

in a footnote as well as in the text on page 5. These minor issues notwithstanding, Hertel's *Unexpected Power* is a very valuable and nicely readable contribution to the growing body of literature on transnational advocacy campaigns. It adds new theoretical depth and should be required reading for scholars as well as graduate and advanced undergraduate students of social movements and international relations.

Direct Democratic Choice: The Swiss Experience.

By Hanspeter Kriesi. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005.

263p. \$90.00.

DOI: 10.1017/S153759270707257X

—Pascal Sciarini, *University of Geneva*

The determinants of the voters' decision in direct democratic votes have received growing attention over the last 15 years. The reasons for this are mainly twofold. First, there has been a sharp increase in the number of popular votes worldwide. In Europe, the successive waves of referenda on the European Union, up to the recent rejection of the EU constitution in France and in the Netherlands, have put the issue of direct democratic choices on the top of both the scientific and political agendas. Second, we have witnessed important theoretical developments in the study of opinion formation and political behavior (e.g., the contributions of social and political psychology with respect to the role of cognitive strategies, or the contributions of communication studies with respect to media and campaign effects).

As the country with the most far-reaching experience with direct legislation and referendum campaigns, Switzerland constitutes a unique "laboratory" for the analysis of direct democratic choices. Exploiting this "comparative advantage," Hanspeter Kriesi delivers a pathbreaking study. At the theoretical level, he uses the long-lasting dispute between the elitist and the pluralist conceptions of direct democracy as a starting point, and argues for a third, "realistic" conception that sheds light on the conditions under which "ordinary citizens are able to arrive at an enlightened political judgment and to make a reasonable choice" (p. 8). These conditions depend on the political elites and on citizens themselves.

First, the realistic conception is premised on the belief that—by delivering political messages, forming coalitions, and mobilizing support during a referendum campaign—the elites play a leading role in the individual process of opinion formation. Second, the author builds on the dual-process theories and distinguishes between two paths of individual opinion formation: a heuristic path, based on shortcuts and simplifying strategies, and a systematic path, based on the arguments provided by the elite. While the former has given rise to an extensive literature, in the United States and abroad, empirical tests

of the impact of argument-based reasoning on the voters' decision are scarce. Kriesi's study fills a gap in that respect.

Methodologically, the author also innovates by relying extensively on hierarchical (two-level) models, which enables him to evaluate how contextual, project-related variables and individual variables interact, and jointly influence the voters' choice. Empirically, Kriesi analyzes an impressive data set of postelection surveys covering nearly 20 years (1981–99) of direct legislation in several policy domains (148 popular votes altogether). This survey data provides systematic information about respondents' sociodemographic background and political attitudes. At the contextual level, the author takes into account both the intrinsic characteristics of the proposals submitted to the voters (e.g., their institutional form, familiarity, and salience) and the characteristics of the related referendum campaign (e.g., the intensity and direction of the campaign, based on newspaper ads, and the level and type of conflict among the elite, based on parties' voting recommendations).

In the first part of the book, Kriesi introduces the reader to these context-related variables and convincingly shows that they strongly structure voters' participation, their level of political information on the issues at stake, and their voting decisions. Thus, the intensity of the referendum campaign and the familiarity of the proposal submitted to the voters significantly increase participation, in interaction with individual factors. Similarly, intense campaigns and familiar projects lead to higher levels of political awareness among individuals. Higher awareness, in turn, increases the likelihood of taking part in the vote, and at the same time reduces the risk of unreasonable decisions. Finally, and in sharp contrast with the view that one could "buy" a popular vote, Kriesi's study demonstrates that once the type of coalition among the party elite is controlled for, campaign spending no longer plays a role for the outcome of a popular vote. Overall then, the analysis confirms that while direct democratic votes necessarily introduce some element of uncertainty for the party elite, the latter still holds fair control over (the quality of) the individual decision.

The core—and major contribution—of the book stems from the analysis of the heuristic and systematic paths of opinion formation (Chapters 6 to 8). The resort to two-level models appears as a successful strategy and leads to several interesting—albeit in some cases fairly complex—findings. Among the three different heuristics included in the analysis (status quo, trust in government, and partisan cues), the last two are at first sight decisive. For example, when the elite is divided, reliance on parties' voting recommendations appears as a widespread strategy, and this even among unaware voters. However, the effects of the partisan and trust heuristics turn out to be partly spurious: They disappear when systematic strategies are controlled for. Indeed, according to Kriesi's main—and most intriguing—finding, argument-based, systematic strategies are of overriding importance, and clearly outweigh

heuristic cues. From this and other findings, Kriesi derives normative implications, ending up with a nuanced, but overall optimistic, conclusion regarding the quality of direct democratic procedures.

While this conclusion is certainly in line with the results, the empirical tests on which it is based raise some questions. To be sure, Kriesi's technical work is of first-rate quality and the author has made the best possible use of the data. But as he himself acknowledges, the data are far from perfect. One problem is that the questions and response categories included in the postelection surveys have varied over time, which affects the measurement of some central variables. Thus, political awareness is mostly based on two crude measures of factual knowledge. Similarly, the measure of the trust heuristic as it is formulated in the survey presumably raises a problem of endogeneity. Finally, and perhaps more importantly, the indicator for systematic reasoning is based on the respondents' agreement with some arguments put forward by the yes and no camps during the referendum campaign. These arguments are always asked at the end of the interview, that is, well after the question on the voting choice. Consequently, one cannot be sure whether a given argument really served as a voting motive, or whether respondents simply used the argument to justify their vote a posteriori—perhaps even without having heard about it before. If the latter holds, then the direction of causality is reversed: It does not go from the argument to the vote, as it is assumed by Kriesi, but from the vote to the argument. This would obviously render the test of the impact of argument-based strategies problematic.

Even with this qualification in mind, I warmly recommend this thorough and highly enlightening book, which provides several convincing answers to the ever more crucial issue of direct democratic choices, and offers an important and stimulating contribution to the ongoing debate between advocates and opponents of direct democracy.

Democracy and Elections in Africa. By Steffan Lindberg. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006. 240p. \$55.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper.
DOI: 10.1017/S1537592707072581

— James R. Scarritt, *University of Colorado at Boulder*

This book is an original, important, and in many ways impressive study that will make a contribution to both electoral and Africanist scholarship. The author's central argument is that repetitive elections (three or more) increase the democratic qualities of regimes and broaden and deepen civil liberties in societies. This argument is carefully placed within democratic theory and rigorously tested by a dense and generally sophisticated empirical analysis, although I have criticisms regarding the tightness of the theory and two variables used in the empirical analysis.

Theoretically, democracy is a regime, a set of rules that is both constitutive and regulatory: "Within regimes, actors have room to maneuver, and their subjective interests, goals and calculations matter for outcomes, but within limits not of their own choosing" (p. 7). Elections are partial regimes, which, Steffan Lindberg argues, are likely to produce complete democratic regimes. Democracy is defined procedurally as self-government comprised of participation, competition, and legitimacy in the eyes of the people. The author wisely chooses to define democracy as a matter of degree, rather than to dichotomize between democracies and nondemocracies. But he surreptitiously introduces dichotomous analysis in the form of a cutting point between two categories on the continuous variable of free and fair elections that contain 91% of the cases (37, 48). These categories are distinguished from each other only by whether irregularities affected the outcome, which is a separate variable from the degree of irregularities and is strongly affected by the closeness of the outcome. Participation is measured in terms of turnout, opposition participation, and the questionable criterion of whether former authoritarian rulers or their close associates are among the presidential candidates. This criterion makes the questionable assumptions that democratic values are essential for democratic behavior, that former rulers' values do not change, and that current rulers not involved in previous regimes do not have authoritarian tendencies. Competition is measured in terms of the winner's percentage of the vote, the largest two parties' percentages of the seats, and turnover of power. Finally, legitimacy is measured in terms of losers' acceptance of results, peacefulness of elections, and electoral system survival.

The problems with the author's use of free and fair as a dichotomous variable and his excessive emphasis on the presence of former authoritarian politicians can be effectively illustrated by his classification of the 1991, 1996, and 2001 elections in Zambia. There were almost as many irregularities in 1991 as in 1996 and there were fewer in 2001 than in either of the previous elections. The election in 1991 is classified as free and fair because the one-sided results meant that irregularities by the losing ruling party did not prevent its defeat. The election in 1996 is classified as not free and fair because manipulations by the ruling party led to a boycott by the former ruling party, even though that party's inclusion would have led to the same presidential result and only slightly different parliamentary results. The 2001 election is classified as not free and fair, though all parties participated, because the very close results may have allowed the ruling party to steal the election through relatively minor manipulations. Certainly, 1996 was the least democratic of these elections. However, this was because the apparently democratic victor in the 1991 presidential election had turned authoritarian in the face of increased opposition,