



Political Legitimacy in Middle Africa: Father, Family, Food

Michael G. Schatzberg

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"... refreshing and provocative... a significant addition to existing literature on African politics." ?Stephen Ellis

"It opens up a whole new field of investigation, and brings into focus the pertinence of an interdisciplinary approach to African politics." ?René Lemarchand

In this innovative work, Michael G. Schatzberg reads metaphors found in the popular press as indicators of the way Africans come to understand their political universe. Examining daily newspapers, popular literature, and political and church documents from across middle Africa, Schatzberg finds that widespread and deeply ingrained views of government and its relationship to its citizenry may be understood as a projection of the metaphor of an idealized extended family onto the formal political sphere.

Schatzberg's careful observations and sensitive interpretations uncover the moral and social factors that shape the African political universe while showing how some African understandings of politics and political power may hamper or promote the development of Western-style democracy. Political Legitimacy in Middle Africa looks closely at elements of African moral and political thought and offers a nuanced assessment of whether democracy might flourish were it to be established on middle African terms.



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