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978-1-107-03047-3 - African Politics in Comparative Perspective: Second Edition

Goran Hyden

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## African Politics in Comparative Perspective, Second Edition

This revised and expanded second edition of *African Politics in Comparative Perspective* reviews fifty years of research on politics in Africa and addresses some issues in a new light, keeping in mind the changes in Africa since the first edition was written in 2004. The book synthesizes insights from different scholarly approaches and offers an original interpretation of the knowledge accumulated in the field. Goran Hyden discusses how research on African politics relates to the study of politics in other regions and mainstream theories in comparative politics. It focuses on such key aspects of the African reality as the supremacy of politics, the problematic nature of the state, the prevalence of an economy of affection, Big Man rule, and the existence of a policy paradox, as well as four key political issues affecting development on the continent: the agrarian question, the gender issue, the ethnic factor, and Africa's engagement with the rest of the world. It concludes by reviewing what scholars agree upon and what the accumulated knowledge offers as insights for more effective political and policy reforms. By offering an intellectual history of comparative politics and the study of Africa, this book goes beyond the usual textbook format and offers stimulating challenges for upper-level undergraduate and graduate students in African and comparative politics as well as in development-oriented courses in political science and related disciplines. It is also of great relevance to governance and development analysts and to practitioners in international organizations.

Goran Hyden is distinguished professor emeritus in the department of political science at the University of Florida. His publications include *Governance and Politics in Africa* (coedited with Michael Bratton, 1992), *Agencies in Foreign Aid* (coedited with Rwekaza Mukandala, 1997), *Making Sense of Governance* (coauthored with Julius Court and Kenneth Mease, 2004), and *Making the State Responsive* (coedited with John Samuel, 2011). He is a past president of the African Studies Association and has served as a consultant on African development to many international agencies.

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Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,  
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press

32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107651418](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107651418)

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First edition published 2006

Second edition published 2013

Printed in the United States of America

*A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data*

Hydén, Göran, 1938–

African politics in comparative perspective / Goran Hyden. – Second edition  
pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-03047-3 (hardback) – ISBN 978-1-107-65141-8 (paperback)

1. Political science – Africa. 2. Africa – Politics and government – 1960– 3. Comparative  
government. I. Title.

JA84.A33H92 2013

320.3096–DC23 2012019843

ISBN 978-1-107-03047-3 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-107-65141-8 Paperback

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## Acknowledgments

This book has been long in the making. Due to many other commitments, not the least being to finish a number of joint projects with other scholars, the opportunity to complete this manuscript was constantly pushed backward. I am glad that during the spring of 2004 I was able to finish a first draft and, subsequently during the second part of the year, revise it in the light of comments received from colleagues and reviewers.

This project is a celebration of fifty years of political science research on Africa. It is also a humble attempt on my part to summarize it and draw my own conclusions from the knowledge that has been accumulated over the past five decades. Many colleagues over the years have been very helpful in shaping my own thinking about Africa, whether or not they have agreed with the conclusions I have drawn. It is appropriate that I first mention my three most important intellectual mentors – individuals who have inspired my curiosity and also helped me develop as a professional. The late James S. Coleman, perhaps the foremost Africanist of the early generation of scholars, gave me intellectual encouragement and leadership at a time in my young career when I was still looking for direction. So did Colin Leys, whom I had the benefit of interacting with at Makerere and Nairobi Universities in the late 1960s and early 1970s. I also count Robert W. Kates among those who have helped form my thinking about Africa and the world. Bob and I were both at the University of Dar es Salaam, but our intellectual encounters came especially in the late 1980s and early 1990s when Bob was director of the Alan Shawn Feinstein World Hunger Program at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, and I had the fortune of serving – on a part-time basis – as his associate director.

Over the years I have also benefited greatly from comments and advice from many political science colleagues. I cannot list them all, but I would like to mention especially Professor Emeritus Crawford Young at the University of Wisconsin; Professor David Leonard, University of California, Berkeley; Professor Joel Barkan, University of Iowa; Professor Nelson Kasfir of

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Dartmouth College; Frank Kunz, Professor Emeritus at McGill University; Professors Rene Lemarchand and Michael Chege, University of Florida; Dr. Norman Miller, an independent scholar based in Norwich, Vermont; and Mette Kjaer, an associate professor at the University of Aarhus, Denmark.

For a more recent and immediate contribution, I also want to thank the graduate students in my African Politics seminar in the spring semester 2004 who all participated in discussions of the issues in the first drafts of each chapter and in many instances returned their marked-up copies of drafts for my consideration. They are, in alphabetical order: Idrissa Abdourahmane, Kenly Fenio, Jennifer Forshee, Aaron Hale, Karsten Jørgensen, Joseph Kraus, Fredline McCormack, Shannon Montgomery, Elisabeth Porter, and Li Zhen.

I also want to express my gratitude to Branoslav Kovalcik who served as my research assistant during the spring semester 2004. Not only did he assist in some of the more tedious tasks of looking up references, but he also took the time to offer helpful comments on my drafts. The same applies to Ms. Elsebeth Søndergaard, who very ably served as my research assistant when I revised the manuscript while I was a guest professor in Political Science at the University of Aarhus during the fall semester 2004. I am most grateful to the four external reviewers who provided useful and constructive comments on earlier drafts of this manuscript.

A special thanks goes to the staff at the Center for African Studies at the University of Florida, most notably its current director, Dr. Leonardo Villalon, for providing a congenial atmosphere for the study of Africa at the University of Florida. Together with the support from the current dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Dr. Neal Sullivan, African studies at the University of Florida has reached a national and international pinnacle.

Finally, this list of acknowledgments also includes my eldest son, Michael, who has kept me alert to and interested in the concerns of the world of nongovernmental organizations working in Africa, and, not the least, my wife of forty years, Melania, who has not only provided a source of stability in my life, but in her own way has also offered important insights into the subject matter discussed in this volume.

Aarhus, Denmark, and Gainesville, Florida, December 2004  
Goran Hyden

#### ADDITION TO THE SECOND EDITION

This second edition has been revised in the light of political changes on the continent and shifts in analyzing them. The new content also reflects feedback – oral as well as written – generated in response to the publication of the first edition. I am grateful for the new insights that I have received. As with the first edition, I am of course ultimately responsible for the content here.

GH