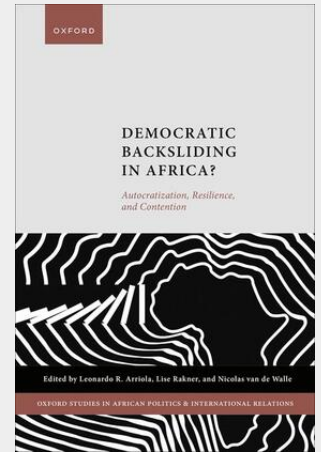


Democratic Backsliding in Africa?

Autocratization, Resilience, and Contention

This is an open access title available under the terms of a CC BY-NC 4.0 licence. It is free to read at Oxford Scholarship Online and offered as a free PDF download from OUP and selected open access locations. Why have most African countries not achieved greater political liberalization? What explains the lack of progress toward the ideals of liberal democracy across the region? This book advances ongoing debates on democratic backsliding with specific reference to Africa. In examining how incumbent leaders in African countries attempt to contain societal pressures for greater democracy, the chapters explain how governments go beyond the standard tools of manipulation, such as electoral fraud and political violence, to keep democracy from unfolding in their countries. The book emphasizes two distinct strategies that governments frequently use to reinforce their hold on power - the legal system and the international system - but which remain overlooked in conventional analyses; it also documents how governments employ the law to limit the scope of action among citizens and civil society activists struggling to expand democratic liberties, including the use of constitutional provisions and the courts. The work further demonstrates how governments use their role in international relations to neutralize pressure from external actors, including sovereigntist claims against foreign intervention and selective implementation of donor-promoted policies. While pro-democracy actors can also employ these legal and international strategies to challenge incumbents, in some cases to prevent democratic backsliding, the book shows why and how incumbents have enjoyed institutional advantages when implementing these strategies through six country case studies of Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Oxford Studies in African Politics and International Relations is a series for scholars and students working on African politics and International Relations and related disciplines. Volumes concentrate on contemporary developments in African political science, political economy, and International Relations, such as electoral politics, democratization, decentralization, the political impact of natural resources, the dynamics and consequences of conflict, and the nature of the continent's engagement with the East and West. Comparative and mixed methods work is particularly encouraged. Case studies are welcomed but should demonstrate the broader theoretical and empirical implications of the study and its wider relevance to contemporary debates. The series focuses on sub-Saharan Africa, although proposals that explain how the region engages with North Africa and other parts of the world are of interest. Series Editors: Nic Cheeseman, Professor of Democracy and International Development, University of Birmingham; Ricardo Soares de Oliveira, Professor of the International Politics of Africa, University of Oxford; Peace Medie, Senior Lecturer, School of Sociology, Politics, and International Studies, University of Bristol.



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