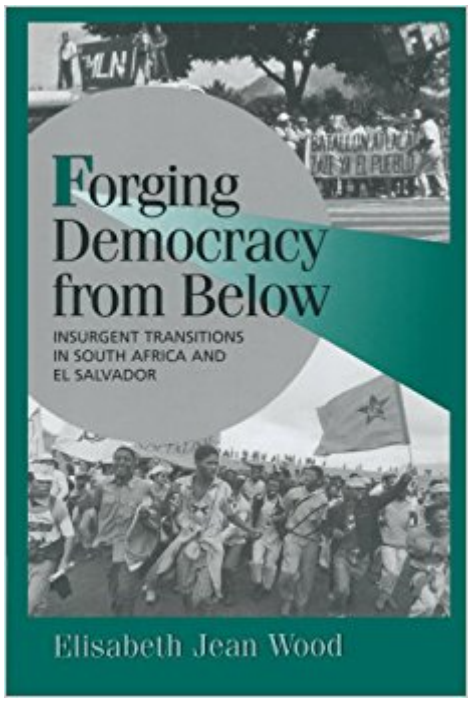
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Forging Democracy From Below: Insurgent Transitions In South Africa And El Salvador (Cambridge Studies In Comparative Politics)



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Synopsis

The recent replacement of authoritarian rule by democracy in both South Africa and El Salvador poses a puzzle: why did the powerful, anti-democratic elites of these countries abandon death squads, apartheid, and the other tools of political repression and take a chance on democracy? Forging Democracy From Below shows how popular mobilization--in El Salvador an effective guerilla army supported by peasant collaboration and in South Africa a powerful alliance of labor unions and poor urban dwellers--forced the elite to the bargaining table, and why a durable settlement and democratic government were the result.

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"Sharp-eyed, sure-handed, and knowledgeable, Elisabeth Wood makes a compelling case for the contribution of popular insurgency to democratization. As she pursues it, the unlikely comparison of El Salvador and South Africa yields important and unexpected returns." Chuck Tilly, Columbia University"Elisabeth Wood has written the single best theoretical explanation of how the enemies in a vicious civil war can agree on a negotiated settlement and move toward political democracy. It marks a major step forward in our understanding of such conflicts. Her skill at using statistical analysis, formal theory, and anthropological fieldwork to confront important theoretical and policy problems is in the best tradition of contemporary social science." Roy Licklider, Rutgers University"This analytically systematic study blends sound theory and fieldwork. It is an important

testament to the utility of rigorous comparative analysis in advancing our understanding of democratic transitions in otherwise markedly dissimilar countries." International Journal of African History"Elisabeth Wood's rigorous study of individual motivations and mobilization in El Salvador will be required reading for students of collective action and civil war. Her unique combination of rich ethnography and rigorous theory represents social science at its best." Stathis N. Kalyvas, Yale University"This book addresses an absolutely fundamental question in both social history and the study of revolutions: Under what circumstances and with what motivations do rural people mobilize collectively to achieve change? Building on ethnographic fieldwork and oral histories, Wood argues that the actions of rural people in El Salvador constituted an 'assertion of citizenship' not reducible to any calculation of the probability of altering outcomes or achieving exclusive benefits. With a delicate sense of social process, she demonstrates the 'pleasures of agency' that were possible even in the shadow of civil war. This is an elegant, important, and inspiring study." Rebecca J. Scott, University of Michigan"Wood shares with us the voices and experiences of Salvadorans who, most extraordinarily, were interviewed in large numbers over many years and with amazing diligence and intensity by the author, despite their contemporary involvements in a hideously violent civil war. Particularly notable is her careful, even meticulous, discussion of the problems of establishing "real" memories in such a setting. She is also good, very good, at dissecting debates about collective action theories and theories of revolution. And the discussions about the social import of mapmaking are just flat out lovely, and feel so very human, which is (alas) not something you can say very often about a work of sophisticated social science. While her own discipline is political science, she draws on and herself surely enriches the fields of sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, and Latin American studies writ large." Timothy Wickham-Crowley, Georgetown University

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