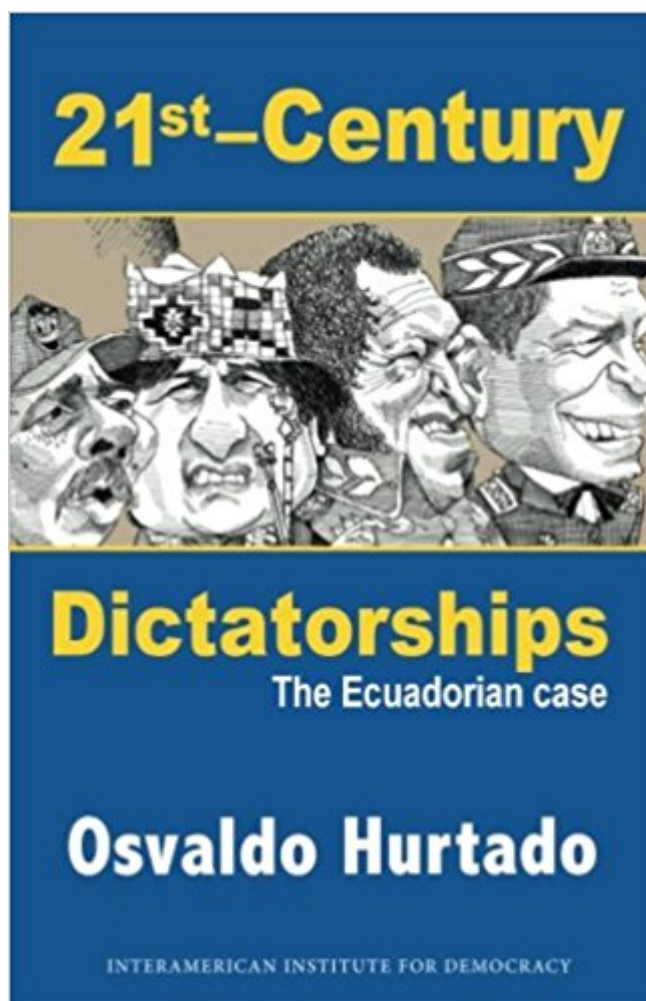


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21st-Century Dictatorships: The Ecuadorian Case



Synopsis

Latin America has been perceived as a region prone to dictatorships. Arguably, though, this is a rather dated perception, as the vast majority of Latin American countries nowadays enjoy political systems that embrace democratic institutions. There is, however, a small group of countries, the so-called "21st-century socialist" countries, where democratic institutions continue to have nominal existence while the rights and freedoms of their citizens are restricted. In his new book, Osvaldo Hurtado shines a bright light on the differences between 21st-century dictatorships and the familiar military despotisms of the past. Hurtado correctly points out that under these new dictatorships attacks against democracy and its institutions are perpetrated by democratically elected presidents who shield themselves behind their popular origins to justify their disregard for the rule of law. 21st-century dictatorships manipulate democratic institutions so as to bring about autocratic governments that do not fit the principles set forth in the Inter-American Democratic Charter unanimously signed by all countries of the Americas. The author succeeds admirably in analyzing these new-fangled dictatorships currently in power in Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Venezuela. He does so by drawing on his dual and considerable experience as a former president and an academic. Given the authoritarian challenge facing Latin American democracies, the Inter-American Institute for Democracy has deemed it absolutely necessary to make 21st -Century Dictatorships: The Ecuadorian Case available to the English-speaking world.

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