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Sommario/riassunto

Epilogue: the 'new' Ethiopia: changing discourses of democracy / Kjetil Tronvoll.

This book offers a comparative ethnography of the contested powers that shape democratization in Ethiopia. Although multi-party elections have become the norm in Africa, relatively little is known about the significance of non-state actors such as traditional authorities in electioneering. Focusing on Ethiopia's competitive 2005 elections, this book analyzes how customary leaders, political parties and state officials confronted and complemented each other during election time. Case studies reveal the contemporaneousness of traditional authorities in modern politics, but also how multi-party competition reproduces traditional relations of domination among ethnic groups. The book documents the importance of customary authority in selecting party candidates and providing legitimacy to political parties, but also their limitations in a country dominated by a semi-authoritarian party-state.