Clarion Review

Political Science

La Marche Vers Le Pouvoir Local: La Conduite D'un Processus; Le Guide Pratique du Futur Candidat a une Election locale

Norbert Gokui Zadi
Trafford
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★★★★☆
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Good government relies on the quality of candidates willing to commit themselves to public service. Sometimes those who seek the limelight of elective office do so for the wrong reasons and fail to perform their duties satisfactorily. Such government officials interfere with the smooth operation of the public entities they've promised to serve.

In his second published book, Norbert Gokui Zadi presents an overview of the duties and obligations that aspiring candidates can expect to encounter while running for elective office. *La Marche Vers Le Pouvoir Local: La Conduite D'un Processus; Le Guide Pratique du Futur Candidat à une Election locale* (The Path Toward Local Power: the Management of a Process; a Practical Guide for the Future Candidate of a Local Election) is written in French, the official language of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast). Zadi, an Ivory Coast national, has experienced thirty years of professional service with local African collectives. In this book, he reviews the pros and cons prospective candidates might consider before deciding to run for public office, suggests methods of gathering support and organizing a campaign, and summarizes events leading up to election day along with general rules of post-election etiquette for successful candidates and their counterparts.

Decentralized government requires strong local autonomy. Because of this, Zadi says, African communities take intense interest in the people who choose to run for local office. Contenders must be established residents, free of scandal both personally and within their families, attend church, speak the regional language, and participate in community life.

Candidates should avoid negative campaigning, such as treating opponents rudely or

telling lies about them. The author stresses the importance of maintaining positive relationships among candidates throughout the campaign, because the damage caused by unkind words and deeds will not soon be forgotten after the election. He suggests that a more successful tactic is to offer coherent arguments in favor of one's own platform that will convince voters to support it with their votes.

Quotations ranging from Socrates, Martin Luther King, and Joan Collins to lesser-known African government officials, and even references to tribal parables, reinforce the author's talking points throughout the book. Not all are attributed, such as one acknowledged simply as being from *les anglais* (the English) that says, "Together each achieves more." This plethora of quotes, while at times supportive of the text, more often reinforces the author's own words.

Overall, Zadi presents a coherent explanation of a complicated process, specific to African countries, that demonstrates the need for qualified people to seek election in local government. The large print, easy-to-follow outline, and abundant white space enhance the book's readability. A colorful cover depicts a man about to assume his elected position. There are some formatting inconsistencies in the text, such as extra lines between paragraphs and irregularities in capitalization of listed points.

Readership of this book is limited to those who know French. Although intended as a primer for aspiring candidates for local election in decentralized governments, the book also offers insight into the process of these elections in emerging African nations.

Margaret Cullison