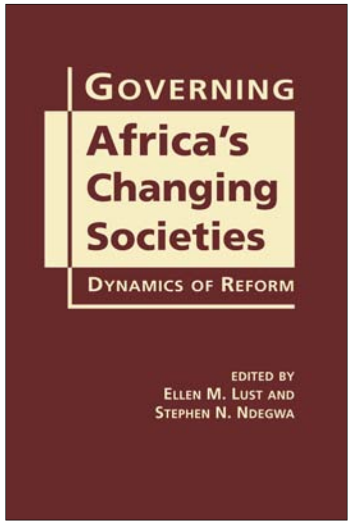
EXCERPTED FROM

Governing Africa's Changing Societies: Dynamics of Reform

edited by
Ellen M. Lust
and Stephen N. Ndegwa



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ISBN: 978-1-58826-834-1 hc

LYNNE RIENNER PUBLISHERS
1800 30th Street, Ste. 314
Boulder, CO 80301
USA
telephone 303.444.6684
fax 303.444.0824

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Lynne Rienner Publishers website
www.rienner.com

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The Challenges of Governance in Africa's Changing Societies

Ellen M. Lust and Stephen N. Ndegwa

Sub-Saharan Africa has undergone significant social, economic, and political changes in the past two decades. Political and civil liberties expanded dramatically. The number of countries that Freedom House rated as Not Free declined from twenty-seven in 1980 to seventeen in 2011; the number rated as Free rose from four to nine; and another twenty-two of Africa's forty-eight countries that were reviewed were rated Partly Free.[1] Combined, the two categories of Free and Partly Free accounted for 63 percent of the continent's population. The continent has also experienced extraordinary economic improvements. While in 1980 real average incomes had regressed to below the levels of the 1960s, in 2011 six African economies were reported as being among the fastest growing economies in the world for 2001 to 2010.[2]

Significant variations exist across African countries, however, and even within them experiences are mixed. Countries like Zimbabwe and Senegal—both with celebrated democratic pasts—saw declining conditions while others like Benin and Ghana improved significantly. A number of coups d'état, in Comoros, Guinea, and Madagascar, signaled the difficulties in store for new democracies and, in some cases, violence (e.g., Kenya and Nigeria) and civil war (e.g., Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, and Sierra Leone) have often marred elections. Yet Africa also witnessed an unprecedented number of peaceful elections and transfers of power in countries like Botswana, Ghana, Mali, Senegal, South Africa, and Zambia.

Prevailing Views of Reform

Scholars looking at the continent surmise differing, and at times diametrically opposed, conclusions, and predict decidedly different fates for development. One set of scholars sees continued suboptimal performance or persistent shortcomings in reform,[3] while another—small but increasingly vocal—highlights unprecedented progress or resurgence.[4] The key analyses underlying and propelling each strand of thinking are theoretically and methodologically sound, and there is no clear ideological divide between the two perspectives. Thus, students of African development confront an important analytical conundrum with practical implications regarding policy choices for citizens, governments, and development partners.

Tumult, Not Progress

The prevailing view of reform is one of tumult, but with no change in the underlying logics of politics and development. This view is perhaps not surprising, given the cycles of autocracy and economic decline in the roughly fifty years of independence from colonial rule and the fact that reform has been a permanent theme of public affairs in Africa.[5] Major developments began with structural adjustment in the 1980s and continued with political liberalization in the 1990s, which triggered substantial change in how power is acquired and exercised, in the rights that citizens experience, and in the institutional density for managing public affairs.

Students of African development responded by analyzing and debating the profundity of these changes, examining privatization and growth trajectories, civil service reform and the quality of service delivery, and political liberalization and turnovers in leadership. Some argue that the executive continues to dominate most transitioned political systems and that, though sometimes celebrated, periodic elections are unable to generate stable outcomes or smooth transfers of power. Others note civil societies lack the autonomy or leverage to constrain state behavior, and yet others find checks-and-balance systems ultimately lacking the independence or incentives to constrain the political class.[6]

The overall verdict is disappointment. In part, this is because the reform efforts and attendant evaluations rest on a central assumption that macroreforms should produce major—indeed, emphatic—results in the targeted political and economic arenas. Success is measured by the degree of change from a status quo ante, with anything short of a turnaround generally portrayed as failure.

Political Barriers to Reform

More recent analyses move away from a focus on the technical aspects of reform and toward embracing political fit. They examine donor-sponsored reforms, especially in public sector governance, and conclude that failure arises not from a lack of the right technical designs but from a lack of political will or programmatic fit.[7] Such authors point out that donor-preferred reforms failed in countries with high levels of political competition—where one might expect a rising tide of participation to break reform resistance—and conclude that political competition forced ruling parties and executives to undermine reforms by favoring continued clientelism over new forms of public management. The challenge for policymakers is thus how reform can move forward in particular political contexts.[8]

This approach moved many reformers, especially donors, to examine the political barriers to reform. Reforms should not only be "technically appropriate" for the country in question, but they should also be "politically appropriate," with modest ambitions tailored to the political context.[9] This perspective argues for abandoning mainstream models of reform that emphasize "best practices"—essentially copying practices from developed economies—in favor of "good enough," "best fit," or "second-best" models that fit reforms to the political economy of the country in question.[10]

A More Positive Account

Recent studies showing institutional advances in spite of the tumult of less than complete reform suggest, however, that even this perspective does not explain *how* good governance emerges in the context of rapid change. These studies record a resurgence of legislatures, an evolving constitutionalism, and stability in democratic institutions such as term limits—with emphatic strides noted even in countries with otherwise blemished transitions.[11] To be sure, when observed in the short term or in motion, the emergence of countries from the doldrums of conflict and dismal growth often seemed bumbling, inchoate, controversial, and overshadowed by their past (e.g., Tanzania in the 1990s) or simply off the analytical radar (e.g., Mali). Yet, rebounds were realized, often in seemingly unpropitious circumstances.

Scholars examining economic resurgence—growth, investment, and technology—find a break in decades-old patterns, especially when "Africa" is disaggregated. Steve Radelet, who put the counternarrative of African development on the global map, argues that seventeen emerging African economies have growth rates, political reforms, and technological advancements that put them on par with the best-performing economies in Asia.[12] These countries—accounting for 300 million people—averaged 5 percent annual growth in gross domestic product (GDP) between 1996 and 2008—a dramatic contrast from the two previous decades, in which growth was flat and conflict widespread.

Moreover, if the path to success was unpredicted, at least in hindsight, it is not entirely unexpected. In these seventeen and another six "threshold" countries, Radelet argues the turnaround story was driven by five factors: more legitimate and accountable governance; reformist economic management, including maintaining modest fiscal deficits; debt restructuring; integration of technology, especially with regard to public and business information; and shifting social expectations among citizens increasingly willing (and able) to act to counter poor governance, whether as individuals, bureaucrats, or politicians.[13]

Radelet is not alone in highlighting success. *The Economist*, hardly a bastion of Afro-optimism, reports that between 2001 and 2010 "six of the world's ten fastest-growing economies were in sub-Saharan Africa" and predicts that from 2011 to 2015, seven of the top ten will be African, outnumbering Asian economies in growth.[14] In terms of returns to investments, performance in Africa is similarly robust. The *New African* notes: "Investment returns in many African countries far exceeds what is achievable elsewhere, even in other emerging markets. Ghana's stock exchange [which did not exist until 1990] had the best performing index worldwide in 2008 and has been a top performing index in emerging stock markets for several years."[15]

Such empirical evidence has led major development actors—especially the World Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB)—to conclude that a significant turnaround is afoot, to seek to understand its drivers, and to build relevant policy responses.[16] For instance, the World Bank's former managing director and now Nigeria's minister of finance, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, points out that "in the early 1990s, there were twenty-six African countries with inflation greater than 20 percent; by 2007 there was only one: Zimbabwe."[17] Further, she notes that in the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) index, which measures policy and institutional performance on a six-point scale, the average performance score for African countries rose from 3.1 in 2001 to 3.25 around 2005. Studies from the AfDB offer similar analyses and conclusions. For example, the AfDB reports a rebound in postcrisis growth in 2010 (up from 3.1 percent in 2009 to 4.9 percent in 2010) and an expected acceleration to 5.8 percent in 2012.[18] This comes atop a decade of growth averaging over 5 percent. In addition, the AfDB analysis shows Africa's exports stood at over US$100 billion in 2008—twice the value in 2003 and three times that of 1998.[19]

Both the World Bank and the AfDB studies provide three explanations for the turnaround: macroeconomic reforms that have induced investment and growth; the rise of commodity prices, including but not limited to oil; and external assistance and changing trade relations, especially with China's intensified role in trade and aid on the continent. As we argue below, these explanations are much too general and blunt. They fail to demonstrate how positive results emerged from the stated drivers, which themselves were simply the boldest policy strokes in a messy canvas of multiple strokes.

Present analyses are also incomplete because researchers do not investigate the dynamics unleashed by change and how those dynamics impact the fate of reforms. Both pessimists and optimists focus on outcomes, linking these outcomes in a linear relationship with particular reforms and assuming static environments. An understanding of the relationship between evolving economic and political contexts and reform—of how and why reforms proceed—is needed. Reforms generate layered effects and complex nonlinear forces that can both challenge the reform and take advantage of the postreform environment to make new demands and to create new facts on the ground. They can change political calculations, shift barriers and incentives, and invite new actors into the reform arena. For example, when we note that privatization reforms have failed because the discharge of public companies was done nontransparently or at a loss to the state, such a conclusion is incomplete. It says nothing about how the new owners—as private businesspersons or as politicians—might alter the nature of the private sector and market competition, and, by their positioning or actions, trigger downstream consumer or demand-side action on subsequent sector policies.

An example of failed privatization reform in the 1990s illustrates this concept. Kenya was among African countries with the highest proportion of uncompetitive and nontransparent privatization transactions—53 percent. The privatization of the monopoly dairy company in 2000 was among the most nontransparent and corrupt transactions, a peak in slow-burn reforms that started in 1992. For example, the former monopoly company was reacquired by the government three years after privatization. Yet even amidst such reversals new entrepreneurs took advantage of the liberalization to set up small firms. A decade later, with intervening policy change related to aspects other than privatization and driven not by donors but by a set of new owners responding to market competition and self-interest, the industry transformed along its entire value chain. Today, the industry processes 516 million liters of milk a year—a 258 percent increase from 144 million liters in 2002—and contributes 14.5 percent of the agriculture GDP, ahead of tea, historically the key cash crop due to its export earnings.[20]

This and other examples point to the importance of going beyond the static notion of best fit or political economy of reform in understanding the dynamics unleased by change. Reform confronts political barriers that mutate; political will has varied vectors; and successor interests differ significantly from original intents of the reforms and reformers, including donors. These factors not only determine success, but also define it, at times more or less expansively than originally imagined. Most importantly, reform—especially donor-sponsored reform—enters and becomes part of a continuous contest, a piece in an ongoing multiplex drama of change.

Understanding Change: Microtransitions

By providing a more nuanced conceptualization and empirical analysis of reform dynamics in a variety of settings in this book, we offer a better basis for understanding how reforms provoke both intended and unintended consequences. We present analysis that stands in contrast to research that finds explanatory variables at macro levels—that is, large-scale events or factors as signifying or driving change. We contend that while macroevents are important—and even structure choices—it is the interplay of evolving factors at more micro levels that determines outcomes. This argues for the need to design reforms that not only fit context at the outset, but also reshape the leverage of reform constituencies in iterative contests.

The current literature on governance reforms in Africa, even in its most sophisticated form, ignores the significance of partial reform, inconclusive contests, and subverted progress.[21] Such analysis focuses on the fate of macrotransitions while ignoring the nature and importance of microtransitions. We define *microtransitions* as changes in segments or subsystems of social, economic, and political spheres.[22] Such microtransitions are not necessarily consistent with the original ambitions of reform, but they nevertheless become part of a new context or calculus of politics. The issue is not one of simple incrementalism, though that is important, but of shifts in multiple aspects of each policy or political contest. It also is not an issue of unintended consequences but of a constantly shifting web of conditions that define the terrain on which new institutions and actors arise, old actors activate or change their claims, and all pursue iterative contests that often imply instability of rules and outcomes. Rarely, if ever, does transformation issue from a single shift, but rather it emerges from cumulative shifts. Even revolutions, examined up close, reveal that the ultimate transformation is the result of piecemeal changes, each sparking off and reacting to that which came before it.[23]

Focusing on the importance of microtransitions, this book addresses several questions left open by previous analyses. First, though specific reforms may have a limited effect in the short term, how do they change the broader context for reform over the long term? Even if political context undermines reforms, how does partial reform impact the public arena over time? Finally, if only partial reform is possible—for a variety of reasons, from poor design and lack of fit to public opposition and lack of political will—what aspects of partial reform might nevertheless produce game-altering dynamics that are still worth pursuing? In contrast with much of the existing literature, which considers political context or design as having a homogenous, and sometimes a determinant, impact on reforms, we argue that reform, including partial reform, can be understood to have a heterogeneous and significant impact in the policy space.

Three Mistakes

Ignoring microtransitions and their cumulative effects often leads scholars to ask the wrong questions in research and reformers to design policies that are sometimes misaligned with the shifting context of politics, economics, and society. Three mistakes are especially notable. First is an overriding assumption of linearity in social progress, with any deviation from a presumed forward trajectory of reform and outcome viewed as undesirable. In fact, setbacks can expose inadequacies that new reform agents can galvanize around, expanding both the constituency and energy behind reform and at times shifting the political calculus in favor of reform. Second, to the extent that analysts consider incremental changes, they do so by looking at one type of change or institution independently (e.g., security reform, parliamentary strengthening, economic reform, and gender reforms) and fail to recognize the important—sometimes even determinant—interrelationships between these changes. Third, in both the scholarly and policy communities, discourse and practice remain focused on judgments pegged onto the macroreforms (e.g., democratization, privatization, and anticorruption) that often are measured by large and dramatic, but infrequent, events (e.g., elections, turnovers, electoral crises, economic collapse, security breakdowns or crackdowns, and regime change). As a result, governments and external actors often miss opportunities to accelerate change, or, worse, they may exacerbate the challenges inherent in the process of change by, for example, withdrawing in the wake of "half reforms."

In this book we aim to highlight the less obvious transformations that have taken place in Africa—paying particular attention to the ways in which they have reshaped the context of power and politics—as well as the fortunes of attempted reforms. We examine how reforms that are often rendered in standard narratives as incomplete, stalled, or failed actually reveal significant change. These reforms alter the scope and capacity of the state to manage society and they reshape citizens' expectations about future prospects. The immediate outcomes of these contests are important in and of themselves, and they attract most of the attention in academic studies and in development discussions (though often resulting in negative assessments of outcomes given that none tend to represent a triumphant turnaround).[24] However, we are concerned here with showing the interrelationship between seemingly unrelated changes and how they cumulate to reshape the contours of state power and the emergence of new actors and arenas of contestation. These, we argue, represent the appropriate milestones of progress—in a long arc of change that is often neglected except in retrospectives.[25] We maintain that it is both theoretically desirable and practically possible to understand change in Africa in this long view rather than through the typical binaries of success or failure of discrete, short-term reforms, seemingly unrelated to a larger dynamic web of actors, institutions, and interests.

Through the study of different social, economic, and political changes from across the continent, we elaborate this argument in two ways: first, we demonstrate the changes or contestation under way in a particular area of political economy or public policy, paying attention to the ways in which these arenas influence and are influenced by changes in other spheres; second, individually and collectively, we illustrate the complex transformations that we posit. Rather than being simply additive effects of discrete reforms, the transformation of state and society is a result of the interrelated microtransitions in political, economic, and social spheres. Although path dependency is a widely shared notion in both scholarship and development practice, it is most often assumed with respect to discrete reforms (i.e., a single path) rather than multiple paths scrambled by diverse changes. As Mark Beissinger writes with regard to the colored revolutions, "Causal mechanisms cumulate, contradict one another, aggregate, and link together, unfolding simultaneously on multiple levels."[26]

Thus, as we show in this book, economic crises have fostered particular economic reforms, but also political and social transitions in response. Social changes—including increased urbanization and demographic shifts—have created economic and political pressures as well as triggered further changes in the policy landscape (e.g., claims for Islamic education resulting from political liberalization); and political changes have both resulted from and created catalysts for transformation in all three spheres. In this way, societal transformation in Africa over the past two decades has led to the emergence of new social forces; has changed the importance of others; and, consequently, has altered relationships among various social and political actors and fostered new coalitions. In this context, the success and failure of discrete reforms pursued by governments and development partners are largely determined by the nature of the shifting equilibriums they encounter in implementation over time. It is more important to understand these shifts than to simply track success or failure of reforms, which are often explained by notions of political will, or, at best, political economy, which is rendered as unchanging or innately hostile to reform.

Three Transformations: Implications for Governance

In response to the divide over whether Africa has experienced profound transformation or incremental reconfiguration since 1990, we focus on the more important question of how change comes about. In this volume we show how sometimes seemingly small social, political, and economic changes, accelerated by the effects of globalization, have significantly altered the governance environment in Africa. Three effects are especially important. The first is the rise of new institutions, changes in the significance of older ones, and the demands citizens make in liberated public spaces, which reveal gaps and tensions in state performance. Second is the rapid mutation of the public space within which contestation occurs, especially with regard to the role of the state, its autonomy, and the functions that existing institutions are serving in a transformed environment. Third is a rise in uncertainty as reforms reveal the efficacy of new claims and new coalitions, but also expose the insufficiency of institutions—old and new—and the limits of change, suggesting impermanence to rules and uncertainty in presumed outcomes. This results in a tense status quo that may lead to legitimacy crises, especially when the state is unable to manage competing claims.

Managing Claims with New Institutions

Overall, we point to two sets of demands that societal actors make on states in Africa. The first includes demands for substantive benefits that different groups seek from state authorities: for example, better social welfare, expansion of rights for women, and economic prosperity. Some of these demands are new, others are not, and none remain subtle or passive given the information and transparency revolutions that propel demonstration effects and make the state less distant or illegible. These demands strain state authority due to limited capacity and demonstrate its inability to resolve important social contests more or less permanently. The most important of these new claims are those that are rendered as claims for public goods rather than patronage—ones that require institutional responses and legal, bureaucratic, and large-scale financial prerequisites to produce and distribute.

Second, and equally important, embedded in these substantive contests are struggles over the nature of the state and over state-society relations, especially around defining realms of authority and autonomy for the state and for society. This implies a social contract gap—one that requires institutional resolution to various citizenship questions such as those brought to the fore over issues of women's rights as Susanna Wing documents in Chapter 6, land reform as Catherine Boone and Ato Kwamena Onoma detail in Chapters 4 and 5, respectively, and political reform that responds to both democratic and religious impulses as Michael Bratton and Leonardo Villalón show in Chapters 2 and 7, respectively.

Bratton in Chapter 2 and Peter Lewis in Chapter 3 illuminate this two-level challenge especially well. Bratton examines whether democratization in Africa in the past two decades has led to improved governance. Through analysis of aggregate data and, at the microlevel, drawing on a comparative survey of the attitudes of African citizens and a case study of Mali, Bratton reveals a consistency between democratization and positive movement in various dimensions of governance (e.g., rule of law and control of corruption, and accountability through elections). However, he shows that responsiveness of elected officials to citizens is wanting, creating an important representation gap where African citizens expect much more from their elected government than they receive. This is a dynamic that is unlikely to stay static for long and, instead, potentially triggers its own dynamic of change from rising discontent. Bratton also determines that citizens find new democratic regimes less transparent than desired.

Lewis examines whether democratic regimes in Africa perform better economically. Using data over twenty-five years, he shows that the quality of a democracy is associated with better economic performance, although citizens do not seem to notice this relationship and poverty reduction has been uneven. Both Bratton and Lewis see new democracies in Africa as having resilient citizen support and view the main challenge as that of accountability. In particular, the continued patrimonialism and the patronage in electoral politics not only produce gaps in state efficiency and performance, but also lead to "tensions between popular expectations and political realities" (Chapter 3). Such representation and accountability gaps limit opportunity for democratic consolidation, but also sow the seeds of resolution through contest.

All of the chapters suggest that institutional reform remains a critical need. The pressure for substantive outcomes exceeds the capacity of existing institutions and political economy arrangements to meet the demand. Yet, the agenda for institutional reform—viewed by state elites and external donors as assuredly destabilizing—has been thus far subordinated to an agenda of service provision and economic growth. These have failed to have the anticipated transformative results because of institutional inadequacies. More importantly, these reform agendas, often pressed from outside, have not tapped into existing constituencies that are primed for and can support the major reforms in which they are interested.

The State, Altered and Challenged

As Wing and Villalón show, the state remains at the center of the policy context, but its autonomy is no longer assured. Indeed its ability to project its dominance or monopoly over societal actors is increasingly limited. For example, Villalón shows in Francophone and Muslim countries of the Sahel the changing nature of state-society relations under democratization (which has provided space to make significant claims that were unthinkable before) and the limited fiscal capacities of the state (which has blunted its domineering instruments) have forced it to compromise and retract the traditional preeminence of state-provided and state-defined formal education. Instead, in a significant retreat, the state has accepted reforms to the formal state system, including adopting characteristics from informal societal institutions, such as the introduction of religious education in state schools. These reforms have given a new significance to Arabic language and religious instruction, justified by the democratic expectation of the state "giving parents the educational system they want" (Chapter 7).

Similarly, Wing shows how multiple actors have emerged in the democratic space in Sahelian countries to significantly limit family law reforms that were seen as imminently passable given their congruence with (liberal) democratic politics, the sizable majority or electoral advantage of incumbent chief executives, and the states' ratification of relevant international conventions. In fact, the democratic opening allowed conservative elements to beat back advances in family law, as politicians made strategic calculations to "fight another day" as they realized local claimants were able and willing to exact a swift electoral punishment if ignored. As Wing notes in Chapter 6, echoing Bratton and Lewis, "Democracy does not necessarily create anticipated support for 'modern' democratic institutions and leaders. Not all good things go together."

Yet the state has not lost control. As Lewis and Villalón demonstrate in the studies that follow, state elites adjust to new constraints and to new forces, thereby retaining power even as they retreat. More importantly, this "retreat and extension" dynamic, as Mine Eder calls it, provides state elites latitude for patronage that is both quite extensive and unrestrained by institutions or by formal political relations or norms.[27] This is quite different from the prevalent understanding in the literature that social actors choose to exit from relations with the state when the state fails to deliver services or that the state necessarily weakens its hold on society when forced to retreat from social welfare provision.

Peter Lewis's analyses of macro-level economic reforms show how resilient the state remains, despite reforms ostensibly aimed at distancing the state from the economy. He finds that the state has continued to play a dominant role: rather than the withering of the state, as once anticipated, patrimonial structures of the state drive the very nature of economic reform. Democracies yield economic benefits over time, but regime change in Africa has not necessarily resulted in greater poverty reduction. As he explains, "Political reform in Africa has produced important changes in actors and institutions, yet resilient structures of politics limit the depth and extent of change" (Chapter 3). Strong presidentialism, dominant parties, and a largely unchanging elite cohort limit achievement of popular expectations.

At least two implications for governance reform arise from this analysis. First, reformers should not assume that one-step measures (e.g., privatization or shedding social welfare responsibilities) will resolve underlying inefficiencies or inequities. Instead, as Onoma argues, they should anticipate secondary opportunities for patronage given that reforms to restrain the official role of the state in the economy can result in an extension of its informal and therefore less accountable forms of action (Chapter 5). Second, divesting the state from direct provision of services should not imply that the state should exit markets entirely; its regulatory role remains significant, particularly when there are no competent market- or civil society–based actors. This is important in terms of achieving efficiency and equity, especially when access to state benefits is easily politicized via patronage networks or identity politics.

Uncertainty Amidst Reforms

The final lessons highlighted in this book focus on how heightened uncertainty accompanying transformations impacts governance reforms. Bratton documents this uncertainty most clearly. He shows how African citizens' increased uncertainty over the rules of the game, combined with rising expectations, led them to become increasingly frustrated with government performance. Citizens may continue to accept limited economic progress, as both Bratton and Lewis document, but how long they will continue to be optimistic as their expectations are persistently unmet in nascent democracies remains a question.

Both Onoma and Boone show the outcome of such heightened uncertainty in the long term. In the past two decades, land reform processes have become notable in attempts by governments, often with donor assistance, to reduce inequity, bring stability and predictability to tenure systems, and reinvigorate agriculture. What reformers imagine as a simple goal of getting land institutions "right" reveals itself to be, according to Boone in Chapter 4, "a complex bundle of political and constitutional issues that complicate efforts to promote the individualization and formalization of land rights" igniting violent conflict (Kenya) and unintended market behaviors (Ghana). Onoma points to three lessons: first, the difficulty of changing actors' preferences through project-based institutional reform; second, the complex bases of and differences in these preferences, which are often overlooked because similar actors (in this case, chiefs in the same country) are believed to have identical preferences; and third, the ways in which the donor community and reformers privilege replicating and extending the Weberian state runs counter to divergent institutions that exist to govern land rights.

Onoma's analysis shows both the state and donors assume uniformity. Central elites, dependent on local chiefs and their customs to manage land relations, do not understand the different modes of relations their intermediaries engage in to achieve stability. Donors suffer the same fate due to misapplied analysis on what institutions and hybrids exist and therefore what and how reform can be sustained that is capable of providing for stable, predictable land tenure revisions.

There are important changes in societal forces and in the demands citizens make, but we caution against assuming that these transformations necessarily induce preferred outcomes. For example, evidence from broader-level views and country cases from other regions show that the impact of economic reform on long-established class interests should not be overstated. In the case of the Middle East, Ibrahim Saif and Farah Chouhair conclude that even where new business classes have emerged and the public sector has contracted, as in Egypt and Jordan, established elites manage to maintain the upper hand by relying on their neopatrimonial networks.[28] The point is not that the institutional reforms are inconsequential, but rather that to understand the impact of such reforms and to devise appropriate strategies for development, scholars and policymakers have to pay close attention to evaluating the interests and power of critical actors, both old and new, as they (re)emerge from reform.

Collectively, the wide range of countries and themes we explore in this book underscore the complexity of the story of change in sub-Saharan Africa. We challenge the easy answers offered by prevailing perspectives and take readers beyond the now trite notions of continuity and change, and the even more outdated perspectives of success and failure, to reveal how multiple changes in society, economies, and politics affect specific policy realms that are often examined and acted on as discrete arenas. We demonstrate continuous struggles between interests and actors that do not fit neatly into favored categories of reformers and conservatives, winners and losers, or insiders and outsiders. Most importantly, we show how the process of reform—often viewed by the development community as a set of technocratic choices informed by ever increasing knowledge—is in fact a set of iterative contests induced by constantly shifting interests, actors, and resources. Given the gap between institutional reforms and actual practice, this book points to the need for a new direction in development policy. It is time for policies that not only recognize, but explicitly exploit, the microtransitions that form the basis for, and engine of, development.

Notes

1. Freedom House, *Map of Freedom: Sub-Saharan Africa, 2011* (Washington, DC: Freedom House, 2011), http://www.cabinda.net/Freedom_House_2011.pdf, accessed March 11, 2012; Freedom House, *Freedom in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2009* (Washington, DC: Freedom House, 2009), www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Freedom%20in%20Sub%20Saharan%20Africa.pdf, accessed March 11, 2011.

2. Raymond Muhula and Stephen N. Ndegwa, "Tempered Hope: African Development in the Last Decade," *Africa*, 4th ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, forthcoming).

3. For example, Elsa V. Artadi and Xavier Sala-i-Martin, "The Economic Tragedy of the XXth Century: Growth in Africa," NBER Working Paper No. 9865, July 2003 (National Bureau for Economic Research, Cambridge, MA); Nicolas van de Walle, *African Economies and the Politics of Permanent Crisis, 1979–1999* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Shimelse Ali and Uri Dadush, "Is the African Renaissance for Real?" *International Economic Bulletin,* September 30, 2010, http://carnegieendowment.org/2010/09/30/is-african-renaissance-for-real/4ew, accessed March 17, 2012.

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7. For example, Levy and Kpundeh, *Building State Capacity*; or more recently, the Centre for the Future State, *An Upside-Down View of Governance* (Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies, 2010).

8. Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan, "Researching the Practical Norms of Real Governance in Africa," Africa Power and Politics Discussion Paper No. 5 (London: Overseas Development Institute, December 2008), www.institutions-africa.org/.

9. M. Stevens and S. Teggemann, "Comparative Experience with Public Service Reform in Ghana,Tanzania, and Zambia," in *Building State Capacity in Africa: New Approaches, Emerging Lessons*, ed. Brian Levy and Sahr Kpundeh (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2004), pp. 43–86; World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2011).

10. Merilee S. Grindle, "Good Enough Governance Revisited," *Development Policy Review* 25, 5 (2007): 533–574; World Bank, *World Development Report 2011*.

11. Joel Barkan, ed., *Legislative Power in Emerging African Democracies* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2009); John Hatchard, Muna Ndulo, and Peter Slinn, *Comparative Constitutionalism and Good Governance in the Commonwealth: An Eastern and Southern African Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Daniel N. Posner and Daniel J. Young, "The Institutionalization of Political Power in Africa," *Journal of Democracy* 18, 3 (2007): 126–140.

12. Radelet, *Emerging Africa*.

13. Radelet's sociological statement on the role of the "Cheetah generation"—a new generation of Africans impatient with old style politics and public management—is brave for an economist to make, but he is not alone. George Ayittey, not known for having a soft spot for African public management, echoes the same in his description of the "Hippopotamus" and the "Cheetah" generations—the former a broody, uninnovative bunch given to handouts and historical blame-games and the latter a fast-footed, worldly, technologically savvy, "going places" pack. Both see Africa's turnaround and future prosperity as dependent on the Cheetahs' attitudes and actions. See Radelet, *Emerging Africa*; and "George Ayittey on Cheetahs vs. Hippos."

14. "The Lion Kings? A More Hopeful Continent," *The Economist,* January 6, 2011, pp. 72–73.

15. Sigi Osagie, "A Rising Africa!" *New African,* November 20, 2011, pp. 56–57. See also World Bank, *Africa's Future and the World Bank's Support to It* (Washington, DC: World Bank, March 2011).

16. Among the many reports, studies, and blogs that give ample evidence of turnaround and discussions of related empirical analysis is the blog hosted by the chief economist of the World Bank's Africa Region, Shanta Deverajan, *Africa Can . . . End Poverty*. See http://blogs.worldbank.org/africacan/, in particular, Devarajan's "African Successes," accessed March 11, 2012; and Waly Wane and Jacques Morisset's "Yes, Africa Can End Poverty . . . but Will We Know When It Happens?" accessed November 3, 2011.

17. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, "Africa's Growth and Resilience in a Volatile World," *Journal of International Affairs* 62, 2 (2009): 176.

18. African Development Bank, *Africa Economic Outlook 2011* (Tunis: ADB, 2011), p. 2.

19. Ibid., p. 3.

20. Kenya Dairy Board, www.kdb.co.ke, accessed March 11, 2012.

21. Centre for the Future State, *An Upside-Down View*; Brian Levy and Francis Fukuyama, "Development Strategies: Integrating Governance and Growth," World Bank Policy Research Working Paper (Washington, DC: World

Bank, January 2010); Hazel Gray and Mushtaq Khan,"Good Governance and Growth in Africa: What Can We Learn from Tanzania?" in *The Political Economy of Africa*, ed. Vishnu Padayachee (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 339–356.

22. For instance, an expansion in the number of civic associations may not itself be a microtransition. However, changes in the operation or modus operandi of associations and their relations with other spheres would constitute microtransitions that cumulatively have effects on a larger scale.

23. See, for instance, Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

24. For example, while the Kenyan election of 2007 and the violence following it were easily recognized as significant setbacks, according to Michael Chege and Maina Kiai, to view them as simply that would be a mistake. The postelection "political settlement" has resulted in a further dynamic of change—elite realignments, a revamped constitutional review process, and state institutions forced to transform (e.g., electoral watchdog and security organs, executive-legislature relations) making possible (imminent now) the passage of a new constitution—the cumulative macrotransition. Such underlying changes forced by evident setbacks underlie what Larry Diamond and Richard Joseph identify as reform in "suspension" at the "frontier" of "the interplay of risk, reward and uncertainty of political and economic life." See Michael Chege, "Kenya: Back From the Brink?" *Journal of Democracy* 19, 4 (2008): 125–139; Maina Kiai, "The Crisis in Kenya," *Journal of Democracy* 19, 3 (2008): 162–168; Larry Diamond, "The Rule of Law Versus the Big Man," *Journal of Democracy* 19, 2 (2008): 138–149; Richard Joseph, "Challenges of a "Frontier" Region," *Journal of Democracy* 19, 2 (2008): 94–108.

25. For example, Douglas North, John Wallis, and Barry Weingast, *Violence and Social Orders* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

26. Mark Beissinger, "Mechanisms of Maidan: The Structure of Contingency in the Making of the Orange Revolution," *Mobilization* 16, 1 (2011): 25–43.

27. Mine Eder, "Retreating State? Political Economy of Welfare Regime Change in Turkey," *Middle East Law and Governance* 2, 2 (2010): 152–184. Eder also shows the state has maintained the authority to legitimize and sanction emerging social welfare institutions, thereby extending its power.

28. Ibrahim Saif and Farah Choucair, "Status Quo Camouflaged: Economic and Social Transformation of Egypt and Jordan," *Middle East Law and Governance* 2, 2 (2010): 124–151.