

PREFACE

Like other regions of the world, there are some major frontier issues facing Africa as we enter the latter half of the second decade of the twenty-first century. Among these major issues are: the troubling practice of some African states abdicating the responsibility for their citizens' material well-being to non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the resulting contestation for power between the state and NGOs, democratization, the growing influence of Evangelical Christian churches, civil conflicts and the efforts to resolve them, and Africa's international relations. Collectively, these issues have serious ramifications for stability and human-centered development and democracy, especially, the linkages between political democracy and human well-being. As the evidence shows, since the 1990s, the African Continent has made laudable strides in terms of political democracy, but has faltered in terms of addressing the material conditions of the majority of their citizens. Importantly, the failure of the state has led to the erosion of state legitimacy and in some cases—Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire and Mali—the resulting collapse of the state has reached its terminal phase; implosion and violence in the form of civil wars and other types of militarism.

Against this backdrop, this book seeks to examine some of the major frontier issues that are currently facing the African Continent. The central purpose is to problematize them, and proffer some suggestions for addressing them. This is because the role of scholarship is not simply to catalog the African Continent's challenges with the twin processes of

state-building and nation-building, but to suggest some concrete ways in which these lacunas can be addressed.

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