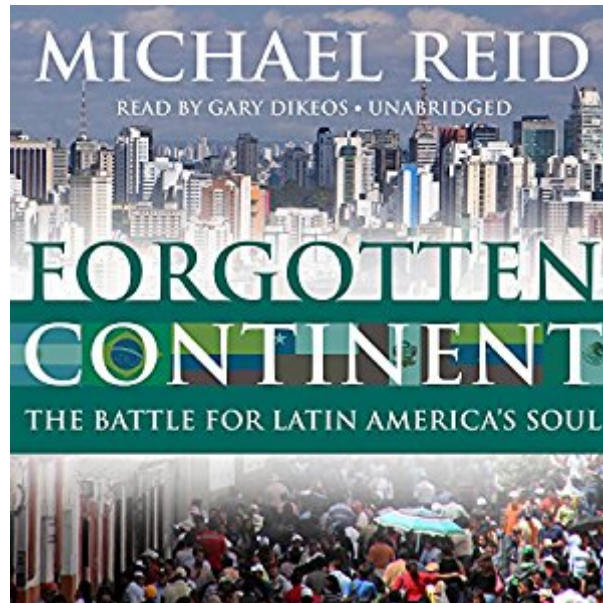


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Forgotten Continent: The Battle For Latin America's Soul



Synopsis

Latin America has often been condemned to failure. Neither poor enough to evoke Africa's moral crusade nor as explosively booming as India and China, it has largely been overlooked by the West. Yet this vast continent, home to half a billion people, the world's largest reserves of arable land, and 8.5 percent of global oil, is busily transforming its political and economic landscape. This book argues that rather than failing the test, Latin America's efforts to build fairer and more prosperous societies make it one of the world's most vigorous laboratories for capitalist democracy. In many countries-including Brazil, Chile, and Mexico-democratic leaders are laying the foundations for faster economic growth and more inclusive politics, as well as tackling deep-rooted problems of poverty, inequality, and social injustice. They face a new challenge from Hugo Chávez's oil-fuelled populism, and much is at stake. Failure will increase the flow of drugs and illegal immigrants to the United States and Europe, jeopardize stability in a region rich in oil and other strategic commodities, and threaten some of the world's most majestic natural environments. Drawing on Michael Reid's many years of reporting from inside Latin America's cities, presidential palaces, and shantytowns, this book provides a vivid, immediate, and informed account of a dynamic continent and its struggle to compete in a globalized world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Michael Reid's task in "Forgotten Continent" is onerous: in one book - a large one, to be sure - he wants to summarize two hundred years of a continent's history, and to argue that Latin America is

now ready for a major change: the embrace of Free Market Democracy in earnest for the first time. The thesis of the book is simple: Latin America is torn between reformers - democrats who support free markets and democracy, and populists - who support neither. Reid argues that although the populists have considerable appeal in the region, the tide has turned against them. Unlike previous eras, the current embrace of democracy and capitalism - augmented with a great deal of redistribution policies - is here to last. Surprisingly for a journalist, Reid's history of Latin American, in three large chapters which take us from the 1820s to the 1990s, is cumbersome and hard to read. It is only when he gets to economic history that Reid, a correspondent for The Economist, hits his stride; A chapter on the development of the Washington Consensus is fascinating; I've read general economic accounts of 1997-1998 crisis (e.g. Paul Krugman's The Return of Depression Economics) and a specific study of Argentina's woes (Paul Bluestein's

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