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Mireille Razafindrakoto, François Roubaud, Jean-Michel Wachsberger

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## PUZZLE AND PARADOX

Madagascar's long-term trajectory is unique: not only has GDP per capita been trending downward since 1960 (the puzzle), but every time the country has set out on path of growth, it has been stopped in its tracks by a socio-political crisis that has shattered the hopes it raised (the paradox). No satisfactory explanation of this failure has been provided so far. This book elaborates a model of intelligibility of Madagascar's downfall, based on an integrated political economy approach as well as mobilizing the most recent development theories. Combining a review of historical literature with original and sometimes unique statistical surveys, it proposes a general interpretative framework for the workings of Malagasy society. Richly documented and accessible, *Puzzle and Paradox* allows readers to understand Madagascar's sociopolitical history while more broadly offering an opportunity to grasp the different dimensions of development in the Global South.

Mireille Razafindrakoto is Senior Researcher at the French Institute of Research for Sustainable Development (IRD). She is the co-editor of many books, including *Madagascar d'une crise l'autre: ruptures et continuité* (2018), *The Informal Economy in Developing Countries* (2014) and *The New International Poverty Reduction Strategies* (2003).

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# Puzzle and Paradox

*A Political Economy of Madagascar*

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## Foreword

JOHN JOSEPH WALLIS

The title of *Puzzle and Paradox* captures two essential features of late twentieth and early twenty-first century Madagascar. Madagascar is one of the poorest and poorest performing countries in the world. Since independence in 1960, the time path of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita follows a downward path, but it is not inexorable. The downward trend results from five consecutive “scallops.” Figure 1.2 dramatically illustrates the history. In the first scallop income rises a few years after independence. A political crisis in 1972 results in sharply declining income for a time, followed by rising income (the scallop), then followed by another political crisis in 1991 and another scallop. The scallop pattern continues to the present day. What explains this pattern and the long decline in income? That is the puzzle.

Yet, unlike most of the other extremely poor nations, Madagascar has not been beset by a series of civil wars; the society is not particularly violent and has a strong cultural inheritance that limits violence and values order; it has resources, both productive land and mineral wealth, but has not been ravaged by a resource curse; and its population exhibits strong support for open democratic values. Nonetheless, each economic recovery ends in a political crisis that chokes off economic growth. That is the paradox.

Mireille Razafindrakoto, François Roubaud, and Jean-Michel Wachsberger weave together the puzzle and paradox to make a convincing case that there are no easy answers to why Madagascar finds itself in its current predicament. The standard diagnoses for why economies fail do not apply neatly to Madagascar, and the authors make their analysis particularly convincing by a close and careful comparison of Madagascar with the rest of Africa. While Madagascar’s economy is one of the worst performing in

Africa, Madagascar ranks somewhere in the middle of African countries with respect to literacy, life expectancy, roads, the quality of governance, and the distortion of agricultural prices, although it does have low fixed capital per capita. The lack of capital is almost certainly a result, rather than a cause, of poor economic performance. Africa is the most ethnically diverse region in the world, and Madagascar is among the most ethnically fragmented societies in Africa. Yet, Madagascar is also the most linguistically homogeneous society in Africa and ethnic divisions and conflict appear to play a smaller role in Madagascar than other African societies. The paradox is a paradox indeed.

The second chapter illuminates the paradox by laying out the history of Madagascar's "scalops." Periods of economic recovery usually end in a political crisis in which a new government is elected and policies change. Political crises are accompanied by low levels of violence but significant amounts of political protest. New regimes change the rules and policies, and the economy suffers for a time. The economy begins to grow again, another political crisis emerges, and a new regime suffers through an initial period of economic shrinking. The cycles are not only persistent, but they appear to be occurring more frequently. Again, a paradox. Why is Madagascar unable to solve the problem of repeated political uncertainty and regime change, and along with it significant disruption to institutions and policies that, nonetheless, fail to produce positive results?

Chapter 3 briefly steps back from the granular history to consider very general frameworks for thinking about the problem of development. The three considered are North, Wallis, and Weingast (2009); Acemoglu and Robinson (2005 and 2012); and Kahn (2010). For the most part, the book uses the North, Wallis, and Weingast (NWW) as a scaffolding for the analysis of Madagascar. NWW theorize about how societies create and sustain social order within the threat of disorder and violence. They focus on elites and intra-elite bargains that create rents for elites that enable intra-elite bargains to be credible and sustainable. Stable elite bargains limit violence among the elites. The framework operates at a high level of generality, very different from the granular detailed history that Razafindrakoto, Roubaud, and Wachsberger provide. The difference provides a useful tension in the argument and a clear organizational structure for the book. On key points Razafindrakoto, Roubaud, and Wachsberger disagree with NWW. They do not show that NWW explain the details of Madagascar's history, but use the framework as it was intended, as a framework for asking questions about the nature of societies. Another benefit of the framing is to quite effortlessly place the Madagascar

experience, and the lessons we might draw from it, in the larger development context. This is done nicely in the book without straining at parallels or analogies. This is accomplished by carefully placing Madagascar both in the African context and in the larger development literature, which the authors know very well.

Having done a careful job of eliminating the usual candidates for poor economic performance in Chapter 1, highlighting the role of political instability at key inflection points in Madagascar's recent history in Chapter 2, the conceptual framework, building on NWW, draws attention to the central role played by elites in Malagasy society and, potentially, in the periodic political crises that stymie economic growth. Chapter 4 finds that non-elites in Madagascar are relatively unorganized. Non-elites are atomistic in the sense that their organizational structures are limited, and not very trusting (again, in comparison to other African societies). In other words, civil society is weak in Madagascar. The organizational structures that people belong to and can tap into to help coordinate their lives are weak.

Chapter 5 is where the real pay-off comes. Using a unique and innovative way of gathering and measuring elite experiences, building on a network of elite contacts that the authors created and nurtured, the authors investigate how networks of elite relationships operate. Madagascar has a long history of hierarchical, status-dominated social relationships. The class structure is not impermeable, but it is real. Beginning by interviewing thirty members of the elite who the team members were connected with (the team members recognizing that they themselves were elites), the initial interviewees conducted additional rounds of interview with elites the original thirty "super-interviewers" identified (the methods are described in Box 5.2 of Chapter 5). Each interview ended with a request to list eight other elites who might be interviewed, and then built out a network of elite by following up the suggested contacts. In all, 1,000 elites were interviewed. Critically, all the elites were interviewed by other elites. The survey of elites in Madagascar is called ELIMAD, and is, among the many valuable contributions of the book, a true innovation.

The ELIMAD survey shows that elites are not only better organized – 80% of elites are members of some association compared to 20% of non-elites – but they are also better connected with each other. Nine spheres of elite spheres of power are identified. More powerful elites "straddle" multiple spheres. Connection across groups of elites is positively associated with the power and status of individual elites. These are fascinating results, for

they show how the elites reconstitute themselves through time and the stark difference in the organizational capacity of elites and non-elites.

How does this help us understand the puzzle and paradox of Madagascar? The authors' research and insights into the organization of elites, non-elites, and the dynamics of Malagasy society offers several possible explanations. What follows are the lessons that I have learned from their research, perhaps more pointed than the authors can draw given their requirement to consider the feasible alternative explanations.

Over time, certainly in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, domination of Malagasy society was secured by a set of privileged elite arrangements dominated by an ethnic highland group, the *Merina*, who established norms and formal rules recognizing and implementing a set of privileges possessed by identifiable status groups, the *Andriana* and *Hova*. These groups were stable, but not closed. They were very successful at limiting violence and instilling a social norm against the use of violence. But instilling a social norm against violence was an outcome; it was not the source of peace. The source of peace, of social order, was the interlocking privileges created and sustained within the elites and their organizations. Those groups remain at the top of the elite social structure today.

With the arrival of the British and the French, the Malagasy elite was not removed, but it was challenged to accommodate new and powerful individuals who could call on external resources. This meant, gradually or not, that the most powerful elites, or perhaps more accurately the highest status Malagasy elite(s), were no longer identified as the elites who ran the government. Elites retained their privileges and their organizations, but within elite status did not determine who controlled the government.

Perhaps this was a necessity under colonialism, when foreign colonial officers necessarily occupied positions of government authority. The arrangement became institutionalized after independence. Political leaders continued to come from the *Andriana* and *Hova*, but their status within the elite hierarchies had little to do with whether they became political leaders. Society as a whole remained markedly disorganized when compared to elites, but the general population was allowed to select leaders through elections that were usually open and fair, but initially returned winning candidates with 80% or more of the vote. That is a result that does not occur at random. It requires organization, but perhaps organization that is not overtly political.

For reasons that are not clear, the Malagasy elites were unwilling or unable to reach an intra-elite agreement in which political leadership came out of an intra-elite agreement. Nonetheless, the elite agreement maintains



social order and ensured existing elite privileges (with some mobility but very limited entry) in the face of changing conditions. The elite agreement has yet to break down: specifically, civil war between the elites had been avoided. The military elites have substantially honored their agreement to remain both outside and above politics. But the costs of maintaining that agreement have been enormous for the rest of society.

Periodically and with growing frequency, political leadership collapses. New leaders are chosen democratically and legitimately (most of the time), and no regime has significantly altered the privileges and agreements within the elites, as evidenced by the continued existence, education, wealth, status, and power of the elites identified in Chapter 5.

But new regimes have shown no reluctance to completely alter other institutional rules governing the economy, as detailed in Chapter 2. The result has been chaos. Every time a new regime enters, the rules change. Things fall apart. As the economy begins to recover, the depredations of the existing regime create circumstances that mobilize a new political competitor. The existing regime falls, the rules change, the economy suffers, people become poorer and the elites remain the elites.

This foreword only scratches the surface of the deep learning and research *Puzzle and Paradox* represents. I learned a tremendous amount from this research and it has influenced my thinking about the problems of both development and the relationships between elites and larger societies. My connection to the book has been through the research project of the Agence Française de Développement under the organization and direction of Nicolas Meisel. With time, the project may produce more book length case studies, and we can only hope that they are of such high quality as this one.

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- All those who agreed to take time out to participate in the dozens of statistical surveys and hundreds of qualitative interviews. May the time they have given to answer relatively tedious and intrusive questions find a form of gratification in the analyses, thinking and debates prompted by this book.

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACMIL	<i>Académie Militaire d'Antsirabé</i> (Antsirabe Military Academy)
AFD	<i>Agence Française de Développement</i> (French Agency for Development)
AfDB	African Development Bank
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
AKFM	<i>Antokon'ny Kongresin'ny Fahaleovantenan'i Madagasikara</i> (Congress Party for the Independence of Madagascar)
AREMA	<i>Avant-garde de la Révolution Malgache</i> (Vanguard of the Malagasy Revolution)
AVI	<i>Asa Vita no Ifampitsarana</i> (Judged By Your Work Party)
BIANCO	<i>Bureau Indépendant Anti-Corruption</i> (Independent Anti-Corruption Bureau)
CAPSAT	<i>Corps d'Administration des Personnels et Services de l'Armée de Terre</i> (Army Corps of Personnel and Administrative and Technical Services)
CAR	<i>Communes Autochtones Rurales</i> (Rural Indigenous Authority)
CASEP	<i>Crédit à l'Ajustement Structurel des Entreprises Publiques</i> (Public Enterprise Structural Adjustment Credit)
CASPIC	<i>Crédit d'Ajustement Structurel de la Politique Industrielle et Commerciale</i> (Industrial and Trade Policy Structural Adjustment Credit)
CEAMP	<i>Centrale d'Équipement Agricole et de Modernisation du Paysannat</i> (Central Agricultural Equipment and Farming Modernisation Stores)
CNDP	<i>Conseil National Populaire pour le Développement</i> (National Popular Council for Development)

## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

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CNOSC	<i>Coordination Nationale des Organisations de la Société Civile</i> (Consortium of Solidarity with Madagascar)
CONECS	<i>Conseil National Economique et Social</i> (National Economic and Social Council)
CPIA	Country Policy and Institutional Assessment
CRES	<i>Comité pour le Redressement Economique et Social</i> (Committee for Economic and Social Recovery)
CSR	<i>Conseil Suprême de la Révolution</i> (Supreme Revolutionary Council)
CSLCC	<i>Conseil Supérieur de la Lutte Contre la Corruption</i> (Anti-Corruption High Council)
CST	<i>Conseil Supérieur de la Transition</i> (High Transitional Council)
CT	<i>Congrès de la Transition</i> (Transitional Congress)
DCAN	<i>Direction de la Construction et de l'Armement Naval</i> (Shipbuilding and Navy Armaments Division)
DIAL	<i>Développement, Institutions &amp; Mondialisation</i> (Joint Research Unit IRD – Université Paris-Dauphine)
EBA	Everything But Arms
EDBM	Economic Development Board of Madagascar
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
EKAR	<i>Eglizy Katolika Apostolika Romana</i> (Roman Catholic Church)
ENEMPSI	<i>Enquête Nationale sur l'Emploi et le Secteur Informel</i> (National Survey on Employment and the Informal Sector)
FCF	Fixed Capital Formation
FFKM	<i>Fikambanan'ny Fiangonana Kristianina eto Madagasikara</i> (Malagasy Council of Christian Churches)
FIDES	<i>Fonds d'Investissement pour le Développement Economique et Social</i> (Investment Fund for Economic and Social Development)
FJKM	<i>Fiangonan'i Jesoa Kristy eto Madagasikara</i> (Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar)
FNDR	<i>Front National de Défense de la Révolution</i> (National Front for the Defence of the Revolution)
FRS	<i>Force de Sécurité Républicaine</i> (Republican Security Forces)
GDP	gross domestic product
GEFP	<i>Groupeement des Entreprises Franches et Partenaires</i> (Madagascar Export Processing Zone Association)
GEM	<i>Groupeement des Entreprises de Madagascar</i> (Confederation of Trade Organisations of Madagascar)
GPM	<i>Groupeement de Police Mobile</i> (Mobile Police Group)

HAE	<i>Haute Autorité de l'Etat</i> (High State Authority)
HAT	<i>Haute Autorité de la Transition</i> (High Transitional Authority)
HCC	<i>Haute Cour Constitutionnelle</i> (High Constitutional Court)
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative
HVM	<i>Hery Vaovao ho an'i Madagasikara</i> (New Forces for Madagascar)
IFI	International Financial Institution
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INSTAT	<i>Institut National de la Statistique</i> (Madagascar National Statistics Office)
IPD	Institutional Profiles Database
IRD	<i>Institut de Recherche pour le Développement</i> (French Research Institute for Sustainable Development)
JINA	<i>Jeunesse Nationaliste</i> (Nationalist Youth; secret society)
JPM	<i>Jery sy Paikady ho an'i Madagsikara</i> (Young Business Heads of Madagascar)
KIM	<i>Komity Iombonan'ny Mpitolona</i> (Committee for the Coordination of the Struggle)
KMF/CNOE	<i>Komity Mpanaramaso ny Fifidianana/Comité National pour l'Observation des Elections</i> (National Election Observation Committee, founded in 1989)
LAO	limited access order
LMS	London Missionary Society
MAP	Madagascar Action Plan
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MDRM	<i>Mouvement Démocratique de la Renovation Malgache</i> (Democratic Movement for Malagasy Renewal)
MFA	Multi Fiber Agreement
MFM	<i>Mpitolona ho amin'ny Fandrosoan'i Madagasikara</i> (Party for Proletarian Power)
MGF	Malagasy franc
MONIMA	<i>Mouvement national pour l'indépendance de Madagascar</i> (Madagascar for the Malagasy; people's peasant, anti-imperialist party)
NIC	National Investment Company
NPA	National People's Assembly ( <i>Assemblée Nationale Populaire</i> )
OAO	open access order
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

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OMNIS	<i>Office des Mines Nationales et des Industries Stratégiques</i> (National Military Agency for Strategic Industries)
PADESM	<i>Parti des Dshérités de Madagascar</i> (Party of the Disinherited of Madagascar)
PAPMAD	<i>Papèterie de Madagascar</i> (Paper Mill of Madagascar)
PDS	<i>Président de la la Délégation Spéciale</i> (Chairman of the Special Delegation)
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSD	<i>Parti Social-Démocrate</i> (Social Democratic Party)
PSM	<i>Parti Socialiste Malgache</i> (Malagasy Socialist Party)
R&D	research and development
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SeFaFi	<i>Sehatra Fanaraha-maso ny Fiainam-pirenena</i> (Public Life Observatory)
SEM	<i>Société d'Electricité de Madagascar</i> (Madagascar Electricity Board)
SIM	<i>Syndicat des Industries de Madagascar</i> (Federation of Malagasy Industries)
SINPA	<i>Société d'Intérêt National des Produits Agricoles</i> (National Farm Produce Marketing Board)
SMOTIG	<i>Service de la Main-d'Œuvre des Travaux Publics d'Intérêt Général</i> (Manpower Service for Public Works)
SMR	<i>Société Malgache de Raffinage</i> (Malagasy Refinery)
SMTM	<i>Société Malgache de Transport Maritime</i> (Malagasy Society of Maritime Transport)
SONACO	<i>Société National du Commerce Extérieur</i> (National Foreign Trade Company)
SOTEMA	<i>Société textile de Mahajanga</i> (Mahajanga Textile Company)
TFP	total factor productivity
TGV	<i>Tanora malaGasy Vonona</i> (Determined Malagasy Youth)
TIM	<i>Tiako i Madagasikara</i> ('I Love Madagascar', the president Marc Ravalomanana party)
TTS	<i>Tanora Tonga Saina</i> ('Aware Youth')
UDECM	<i>Union des Démocrates Chrétiens de Madagascar</i> (Union of Christian Democrats; membre du FNDR sous la IIe République)
UDSM	<i>Union Démocratique et Socialiste de Fianarantsoa et Tuléar</i> (Union of Social Democrats of Fianarantsoa and Toliara)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

UNISDR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UPM	<i>Union des Populations Malgaches</i> (Union of Malagasy Peoples)
VITM	<i>Vonjy Iray Tsy Mivaky</i> (Popular Movement for the Unity of Madagascar)
VVS	<i>Vy, Vato Sakelika</i> (Iron, Stone, Branching; secret political society)
WDIs	World Development Indicators
ZOAM	<i>Zatovo Orin’asa</i> (Unemployed Youth)
ZWAM	<i>Zatovo Western Andevo Malagasy</i> (Malagasy Western Slave Youth)