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## Multi-ethnic Coalitions in Africa; Business, Politics, and the State in Africa

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Policymakers and students of African political economy have long wondered why more African governments have not done a better job of promoting investment by the private sector and what factors differentiate the minority of countries that have enjoyed good relations with business. Both of these books shed light on this question by emphasizing political processes rather than ideology or economic policy.

Using a variety of methods, Arriola carefully and persuasively argues that democratic rule and accountability become more likely when the main ethnic groups that control the government in a country are not the same as those that control finance. This form of political pluralism allows for checks and balances to prevent the abuse of power. Arriola makes his case through inventive data analysis and thorough case studies of Cameroon and Kenya. The idea that combining independent capitalist actors with political pluralism can lead to a more disciplined state and expand economic opportunities goes back at least to James Madison. But Arriola has found new and arresting ways to apply that argument to contemporary Africa.

Kelsall's book takes a different view, and reflects a growing disillusion among international donors with democratization and governance reforms in Africa. Questioning the link between capitalism and political pluralism, he argues that economic growth results from "visionary" political leaders who enjoy highly centralized control of the state apparatus and can shape long-term plans for economic development. The book includes four case studies of countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, Rwanda, and Tanzania) in which Kelsall claims growth has resulted from those conditions. But he says little about how to encourage visionary leadership or why so few states have it. A corollary to Kelsall's main argument is the idea that public corruption need not eliminate private-sector growth—a valuable insight, to be sure. But the book's more central claims are undermined by the anecdotal and sparse nature of the evidence Kelsall cites.

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