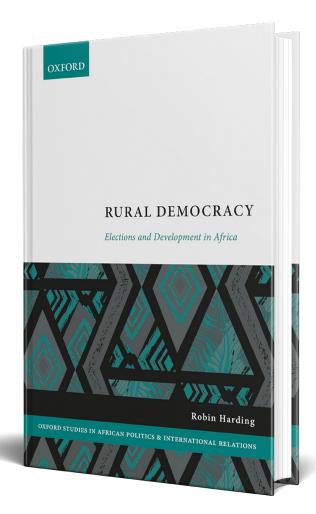
New From Oxford

RURAL DEMOCRACY

ELECTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

Robin Harding



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ow have African rulers responded to the introduction of democratic electoral competition? Despite the broadly negative picture painted by the prevailing focus on electoral fraud, clientelism, and ethnic conflict, the book argues that the full story is somewhat more promising. While these unfortunate practices may be widespread, African rulers also seek to win votes through the provision and distribution of public goods and services. The author's central argument is that in predominantly rural countries the introduction of competitive elections leads governments to implement pro-rural policies, in order to win the votes of the rural majority. As a result, across much of Africa the benefits of democratic electoral competition have accrued primarily in terms of rural development.

FEATURES

- Offers an important new argument about how African governments respond to electoral competition
- Provides a significant new, and more optimistic, assessment of the operation of democracy in Africa
- Includes previously unpublished evidence of systematic urban-rural differences in political support across Africa

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