



## Perpetuating Power: How Mexican Presidents Were Chosen

By Jorge G. Castaneda

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Jorge Castañeda, who served as Mexico's foreign minister from 2000 to 2003, has been both an insider and an outsider in Mexico's political system. In *Perpetuating Power*, he lays bare the often mystifying workings of power in Mexico, offering readers what the *New York Times Book Review* called "an unusually revealing explication of the inner workings of three decades of presidential succession."

To outside observers, Mexico stood out for its odd mixture of democratic pretension with autocratic inevitability: there were always elections, but everyone knew the next president would be the candidate of the aptly named Party of the Institutional Revolution, which governed Mexico throughout most of the last century.

In six penetrating essays combined with interviews by Castañeda with each of the living Mexican ex-presidents, *Perpetuating Power* provides a remarkably candid account of the political machinery behind Mexican presidential politics and a view, startling to political outsiders, of how power really operates.

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## Perpetuating Power: How Mexican Presidents Were Chosen By Jorge G. Castaneda Bibliography

- Rank: #2448654 in Books
- Brand: Brand: New Press, The
- Published on: 2001-11-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.20" h x .76" w x 6.08" l, .84 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 272 pages

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### Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Here, Castañeda (political science, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and New York Univ.) solves a puzzle that has baffled many political scientists. By examining the Byzantine workings of Mexico's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which enjoyed uninterrupted supremacy until the recent election of Vicente Fox, he explains how the party selected presidents. Included are interviews with four living ex-presidents, as well as defeated candidates and other protagonists. This wealth of primary data lends weight to the book's analysis. The author observes that the one-party system was Mexico's solution to the tumult and sporadic violence that disrupted electoral politics from Independence in 1810 until the Revolution in 1910. While he admits that this system had shortcomings, he points out that Mexico has transferred power peacefully in recent decades and that the abuses visited on opponents of the government were mild by Latin American standards. An invaluable work for students of Mexican politics, this is recommended for academic collections. James R. Holmes, Fletcher Sch. of Law and Diplomacy, Belmont, MA  
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Review

"Castañeda strikes a blow for a more open and democratic Mexico in the future." —*The Washington Post Book World*

"An unusually revealing explication of the inner workings of three decades of presidential succession." —*The New York Times Book Review*

About the Author

Jorge G. Castañeda is a Mexican politician and academic who served as Mexico's secretary of foreign affairs from 2000 to 2003. He worked as a professor at several universities, including the National Autonomous University of Mexico; the University of California, Berkeley; Princeton University; New York University; and the University of Cambridge. He has authored more than a dozen books, including *Ex Mex: From Migrants to Immigrants*, *The Mexican Shock: Its Meaning for the United States*, and *Perpetuating Power: How Mexican Presidents Were Chosen*, all published by The New Press. Castañeda regularly contributes to newspapers such as *Reforma* (Mexico), *El País* (Spain), the *Los Angeles Times*, and *Newsweek*.

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