Politics in Southern Africa:
Transition and Transformation

SECOND EDITION

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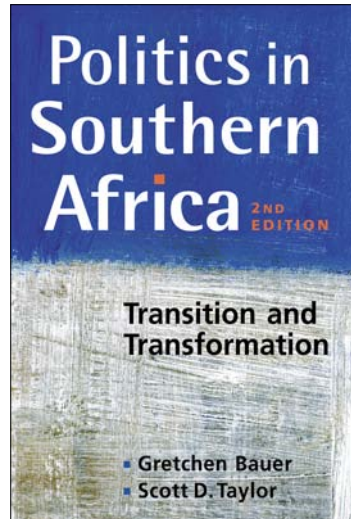
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1 Introduction

From June 10 to July 11, 2010, the eyes of the world were on South Africa. At the peak, some 700 million people sat in front of television and computer screens around the world, transfixed by events unfolding at the southernmost tip of the African continent. This unprecedented attention stemmed not from some human or natural catastrophe but from the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) World Cup, the quadrennial contest to determine the world soccer champion. The attention was nearly universally positive. And for South Africa, it marked an international validation of that country's dramatic transformation: from international pariah to regional leader; from developing country to major emerging economy.

The fact that the World Cup competition was held in South Africa was itself a signal event and the first time the prestigious international tournament had been held on African soil. South Africa, which six years earlier had won the competitive international bidding process to host the games against considerable odds, spent roughly US$4 billion to prepare for the games, including expanding roads, highways, and ports; developing new interurban rail service; constructing new lodging facilities and telecommunications infrastructure; and, of course, building state-of-the-art sports venues. The world saw a picture of Africa that was thoroughly modern, technologically adept, remarkably unified, and above all, peaceful and secure.

This image of Africa revealed during the World Cup was in sharp contrast to common Western depictions of Africa that emphasize death, disease, poverty, dictatorship, war and conflict, exotic wildlife, and primitive "traditional" cultures. Although some of these aspects may persist to varying degrees, even in South Africa, they capture, at best, only a portion of the reality of contemporary Africa.

The FIFA World Cup thus focused a vital and refreshingly positive spotlight on Africa. And the expectations were lofty if not unrealistic: not merely to host the games successfully but also to build infrastructure designed to attract new investment and development over the long term. As such, the decision to

host the games also involved significant opportunity costs, given the enormous pressure on the state to spend not on stadiums and infrastructure but on the country's more immediate social welfare needs. The results of this gamble will not be clear for many years.

The other countries of southern Africa imagined that the World Cup might also have an immediate positive impact on them, such as through increased tourism, as well as be a catalyst for their own long-term development. Throughout the region, expectations were raised. Many people in governments, the hospitality sector, and investment agencies as well as the general public anticipated that their countries could capitalize on the games. A program called, appropriately enough, "Boundless Southern Africa" neatly captured this regional dynamic of optimism surrounding the World Cup. Initiated in 2008, the program was oriented around a rather new concept: transfrontier ecotourism. Moreover, Boundless Southern Africa was itself a direct response to a South African government initiative known as the African Legacy Programme, which was created in 2006 with the explicit aim of leveraging the *regional* benefits of the World Cup. Indeed, among its goals were to "improve Africa's global image and combat Afro-pessimism," to ensure that "the legacy benefits are not to be confined to the host country," and, together with the African Union, to make certain "that the 2010 World Cup legacy agenda is owned continent-wide."[1] In few places outside of South Africa was this African Legacy—and ownership—more apparent than among South Africa's southern Africa neighbors, who also sought to capture some of the world's attention and largesse.

To be sure, the countries of the southern African region did not reap the immediate rewards they anticipated, and even for South Africa, economists will long debate the return on its staggering combined World Cup–related expenditure of close to US$4 billion (28 billion rand) (see Fisher-French 2010). But not to be underestimated is the nonfinancial impact, articulated by the African Legacy Programme and others, "to improve Africa's image and combat Afro-pessimism."[2] In that respect, the World Cup appears to have succeeded, by conveying to the world a region at peace; a region in which prosperity is possible, if not universally shared; and a region that is populated by capable and resourceful people who have the ability to create and maintain functioning economic and political institutions.

Just a generation ago, such a benign, even upbeat, assessment of the socioeconomic, political, and institutional fabric of southern Africa would have been unthinkable. In 1990, southern Africa was plagued by collapsing economies, long-standing single-party authoritarian regimes in some countries, and protracted warfare and social conflict in the others. Angola and Mozambique had not yet emerged from decades of civil war, dating from before independence. Zambia and Malawi were suffering under the exhausted nationalism of three decades of authoritarian rule by presidents-for-life. Namibia, which had won its independence only in 1990, was emerging from a

complex internationally brokered negotiation following a long liberation struggle. South Africa, though far more developed economically than its neighbors, was convulsed in the final throes of apartheid, the repressive and violent system that denied the black majority citizenship rights in the land of their birth, among other things.

The 2010 World Cup took place in a radically transformed environment. Growth in gross domestic product (GDP) in southern Africa had averaged over 4.5 percent per year since 2000, exceeding a combined $800 billion in 2009 (at purchasing power parity [PPP]). Before the global economic downturn in 2009, Angola's oil-based economy had expanded by more than 15 percent since 2000, whereas Mozambique's figure was about half that. Democratic elections have become the norm in South Africa, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, and Namibia as well as Lesotho. Long-delayed parliamentary elections were finally held in Angola in 2008. Botswana remains one of Africa's most stable democracies and has also benefited from robust economic growth. Indeed, among the countries of the region, only Zimbabwe and Swaziland have not seen marked improvement in democratic politics or economic performance, or both, since the transitions of the 1990s.

Thus, when measured by a host of international indicators, from GDP, foreign direct investment, freedom, transparency, governance, peace, or business climate,[3] to more subjective assessments of "modernity" and development, such as those captured in the World Cup snapshot, southern Africa is unique among Africa's regions. This distinctive character also firmly establishes southern Africa as a worthy geographic area for inquiry. Analyzing the domestic and regional bases for southern Africa's economic and political performance, and the specific challenges faced by the region, is the principal aim of this book.

In pursuing this line of inquiry, we resist clear preference in policy and popular circles, and among some scholars, for painting all of Africa with one undifferentiated brush. Thus, chronic violence in Somalia or Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) becomes a quintessentially African archetype; the corruption plaguing Nigeria and Kenya becomes a metaphor for the condition of states and societies across the continent. This is done, for example, through provocative and often damning titles, though fortunately the content occasionally belies the cover and allows for some variation. One such example is Martin Meredith's *The Fate of Africa: A History of Fifty Years of Independence*. Although Meredith is a superb author, and his book not devoid of nuance, the overriding message that most readers will take away is that Africa is in terrible shape and its prospects are unremittingly dim (Meredith 2006). Other authors eschew nuance altogether and effectively condemn an entire continent.[4]

Although it is often journalists, responding to their editors' need to sell copy, who regularly produce the dramatically titled "Afropessimist" accounts, scholars have been guilty of such overgeneralizations as well. This is particularly the case when it comes to assessments of the African state, which has

been variously described as "criminal" (Bayart, Ellis, and Hibou 1999), as being "in chaos" (Ayittey 1998), or as having achieved a condition of "instrumentalized disorder" (Chabal and Daloz 1999). Although a number of these analyses suggest that African states that have failed due to a combination of internal corruption, depraved leadership, and a hostile external environment can be restored (see Zartman 1995), one line of analysis suggests that the origin of African state dysfunction in the contemporary period is rooted in geography and dates to the *pre*colonial era, thus conforming to a centuries-old pattern of neglect of the countryside. According to Jeffrey Herbst (2000), precolonial political authorities lacked the incentive and capacity to project power beyond central cities; colonialism exacerbated the phenomenon, and hence the scope of the contemporary African state is limited geographically. As a result, sovereignty—indeed "stateness" itself—remains elusive. Patrick Chabal and Jean Pascal Daloz (1999) go so far as to portray Africa's predicament as normal, whereby "vacuous and ineffectual" states characterized by endemic corruption and neopatrimonialism predominate, liberal democratic state models and forms of government are fundamentally incompatible with African culture, Western notions of civil society are inapplicable, and the state is merely an instrument for depraved elites.

We regard this Afropessimist literature as deeply problematic, inasmuch as it typically sweeps aside any empirical observations from this vast continent that might challenge its dismal assumptions and their equally dire conclusions. At the same time, it is hard to argue that pessimistic views of African state and society are not based at some level on observable realities. Indeed, genocide in Rwanda, gruesome civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone, resource-driven violence in DRC, state collapse in Somalia, embedded corruption in Nigeria, and state-sponsored terrorism in Sudan certainly warrant condemnation, perhaps even pessimism; though even some of these are things of the past. Our point, however, is that the writings in what has been labeled the "Afropessimist tradition" all tend to obscure important regional and subregional distinctions and confirm Western preconceptions—and misconceptions—about the African continent (see Keim 2008). The message of these works is that what applies in one country or region of Africa obtains throughout the entire continent. Southern Africa, by contrast, is a region whose states have largely, albeit not completely, escaped the dire depictions that seem to dominate the Afropessimist narrative.

The African continent represents a vast area of the globe. Africa is three times the size of the continental United States. Its population of 1 billion people exceeds that of the Americas; after Asia, Africa is the second most populous continent. Its people reside in fifty-four countries and speak over a thousand different languages, corresponding to hundreds of distinct cultures. African history—ancient and medieval—is exceedingly rich and remarkably diverse, and its contemporary political and economic stories also vary widely.

Quite simply, as is often argued, "there are many Africas." Yet the impulse of both those unfamiliar with Africa and many scholars and practitioners is to treat Africa as a monolith. This use of "Africa" as convenient shorthand becomes particularly destructive and misleading, especially in the hands of Afropessimists, who attempt to extrapolate from a few countries a theory of African politics.

Even many African politics textbooks, which tend to be more evenhanded in their appraisal of Africa's problems and prospects, struggle to strike a balance between targeted analyses of specific countries and overgeneralizations of conditions on the continent.[5] Such texts that examine Africa as a whole are quite useful in providing a broad introduction to a continent unfamiliar to many audiences, and to be fair, authors are not accorded limitless pages to counter every myth about Africa or to engage in detailed analyses of every country and issue. Certain common factors do exist, such as the universality of colonialism and the preponderance of underdevelopment or maldevelopment, yet these have fostered a monolithic, undifferentiated approach to the study of African politics and society,[6] an approach that tends to obscure important regional distinctions.

Southern Africa as a Region

Southern Africa is one of the areas of the African continent that warrants systematic treatment as a region.[7] As Sandra MacLean (1999, 947) observes, "regions are almost always more than geopolitical divisions; they are also 'social constructions,' i.e., processes based on shared interests and intersubjective understanding." And although both political boundaries and identities can shift over time, "it is well established that the region of southern Africa does exist empirically. As Peter Vale states, 'the notion of Southern Africa—like the notion of Europe—is a single and indivisible one.' To be thus identified, a particular area or group of states must, over time, develop a sense of 'regionness.' There are various levels of this quality, determined largely by the degree to which the empirical and socially constructed attributes are entrenched and combined" (MacLean 1999, 947, citing Vale 1997, 73).[8]

Building on this notion of regionness, it is possible to identify a number of common empirical and socially constructed characteristics within and across states and societies in southern Africa. Indeed, given the many shared attributes and experiences, analysis of the countries as part of a regional bloc is a fruitful and revealing exercise.

First, many of the contemporary states of southern Africa share a common colonial and early postcolonial history. The region was initially settled by the Portuguese on both coasts, in what is now Mozambique and Angola, and by the Dutch in South Africa. However, with the exceptions of Angola, Mozambique,

and Namibia (which was under German rule), much of the territory had fallen under British imperial domination by the end of the nineteenth century. Although Portuguese, Afrikaner (Dutch), and German influences continue to play a role in one or more of the states of the region today, the Anglo linguistic, legal, political, and economic heritage remains a common feature for most.

Moreover, for nearly all of southern Africa, colonialism lasted far longer than elsewhere on the continent. In five countries—Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa—liberation movements were forced to resort to armed struggle to attain independence. Each of these movements was marked by at least a rhetorical commitment to socialism. In the context of the Cold War, the stated commitment to socialist principles generated intense interest in the region among external actors. It also fueled apartheid South Africa's campaign of regional destabilization against neighboring countries, the effects of which were borne by all the countries in southern Africa. This extended colonialism—and the resort to war to obtain independence—has had profound and lasting effects on social, political, and economic developments in the region, which are elaborated in the country chapters of this book.

Second, the presence of large white settler populations, or at least settler interests, emerges directly from the region's unique history and represents a key feature of many of its states. Each of the five aforementioned states that endured violent struggles for liberation had an expansive settler population. Although whites fled Angola and Mozambique on the eve of independence, their continued prominence in many countries, including South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Namibia and to a considerably lesser extent Botswana and Zambia, has been a double-edged sword. These states face severe and potentially destabilizing disparities of wealth and resources between rich and poor. Of course, there are wealthy black elites, and this class has expanded markedly since the 1990s; however, where a disproportionate share of wealth and productive capacity is owned and controlled by a "nonindigenous" white minority, tensions have lingered. In Zimbabwe, for example, the white population was demonized and targeted by the government of President Robert Mugabe in the first decade of the twenty-first century, leading to widespread violence, dislocation, and economic decline. There are also significant numbers of other "nonindigenous" groups, particularly Asians, who occupy important economic strata. How these countries incorporate racial and ethnic minorities affects their prospects for long-term stability.

At the same time, paradoxically, it can be argued that the white presence, and particularly the retention of a considerable percentage of "settler capital," in southern Africa have improved the development prospects for the region. Whereas some settler regimes in Africa, such as in Kenya and Algeria, abandoned the continent in the 1960s, their southern African counterparts held on much longer. White-ruled regimes in Zimbabwe (until 1980), Namibia (until 1990), and South Africa (until 1994) used their tight control over resources

and their international access to provide a strong infrastructure and relatively sophisticated international economies that were inherited by black governments at independence.[9] By and large, these economies were more diversified and performed better than those in the region and elsewhere on the continent that experienced massive capital flight upon transition to multiparty rule.

Third, southern Africa is politically and socially interconnected and interdependent. Although the region cannot be described as culturally homogeneous, the peoples of southern Africa are interrelated to a significant degree. The first inhabitants of the region were the Khoisan, whose descendants still live in parts of Namibia, South Africa, and Botswana. In the early centuries of the common era the Khoisan were joined, and substantially displaced, by successive waves of peoples from the north, as the Bantu migrations dispersed peoples throughout Africa. These Bantu-speaking peoples were agriculturalists, as well as pastoralists, who brought with them techniques of smelting iron and other metals. Their descendants are found today throughout southern Africa—for example, the Chewa in Malawi, the Bemba in Zambia, and the Xhosa and Zulu in South Africa, among many other groups. In the nineteenth century the accelerated arrival of Europeans and the formal onset of colonialism in southern Africa and elsewhere meant the imposition of arbitrary boundaries that typically divided ethnic groups across colonial borders. With few exceptions, the colonial-era map of Africa is unchanged, and therefore connections remain between peoples across those same borders: there are Batswana in Botswana and South Africa, Basotho in Lesotho and South Africa, Ovambo in Namibia and Angola, Shona in Zimbabwe and Mozambique, and so on.

Connections among the peoples of southern Africa are also fostered by a regionwide migrant labor system, which is another artifact of European settlement and colonialism. With the discovery of diamonds and gold in the future South Africa in the late 1800s, there emerged a migrant labor system that brought workers from throughout the region to the mines in South Africa. Before and after independence, foreign migrant workers also crossed borders to work in mines in Namibia, Botswana, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. As they crisscrossed the region, mineworkers participated in a cross-fertilization of ideas and experiences across national borders, leading in some cases to an early organization of workers or the rise of nationalist movements. Southern Africans also crossed regional borders in search of educational opportunities. During the colonial period, for example, a number of southern African leaders (as well as other privileged elites) attended Fort Hare College in South Africa, the first university for blacks in the region. Much later, many black Namibians, with no tertiary-level educational opportunities in their own country, would flock to South African universities—and then return home imbued with tactics gleaned from South Africa's liberation struggle.

Liberation struggles also fostered interconnectedness among peoples and states of the region. Many of those fighting for independence in their own

countries were forced to spend long periods of exile in neighboring countries. Countries like Angola, Mozambique, and Zambia, which gained their independence first, became havens in the 1970s and 1980s for rebel movements that were attempting to end minority rule in South West Africa (Namibia), Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), and South Africa. Thus, tens of thousands of Namibians spent decades in Angola, many South Africans flocked to Zambia, and Zimbabwean rebels established staging areas in Mozambique, to cite but a few examples.[10] In the process, these young exiles were also able to compare experiences from home and contemplate a common southern African future. Moreover, throughout these same years of struggle, the independent countries of the region were united in a political body known as the Frontline States (FLS), formed in an effort to isolate apartheid South Africa and bring an end to white minority rule in the country.[11]

Fourth, as in much of the rest of Africa, countries in southern Africa underwent processes of political and economic transition in the 1990s, during which significant political and economic liberalization took place—more or less successfully in some countries than in others. Although nearly every state in the region today claims to be democratic, the degree of democracy varies widely, in part reflecting the varied experiences of transition and the difficulty of inculcating and consolidating democratic regimes. Botswana, with a history of peace and stability and democratic elections since independence in 1966, was in no need of political transformation on the scale of the other countries. Namibia and South Africa, since their respective transitions in 1990 and 1994, have by and large abided by their widely acclaimed democratic constitutions and respected the rule of law. Zambia and Malawi, following a pattern familiar to much of the rest of Africa, made transitions in the early 1990s from decades of single-party rule by presidents-for-life (de facto in Zambia, de jure in Malawi) to fairly vibrant multiparty political systems. Zimbabwe, by contrast, has gone in the reverse direction, and, significantly, is the only country featured in this book that has experienced an erosion of democracy since the 1990s. There, President Robert Mugabe, in office since 1980, has employed ruinous and often violent strategies to undermine the opposition and continue his tenure in office by authoritarian means. Finally, the Lusophone states took divergent paths in the 1990s. In Mozambique, a successful transition from three decades of war to peace in 1992 made way for a vibrant period of reconstruction and development. In Angola, an end to decades of war was only accomplished after the death of rebel leader Jonas Savimbi in early 2002. An initially cautious cease-fire at the beginning of the decade, followed finally by elections in 2008 and a new constitution in 2010 may signal movement, albeit halting, toward economic and political transition in that country.

In addition to the nearly regionwide turn to more democratic modes of governance, the states of southern Africa share a unique feature in Africa: none has been the victim of a military coup. In fact, even coup *attempts* are rare,

making southern Africa truly exceptional on the continent in this regard.[12] This may suggest a level of stability or at least a respect for and expectation of civilian rule that does not prevail throughout Africa. Moreover, the region is also characterized today by relative peace, including manageable levels of social conflict and internal security and cohesion—again, a factor that differentiates the south from nearly every other zone in Africa. Even the regime-initiated violence in Zimbabwe abated in the wake of a fragile postelection power-sharing arrangement initiated in 2008. This peace and stability should bode well for future economic development and the sustainability of social and political movements attempting to achieve greater democracy.

Economically, there is considerable variation among southern African countries. That variation stems from a host of factors, such as population size, resource endowment, location, and a legacy of decades of war versus peace and stability. Botswana and Namibia have around 2 million people; South Africa has almost 50 million. Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa have diamonds and other valuable minerals; Angola has diamonds and oil. In contrast, Malawi grows tobacco, and Mozambique, until fairly recently, was largely reliant on production of cashews and prawns. Botswana, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe are landlocked, whereas the others have ample access to the sea. Recent developments, however, including a rebound in global prices of commodities such as copper (Zambia's main export) since 2002, the discovery of vast diamond deposits in Zimbabwe, and the expansion of aluminum smelting and natural gas and hydroelectric resources in Mozambique, have had a salutary impact on regional economies. Yet whereas growth has been impressive, substantial disparities continue to characterize the region. For example, in 2009, estimated per capita gross domestic product (at purchasing power parity) in the region ranged from US$12,700 in Botswana to less than US$100 in Zimbabwe.[13] Nonetheless, taken together, the economies of southern Africa are among the strongest on the continent, and the potential for future collective growth and development is enormous.

Despite this relative economic strength, however, all of the countries of southern Africa (with the exception of Botswana and Namibia) adopted some form of neoliberal economic reform, often referred to as structural adjustment programs (SAPs), in the 1980s and 1990s. Designed and implemented by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund,[14] these programs were intended to spur a process of fundamental economic transformation. SAPs were imposed across the continent beginning in the 1980s, when African states proved unable to recover from the collapse of global primary commodities prices, declining terms of trade, and rising debt levels. When they were introduced, however, adjustment programs were envisioned as a short-term series of measures that would restore Africa's economic health (World Bank 1981). By the time adjustment programs entered their third decade, in the guise of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, the flaws in the initial rosy projections

were glaringly apparent. Over the years, intense criticism and a lack of tangible and sustainable success led to substantial modifications in SAP programs themselves (Mkandawire and Soludo 1999); the World Bank even dropped the name SAP, replacing it with "development policy lending" in the lexicon. Notwithstanding such rebranding, and the elevation of "poverty reduction" as a priority in development policy rhetoric, the predominant development prescription remains a substantially neoliberal one. (In the contemporary period, perhaps only Angola, with its oil wealth and access to Chinese loans, can avoid the model.) This economic model regards state involvement in the economy negatively. However, given the outsized economic role played historically by southern African states, this process of transformation has proved particularly unsettling and painful for many. The interconnectedness of this region has meant that any economic difficulties in one country are keenly felt in neighboring states.

Indeed, regional proximity and economic interconnectedness have produced harmonies as well as tensions. A formal institution through which states attempt to mitigate conflict and promote economic and political cooperation is the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The SADC itself underwent a notable transition in the 1990s when it transformed itself from the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (made up of the members of the Frontline States grouping), into the Southern African Development Community, with South Africa at its core. Owing partly to South Africa's membership and its ability to play a hegemonic role given its far more developed economy, the SADC is widely regarded as the most viable regional economic community in Africa (McCarthy 1999).[15] Although one of three (somewhat redundant) bodies concerned with regional trade relations, SADC also represents a forum for regional cooperation on a large range of nontrade issues including politics, transport, gender, and health.

In sum, the histories and the prevailing political, social, and economic conditions, as well as the fates of each of the countries of southern Africa, are profoundly linked. This book attempts to regard them as such.

Theory and Southern Africa

Southern Africa has been examined through multiple theoretical lenses, each of which offers some insight on the politics of the region as a whole or of its constituent parts. International relations theories are particularly suited to the former, and scholars have employed variations on realist, liberal, and Marxist approaches to the study of the region (Vale 2001). Operating at a lower level of abstraction, scholars of comparative politics have relied generally on related theoretical tools, such as the modernization, dependency, and statist approaches, as well as on pluralist models that emphasize societal actors

(Chazan et al. 1999). Each of these theories and their various permutations has been employed to explain political and economic phenomena in independent Africa as a whole, though they have often come to conflicting conclusions about the nature of the politics in and of Africa.

Dependency and underdevelopment, for example, which have their intellectual origins in Marxism, were particularly helpful in conceptualizing the world as a system of states, in which the less-developed regions, including Africa, were unalterably relegated to the global periphery (Rodney 1974; Wallerstein 1974). Such perspectives, which elevate the notion of structure, had some validity: surely the marginal position from which African states entered the world stage—namely as economically backward, primary commodity exporters—helped to explain the late-twentieth-century African predicament (Leys 1994). These approaches, however, neglected too many factors. Like the structuralist theories within the international relations subfield, such as neorealism, which regarded the position of states as a result of power relations, the dependency tradition tended to ignore that power may also reside in states of the so-called periphery (as well as being vested in actors other than states).

In short, structural theories rely on material capacity and suggest that material attributes or endowments (whether wealth or power) determine political behavior (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001). In this view, African states are at the mercy of more powerful states in the developed North. Yet this is not consistently the case, and structuralist approaches are largely incapable of explaining the variation and change that define political life, at both the international and national levels. An emphasis on *agency,* by contrast, can help offset several of these shortcomings.

Depending on whether the level of analysis is international relations or at the state level, individual states or individual economic or political actors may be considered agents. If we examine first the role of the *state* as agent, the power that southern African states project in an international system is far more nuanced than structuralism allows. Structuralist theories are hard pressed to explain, for example, how South Africa has used its "middlepowermanship" to effectively negotiate international accords to its benefit and at the expense of both its less-developed neighbors and of *developed* countries (I. Taylor 2002). In a different way, Zimbabwe—and its neighbors—have resisted multiple forms of pressure from far more conventionally powerful developed states to remove President Robert Mugabe. The international community cheered a 2008 power-sharing arrangement between the ruling party and the embattled opposition party, but President Mugabe and his party have used both guile and control of the country's security apparatus to maintain control. Throughout the 1990s, chronically poor Zambia was able to play its various donors and lenders off one another to its advantage, practicing what some scholars labeled "partial reform syndrome" (Rakner, van de Walle, and

Mulaisho 2001). Botswana has defied many of the neoliberal tenets of "globalization" by successfully enacting and adhering to a state-centric, "developmentalist" model. Finally, the emergence of China as a major economic player throughout the region means that the structurally weak states of southern Africa are increasingly able to extract bargains by playing their traditional trade, development, and security allies against the ever more active Chinese—or by rejecting them altogether (Bräutigam 2010).

Moving more squarely into the realm of comparative politics, statist approaches reassert African (state) agency by proclaiming a greater role for the state, particularly concerning development questions and domestic affairs. They regard the state "as a primary motor force behind social and economic occurrences on the continent" (Chazan et al. 1999, 21). Of course, many African states lack bureaucratic capacity, or even legitimacy; yet whereas the state may be "weak by any conventional measure of institutional capacity . . . it remains the most prominent landmark on the African institutional landscape" (Bratton 1989, 410). In the statist view, African states are themselves actors, and their attributes, behaviors, and shortcomings help to explain problems of development and democracy.

Another theoretical framework frequently employed by Africanists is one that emphasizes the preeminent role of "one individual (the strongman, 'Big Man,' or 'supremo')" in African politics (Bratton and van de Walle 1997, 62). In this category, Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg's *Personal Rule in Black Africa* (1982) was a prominent early example. Analyses that emphasize the ubiquity of neopatrimonial rule in Africa and the neopatrimonial nature of the state are certainly part of this tradition (Clapham 1982; Bratton and van de Walle 1997). More recently, scholars have argued that the neopatrimonial framework has been subject to such a high degree of conceptual stretching and has been employed to explain such a vast array of negative outcomes in Africa that its utility has been called into question (deGrassi 2008; Pitcher, Moran, and Johnston 2009). We certainly welcome these developments.

Nevertheless, such "personalist" approaches retain a prominent position in Africanist scholarship; hence they warrant attention briefly here. Certainly, they are difficult to categorize using the agent-structure dichotomy introduced above. In fact, such approaches fit rather uncomfortably in an agent-structure framework: on one hand, they *reduce* African politics and economy to the individual—the "big man"—claiming that he is responsible for political outcomes, attitudes, and behaviors. Hence they are in one sense the ultimate expression of agency. On the other hand, such approaches *deny* Africans in general any agency, by suggesting that neopatrimonial behaviors are immutable, deeply culturally embedded, and in effect *genetic,* thus giving them a structural quality. Such determinism is fundamentally at odds with our approach, which regards politics in southern Africa as dynamic rather than preordained.

The diversity of African politics demonstrates the necessity of utilizing different theoretical lenses to analyze political, economic, and social phenomena on the continent. We argue for balance, though, not for conceptual muddling. Neopatrimonialism, for example, may offer theoretical parsimony, but as Naomi Chazan and colleagues (1999, 23) point out, "politics in Africa (as elsewhere) cannot be reduced so easily to the activities of actors on the national scene." Quite simply, despite his significance, Mugabe does not *define* Zimbabwe, nor did Nelson Mandela, who practically embodied the first five postapartheid years, define South Africa. Thus, such reductionist emphasis on the "big man" (and arguably the culture of corruption he inspires) is inadequate to understanding contemporary Zimbabwe and President Robert Mugabe without reference to structural variables as well. Likewise, women's participation in southern African politics is constrained by what we might label *structural* biases against women, but reliance solely on structural factors denies women the agency they so obviously possess, evidenced by the gains of women politicians and activities of women's movements throughout the region. As Alexander Wendt argues, "it is impossible for structures to have effects apart from the attributes and interactions of agents" (1999, 12). At bottom, the lesson to be drawn is that agency and structure, and how they interact, are important in the study of African politics.

Agents not only shape their environment, but they are shaped and constrained by domestic and international influences as well. Thus there are clear limits to exclusively agent-based approaches, which tend to treat "collective understandings as simply epiphenomena of individual action and deny that they have causal power or ontological status" (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001, 393). This is the basis of constructivist approaches, which may offer a corrective to prevailing theories (Ba and Hoffman 2003, 21); indeed, we find a number of helpful insights in this literature.[16] Among the most helpful contributions of the constructivist research program is its emphasis on learning.

Southern Africa has been shaped by agents and structural forces. External practices are not always simply imposed without adaptation on an African tabula rasa. Exogenous ideas are "endogenized" when they encounter "local" African norms and traditions (Magnusson 2002). Hence the influences on southern Africa are broadly international (for example, neoliberalism, globalization, democratization) and domestic (local norms and traditions, including those of both democracy and authoritarianism) as well as regional (states, their leaders, and societies observe and are affected by one another in the regional context). Politics, economics, and society in the region are explained, therefore, as Bruce Magnusson (2002, 2) argues, "by the work (the practice) involved in the articulation of ideas, norms, and context among communities within the territorial state and across territorial lines." Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink (2001, 407) describe this practice as "learning": "The mechanisms that lead to learning include interaction (with domestic and international actors),

comparison (with prior national experiences and with other countries' experiences), reflection (including internal debates and self-criticism) and personnel change."

The case study chapters reveal that in southern Africa, as elsewhere, there is learning across a range of social, political, and economic issues as regional norms and ideas shift in response to various exogenous—and endogenous—stimuli, continuing the process that MacLean (1999), in the vernacular of constructivism, labels the "social construction" of southern Africa. Examples of such learning include emerging regional ideas about the symbolic and practical role of land, what it means to be African or southern African, and evolving norms of constitutionalism and presidentialism, to name a few. As Chazan and colleagues (1999, 23) suggest in endorsing their "political interaction framework," "by looking at the interaction of social forces, economic activities, formal institutions, and prevalent values, we may better grasp the meaning and direction of the diverse patterns that have evolved in Africa since independence."

Like Chazan and colleagues, we apply an eclectic theoretical approach in this book and attempt to capture the diversity—and consistency—within the region. Indeed, whereas we employ a common framework for analyzing the countries, the research questions, and hence the emphases, in the chapters are varied. Nonetheless, each of the chapters explores the relationship among history, ideas, and institutions, broadly emphasizing economic development and democratization and seeking to identify the variables that enhance or retard the opportunities for their realization in the region. On the whole, the chapters serve to illuminate the tension between agent-based and structural explanations in Africa. Therefore, we draw on the theoretical literatures that privilege structure, state, and individual agents to inform the analysis of southern Africa's political, social, and economic transformations.

Country Case Studies

States of southern Africa could be analyzed in several possible ways. One example would be to classify them on the basis of trade relations, such as those that are Southern African Customs Union members and those that are not. Another would be to divide the states by degree of democracy or level of economic development. They might also be categorized by European language and cultural influences: predominantly Anglophone versus predominantly Lusophone. An alternative approach to analyzing the region might not privilege states at all and might instead weigh its *people* more heavily (Vale 2001, 28). Clearly, myriad other possibilities exist, and the choice of grouping or organization depends on which factors are emphasized. Thus, while recognizing the value of other possible criteria, this book divides the countries of southern

Africa largely according to historical experience, with attention to recent political transitions. As such, we have grouped them in the following way.

Malawi and Zambia were the first states in the region to gain their independence from colonial rule and are distinct in the region for the way in which their economic and political trajectories, after independence, mirror closely those of the rest of sub-Saharan Africa rather than southern Africa. Like other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Malawi and Zambia experienced significant political transitions in the early 1990s. Botswana also achieved independence in the 1960s from Britain and, like its counterparts, emerged under conditions that were both optimistic and uncertain. Yet in many ways, Botswana defies categorization, given its unique position in southern Africa and indeed in Africa as a whole. Botswana is one of the very few countries in Africa to have experienced both stable multiparty democracy and relative economic prosperity since independence.

The Lusophone countries, Mozambique and Angola, form a logical pairing based on historical criteria, although their paths diverged in the early 1990s. Each attained its independence in 1975, only to plunge immediately into protracted war. Mozambique and Angola struggled bitterly to achieve first their independence from Portugal and then the peace that would allow them to develop and possibly catch up to some of their more developed neighbors. The postsettler societies of Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa are the final grouping of states. These were the last countries in the region to attain their independence, and only after years of heightened struggle. All three countries contend still with the legacies of decades of oppressive white minority rule.

Malawi and Zambia are the subjects of Chapters 2 and 3. Both countries were colonized by the British, or British interests, beginning after 1889. As colonial possessions, they were eventually referred to as Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, respectively, and for the last ten years of colonial rule were part of the Central African Federation (together with Southern Rhodesia). Following the emergence of nationalist movements, the two countries gained their independence, largely peacefully, with the majority of other African countries in the early 1960s. Shortly after independence, moreover, both countries became one-party states led by presidents with a seemingly unbreakable hold on power: Malawi's Hastings Kamuzu Banda, as self-proclaimed president-for-life, and Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda, who faced no competition when he went to the polls every five years. While Malawi was clearly the more repressive of the two polities, Zambia was also intolerant of political dissent and permitted little autonomous societal organization. One significant difference between the two regimes was their stance toward apartheid South Africa and, by extension, the region. While President Kaunda in Zambia was one of the founders of the Frontline States organization, established to unite the region against South Africa, the Banda regime in Malawi was one of the very few friends of the

apartheid state. Moreover, Zambia also allowed regional liberation movements fighting the South African regime to locate exile camps within its borders.

More recently, however, the two countries' political and economic paths have again converged. By the late 1980s both countries were experiencing economic crisis, though of somewhat different origins. Economic deprivation combined with the long-standing political repression led, in both countries, to calls for political liberalization. First in Zambia, and just a few years later in Malawi, the once all-powerful executives bowed to domestic and international pressure and agreed to an opening of their political systems. Transition elections were held first in Zambia in 1991 and then in Malawi in 1994, in both cases bringing new political parties and new leaders to power. In the years since, however, the optimism and promise of those transitions were first replaced by the emergence of "electoral authoritarian" regimes, but subsequently settled back into the vicissitudes of normal politics: economic growth remains stubbornly tied to international commodity prices; incumbents have been elected and left office as scheduled; each country is noticeably but shallowly democratic.

Yet in a paradoxical way, Zambia and Malawi are in many respects further advanced along the democratic path than their southern African neighbors. Whereas all of the other countries profiled in this book are still led by first-generation liberation movements cum governments, Zambia and Malawi represent a noteworthy, if flawed, second generation. Their liberation governments were replaced in 1991 and 1994, respectively; while this has not resulted in flourishing democracies per se, it has seen the flourishing of opposition parties in these countries and the maturation of civil societies that have diminished tolerance for authoritarian politics. Thus, even though the immediate democratic future is uncertain, the longer-term political development of these states has much to commend it. In sum, these two countries form an important part of the region. Although their politics sometimes conforms to the rest of Africa, their experience may provide a blueprint—to be followed or avoided—for the rest of southern Africa.

Chapter 4 examines Botswana, considered by many observers to be an exceptional case in Africa, albeit as other countries become more democratic it becomes less the exception. Like Zambia and Malawi, Botswana was also colonized by the British, though many argue that British colonial rule in Botswana was particularly mild and allowed for a significant degree of continuity of traditional rule, in particular the institution known as *kgotla* (an assembly of all adult males in the community). Moreover, like Zambia and Malawi, Botswana achieved independence relatively peacefully, in the case of Botswana under the leadership of the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP). Despite regular elections every five years and smooth leadership transitions, the BDP has remained in power ever since 1965, an outcome that has implications for the robustness of Botswana's "model" democracy. Botswana has also

been a singular economic success story in Africa; its economic growth rates have been among the world's highest after diamonds and other minerals were discovered in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Moreover, revenues generated from the country's mines and cattle ranches (the primary source of wealth accumulation before diamonds were discovered) have been used judiciously to invest in the country's infrastructure and human resource base, earning Botswana the distinction of being one of the few "developmental" states—or at least a state with developmental characteristics—in Africa. In one way, however, Botswana is all too much like its neighbors in the region, having the second highest human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection rate in the world in 2010. Still, Botswana stands out for its progressive response to the HIV/AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) crisis, among other things making antiretroviral drugs available to all Batswana who need them. Like many other countries in Africa, Botswana has also seen a most welcome decline since 2009 in the HIV prevalence rate.

The two Lusophone countries, Mozambique and Angola, are analyzed in Chapters 5 and 6. Although much joins these two countries to their southern African neighbors, Mozambique and Angola are appropriately considered apart. Both were colonized by Portugal, a backward European power that imposed a particularly harsh colonial rule and refused to quit when other European powers were abandoning their colonial empires. Indeed, liberation movements in both countries fought for more than a decade until a military coup brought down the regime in Portugal and independence was finally granted to Portugal's African colonies. But the fighting continued in both countries, as rebel movements challenged new governments: in Mozambique until 1992 and in Angola until 2002. In both countries there was substantial sponsorship of hostilities and combatants by a host of external players, including Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and South Africa, the United States, the Soviet Union, Cuba, and others. In a more constructive international role, the United Nations sought to broker peace agreements in the early 1990s and to facilitate transitions to peace in both countries. In Mozambique they were successful. In Angola they were not; lasting peace was only achieved in Angola nearly a decade later in 2002. The economies of the two countries have always diverged significantly, and by 2009 Angola, with all of its tremendous resources, had a per capita income (at purchasing power parity) ten times that of Mozambique.

Chapters 7, 8, and 9 address the postsettler societies of Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa. These countries share one of the most significant features of the region, namely enduring and recalcitrant settler regimes; as a result, independence or black majority rule was only obtained decades after the rest of the sub-Saharan African countries had achieved it. In all three, liberation movements were forced to resort to armed struggle, even war, to gain independence. Namibia and South Africa are particularly closely related; indeed, Namibia was the de facto colony of South Africa for seventy-five years. Many

of these linkages, economic and sociocultural, continue to the present. Zimbabwe, meanwhile, differs in some important ways from the rest of southern Africa, but it also shares many characteristics within this trio of states. The similar legacies include the ascension to power of the leader of the independence movement (who has proved astonishingly resilient in the Zimbabwe case), gross and lasting disparities in land and resources, and the promotion of reconciliation without accountability. Each legacy has profound consequences for the future trajectories of these states. Zimbabwe's method of belatedly facing these challenges has proved aggressive, corrupt, and ultimately immensely destructive. Nonetheless, Zimbabwe's decline serves as a warning, as all three countries face some common challenges in the twenty-first century, although Zimbabwe must also confront the challenge of reconstruction.

Organization of the Book

In order to facilitate comparison across cases, this book adheres to a similar format for each of the country chapters. First, the chapter identifies the key themes that help to define contemporary politics and society in the country. Then it provides some historical background, from the precolonial period, through colonialism and the struggle for independence, until final decolonization was achieved. What follows is an examination of enduring racial and ethnic cleavages, an important, often defining characteristic in a region where all states are multiethnic and where six of eight experienced significant white settlement. Each chapter also offers a careful delineation of the different branches of government and the extent to which they act as a check on one another. After covering the realm of formal politics and institutions, the chapter turns back to the role of civil society actors, before turning to the fundamentals of the political economy. Each country chapter concludes with an examination of the most pressing challenges to state and society in the first decade of the twenty-first century and those they will likely confront in the years to come.

Chapters 10, 11, and 12 treat issues that transcend state boundaries in southern Africa: HIV/AIDS, women and politics, and southern Africa's international relations with Africa and the world. AIDS and gender are also subnational issues that relate to "deep politics." Although these issues are, or should be, of concern to states, these chapters offer at least a partial corrective to Vale's indictment of approaches that neglect people (2001). Southern Africa's international relations, meanwhile, speak to supranational issues and also move beyond the limitations of the state and state-centric analyses.

Chapter 10 examines what was a few years ago regarded as an existential threat to the countries of the region, namely the AIDS epidemic. Indeed, the countries with the highest HIV infection rates in the world continue to be the countries of southern Africa, at the same time that rates of new HIV infection

and adult HIV infection prevalence rates are falling in the region as elsewhere in Africa. The rapid spread of HIV throughout southern Africa resulted in setbacks to decades of development progress; for example, life expectancy and infant mortality rates plummeted to below preindependence levels in some countries. At the same time, remarkably, at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, both prevention and treatment efforts appear to be working. As noted, new infection rates are falling, due in part to changes in behavior and in part to simple measures like enhanced access to nevirapine for pregnant women to prevent mother-to-infant transmission. As for treatment, whereas in 2003 only 2 percent of sub-Saharan Africans had access to antiretroviral drugs, by 2008 44 percent of Africans (and 48 percent of southern Africans) had such access, leading to an increase in those living with HIV/AIDS across Africa and the region (UNAIDS 2009a, 25). Although HIV/AIDS continues to threaten southern African polities and societies at multiple levels, it has become a disease for which people have developed an array of successful coping strategies. Today the people and countries of southern Africa are *living* with HIV/AIDS.

Chapter 11 investigates women and politics in the region. Gender intersects nearly every other issue, from political participation to social organization, and women have long filled much of the space created by weak state capacity in the region. Indeed, permeating gender relations in the region and enlisting the support of women has been essential to stemming the HIV/AIDS tide. More broadly, this chapter touches upon the way in which women have transformed their role over the decades in the region—from the precolonial period, through colonialism, and into the independence period. In particular the chapter focuses on how women are remaking politics in contemporary southern Africa. Indeed, several countries in the region—Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, and South Africa—are among world leaders in women's representation in national legislatures and national executives; these and other countries in the region, such as Lesotho, lead in women's representation at the local level as well. Vibrant women's movements across the region have been at the forefront of efforts to institutionalize national gender machineries and ensure that women politicians respond to the agendas of the women activists. In this arena, southern Africa sets a clear example for the rest of the continent.

Chapter 12 explores southern Africa's international relations by analyzing economic and political linkages within the region and strategic interactions between the region and the rest of Africa and between the region and the world. Thus the chapter focuses on such regional institutions as the SADC, pan-African structures such as the African Union and the New Partnership for African Development initiative, and international relationships centered on trade, debt, and aid regimes. Southern Africa is not yet "boundless," as its leading advocates would like, but it has arguably made far greater inroads than comparable institutions across the continent. Southern Africa, principally

through the efforts of South Africa, has taken a leadership role in these regional and continental processes.

Chapter 13 concludes the book. Although the countries of southern Africa face entrenched problems and challenges—both individually and collectively—southern Africa is in many ways the most dynamic and most promising region on the African continent. Although the positive World Cup spotlight was welcome, it was fleeting; its glare nevertheless obscured the finer detail of the region. In this concluding chapter we outline the lessons derived from explicit study of southern Africa, and we outline avenues for future research and analysis, which the region deserves, and social science demands.

Notes

1. Http://www.sa2010.gov.za/. Note that works representative of the Afro-pessimist approach include Ayittey 1998; Chabal and Daloz 1999; Kaplan 1994; and Kaplan 2000.

2. Http://www.sa2010.gov.za.

3. Many such indicators are provided by the World Bank, Freedom House, Transparency International, United Nations Development Programme, the Economist Intelligence Unit, and others.

4. See, for example, Schwab 2002. In fairness, the relatively scarcer Afro-*optimist* books are not immune to overgeneralizing either, although most do strive at least to account for the negative. See, for example, Dowden 2010 and Hunter-Gault 2006.

5. See, for example, Tordoff 2002; Khapoya 2009; Chazan et al. 1999; Schraeder 2003; Gordon and Gordon 2001; Thompson 2001. Soyinka-Airewele and Edozie 2009 is a partial exception in that it is as much about the *study* of African politics as it is about the politics of Africa.

6. One text that does not take an explicitly regional approach, but nonetheless succeeds in capturing the diversity of the continent by categorizing African regime types, societies, and the like, is Chazan et al. 1999.

7. This book focuses exclusively on continental southern Africa and therefore ignores the island states of Madagascar, Mauritius, and Seychelles. Neither do we engage in any systematic examination of Lesotho or Swaziland, although references occasionally are made to these states. Lesotho and Swaziland are surrounded by South Africa geographically as well as politically and economically. Although the systems differ—Swaziland has become increasingly authoritarian, whereas Lesotho maintains its fragile democracy—these enclave states are ultimately tied to South Africa. Though Tanzania is a member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and is occasionally included among southern African countries, we regard its connection to East Africa as far more significant. Democratic Republic of Congo, a relative newcomer to SADC, is also not part of southern Africa's geography.

8. East Africa, North Africa, the Horn of Africa, West Africa, and arguably Central Africa also warrant attention on a regional basis. The specific countries one might include in any one of these regions, however, is to some degree a matter of interpretation, and overlapping affinities are clearly possible.

9. Ironically, in what some have described as "the new white trek to the north," white South African farmers have been offered land in neighboring countries (and as

far away as Nigeria) in return for teaching agricultural and other skills to rural peasants (Legum 2000).

10. Wars in the region may have had a similar impact. As a result of Mozambique's civil war, nearly 1 million Mozambicans became refugees, for nearly a decade, in neighboring Malawi. Over the years, war in Angola similarly drove many Angolans to neighboring Namibia.

11. The Frontline States comprised Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe as well as Tanzania. Malawi, which supported the apartheid regime in South Africa, was not part of the Frontline coalition.

12. Patrick McGowan (2003, 339) reports that between January 1956 and December 2001 there were 80 successful coups d'état in sub-Saharan Africa, 108 failed coup attempts, and 139 reported coup plots.

13. Https://www.cia.gov/.

14. Zimbabwe's program was suspended in 1997 due to noncompliance. South Africa designed its program internally, albeit following substantially on the International Monetary Fund and World Bank model (Padayachee 1997).

15. The SADC is not without a number of problems, however, including South Africa's reluctance to play the role of regional hegemon (see Oden 2001 and Chapter 12 in this book).

16. As Finnemore and Sikkink (2001, 393) maintain, constructivism is simply "a framework for thinking about the nature of social life and social interaction, but makes no claims about their specific content. . . . Agents and structures are mutually constituted in ways that explain why the political world is so and not otherwise." It does not provide "substantive explanations or predictions of political behavior until coupled with a more specific understanding" of structures and agents; thus we need to consider it alongside other approaches. See also Wendt 1999 for applications to international politics.