

## **ABSTRACT**

### **ALTERNATION AND LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION IN AFRICAN DEMOCRACIES**

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Orderly turnover of executive office between political parties in elections following a foundation election is widely identified as a benchmark in the entrenchment of procedural democracy. An additional and related test of the extent to which democratic conventions have become generally accepted routines is the extent to which presidential incumbents comply with or resist limited terms of presidential office. This paper will consider turnover of power between political parties and presidents in new African democracies. What conditions and settings facilitate orderly turnovers? The paper will consider a set of relatively successful cases of such successions – including Benin, Cape Verde, Ghana, Mali, Mauritius, Sao Tome & Principe and Senegal – to identify the combination of structural factors and institutional characteristics that favour orderly transfer of office. Variables to be considered will include party configuration and predominant party types, the presence or absence of politicised social cleavages, and the degree to which the history of democratic transition involved organised mass mobilisation. Preliminary findings about the variables that appear to facilitate succession and turnover will be tested against case studies of failure in which incumbents resist leaving office, including Kenya and Zimbabwe.