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978-0-521-00836-5 - African Economies and the Politics of Permanent Crisis, 1979-1999

Nicolas Van de Walle

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## AFRICAN ECONOMIES AND THE POLITICS OF PERMANENT CRISIS, 1979-1999

This book explains why sub-Saharan Africa remains mired in a devastating economic crisis despite two decades of efforts to renew economic growth. It focuses on the manner with which political authority is exercised in the region, the dynamics of interaction with international forces, and the effect of past efforts at economic reform.

By comprehensively examining contemporary African political economy, this study shows that there has been little societal opposition to reform in Africa and that the dominant obstacles to reform lie not in interest-group pressures on the state, as others have argued, but within the state itself; that donor-supported structural adjustment programs strengthen the status quo rather than promote reform; that aid does not advance the interests of international capital but is a substitute for foreign private capital; and that the legacies of past reform failures continue to influence the dynamics of present efforts of reform.

*Nicolas van de Walle* is a Professor of Political Science at Michigan State University. He received his Ph.D. from Princeton University in 1990. In recent years, he has conducted field research in Botswana, Cameroon, Niger, Senegal, Uganda, and Zambia. He has served as a consultant to UNDP, UNIDO, USAID, the Global Coalition for Africa, and the World Bank. He has received research grants and awards from the National Science Foundation, the Rockefeller Brothers' Fund, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the Ford Foundation. He is the co-author of *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspectives* (1997), *Improving Aid to Africa* (1996), and *Of Time and Power: Leadership Duration in the Modern World* (1991). He is the co-editor of *Agenda for Africa's Economic Renewal* (1996) and *Foreign Aid in Africa: Learning from Country Experiences* (1997).

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