Strategic Dilemmas

Rewiring Africa for a Teeming, Urban Future

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Western Powers Take Note—Africa Is Changing Fast

Africa's population is expanding at rates never seen before. Between now and 2050 it is predicted to double. Most of that growth—80 percent—will occur in urban areas. In the past decade alone, technology—especially mobile phones—has transformed the way Africans communicate and do business. Politics is also changing rapidly. Multiparty elections and popular support for democracy are the norm, even though the record across the continent is uneven and numerous countries have reversed course in recent years.

International and historical experience suggest that mega-trends around population and urban growth are often a double-edged sword: they will amplify the effects of both good and bad policy choices. Hence, if African governments get the policy instruments right and succeed in implementing them, the payoff in terms of economic growth, innovation, and job creation could generate massive development gains for the whole continent. Conversely, if bad policies are followed or good policies are not implemented, the result will be massive instability, joblessness, and "slumification." In the upcoming decades, much will depend on the quality of governance in Africa and the way new technologies are harnessed.

This article examines the broad strategic implications of these potential paths in Africa. Increased migration pressures and border security are already a significant concern, but they will become exponentially more acute if the more negative scenarios eventuate. The risk, too, of escalating extremism and terrorism, as more and more jobless in Africa are drawn to malign

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ways of supporting themselves and finding meaning in their lives, clearly exists. At the same time, a better governed, more stable Africa with great economic clout would be likely to push for a much greater role in the international system, not least in its security structures so long dominated by the major powers. An Africa more politically secure is likely to find new and more innovative ways to tackle some of the security challenges which Western forces have struggled to mitigate, such as those in Somalia and in parts of the Sahel.

Microcosm of Challenges: Nigeria

Nigeria, says its former President Olusegun Obasanjo, comprises three countries. There is one, in the south, where quality of life indicators classify that area's status in middle-income developing terms. Then there is the average for the whole country; a low-income developing country. And then there are the statistics for the north, wobbling somewhere between a fragile and a failed state.

Such differentiation is linked to the country's security challenges. President Obasanjo in 2015 said, in explanation of the origins of the militant Islamist group Boko Haram, that "the fundamental issue is social and economic development, a lack of opportunity" which has caused its followers literally, in the terms of its name, "to reject Western education because it has given them so little. Its origins are from the absence of employment" and that, he stresses, is related to education. "In the southeast," says Obasanjo, literacy is 78 percent, "and in the southwest it is 79 percent. But in the north-east," where Boko Haram is concentrated, "it is 19 percent."[1]

He is not alone in expressing such concerns. Kashim Shettima is governor of Borno State, the epicenter of Boko Haram. First elected in 2011, he does not hide his obvious frustration or mince his words about the challenges faced. "Underneath Boko Haram," he says, "is the cause of extreme poverty, all of this born out of economic deprivation." The poverty has been aggravated by the high rate of population increase. From an official 177 million today, "By 2020," he notes, "Nigeria will be at 210 million people; by 2030, 270 million; and, by 2050, 440 million—the third most populous country in the world." By then, he states, "70 percent of Nigerians will live in northern Nigeria," with its "cocktail of desertification, youth unemployment, and low output. There is no part," he reminds, "of the north immune from this madness."

The road to Jaji, north from Nigeria's capital, Abuja, offers plenty of evidence of the scale of the challenge. Stores line the highway, selling plastic bottles of red palm oil, guinea fowl eggs, corn, and soil-encrusted yams. In one of the "tanker towns," more than 100 fuel-tankers take refreshments, says our guide, "of various sorts." Small businesses operate ceaselessly in the heat and amidst the dust, cooking and selling food, making furniture, changing and patching tires, and repairing cars, trucks and motor-bikes.

Indeed, the chaotic roadside scenes remind of the strength of the human spirit, the seemingly irrepressible ingenuity of Nigerians, and the costs of weak governance. An agricultural economist by training, Shettima rattles off statistics illustrating their plight. "While we import potatoes from South Africa, tomato paste from China, and cabbages from the United States which are repackaged in Dubai, 70 percent of our farmers are in the drudgery of subsistence agriculture. Whereas our cows produce a litre of milk per day, Europe can do forty times this amount. While entrepreneurial capitalism is embedded in the very psyche of Nigerians," he laments, "we lack the technical skills and organisation."

Thus, despite its rich soils and plentiful rainfall, Nigeria is a net food importer. Even though agriculture employs two-thirds of the labour force, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation calculates that during the past 20 years, value-added per capita in agriculture has risen by less than one percent annually. It estimates that Nigeria has forfeited $10 billion in annual export opportunity from groundnut, palm oil, cocoa, and cotton alone. Nigeria consumes five million tons of rice a year, at least three million of which are imported. Though it is the largest producer of cassava in the world, the average yield is estimated at just under 14 tons per hectare against potential yield of up to 40 tons. Equally, productivity on other cereals remains low, around 1.2 tons per hectare compared, for example, to South African farms which average three times this yield.[2]

The reasons for the poor agricultural performance include high interest rates and resultant lack of investment, the lack of large-scale commercial plantations, scant use of fertiliser, and an absence of extension services. An underlying issue has been the dominance of crude oil as a source of national revenue and the lack of will to diversify as long as the price was high.

Nigeria's cities will, however, be the likely site where these strains play out. For example, Lagos is now Africa's most populous city, surpassing even Cairo, the previous leader. In 1970, its population was 1.4 million. This increased to five million in 1991, and today it is estimated to be more than 20 million, and is estimated to double by 2030. The city generates a quarter of Nigeria's total GDP. While there are numerous wealthy in the city (that is estimated to have the second largest number of "millionaires" in Africa behind Johannesburg), two thirds of the population live in slums.[3] The juxtaposition of such dearth and excess could have a political dimension, given that city dwellers can be much more easily mobilized into mass movements (witness the events in Cairo in January 2011), a feature largely absent in Africa's post-colonial political history.

Nigeria's acute internal differences are a metaphor for Africa. The continent's states are increasingly differentiated in terms of their economic bases, both between each other and within their borders. Regardless, they do share commonalities around politics and governance. This article highlights a number of these common threads and suggests ways in which they might evolve.

Drivers of African Insecurity

Four factors will shape patterns of African development and conflict. The first is people. Africa's share of the world's population is projected to double to 25 percent by 2050, and to reach 39 percent in 2100. Of the additional 2.4 billion people estimated by the United Nations to be added to the global population by 2050, around 1.3 billion will be born in Africa.[4] As the statistician Hans Rosling has noted, "The reason the population is growing in Africa is the same reason that [saw] population growth first in Europe, then in the Americas, then in Asia. It's when the population goes from a phase where you

Table 1. Percent Increase in Population, 2015–2035

Niger	116	Eritrea	62	Côte d'Ivoire	51
Zambia	87	Mozambique	61	Sao Tome	51
Mali	86	Rwanda	58	Gabon	49
Uganda	81	Liberia	58	Zimbabwe	45
Gambia	77	Benin	58	Central African Republic	43
Chad	75	Kenya	58	Ghana	41
Tanzania	73	Equatorial Guinea	57	Sierra Leone	37
Angola	73	South Sudan	57	Namibia	35
Somalia	73	Cameroon	57	Djibouti	25
Burundi	72	Mayotte	57	Swaziland	24
Malawi	70	Guinea	55	Botswana	19
Nigeria	69	Togo	54	Lesotho	19
Madagascar	67	Ethiopia	52	Cape Verde	17
Burkina Faso	67	Guinea-Bissau	52	South Africa	11
Senegal	63	Mauritania	52	Seychelles	6
Congo	63	Comoros	52	Mauritius	2
Democratic Republic of the Congo	63				

have many children born and many who are dying. Then the death rate goes down and [some time later] the birth rate follows."[5]

As table 1 illustrates, most African countries will grow by at least 37 percent during the next twenty years.[6]

All of the major countries get much bigger except for South Africa,[7] which begins to fall out as one of the demographically largest African countries, with possible significant implications for its standing on the continent. In turn, Tanzania—currently one of Africa's more populous states but not thought of as a giant—will become a notable state on a continental level because its fertility is high even by African standards.

At the same time, Nigeria's large population and significant growth will mean that on the world stage it will become one of the most demographically significant nations. By 2050, it will surpass both the United States and Indonesia in population, making it third behind India and China—the global giants. As a result, what happens in Nigeria, for good and bad, will only be magnified over time because it will increasingly be the site of one of the world's largest concentrations of people.

The International Monetary Fund in its April 2015 *Sub-Saharan Regional Outlook* estimates that in order to maximise on this population dividend, the region will need to produce an average of 18 million high-productivity jobs per year until 2035. This is an extremely rapid, possibly unprecedented, rate of growth. It also notes that during this period policies are required to gradually transition jobs from the informal sector, which accounts for about 90 percent of the 400 million jobs in low income sub-Saharan African countries, to non-agricultural formal sector employment, another extremely challenging goal.[8]

To date job creation has not kept up with existing birth rates. The African Development Bank's *African Economic Outlook 2015*, for example, finds that only seven percent of the continental population aged 15–24 in low-income countries had a decent job. In middle-income countries this figure increased marginally to ten percent.[9] Underlining this challenge, in 2015 the World Bank forecast that, by 2030, despite major efforts, some 19 percent of Africa's population will still live in poverty. Those 300 million people will then represent 80 percent of the global population living on less than (the 2005 equivalent of) US $1.25 a day.[10]

The second driver is where they are going to be living. The UN projects Africa to be the most rapidly urbanizing region, with the percentage of people living in its cities rising 16 percent to 56 percent by 2050.[11] During this period, an expected 2.5 billion people will be added to the urban population world-wide, with almost 90 per cent of this increase occurring in Asia and Africa. India, China, and Nigeria are expected to account for 37 percent of the projected growth, with India alone adding 404 million urban dwellers, China 292 million, and Nigeria another 212 million. Africa's urbanization will far outpace the historical urbanization of developed regions. While the population of London, England grew at two percent annually from 1800 to 1910, doubling every 25 years, Kigali, Rwanda grew at rate of seven percent annually from 1950 to 2010, doubling every 10 years.[12] Even the rapid expansion of Asia's population pales in comparison: it will have grown by a factor of 3.7 between 1950 and 2050, while Africa's equivalent rate is predicted to be 5.18 from 2000 to 2100.[13]

So far African urbanization does not seem to have led to industrialization on a similar scale to that experienced in Europe or Asia. Migrants have largely moved from low productivity jobs in rural communities to equally low productivity jobs in urban areas, and thus are not gaining the economic benefit of urban agglomeration, through the availability of labour and concentration of skills it brings.

Cities are predicted to account for 80 percent of global economic growth in the future, a function of efficiencies and economies of scale of people and infrastructure. Realising such growth will, however, require suitable housing, water and sanitation, electricity, and public transport; and these aspects demand, in turn, government planning and delivery of infrastructure, services, and the expansion of the mortgage market beyond the current African level of just three percent.[14] When demanding redress, city dwellers can physically threaten the state more directly than peasants because urbanization (plus the spread of technology) facilitates more easily the mobilization of mass movements.

At the same time, urbanization can potentially be positive (for the state) because it is in the cities where the state is strongest and, at least in some countries, is the only place that it exists. Thus during the next twenty years, many people will be moving to the strongest part of the state, reversing the traditional African pattern of escaping—often because of repression by central authorities—to areas where the state's "footprint" is lightest. Very little productive economic activity is possible in weakly—or ungoverned spaces because it cannot link into value-chains or national infrastructure. In contrast, those who move to the loci of state power—i.e. cities—seeking greater opportunity and better living conditions will inevitably demand more government accountability and transparency. Greater pressure may stimulate additional investment in infrastructure and administration. Perhaps the greatest irony of politics in Africa is that the most powerful force strengthening states has nothing to do with the actions of governments, but is caused by the independent reproductive and locational decisions of millions of people. Even in as weak a state as Malawi, people will be flooding the cities and there could be more people in the urban areas in 2050 than there are in the entire country in 2016.

This leads to a third major driver: technology. Once the cut-off continent, mobile phones have transformed African connectivity. In the mid-1990s, sub-Saharan Africa connectivity was estimated to be just 0.5 lines per 100 inhabitants (compared to a global average of 15/100), with a waiting list of 3.6 million for fixed lines.[15] Half of African countries had no connection at all to the internet in 1995.[16] Spurred by greater openness to foreign capital through privatizations and regulatory changes, this situation has transformed. By 2019, it is predicted that voice call traffic in sub-Saharan Africa will increase to 930 million from its current (2015) number of 653 million subscriptions. Similarly, mobile data usage will increase an estimated 20 times between 2013 and 2019, twice the anticipated global expansion, when three in four mobile subscriptions will be internet inclusive. This increase is in line with the global increase in mobile usage, from just 11.1 million users in 1990 to around four billion in 2015, half of whom are using smart phones.

The increase in connectivity has and will continue to significantly reduce the cost of doing business in Africa. African mobile banking platforms have been global leaders, such as MPesa in Kenya. The spread of the communications will also invariably assist in improving transparency, to which there is a political dimension: young people are the ones most likely to be early adopters of technology. This tech wave may well lead to new social movements, or at least new methods of political organization.[17] At the very least it will provide greater awareness of what the world outside has on offer.[18]

The fourth major trend is that of political and economic governance and the implications for growth. African economic growth in the post-independence era can be divided into three periods. After independence came to most countries in the early 1960s, per capita income growth was steady, hitting a high of approximately $943 (in 2005 dollars) in 1974. Then there was a long decline due to weaknesses in commodity markets, poor government policy in many sectors in most countries, and the unrelenting increases in population that made per capita gains very difficult to sustain. Africa as a whole hit bottom in 1994 when per capita income (in constant dollars) was $732, a 22 percent decline from the high in 1974.

Since that low point, per capita incomes have increased because of improvements in commodity markets, higher (notably Chinese-led) levels of investment, the decline of conflict, better government policies, and the boom brought about by the advent of cellular technology. However, many of the gains since 1994 have had, inevitably, to be devoted first to what was lost in the previous period. Thus, it was not until 2007 that Africa again reached the high point in per capita income achieved in 1974. In one sense, the continent as a whole has, from a macroeconomic perspective, nothing to show for 33 years of effort. Since 2007, new records in per capita income have been set almost every year. Per capita income in 2013 is estimated to be (in constant 2005 dollars) $1,018, a gain of 39 percent since the low point in 1994.

There has been a long debate about the relationship between political and economic liberalization. Some have argued that political and economic reform are mutually enhancing. Others, especially in light of the Asian experience, have suggested that economic reform should come first as simultaneous reform is too difficult (especially in very poor countries) and because democratic reform is more probable in richer countries. The debate has intensified because of China's increasing role in Africa and given Beijing's well-known view that economic reform should occur in an authoritarian setting. Some have speculated about the emergence of a "Beijing Consensus" in Africa as China's role grows. Indeed, the success of Rwanda—with a relatively open economy and an authoritarian government—has been widely noted, and many African leaders speak enthusiastically of hoping to duplicate the post–1994 Rwandan experience of stability and efficiency (as well as job security for the incumbent).

The Heritage Foundation in its *Index of Economic Freedom* from 2015 evaluates almost every country in the world according to governance in a wide variety of areas, including protection of property rights, regulatory efficiency, corruption and openness of markets. In the Index, Mauritius is the top-rated African country and is 10th worldwide, and the only one judged to be "mostly free"—the category that the United States and Canada also are listed under.[19] Table 2 lists almost all African countries by category.[20]

There is not an immediate, obvious association between governance and economic performance. For instance, both Angola and Equatorial Guinea have high economic growth rates despite being labelled "repressed," because of significant hydrocarbon reserves. However, over the medium- to long-term, governance does matter since commodity prices are cyclical and good governance is necessary to garner investment. While there have been improvements in economic governance across Africa, the overall record is still relatively poor. A significant majority of African countries are in the lower half of the world rankings (including all those in the "mostly free" and "repressed" categories), suggesting strongly that even the improvements in governance that some African countries have undertaken are not enough to move the region as a whole forward.

Political reform began with the end of the Cold War. Before then, only two countries had what could be considered institutionalized democratic systems (Botswana and Mauritius).[21] Between 1990 and 2005, there was a dramatic increase in the number of

Table 2. Economic Freedom of Sub-Saharan Africa, 2015

Mostly Free	Moderately Free	Mostly Unfree			Repressed
Mauritius	Botswana	Swaziland	Djibouti	Mauritania	Lesotho
	Cape Verde	Uganda	The Gambia	São Tomé and Principe	Chad
	Rwanda	Namibia	Seychelles	Togo	CAR
	Ghana	Benin	Mali	Liberia	DRC
	South Africa	Zambia	Nigeria	Comoros	Congo
	Madagascar	Burkina Faso	Kenya	Guinea	Equatorial Guinea
		Côte d'Ivoire	Mozambique	Guinea-Bissau	Eritrea
		Gabon	Malawi	Cameroon	Zimbabwe
		Senegal	Nigeria	Sierra Leone	
		Tanzania	Burundi	Ethiopia	

countries considered "free" by Freedom House, from three to eleven, however this improved number still only represents 23 percent of all African nations.

Arguably the bigger movement was from the countries labelled "not free" that were 70 percent in 1990 but only 33 percent in 2005. Most of the countries that moved out of this category migrated to the "partly free" category which went from 24 to 44 percent in 2005. The movement from authoritarian regimes to a more mixed political picture is not surprising. The major change across the continent was that regularly scheduled multiparty elections became almost universal. However, these elections varied enormously in quality. Other democratic institutions (parliaments, courts, constitutional protections) were established but these were nascent and often weak because it is very hard to create such structures. All told, the first fifteen years of Africa's democratic experiment (1990 to 2005) saw more progress than might be reasonably expected.

While there have been democratic reversals, it is important to note that African citizens continue to support democracy. For example, the Afrobarometer—a pan-African Survey of more than 30 countries—"Index of Demand for Democracy" climbed 15 points in 16 countries surveyed from 2002–12, from 36 percent to 51 percent. Seven out of ten Africans in 34 countries surveyed preferred democracy to "other kinds of government" by 2013. Africans also see elections as the best sign of a democratic regime.

Since the end of the Cold War, too, the frequency in the number of military regimes and coups has declined significantly. Throughout the 1960s–80s much of the African continent had become militarised. Relatively few states avoided military coups, and those that did had to find some accommodation with their armed forces. As one indicator, from 1960–2004 there were 105 violent overthrows of African regimes, more than half the total of regime changes in this period. However, the rate of coups has more than halved since 2000. Even though there has been a revisionist literature on the impact of "good coups" in Africa, the record of economic management and political violence of the "coup era" speaks for itself, as African militaries have as a norm been worse at managing countries than their civilian counterparts. [22]

Assessing Responses

During the past decade, while most African countries were able to enact relatively modest reforms in governance, they were able to grow because regulatory improvements changed perceptions of investors. In addition, the commodity boom and the cell phone revolution routinely promoted growth so that most countries saw around five percent annual increases in the size of their economies.

Such growth is impressive given the region's history, and has had a positive impact. Between 2011–13 and 2014–15, for example, recent data suggests that "lived poverty" fell in 22 of 33 sub-Saharan countries polled. But poverty remains widespread, with the highest percentage recorded among the people of central and western Africa. On average, in 2014–15 more than 40 percent of African people reported being without food and drinking water, at least once or twice in the past year, while 49 percent were without medical care, 38 percent without fuel, and 74 percent without a monetary income.[23]

As a result, five percent growth will not be enough to prepare for the coming population increases. Moreover, during the next five years, commodity prices are unlikely to be high, especially as demand from China cools. Thus, governance will become an increasingly important differentiator and relatively well-functioning administrative and regulatory processes will become absolutely critical to assuring even moderately high growth rates. Well-governed countries will also have a better chance of addressing resource shortages that are bound to occur given enduring poverty and the population increases that African countries will experience.

During the commodity boom there was considerable optimism that African economies were changing and that they were no longer dependent on raw material exports. The McKinsey Global Institute claimed that, "[The] commodity boom explains only part of Africa's growth story. Natural resources directly accounted for just 24 percent of Africa's GDP growth from 2000–08." Rather, McKinsey argued that, "the key reasons behind Africa's growth surge were improved political and macroeconomic stability and microeconomic reforms."[24]

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As China slows down, it is now clear that the prediction about rising demand was flawed. That makes the observation that African countries had improved their governance even more critical because, if accurate, economic reform would both buffer countries from the shock of declining commodity prices and help with diversification.

Many African states remain riven by fault lines, around ethnicity, religion or race. As noted above, many have weak governance regimes, with a poor record on tackling corruption. Their leadership often centers on individuals rather than institutions, making access difficult for those on the outside, whether these be locals or foreigners seeking a way into the economy. At their operational core, many African states remain networked around "big men" (and a few women), where the terms of engagement are subject to the vagaries of relationships, an environment which breeds corruption and ensures policy unpredictability. There are only a limited number of countries that have been able to break out of the governance trap. They tend to be small, although Ghana is an example of a middle-size country that has performed relatively well.

There are thus grounds for considerable concern given current and potential conflicts and slowing continental economic growth. The International Monetary Fund *Regional Economic Outlook for Sub-Saharan Africa* from October 2015 notes: "Acts of violence by Boko Haram and other insurgency groups have increased in a region spanning Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria, but also in Kenya and Mali. . . . These acts of violence weigh on economic activity, strain fiscal budgets, and diminish the prospects for foreign direct investment."[25] For the poorest countries it can become a vicious circle, as research shows that civil war is more likely in low income, low growth countries, and that civil war in turn tends to reduce growth by an average of 2.3 percent per year. Furthermore the characteristics of those most likely to engage in political violence are: being young, being uneducated, and being without dependents—the very section of the population that is set to grow in the poorest African countries during the next 30 years.[26]

In these cases, the political-economies embody a pressure cooker, where politicians resort to short-term redistributive measures to manage key constituencies and high expectations. Institutional structures, such as Nigeria's 36 states, are constructed more to ensure the flow of such largesse than to deliver the benefits of decentralised management. These are post-modern places of hardship and hard edges of violence and its corollary of insecurity, where, as the author Paul Theroux observes, its people are "not indestructible ... but badly in need of rescue."[27] They include the touts risking life and limb to sell bootleg books while dodging manic traffic on the highways through Lagos, the glowering youths loitering on Monrovia's street corners with little to do, the prostitutes loitering under Abidjan's street lights beneath the hotel window, some painfully young, haggling and hassling their way through the night, or the great human waves making their way into Kinshasa's mega-city in the morning to look for work, and drifting back, bobbling spots in the moving dust, mostly empty-handed come sundown.

This is then an Africa not benefiting from rapid urbanization, the demographic dividend, and the density of nascent mega-cities, but a continent where, already, 200 million live in slums, the highest of any continent. These urban areas are in this scenario not promising nodes of development, but suffocating situations of disorder and decay, futureless and hopeless, of endemic unemployment and fragmentary education, where services, where they exist, were designed for a fraction of the current population.

This is the African antidote to the euphoric private equity fund or consultancy trying to sell an upbeat vision of the continent along with its services, or a fund talking up prospective returns on investment. This is not the romantic Africa, but one of rutted and potholed roads, ubiquitous evidence of a lack of investment and maintenance regimes and of a failure of governance. It is the Africa where people have made a plan in the absence of their governments having one; where digital technology remains, cell phones aside, tantalisingly out of reach, but where the old analogue ways no longer work for spares, skills, or systems. This is the Africa of people risking everything and staking their small fortunes on getting to Europe by whatever means possible. But this is not the only way in which Africans have, and might, respond.

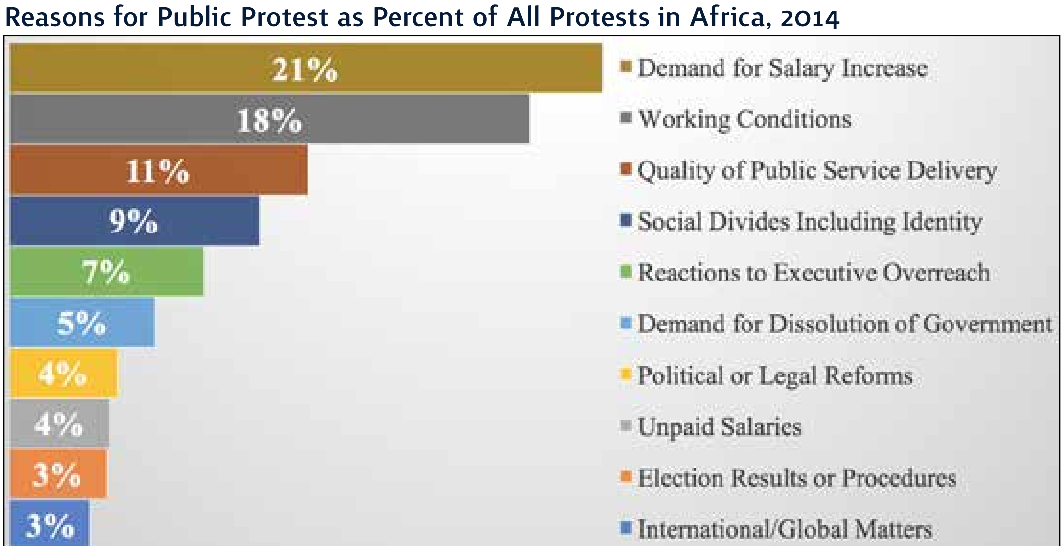
Increasing Challenges Around Poor Governance

In line with its changing democratic environment and, perhaps, its media penetration and economic circumstances, Africa has seen a 2.5 times increase in the numbers of public protests since 2000. The top drivers of public protests continue to be employment-related claims for wage increases and better working conditions, followed by demands for better public services. As illustrated in the chart, there has also been a rise in different motives, including political divides among citizens. [28]

At the other end of the spectrum exists armed conflict and even state failure. Even in the latter case, however, seldom is collapse or failure not in the interests of one group or another—and it can even be a choice, a course of action deliberately and frequently assiduously pursued regardless of the consequences for many citizens. This is a short-term game; while this environment may benefit different groups, the transaction costs are ultimately as ruinous for the privileged elites, if they did but know it, as they are for the nation.

For example, the remnants of those responsible for the Rwandan genocide fled

Reasons for Public Protest as Percent of All Protests in Africa, 2014



into what was then Zaire in 1994. About 6,000 remain in the Democratic Republic of the Congo today, grouped into the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), occupying a chunk of the province of North Kivu where Congolese Tutsi, among others, have become a proxy-target for their far-fetched schemes to one day again capture Kigali. This is only part of the reason, however, that war has continued to rage in the Congo. It is an example of the wars that never end, otherwise termed by Jeffrey Gettleman as the "forever wars," wars not fought over national interests, grievances or even over resources and greed, but those that have their own tautology, where groups fight as a way of life, precisely because there is no state.[29] Sub-Saharan Africa is home to the bulk of those countries denoted as "fragile" or "failed." According to the Foreign Policy/Fund for Peace's *2015 Failed States Index*,[30] for example, this includes all of the four in the (top) "very high alert" category (South Sudan, Somalia, Central Africa Republic, and the Sudan), six of the following 11 (Chad, Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan, Guinea, Haiti, Iraq, Pakistan, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, and Zimbabwe) in the "high alert" category, and a further 13 of the next 22 in the "alert" category.

Yet the threads of fragility—of governance, economics, politics, and society—intersect and play out differently, depending on the local conditions. Until now, the role of African guerrilla movements has been either to overthrow the state, precisely because of all of its inadequacies, or to establish alternative centers of informal control, best described as warlords. But the rise of first al-Qaeda, then al-Shabaab and Boko Haram, and now the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) give cause for reflection.

First they have, in Africa, exploited weak governance and economic disadvantage, particularly lack of employment, to gain support for their organizations. This combined with their strong brand of ideology and resulting robust individual commitment to the cause has allowed for rapid mobilization of support and the creation of forces with a real motivation to fight. Second they have regionalised their conflicts exploiting boundaries and weak international cooperation. Third they have all exploited modern communications to communicate with a global audience. Finally they have begun to engage in state creation rather than just state overthrow. ISIL appears to be aiming to create a new state carved out of several areas according to a different ideology; it is not simply terrorism. This approach may encourage some in those areas of Africa where governance by the state is weak to adopt a similar tactic.

A comparison between north-eastern Nigeria and Zimbabwe is thought provoking. Why despite high unemployment, rising food insecurity and a very weak economy has their not been more unrest in Zimbabwe? The answer would appear to be that no opposition movement has yet been able to tap into the resentment that such conditions breed and motivate people to take the personal risks that change will require. The tough approach taken by the Mugabe regime to internal security and tribal loyalties has so far provided an adequate repressive force. In north-eastern Nigeria, where the conditions are not dissimilar, it is radical Islam that has been the mobilising factor.

What are the means available to deal with such insecurities?

Cementing Long-Term Security: Three Key Elements

Solutions to the endemic and chronic crises of insecurity are articulated, often, in terms of more money or greater technology. A Marshall Plan is the most frequently invoked solution, forgetting that even at that troubled point in Europe's history, the aid to GDP ratio was lower than it is today across sub-Saharan Africa.

The answer is, as always, less dramatic, reliant more on perspiration than inspiration during a very long term. Three aspects stand out. First, as Borno State's Governor Shettima argues, there is a "need for a holistic approach. We can," he says, "accomplish very little without a wider strategy which involves more than just the military." His argument is that insecurity is a symptom not a cause, and that for healing to occur the underlying drivers of the conflict must be addressed.

This is easier said than done. The causes of such crises as the current one in north-eastern Nigeria have often built up over a considerable period time and are frequently the result of the partial exclusion from society and/or a mismatch of aspirations of groups of people within a country. Resolution is not a quick business; the period of economic recovery is generally at least as long as the period of decline. Achieving quick meaningful progress is, thus, very challenging and most often achieved through improvements in physical security, which in turn removes some of the urgency for wider change. But these improvements are undermined if simultaneous action is not taken to address the political and economic causes.

When the late Mohammed Yusuf, the former leader of Boko Haram, instructed some unemployed students to rip up their university certificates because "western education had given them nothing," he was making a much wider point than one simply about education; he was criticising the whole western approach to civilisation and advancing a radical Islamic alternative. Thus, a strategy for north-eastern Nigeria must not only address physical security but must also address issues of economic disadvantage (employment, infrastructure, services, education), weak governance, political inclusion, and of what it means to be Nigerian.

In addressing the economic causes the tendency is to redistribute from central government (or foreign taxpayer) coffers to assuage restive populations. More important is to set the macroeconomic policy and regulatory framework, and avoid the temptation for overt political interference in economic policy making. The scale of job creation required is so large that there must be a conscious effort to harness the power of the private sector at every level. Nigerians know how to do business, what they need are the economic policies and infrastructure to allow their potential to be realised. They need outsiders to invest, and what long-term investors crave is stability and certainty.

In tackling the political causes of such crises a genuine attempt has to be made to improve the political culture. To move away from the worst excesses of a rent-seeking elite, where being in government is seen as a means to acquire personal wealth and to protect patronage networks at the expense of others, toward a more inclusive approach that focuses on delivering services for the benefit of all, a meritocratic approach. In this respect Nigerian President Buhari's recent attempts to crack down on corruption and prosecute those responsible for the worst excesses are an encouraging start. But such change cannot just be driven top down: people have to be encouraged to engage in such cultural change bottom up; not to vote, for example, on just tribal or ethnic grounds. Changing culture on this scale takes considerable time, the right incentives, and long-term, cross regime commitment. Such an approach must also include dialogue with all parties in the conflict, an approach long argued for by Governor Shettima.

Thus, the crisis cannot just be left to the security forces to solve; a comprehensive approach requires whole-of-government attention and "skin in the game." Finally, it needs to be underpinned by a common narrative which succinctly explains why the current situation has been arrived at, what needs to be done to sort the situation out, and how these actions are going to be achieved.

The second, or perhaps first equal, aspect is the requirement for large dollops of hands-on local leadership concerned with the detail of implementation. The challenges have to be locally owned as do the solutions. Outsiders just cannot do this and it spells trouble if the outsiders want the problem fixed more than the locals. Governor Shettima notes that "[President] Buhari has brought something remarkably un-Nigerian: integrity along with austerity." This is required since, as the governor puts it, "corruption has become intolerable. While there are tolerable and intolerable levels of corruption, today it has become the aim on its own, which is unsustainable."

This relates to the nature of institutions and their interplay with hierarchy and networks. "It is in our enlightened self-interest to work for the interests of the people," says the Governor. "People hate Nigeria's leadership with a passion. They are contemptuous about it. We need a much more realistic approach to solving problems." Doing so will demand strong leadership to challenge the system of spoils based largely on ethnicity, religion and geography, and supplant it with a meritocracy. It is here that personal example and transparency will be key. It was interesting to learn that President Buhari owns two mud huts and some 270 head of cattle;[31] but the fact that he put his assets on public record sent a much wider message. It will be far more interesting to see if his ministers also publically declare their assets, and just how many corrupt officials are brought to trial during the next few years.

Such leadership requires governments that are symbolically and materially attentive to the needs of their citizens. Furthermore the leadership needs to be underpinned by a system that can deliver what its leader wants. It is here that the civil service has a vital role to play; for if the civil service, as an institution, does not work people will fall back on other networks to "make stuff happen." Thus, ensuring the civil service is both trusted and effective needs to be high up the agenda. In the war in Afghanistan this was left much too late and has seriously hampered the governments' ability to operate.

The advantages are clear despite the manifest short-term threats in so doing. General Charles de Gaulle noted that France vacillated between the woes of a people divided and the fruits of unity. It is crucial in this regard for leadership to create a common national narrative, not least by delegating power to institutions and ensuring equal opportunities through education.

Finally the first step in a holistic approach is to restore security, thus ensuring that the security forces (the intelligence services, the armed forces, and the police) have the capability to deliver needs to be high on the agenda. Here the focus often tends to be on high-end equipment when in fact a much broader view needs to be taken. It is about numbers of people and how they are trained, distributed and supported. In equipment terms this is less Apache helicopters and fast jets than good boots, clothing, training, light transport, ammunition supply, counter-IED capacity, sound intelligence collection and fusion, and, perhaps more than anything, food. "Most African militaries," says one foreign observer based in Nigeria, "have an acute logistics problem. The Nigerians have four different types of helicopters, and they yet struggle to feed or resource their army properly. They need a pick-up truck yet they want a Ferrari." The solution is often more about "thinking" than it is about "things."

Outsiders can help develop security capacity, but what they can do has big limitations. As Napoleon highlighted in his maxims for war, "moral is to physical as three is to one;" outsiders can help with the physical—supplying equipment and training—and with the conceptual—the "how to fight," but in motivating an armed force to actually fight there is comparatively little that they can do; this is a national issue. This has been aptly demonstrated in the shortcomings exposed in the Iraqi Army's performance against ISIL in 2014–15, despite huge amounts of physical assistance from the United States.

In sum, the path of reform and to stability and prosperity is less dramatic than its alternative—collapse. It centers on conservative, carefully orchestrated and telegraphed policy actions, dependent on consistency, strong leadership and long-term application; around governance more than fancy technology.

Save such actions, does Boko Haram or al-Shabaab represent a likely future for some African states? Certainly sub-Saharan Africa is ready-made for guerrillas. Large numbers of marginalised, unschooled and angry youth, and weak government services offer an attractive recruiting sergeant. Failing an appropriate government response, not only could the outcome end up as "wars without end," but may also, ISIL-like, ensure the conditions and provide the necessary motives for attempts to create alternative methods of control in the form of new states. If demographics, where people will be living, and the impact of technology can be denoted as "certainties," the variables are the ways—principally through policy, planning, and execution, in a word governance—in which governments respond to these changes. The differences in response will inevitably lead to greater differentiation between countries, where these drivers serve to improve or worsen the prospects for stability. **PRISM**

Notes

[1] The discussions with former President Obasanjo and Governor Shettima were had in Abuja, Nigeria in September and October 2015, respectively.

[2] United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, "Nigeria at a Glance," available at <http://www.fao.org/nigeria/fao-in-nigeria/nigeria-at-a-glance/en/>.

[3] BBC, "South Africa's Johannesburg Tops Africa Millionaires List," September 3, 2015, available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-34138610>.

[4] BBC, "Global Population Will Soar to 11.2bn by 2100—with Africa accounting for much of the growth, says UN forecast," available at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/global-population-will-soar-to-112bn-by-2100-with-africa-accounting-for-much-of-the-growth-says-un-10448880.html>.

[5] AfrAsia Bank and New World Wealth reports that Johannesburg is home to 23,400 millionaires, 30 percent of the African total, with Egypt second on 10,200, Lagos third with 9,100, Cape Town with 8,900, and Nairobi with 6,200. BBC, "How will a Population Boom Change Africa," September 11, 2014, available at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-34188248>.

[6] United Nations, *World Population Projections*, the 2012 Revision.

[7] Max Fischer, "The Amazing, Surprising, Africa-Driven Demographic Future of the Earth, in 9 Charts," *Washington Post*, July 16, 2013, available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2013/07/16/the-amazing-surprising-africa-driven-demographic-future-of-the-earth-in-9-charts>.

[8] https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/reo/2015/afr/eng/pdf/sreo0415.pdf, 25, last accessed 5 Nov 2015.

[9] African Development Bank, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, United Nations Development Programme, *African Economic Outlook 2015*, (2015), xiii.

[10] Ibid., xiv.

[11] Mark Anderson and Achilleas Galatsidas, "Urban Population Boom Poses Massive Challenges for Africa and Asia," *The Guardian*, July 10, 2014, available at <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/jul/10/urban-population-growth-africa-asia-united-nations>.

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[13] Max Fisher, "The amazing, surprising, Africa-driven demographic future of the Earth, in 9 charts," *Washington Post*, July 16, 2013, available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2013/07/16/the-amazing-surprising-africa-driven-demographicfuture-of-the-earth-in-9-charts/>.

[14] We are grateful to Paul Collier for this insight.

[15] Tiyambe Zeleza and Ibulaimu Kakoma, *In Search of Modernity: Science and Technology in Africa* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2003).

[16] Manuel Castells, *End of the Millennium: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture*, Vol III (Oxford: Blackwells, 1997), 95.

[17] David Smith, "Internet Use on Mobile Phones in Africa Predicted to Increase 20–Fold," *The Guardian*, June 5, 2014, available at <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/05/internet-use-mobile-phones-africa-predicted-increase-20-fold>.

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[19] Only Hong Kong, Singapore, and New Zealand are considered "free."

[20] Table Source: Terry Miller and Anthony B. Kim, "Global and Regional Trends in Economic Freedom," *2015 Index of Economic Freedom* (Washington, DC: Heritage Foundation, 2015), available at < http://www.heritage.org/index/pdf/2015/book/chapter6.pdf>. Countries within categories are list by rank.

[21] Table Source: Freedom House, *Freedom in the World, 2015* (NY: Freedom House, 2015), available at <www.FreedomHouse.org>.

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