

Preface

Academics and policy makers acknowledge that elections on their own do not secure a country's democracy. There are, in fact, a number of books that have assessed individual case study countries and/or looked at specific aspects of these democracies such as their political history, the electoral system, the machinations of political parties, the veracity of key institutions and the rise of authoritarianism. Many of these studies also feature African case studies in isolation and trace development trajectories using mostly economic data.

The authors contributing to this edited volume, however, take an essentially political approach to the study and compare the democratic principles, presence and performance of ten former British colonies across Sub-Saharan Africa. The book aims to see what trends are present and what challenges this subset of African democracies face. This volume, in other words, looks to examine the *practice of democracy* and does not intend to offer philosophical comment.

Most intentionally, this project also endeavoured to expose and mentor younger scholars through the rigors of academic research and publication. Many will see their work published for the first time. And this mix of seasoned and emerging scholars makes this publication audacious and will hopefully inspire similar projects in the near future.

This is a book that students and scholars of African affairs, politics and law will find useful. Its findings will also be of interest to independent electoral management bodies, political parties, policy researchers of all stripes, civil society groups and local and international funders.

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