

New Actors, Democracy, and Challenges Face Central America on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century.

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Abstract

Taking as a point of departure the recently achieved (in the 80s and 90s) global, positive balance for Central America, the resolution of armed conflicts and the democratic institutional scene; this essay intends to evaluate the path walked in relation to the transition processes and democratic consolidation, the mechanisms of social inclusion and the difficult conditions that confront Central America's international economic inclusion. In this perspective, the essay intends to report some key actors and moments that have marked the region and that have imparted characteristics of its present behavior, but which also show trends and possibilities for the future.

New Actors, Democracy, and Challenges Face Central America on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century*

JUANY GUZMÁN LEÓN
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Abstract

Taking as a point of departure the recently achieved (in the 80s and 90s) global, positive balance for Central America, the resolution of armed conflicts and the democratic institutional scene; this essay intends to evaluate the path walked in relation to the transition processes and democratic consolidation, the mechanisms of social inclusion and the difficult conditions that confront Central America's international economic inclusion. In this perspective, the essay intends to report some key actors and moments that have marked the region and that have imparted characteristics of its present behavior, but which also show trends and possibilities for the future.

Introduction

When attempting to analyze the dynamics of Latin American society, scholars look at the institutional transformations, the change of players, and the configuration of political systems as well as the complex dynamics of democratization in Latin America during the last fifteen years. The complexity of the region's recent history makes it necessary to identify turning points that might help explain the contradictory experiences Central America is going through as it aspires to democracy and development.

The writers assume that the ultimate goal is a balance of forces that would be globally beneficial for a region where, in the decades of 1980-1990, conflicts moved from the battlefield to institutional and democratic forums. Thus, an

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