



The Mexican Exception: Sovereignty, Police, and Democracy

Gareth Williams

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The war on drugs has opened up a discussion on whether Mexico is living a state of exception or even becoming a failed state. This book argues that sovereign exceptionality has always been central to Mexican modernity. The question is how to understand the way the sovereign exception has worked and continues to work in cultural, historical, and institutional terms since this holds the key to understanding the nature of contemporary democracy. Each chapter of *The Mexican Exception* examines an event or particular historical sequence that sheds light on the relation between culture, sovereign exceptionality, and the political. Drawing on literature, photography, critical theory, and the history of social movements and state formation, *The Mexican Exception* proposes a partial history of the state of exception by examining the electoral stand-off of 2006; Zapatismo past and present; the humanist representation of history; sovereignty and *caciquismo*; popular culture and the figure of the rogue; the events and political imagination of 1968; the 'dirty war' of the 1970's and the militarization of the social sphere in recent decades. In this book Williams maps out political and cultural counter-genealogies in order to shed light on the workings of the constitutive couple of democracy (equality and freedom) in modern and contemporary Mexico.

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