

## Predatory Rule: State and Civil Society in Africa



A comparative study of African systems of governance, *Predatory Rule* argues that, in spite of contradictory practices and institutional clashes, state and civil society are two aspects of an organic totality. Fatton attempts to move beyond the bifurcated understanding of African politics as a field of deadly struggles on which a soft authoritarian state opposes an emerging democratic civil society. His alternative conceptualisation of the African social order is based on the dialectical interdependence of state and civil society. Examining how the state functions as the governing classes structure of dominance and as the principal instrument of their predatory rule, he explores how, in resisting the incursions of the state, civil society offers autonomous venues for the collective expression of subordinate class grievances, while paradoxically fortifying the governing classes dominance. *Predatory Rule* also addresses how the dialectical interaction between state and civil society creates contradictory processes of class formation and disarticulation. Fatton suggests that such processes both foster and undermine democratic forms of governance throughout the continent.

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that civil society is an alternative to the state), like C. Monga<sup>81</sup> seems to do popular initiatives as a revenge of African societies on the state, is misleading in the sense that it gives

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