

## The Politics of Property Rights Institutions in Africa

Why do some political leaders create and strengthen institutions such as title registries and land tribunals that secure property rights to land, while others neglect these institutions or destroy those that already exist? How do these institutions evolve once they have been established?

This book answers these questions through spatial and temporal comparison of national and subnational cases from Botswana, Ghana, and Kenya, and, to a lesser extent, Zimbabwe. Ato Kwamena Onoma argues that the level of property rights security that leaders prefer depends on how they use land. However, the extent to which leaders' institutional preferences are translated into actual institutions depends on the level of leaders' capacity. Further, once established, these institutions through their very working can contribute to their own decline over time. This book is unique in revealing the political and economic reasons why some leaders, unlike others, prefer an environment of insecure rights even as land prices increase.

Ato Kwamena Onoma is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Yale University. After receiving his PhD from Northwestern University, he was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Niehaus Center for Globalization and Governance at Princeton University. His work is featured in *Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency, and Power*, a collection of essays edited by James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen (2010, Cambridge University Press).

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ATO KWAMENA ONOMA

*Yale University*



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*To D. A. Akyeampong and G. K. Tetteh of Senya Bereku. And also  
to the memory of the late Mzee Frank Mcharo of Taita Mwatate.*

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## Abbreviations

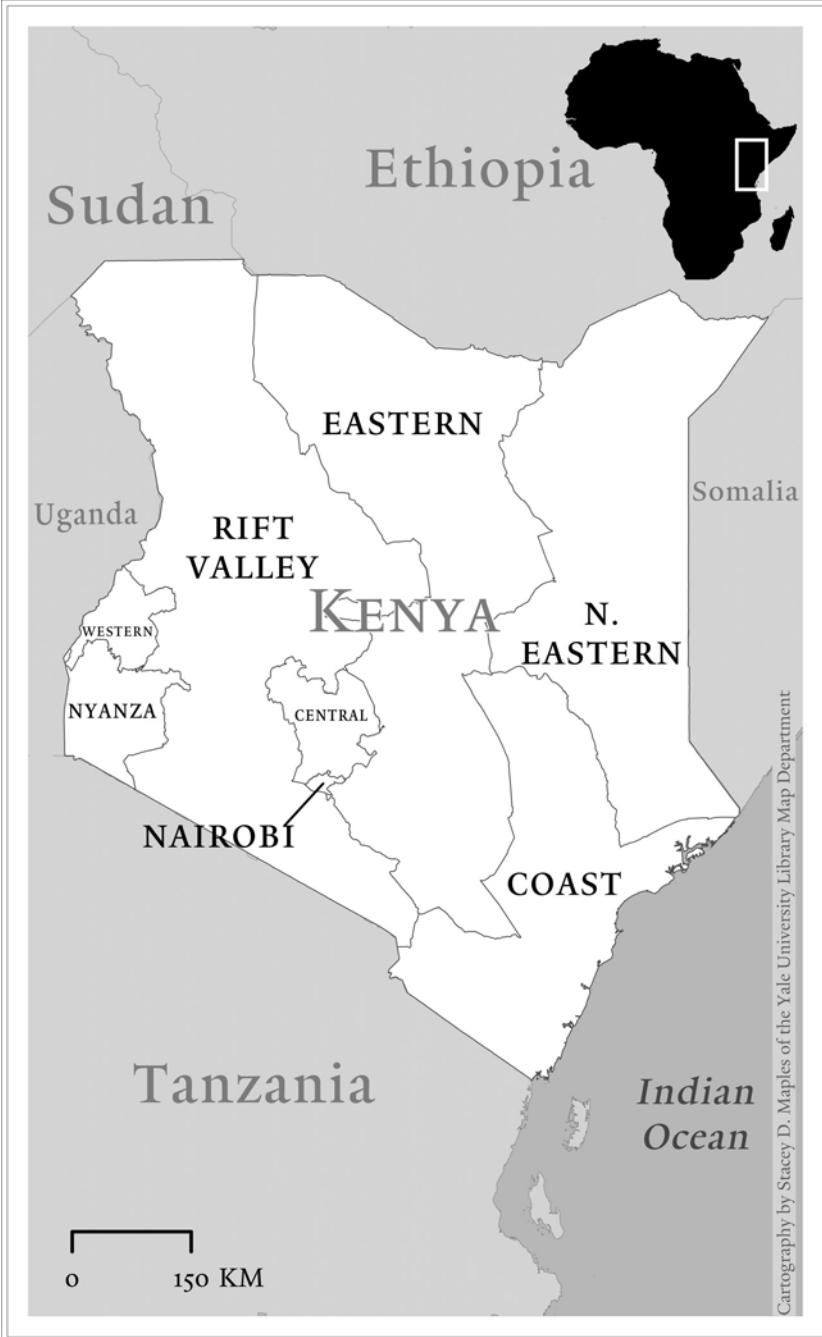
AASA	Akyem Abuakwa State Archive
AMA	Accra Metropolitan Assembly
BDP	Botswana Democratic Party
CPP	Convention Peoples Party
DLAS	Department of Land Adjudication and Settlement
GEMA	Gikuyu, Embu, and Meru Association
GREDA	Ghana Real Estate Developers Association
GSU	General Service Unit
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KNA	Kenya National Archives
LBC	Land-Buying Company
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NLM	National Liberation Movement
NPP	New Patriotic Party
OASL	Office of the Administrator of Stool Lands
PNDC	Provisional National Defense Council
SFT	Settlement Fund Trustees
SHHA	Self-Help Housing Agency
SLIMS	State Lands Information Management System
TGLP	Tribal Grazing Land Policy (1975)
TLIMS	Tribal Lands Information Management System
UGCC	United Gold Coast Convention
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front



MAP 1. Map of Botswana.



MAP 2. Map of Ghana.



MAP 3. Map of Kenya.