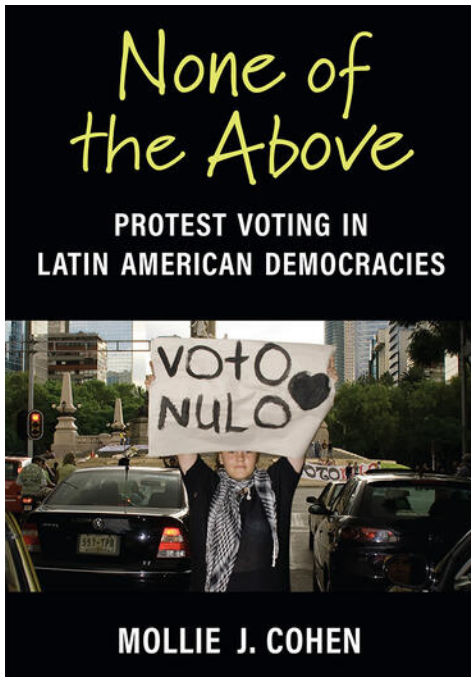




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NONE OF THE ABOVE

PROTEST VOTING IN LATIN AMERICAN DEMOCRACIES

Mollie J Cohen

Weiser Center for Emerging Democracies

Around the world each year, millions of citizens turn out to vote but leave their ballots empty or spoil them. Increasingly, campaigns have emerged that promote “invalid” votes like these. Why do citizens choose to cast blank and spoiled votes? And how do campaigns mobilizing the invalid vote influence this decision? *None of the Above* answers these questions using evidence from presidential and gubernatorial elections in eighteen Latin American democracies. Author Mollie J. Cohen draws on a broad range of methods and sources, incorporating data from electoral management bodies, nationally representative surveys, survey experiments, focus groups, semi-structured interviews, and news sources.

Contrary to received wisdom, this book shows that most citizens cast blank or spoiled votes in presidential elections on purpose. By participating in invalid vote campaigns, citizens can voice their concerns about low-quality candidates while also expressing a preference for high-quality democracy. Campaigns promoting blank and spoiled votes come about more often, and succeed at higher rates, when incumbent politicians undermine the quality of elections. Surprisingly, invalid vote campaigns can shore up the quality of democracy in the short term. *None of the Above* shows that swings in blank and spoiled vote rates can serve as a warning about the trajectory of a country’s democracy.

Mollie J. Cohen is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Purdue University.

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A wonderful example of a well-executed scholarly book that takes an interesting and misunderstood phenomenon—invalid voting—and explores both the meaning and the consequences across a wide range of contexts. Dr. Cohen is a true expert on this topic. This book showcases her deep knowledge of protest voting in Latin American elections and presents convincing evidence that the practice of invalid voting in protest is more important than many might think at first.”

—Carew Boulding,
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