Following the (re-)introduction of multiparty systems in Africa in the early 1990s, third and fourth elections in Africa’s new democracies and hybrid regimes are now being seen. Although there is a large and growing literature on democracy and elections in Africa, parties and party systems have hitherto not been the focus of research, which may be surprising given their central role in a liberal democracy. Research on political parties and party systems in Africa is still in its infancy.

Various contributions in this volume examine the African parties and party systems with their particular features of weak organisation, informal relationships dominated by “big men” and clientelism within a neopatrimonial setting. Others raise the crucial question of representation in relation to ethnicity, civil society and gender.

Finally, there are chapters which focus on the neglected area of electoral violence, and the moral role of money and vote buying is scrutinized through a case study.

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