

Guatemaltecas



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After thirty years of military rule and state-sponsored violence, Guatemala reinstated civilian control and began rebuilding democratic institutions in 1986. Responding to these changes, Guatemalan women began organizing to gain an active role in the national body politic and restructure traditional relations of power and gender. This pioneering study examines the formation and evolution of the Guatemalan women's movement and assesses how it has been affected by, and has in turn affected, the forces of democratization and globalization that have transformed much of the developing world. Susan Berger pursues three hypotheses in her study of the women's movement. She argues that neoliberal democratization has led to the institutionalization of the women's movement and has encouraged it to turn from protest politics to policy work and to helping the state impose its neoliberal agenda. She also asserts that, while the influences of dominant global discourses are apparent, local definitions of femininity, sexuality, and gender equity and rights have been critical to shaping the form, content, and objectives of the women's movement in Guatemala. And she identifies a counter-discourse to globalization that is slowly emerging within the movement. Berger's findings vigorously reveal the manifold complexities that have attended the development of the Guatemalan women's movement.

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目录:

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