



Democracy and Elections in Africa

By Staffan I. Lindberg

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This volume studies elections as a core institution of liberal democracy in the context of newly democratizing countries. Political scientist Staffan I. Lindberg gathers data from every nationally contested election in Africa from 1989 to 2003, covering 232 elections in 44 countries. He argues that democratizing nations learn to become democratic through repeated democratic behavior, even if their elections are often flawed.

Refuting a number of established hypotheses, Lindberg finds no general negative trend in either the frequency or the quality of African elections. Rather, elections in Africa, based on his findings, are more than just the goal of a transition toward democracy or merely a formal procedure. The inception of multiparty elections usually initiates liberalization, and repeated electoral activities create incentives for political actors, fostering the expansion and deepening of democratic values. In addition to improving the democratic qualities of political regimes, a sequence of elections tends to expand and solidify *de facto* civil liberties in society.

Drawing on a wealth of data, Lindberg makes the case that repetitive elections are an important causal factor in the development of democracy. He thus extends Rustow's (1970) theory that democratic behavior produces democratic values.

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Editorial Review

Review

For the foreseeable future, this book will be the essential reference on African multiparty elections.

(Foreign Affairs)

A good and timely book on a very important topic... His prose highlights his expertise in Africa, the comparative literature on democratization, democratization in Africa, and methodology.

(Taiwan Journal of Democracy)

An important contribution to the study of African politics and democratization in general... Highly recommended.

(Choice)

A rigorous investigation... This book makes a notable contribution to the study of electoral politics, democratisation theory and the study of African politics.

(Peter Burnell Political Studies Review)

Lindberg contributes a serious study that has significant heuristic value and will encourage a testing and retesting of its hypotheses and theoretical premises.

(John R. Heilbrunn Comparative Political Studies)

This book is an original, important, and in many ways impressive study that will make a contribution to both electoral and Africanist scholarship.

(James R. Scarritt Perspectives on Politics)

This book is a path-breaking and much-needed study of the role of elections in Africa.

(Nic Cheeseman Africa)

Lindberg has done a good job. Written with serious academic and methodological rigor, this book contributes to the discourse on comparative democratization in Africa.

(Arthur Abraham International Journal of African Historical Studies)

Contains significant levels of data and analysis and will be a useful text for students and practitioners alike.

(Heather Deegan *Democratization*)

There is a dearth of publications on democratization in Africa, but here is a book that is presented on the basis of solid empirical data and carries a surprisingly positive message. Lindberg meticulously codes all the information on African elections and democratization and makes it available to the scholarly community. This first-rate book is complete in theoretical respects and demonstrates Lindberg's great versatility in handling large amounts of data.

(Goran Hyden, University of Florida, Gainesville)

Essential reading for all people interested in elections and democracy in Africa.

(Gero Erdmann *African History*)

Draws far-reaching and well-based conclusions about the 'power of elections.'

(Gero Erdmann *Development and Cooperation*)

Without doubt, this study provides a strong stimulus for future research, and this is precisely what excellent scientific work is meant to be.

(Matthias Basedau *Modern African Studies*)

About the Author

Staffan I. Lindberg is an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science and the Center for African Studies at University of Florida. His work on elections received the American Political Science Association's Juan Linz Award for Best Dissertation in 2004 and won the Annual Best Graduate Paper Prize of the African Studies Association in 2003.

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