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Coping with Crisis in African States

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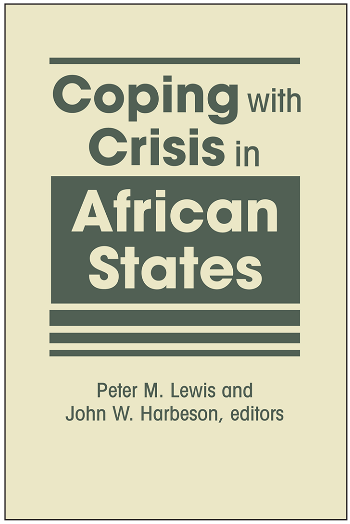

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Crisis, Vulnerability, and Response in Africa

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IN MARCH 2012, SOLDIERS IN MALI REVOLTED AGAINST THE GOVERNment of Amadou Toumani Toure, invoking a worsening security situation in the northern portion of the country where a Tuareg rebellion was gaining ground. The coup ended two decades of civilian rule and plunged the country into a new period of turbulence. While political maneuvers unfolded in Bamako, the capital, Tuareg insurgents were soon eclipsed by a group of Islamist forces, including Ansar Dine and al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM), who established draconian authority over the main northern towns and virtually partitioned the sprawling Sahelian state. At a moment when many international and African commentators were focusing on economic growth, improved governance, and broadening peace in much of the continent, Mali's coup and civil conflict provided a stark reminder of the fragility of many African states and the susceptibility of countries to sudden destabilizing events—even amid positive conventional indicators of economic performance and governance.

These events provide one of the more immediate reminders of the multiple sources of vulnerability that give rise to crises and emergencies in Africa. Wars, political upheaval, social violence, and uneven economic performance pose problems for many African states. Within the past two decades, conflict has taken a burdensome toll of casualties and displacement. More than 3 million people are estimated to have died in the many-sided conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) from 1998 to 2003 (Coghlan et al. 2006). More than a million lost their lives in various hostilities in Sudan (US Committee for Refugees 2001). About 800,000 perished in the 1994 Rwandan genocide, and nearly half as many in the extended civil violence in Burundi (Prunier 1995; Lemarchand 2007). Major wars in Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Angola, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Uganda have claimed numerous lives and destabilized various portions of the continent.

African conflicts have been shadowed by large-scale movements of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), now numbering more than 10 million (UNHCR 2015). In the wake of conflict, African states have confronted major challenges of rehabilitating shattered lives and societies along with weakened economies. Postconflict governments have sought to institute structures for sustained improvements in governance to strengthen the underlying fabric of their states.

Even for countries not overtly embroiled in conflict, violence spurred by ethnic, religious, partisan, or criminal motives have been a common problem. South Africans have had to cope with high levels of crime and recent incidents of xenophobic violence. Nigeria has been affected by hundreds of incidents of varied social violence, including the northern insurgency Boko Haram, with an overall toll exceeding 18,000 (Nigeria Social Violence Project 2015). Mali has contended with al-Qaeda and Tuareg insurgencies, Guinea-Bissau is dominated by narcotics traffickers, and Ghana has had intermittent communal violence in the northern region.

Other forms of instability have been equally prevalent. In the early 1990s, numerous governments in Africa faced escalating opposition to autocratic rule. Dozens of regime transitions followed, including many newly democratizing systems such as South Africa, Mali, Ghana, and Mozambique. Shifts in the old regime, however, did not always signal political reform. Many incumbents resisted change or introduced superficial reforms that preserved their power, as in Cameroon, Togo, and Angola, perhaps even weakening the fabric of their states. Several states collapsed into civil conflict, including Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Somalia. In other democratizing regimes, reforms flagged, elements of the old regime returned, or the military again stepped into the political arena.

Political changes in the 1990s were preceded by a decade of economic failure and stagnation. The majority of countries in the region showed lagging growth, burdensome debt, and acute fiscal pressures. Unemployment and poverty expanded while public services and government administration declined. Investment diminished, industries withered, and agriculturalists fell back on subsistence strategies. Africa receded to the margins of the global economy as the region's share of trade and investment declined.

Although economic, political, and security trends have significantly improved over the past decade, many hazards remain. South Sudan and the Central African Republic descended into political disarray and communal violence in 2013. Economic shocks in 2008–2009 caused growth to plummet across much of the region, although recovery appeared fairly quickly. Drought in Niger in 2005–2006 and massive flooding in Mozambique several years earlier caused large-scale dislocation and humanitarian needs. Rising insurgencies in West Africa have created several pockets of insecurity in the Sahel and the Gulf of Guinea. Chronic conflict in eastern Congo (then Zaire) and Somalia are further sources of strife. The risk of destabilizing shocks is a recurring problem for governments, neighbors, and international organizations.

Crisis is a familiar if indiscriminate term in Africa as in many other settings (see, e.g., Mkandawire 1999; van de Walle 2001; de Waal and Whiteside 2003). Contemporary affairs in the region have frequently been discussed in the language of crisis, yet this characterization is often applied without attention to context, timing, or outcomes. In common usage, a crisis indicates a chronic, deep-seated challenge of security, governance, or economic viability. Security crises such as those in Mali and the DRC are accompanied by large-scale violence and the attendant humanitarian consequences. Political crises such as the Madagascar stalemate of 2007–2008 often lead to breakdown and regime change. Economic crises, such as that in Zimbabwe in the early 2000s, result in mass poverty, hardship, fiscal emergencies, declining output, and the dislocation of currencies or firms. Longer-term crises may emerge from climatic events or migration, causing pressures on livelihoods and demographic shifts.

These types of emergencies are endemic in many parts of Africa, often creating a focus for regional and international attention whether through peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, economic aid, or political engagement. However, not every adverse event is a catalyst of crisis. While certain shocks may create inflection points that shift the trajectories of states or societies, others are managed or contained within existing institutions and resources. Countries in Africa vary in their susceptibility to crises and their capacities for responding to major shocks.

In this book, we assess comparative capabilities for crisis management among African states. When do unexpected events spiral into crisis? Are there institutions and policies that can help to manage adverse shocks? How do crises emerge, and how are they resolved? By improving our understanding of how African states cope with crisis situations, we can better anticipate disruptions and sources of instability across the region. This also sheds light on comparative questions of state capacity, economic flexibility, and social resilience. Collectively, we seek to answer three broad questions: How can we define crisis, especially the relationship between negative shocks and systemic distress? What are the political and economic factors that determine relative responses to shocks, and the range of outcomes from adverse events? Finally, how have different states in Africa answered major challenges, and what can we infer from their experiences? Aiming for conceptual clarity, we seek analytical conclusions about governance and draw on a careful reading of comparative case experience.

Putting Crisis Management in Perspective

By taking up the subject of crises and crisis management, we hope to provide a more complete perspective on adverse events and emergencies in Africa. Clearly, African states and societies cannot be perceived solely or primarily through the lens of crisis management. Central economic and security trends on the continent have improved in recent years, though risks and deep problems persist. Notwithstanding general improvements in economic growth, governance reform, and conflict management, it is evident that multiple challenges to stability and security continue to test the legitimacy and even viability of many states. Violence, political uncertainty, economic shocks, social tensions, environmental problems, or demographic shifts have the potential to continue to foment major crises for African states and for regional clusters of states. The analysis of crises and crisis response is clearly still relevant for policy and analytic domains.

These problems have not been randomly or uniformly distributed across the continent. Rather, countries differ in their degree of susceptibility to crisis, their history of insecurity-generating shocks, and their capacities to confront and manage them. In countries with reasonably capable legitimate states, responsive governments, and adequate external support, unwelcome shocks have been managed relatively effectively. In other contexts where state capacities have proven demonstrably weaker, governments have been resistant or unresponsive, external assistance has been hampered by political or geographic factors, and the crises of stability or security have been deeper and more protracted. Unfortunately, the latter circumstances have been more common throughout Africa. Economic development and political reform have been important factors in framing the nature, course, and outcomes of various crises.

As a collective project, we examine here the dimensions and trajectories of extended and near-term crises in Africa, gauge comparatively the capabilities that African states have demonstrated for crisis management, and assess the outcomes for ameliorating or deepening degrees of state weakness. Following this introduction, the next chapter defines more extensively what we mean by crises and sets forth a framework for comparing the factors contributing to their occurrence, the nature and sources of crisis management capability, and the variety and significance of the outcomes of these efforts.

Defining and Managing Crises

Crises arise when unresolved shocks pose basic challenges to political, economic, or social equilibrium. There is an essential distinction between shocks and crisis. Shocks are unanticipated adverse events that have potentially destabilizing effects, a jolt to the system that may upset economic performance, political regimes, governing institutions, societal norms, subsistence arrangements, demographic patterns, or provisions for security. Crises develop when existing institutions or governance arrangements cannot effectively manage these challenges, leading to protracted instability or dysfunction. The temporal dimension is also important, as crises often generate some urgency for resolution whether from domestic or external sources. Although a crisis situation may linger, it is rarely sustainable over the long term and, if unattended or managed ineffectively, can trigger large-scale insecurity or societal disruption. Crises present the risk of systemic breakdown: a collapse of regime, large-scale conflict, or economic malaise.

Crisis management can be regarded as the policies, resources, institutions, and informal arrangements employed by African states (solely or in concert with other countries and organizations) to address adverse conditions as they evolve. Governmental approaches to crisis management reflect different levels of political commitment, mobilization, and capacity. Similarly, there exists a broad spectrum of responses for crisis prevention, control, and amelioration, ranging from adequate resourcing and institutions to manage adverse shocks—which can bolster governments and states—to inadequate capabilities for crisis response that can yield a prospect of worsening state weakness in the face of challenges.

Occasionally, political leaders are actively motivated to prevent crises from emerging, and governments may take steps toward preventive action. The development of early warning and analysis can provide some ability to anticipate shocks whether they involve electoral tensions, communal violence, economic imbalances, or even climate trends (Goldstone et al. 2010). With sufficient information, governments have opportunities to forestall or mitigate adverse events. Election reform, local conflict mediation, central bank intervention, and climate risk insurance are diverse tools for managing potential disruptions.

In actual practice, preventive action is rarely effective, and early response is often the best course available to governments facing serious adverse events. As the impact is broadcast (e.g., from postelection violence, revenue or trade declines, flooding, or migration), governments have the option, with good information and sufficient institutional capacity, to address problems as they arise and to stem their effects. This can entail efforts at political negotiation, economic stabilization, security intervention, or humanitarian relief. Appeals for external assistance are often an important element, although outside involvement commonly involves delays and gaps. Later interventions, while frequently more sporadic and less effective, may be sufficient to contain the effects of shocks before they escalate into systemic problems.

Responses to shocks, of course, are neither inevitable nor universal. We note that often governments fail to respond to adverse developments and to disregard, or even aggravate, emerging crises. In many instances, rulers have actively encouraged turmoil to profit politically or economically, effectively prioritizing their own survival in power and economic prerogatives over the public good. A full understanding of comparative crises and the range of response should examine not only forms of management, but also manifestations of deliberate escalation or neglect.

In this book, we analyze the varying nature, sources, and dimensions of state vulnerability and capacities to address crises, illustrated in a number of important country cases. In the following section, we consider the types and nature of crises, and the susceptibility to shocks among diverse African states. This is followed by a consideration of salient causal factors in the genesis of crisis in Africa. The framework distinguishes among background factors that are largely immutable, at least in the short to medium term (e.g., history and geography); proximate or medium-term factors (e.g., fiscal capabilities, political parties, and social movements) that define the structure of opportunity, but may change in response to circumstances; and contingent or triggering factors (e.g., leadership and policy choice) that may alter the near-term course of events. We also evaluate the nature and differential impact of shocks, the timing and evolution of crisis conditions, the nature of strategic response and policy choice, and the political and institutional capabilities for managing adverse events.

Forms and Modes of Crisis

African states, while exhibiting diverse capabilities and attributes, have contended with many common challenges. The seven cases considered in the book—Algeria, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa—have all been susceptible to large shocks and have experienced potential (or actual) crises. These countries vary substantially in their structure, capacities, and liabilities, ranging from South Africa, generally recognized as among the most capable states on the continent, to the DRC, which has seemingly teetered on the brink of failure for many years. The major issues observed in the chapters range in scope and intensity. Ghana has experienced transitory ethnic violence in the northern areas while Kenya has witnessed sporadic, though highly consequential, election-related violence. Nigeria contends with chronic electoral violence, insurgencies, and social tensions while large-scale civil conflicts have wracked Algeria, Angola, and the DRC. Not only are the challenges diverse, but states have varied markedly in their degree of vulnerability and in their demonstrated ability to draw on strategies and resources to forestall or ameliorate serious challenges.

Crises in Africa can be considered along three broad dimensions: governance, the economy, and security. A *crisis of governance* reflects the failure of key institutions or a collapse of political order.[1] Governance crises are marked by regime instability, social restiveness, and often violence. This is frequently related to basic failures of government to meet functions of accountability, resource mobilization, or the provision of essential public goods. In some circumstances public institutions do not effectively control the country, and significant groups or areas have been antagonistic to ruling regimes. Crises of governance reflect an inability to sustain legitimate control or to elicit popular investment in the state. To some degree, these problems, and the resulting challenges to ruling regimes, have been associated with contestation concerning the structure of the state itself.

Crises of governance are manifest in different ways. Military revolts and coups d'état, chaotic elections, political stalemate among parties or factions, recurring large-scale social violence, and rising insurgencies signal fundamental problems of political order and legitimacy. It can be difficult to distinguish periodic turbulence or political challenges from a more basic governance crisis, which is often a matter of judgment and degree. The main consideration is the relative duration and scope of political dislocation, understood in relation to the capabilities within the system for engagement and resolution.

Why is it important to assess such a crisis rather than simply addressing the immediate political challenge? We argue that deeper systemic problems require more extended and comprehensive approaches than alleviating short-term tensions or resolving transitory disputes. In circumstances of poor governance, an essential social contract is absent. Regimes often fail to establish durable linkages with important portions of society whether ethnic, regional, or religious segments; rural populations; or influential class groups. Many regimes have garnered minimal legitimacy and have sought to maintain control largely through clientelism, institutional manipulation, and coercion (Lemarchand 1972; Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Hyden 2012). Limited accountability is often a correlate of weak legitimacy, and not necessarily a function of regime type. Though mechanisms of accountability may be more clearly institutionalized in electoral regimes, it is evident that some governments in nominal democracies may be distant and unresponsive, even as particular nondemocratic rulers may respond relatively effectively to citizens' needs (Fukuyama 2012; Levitsky and Way 2010).

Poor governance is often associated with deficient resource mobilization and a resulting failure to deliver essential public goods. Resource mobilization includes both revenue and spending. In states with weak institutions and scant legitimacy, revenue extraction is often quite limited, as governments lack the organization or influence to tax citizens and firms (Ebeke and Ehrhart 2012). In these circumstances, essential revenues may be available primarily from natural resource rents or foreign aid (Brautigam and Knack 2004). On the spending side, wide discretion (often accompanied by patronage, rent distribution, and corruption) has typically led to the diversion or misuse of revenues. A natural consequence has been a failure to provide collective goods in the forms of education, health, infrastructure, policing, and justice.

Struggles over political change have prompted crises at various moments in Africa's contemporary history. Considering the cases included in this study, colonial rule provoked serious conflicts including anticolonial wars in Angola and Algeria and the Mau Mau emergency in Kenya, arising from the failure to address the land tenure crisis arising from settler rule. A comparable set of challenges emerged from the deep-seated structural inequalities and intransigent settler regime in South Africa, leading to decades of contentious politics and armed struggle for an end to apartheid. In Nigeria and the DRC, inadequate preparation, poor institutional design, and weak management of transitions from colonialism led to serious destabilization in the wake of independence. Following the end of colonial rule, the articulation of authoritarian regimes and struggles among political factions led to political violence, coups, or civil conflict in most of the countries considered here. Ghana and Nigeria experienced recurring civil and military cycles while Algeria quickly succumbed to military rule. Nigeria, Angola, the DRC, and Algeria were embroiled in internal wars of varying scope and duration. Kenya and South Africa have experienced recurring violence arising from domestic inequality and social tensions.

In the era of political reform and democratization since the end of the Cold War, new sources of tension and instability have appeared, some of which are directly related to the transition process. Algeria and Angola descended into devastating civil conflict following failed transitional elections in 1992. Nigeria and the DRC experienced stalemate among authoritarian incumbents and aspiring civilian politicians in the mid-1990s. In Kenya in the 1990s, and in South Africa for more than fifteen years in the wake of the 1976 Soweto rebellion, social violence expanded under incumbent regimes as pressures for reform gathered.

Following many political transitions, democratic development has been hampered by tensions around electoral cycles and competition, accompanied by relative neglect of other dimensions of democracy (including constitutional reform and the rule of law). Serious political tensions and violence have surrounded three of Kenya's four elections since donors compelled the Daniel arap Moi government to hold elections in 1991, before constitutional reform was undertaken to undo the effects of authoritarian rule. Elections without structural change have aggravated governance problems in the DRC, especially since the deeply flawed 2011 poll. Nigeria's electoral failings have instigated violence in every polling cycle. Unbending authoritarian rule, veto players within the military, and inability to accommodate key challengers have aborted transitions in Algeria and Angola. Moreover, continued pervasive corruption has undermined democratic transitions throughout much of Africa, further exposing weak states to potential political crisis.

Economic crises are typically more straightforward in terms of measurement and assessment, yet also varied in their genesis and response. An economic crisis is marked by a sustained failure of growth accompanied by serious macroeconomic imbalances. Key indicators are large dislocations in government finance, the balance of payments, foreign exchange, or monetary stability. Slow growth or contraction of the gross domestic product (GDP; below 2 percent aggregate growth) for two years or longer is a beacon of crisis in an economy. Low growth is usually accompanied by severe fiscal shortfalls, declining public and private sector employment, the compression of imports (leading to shortages of both final consumption goods and industrial inputs), currency depreciation (whether registered officially or through a parallel market), and eroding investment in public services and infrastructure.

Economic distress has been a recurring problem in many African states for at least three decades. Adverse shocks can fall along several lines, including trade, investment, or monetary shifts. Trade and financial shocks have triggered crises in many African economies, notably in the late 1970s and early 1980s. A crucial source of vulnerability arises from the structure of these economies that are rooted in agriculture and natural resource exports (Ake 1981; Collier 2003). Abrupt swings in prices for commodities in international markets have rippled throughout many economies, regardless of the content or range of their exports. Revenue downturns—or sharp increases in key import costs, notably energy—provoked fiscal emergencies, shortages of essential goods and inputs, capital droughts in the private sector, and a degeneration of government provisions. Escalating foreign debt obligations were an integral feature of the long economic crisis of the 1980s and 1990s, resulting in a debt overhang that diminished revenues and forestalled recovery in many countries.

Revenue volatility is a special problem for resource exporting countries. Export proceeds are sharply affected by changes in price or quantity of the leading product (whether oil, gas, or minerals). Moreover, governments fail to manage windfall revenues effectively, and ambitious spending targets set during growth periods are rarely scaled back during slumps. The consequences of such fiscal myopia are growing deficits and the accumulation of external debt, leading to severe dislocations in revenues and the balance of payments. For many African economies, the prevalence of natural resources has given rise to particular syndromes of monoculture production and economic distortions characterized as a "resource curse" (Ross 1999). Resource exporters are fiscally centralized and highly concentrated on a key revenue source. The advent of export windfalls has the effect of diminishing agriculture and manufacturing activities while the rapid growth of state resources fosters a growing public sector that crowds out local production and services.

The problems of enclave economies and resource wealth are salient for most countries in this study; of the seven, only Kenya lacks substantial natural resources. Algeria, Angola, Nigeria, and recently Ghana are significant producers of hydrocarbons. The resource syndrome has been evident for all of the mature producers in the group. Ghana is an especially interesting experiment, as it will be one of the first countries potentially exposed to the resource curse after having become a pacesetting African democracy on the foundation of a more balanced economy. In the DRC and South Africa, mineral wealth has significantly shaped their economies, though with very different outcomes.

Crises of the economy are influenced not just by economic structure or international economic trends, but crucially by domestic politics and policies. Internal conditions strongly influence the readiness and ability to respond to exogenous shocks and competitive challenges. At the most immediate level, the capability of the peak economic bureaucracy is a crucial factor in tracking and managing key balances and sectoral policies. Bureaucratic and planning capacities, however, are a reflection of the basic incentives of rulers toward effective economic management or discretion and political allocation (Haggard and Kaufman 1992; P. M. Lewis 2007). Distributive politics and the nature of regimes have decisive influences on the nature of economic oversight in different states. As the case discussions make clear, the political framing of economic strategy and policy is a leading factor in understanding economic trajectories.

Security crises are evident in sustained significant violence in substantial parts of the territory or society. Insurgency, civil war, cross-border conflict, or dispersed communal violence can all be indicators of a security crisis. Different observers look to varying thresholds, though it is possible to operationalize a measure of insecurity by defining thresholds of casualties and displacement (see Sambanis 2002: 238). Security challenges can quickly upset political and social systems, producing broader volatility, as has been evident in Algeria, Nigeria, and the DRC. Large-scale conflict or dispersed violence may be a symptom of political dysfunction, economic downturns, or social strains, though these security challenges will also aggravate such problems. There are reciprocal paths of causation.

Crises of security are often apparent at the outset; certainly, this was true in 1992 in Algeria and Angola as well as the more recent instances of Mali in 2012 and the Central African Republic in 2013. Many conflict situations, however, emerge from extended chains of events. In the DRC, the spillover of refugees and combatants from Rwanda after 1994 shattered tenuous stability in then Zaire. The entry of troops from several neighboring states served to aggravate strife. Local militias proliferated, leading rapidly to a catastrophic situation of conflict. These events escalated over time into a large-scale conflict, with horrendous consequences for the civilian population. In Nigeria, grievances and tensions in the Niger Delta, and later in several northern states spiraled into insurgency, while long-standing tensions in the central city of Jos and surrounding areas fostered a complex of intercommunal violence. Recent conflict in South Sudan and bordering regions has also been cumulative rather than sudden.

Just as the onset, escalation, and scope of violence has followed different paths, governments have had recourse to different responses. In the cases considered here, Algeria, Angola, and Nigeria deployed relatively cohesive national armies, although efforts to contain or defeat insurgents required many years of conflict and attrition in the former two cases. The Nigerian armed forces have reflected problems of professionalism and capacity, though they have periodically been able to mount concerted efforts to contain instability. Kenya has also struggled with security forces (especially police) who have been implicated as instigators of abuse as often as sources of a security response. In the DRC, the armed forces under successive regimes were fragmented and ineffectual, leaving much of the response for regional forces and international peacekeepers.

Two broad historical shifts—decolonization and the end of the Cold War—have been associated with multiple security crises in Africa. While decolonization was often achieved relatively peacefully in the 1950s and 1960s, the process was blocked in a number of settler states, prompting armed struggles for independence. Among our cases, Algeria, Angola, and South Africa had long insurgencies against settler rule, sometimes with lasting effects on security and stability. Angola endured the most sustained violence, as the anticolonial struggle quickly gave way to a civil war that lasted twenty-seven years, ending only in 2002. Algeria's revolutionary struggle yielded a stable postindependence regime until the failed political opening of 1992 incited a civil conflict lasting a decade. South Africa has achieved broad stability since the end of apartheid in 1994, though it has been marked by high levels of criminal violence and sporadic xenophobic attacks.

A distinct set of conflicts emerged in postcolonial societies affected by polarized social groups and divisive governance (Chazan et al. 1999; Young

2012). Political turbulence and secessionist pressures erupted immediately after independence in the DRC, while in Nigeria ethnic competition and failed democratic institutions precipitated political collapse and civil war by the end of the 1960s. In Ghana and Kenya, though ethnic and regional rivalries were acute, regimes crafted ethnic bargains and clientelist management that avoided the more severe upheavals of many neighboring states.

With the end of superpower competition and the strategic balances that characterized the Cold War, new sources of instability were evident across the continent (Young 1994; Collier and Sambanis 2005). The collapse of the Soviet bloc after 1989 unraveled a set of military, security, and political alliances that had sustained numerous African regimes while Western powers quickly signaled that they were unwilling to continue to subsidize or support authoritarian regimes for ideological advantage. Pressures for political reform, focusing on electoral democracy, rapidly intensified in many countries. The rapid defeat of regimes by insurgents in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Liberia also fostered a spread of weaponry and spillover effects in the region. The new security challenges of the 1990s were manifest in many of the countries treated in this volume. Failed democratization fostered civil war (or new episodes of conflict) in Algeria and Angola, while in the DRC political decay gave way to regime change and conflict in the wake of the genocide in neighboring Rwanda. Nigeria suffered a new predatory episode of military rule, and Kenya's stalled political transition was punctuated by state-induced ethnic violence in the Rift Valley.

Security crises are most often addressed within states, as illustrated here in the cases of Algeria, Angola, Nigeria, and South Africa. While varying in capacity and efficacy, regimes in these countries deployed national security forces and other conflict management tools to stem ongoing conflicts and insurgencies. In the cases of the DRC and Kenya, international actors played more prominent roles. The United Nations (UN) and a variety of regional actors have been involved in the DRC for more than fifteen years while external powers helped to broker the power-sharing arrangement that curtailed Kenya's postelection violence in 2008. Regional mediators, influential states, and international organizations frequently play roles in the management of conflict.

It is also important to note the role of environmental and demographic factors that are not often recognized to be "crises" as such, but may create conditions that aggravate deeper problems in governance, livelihoods, or stability. Environmental problems of drought, flooding, and erosion—whether emanating from changing weather patterns or population shifts—can instigate subsistence problems that in turn aggravate competition over land and property rights (see, e.g., Hendrix and Glaser 2007; Reuveny 2007; Hendrix and Salehyan 2012). Migration, including large displacements and refugee flows, can be instrumental in conflict, as seen in the

DRC. In Kenya, the changing distribution of ethnic groups in response to land and patronage opportunities was an important source of conflict in the 2007–2008 electoral violence. Urbanization and shifting communal groupings can also affect stability and governance.

Crisis Vulnerabilities

African countries vary greatly in their susceptibility to shocks and ensuing emergencies. Angola had a devastating civil conflict for more than a quarter-century, and the DRC and Nigeria have been embroiled in a steady stream of crises since independence. Algeria, Ghana, and Kenya have experienced more episodic problems while South Africa has been comparatively well governed for two decades. As we elaborate later in the book, it is essential to distinguish between relatively inflexible background factors, intermediate structural elements, and proximate or triggering variables in the genesis of crisis. Geography, demography, history, and institutions will shape the likelihood of significant shocks, the degree to which shocks may foster broader dislocations, and the capabilities of states and societies in managing such challenges. Here, we briefly discuss the precipitating factors that shape crisis trajectories in the domains of governance, the economy, social accommodation, and security.

Security challenges are evident in all of the countries discussed in this study, with a majority experiencing persistent instability that is consonant with crisis. Algeria, Angola, the DRC, and Nigeria have undergone protracted civil conflicts or recurring sectional violence. If we consider South Africa from the 1970s, the country certainly reflected a deepening security crisis following the 1976 Soweto rebellion as resistance to the apartheid regime gathered in strength and militancy, culminating in the 1984–1986 township rebellions. The transition period of the early 1990s was also turbulent, as groups allied to different political tendencies fought in many urban areas. Since the transition to democracy in 1994, South Africa's security situation has been broadly stable. In Ghana and Kenya, communal violence punctuated the landscape in the 1990s and 2000s, though conflict was largely curtailed in Ghana and contained in Kenya after the violent electoral cycle of 2007–2008.

What factors account for the prevalence of security crises in particular states? Obviously, a range of drivers operate at different levels of generality, but legacies and spillovers appear particularly salient in several of these cases. The path-dependent nature of conflict is evident in many countries (not only in Africa), and it is not a tautology to say that historical violence is a reasonable predictor of future violence (Fearon and Laitin 2003). Certainly, this is seen in Angola, Nigeria, and the DRC, where historical tensions and conflicts have created turbulence and fed into recurring security problems. The successful management of conflict in northern Ghana can be partly attributed to the fact that it was exceptional and isolated, within a general context of communal stability. In South Africa, by contrast, a long history of inequality and social violence has yielded a troubling legacy. Though there is little antisystem or mobilized group conflict, fragmented societal violence is pervasive, even if policing and state security forces are capable of maintaining a modicum of order at the national level.

Bad neighborhoods create significant hazards for clusters of states. Virtually every country in this study has been subject to influences from nearby crisis-prone states. Spillover effects are most visible in the history of the DRC where refugee flows and the incursion of militias have fueled conflict for decades. In addition, the direct intervention of neighboring states (including Rwanda, Uganda, Angola, and Zimbabwe) and their support for local proxies have been instrumental in conflict dynamics since the 1990s. Angola contended for many years with offensives from South Africa and proxy support from the DRC (formerly Zaire) for rebel groups. More recently in Algeria and Nigeria, trans-Sahelian networks of Islamist militants have been significant in sustaining and expanding insurgencies that began as internal movements. Kenya's Somali-inhabited northeast region has been vulnerable to fallout from that failed state. As dominant regional states, South Africa and Nigeria have had some role in contributing to the restoration of stability among neighbors—Nigeria through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and South Africa in the case of Lesotho. Other countries have far less capacity to influence their environment.

The degree of social polarization within states is an important element in governance and security crises. One aspect of the problem is ethnic demography. Both Kenya and Nigeria have relatively concentrated though also contentious ethnic maps since three groups in each country (none of them a national majority) are highly mobilized and engaged in rivalries over power and distribution. In Angola, ideology overlapped with ethnicity as the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (Movimento Popular pela Libertação de Angola, MPLA) government and its principal opponents drew from different ethnoregional bases. Group distinctions have been central in South Africa, though the defining fault line among black and white identities during the liberation struggle eclipsed many tensions among other ethnicities. The DRC and Ghana are both comparatively fragmented in ethnolinguistic terms, yet with very different trajectories. Among the states considered in this study, Algeria is the most socially cohesive, though different identities among Berbers, Arabs, and several minorities influence politics.

While ethnic demography can be consequential, many analysts have focused instead on the degree of fractionalization or tension among groups.

Early measures of fractionalization (Easterly and Levine 1997) drew on the number and relative size of groups, though subsequent refinements have focused on measures of social distance or contention (Fearon 2003; Posner 2004b). While a bifurcated map is clearly hazardous, as evident in Rwanda and Burundi, three major groups can be volatile (as seen in Nigeria and Kenya) though not necessarily violent (as seen in Malawi). More fragmented maps can sustain relative peace (Tanzania) or conflict (the DRC). The degree of ethnic fractionalization is one indicator of the hazards of demography as is the history of group relations referenced above.

Ethnicity is not the only factor that plays a role in social tensions; regional and class differences can also foster instability. The profound spatial inequalities and neglect of some regions in Nigeria and the DRC are prominent drivers in the governance and security problems of these states. Regionalism is significant in Algeria as well. Deep economic inequalities in South Africa are clearly manifest in populist politics, protest behavior, and xenophobic violence. Kenya too reflects the liabilities of sharp class differentiation and systemic inequality.

The realm of social relations reminds us that structure interacts closely with policy. The challenges of managing diversity have been shaped by the degree to which governments were able to furnish public goods or devise inclusive social bargains (Miguel 2004; Lieberman 2009). South Africa's political settlement of 1994 was instrumental in laying the basis for future stability, even as the failure to make inroads against inequality has threatened the social fabric. In Nigeria, Kenya, the DRC, and Angola, the regime's discrimination against groups and neglect of regions have been important sources of conflict. Algeria's blunt exclusion of Islamists from the political sphere in 1992 incited strife. By contrast, Ghanaian regimes have managed to balance appointments and patronage sufficiently to quell rivalries and preserve a degree of inclusion. Political institutions and governing strategies are instrumental in mitigating or aggravating vulnerabilities.

The attributes and capabilities of states are pivotal in shaping crisis vulnerabilities as well as response. Broad state capabilities can be assessed in various ways, including specific governance indicators, indexes of public goods, and qualitative evaluations. The cases considered here are anchored by South Africa at the high end of capacity and the DRC at the lower end, with the other cases arrayed along intermediate positions. This type of ranking, however, overlooks the variation of capabilities within states. Algeria and South Africa are largely aligned in overall public goods provision, though sharply divergent in political competition or in rule of law. Kenya and Nigeria reflect uneven capacities, with domains such as macroeconomic management, elections, and security showing a degree of efficacy, while sectoral policy, judicial capacity, and many public functions are quite deficient. Angola too has pockets of effectiveness in the petroleum sector and in some urban areas, but deep deficits in developmental capacity and political inclusion. In the most general sense, more capable states such as South Africa (or Botswana) have been less vulnerable to crisis than extremely weak states such as the DRC (or the Central African Republic). But this is hardly a sufficient condition since other weak states including Senegal and Malawi have been less turbulent than stronger neighbors such as Côte d'Ivoire or Zimbabwe.

What accounts for the vulnerability of some regimes and resilience in others? We identify three functions that states manage differently: competition, distribution, and violence. Where broad-based pressures for competition have been resisted or foreclosed, there is a greater likelihood that states will experience political or security challenges. This is evident in the cases of Algeria, Angola, the DRC, Kenya, and Nigeria, and substantially contrasted by Ghana since 1992 or South Africa since 1994.[2] Electoral politics offer no guarantees against political tensions, but a competitive political sphere furnishes outlets for elite bargaining and popular contention that are largely absent in closed systems. More plural systems also create outlets for addressing the distributive problems that can provoke instability and conflict.

Every case in this study is characterized by acute inequalities and uneven growth, though the dispersal of benefits varies among countries. More durable political compacts are evident where governments are able to address major group claims and to achieve sustained growth. Adverse shocks and political turbulence have greater likelihood where distributive claims among salient groups are ignored or suppressed. Apartheid South Africa is the leading example, though pressures can be identified most clearly in Nigeria and Kenya among our sample of states.

Finally, the management of violence is a factor that clearly affects crisis vulnerabilities. In this regard, the state should be viewed as a potential source of violence as well as a (potentially) sovereign authority that responds to violence. The escalation or entrenchment of conflict is more likely in instances where state security forces are major instigators, as in the DRC, Nigeria, Algeria, and Angola. State-induced violence evidently polarizes groups or segments and hampers alternative mechanisms of resolution. Moreover, state capabilities for responding to violence and managing conflict will condition the effects of shocks in the security domain. In South Africa and Ghana, a combination of institutional mechanisms and security capabilities has enabled governments to contain potential challenges and conflicts. In Nigeria and the DRC, both bargaining and security mechanisms are limited relative to major challenges, and security problems have consequently escalated.

In the economic domain, structural and institutional factors are paramount. Export concentration is a major source of vulnerability, especially in economies dominated by natural resources. Trade shocks have been consequential for Algeria, Angola, the DRC, Ghana, Nigeria, and to some degree South Africa, all of which have substantial resource components in their economies. More important, however, is the competence and autonomy of the peak economic bureaucracy. Where capable economic managers have held sway for extended periods, as in Ghana, South Africa, and to some degree recently in Angola, Nigeria, and Kenya, countries have been able to navigate economic downturns and fluctuations more successfully. The DRC has had little capacity to manage external shocks while earlier episodes of economic distress in most of the countries in our cluster illustrate the vulnerabilities of weak or politicized economic management.

Organization and Aims of the Study

Following two conceptual and synthetic chapters, Chapters 3–9 draw on a set of case studies of crisis management in seven African countries: Algeria, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa. Each case study broadly follows a consistent format in analyzing (1) the contextual features; (2) the nature of a central management crisis faced by the country; (3) the management efforts and strategies employed to address the crisis; and (4) the outcomes of the crisis and any follow-up efforts exerted. In each case, the authors focus on the deployment of capabilities, the activities of the relevant external and internal actors, and the crisis management approach adopted by the respective governments. The analyses each conclude with an assessment of crisis management capabilities of the country, an assessment of the bearing of the outcomes for the strengthening or weakening of the state, and what the outcomes portend for future challenges facing the country.

A comparative case study has many advantages along with limitations. Each case in this study is analyzed in depth, with attention to context and the particular features of the country under discussion. A common analytical framework and case structure allow for comparisons or distinctions across the cases. However, the diversity among cases also means that we must treat inferences with caution. Case comparisons can generate useful insights and guide further research, but this approach can provide only limited generalizations. Accordingly, we offer provisional conclusions and recommendations.

This introduction has framed the issues in defining, diagnosing, and managing crises in African states. In Chapter 2, we address at greater length the trajectory and causes of crises, ranging from fundamental background factors to immediate triggering causes. We also outline the essential components of crisis management in broad perspective. Our analysis considers the relative weight of elite incentives, political and economic capabilities, and international cooperation in responding to adverse events.

In the concluding chapter of this book, we summarize the findings of the case studies, consider cross-cutting themes drawn from them, and relate them to the assessment framework set forth in Chapter 2. We offer some policy guidelines for more effective crisis management suggested by these cases. These guidelines center on the anticipation and prevention of crises; better identification of vulnerabilities and strengthening of capabilities for diagnosis and response; and more clearly articulated crisis management strategies and practices, including postcrisis follow-up. Finally, we consider the lessons of crisis management suggested by these studies for the interrelated objectives of overcoming state weakness, advancing democratization, and strengthening economic development in Africa.

Notes

1. Many have written extensively about failures of governance in the context of Africa. See, for example, Hyden and Bratton 1992; van de Walle 2001; Bräutigam and Knack 2004.

2. Ghana's turbulent civil-military relations and state failure prior to 1981 offer further validation to the idea that limited competition fosters crisis; South Africa under apartheid furnishes a similar lesson.