

DECENTRALIZATION AND POPULAR DEMOCRACY

Governance from Below in Bolivia

Jean-Paul Faguet

Faguet identifies the factors that determine the outcomes of national decentralization on the local level

Bolivia decentralized in an effort to deepen democracy, improve public services, and make government more accountable. Unlike many countries, Bolivia succeeded. Over the past generation, public investment shifted dramatically toward primary services and resource distribution became far more equitable, partly due to the creation of new local governments. Many municipalities responded to decentralization with transparent, accountable government, yet others suffered ineptitude, corruption, or both. Why? Jean-Paul Faguet combines broad econometric data with deep qualitative evidence to investigate the social underpinnings of governance. He shows how the interaction of civic groups and business interests determines the quality of local decision making.

In order to understand decentralization, Faguet argues, we must understand governance from the ground up. Drawing on his findings, he offers an evaluation of the potential benefits of decentralization and recommendations for structuring successful reform.

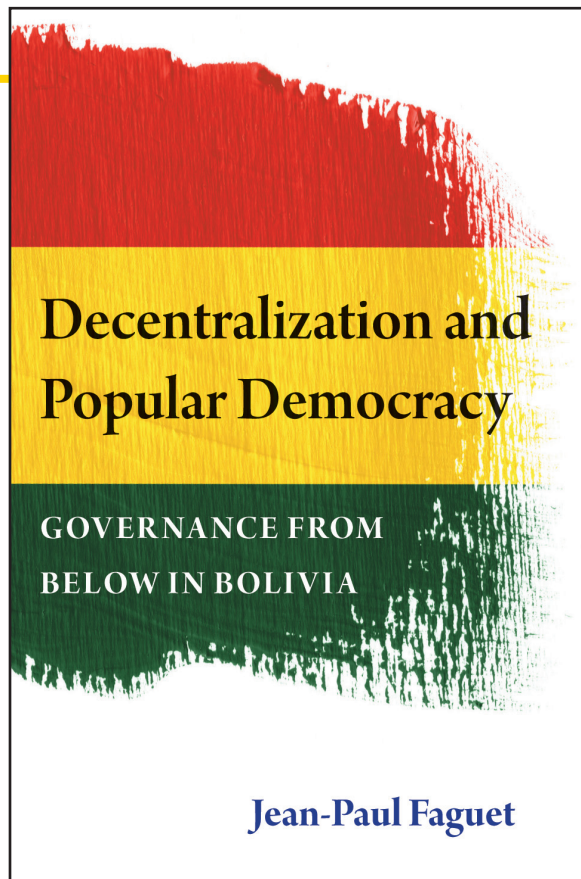
Jean-Paul Faguet is Reader in the Political Economy of Development at the London School of Economics and Political Science and Chair of the Decentralization Task Force of the Initiative for Policy Dialogue at Columbia University.

“This book promises to alter the entire debate on decentralization and will certainly make a signal contribution to the field.”

—James Dunkerley, Queen Mary University of London

“The Bolivian experience is striking and this book will easily be the definitive work on the topic.”

—Dilip Mookherjee, Boston University



“Faguet sheds new theoretical and empirical light on a long-standing question in political science: what is the impact of political and economic decentralization on government performance? He has amassed an astounding array of empirical evidence, including a unique data set of municipal-level spending in Bolivia and qualitative, ethnographic evidence of government performance in different Bolivian municipalities.”

—Isabela Mares, Columbia University

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