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# DEMOCRATIC EXPERIMENTS IN AFRICA

*Regime Transitions in  
Comparative Perspective*

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140. Young, *African Colonial State*, p. 41.
141. Krasner, "Approaches to the State," 225.
142. Reuschemeyer, *Capitalist Development and Democracy*, p. 7.
143. Krasner, "Approaches to the State," 225.
144. *Ibid.*
145. Catherine Boone, *Merchant Capital and the Roots of State Power in Sénégal, 1930-1985* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 4.
146. See Joel Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).
147. Malloy and Seligson, *Authoritarians and Democrats: Regime Transition in Latin America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987) p. 239.

## NEOPATRIMONIAL RULE IN AFRICA

Throughout this book we ask whether regime transitions in sub-Saharan Africa resemble democratization in other parts of the world. The nature of political authority and its embodiment in political institutions differ in Africa in several significant respects from other world regions that have undergone fundamental change in recent years. We contend that these differences critically affect the dynamics and outcomes of distinctive democratization processes in the sub-Saharan region. This chapter introduces this thesis by briefly reviewing the nature of formal and informal political institutions in postcolonial Africa. We then develop several hypotheses linking these institutions to specific traits of regime transitions in Africa in the early 1990s. We cast the argument comparatively in order to highlight differences among political regimes, both between Africa and the rest of the world but also among African countries themselves.

### NEOPATRIMONIAL RULE

The institutional hallmark of politics in the *ancien régimes* of postcolonial Africa was neopatrimonialism. The term is derived from the concept of patrimonial authority, which Max Weber used to designate the principle of authority in the smallest and most traditional politics.<sup>1</sup> In patrimonial political systems, an individual rules by dint of personal prestige and power; ordinary folk are treated as extensions of the "big man's" household, with no rights or privileges other than those bestowed by the ruler. Authority is entirely personalized, shaped by the ruler's preferences rather than any codified system of laws. The ruler ensures the political stability of the regime and personal political survival by providing a zone of security in an uncertain environment and by selectively distributing favors and material benefits to loyal followers who are not citizens of the polity so much as the ruler's clients.

Weber distinguished patrimonial authority from rational-legal authority, in which the public sphere is carefully distinguished from the private sphere; written laws and bureaucratic institutions routinize the exercise of authority and protect individuals and their property from the whims of capricious leaders. His definition of patrimonialism may provide an accurate description of the political systems of small, isolated communities with rudimentary economies, including African chiefdoms in the precolonial era, and the practices of patrimonialism may persist at the local level in a number of different settings.<sup>2</sup> But it does not adequately characterize any of the national political systems existing in our times, the smallest and poorest of which possess bureaucratic institutions and written laws. Yet, it is clear that some nations in the developing world, most notably in sub-Saharan Africa, retain in modified form many of the characteristics of patrimonial rule. As a result, political scientists have found it useful to characterize as *neopatrimonial* those hybrid political systems in which the customs and patterns of patrimonialism co-exist with, and suffuse, rational-legal institutions.<sup>3</sup>

As with classic patrimonialism, the right to rule in neopatrimonial regimes is ascribed to a person rather than to an office, despite the official existence of a written constitution. One individual (the strongman, "big man," or "supremo"), often a president for life, dominates the state apparatus and stands above its laws. Relationships of loyalty and dependence pervade a formal political and administrative system, and officials occupy bureaucratic positions less to perform public service, their ostensible purpose, than to acquire personal wealth and status. Although state functionaries receive an official salary, they also enjoy access to various forms of illicit rents, prebends, and petty corruption, which constitute a sometimes important entitlement of office. The chief executive and his inner circle undermine the effectiveness of the nominally modern state administration by using it for systematic patronage and clientelist practices in order to maintain political order. Moreover, parallel and unofficial structures may well hold more power and authority than the formal administration. To summarize, the characteristic feature of neopatrimonialism is the incorporation of patrimonial logic into bureaucratic institutions.

Insofar as personalized exchanges, clientelism, and political corruption are common in all regimes, theorists have suggested that neopatrimonialism is a master concept for comparative politics, at least in the developing world. Robin Theobald argues that "some of the new states are, properly speaking, not states at all; rather, they are virtually the private instruments of those powerful enough to rule."<sup>4</sup> Christopher Clapham claims that neopatrimonialism is "the most salient type [of authority]" in the Third World because it "corresponds to the normal forms of social organization in precolonial societies."<sup>5</sup> We make a finer distinction – namely, that although neopatrimonial practices can be found in all polities, it is the *core* feature of politics in Africa and in a small number of other states, including Haiti, and perhaps Indonesia and the Philippines.<sup>6</sup> Whereas personal relationships occur on the margins of all bureaucratic systems, they constitute the foundation and superstructure of political institutions in Africa. As a

result, scholars of African politics have embraced the neopatrimonial model,<sup>7</sup> or they have analyzed the same general phenomena under related theoretical labels, including "personal rule," "prebendalism," and the "politics of the belly."<sup>8</sup>

Does it make sense to speak of neopatrimonial institutions? Can the practices we have described be viewed as defining rules and norms that shape individual behavior and structure societal relationships? Jackson and Rosberg answer "no," stating that in Africa, "the rulers and other leaders take precedence over the formal rules of the political game ... the rules do not effectively regulate political behavior."<sup>9</sup> Neopatrimonialism *does* undermine formal rules and institutions, and it may be true that in the despotic tyrannies of a small number of leaders like Idi Amin or Macias Nguema, politics becomes almost entirely arbitrary and unpredictable. Nonetheless, we argue that when patrimonial logic is internalized in the formal institutions of neopatrimonial regimes, it provides essential operating codes for politics that are valued, recurring, and reproduced over time.<sup>10</sup> In Africa, these same practices exist across more than 40 countries and have persisted after the death or retirement of the first generation of national leaders. The broad routinization of an established set of behavioral norms and procedures is testimony that neopatrimonial practices are more than the idiosyncratic expressions of individual leaders. In particular, it is possible to discern at least three – albeit informal – political institutions that have been typically stable, predictable, and valued in Africa's neopatrimonial regimes.

### PRESIDENTIALISM

The first such institution we call *presidentialism*. Presidentialism implies the systematic concentration of political power in the hands of one individual, who resists delegating all but the most trivial decision-making tasks. In Africa, personal dictators emerged from either the army or a dominant political party, but they consolidated power by asserting total personal control over formal political structures.<sup>11</sup> As a result on consolidation, presidentialism contributed to the weakening of already frail structures within the military, the judiciary, and the civil service. Ironically, the disempowerment of formal institutions vis-à-vis the presidency was accompanied by the multiplication of public offices and the increasing size of governments in postcolonial Africa. It was not unusual for cabinets to include some 35 to 50 offices; yet ministers were virtually powerless, because all significant decisions were made in the president's office or through personal emissaries. As Hastings Banda put it in 1972, "Nothing is not my business in this country: everything is my business, everything. The state of education, the state of our economy, the state of our agriculture, the state of our transport, everything is my business."<sup>12</sup>

Although presidentialism promoted some formal institutions – notice the predilection for presidential constitutions – we are referring to the informal dimensions of the term. Across Africa, power was deeply personalized. Political life was structured around dyadic exchanges between strongmen and their acolytes, which

together comprised clientelist pyramids and factional networks. Strongmen also exerted considerable discretion over national patterns of domination. Over time, rulers like Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia, Sekou Touré in Guinea, and Felix Houphouët-Boigny in Côte d'Ivoire left a deep personal imprint on national politics, molding their countries' political rules and rhetoric. The personalization of power was both cause and consequence of the political longevity of neopatrimonial rulers. They were more likely to remain in power than leaders in other regime types; regular coups d'état and the appearance of political instability notwithstanding, the average African leader from independence to 1987 still retained power considerably longer than counterparts in postcolonial Latin America or Asia.<sup>13</sup>

Neopatrimonial rulers were also likely to promote a cult of personality. They dominated the national media, which described their every public action with gushing enthusiasm; their likenesses graced the currency, their portraits hung in every public building, and the national printing press periodically published collections of their speeches and writings. As Ellis writes, "The cultivation of religious and cultural symbols ... [was] calculated to demonstrate to the Togolese that Eyadéma was semi-divine and that his government was endowed with supernatural authority."<sup>14</sup> After a time, the style and symbolism of national politics came to reflect the personalities of the leader. Under the guise of his policy of *authenticité* for example, Mobutu convinced Zairians to abandon their Christian first names, adopt *abacos* (the special collarless jackets he liked to wear), and address each other as *citoyen*.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, like a traditional monarch, the neopatrimonial leader often cultivated the image of the pater familias, who was directly responsible for the people's welfare and was willing to entertain and redress individual grievances personally, without the intermediation of the state apparatus. Paternalistic rhetoric was used to legitimate nondemocratic authority. As Schatzberg has argued, "The imagery and language of father and family are widespread in Africa because they strike a resonant and deeply embedded cultural chord."<sup>16</sup> This paternalism was present in official discourse, which often encouraged a view of the ruler as that of a stern but fair father figure.

In addition, supreme leaders openly encouraged public expressions of personal beneficence. Houphouët-Boigny, for example, engaged in regular "dialogues" with groups of citizens in a practice clearly meant to evoke the palaver of the traditional chieftaincies.<sup>17</sup> In tours around the country, he would meet local elites, listen to their grievances, and promise redress. The systematic recourse to clientelism that was the hallmark of these regimes ritualized face-to-face contact between the ruler and his subjects. This paternalism cut both ways, for the state's coercive tendencies were also highly personalized, from the widely accepted rumors in Togo that Eyadéma practiced black magic against his political enemies, to the perhaps apocryphal stories that Ahidjo personally approved all exit visas for Cameroonians wishing to leave the country, or that Nguema Macias of Equatorial Guinea personally participated in the physical torture of his political enemies.<sup>18</sup> Here too, rumor and exaggeration were encouraged by rulers eager to cultivate a larger-than-life image.

As a result of presidentialism, African political regimes were distinctly non-bureaucratic, despite the fact that they possessed a large state apparatus with all the outward trappings of a formal-legal order. Nor could they be viewed as corporatist, a label that is sometimes given to the authoritarian regimes of Latin America or Asia. Leaders of postcolonial African countries may have pursued a corporatist strategy to the extent that they attempted to direct political mobilization along controlled channels. But African leaders rarely used bureaucratic formulas to construct authoritative institutions and seldom granted subsidiary spheres of influence to occupational interest groups within civil society. African regimes did not display the formal governing coalitions between organized state and social interests or the collective bargaining over core public policies that characterize corporatism. At best, African efforts to install corporatist regimes constituted a policy output of an ambitious political elite rather than a reflection of strong class interests within domestic society.

Moreover, power was absolute. Personal rulers dominated their political systems to a much larger extent than is the case in bureaucratic polities. Power was not restrained by legal niceties or systems of checks and balances. That does not mean that these rulers were omnipotent; typically the weak and ineffectual state apparatus responded to their orders fitfully, and the rulers were often constrained by the need to maintain balance across complex ethnic or clan divisions. Yet it does mean that rulers and their closest cronies were not bound by the dictates of the law and tried to emasculate or eliminate formal institutional checks on the executive. The independence of the legislative and judicial branches was severely limited, and neopatrimonial rulers were typically deeply suspicious of any form of institutional pluralism. As a result, neopatrimonial regimes were typically highly exclusionary and the strongman tended to rule by decree; institutions of participation existed in name only and could not check the absolute powers of the chief executive. The strongman may even have preempted his own removal from office by declaring himself president-for-life. As we shall see later, there was, nonetheless, a wide and significant variation in the degree to which plural and participatory institutions managed to endure in these regimes.

In sum, neopatrimonial leaders consciously promoted an image of omnipotence, which exaggerated the already considerable degree to which they dominated national politics. Both the reality and the myths of presidentialism suggest that the personal interaction between the "big man" and his extended retinue defined African politics, from the highest reaches of the presidential palace to the humblest village assembly.

### CLIENTELISM

A second informal institution of neopatrimonialism was *systematic clientelism*. Neopatrimonial strongmen all relied on the award of personal favors. Within the state, these favors typically took the form of public sector jobs; within society, the distribution of public resources through licenses, contracts, and projects. In return for material rewards, clients mobilized political support and referred all decisions

upward in a mark of loyalty to patrons.<sup>19</sup> This happened at every level; at the top, the ruler's faithful political aristocracy was rewarded with prebendal control of public offices, monopoly rents, and the possibility of creating its own clientelist networks. These positions as a result demonstrated a seemingly inexorable increase over time. In Côte d'Ivoire, Tessa Bakary notes, the number of departments, sub-prefectures, and communes went from 4, 19, and 17 at independence to 36, 137, and 135, respectively, by 1987. Similarly, the average size of cabinets increased by a factor of 2.5 during the same period, the Economic and Social Council went from 25 to 120 members, and the single party's political bureau increased from 15 to 302. This inventory does not include positions in the diplomatic service or the parastatal sector, also in rapid expansion during this period.<sup>20</sup> Typically, these positions came with various perks such as official house and car, staff, and pension. Nor were patronage and clientelist benefits limited to the political aristocracy; Bates and Collier report that Kenneth Kaunda controlled 40,000 patronage positions in Lusaka alone during the 1980s, through the United National Independence Party (UNIP), which he dominated.<sup>21</sup>

Systematic clientelism led neopatrimonial rulers to promote state intervention in the economy. The fact that political authority rested on the selective allocation of state resources to individuals created a powerful incentive for extensive regulation of economic activity, through which the incumbent elite gained control over a wide range of monopolies and economic rents. In sum, public resources were privatized to the benefit of the coterie of presidential loyalists. To a certain extent, these dynamics describe all types of political regimes, but African neopatrimonial regimes were distinctive in the extent to which systematic clientelism was generalized. A fiscal study of Cameroon estimated that various exemptions granted by the government and tax fraud resulted in a revenue shortfall equivalent to 18 to 22 percent of gross domestic product (GDP).<sup>22</sup> A study of tax administration in the Gambia estimated the losses associated with tax evasion at 70 percent of total public revenue, noting that only a fifth of all registered companies filed income tax returns.<sup>23</sup> In other words, by setting high rates of taxation, governments created various economic rents that could be used to dispense political favors. In other countries, it was not unusual for one third of all imports to benefit from a special political exemption from import duty. Indeed, in neopatrimonial regimes, virtually all economic policy was motivated at least in part by the economic rents provided to the state elite.

### STATE RESOURCES

A third informal institution was the *use of state resources* for political legitimation, and it was closely linked to the reliance on clientelism. Neopatrimonial leaders made little distinction between the public and private coffers, routinely and extensively dipping into the state treasury for their own political needs. President Ahidjo of Cameroon kept a large proportion of his country's oil revenues in a personal offshore bank account, to be spent during the course of the year as he saw

fit. Houphouët-Boigny regularly pocketed a tenth of his country's cocoa exports, spending it on grandiose prestige projects that flattered his image as the country's founding father.<sup>24</sup> Mobutu amassed a huge personal fortune, widely assumed to be roughly equivalent to Zaire's national debt, largely by extracting a cut from the country's diamond and copper exports.<sup>25</sup> When state coffers ran dry by 1992, however, Mobutu returned the favor by using this "rainy day fund" to meet the army's wage bill, suggesting that the purloined spoils had never been meant to serve as personal enrichment for its own sake.

As a consequence of both clientelism and the use of state resources, neopatrimonial regimes demonstrated very little developmental capacity. Lacking political legitimacy, rulers survived through coercion and clientelism but often failed to exercise complete control over the polity. The large state apparatus they had created as much for patronage as anything else was costly as well as inept, undisciplined, and unresponsive to their orders. Public investment was inadequate because a disproportionate share of public monies went to pay a bloated salary bill for the large number of offices reserved for the political class. In sum, there was a contradiction between the regime's redistributive practices and long-term accumulation.<sup>26</sup> Typically, public infrastructure was poorly maintained and state agents lacked operating funds; office equipment was old and run down, the few state cars that were functioning were privately appropriated by top officials, and gas coupons were sold for profit or not budgeted for. As a result, the state was barely proficient at even basic functions and was further undermined in the 1980s by the growing fiscal crisis, which resulted in sharply reduced real salaries. In effect, the neopatrimonial state exercised only limited effective sovereignty over the national territory; outlying regions were not fully policed and the state could neither enforce its own laws and regulations nor prevent fraud along its borders.

Moreover, the constant redistribution of state resources for political purposes led to endemic fiscal crisis and diminished prospects for sustained economic growth.<sup>27</sup> The dynamics of neopatrimonial rule ensured that African states routinely outspent their revenues by a large margin. Pervasive rent-seeking and political manipulation of economic policy resulted in a state apparatus that was both too large relative to the economy and too weak to effectively collect revenues.<sup>28</sup> The high-level corruption in Nigeria during the early 1990s led to the disappearance of oil revenues for the state that were worth as much as a tenth of GDP each year.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, the recent history of Africa was characterized by a decline in state revenues as a proportion of the economy, particularly as the continent's economic crisis worsened during the 1980s. By 1980, central government revenues amounted to 18.3 percent of gross national product in the 23 African countries for which there were data, compared to an average of 30.5 percent in OECD countries.<sup>30</sup> Because of this low extractive capacity, most African states came to rely increasingly on foreign aid to pay for basic functions. In Zambia, for instance, aid was equivalent to 32.7 percent of GNP by 1993, whereas government revenues amounted to 11.9 percent of GDP in 1991, down from some 27 percent in 1980.<sup>31</sup>

Concomitantly, neopatrimonialism created an economic climate of uncertainty and risk that scared away investors or directed them toward short-term speculation. The viability of existing enterprises was undermined by the exactions of state agents, as well as by the doldrums in the economy. As a result, African economies suffered from a shortage of long-term private investment, which further condemned them to slow economic growth. The state's need for revenues, coupled with an inability to confront the politically powerful, led it to tax excessively a narrow range of economic agents. For most of Africa's postcolonial history, that meant the taxation of the cash-crop-producing peasantry, which responded by decreasing its output or smuggling agricultural products to neighboring countries.<sup>32</sup> The case of Ghana was egregious: In the world's largest producer of cocoa at independence, with a peak of 560,000 tons in 1965, cocoa production declined to 249,000 tons by 1979, largely because state taxation undermined producer incentives. By 1970, the government passed on less than 37 percent of total cocoa export receipts to the producers themselves, down from 72 percent in 1960.<sup>33</sup>

## INSTITUTIONAL VARIATIONS IN AFRICAN REGIMES

That virtually all African regimes could be viewed as neopatrimonial should not obscure the significant variation in political institutions that evolved across the different states in the region. Typologies of sub-Saharan political regimes have been advanced in the African politics literature to capture such institutional differences.<sup>34</sup> Following Dahl's classic formulation, we find it useful to distinguish among neopatrimonial regimes according to the extent of political competition (or contestation) and the degree of political participation (or inclusion).<sup>35</sup>

### POLITICAL COMPETITION

First, Africa's neopatrimonial regimes varied in the extent to which at least some members of the political system were allowed to compete over elected positions or public policy. Even when state elites worked to eliminate, control, or coopt opposition parties, they sometimes tolerated pluralism within the single party or in the lobbying activities of nonstate associations. At one extreme, opposition parties were formed and even allowed into the legislature in a small number of countries. At the other extreme, some governments banned any and all questioning of the policies formulated by an inner group of politicians. In between, islands of contestation were tolerated, either independently of the state or formally under the authority of the ruling party.

A cursory examination of electoral competition since African independence confirms this variation. Elections in Africa are generally depicted as empty and largely symbolic exercises designed to legitimate officeholders. And, indeed, following a lone competitive election at independence, that is apparently what

many African elections became. Between independence and 1989, 106 presidential and 185 direct parliamentary elections were held in the 47 countries of sub-Saharan Africa (Table 1). In the presidential elections, the winning candidate on average reportedly received 92 percent of the vote; moreover, in 64 of those elections, the winner officially received above 95 percent of the votes, whereas the opposition candidate won at least a quarter of the vote in only 10 cases. Thus, for instance, Houphouët-Boigny won all six of the presidential elections held in Côte d'Ivoire between 1960 and 1989, with a reported average of 99.7 percent of the vote. A bit more competition was tolerated in parliamentary elections, perhaps because they threatened less the power of the ruler, but even here the winning party won an average of 83 percent of the votes and 88 percent of the seats. In 29 countries, opposition parties were never allowed to win a single seat over the course of 150 separate elections. Since these averages include the relatively open elections held right at independence, they really do suggest that, at least in terms of political competition, elections were largely empty rituals.

Indeed, in many of the countries of the region, rulers could not countenance electoral challenge and used elections in an entirely self-serving manner. As Chazan noted, "The essential purpose of the ballot in this type of election is to provide the existing government a semblance of popular approval."<sup>36</sup> In fact, governments in these countries were quick to discontinue elections when they threatened to lead to the expression of discontent. But elections were not necessarily completely meaningless in political terms. They provided opportunities for the strongman to tour the country, dispense favors, hone the regime's ideological rhetoric, and, as we show in the next chapter, mobilize a measure of political participation through the ruling party. But generally they did not include meaningful political competition.

Nonetheless, one can distinguish at least three forms of limited electoral competition in postcolonial Africa. First, a small number of regimes consistently sustained multiparty politics from independence onward. Botswana, the Gambia, Mauritius, Sénégal (at least since 1980), and Zimbabwe all provide examples of stable, functioning multiparty rule, in which reasonably free and fair elections were held on a regular basis. It is easy to see flaws in these democracies; with the exception of Mauritius, the stability of democratic rule was facilitated by the presence of a dominant party, which was never seriously challenged; thus, the majority party in Botswana, the Gambia, and Sénégal won an average of 85.8 percent, 81.7 percent, and 86.8 percent, respectively, of seats contested in multiparty elections. In all cases, the opposition was harassed, and patterns of electoral abuse witnessed elsewhere on the continent were not entirely absent. Nonetheless, these states had begun to institutionalize multiparty electoral competition before 1989.

Second, some countries experienced brief interludes of democratic rule between longer periods of authoritarianism. Excluding the five countries just discussed, we found 19 elections in 12 countries since 1970 in which an opposition party won at least one seat. These elections typically occurred in countries charac-



Table 1. *Elections in Sub-Saharan Africa, Independence to 1989*

Country	Presidential Elections	Winner's Share (mean % votes)	Legislative Elections	Winner's Share (mean % seats)
Angola	0	—	0	—
Bénin	3	84.2	5	100.0
Botswana	0	—	5	85.8
Burkina Faso	2	77.3	3	57.0
Burundi	1	99.6	2	81.8
Cameroon	6	97.6	8	90.9
Cape Verde	0	—	2	100.0
Central African Republic	3	80.5	3	95.3
Chad	2	96.2	2	100.0
Comoros	2	99.7	3	13.7
Congo	2	100.0	5	100.0
Côte d'Ivoire	6	99.7	6	100.0
Djibouti	2	87.3	2	100.0
Eq. Guinea	2	97.9	2	100.0
Ethiopia	0	—	6	100.0
Gabon	5	99.6	7	95.1
Gambia	2	65.7	5	81.7
Ghana	2	75.5	4	76.1
Guinea	5	99.7	4	100.0
Guinea-Bissau	0	—	0	—
Kenya	0	—	6	99.1
Lesotho	0	—	1	38.3
Liberia	6	82.6	6	89.8
Madagascar	5	86.8	7	74.2
Malawi	0	—	4	100.0
Mali	2	99.9	5	100.0
Mauritania	4	97.7	4	100.0
Mauritius	0	—	4	57.3
Mozambique	0	—	0	—
Namibia	0	—	1	—
Niger	3	99.8	3	100.0
Nigeria	2	40.6	3	56.5
Rwanda	5	97.3	5	100.0
São Tomé	0	—	0	—
Sénégal	6	87.7	7	93.4
Seychelles	3	95.6	3	100.0
Sierra Leone	2	97.6	6	62.5
Somalia	1	99.9	4	78.7
South Africa	0	—	8	71.8
Sudan	3	98.2	8	70.6
Swaziland	0	—	1	87.5
Tanzania	6	94.9	5	100.0
Togo	5	98.3	4	100.0
Uganda	0	—	4	68.4
Zaire	3	99.1	5	92.8
Zambia	5	83.4	6	89.9
Zimbabwe	0	—	1	80.0
Total/Average	106	92.0	185	88.0

terized by political instability and fragmentation in which a succession of military and civilian rulers failed to overcome the complex ethnoregional divisions that undermined regime legitimacy. These elections were often tainted by accusations of fraud, and their deficiencies contributed to the delegitimation of the democratic order, but they did include real political competition. Nigeria's Second Republic, for example, held multiparty elections in 1979 and 1983. In each, there was considerable malpractice both before and during the polling, and the September 1983 elections were marred by extensive violence and increased ethnic tensions. The December 31, 1983, coup that ended the Second Republic actually singled out these electoral problems as justification for military intervention.<sup>37</sup>

Third, and more ambiguously, some of Africa's single-party regimes institutionalized limited but real competition within the ruling party. The party presented more than one candidate for each parliamentary district or held competitive primaries before legislative elections. In these cases, the electorate had a chance to vote an incumbent representative out of power. Detailed analysis of these elections was beyond the scope of our study, but we identified 14 countries with at least one intraparty competitive election (including Cameroon and Togo in the 1980s) and a smaller number of countries (notably Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia in the 1970s, and Côte d'Ivoire after 1980) in which rules of intraparty competition were in place for several elections. The impact on the political class was occasionally quite marked; for example, in the 1985 Ivoirian parliamentary elections, only 64 members of the outgoing parliament were reelected in a field of 546 candidates for 175 seats. Similarly, in the 1985 Togolese elections, only 20 out of 66 deputies were reelected. In the 1988 Zambian elections, two sitting senior ministers were defeated.

Granted, such competition was always controlled. Neopatrimonial rulers used emerging electoral institutions to assert presidential prerogatives over the single party and to discipline the political class.<sup>38</sup> Even when the strongman did not intervene in the selection of candidates, the electoral turnover of legislators clearly weakened party notables relative to the president. The attractiveness of intraparty competition may well have derived from the fact that it facilitated the circulation of elites and introduced fresh blood into the system, yet never shook the legitimacy of the regime or of the ruler himself.<sup>39</sup> And because a member of parliament could expect a generous salary and allowances, it also enabled the patron to redistribute desirable patronage positions. Indeed, the size of legislatures was expanded to accommodate the demand for paid posts; the average African legislature grew from 89.5 seats to 140 seats between the first parliamentary postindependence election and the end of 1989. This inflation was very clear in Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, where the parliament grew from 70 to 175 seats between 1960 and 1989, and in Zambia, where it grew from 75 to 136.

The extent to which controlled intraparty competition actually added to the competitiveness of the regime was uncertain, but it was potentially significant. It allowed a measure of parliamentary accountability to voter concerns as incumbents and challengers struggled to demonstrate an ability to bring home the bacon. Barkan captures well these dynamics in the Kenya of the 1970s when he

writes that elections amounted to "local referenda on the ability of individual incumbents to secure state resources for their home areas.... Because elections were truly competitive, incumbents were held accountable for their activities and forced to be attentive to the concerns of their constituents."<sup>40</sup>

Elections provided one indicator of the degree of competition, but there were others as well. In particular, it was possible to notice key differences among African regimes in the degree of institutional pluralism that survived in civil and political society through the 1970s and 1980s. Most African regimes tried to eliminate, weaken, or take over any nongovernmental institution that might contest their legitimacy and authority. These included opposition political parties, which were illegal in 32 states as late as 1989. Also included were a wide variety of nongovernmental organizations, such as farmer associations and producer cooperatives, trade unions, professional groups, and business associations, as well as media organizations. As a result of state-directed repression and cooptation, civil society was generally weak and less developed in Africa than elsewhere in the developing world.

Nonetheless, the available data on associational life suggests striking contrasts within Africa. In 1989, four countries in the sub-Saharan subcontinent did not have a single registered trade union, and only one officially sanctioned union was tolerated in an additional total of 18 countries. At the other extreme, 16 African countries could claim at least five legally registered trade unions. Similarly with business associations: The 16 countries with only one or fewer such groups could be contrasted with the nine countries in which at least 10 business bodies were officially registered. Such examples could be multiplied – for example, with reference to churches and the press. They suggest that, in associational life as in the conduct of national elections, the degree of institutionalized political competition in Africa was far from constant across African regimes.

### POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

African regimes also varied in the degree of political participation allowed. Because of limited institutional pluralism, decision making in public affairs was typically restricted to elites with a narrow social base. Only rarely was the population at large consulted about public policies, and then through a single party or approved membership associations. Kasfir has argued that most African regimes tried to circumscribe political participation, by "shrinking" the public arena in the years after independence.<sup>41</sup> Relative to the heady days of the independence struggle that may well be true. Nonetheless, most regimes continued to allow some participation and were much more likely to clamp down on competition.

Here, too, significant differences are apparent from a survey of the countries in Africa. We tabulated the number and frequency of elections, and recorded the officially reported voter turnout rates. To repeat, between independence and the end of 1989, there were 106 presidential and 185 direct parliamentary elections

in the 47 countries of the sub-Saharan region, for an average of 2.30 and 4.02 elections, respectively (see Table 1). These averages mask sharp differences; thus, 16 countries never held a single presidential election, but 12 held four or more. Parliamentary elections were more evenly distributed; 13 countries held two elections or fewer, and 20 held five or more. We should not forget that the very choice not to hold direct elections was a way of limiting participation in some countries.

Some sense of the extent of political participation can be obtained with reference to voter turnout rates: first, the proportion of registered voters that was said to have turned out; and second, the proportion of the total population that reportedly voted.<sup>42</sup> Here, too there was surprising variation. The range across all countries for which we have data are an average 85.2 percent and 39.3 percent, respectively, for presidential elections and an average 77.8 percent and 33.5 percent for parliamentary elections. But these voter turnout rates are difficult to interpret; officially proclaimed, they were clearly manipulated in many instances. Nonetheless, the data did not suggest the kinds of obstacles to widespread participation that scholars have reported for Latin America.<sup>43</sup> In fact, there were virtually no *de jure* limits on the franchise in postcolonial Africa. In contrast to the historical record in Europe or Latin America, African states never instituted literacy, gender, property, or income requirements for the right to vote.

If anything, reported participation rates were suspiciously high and suggest considerable fraud, at least in some countries. What are we to make of the official results for elections in Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon, for example, according to which well over 90 percent of registered voters – or roughly two thirds of the adult population – voted six times in less than three decades in noncompetitive contests? Even allowing for fraud, however, participation rates did vary, particularly the percentage of the adult population voting. For instance, in the 1988 presidential election in Sénégal, 59 percent of all registered voters cast a ballot, but this amounted to little more than roughly a third of the total population. Less than half of the adult population voted, on average, in 10 countries holding at least one election, according to official numbers. Low turnout may well have been a way for voters to show their dissatisfaction with available candidate choices, or it may have reflected more mundane apathy, reinforced by the practical difficulties of registering and casting a ballot.<sup>44</sup> In any event, and except in the racial oligarchies of South Africa and Namibia, low turnout did not necessarily imply governmental attempts to limit the franchise, as in other parts of the world.

How can we explain these differences in degrees of political competition and participation across countries? A full explanation is well beyond the scope of this study, but some national patterns are evident. First, variation can be traced to the political dynamics of the immediate postindependence years; the circumstances in which different leaders consolidated power partly determined the degree of pluralism that came to characterize the existing regime.<sup>45</sup> When a dominant party emerged early during the period of competitive party politics at indepen-

Table 2. *Elections in Which Winning Party Failed to Gain a Majority of Seats*

Country	Election	Seats/ Total	Winning Party	Outcome in Parliament
Sudan	1958	63/173	UMMA	dissolved 1958
Nigeria	1979	168/449	NPN	dissolved 1983
Lesotho	1970	23/60	BNP	dissolved 1970 <sup>a</sup>
Sudan	1986	100/260	UMMA	dissolved 1989
Sudan	1965	75/173	UMMA	dissolved 1968
Uganda	1963	37/82	UPC	dissolved 1969
Sierra Leone	1963	28/62	SLPP	—
Sudan	1968	101/218	UDP	dissolved 1968
Sierra Leone	1967	32/66	APC	military coup <sup>b</sup>
Mauritius	1976	34/70	MMM	—
Burkina Faso	1978	28/57	UDV-RDA	dissolved 1980

<sup>a</sup>Electoral results are invalidated and election is suspended by sitting prime minister.

<sup>b</sup>Military coup is reversed following junior officer counter coup, which restores Siaka Stevens's All People's Congress government to power in April 1968.

dence, that party was typically able to integrate, coopt, or eliminate other political parties and to install stable civilian single-party rule, at least until the first leader retired. This was the pattern in countries like Tanzania, Côte d'Ivoire, and Zambia. In the absence of a dominant party from the independence struggle, ensuing regimes were characterized by considerable instability and a greater reliance on coercion, notably through military intervention.<sup>46</sup>

A closer look at electoral data confirms that close elections that did not decisively promote one political party over the others were associated with political instability in postcolonial Africa. Table 2 lists all elections held in sub-Saharan Africa between independence and 1989 in which the incumbent party did not win a majority of seats. In each case, except following elections in Sierra Leone in 1962 and Mauritius in 1976, the parliament was dissolved extralegally within the next couple of years. It is difficult to separate cause and effect. Minority governments were more likely to be contested, particularly in ethnically divided countries, and to result in party fragmentation. Intense partisanship and infighting, fueled by the zero-sum struggle for state resources, often mobilized ethnic identities and led to societal polarization. On the other hand, in countries like Tanzania, ethnic fragmentation did not lead to political conflict, for the ruling party was able to garner support throughout the country.

Partly overlapping this first set of factors, distinct variants of neopatrimonial regimes emerged as a result of specific historical attempts to overcome tensions created by ethnic, linguistic, and regional heterogeneity, which varied markedly

across states. Very few regimes in Africa adopted a discourse of exclusivity, preferring to expend resources to promote cultural assimilation and a sense of nationhood.<sup>47</sup> Participatory rituals were considered useful precisely because they provided rulers with carefully controlled opportunities to demonstrate broad-based legitimacy.

Rulers used a variety of mechanisms to attempt to maintain national cohesion and their own popularity. Within a number of countries, for instance, great efforts were made to equilibrate public expenditures across regions. Rothchild notes for Kenya and Nigeria during the late 1970s and early 1980s that public expenditures were patterned on a "proportionality principle" to achieve fairness among provinces, and his survey of the senior staff of the Ghana civil service in 1972 showed "remarkably close parallels between the ethnic proportions in the civil service and the society at large."<sup>48</sup> Sometimes rulers agreed informally to rough ethnic, communal, or regional quotas for official positions. Even more commonly, leaders extended material inducements to a smaller set of social elites in order to promote various kinds of accommodation within the political class, arrangements that resulted in relatively high levels of elite participation and competition.<sup>49</sup> In these regimes, rulers promoted intermediaries who represented specific subnational constituencies at the top of the government.<sup>50</sup> These served as the rulers' emissaries and ensured that constituencies received fair shares of state benefits. The ruler might devolve this role to traditional chiefs in recognition of their authority, or he might designate members of the political class, notably through appointments to cabinet-level positions. If the latter, cabinet reshuffles were interpreted in terms of an elaborate ethnic calculus in which each group was assumed to be entitled to a recognized ratio of seats.

The ethnic calculus led to constant pressure to increase the number of important offices, so that the demands of diverse groups could be met. Even as it expanded competition within the political elite, the proliferation of positions complicated the suprema's ability to manage the regime. Could the members of the political aristocracy be trusted? Would they eventually wrest away the clientelist networks and rents on which rule was founded? Neopatrimonial leaders responded to such fears by systematically promoting the turnover of officeholders: No minister, backbencher, parastatal manager, governor, or prefect could ever be allowed to forget that a position was owed to the strongman, who could and would take it away sooner or later. Particularly vulnerable were men and women who had committed *lèse majesté* by developing independent networks of influence and power.

This dynamic helps to explain why so many rulers were willing to introduce competition within the single party; the introduction of such reforms in Cameroon, Togo, and Côte d'Ivoire during the 1980s signaled in each case a clear executive attempt to weaken the political class. More generally it explains one of the striking characteristics of these regimes: the rapid turnover of personnel. Thus, during Ahidjo's 24 years in power, he had 8 different ministers of finance, 11 ministers of agriculture, 12 ministers of the national economy, and 9 ministers of foreign affairs.<sup>51</sup>

Managing the political class by the circulation of officeholders strengthened the hand of the supremo but had the inbuilt disadvantage of generating an entire class of discontented elites. Leaders could always bring purged barons back to defuse emerging problems; a case in point is Mobutu's on-again, off-again relationships with Nguza Karl-I-Bond and Etienne Tshisekedi, in which the two men were repeatedly brought back from disgrace and even prison to occupy high-level positions in Mobutu's cabinet. Nonetheless, over time, the ranks of the discontented swelled, particularly after the economic and fiscal crisis erupted in the 1980s and began to necessitate the state's retrenchment and its acceptance of a freer civil society. As Heilbrunn notes, "Disaffected elites resented their exclusion from the patronage networks of authoritarian regimes and hence established independent bases of power in voluntary associations beyond the immediate reach of the state."<sup>52</sup>

These practices did increase political participation and competition in some states. All African neopatrimonial regimes, it should be emphasized, however, promoted social stratification and inequality. In some cases, the intermediate barons served their communities well and promoted significant reallocation of state resources across the territory. Nonetheless, their interest in representing a constituency was often essentially fictitious, and the effective redistribution that took place was limited to a relatively small elite. As Schatzberg writes, using neopatrimonial metaphors, "A major social and political divide thus occurs between those who can 'eat' and those who cannot; between those who command the forces of the night and those who are its victims.... In most cases, the 'winners' ... are usually inside the state, while the losers are usually on the outside looking in."<sup>53</sup>

Other regimes pursued approaches that relied more extensively on a mixture of ideology and coercion to maintain national unity and political stability. As a result, they were less likely to tolerate participation and competition. This was often the case for military regimes. Military coups were more likely in countries that had failed to emerge from independence with a stable government, often because of factional disputes within the political class.<sup>54</sup> Once the military intervened a first time, it suppressed formal institutions of competition and participation, which it argued had caused the instability and which it probably viewed as a threat to its own hold on power. Newly installed military regimes invariably outlawed political parties and independent associations, closed parliaments, and circumscribed the jurisdiction of civilian tribunals.

Yet military leaders soon found it difficult to rule without recourse to civilian institutions. Almost immediately, they were forced to call on civil servants to provide the technical expertise necessary to keep the government running. Over time, they began to adopt many of the institutional practices they had initially derided. Following Mobutu's lead, such rulers distanced themselves from the military and sought to civilianize their regimes, including by perfecting neopatrimony. Nonetheless, countries that had lived through military rule for any length of time were likely to have lower levels of political competition and political participation. Some military regimes, notably radical regimes such as that of Ethiopia under Mengistu or of Burkina Faso under Sankara, continued to rely

less on material inducements or more strictly limited their beneficiaries throughout their tenure.<sup>55</sup> Even as these regimes proved willing to increase levels of participation somewhat, notably by creating single parties or by convening sham elections, they continued to eschew virtually any form of significant competition.

## FIVE MODAL REGIMES

It is now possible to identify modal variants of African political regimes that embody distinct combinations of political participation and political competition. These regimes are distinguished by whether the population was broadly or narrowly mobilized (participation) and by the plurality of political associations (competition). Figure 5 identifies five modal regime variants that together collectively exhaust the range of political arrangements predominant in postcolonial Africa. It places them in a property space defined, following Dahl, by the extent of participation (*x* axis) and competition (*y* axis). The figure also shows where African regimes stood in relation to Remmer's four ideal regime categories: exclusionary and inclusionary authoritarianism, and exclusionary and inclusionary democracy.<sup>56</sup>

For the most part, African postcolonial regimes were variants on a neopatrimonial theme. At least three modal forms – military oligarchy, plebiscitary one-party system, and competitive one-party system – featured "big man" rule. Between them, these three types (*n* = 40) accounted for most of sub-Saharan Africa's political regimes in 1989 (see Table 3). Even Africa's multiparty systems (*n* = 5), in which chief political executives were checked to a degree by opposition parties and competitive elections, showed tendencies toward personal rule. Only the settler oligarchies of South Africa and Namibia (*n* = 2) clearly departed from Africa's neopatrimonial norm; with their stronger, centralized state and military apparatus and their closer adherence to legal-rational administrative procedures, they more closely resembled the bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes that had been common a decade earlier in Latin America and Southern Europe.

We do not offer these modal regimes as immutable categories. Actual African regimes reflected their own peculiar postcolonial histories that encompassed shifts from one regime variant to another. For example, Zaïre transited from military oligarchy to plebiscitary one-party system after Mobutu created in 1966 the Popular Revolutionary Movement (MPR) as the country's sole political party; Cameroon transited from a plebiscitary to a competitive one-party system in 1985 when Biya introduced multiple candidate lists for municipal and legislative elections; and Zimbabwe transited from a settler oligarchy to a formal multiparty system with independence in 1980. In part as a result of such changes, actual regimes displayed characteristics of more than one type, combining features of each at one time or another. In fact, this possibility is inherent in the logic of our framework, which proposes neopatrimonial rule as a master concept that embraces a variety of subsidiary regime types. We now describe each of these variants.

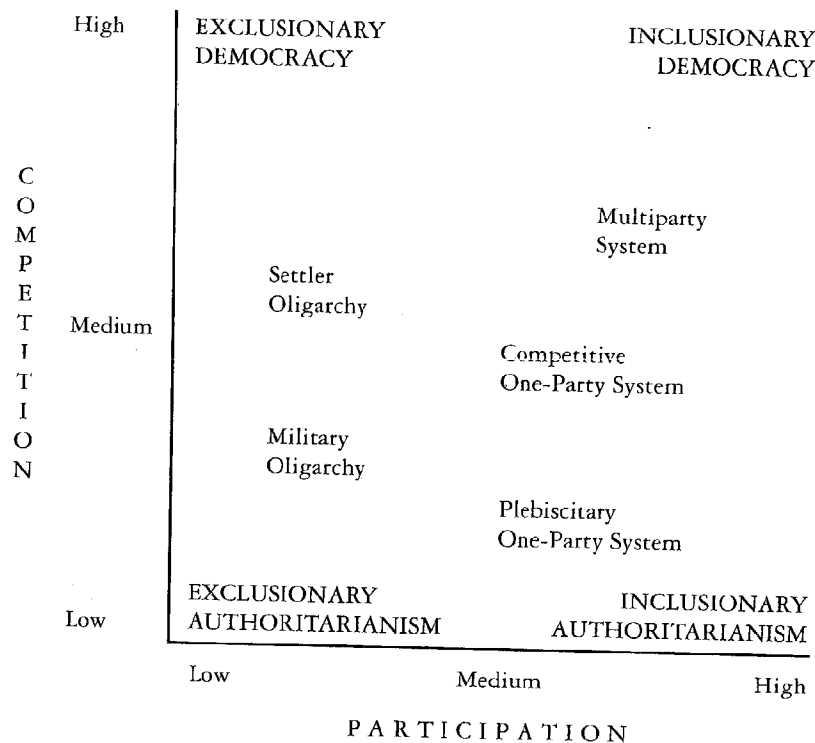


Figure 5 Modal Regimes in Sub-Saharan Africa, Independence to 1989

### THE PLEBISCITARY ONE-PARTY SYSTEM

This form of neopatrimonial regime allowed extremely limited competition but encouraged a high degree of political participation. Mass participation was orchestrated from above and channeled through symbolic rituals of endorsement for the personal ruler, his officeholders, and his policies. Voters were simultaneously mobilized and controlled through one-party "plebiscites," which included elections and officially sponsored rallies and demonstrations.<sup>57</sup> Electoral turnout rates and affirmative votes for the president typically exceeded 90 percent, results that suggested genuine participation, even if electoral competition was highly restricted by the government. Between elections, the regime employed a party machine to distribute patronage to a fairly wide array of economic and regional interests. Despite these participatory rituals, the plebiscitary one-party system was decidedly undemocratic because it precluded genuine political competition. Opposition political parties were proscribed, and only one candidate from the official party appeared on the ballot.

Table 3. *Modal Regimes by Country, Sub-Saharan Africa, 1989*

Plebiscitary One-Party Systems (n = 16)	Military Oligarchies (n = 11)	Competitive One-Party Systems (n = 13)	Settler Oligarchies (n = 2)	Multiparty Systems (n = 5)
Angola	Burkina Faso	Cameroon	Namibia	Botswana
Bénin	Burundi	Central African Republic	South Africa	Gambia
Cape Verde	Chad	Côte d'Ivoire		Mauritius
Comoros	Ghana	Madagascar		Sénégal
Congo	Guinea			Zimbabwe
Djibouti	Lesotho	Mali		
Equatorial Guinea	Liberia	Malawi		
Ethiopia	Mauritania	Rwanda		
Gabon	Nigeria	São Tomé		
Guinea-Bissau	Sudan	Seychelles		
Kenya	Uganda	Sierra Leone		
Mozambique		Tanzania		
Niger		Togo		
Somalia		Zambia		
Swaziland				
Zaire				

ocratic because it precluded genuine political competition. Opposition political parties were proscribed, and only one candidate from the official party appeared on the ballot.

The one-party plebiscitary regime in Africa was characteristically headed by a first-generation leader, either civilian or military. If civilian, the leader was usually the grand old man of nationalist politics who had won independence in the early 1960s; if military, he commonly had come to power in the first round of coups in the late 1960s or early 1970s. This latter group of leaders typically tried to civilianize and legitimize the regime by abandoning military rank and uniform and attempting to construct mass-mobilizing political parties. Examples included Mobutu in Zaire and Kérékou in Benin. As a result, by 1989 the plebiscitary one-party system had become the most common type of neopatrimonial regime in Africa.

### THE MILITARY OLIGARCHY

By contrast, the military oligarchy was an exclusionary form of neopatrimonial rule. Elections were few or entirely suspended; all decisions were made by a narrow elite behind closed doors. There was a visible personal leader, but power was

not completely concentrated in the hands of one man; decisions were made somewhat more collectively by a junta, committee, or cabinet that often included civilian advisers and technocrats alongside military officers. There was a degree of competitive debate within the elite, and objective criteria were brought to bear in assessing policy options. Implementation occurred through a relatively professional civil or military hierarchy, and executive institutions were maintained in at least a token state of readiness and effectiveness.<sup>58</sup>

The military oligarchy tended to be led by a younger generation of junior military officers who had come to power in a second, third, or later round of coups during the late 1970s and 1980s. The military retained a much larger role in the polity than was the case in plebiscitary regimes, even when the latter were headed by leaders who had emerged out of the military. Political participation was severely circumscribed, not only because elections were eliminated in the early years of military rule but also because existing political parties and most civic associations were banned. In radical regimes such as those in Burkina Faso or Congo, the military filled this political space with so-called people's committees to disseminate its message.<sup>59</sup> Although military oligarchs sometimes espoused a populist ideology, their methods of rule did not include genuine participation, at least until such time as these leaders began to make good on promises to return to civilian rule.<sup>60</sup> This reflected the military's deep distrust of politics and politicians.<sup>61</sup> The military oligarchy variant of neopatrimonial regimes was exemplified, among others, by the governments of Jerry Rawlings in Ghana (1981–92) and Ibrahim Babangida in Nigeria (1985–93).

### THE COMPETITIVE ONE-PARTY SYSTEM

This less common variant of the one-party system was as inclusive as the plebiscitary variant, but (as the label suggests) it was somewhat more competitive. It was distinguished from the military oligarchy in its toleration of limited political competition at the mass as well as elite levels. Elections in these neopatrimonial systems allowed for two or more candidates in party primaries or parliamentary elections. Voters possessed a restricted electoral choice among candidates from a single official party with an established policy platform. To be sure, candidates who enjoyed the support of the ruling strongman stood at an advantage in elections, but this did not always reliably protect them against defeat at the hands of voters. Even though personal rulers attempted to depoliticize society and manipulated electoral rules, voters seemed sufficiently attracted by the available choices to sustain genuine turnout figures at relatively high, though declining, levels.<sup>62</sup> Such regimes were also relatively stable, resisting military intervention.

As an aspect of institutional longevity, the competitive one-party regime was characteristically headed by a nationalist founding father like Kaunda of Zambia

or Houphouët-Boigny of Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>63</sup> Sometimes the original ruler engineered a smooth but nondemocratic leadership transition to a handpicked successor (as to Moi in Kenya or Mwinyi in Tanzania).<sup>64</sup> In these regimes, long-serving leaders had consolidated and institutionalized support in ruling parties and were, or considered themselves to be, politically secure.<sup>65</sup> A degree of pluralism was tolerated, so that significant opposition to the government was allowed on the fringes of the single party and in the press and among civic associations, which were strong by African standards.

### THE SETTLER OLIGARCHY

As we have mentioned, the settler form of rule did not share the core features of Africa's neopatrimonial regimes. Instead, it resembled the bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes constructed by Europeans in those parts of the colonial world where settlers gained *de facto* control of the state.<sup>66</sup> Settler oligarchies approximate exclusionary democracy. The dominant racial group used the instruments of law to deny political rights to ethnic majorities, usually through a restrictive franchise and emergency regulations backed by hierarchically organized coercion. At the same time, however, settlers reproduced functioning democracies within their own microcosmic enclaves, with features like elections, leadership turnover, loyal opposition, independent courts, and some press freedoms, all reserved exclusively for whites. Thus, at the same time that they permitted quite far-reaching measures of political competition, these regimes proscribed access to the political process by limiting participation. The classic case is of course South Africa, which with Namibia was the only remaining settler oligarchy in Africa by 1989, though half a dozen other African countries in the eastern and southern subcontinent shared a settler colonial heritage. Because of their peculiar institutional origins, one would expect settler oligarchies to display distinct transition dynamics, discussion of which is reserved for Chapter 5.

### THE MULTIPARTY SYSTEM

Multiparty regimes display relatively high levels of both participation and competition. Because they have met the minimal requirements for the installation of a democratic order, we do not include them in the following discussions of the dynamics of recent regime transitions. In these regimes, voters enjoy guarantees of universal franchise and equality before the law that are largely enforceable, and a plurality of political parties is free to contest elections that are largely open. The shortcomings of African multiparty systems, which are discussed more fully elsewhere (see Chapter 7), include weak opposition parties, intimidation of opposition supporters by incumbent governments, and an absence of leadership

turnover. The multiparty systems of Botswana, Sénégal, and Zimbabwe are all imperfectly democratic in these respects, and when unchecked, their leaders show marked tendencies to lapse into neopatrimonial habits. African multiparty systems can be thought of as hybrid regimes in which the formal rules of electoral democracy vie with informal personal ties of "big men" to define and shape the actual practice of politics.

## TRANSITIONS FROM NEOPATRIMONIAL RULE

We are now ready to assess the extent to which the neopatrimonial nature of regimes in Africa affects the process of democratization. On the one hand, one would expect transitions from neopatrimonial rule to have shared characteristics – for example, centering on struggles over the legitimacy of dominant, personalistic leaders. On the other hand, one would also expect the dynamics of political change to be highly variable, reflecting the different institutional regimes devised by strongmen. Hence the need to emphasize both the commonalities *and* variations in transition dynamics and outcomes.

Bearing this in mind, let us now turn to our central questions:

- How does neopatrimonialism influence whether transitions ever begin?
- How do they subsequently unfold?
- How do they eventually turn out?

We pursue a twin track of comparative analysis. In this chapter, we compare political transitions in Africa with those in other regions of the world where political authority is not neopatrimonial. In the following chapters, we ask whether the differences in the degree of political competition and participation present among African states since independence can help to explain differences in transition dynamics and outcomes.

The recent literature on democratization in Europe and Latin America converges on a common account of regime transition.<sup>67</sup> According to this scenario, transition begins when a moderate faction within the state elite recognizes that social peace and economic development cannot adequately legitimate an authoritarian regime. These softliners promote a political opening by providing improved guarantees of civil and political rights and later conceding the convocation of free and fair elections. The greatest hazard to democratic transition comes from a backlash by elements of a hardline faction within the political elite, manifest in threats by the military to execute a reactionary coup. To forestall hardliners, government and opposition leaders meet behind the scenes to forge a compromise pact to guarantee the vital interests of major elite players, thereby smoothing the way to democracy.

We propose that political transitions from neopatrimonial regimes depart from this model scenario in the following major respects.

## *Transitions from Neopatrimonial Regimes Originate in Political Protest*

As argued earlier, neopatrimonial practices cause chronic fiscal crises and inhibit economic growth. In addition, however much leaders strive for ethnic balance, neopatrimonial rule tends toward particularistic networks of personal loyalty that grant undue favor to selected kinship or subnational groupings. Taken together, shrinking economic opportunities and exclusionary rewards are a volatile recipe for social unrest. Mass popular protest is likely to break out, usually over the issue of declining living standards, and to escalate into calls to remove incumbent leaders. Unlike corporatist rulers, personal rulers cannot point to a record of stability and prosperity to legitimate their rule.

Endemic fiscal crisis also undercuts the capacity of rulers to manage the process of political change. A critical moment arrives when public resources dwindle to the point at which the government can no longer pay civil servants and the latter join antiregime protesters in the streets.<sup>68</sup> Shorn of the ability to maintain political stability through the distribution of material rewards, neopatrimonial leaders resort erratically to coercion, which in turn further undermines the regime's legitimacy. The final showdown arrives when the government is unable to pay the military.

As a result of twin political and economic crises, regime transitions are more likely to originate in society than in the corridors of elite power. The existing literature is inconsistent on this point. O'Donnell and Schmitter assert that "there is no transition whose beginning is not the consequence – direct or indirect – of important divisions within the authoritarian regime itself."<sup>69</sup> Yet the same authors note that authoritarian rulers usually miss opportunities to open up when the regime is riding a wave of economic success, instead, "attempt[ing] liberalization only when they are already going through some serious crisis."<sup>70</sup> We read this to mean that political liberalization is as much an elite *response* as an elite initiative. It also begs the question of how leaders apprehend the existence of a "crisis"; presumably, elites are awakened to the necessity of reform by an outpouring of protest. Indeed, O'Donnell and Schmitter elsewhere concede that ordinary citizens commonly take a leading role in transitions: Whereas "political democracies are usually brought down by conspiracies involving a few actors ... the democratization of authoritarian regimes ... involves ... a crucial component of the mobilization and organization of large numbers of individuals."<sup>71</sup>

The well-known distinctions between top-down, bottom-up, and negotiated transitions are helpful here.<sup>72</sup> One might be tempted to predict that, since personal rulers centralize so much decision-making power in their own hands, neopatrimonial regimes would undergo elite-initiated transitions.<sup>73</sup> But the evidence presented in the next chapter indicates that transitions in Africa seem to be occurring more commonly from below. In general, neopatrimonial rulers are driven by calculations of personal political survival: They resist political openings for as long as possible and seek to manage the process of transition only after it has been forced on them.

The structure of political incentives in neopatrimonial regimes helps to explain why political actors from civil society rather than state elites initiate transitions. When rule is built on personal loyalty, supreme leaders often lose touch with popular perceptions of regime legitimacy. They lack institutional ties to corporate groups in society through which to receive signals about the strength of their popular support. Instead, they surround themselves with sycophantic lieutenants who, to protect their own positions, tell the leader what he wants to hear and shield him from dissonant facts. Thus, even skillful personalistic leaders lack a flow of reliable information that would enable them to soundly judge the need for, and timing of, political liberalization. Instead, they react to popular discontent by falling back on tried and true methods of selective reward and political repression. To be heard, ordinary citizens have little choice but to persist with protest and raise the volume of their demands in order to penetrate the conspiracy of silence surrounding the supremo. In sum, personal rulers are unlikely to initiate political liberalization or relinquish power without a struggle; they have to be forced out.<sup>74</sup>

We have argued that personalistic rulers who are overly sensitive to threats to their authority set about weakening all independent centers of power beyond their control. Transitions from neopatrimonial rule are therefore conditioned by the weaknesses of state and civic institutions. In the absence of formal institutional mechanisms for political competition, the protagonists find difficulty in reaching a compromise formula to end the regime. Because it provides few institutional channels for negotiation over rules and power sharing, personalistic rule instead gives rise to all-or-nothing power struggles.

Ironically, because neopatrimonial rule also undercuts civil society, it also weakens the foundation for antisystem change. Thus, when political protest does burst out against neopatrimonial regimes, it is usually spontaneous, sporadic, disorganized, and unsustained. True, opposition parties, human rights organizations, and trade unions mushroom as soon as the regime's repressive capabilities weaken, but they are fragmented, impoverished, and themselves lacking traditions of participatory politics. In this context, the emergence of the church as a primary actor in the transitions of several African countries reflects, as much as its own prestige and power, the absence of credible secular candidates to lead the opposition.<sup>75</sup> Because civil society is underdeveloped, the completion of the transition and the consolidation of any subsequent democratic regime become problematic.

#### *In Neopatrimonial Regimes, the Transition's Outcome Hinges on the Fate of the Dictator*

The presidentialism of neopatrimonial regimes has major implications for the dynamics of the transition. Power is so concentrated that the disposition of the regime is synonymous with the personal fate of the supreme ruler. Opposition leaders understand that real political change is unlikely to occur as long as the big man remains, since he has set all the rules and could manipulate any new

ones to limit their impact. As a result, his overthrow or flight becomes the primary objective of the opposition throughout the transition. The fate of long-standing authoritarian leaders can be a major bone of contention in other regimes, as witnessed for instance in the transition from bureaucratic authoritarianism in Chile in 1989; but in neopatrimonial regimes, it typically is the single issue that unifies and motivates the opposition. Ideological and organizational cohesion are likely to be strictly ancillary concerns.

For his part, the strongman identifies the sustainability of the regime with his own political survival and is likely to make major efforts to ride the wave of protest. This confusion between self- and national interest is not unique to personal dictatorships, but it has more serious implications there. Leaders in other regimes might believe themselves to be essential, but they are rudely reminded of the need to compromise by other institutions – for example, when the military and judiciary refuse to repress protest. Because personal dictators can deploy public revenues (however limited these may be) in support of personal survival, they can avoid accountability to the state's own institutions.<sup>76</sup>

The willingness of leaders to step down instead often depends on whether they fear prosecution for having abused state powers and privileges. Unchecked personal dictators are most likely to have committed egregious abuses, leading them to cling most desperately to power. Even when friendly powers promise protection from extradition demands as an inducement to accept retirement, leaders with a poor human rights record and a history of state violence may hesitate to give up the protection of office without amnesty. They fear the opposition's promises to prosecute them, and recalling the ignominious exile of the Marcoses of the Philippines or the Shah of Iran, worry that they will never be safe.

As a result, the demise of personal dictators is usually protracted and painful, with incumbents tenaciously clinging to power. At worst, the most stubborn incumbents may even allow the destruction of their nation's economic and political structures as a cost of personal political survival.<sup>77</sup> Over time, the ruler's authority over persons and territory and the very existence of the state as an organized body may become a fiction. The leader shrinks to little more than a local warlord who survives by controlling some resources and retaining the loyalty of a segment of the old coercive apparatus.

#### *Neopatrimonial Elites Fracture over Access to Patronage*

The ruler's systematic reliance on clientelism, another key informal institution of neopatrimonial regimes, also conditions transition dynamics. At face value, one would expect elite cohesion to be particularly problematic in governing coalitions built on the quicksand of clientelism. By arguing that African transitions were initiated by political protest, we do not wish to claim that factionalism among rulers is unimportant. But we side with the view that "political struggle ... begins as the result of the emergence of a new elite that arouses a depressed and previously leaderless social group into concerted action,"<sup>78</sup> rather



than with "a move by some group within the ruling bloc to obtain support from forces external to it."<sup>79</sup> At issue is whether the leadership of the reform coalition comes from inside or outside the incumbent group.

Favoring the latter interpretation, we argue that the dimensions of elite factionalism are distinctive in personalistic regimes.<sup>80</sup> The conventional distinction between hardliners and softliners does not capture the essential fault line within a neopatrimonial elite.<sup>81</sup> Instead of fracturing ideologically over whether or not to liberalize, neopatrimonial elites are more likely to take sides pragmatically in struggles over spoils. Their political positions come to be defined according to whether they are *insiders* or *outsiders* in relation to the patronage system.

Elite fragmentation occurs as follows. Neopatrimonial regimes are characterized by rapid turnover of political personnel. To regulate and control rent-seeking, to prevent rivals from developing their own bases, and to demonstrate power, rulers regularly rotate officeholders.<sup>82</sup> Rulers typically expel potential opponents from government jobs, from approved institutions like ruling parties, or even from the country itself. Even if dissenters can sometimes expect to be later forgiven and brought back into the fold, such practices establish a nonaccommodative pattern of politics. Whereas insiders enjoy preferential access to state offices and associated spoils, outsiders are left to languish in the wilderness. The more complete their exclusion from economic opportunity, the more strongly outsiders are motivated to oppose the incumbent regime. Outsiders take refuge from official institutions in civil society, the parallel economy, or international exile. From these locations, they grasp for control of popular protest movements, usually by promoting symbols (such as multiparty democracy) that can convert economic grievances into demands for regime change.

Meanwhile, the insiders in a patrimonial ruling coalition are unlikely to promote political reform. Stultified by years of obeisance to the official party line, they have exhausted their own capacity for original or innovative thinking. Recruited and sustained with material inducements, lacking an independent political base, and thoroughly compromised in the regime's corruption, they are dependent on the survival of the incumbent. Insiders typically have risen through the ranks of political service and, apart from top leaders who may have invested in private capital holdings, derive livelihood principally from state or party offices. Because they face the prospect of losing all visible means of support in a political transition, they have little option but to cling to the regime, to sink or swim with it.

Even if the state elite does begin to fragment over the pace of political reform, such splits are governed more by considerations of self-interest than ideology. At some point during the transition, waverers may calculate that their access to rents and prebends is best served by crossing over to the opposition. As patronage resources dwindle, incumbent leaders try to tighten their grip on revenues (especially export returns and foreign aid) in order to reward the loyalty of remaining insiders and to attempt to buy back the outsiders.<sup>83</sup> In sum, the operations of neopatrimonialism tend to simultaneously create a defensively cohesive state elite and a potential pool of alternative leaders outside of the state.

### *Elite Political Pacts Are Unlikely in Neopatrimonial Regimes*

Pacts are "more or less enduring compromises ... [in which] no social or political group is sufficiently dominant to impose its ideal project, and what typically emerges is a second-best solution."<sup>84</sup> They have featured prominently in the literature because of their role in democratic transitions in Spain, Brazil, and Venezuela.<sup>85</sup>

Some of the conditions conducive of pact-making are present in the late stages of neopatrimonial rule, such as the interdependence of competing players and the inability of anyone to impose a preferred outcome. But other conditions are absent. First, incumbent and opposition leaders are usually so polarized from winner-take-all power struggles that there is slim possibility that moderate factions from either side can negotiate an agreement. Instead, transitions unfold along a path of escalating confrontations until one side or other loses decisively. To the extent that transitions occur without setting a precedent for compromise, the chances are reduced that any resultant democratic regime can be sustained and consolidated.

In addition, the likelihood of pacts is a function of the degree of formal political institutionalization in a regime. In corporatist regimes, the parties to a political pact are the acknowledged leaders of major interest blocs within state and society and, by carrying their supporters along, can make agreements stick. In neopatrimonial regimes, political leaders may represent no more than a tiny coterie of clients and may be unable to build a political consensus around any intralite agreement. The emerging political parties and civic groups typically lack organizational traditions, experience, and funds and find it difficult to escape factionalism. As a result, contending opposition leaders within a pluralistic social movement do not usually have the authenticity and legitimacy to strike a deal on behalf of dissident factions.

Under neopatrimonialism, the prospect of compromise depends more on the personality, management skills, and governing institutions of the incumbent ruler. A leader who has attempted to legitimate a personalistic regime with populist rhetoric – for example, of "peoples" democracy or "African" socialism – is more likely to respond positively to demands for political liberalization than a leader who has ruled on the basis of claims of traditional paternalism or revolutionary purity. A leader who has allowed political rivals to live freely within the country is more likely to strike a deal on the rules of transition than a leader who has systematically eliminated or exiled opponents. As we show in the next chapter, a number of such deals were struck during Africa's transitions of the early 1990s. We contend, however, that neopatrimonial practices generally reduce the possibility of a grand compromise of power sharing. Rather, as argued earlier, the strongman and his entourage have to go.

### *In Neopatrimonial Regimes, Transitions Are Struggles to Establish Legal Rules*

As struggles over the rules of the political game, regime transitions determine the future constellation of winners and losers in the socioeconomic realm.

Here, too, the institutional features of the previous regime shape the status of rules and the nature of rule-making conflicts. Corporatist regimes elsewhere in the world may have been installed by extraconstitutional means and may have involved the suspension of constitutional rights. But to the extent that this form of authoritarian rule was bureaucratic, it was rule-governed, and its participants were acculturated in important respects to a rule of law.

Because personalistic leaders enjoyed sweeping discretion to make public decisions, transitions from neopatrimonial regimes are concerned fundamentally with whether rules even matter.<sup>86</sup> The opposition, which commonly includes lawyers within its leadership ranks, calls for the rule of law.<sup>87</sup> Indeed, in its different national and international manifestations, the law is one of the more potent weapons the opposition has at its disposal. In an effort to establish the primacy of legal rules, it challenges the regime to end human rights violations, lift emergency regulations, allow registration of opposition parties, hold a sovereign national conference, limit the constitutional powers of the executive, or hold competitive elections. At some moment in the struggle, the content of the constitution and the electoral laws become points of contention. In other words, the opposition attempts to reintroduce rule-governed behavior after a prolonged period in which such niceties have never existed or have been suspended.

Part of the opposition's objective in establishing legal rules is to gain access to resources monopolized by the ruling clique. In the context of a democratic transition, the opposition is most immediately interested in the regime's control of the media and other electoral campaign assets. In the longer run, business interests in the opposition may be keen to permanently alter the rules about government intervention in the economy. At this point, internal conflicts may emerge within the opposition over the extent of regime transition, with old-guard politicians often seeking to limit rule changes to ensure that they can benefit from state patronage or business opportunities once they capture state power. Thus, the struggle over political rules is often a pretext for or a prelude to even more fundamental economic struggles that are laid bare in efforts to strip neopatrimonial rulers of their political monopolies.

#### *During Transitions from Neopatrimonial Regimes, Middle-Class Elements Align with the Opposition*

Struggles over the status of property rights reveal the deeper structure of a regime's social base. The relationship between state and capital in Latin America and Southern Europe is very different from that of African countries. Corporatist regimes promote accumulation through "triple alliances" with foreign and national private capital, and draw domestic political support from the expanding entrepreneurial middle classes.<sup>88</sup> This structure of political support has maintained or deepened great inequalities of wealth and income, which in turn limit the options for transition. Under capitalism, democracies can be installed only gradually without disrupting the distribution of assets, or by a popular upsurge, a rapid transition, and the introduction of redistributive policies, which risk provoking right-wing forces to intervene to reverse the transition. Some analysts

argue that to achieve a stable democracy the right wing must therefore do well in a founding election and that the left must accept the inviolability of the bourgeoisie's property rights.<sup>89</sup>

Because neopatrimonial regimes are embedded in precapitalist societies, one would expect different transition trajectories. The pervasiveness of clientelism means that the state has actively undermined capitalist forms of accumulation. Property rights are imperfectly respected, and there are powerful disincentives against private entrepreneurship and long-term productive investments. Unlike in Latin America, governing alliances between military rulers and a national bourgeoisie are uncommon. Instead, the weak national bourgeoisie of Africa is frustrated by state ownership, overregulation, and official corruption. Rather than regarding the incumbent regime as the protector of property rights, private capital opposes the use of the state machinery by a bureaucratic bourgeoisie to appropriate property for itself. Thus, instead of demanding that property rights be ruled out of bounds, the national bourgeoisie in transitions from neopatrimonialism wants to include them in the new rules of the political game.

This explains the tendency of emergent middle classes in Africa to side with the democratic opposition rather than to uphold the incumbent government. Businessmen and professionals often take on political leadership roles in the opposition, drawing in other middle-class factions, like public servants, whose downward economic mobility is a powerful impetus to protest. These elements are unlikely to pose a threat to the acceptance of a new government established by a founding election, because any new government is likely to be more economically liberal than its predecessor, but also because bourgeois elements are unlikely to turn to military officers in a quest to reverse democratization. In transitions from neopatrimonial rule, the threat of backlash comes mainly from the military acting alone, with the emergent middle classes being the strongest and most articulate advocates of civilian politics.

To conclude, political transitions from neopatrimonial rule display distinctive features that can be gleaned from comparisons with transitions elsewhere in the world. And we have argued that, even if regime transitions are characterized by considerable uncertainty and some serendipity, the outcome of political struggles depends critically on the way that power was exercised by the rulers of previous regimes. We turn – after presenting a summary of transition features – to test this politico-institutional argument against empirical data from Africa.

#### ENDNOTES

1. See Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968); and Robin Theobald, "Patrimonialism," *World Politics* 34 (1982): 548–59.
2. For diverse examples and theoretical discussions from different perspectives, see S. Schmidt, James Scott, J. Guasti, and C. Lande, eds., *Friends, Followers and Factions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

3. A good introduction to these issues is provided by Samuel N. Eisenstadt, *Traditional Patrimonialism and Modern Neopatrimonialism* (London: Sage, 1972); see also Christopher Clapham, *Third World Politics: An Introduction* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).
4. Theobald, "Patrimonialism," 549.
5. Clapham, *Third World Politics*, p. 49. See also Guenther Roth, "Personal Rule, Patrimonialism, and Empire-Building in the New States," *World Politics* 20 (1968): 194–206.
6. See, for example, Harold Crouch, "Patrimonialism and Military Rule in Indonesia," *World Politics* 31, (1979); and Paul D. Hutchcroft, "Oligarchs and Cronies in the Philippine State: The Politics of Patrimonial Plunder," *World Politics* 44 (1992): 414–50.
7. Key early works in an increasingly rich and varied literature include Jean-Claude Willamé, *Patrimonialism and Political Change in the Congo* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972); Victor T. Levine, "African Patrimonial Regimes in Comparative Perspective," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 18 (1980): 657–73; Thomas M. Callaghy, *The State–Society Struggle: Zaire in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); Richard Sandbrook, *The Politics of African Economic Stagnation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Jean François Médard, "The Underdeveloped State in Africa: Political Clientelism or Neo-patrimonialism?" in *Private Patronage and Public Power: Political Clientelism in the Modern State*, ed. Christopher Clapham (London: Frances Pinter, 1982); and John Waterbury, "Endemic and Planned Corruption in a Monarchical Regime," *World Politics* 25 (1973): 533–55.
8. See, respectively, Robert H. Jackson and Carl G. Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982); Richard Joseph, *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: The Rise and Fall of the Second Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); and Jean-François Bayart, *L'Etat en Afrique* (Paris: Fayard, 1989). Jean-François Médard has reviewed and compared these different terms and argues the theoretical differences are trivial or mostly semantic. Médard, "L'Etat Néo-patrimonial en Afrique Noire," in *Etats d'Afrique Noire: Formation, Mécanismes et Crises*, ed. Jean François Médard (Paris: Karthala, 1994), pp. 323–53.
9. Jackson and Rosberg, *Personal Rule*, p. 10.
10. See Irving L. Markovitz, introduction to *Studies in Power and Class in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 5 for a parallel critique of Jackson and Rosberg.
11. Writing about Mobutu's consolidation of power, Callaghy speaks of the systematic "dismantlement of inherited structures, especially departicipation and depoliticization," including the emasculation of parliament, the elimination of the position of prime minister, the banning of all parties and youth organizations, and the centralization of state power away from the provinces to Kinshasa. Callaghy, *State-Society Struggle*, p. 171.
12. Quoted in Jackson and Rosberg, *Personal Rule*, p. 165. The authors go on to note that at one time or another, Banda personally held ministerial portfolios for agriculture, foreign affairs, works and supplies, natural resources, and justice, as well as holding ownership of agricultural estates and private companies.
13. Henry S. Bienen and Nicolas van de Walle found that a third of all African leaders are still in power after eight years in office, compared to 5 percent and 18 per-

- cent of all Latin American and Asian leaders, respectively. See their essay "A Proportional Hazard Model of Leadership Duration," *Journal of Politics* 54 (1992): 693.
14. Stephen Ellis, "Rumour and Power in Togo," *Africa* 63 (1993): 465.
15. Crawford Young and Thomas Turner, *The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); Michael Schatzberg, *The Dialectics of Oppression in Zaire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), especially Ch. 5.
16. Michael Schatzberg, "Power, Legitimacy and 'Democratization' in Africa," *Africa* 63 (1993): 451.
17. Jean François Médard, "la Régulation Socio-Politique," in *Etat et Bourgeoisie en Côte d'Ivoire*, ed. Yves A. Fauré and Jean-François Médard (Paris: Karthala, 1982).
18. Ellis, "Rumour and Power in Togo"; Jean-François Bayart, *L'Etat au Cameroun*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale de Sciences Politiques, 1985), pp. 141–57, for analysis of the centralization of power under Ahidjo.
19. On this point see Joseph, *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria*, in particular Ch. 5. On the recent evolution of these phenomena, see the excellent analysis in René Lemarchand, "The State, the Parallel Economy, and the Changing Structure of Patronage Systems," in *The Precarious Balance: State and Society in Africa*, ed. Donald Rothchild and Naomi Chazan (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1988), pp. 149–71.
20. Tessa Bakary, "Côte d'Ivoire: l'Etatisation de l'Etat," in *Etats d'Afrique Noire: Formation, Mécanismes et Crises*, ed. Jean François Médard (Paris: Karthala, 1994), 72–3.
21. Robert H. Bates and Paul Collier, "The Politics and Economics of Policy Reform in Zambia," in *Political and Economic Interactions in Economic Policy Reform*, ed. Robert H. Bates and Anne O. Krugger (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p. 391.
22. Quoted in Nicolas van de Walle, "Neopatrimonialism and Democracy in Africa, with an Illustration from Cameroon," in *Economic Change and Political Liberalization in Sub-Saharan Africa*, ed. Jennifer A. Widner (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1994), p. 137.
23. Cited in Mamadou Dia, *A Governance Approach to Civil Service Reform in Sub-Saharan Africa*, World Bank Technical Paper, no. 225 (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 1993), p. 21.
24. Jean-Louis Gombaud, Corinne Moutout, and Stephen Smith, *La Guerre du Cacao: Histoire Secrète d'un Embargo* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1990).
25. Steve Askin, "Mobutu's Wealth: How He Got It, How He Spends It" (paper presented to the annual meeting of the African Studies Association, Baltimore, MD, November 1–4, 1990).
26. Médard, "L'Etat Néo-Patrimonial," pp. 347–9.
27. Within a large literature that makes this point, see Sandbrook, *Politics of African Economic Stagnation*; Thomas M. Callaghy, "The State and the Development of Capitalism in Africa: Theoretical, Historical and Comparative Reflections," in *The Precarious Balance: State and Society in Africa*, ed. Rothchild and Chazan (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1988), pp. 67–99; and Nicolas van de Walle, "Neopatrimonialism and Democracy in Africa."
28. The World Bank estimated that in the early 1980s, government consumption constituted 17 percent of GDP in sub-Saharan Africa, 50 percent higher than

- in a sample of other developing countries. *Adjustment in Africa: Reforms, Results and the Road Ahead* (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 1993), pp. 23–4.
29. Cited from *The Economist* in Larry Diamond, "Nigeria: The Uncivil Society: The Descent into Praetorianism," *Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences with Democracy*, 2nd Ed., ed. Larry Diamond, Juan Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995), 417–91.
  30. Estimated from Table 12 of The World Bank, *World Development Report*, 1993 (Washington, D.C.: Oxford University Press, 1993), 260–1. Admittedly, such aggregate numbers disguise quite a large variation within both categories of countries and are based on data of often suspect quality. On the decline of Africa's fiscal base and on the difficulties of raising central government revenues in Africa, see Dennis Anderson, *The Public Revenue and Economic Policy in African Countries*, World Bank Discussion Paper, no. 19 (Washington: World Bank, 1987); and Karim Nashashibi et al., *The Fiscal Dimensions of Adjustment in Low-Income Countries*, Occasional Paper Number 95. (Washington, D.C.: International Monetary Fund, April 1992).
  31. The aid numbers are cited in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), *Development Assistance Committee Report*, 1994 (Paris: OECD, 1995), H8; the revenue data are cited in the World Bank, *World Development Report* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1984 and 1993).
  32. The seminal examination of these issues remains Robert H. Bates, *Markets and States in Tropical Africa: The Political Basis of Agricultural Policies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).
  33. Cited in D. K. Fieldhouse, *Black Africa 1945–1980: Economic Decolonization and Arrested Development* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1986), p. 145.
  34. Seven distinct regime types, based loosely on seven criteria, are proposed in Naomi Chazan, Robert Mortimer, John Ravenhill, and Donald Rothchild, *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1988). Ruth Berins Collier, *Regimes in Tropical Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982) proposes five regime types. See also Roger Charlton, "Dehomogenizing the Study of African Politics: The Case of Interstate Influence on Regime Formation and Change," *Plural Societies* 14 (1983): 32–48; Crawford Young, *Ideology and Development in Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982); and Dirk Berg-Schlosser, "African Political Systems: Typology and Performance," *Comparative Political Studies* 17 (1984): 121–51.
  35. Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971).
  36. Naomi Chazan, "African Voters at the Polls: a Re-examination of the Role of Elections in African Politics," *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 17 (1979): 136–58, quoted from p. 137.
  37. Diamond, "Nigeria: The Uncivil Society," p. 440.
  38. For example Tessa Bakary, "Côte d'Ivoire: Une Décentralisation Politique Centralisée," *Géopolitique Africaine* 2 (June 1986).
  39. Chazan develops this argument in "African Voters at the Polls," 137–9.
  40. Quoted on page 172 in Joel D. Barkan, "The Rise and Fall of a Governance Realm in Kenya," in *Governance and Politics in Africa*, ed. Goran Hyden and Michael Bratton (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1991), pp. 167–92. See pages

- 182–3 for a description of the different strategies Moi used to undermine the competitiveness of these elections.
41. Nelson Kasfir, *The Shrinking Political Arena: Participation and Ethnicity in African Politics with a Case Study of Uganda* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).
  42. These two measures are highly correlated: Pearson's  $r = 0.672$ ,  $P = 0.000$ .
  43. Karen L. Remmer, "Exclusionary Democracy," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 20 (1986): 64–85.
  44. This is argued by Chazan, "African Voters at the Polls," 149–50.
  45. Collier, *Regimes in Tropical Africa*.
  46. Numerous studies have chronicled and analyzed this process. The *locus classicus* remains Aristide Zolberg, "The Structure of Political Conflict in the New States of Tropical Africa," *American Political Science Review* 62 (1969): 70–87; see also Zolberg, *Creating Political Order: The Party States of West Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966); Henry S. Bienen, *Tanzania: Party Transformation and Economic Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967); William Foltz, "Political Opposition in Single-Party States of Tropical Africa," in *Regimes and Opposition*, ed. Robert A. Dahl (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973); and Samuel Decalo, *Coups and Army Rule in Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976).
  47. The exceptions include South Africa before 1994, of course, but also arguably present-day Sudan and Mauritania where Arab/Islamic regimes are increasingly excluding non-Arab/non-Muslim segments of the population. Donald Rothchild and V. A. Olorunsola, eds., *State versus Ethnic Claims: African Policy Dilemmas* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1982).
  48. Donald Rothchild, *Pressures and Incentives for Cooperation: The Management of Ethnic and Regional Conflicts in Africa* (United States Institute of Peace, 1996), Ch. 3, p. 7.
  49. Rothchild and Olorunsola, *State Versus Ethnic Claims*; and Bayart, *L'Etat en Afrique*.
  50. Rothchild, *Pressures and Incentives for Cooperation*, Ch. 2–3.
  51. These numbers are cited in Pierre Flambeau Ngayap's fascinating description of Cameroon's political class, *Qui Gouverne le Cameroun?* (Paris: l'Harmattan, 1983).
  52. John Heilbrunn, "Social Origins of National Conferences in Bénin and Togo," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 31 (1993): 277.
  53. Schatzberg, "Power, Legitimacy and 'Democratization,'" 450.
  54. For example, J. Craig Jenkins and Augustine J. Kposowa, "The Political Origins of African Military Coups: Ethnic Competition, Military Centrality, and the Struggle over the Postcolonial State," *International Studies Quarterly* 36 (1992): 271–91.
  55. On Ethiopia, see Christopher Clapham, "State, Society and Political Institutions in Revolutionary Ethiopia," in *Rethinking Third World Politics*, ed. James Manor (New York: Longman, 1991), especially pp. 248–52; on Burkina Faso, see René Otaek, "The Revolutionary Process in Burkina Faso," in *Military Marxist Regimes in Africa*, ed. John Markakis and Michael Waller (London: Frank Cass, 1986), pp. 95–6.
  56. We adopt the terminology used by Remmer, "Exclusionary Democracy," 64–8.
  57. See Collier, *Regimes in Tropical Africa*, 104–8 for a discussion.

58. Henry S. Bienen, *Armies and Parties in Africa* (New York: Africana Publishing, 1979); Samuel Decalo, *Coups and Army Rule in Africa*, pp. 231–54.
59. Even then, Samuel Decalo notes the military sought to limit the power and autonomy of the party, despite Leninist principles regarding the supremacy of the party over all other political institutions. Decalo, "The Morphology of Military Rule in Africa," in *Military Marxist Regimes in Africa*, ed. John Markakis and Michael Waller (London: Frank Cass, 1986), pp. 134–5.
60. Henry S. Bienen suggests that, even when they may have liked to, military elites lacked the organizational capabilities to develop grassroots support. Bienen, "Military Rule and Political Processes: Nigerian Examples," *Comparative Politics* 10 (1978): 205–25.
61. Back in 1968, Samuel P. Huntington wrote, "The problem is military opposition to politics. Military leaders can easily envision themselves in a guardian role; they can also picture themselves as the farseeing impartial promoters of social and economic reform in their societies. But with rare exceptions, they shrink from assuming the role of political organizer. In particular, they condemn political parties." Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 243.
62. The trend of depoliticization, involving both a demobilization of formerly active participants and the cooptation or elimination of opposition power centers, is well covered in Kasfir's *Shrinking Political Arena*. On the characteristics of single-party elections in Africa, see Fred M. Hayward, *Elections in Independent Africa* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1987); Chazan, "African Voters at the Polls"; and D. G. Lavroff, ed., *Aux Urnes l'Afrique! Elections et Pouvoirs en Afrique Noire* (Paris: Pedone, 1978). On elections in Tanzania and Kenya, two regimes that fit this category well, see Jan Kees Van Donge and Athumani Liviga, "The 1985 Tanzanian Parliamentary Elections: A Conservative Election," *African Affairs* 88 (1989): 47–62; and Goran Hyden and Colin Leys, "Elections and Politics in Single-Party Systems: The Case of Kenya and Tanzania," *British Journal of Political Science* 2 (1972): 389–420.
63. Côte d'Ivoire moved progressively to competitive primaries within the single party after 1980. Bakary, "Une Décentralisation Politique Centralisée"; Yves A. Fauré, "Nouvelle Donne en Côte d'Ivoire," *Politique Africaine* 20 (December 1985).
64. Kenya was a classic example of a competitive one-party regime until 1986 when Moi abolished the secret ballot in favor of "queue voting" in full public view, effectively eliminating voter choice (see Table 2).
65. Henry S. Bienen and Nicolas van de Walle, "Of Time and Power in Africa," *American Political Science Review* 83 (March 1989): 19–34.
66. Michael Bratton, "Patterns of Development and Underdevelopment: Toward a Comparison," *International Studies Quarterly* 26 (1982): 333–72; Kenneth Good, "Settler Colonialism: Economic Development and Class Formation," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 14 (1975): 597–620.
67. In addition to the works already cited, see Enrique A. Baloyra, ed., *Comparing New Democracies: Transitions and Consolidation in Mediterranean Europe and the Southern Cone* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1987); James M. Malloy and Mitchell A. Seligson, eds., *Authoritarians and Democrats: Regime Transitions in Latin America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987); Karen L. Remmer, "New

- Wine or Old Bottlenecks? The Study of Latin American Democracy," *Comparative Politics* 23 (1991): 479–98; Robert A. Pastor, ed., *Democracy in the Americas: Stopping the Pendulum* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1989).
68. Thus, Chris Allen argues that "in failing to pay salaries [the Kérékou regime in Bénin] ... signed the death warrant it had drafted by its own gross corruption, for it led to the actions of 1989 that in turn caused the regime's collapse." Allen, "Restructuring an Authoritarian State: Democratic Renewal in Bénin," *Review of African Political Economy* 54 (1992): 46.
69. Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions About Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 19.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
72. Juan J. Linz, "Crisis, Breakdown and Reequilibration," in *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*, ed. Linz and Alfred Stepan (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); Samuel P. Huntington, "How Countries Democratize," *Political Science Quarterly* 106 (1992): 579–616; René Lemarchand, "Africa's Troubled Transitions," *Journal of Democracy* 3 (1992): 98–109.
73. Huntington finds only six cases of transitions by "replacement," that is, from below. Huntington, *Third Wave*, p. 113.
74. A similar argument is made in Richard Snyder, "Explaining Transitions from Neopatrimonial Dictatorships," *Comparative Politics* 24 (1992): 379–400.
75. Paul John Marc Tedga, *Ouverture Démocratique en Afrique Noire?* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1991), p. 84.
76. News reports in mid-1992 indicated that Zaire's national currency, printed in Germany, was being flown directly to Mobutu's luxury yacht on the Zaire river for use as he saw fit (*Africa News*, 24 May 1992); amidst a crumbling economy, and although the average civil servant had not been paid in months, Mobutu was still personally ensuring the support of key followers, including elements of the armed forces charged with protecting him. "Mobutu's Monetary Mutiny," *Africa Confidential* 5 February 1993; and "Zaire, a Country Sliding into Chaos," *Guardian Weekly* (Manchester), 8 August 1993.
77. See René Lemarchand's well-informed essay, "Mobutu and the National Conference: The Arts of Political Survival" (Gainesville: University of Florida, unpublished manuscript, 1992).
78. Dankwart A. Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy: Towards a Dynamic Model," *Comparative Politics* 2 (1970): 352.
79. Przeworski, "Some Problems in the Study of the Transition to Democracy," in O'Donnell et al., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule* (1986), p. 56.
80. A large literature analyzes factional conflict within the African state elite; see Richard Sandbrook, "Patrons, Clients, and Factions: New Dimensions of Conflict Analysis in Africa," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 5 (1972): 397–432; and Bayart, *L'Etat en Afrique*, especially pp. 261–77.
81. For Huntington, the success of democratization largely hinges on the ability of "liberal reformers" within the government to outmaneuver the "standpatters."
82. Waterbury argues with respect to the monarchy in Morocco, "The king's degree of political control varies directly with the level of fragmentation and factionalization within the system.... The king must always maintain the initiative

through the systematic inculcation of an atmosphere of unpredictability and provisionality among all elites and the maximization of their vulnerability relative to his mastery." Waterbury, "Endemic and Planned Corruption."

83. van de Walle, "Neopatrimonialism and Democracy in Africa."
84. O'Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, p. 38.
85. See, respectively, Raymond Carr and Juan Pablo Fusi Aizpurua, *Spain: Dictatorship to Democracy* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1979); Frances Hagopian, "Democracy by Undemocratic Means? Elites, Political Pacts and Regime Transition in Brazil," *Comparative Political Studies* 23 (1990): 147–70; and Terry Lynn Karl, *Petroleum and Political Pacts: The Transition to Democracy in Venezuela*, Latin America Program Working Paper 107 (Washington, D.C., The Wilson Center, 1981).
86. Confronted by a journalist on national television with evidence that the government had disregarded its own laws in the manipulation of voter lists on the eve of the legislative elections of March 1992, the Cameroonian minister of territorial administration explained that "laws are made by men, and are no more than reference points." Cited in Célestin Monga, "La Recomposition du Marché Politique au Cameroun (1991–1992)" (Yaounde, Cameroon: GERDDES (le Groupe d'études recherches sur la démocratie et le développement économique et social), 1992, unpublished paper), p. 10.
87. The National Bar Associations played leading opposition roles in Cameroon, Mali, the Central African Republic, and Togo. See Tedga, *Ouverture Démocratique en Afrique Noire*, pp. 64–72.
88. Peter Evans, *Dependent Development: The Alliance of Multinational, State and Local Capital in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); and David Collier, ed., *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).
89. O'Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, pp. 62, 69. See also Daniel H. Levine, "Paradigm Lost: Dependence to Democracy," *World Politics* 45 (1988): 377–94.

## AFRICA'S DIVERGENT TRANSITIONS, 1990–94

Commentaries on sub-Saharan regime transitions run the gamut from giddy Afrophilia to gloomy Afropessimism. First assessments were hopeful, seeing the peaceful electoral displacement of authoritarian regimes in countries like Bénin and Zambia as harbingers of "political renewal" and "second liberation."<sup>1</sup> A critical backlash soon followed in the wake of a series of disputed elections in places like Angola and Kenya. At best analysts pondered thoughtfully about the sustainability of multiparty competition under conditions of ethnic fragmentation and elite corruption<sup>2</sup> or at worst lapsed into apocalyptic warnings of impending civil disorder in the wake of the "stalling ... winds of change."<sup>3</sup>

In our view, analysts should not rush to judgment but instead adopt a detached and broadly comparative view of what is essentially a mixed situation of democratization in Africa. As Peterson suggests, "Democratic development will not be a uniform, linear process."<sup>4</sup> Even in democratizing countries, transitions unfold with occasional steps back for every step forward. As some countries advance, others regress into authoritarian rule. And some years are better for democratization than others, making long-term predictions from short-term trends risky at best; for example, although there was a preponderance of democratic transitions in Africa in 1991 and 1994, there was a flurry of flawed elections in 1992 and 1993.<sup>5</sup> At any given time, optimists can discover reasons for celebration in some countries, and skeptics will find their worst fears confirmed in others.

By the end of 1994, the closing date for this study, the diversity of transition outcomes in Africa was compellingly illustrated by the contrasting fates of Nigeria and South Africa. Political developments in these regional giants have always influenced events in surrounding countries and helped to characterize the politics of the continent as a whole. Against the odds, South Africa made a harmonious transition to multiracial power-sharing under a government of national unity by means of democratic elections in April 1994. At the other end of the continent, Nigerians