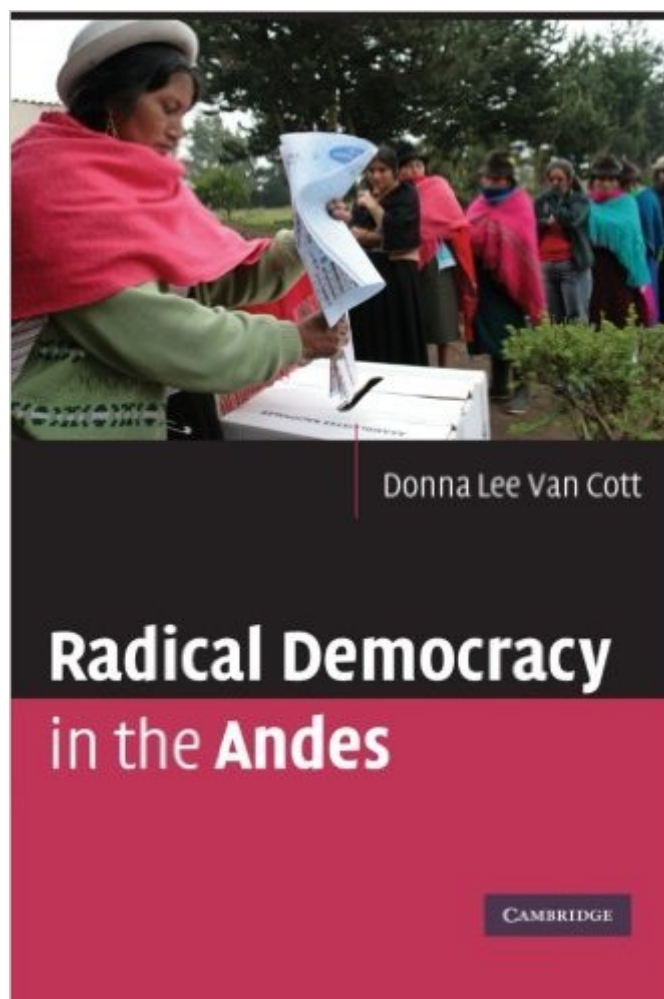


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Radical Democracy In The Andes



Synopsis

After a decade in local office, are indigenous peoples' governments in the Andes fulfilling their promise to provide a more participatory, accountable, and deliberative form of democracy? Using current debates in democratic theory as a framework, Donna Lee Van Cott examines 10 examples of institutional innovation by indigenous-party-controlled municipalities in Bolivia and Ecuador. In contrast to studies emphasizing the role of individuals and civil society, the findings underscore the contributions of leadership and political parties to promoting participation and deliberation -- even at the local level. Democratic quality is more likely to improve where local actors initiate and design institutions. Van Cott concludes that indigenous parties' innovations have improved democratic quality in some respects, but that authoritarian tendencies endemic to Andean cultures and political organizations have limited their positive impact.

Book Information

Paperback: 278 pages

Publisher: Cambridge University Press; 1 edition (September 8, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0521734177

ISBN-13: 978-0521734172

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.6 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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Best Sellers Rank: #2,802,365 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #91 in Books > History > Americas > South America > Ecuador #150 in Books > History > Americas > South America > Bolivia #2246 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > History > Latin America

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