

# BOOK PRESENTATION

**Dr. Jean-Paul Faguet**

Reader in the Political Economy of Development  
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Moderator:

**Dr. Juan Antonio Morales**

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## Decentralization and Popular Democracy

GOVERNANCE FROM  
BELOW IN BOLIVIA

**Jean-Paul Faguet**

Room 802 IAB • December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from 4-6pm

Decentralization is meant to deepen democracy, improve public services, and make government more accountable. But evidence from across the globe is contradictory. Is it all empty fashion? A giant mistake?

Jean-Paul Faguet uses the remarkable case of Bolivia to investigate reform over a generation. Public investment shifted dramatically towards primary services and resource distribution became far more equitable. Change was driven by Bolivia's smaller, poorer municipalities prioritizing their needs. Many municipalities responded to decentralization with transparent, accountable government, but others suffered ineptitude, corruption or both. Why? Faguet combines broad econometric data with deep qualitative evidence to plumb the social underpinnings of governance. He shows how civic groups and firms interact to determine the quality of local decision-making. To understand decentralization, Faguet argues, we must understand governance from the ground up. He concludes with a discussion of the potential benefits of decentralization and recommendations for structuring successful reform.