BOOK REVIEW

Edalina Rodrigues Sanches. *Party Systems in Young Democracies: Varieties of Institutionalization in Sub-Saharan Africa.* Oxford: Routledge, 2018. xii + 202 pp. Appendices. Bibliography. Index. Cloth. $145.00. ISBN: 978-1-138-71198-3.

Edalina Sanches's *Party Systems in Young Democracies* is a welcome contribution to the growing body of literature on African parties and party systems. Utilizing varieties of data sources, Sanches skillfully combines quantitative and qualitative methodologies to explain the causes of party system institutionalization in Africa. The book places great emphasis on the enduring legacies of regime transitions, the design of political institutions, and programmaticness of party-citizen linkages for the development of party systems. Building on the results from time-series cross-sectional analysis of thirty sub-Saharan African countries between 1960 and 2016, the book investigates causal mechanisms through in-depth case studies of Cape Verde, Zambia, and Mozambique. The result is a forceful demonstration of the substantial variation among African party systems and an original contribution to the literature.

The book begins by conceptualizing party system institutionalization as a multi-dimensional concept that entails a twofold variance, in terms of degree and in terms of quality. The degree of party system institutionalization encompasses three conceptual attributes: stability in patterns of party competition, stable roots in society, and organizational continuity. The study operationalizes these attributes by constructing an additive index composed of eleven indicators that capture parties' interactions across electoral, parliamentarian, governmental, and organizational arenas. Sanches skillfully utilizes these indicators to highlight the significant variation in party system institutionalization across time and space.

The second dimension, the quality of institutionalization, entails the extent to which party systems are able to cultivate political participation and encourage further democratization. Using hierarchical cluster analysis, Sanches investigates the association between the degree and the quality of institutionalization and innovatively maps out three types of party systems. The first cluster comprises what Sanches calls "adequately institutionalized party systems," which combine high levels of institutionalization with high voter turnout rates and levels of democracy as depicted by Freedom House scores. Party systems with weak institutionalization and intermediate levels

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of political participation and democracy fall into the second cluster of "inadequately institutionalized party systems." Finally, the third cluster consists of overly institutionalized party systems that simultaneously exhibit low levels of political participation and exemplify the worst democratic practices. The resulting three party system types clearly demonstrate that institutionalization may very well coexist with authoritarian practices and does not necessarily further democratization.

In subsequent chapters, the book explores the sources of variation in party system institutionalization in Africa. The quantitative analysis indicates that party system institutionalization is mainly driven by the mode of regime transition, political institutions such as electoral rules and party funding laws, and the extent to which parties cultivate programmatic rather than clientelistic linkages with their constituencies. The mode of regime transition emerges as the most important variable, since the book's theoretical model highlights its fundamental role in shaping political institutional framework that reinforces the initial patterns of institutionalization over time.

According to Sanches, institutionalization was more likely where political elites controlled the transition process and designed political institutions that strengthen their position in subsequent elections. In contrast, where political elites acquiesced to pressures from below exacerbated by frequent anti-incumbent mass uprisings during regime transitions, the result was the establishment of institutions conducive to party proliferation and party systems that are incapable of channeling growing participatory aspirations among the masses. Hence, the book proposes the number of anti-incumbent mass uprisings as a crucial determinant of the political elites' ability to control the transition process and consequently party system institutionalization.

Although the emphasis on transition mode as a previously overlooked driver of institutionalization represents an important contribution, Sanches does not exhaustively discuss the possibility that organizational resources inherited from a previous authoritarian regime may in fact condition the incumbents' capacity to resist and moderate the implications of mass uprisings. The possibility of such interaction effect deserves further exploration, and its investigation would be helpful to understand the conditions under which authoritarian incumbents acquiesce to mass protest and lose the ability to effectively influence post-transition political outcomes.

In-depth case studies of Cape Verde, Zambia, and Mozambique further shed light on the mechanisms linking mode of transition, political institutions, and party-citizen linkages to party system institutionalization. Examining various data sources including over eighty semi-structured interviews conducted during fieldwork in each country, Sanches deftly explores the causal processes at play. Most importantly, the three specific cases that are examined suggest that the degree of power imbalance between the incumbent and opposition parties during regime transitions was crucial in determining the extent to which institutionalization subsequently promoted political

participation and democratization. Cape Verde is the case where both the incumbent and opposition party were strong challengers during the regime transition, and institutionalization subsequently fostered democratization. In contrast, the Zambian transition was marked by mass uprisings which led to the fragmentation of the incumbent party and provided ample opportunities for the opposition to dominate the transition process. The result was weak institutionalization that failed to bolster participation and democratization. In Mozambique, the incumbent party maintained full control over the political transition without much input from the opposition party on the design of political institutions. As a consequence, institutionalization of that party system has been accompanied by authoritarian practices.

What these examples suggest is that although the incumbent control over political transitions was necessary for institutionalization, absent an opposition party that is able to link the masses into an emerging institutional framework, democratization often fell short of expectations. This is a novel insight that definitely requires further investigation, since Sanches does not discuss the generalizability of this finding beyond the book's three case studies.

Overall, Sanches's book is a unique contribution to the literature on African parties and party systems and comparative democratization in general. It is full of rich in-depth empirical material and attempts to answer important questions in an innovative way. It is a must-read book for every scholar, student, and policy-maker who is interested in the subject.

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For more reading on this subject, the ASR recommends:

Cheeseman, Nic. 2016. "Patrons, Parties, Political Linkage, and the Birth of Competitive-Authoritarianism in Africa." *African Studies Review* 59 (3): 181–200. doi:10.1017/asr.2016.79.

Hyden, Goran. 2016. "Beyond the Liberal Democracy Paradigm: A Fresh Look at Power and Institutions." *African Studies Review* 59 (3): 169–80. doi:10.1017/asr.2016.121.