POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICA

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Acknowledgments

This volume was conceived by Lynne Rienner several years ago in response to the need for a comprehensive and comparative overview of contemporary African politics and society. From the outset, it was designed as a joint venture, since it was generally agreed that no single individual could encompass, either geographically or thematically, all the main issues that such a book needed to address. The authors met initially to outline the book late in 1983, and have since communicated regularly despite the fact that they reside in three different continents. Thanks to the warm hospitality of Edith and Don Rothchild, the first draft was dissected at a week-long meeting in early 1987; since then several other meetings have taken place to go over various revisions. Subsequent drafts benefited substantially from the meticulous comments provided by Thomas M. Callaghy and Frank Holmquist. Throughout the writing and the revision of the manuscript this has been a most rewarding cooperative effort. We feel that the final product justifies the team approach; moreover we note that each of us has learned a great deal in the process.

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Changes in Country Names

Present	Previous
Benin	Dahomey
Botswana	Bechuanaland
Burkina Faso	Upper Volta
Burundi[1]	Ruanda-Urundi
Cameroon	French Cameroons and British Southern Cameroons[2]
Cape Verde	Cape Verde Islands
Central African Republic	Oubangui Chari
Congo	French Congo; sometimes referred to as Congo-Brazzaville
Côte d'Ivoire	Ivory Coast
Djibouti	French Territory of the Afars and Issas
Equatorial Guinea	Spanish Guinea
Ghana	Gold Coast and British Togoland
Guinea-Bissau	Portuguese Guinea
Lesotho	Basutoland
Malagasy Republic (still often referred to as Madagascar)	Madagascar
Malawi	Nyasaland
Mali	French Soudan
Namibia	South West Africa
Rwanda[1]	Ruanda-Urundi
Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic[3]	Spanish Sahara; sometimes referred to as Western Sahara
Somali Democratic Republic (Somalia)	British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland
Tanzania[4]	Tanganyika and Zanzibar
Togo	French Togoland
Zaire	Belgian Congo; subsequently Congo; sometimes referred to as Congo-Leopoldville or Congo-Kinshasa
Zambia	Northern Rhodesia
Zimbabwe	Southern Rhodesia; Rhodesia

1. Ruanda-Urundi was a Belgian-administered trust territory that became independent in 1960 as two separate states.
2. The Southern Cameroons, a British-administered UN trust territory, joined the Republic of Cameroon following a plebiscite in 1961; the people of the Northern Cameroons opted for integration with Nigeria.
3. Morocco has claimed this territory, a claim contested by the Polisario Front (the national liberation movement). Polisario refers to the territory as the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR).
4. The United Republic of Tanganyika and Zanzibar came into being on 26 April 1964, as a consequence of the union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar; the name "United Republic of Tanzania" was officially adopted a year later.

Source: Adapted from William Tordoff, *Government and Politics in Africa* (Indiana University Press 1984).

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Introduction

The excitement of the struggle for independence still permeates the African continent. Nevertheless, current traumas regarding economic survival and effective political rule have taken a heavy toll; Africans, their governments, and the international community continue to grapple with economic adversity, political uncertainty, and social inequities. How have these constraints on growth and opportunity influenced the African political experience? What options exist in these circumstances? What political and economic choices have been made and what are their implications? The answers lie not in a single isolated variable but in the complex interconnections between politics and society, between domestic and external forces, and among historical legacies, available resources, and future prospects.

The purpose of this introduction to African politics and society is to depict in broad strokes the complexities and diversities of the African world since independence and to investigate new paths to understanding its intricate dynamics. Besides offering an initial acquaintance with contemporary Africa, we seek to provide a basic knowledge of political events and a closer comprehension of major problems, processes, and trends. By suggesting different ways of looking at issues, we raise a range of explanations for past occurrences and possible directions for theory. The book, therefore, constitutes a preliminary exploration into the multiple forces that make up present-day Africa.

In Chapter 1 we analyze different approaches to the study of African politics and present the main elements of a political choice method for the investigation of political structures, processes, and change. In Part 1 we focus on the building blocks of African politics. Chapter 2 is devoted to the study of government institutions. We examine the colonial legacy, the manner of transition to independence, and the structural foundations of the new states. We also trace

institutional changes since independence and pinpoint the differences that have emerged among African states since the 1960s. The third chapter is focused on the varying social groups that operate within the African setting. We look not only at cultural, kin, religious, racial, and geographic agglomerations but also at socioeconomic formations and their competing interests. Chapter 4 is concerned with the interaction of class, ethnicity, and the state in various African countries, highlighting differing patterns of cooperation, conflict, and exchange.

Part 2 centers on the study of the political process. In Chapter 5 we present a typology of regime forms and discuss their evolution. In Chapter 6 we examine how leaders have attempted to govern: We look at ideologies and at the linkages between rulers and ruled. Chapter 7 is devoted to political conflicts evident since independence. In Chapter 8 we analyze the mechanisms, the direction, and the nature of political change, summarizing common political themes, indicating diverging trends, and underlining the diverse dynamics of state-society relationships.

Part 3 concerns the political economy. In Chapter 9 we analyze the differing contexts of development and underdevelopment and examine several major policy issues. Building on this base, in Chapter 10 we study the relationship of Africa to the world economy, probing the ways in which global economic currents impinge on African choice and the differing strategies adopted by African governments and groups to enhance their capacity to manage and progress in such settings.

In Part 4 we delve into the international facets of the African experience since independence. In Chapter 11 we look at how external and domestic constraints have guided relations within Africa and in Chapter 12 we review Africa's ties with the outside world and its activities in the international arena. Diverging foreign policies are therefore conceived of as the outcome of the exercise of choice within the context of powerful common constraints.

In Chapter 13 we examine the special case of white minority rule and black opposition in South Africa. We look at the peculiar structures and processes of this dual society in order to understand the explosive situation in the southern part of the continent. In Chapter 14 we draw together the lessons gleaned from the study of the many dimensions of politics on the continent, reviewing major patterns, discussing ongoing trends, and advancing some tentative ideas as to the choices ahead for Africans as they continue to deal with the exigencies of scarcity, institutional fragility, dependency, and sociocultural diversity.

In each chapter we present the historical background, give an overview of developments since independence, and depict the differing manifestations of each topic and issue. Because it is impossible to go into detail for all fifty-one states in Africa, we conduct a comparative analysis of processes that exemplify emerging patterns on the continent. On this basis, special attention is devoted to Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, and Senegal in West Africa; Algeria and Morocco in North Africa; Chad and Mali in the Sahel; Ethiopia

and the Sudan in the Horn of Africa; Zaire and Zambia in Central Africa; Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda in East Africa; and Angola, Mozambique, and Botswana in southern Africa. We conclude each chapter by extracting the major patterns that emerge from the data; we discuss various explanations and raise further questions for thought and action.

In this textbook, unlike others on African politics, we concentrate on the period of independence in order to expose existing problems in greater detail and to explore the possibilities that emanate from the need to confront these difficult realities. The politics of contemporary Africa are as vibrant as they are diverse. Since independence, new dimensions of political life have unfolded that defy conventional wisdom and demand a reformulation of concepts and expectations. We offer this volume as an induction into this often confusing, constantly challenging, always fascinating, and ultimately questioning world.

1

The Diversity of African Politics: Trends and Approaches

The African continent encompasses a rich mosaic of peoples, cultures, ecological settings, and historical experiences. Africa's vast expanse of 11,677,240 square miles (30,244,050 square kilometers) stretches from the Mediterranean in the north to the meeting point of the Atlantic and Indian oceans in the south. The 450 million people of Africa (roughly 10 percent of the globe's population) are as diverse as the terrain they inhabit. The blacks and Arabs who live on the continent (together with small concentrations of Asians and whites) speak more than eight hundred languages, belong to hundreds of ethnic groups, and over the years have embraced many animist belief systems as well as all the great religions (most notably, Christianity and Islam). Although 70 percent of the continent's people live in the rural areas and make their living as farmers and pastoralists, rapidly growing ancient and new cities are also sprinkled over the map of Africa. Subsistence agriculture is sustained alongside hi-tech industries; the world's greatest mineral reserves are to be found in regions of the most abject poverty; universities thrive where illiteracy still prevails.

The political map of Africa captures the complexity that is the essence of the continent. Africa's fifty-one states are the product of conquest and separation, amalgamation and continuity. Ethiopia and Egypt are among the oldest political entities known to human history. But most of Africa consists of new states carved out by the imperial powers. Nigeria, with its population of 100 million, contrasts sharply with tiny Comoros or Gambia. Massive Zaire is bordered by the small republics of Rwanda and Burundi. Swaziland is a nation-state (that is, ethnically homogeneous). It is surrounded by some of the most heterogeneous, multiethnic countries in the world today. Africa sustains monarchies and dictatorships, military regimes and civilian governments, revolu-

tionary systems and democracies, populist administrations and authoritarian modes of rule.

African politics constitute a microcosm of political forms and contents, experiences and patterns, trends and prospects. To focus on the contemporary politics of this continent is therefore to contemplate some of the most basic issues of human survival, organization, change, and growth. This book provides an introduction to the central themes of political life in independent Africa.

■ INDEPENDENT AFRICA: TRENDS AND PATTERNS

The first wave of independence in Africa commenced in the 1950s with the emergence of North Africa and then Ghana from colonial rule. The year 1960, generally considered *the* year of African independence, witnessed the dismantling of the French colonial empire as well as the attainment of sovereignty by Nigeria—black Africa's foremost power. By the mid-1960s over thirty new states had undergone the process of decolonization.

The second, and generally more violent, wave of independence began in 1974, following the revolution in Portugal. The lusophone (Portuguese-speaking) states of Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Mozambique, and Angola finally overcame 400 years of colonial domination. In 1975, Spain withdrew from the western Sahara, setting in motion a period of still unresolved strife over control of the territory. And in 1980 the struggle against white rule in Rhodesia was crowned with success: The independence of Zimbabwe brought the British colonial presence in Africa to an end. Namibia and South Africa are the last, and most recalcitrant, remnants of the colonial presence in contemporary Africa.

The heady expectations that accompanied the transfer of power have, in the first postcolonial generation, of necessity given way to a more sober view of domestic and international realities. The meaning of independence, nevertheless, has varied from place to place on the continent. Different states, individuals, and groups have undergone quite distinct experiences in a variety of spheres, rendering Africa far more heterogeneous in the late 1980s than it was on the eve of the transition from colonial rule.

In economic terms, the performance of many African countries has fallen far short of the vision of progress and well-being held forth by the leaders of anticolonial movements (see Table 1.1). In 1985, for example, twenty-two countries could not feed their growing population; agricultural production in the first part of the 1980s had actually declined. Economic growth rates per capita during the 1970s and the early 1980s, with a few exceptions, were stagnant if not negative. The foreign debt of most African states has increased precipitously since the late 1970s. Yet, some countries recorded substantial

economic achievements (Botswana, Algeria, Gabon, and Côte d'Ivoire, for example) and others had taken significant steps to avert further economic deterioration (Ghana, Zimbabwe). Certain amenities, such as clean water, electricity, latrines, and feeder roads, are now generally more available than at the close of the colonial era. Some Africans have enriched themselves in the course of these years; for others the exigencies of absolute poverty have continued to shape their existence.[1] Although economic trends have highlighted a widespread malaise, the economic paths of African countries and specific groups have diverged markedly during this short time span.

Social gains in some areas have come together with social dislocation and glaring inequalities in others (see Table 1.2). Most African countries have made impressive advances in education and primary health care. Nevertheless, infant mortality rates are high (in some cases 50 percent of those born do not survive until the age of five), and life expectancy is still below fifty years. Access to much-needed services is uneven. The gap between the city and the countryside persists and has, in many places, been exacerbated. Elite-mass strains are pronounced. In Nigeria, for example, successful entrepreneurs and professionals fly around in private jets, while peasants line up for a portion of rice. Many rural areas have not been electrified; urban dwellers frequently have their own generators. In the countryside, wealthier landowners can control large tracts of land, while small farmers scratch out a living from depleted soil.

Social groups throughout the continent have become more aware, over the years, of their own particular circumstances. Ethnic groupings, incipient classes, and a variety of local communities, professional associations, trade unions, women's organizations, and religious movements have organized to forward their specific interests. In some instances, formal channels of participation have facilitated ongoing communication; in others, indirect avenues have been established to raise demands and to distribute benefits (patron-client relationships are a good example); and in other cases politicization has increased while access to the political center has been severely circumscribed. The opportunities for involvement in decision making have therefore varied.

Conflicts have been an integral part of the independence experience, as have the ongoing quests for national coherence. Political violence, unquestionably, has proliferated. Ethnic and nationality conflicts (in Ethiopia, Chad, Nigeria, Zaire, Sudan, and Angola) persist. Civil dissension has risen in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Uganda. Religious riots, virtually unheard of in the 1960s, are in evidence today. Interstate conflicts have also erupted: The Somali-Ethiopian conflict, the ongoing Chad-Libya dispute, the Zaire-Angola skirmishes, and the border wars between Burkina Faso and Mali are just some examples. From a most personal point of view, in some countries individual security has been threatened. Armed bandits roam through Uganda; in Nigeria, highway robbery is commonplace. But violent confrontations have been less widespread than could have been expected given the multiplicity of ethnic and linguistic groups and the growing socioeconomic discrepancies apparent

throughout the continent. Indeed, with few exceptions, some form of national consciousness has evolved over the years. And in many countries norms of social interaction have been formulated and a modicum of civic order established.

Socioeconomic malaise is reflective of endemic political problems. In the early postcolonial years, most African leaders, in an effort to gain control, centralized power. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Ahmed Sekou Touré of Guinea were among the first leaders to establish one-party states; they were followed by most of their peers. Centralization came with the personalization of power and with a heavy reliance on bureaucratic structures. The trend toward unitary government was almost uniform in the first two decades of independence. Yet, Nigeria developed a sophisticated federal system; Gambia, Botswana, and Mauritius have been able to sustain multiparty politics into the 1980s; and, most recently, Senegal returned to competitive elections. These countries constitute important examples of a possible shift away from the convention of centralized nonparticipatory politics.

African leaders have also experimented with many ideologies and political philosophies. African socialism, adopted in such countries as Tanzania, Ghana, Mali, Guinea, and Zambia, proliferated in the 1960s. In the mid-1970s Afro-Marxist regimes, more closely aligned with Marxist-Leninist principles, developed in Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Angola. In the early part of the 1980s, Jerry Rawlings in Ghana and Thomas Sankara in Burkina Faso introduced an African brand of radical populism. Throughout the past thirty years democratic ideas have proliferated alongside decidedly personalistic concepts of rule, and although ideological fads have come and gone, pragmatic values have prevailed in many countries.

Ideologies aside, authoritarian politics have dominated the domestic scene. Competition over access to and control of state resources has nurtured an instrumental view of politics in which the public domain is seen as a channel for individual or partisan enrichment. Zero-sum patterns of interaction (one side's gain is another side's loss) have led to the muzzling of loyal oppositions and to an intolerance of dissenting opinions.

Under these conditions, the military has become an important mechanism for bringing about political change. Virtually every African state has been subjected to an attempted coup. The armed forces rule in almost half the states of the continent. At least a third of the countries in the Sub-Sahara have had several military takeovers. The move from civilian to military rule and back again has become an essential part of the rhythm of politics in postcolonial Africa. In some countries, however—Cameroon, Zambia, Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, Botswana, Senegal, Malawi—the army has not taken over, and some have witnessed orderly political succession. Patterns of political transition, therefore, have varied widely.

Governmental capacities have not improved markedly during these years. In many countries, top-heavy administrations run by civilian or military leaders wield very little authority, and the power of their governmental institutions has

TABLE 1.1
Basic Economic Characteristics of African States

	Area (thousands of square kilometers)	Population (millions) 1984	GDP (millions of dollars) 1983	GNP per Capita		Distribution of GDP 1983 (percent)				Debt (millions of dollars) 1984	Debt-Service Ratio as Percentage of Exports of Goods and Services, 1984
				Dollars 1984	Annual Growth Rate 1965–84 (percent)	Agriculture	Industry	Manufacturing[a]	Services		
Algeria	2,382	21.9[b]	58,180[b]	2,550[b]	3.6[b]	8[b]	48[b]	11[b]	43[b]	13,664.0	33.3[b]
Angola	1,247	8.4	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	860.0	n.a.
Benin	113	3.9	930	270	1.0	40	14	n.a.	47	581.5	9.3[b]
Botswana	600	1.0	890	910	8.5	10	43	n.a.	48	276.1	3.8
Burkina Faso	274	6.6	930[b]	160	1.4	41	19	n.a.	40	407.5	8.7[b]
Burundi	28	4.6	1,020	220	2.1	58	16	n.a.	26	334.4	7.5[b]
Cameroon	475	9.9	7,220	810	2.7	24	32	11	45	1,737.9	8.9
Cape Verde	4	0.3[b]	n.a.	430[b]	5.0[b]	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Central African Republic	623	2.5	600	270	0.1	37	21	8	42	224.4	11.7[b]
Chad	1,284	4.9	320[b]	n.a.	-2.3[b]	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	109.0	1.7
Comoros	2	0.5[b]	n.a.	240[b]	-0.3[b]	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Congo, People's Republic of the	342	1.8	2,110	1,120	3.5	7	55	6	38	1,395.6	20.5[b]
Côte d'Ivoire	322	9.9	7,090	610	1.0	27	24	13	50	4,834.6	21.3
Djibouti	22	0.4[b]	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Egypt	1,001	48.5[b]	30,550[b]	610[b]	3.1[b]	20[b]	31	n.a.	49[b]	18,501.0[b]	33.6[b]
Equatorial Guinea	28	0.4[b]	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Ethiopia	1,222	42.0	4,270	110	0.5	48	16	11	36	1,384.2	13.8
Gabon	268	0.8	3,120	3,480	3.2	7	63	5	30	724.5	11.4
Gambia	11	0.7	220	260	1.4	27	14	n.a.	59	160.9	7.7[b]
Ghana	239	13.4	3,720	350	-2.1	53	7	4	40	1,122.5	13.2
Guinea	246	5.9	1,910	300	1.1	38	23	2	39	1,168.2	n.a.
Guinea-Bissau	36	0.9	145	180	-1.5[b]	43	11	n.a.	46	149.4	11.8[b]
Kenya	583	19.7	4,940	300	2.3	33	20	12	46	2,633.4	22.9

Lesotho	30	1.5	300[b]	530	6.3	23	22	6	55	134.3	5.0
Liberia	111	2.1	980	470	0.8	36	26	7	38	756.7	8.6
Libya	1,760	3.8[b]	25,420[b]	7,170[b]	–1.3[b]	4[b]	57[b]	5[b]	39[b]	n.a.	n.a.
Madagascar	587	9.7	2,850[b]	270	–1.2	41	15	n.a.	44	1,636.4	24.3[b]
Malawi	118	6.8	1,330	210	2.2	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	730.6	20.3[b]
Mali	1,240	7.3	980	140	1.2	46	11	n.a.	43	960.0	8.0
Mauritania	1,031	1.7	700	450	0.3	34	21	n.a.	45	1,170.6	10.0[b]
Mauritius	2	1.0	910	1,100	2.8	14	25	n.a.	61	354.2	14.8
Morocco	447	21.9[b]	11,850[b]	560[b]	2.2[b]	18[b]	32[b]	17[b]	50[b]	n.a.	n.a.
Mozambique	802	13.4	n.a.	160	n.a.	35	11[b]	n.a.	53[b]	1,042.0	n.a.
Niger	1,267	6.3	1,340	190	–1.2	33	31	n.a.	37	677.9	18.3[b]
Nigeria	924	96.8	64,570	770	3.2	26	34	5	40	11,815.4	25.5
Rwanda	26	5.9	1,560	270	2.3	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	243.9	3.3
Sao Tome and Principe	1	0.1[b]	n.a.	320[b]	0.8[b]	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Senegal	196	6.4	2,570	380	–0.5	21	26	17	54	1,555.1	7.2
Seychelles	(.)	0.7[b]	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Sierra Leone	72	3.7	950	300	1.1	32	20	5	48	341.6	7.2[b]
Somalia[b]	638	5.2	1,540	260	–0.8[c]	50	11	6	39	1,233.0	28.9
South Africa	1,221	32.4[b]	67,710[b]	2,010[b]	1.1[b]	5[b]	45[b]	23[b]	50[b]	n.a.	n.a.
Sudan	2,506	21.5	6,850	340	1.3	34	15	8	51	5,658.9	11.0
Swaziland	17	0.7	n.a.	800	2.6	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	178.0	5.4
Tanzania[b]	945	21.5	4,550	210	0.9	52	15	9	33	2,593.6	14.1
Togo	57	2.9	720	250	1.1	22	28	6	50	659.2	26.3
Tunisia	164	7.1[b]	7,240[b]	1,190[b]	4.0[b]	17	34[b]	14[b]	49[b]	4,688.0[b]	n.a.
Uganda	236	14.3	3,360[b]	230	–4.4[c]	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	675.1	21.1[b]
Zaire	2,345	30.6	5,440[b]	140	–1.3	36	20	2	44	4,083.7	7.7[b]
Zambia	753	6.5	3,350	470	–1.3	14	38	19	48	2,778.7	11.3
Zimbabwe	391	8.2	4,730	740	1.5	11	32	21	57	1,445.7	20.0

Sources: World Bank, *Financing Adjustment with Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa 1986–1990* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1986); World Bank, *World Development Report 1987* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1987).

[a]Manufacturing is part of the industrial sector, but its share of GDP is shown separately because it typically is the most dynamic part of the industrial sector.
[b]Figures are for years other than those specified.
[c]Figures are for 1965–1983, not 1965–1984.