The late twentieth century witnessed the birth of an impressive number of new democracies in Latin America. This wave of democratization since 1978 has been by far the broadest and most durable in the history of Latin America, but many of the resulting democratic regimes also suffer from profound deficiencies. What caused democratic regimes to emerge and survive? What are their main achievements and shortcomings? This volume offers an ambitious and comprehensive overview of the unprecedented advances as well as the setbacks in the post-1978 wave of democratization. It seeks to explain the sea change from a region dominated by authoritarian regimes to one in which openly authoritarian regimes are the rare exception, and it analyzes why some countries have achieved striking gains in democratization while others have experienced erosions. The book presents general theoretical arguments about what causes and sustains democracy and analyses of nine theoretically compelling country cases.

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For our children,
Michael Messina and
Benjamin Mainwaring and Grace Mainwaring
With our love
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This volume is of course a product of the editors and authors. It is also a Kellogg Institute product. Since its inception in 1982, the Kellogg Institute has attempted to promote outstanding research on some of the most important normative issues that confront humanity, including democracy. Our scholarly interests and perspectives have been shaped by the rich intellectual debate at the Kellogg Institute on this theme. Seven of the authors in this volume are former Visiting Fellows of the Institute, three contributors are current Kellogg Faculty Fellows, and one is a former graduate student of the University of Notre Dame. Six of seven discussants who enriched our conference have been either Visiting or Faculty Fellows. We especially thank our colleague, Guillermo O’Donnell, who since the 1970s has set the agenda on debates about democratization.

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