

INNOVATING DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES IN AFRICA

Over the second half of the twentieth century, African states have shifted away from state-led development strategies and are instead moving toward a strategy of regional economic integration. In this book, Landry Signé explores the key drivers of African policy and economic transformation, proposing a preeminent explanation of policy innovations in Africa through the examination of postcolonial strategies for economic development. Scholars and practitioners in fields as varied as development studies, political science and public policy, economics, sociology, and African studies will benefit from Signé's unprecedented comparative analysis, including detailed cases from the often-understudied francophone Africa. First studying why, how, and when institutional or policy changes occur in Africa, Signé explores the role of international, regional, and national actors in making African economic development strategies from 1960 to today, highlighting the economic transformations of the twenty-first century.

Landry Signé is a Distinguished Fellow at Stanford University's Center for African Studies, Professor of Political Science and Senior Adviser to the Chancellor and Provost on International Affairs at the University of Alaska Anchorage, Woodrow Wilson Center Public Policy Fellow, Chairman of the Global Network for Africa's Prosperity, and Special Adviser to African and global leaders. He is the author of numerous key publications in the political economy of development with a focus on Africa and has a special interest in the politics of economic reform, institutional change, emerging and frontier markets, global political economy, post-conflict reconstruction, political regimes, state capacity, public service delivery, and governance. He is the recipient of more than sixty prestigious awards and distinctions from four continents, and has been honored as a World Economic Forum Young Global Leader, Desmond Tutu Fellow, and Andrew Carnegie Fellow and was listed as one of the "Top Ten Outstanding Young Persons in the World." His work has appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Harvard International Review*, among other media. His website is www.landrysigne.com.

“This seminal book is an outstanding contribution to the understanding of the policy-making process and evolution of economic development strategies in Africa. The book is an elegant demonstration of how ideas, interests and institutions have evolved over time in Africa, including during the structural adjustment period, shaping the actions of international, regional, and national players. Landry Signé, one of the most innovative thinkers of his generation, takes the readers on an edifying journey that will change their views of Africa.”

Albert G. Zeufack, Chief Economist, Africa Region, World Bank Group

“Professor Signé offers a highly original take on Africa’s development trajectory since independence. In focusing our attention on innovations in development strategy, Signé illuminates how African governments have changed both the policies they choose and the institutional means by which they choose them. Drawing on a thoughtful analysis of nine cases in francophone Africa, Signé captures the transition from structural adjustment to new frameworks and approaches, including the New Partnership for Africa’s Development. His approach challenges scholars to think critically about mechanisms of policy innovation on the continent and to take seriously the ways in which national governments and regional organizations are reshaping the contours of development strategy.”

Jeremy Weinstein, Professor of Political Science, Stanford University;
former Deputy to the US Ambassador to the United Nations and
former Director for Development and Democracy on the
National Security Council staff at the White House

“This book has two major strengths. It uses a framework in which interests, ideas, and institutions all matter. This is surely right, and opens avenues of enquiry that are otherwise missed. The other is that it is manageably comparative: by focusing on nine countries of Francophone Africa it has an arena in which divergence can meaningfully be explored. We need more books like this.”

Paul Collier, Professor of Economics and Public Policy, Oxford University

“Landry Signé has succeeded in applying rigorous, original thinking to one of the most important development issues of our time: the rapid economic and political changes occurring in much of Africa. Signé’s framework simultaneously captures the diversity of experiences across the continent while providing a consistent framework for understanding the forces behind these changes. This important work by a rising academic star is a must-read for anyone interested in comparative politics, development policy, and international relations, especially in Africa.”

Steven Radelet, Distinguished Professor of the Practice of Development,
Georgetown University and former Chief Economist of USAID

“Professor Signé has viewed the development community from within. He views his experiences in the policy world from the vantage point of a trained professional, and teaches us what he has learned in lucid and balanced prose. This book places us in his debt.”

Robert H. Bates, Eaton Professor of the Science of Government,
Harvard University

“In his very important book, Landry Signé studies the process of innovation in economic development strategies in Africa. The author argues that the evolution of development strategies reflects an adaptive learning process by state actors and has been shaped by the institutional heritage, actors’ interests, economic paradigms, and the increasing role of international development agencies in policy-making in Africa. The book is a must-read for development practitioners and academics working on Africa.”

Leonard Wantchekon, Professor of Politics, Princeton University;
Founder and President, African School of Economics

“This book is challenging and thought provoking, and makes a number of arguments that those who research and practice development would do well to engage with. Steering clear of both Afro-pessimism and Afro-optimism, Signé advances an important but often overlooked point: contrary to popular perceptions, political and developmental strategies in Africa do not stand still. Instead, they are subject to innovation, reversal, and revision. By demonstrating this eloquently, and challenging received wisdom, this book makes a significant contribution to the debate on development in Africa.”

Nic Cheeseman, Professor of Democracy, University of Birmingham

“Landry Signé’s book will change how we understand the political economy of development in francophone Africa. This book does more than introduce his readers to the complexity of policymaking in a set of countries little understood by anglophone scholars. It details the processes by which Africans have pursued their own ideologies and interests while negotiating with the international actors often credited – or blamed – for shaping development trajectories across the continent. Those who want to understand how policymaking is evolving in Africa should read this book.”

Leonardo Ariolla, Associate Professor of Political Science and Director of
the Center for African Studies, University of California, Berkeley

“Landry Signé draws on leading traditions in economics and political science to develop a multilayered analysis of how national development strategies change over time. As applied to nine francophone countries, the framework sheds light on the timing and direction of reforms in sub-Saharan Africa since 1980. An intriguing read as countries face new pressures both internally and in global markets.”

Stephen A. O’Connell, Gil and Frank Mustin Professor of Economics,
Swarthmore College, and Research Associate, Center for the Study
of African Economies, University of Oxford

“Africa’s dismal development stories of the 1980s and 1990s have given way to today’s ‘Africa Rising’ mantra. Yet, the process leading to this transformation has not been well understood. *Innovating Development Strategies in Africa* does a masterful job in helping us understand that process. The earlier development strategies have markedly improved, through a Bayesian-type process involving international, national, and regional actors, and so have the development outcomes. Thus

the book fills an important void and is a must-read for all interested in the process of African development.”

Augustin K. Fosu, Professor, University of Ghana; Extraordinary Professor, University of Pretoria; and CSAE Research Associate, University of Oxford

“Grand development strategies have often disappointed Africans. In this clever and accessible analysis, Landry suggests that how we approach institutional learning may be even more important than debates over the content of policy. This book offers a compelling new portrait of African political economy where national actors are far from being victims – even accounting for power asymmetries with international financial institutions. Landry’s framework demonstrates how the convergence of interests and ideas, and the contexts of opportunity over time, account for innovation in development strategies across a complex set of cases. We are left with an insightful and hopefully enduring theory grounded in rich research.”

A. Carl LeVan, Associate Professor, American University

“Using innovative concepts of political science, this fascinating and original book enlightens the successive models of the relationships between international, regional and national actors, which have resulted in successive changes of development strategy. Professor Signé provides a refreshing and stimulating view of the changes in development strategies that have occurred in nine Francophone countries since 1960.”

Patrick Guillaumont, Professor Emeritus, University of Clermont Auvergne, and President of Ferdi, Fondation pour les études et recherches sur le développement international

“This book presents a historical account of five decades of development policy in Africa, charting the ebb and flow of strategies over time in a dance involving national states and international actors. The author heralds a new generation of African scholars ready to overcome ideological divides of yore with a simple but powerful message: let’s get down to the pragmatic business of development.”

Marcel Fafchamps, Senior Fellow at the Stanford Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law, Stanford University

“Africa is often portrayed as a (reluctant) consumer of externally imposed development strategies. Dr. Signé’s book challenges this view. Using nine country case studies, he seeks to demonstrate that African countries were not passive recipients of internationally driven development programs such as the Structural Adjustment Programs prevalent in the 1980s. He argues that the heavy contestation about the appropriate role of State led to a push-and-pull between international and African ideas, interests, and processes related to development. This resulted in the emergence of new African development approaches and strategies such as the Lagos Plan of Action and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, as well as the domestication of some aspects of international development approaches. This book is a must-read for anyone interested in understanding the evolution and trajectories of development approaches in post-independence Africa.”

Monde Muyangwa, Africa Program Director, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

Innovating Development Strategies in Africa

The Role of International, National, and Regional Actors

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

4843/24, 2nd Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi - 110002, India

79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107173071

DOI: 10.1017/9781316779699

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First published 2017

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data

Names: Signé, Landry, author. | Van de Walle, Nicolas, 1957– writer of foreword.

Title: Innovating development : the role of international, national and regional actors / Landry Signé ; foreword by Nicolas van de Walle.

Other titles: L'innovation en stratégies de développement en Afrique.

English

Description: New York : Cambridge University Press, 2017. | Book is an improved translation of L'innovation en stratégies de développement en Afrique. Paris : Éditions Karthala, 2015. |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017006000 | ISBN 9781107173071 (hardback)

Subjects: LCSH: Economic development – Africa–History. | Africa – Economic conditions – 1960– | Africa – Economic policy.

Classification: LCC HC800 .S537713 2017 | DDC 338.96–dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2017006000>

ISBN 978-1-107-17307-1 Hardback

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Foreword

H.E. Joyce Banda, Former President of the Republic of Malawi

Innovating Development Strategies in Africa is a bold and ambitious undertaking in which Professor Landry Signé, Africa's own esteemed and world-renowned expert on international and African affairs, masterfully illustrates more than five decades of economic development strategies and transformations in Africa. With accessible but incisive insight and a sincere professional, and personal interest, Professor Signé answers several of the key questions critical to development thinkers and policy leaders: What are the key drivers of innovation in development strategies and Africa's transformation in the past half-century? What is the role of international, regional, and national actors in the formulation and implementation of developmental strategies in Africa? This book is a must-read for African and global leaders, policy makers, development practitioners, and scholars.

Professor Landry Signé is an ideal guide for this major endeavor. He combines a unique mix of globally acclaimed academic and policy contributions, which makes us Africans very proud and hopeful for the future of our continent with him as a contributor and leader. Born and raised in Cameroon, he was trained in seven universities on three continents (University of Lyon 3, University of Montreal, Sciences Po Paris, McGill University, Stanford University, University of Oxford, Harvard University) and has gained experiences in various institutions to become one of the most acclaimed African academics and public intellectuals of his generation. He has received widespread recognition, heralded as a World Economic Forum Young Global Leader for offering "innovative solutions to the problems faced by humankind." He was also named an Andrew Carnegie Fellow, as one of the "country's most creative thinkers," a Woodrow Wilson Public Policy Fellow for his "pre-eminent" and "world-class" research, and a Desmond Tutu Fellow, for being part of the "elite group of Africa's highest potential . . . that drives the transformation" of the continent.

In his new book, Professor Signé offers the most powerful and sophisticated study of African economic development strategies from the 1960s to the present that I have ever read. He expertly uses extensive historical evidence to demonstrate the critical need for the study of policy innovation to go beyond looking merely at success or failure and classifying innovations as either incremental or paradigmatic, since “cumulated small changes sometimes leads to greater transformations.” It is these small changes revealed by Signé that explain why, despite a series of economic crises during the 1980s and 1990s and the apparent continuity of policies, African countries have achieved an overall positive economic transformation during the 2000s and 2010s, even if performances across individual nations are varied.

Professor Signé offers a comprehensive account of the complex role of international, regional, and national actors in the emergence and trajectories of development strategies in Africa from 1960 to the present — indispensable knowledge for understanding why some policy innovations evolve, succeed, or fail. His analysis shows that in spite of power asymmetry and international influences, African leaders remain key agents of their countries’ destinies. In these circumstances, competent, accountable, and transformational political leadership is crucial.

Many of the most respected development thinkers, economists, political scientists, and Africanists have praised this book, including Paul Collier, Nicolas van de Walle, Jeremy Weinstein, Robert Bates, and Steve Radelet. This unique recognition of Professor Landry Signé’s influential development thinking is not a surprise to me. For his academic contribution and leadership, the Junior Chamber International (JCI), named him one of “Ten Outstanding Young Persons in the World.” Previous JCI winners include academics such as Henry Kissinger and leaders such as John F. Kennedy, Bill Clinton, and Nelson Rockefeller. He has also received recognition from the World Bank and the American Political Science Association among others. His development and African expertise is regularly sought out by leading institutions such as the National Endowment for Democracy, the United Nations Global Network on Digital Technologies for Sustainable Urbanization, the World Economic Forum, the World Policy Conference, and leading media such as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*.

Professor Signé’s extensive experience with diverse platforms explains his ability to efficiently engage a broad range of audiences while maintaining the highest level of academic rigor. He has provided refreshing insights for both casual and expert readers seeking to understand the major economic and policy transformations in Africa and to answer the critical questions of why, how, and to what extent the continent has been changing, and the

nature of its processes and challenges. Professor Signé's book, a testament to his accomplishments as a scholar, will change the way specialists and general readers think about development in Africa and will inform and drive actionable ideas for the policy and development community. As a former head of state, I have been delighted to read this inspirational book, and would have loved having access to its prodigious perspective while in office as president of Malawi. I urge everyone, especially my fellow African leaders and our international counterparts, to read this remarkable book.

Foreword

Nicolas van de Walle, Cornell University

Two common clichés are often repeated about Africa. First, it has become common to admonish observers about how big and varied a continent Africa is, with its more than fifty states covering varied types of territory and endowed with very different levels of resources. And, second, writers often point to the rapid change taking place in Africa; the pace of change is incredibly fast, it is often said, in a region with very rapidly growing population and a recent history of frenzied political and economic change.

Yet these two often stated truths about the region are mostly ignored in the political economy literature on the region, which tends to generalize incredibly broadly about “Africa,” almost as if it was a single country. Similarly, for a region that we all recognize is changing radically fast, it is disappointing how often the timelessness of certain ideas and certain political dynamics are asserted in the literature.

The great merit of the present study by Professor Landry Signé is his twin focus on cross-national comparison and change. The book he has written does not simply pay lip service to these two principles, but adopts them as a guiding set of ideas for the work as a whole. The present study of the making of economic policy explicitly compares nine different countries of francophone Africa. It also seeks to understand the complex processes of institutional and policy change among these nine countries over the course of the last five decades. In the process, Professor Signé has produced a much needed road map to understand how and why the continent has been and is changing, and the different variations in these processes across at least the nine countries on which he has chosen to focus.

The book focuses on three sets of key interacting variables to understand institutional and policy change since the 1970s: interests, ideas, and institutions. Too many analysts focus entirely on one of these variables, yet it seems clear that examining interests, say, while ignoring ideas or the institutional

context in which interests are asserted, will lead inexorably to reductionist explanations. Instead, the book chooses the option of greater complexity, by focusing on the interaction between the three variables in order to develop a more sophisticated theory of change, in which certain choices are made, while other, perhaps more desirable choices never seemed possible, at least in some of the countries of the region.

In its broad sweep, knowledge of the literature, and ability to broadly engage the empirical realities of nine different countries, the book provides an impressive synthesis of an important tranche of Africa's recent economic history. Professor Signé is particularly good at explaining the relationships between the countries of the region and the international financial institutions. He writes knowledgeably about the transition from the early, not very productive years of structural adjustment to the more complex realities of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. Though he is not naïve about the continuity between these different phases of the relationship between the governments of the region and various international actors, he shows also the very real evolutionary changes over time, the policy learning that went on, the institutional memory lapses, and the new possibilities that open up even as other opportunities fade into the background. In sum, Professor Signé has written an important history of the political economy of francophone Africa during the key period of the region's postcolonial decades. Not everyone will agree with the arguments in this book. Some readers may wish the book discussed in greater detail the political changes these countries underwent during this same period. Others, perhaps, would have liked a more adversarial stance vis-à-vis the Washington institutions. Still, everyone will need to confront the arguments advanced in this book.

Acknowledgments

Writing a book requires the collaboration and unique contributions of many individuals. I am indebted to Vartan Gregorian, president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and to his fabulous team, for making this project possible. Special thanks to Her Excellency Joyce Banda, former president of the Republic of Malawi, and Africa's second female president in history, and to Nicolas van de Walle from Cornell University, who have graciously written forewords for this book. I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who has helped me, including Larry Diamond, Francis Fukuyama, Richard Roberts, Jeremy Weinstein, Stephen Stedman, Marcel Fafchamps, Laura Hubbard, Sarina Beges-Thysen, Joel Samoff, Barry Shultz, and Nadejda Marques from Stanford University; Nicolas van de Walle and Muna B. Ndulo from Cornell University; Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler from the University of Oxford; Leonard Wantchekon from Princeton University; Jane Harman, Monde Muyangwa, Robert S. Litwak, Elizabeth M. Ramey, Grace Chesson, Jeremy Gaines, Hannah Beckett, Kimberly Conner, Beverly Thomas, Arlyn Charles, Lindsay Collins, Krishna Aniel, Janet Spikes, Michelle Kamalich, and Patrick Brown from the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars; Robert Bates from Harvard University; Steven Radelet and Kennedy Opalo from Georgetown University; Augustin K. Fosu from the University of Ghana; Nic Cheeseman from the University of Birmingham; A. Carl LeVan from American University; Patrick Guillaumont from Ferdi; Stephen A. O'Connell from Swarthmore College; Leonardo R. Arriola from the University of California, Berkeley; Tom Case, Samuel Gingerich, John Stalvey, John Petratis, James Muller, Forrest Nabors, Dalee Dorough, and Kimberly Pace from the University of Alaska Anchorage; Mamoudou Gazibo, Anne Calvès, and Robert Dalpé from the University of Montreal; Daniela Ginsburg for her fabulous contribution; Marie-Élie Poute de Puybaudet from the Community of Saint John;

and to my assistants Samantha Mack, Caroline Streff, Wilfried Youmbi, and Chelsea Johnson.

I would also like to thank the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars (Africa Program), Stanford University (Center for Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law, and Center for African Studies), Cornell University (Institute for African Development), the University of Oxford (Centre for the Study of African Economies), the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Fonds Québécois de la Recherche sur la Société et la Culture, the Political Science Department of the University of Montreal, the Quebec Ministry of Culture, the International Relations Program of the University of Montreal and the Development Research Center at the Center of International Studies at the University of Montreal, *Revue Politique et Sociétés*, *Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines*, *Revue de l'Innovation*, *Revue Cosmopolis*, and the University of Alaska, Anchorage, which generously provided the support that made this book possible.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank my fantastic family (Michel, Joséphine, Nadège, Carine, Gaël, Marcelle, and Nadine), whose unconditional support has been a constant source of motivation.

This book was made possible in part by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The statements made and views expressed are solely the responsibility of the author.

Abbreviations

AAP	African Action Plan of the AU/NEPAD
ADB	African Development Bank
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
AU	African Union
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program
ESAF	Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
G7	Germany, Canada, United States, France, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom
G8	Germany, Canada, United States, France, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, Russia
HIPC	heavily/highly indebted poor countries
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IDA	International Development Institution
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFI	international financial institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPPF	Infrastructure Project Preparation Facility
ISAP	Infrastructure Strategic Action Plan
LPA	Lagos Plan of Action
MAP	Millennium Partnership for Africa Recovery Program
MAP	Millennium Action Plan
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NAI	New African Initiative
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NITC	New Information and Communications Technology
OAU	Organization of African Unity
ODA	Official Development Assistance

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
OPEV	Operations Evaluation Department (African Development Bank)
PFP	Policy Framework Paper
PIDA	Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa
PRGF	Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility
PRSC	Poverty Reduction Support Credit
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SAP	structural adjustment program
SPD	Spatial Development Program (of NEPAD)
STAP	Short-Term Action Plan (of NEPAD)
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
US	United States
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization