POLITICS, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, AND GLOBALIZATION

Matthias Basedau, Gero Erdmann, and Andreas Mehler, eds. *Votes, Money and Violence: Political Parties and Elections in Sub-Saharan Africa.* Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2007. 301 pp. Tables. Notes. References. Index. €31. Paper.

This work includes ten contributions presented to a conference organized by the Africa-Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies (AEGIS) held at Hamburg in 2003. The diversity of the contributions testifies both to the vitality of the work in this field and to the range of subthemes to emerge under the general rubric of the effects of money and violence on voting patterns. As the editors note, "research on African political parties and party systems is still in its infancy" (276). Nonetheless, despite the "infancy" of the field, these texts are far from immature.

The first contribution, by Gyimah-Boadi, is by a recognized analyst of political processes in Ghana, his country of origin; he is the only African contributor to this book. The depth of his understanding of the local conditions stands out; other contributions, by European researchers, struggle in constructing conceptual frameworks and lack the density of empirical data of this chapter. It is clear that the difficulty of acquiring a command of local conditions makes it very challenging to construct a viable comparative framework among these various presentations.

Most papers address the task of drawing up a framework for comparative analysis, beginning with that of Erdmann, who explores the flaws of the Western model, and that of Burnell, who continues the discussion. Subsequent chapters are based on transnational African comparisons and explore the relations between electoral systems and party systems, a focus for a great deal of literature published at the international level. Two chapters by Mehler and Laakso analyze the theme of "violence," while Nugent takes on the task of examining the role of money in these elections. These three chapters share the merit of exploring the complexity of voting processes in Africa by which democracy is precariously situated within the social fields associated with "clientelism," "neopatrimonialism," and "ethnicity." Their arguments show the importance of careful research that does not assume that violence necessarily precludes democracy or that the exchange of money necessarily means only "selling votes."

The most interesting themes of this book, however, are found in the conclusion, written jointly by the three editors, who draw up a balance sheet and propose a research agenda for this topic. Their classification is based on problems and approaches; they remind the reader that research on parties and elections varies according to whether money and violence are considered dependent variables or independent variables. The former underscores the effects of different social contexts; the latter calculates influence by the evolution of a process of democratization or of consolidation.

The core of their argument is that in dealing with parties in Africa, the relation of money, violence, and political process is a mystery that neither their book nor the available literature allows them to illuminate. This conclusion is valid if one takes into account only the works cited in their bibliography. But it could be expanded by looking into other pathways, such as those explored in French literature on the subject. All the relevant questions they pose in this domain fit into the field of political science as applied to sub-Saharan Africa. The simple transfer of paradigms and methods of a discipline developed in North America for contexts in the countries of the North is often faced with insurmountable difficulties that the authors clearly articulate. The answers they await will have to come from long-term qualitative anthropological research. But how many political scientists are ready to invest years of research in the field to address these issues? Conversely, how many anthropologists are sufficiently interested in the political science debates to gain the necessary mastery of the field and to orient their research to these ends?

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Abdeslam M. Maghraoui. *Liberalism without Democracy: Nationhood and Citizenship in Egypt, 1922–1936.* Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006. xx + 192 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. $74.95. Cloth. $21.95. Paper.

The question of how to assess the impact of the "West" without eliding the internal dynamics of change animates many new studies on the history and politics of Egypt. Indeed, the very meaning of the "colonial" in Egyptian history is subject to reexamination. Abdeslam M. Maghraoui attempts to do this by providing a cultural analysis of why liberalism failed in Egypt during the interwar period.

Relying on a linguistic definition of culture derived from Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, and drawing on the discourses of a handful of liberal reformers whom he terms "secular modernists," Maghraoui charts the unconscious workings of Egyptian liberalism as essentially the expression of the desire to become "Other," that is, to become European. The exclusionary politics of identity that resulted were, he asserts, the bases of liberalism's failure in Egypt. This heavy-handed application of Lacanian metaphors of self-recognition (such as the "mirror stage" of infants) to explain Egyptian political maturation—or lack thereof—is problematic, to say the least. As a historian of the interwar period in Egypt, I have objections to this study that are primarily of a historical nature and may be overly empiricist; but it is precisely the author's failure to attend to history as more than a reservoir of "telling moments" that undermines the potential theoretical contribution of this work both to history and to the