Recent distributive conflict models of regime change have suggested that inequality, and mass mobilization related to it, can help account for both democratic transitions and reversions. In this book, Stephan Haggard and Robert Kaufman subject these models to empirical test over the period of the Third Wave (1980-2008). They find that inequality is unrelated to regime change one way or the other and that only a limited share of all transitions or reversions conform with the causal mechanisms stipulated in these class conflict models. They suggest that different paths to democratic rule are likely to have different determinants, with institutions and capacities for collective action, influence distributive conflict transitions rather than inequality per se. Reversions, by contrast, are explained by weak institutionalization, praetorian histories and poor economic performance.

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