

# The State, Non-State Organizations and Livelihood Outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa



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Edited by

Roland Azibo Balgah  
and Emmanuel Yenshu Vubo

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## INTRODUCTION

EMMANUEL YENSHU VUBO  
AND ROLAND AZIBO BALGAH

Theoretical contestations in development literature portray disagreements among scholars on who should lead development. While state-centric proponents propel states as the epicentre for development, an opposing narrative conceptualises development as best undertaken by non-state actors. This theoretical divide has been at the basis of the allodoxia between theoretical constellations and empirical reality. The groove between theory and empirics persists, despite advances in both camps. Given the changing nature and functions of the state, the emergence of non-state actors and the transformation of the development efforts into livelihood benefits, it becomes crucial to revisit these issues especially in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), where development has recorded the slowest rates in the world. This edited volume eases the theoretical and empirical tensions on the subject, by verifying theoretical constellations with contemporary empirical reality.

The end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was marked by the end of the Cold War, the rise of neoliberalism, a decline in the role of the state accompanied by the promotion of developments away from the state and within the confines of new actors and the emergence of new conflicts. New development blue prints such as social development and sustainable development were advanced on the global scene, as structural adjustment schemes were being moderated with qualifiers such as social dimensions of adjustment, development with a human face, and preoccupation with poverty (fight against poverty, poverty reduction, and poverty alleviation). These ideological and programmatic revisions seemed to have faded in rapid succession but the key issues of development remain. The UN's advancement and promotion of millennium development goals and then sustainable development goals are an eloquent testimony, as are the stark realities of precarious livelihoods. The book provides an opportunity to have a retrospective look into the past but also explore the possibilities of new agendas (emergence, ten-year development plan, Africa's Agenda

2063). This edited volume is a strategic contribution to the state and non-state development discourses and reality in SSA. In addition to theoretical discourses and summative reviews, it draws on multiple (state and non-state-led) development projects in Cameroon.

Part I of this volume revisits the theoretical contestations in three chapters, reviews existing empirical evidence from SSA in two chapters, and presents a textual overview of public-private partnerships and their envisaged outcomes in Cameroon. Part II consists of fourteen solid and independent empirical studies on State and Non-state-led development projects, and their livelihood outcomes in Cameroon. The studies in Part II are grouped under two subsections: (2.1) State-led development projects with seven cases, and (2.2.) NGO-Led projects with seven contributions. Overall, the edited volume consists of 20 chapters: four theoretical chapters and two systematic reviews (Part I), and 14 independent case studies from Cameroon with an equal number of state-driven and NGO-driven projects. In the following, we summarise the theoretical contributions, and present the different case studies within each defined group. We commence with state-led projects, followed by NGO-driven ones. We make a conclusion on the role of state and non-state projects on livelihoods in sub-Saharan Africa, based on the case studies from Cameroon. We then comment on the methodology used in the studies, before concluding on the theoretical, empirical, research and policy implications of state and non-state-led development on livelihoods in sub-Saharan Africa.

## **State and Non-State Organisations in Development: Theoretical and Contemporary Issues**

Although organisational analysis has been guided by multiple theoretical and conceptual frameworks, the discipline still lacks an overarching framework that connects analytical components such as organisational context, theory, form, strategies, with outcomes. The absence of a generalised conceptual framework renders empirical organisational research individualistic, rendering advances in the discipline minimal. In chapter one, Emmanuel Yenshu Vubo and Roland Azibo Balgah briefly re-visit the existing literature, reflecting on its central tenets, foundations, and relevance in designing an overarching organisational analysis framework. Drawing from the literature, the authors then propose a novel Generalised Organisational Analysis Framework (GOAF). This novel framework strategically establishes linkages between context, theory, form and outcomes. The authors highlight the implications of the novel framework for organisational research especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

The next chapter (two) by Emmanuel Yenshu Vubo reviews theories of the state, notably Marxist and Bourdieu's contributions, and links these to the development preoccupation. The classical nature and functions of the state as found in its Western European cradle and extensions in North America and other parts of the developed world are examined and contrasted with the state form that emerged from decolonisation, with the argument that it is the latter form that coincides and appropriates development as an ideology and an imperative. This *de facto* developmental state – it is demonstrated – did not achieve the development goals and was discredited with a slowing down of the development idea before it was revived by the United Nations. It is the paradox of development that the postcolonial developmental state was being discredited in some areas of the South at the same time that theories of a developmental state were elaborated and codified with the success of the Asian tigers in the 1990s. Taking the role of the state as still being essential in development, Yenshu Vubo proposes a reform and reorientation of states to be able to play that role alongside other actors.

Roland Azibo Balgah and Emmanuel Yenshu Vubo revisit theoretical contestations in the development literature on who should lead development in the third chapter, bringing to light divergences between state-centric proponents projecting states as the most appropriate (or sole) organisational form for sustainable development, in stark contrast to opposing narratives propelling markets and the non-profit sector as suitable alternatives to the state. The authors then argue that existing theoretical divide is contested by the empirical evidence of successful bipolar collaborations, with cumulative positive effects on development in sub-Saharan Africa. Going beyond theoretical constellations and empirical evidence, the scholars propose a triple partnership framework that unites the individual organisational capacities of the State, the market and the non-profit organisations, to generate broad-based, holistic and sustainable development especially in rural areas in sub-Saharan Africa, based on the complementarity of different organisational capacities. The authors then contemplate the relevance and implications of state-market-non-profit continuum and competence-based approach for sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa.

In chapter four, Nyong Princely Awazi and Roland Azibo Balgah undertake a systematic review of state interventions and livelihood outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa, as a first step to capture contemporary trends of state interventions and livelihoods in SSA in the existing literature. The authors undertake an in-depth review of 60 empirical papers on state intervention and livelihood outcomes across SSA. Review

findings reveal that infrastructure and agriculture are the main domains of state intervention in the region. The livelihood outcomes of state interventions are mainly positive in the two sectors of infrastructure and agriculture. However, negative and neutral outcomes were also reported. Being cautious, the authors recommend expanded empirical research on state intervention and livelihood outcomes in SSA and a comparative analysis of the current study with the literature on non-governmental organisations.

To allow for comparison, Roland Azibo Balgah and Nyong Princely Awazi undertake a systematic review in chapter five on the impacts of the NGO intervention on livelihoods across SSA. Their study draws on 51 empirical studies. Results show that the main domains of NGO intervention across SSA are health, environment, agriculture, microfinance, education, and infrastructure. The domains are quite diverse, and differ greatly from the prioritisation of state projects on infrastructure and agriculture (chapter four). The livelihood outcomes of NGO interventions in different domains across SSA are mainly positive, and represent a 23-percentage point's edge over state interventions, as reported in chapter four. Like with state-driven projects, negative and neutral livelihood outcomes were also reported, though much lower compared to state driven project outcomes. Based on these results, the authors conclude that NGOs are playing a major part in development and livelihood improvement across SSA. However, they recommend further empirical research to better understand the realities of NGO intervention and livelihood outcomes in SSA.

To contribute to scholarly and policy debate on sustainable pathways to achieving food security, Athanathius Amungwa Fonteh explores the involvement of public, private and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in agricultural extension in Cameroon in chapter six. He departs from the premise that government extension services are better suited to undertake a wide range of extension programs while NGOs are capable to assist small-scale farmers on social capital and poverty alleviation programs and advice that complements state actors in agricultural extension service delivery. Much in the tradition of the state-market-nonprofit continuum (chapter three), Fonteh compares the extension approaches of NGOs with those of public-funded extension programs, emphasising that policies and resources employed in agricultural extension should consider the comparative strengths of state and non-state organisations to improve on livelihood outcomes. This would be best achieved by establishing extension partnerships between State and non-State organisations for greater impact, especially on Cameroon's agricultural landscape.

## **State Organisation and Livelihood Outcomes in Cameroon: Empirical Evidence**

This section consists of seven independent studies of outcomes of government-led development projects in Cameroon. Many donor-funded projects in sub-Saharan Africa are executed by governments. Unfortunately, scientific evidence on their livelihood impacts and challenges faced by beneficiaries during and after project implementation is very much lacking. In chapter seven, Gregory Nguh Muluh, Jude Ndzifon Kimengsi, Roland Azibo Balgah, and Kester Azibo Ngwa draw on a random sample of 150 beneficiaries of the first phase of the Investment Fund for Communal and Agricultural Micro-projects (FIMAC I) in seven communities in the North West Region of Cameroon, to analyse the project's impact on livelihoods, and challenges from the loan scheme. Methodologically, the authors apply the before-after design using recall, due to the absence of baseline data, complemented by key informant interviews and field observations. The study reveals significant changes in beneficiary livelihoods in terms of growth in crop and livestock outputs, agricultural and non-farm income and savings, attributable to the FIMAC I loan scheme. Fuzzy transparency in loan application processes and absence of collateral security were the key challenges faced by project beneficiaries. The study concludes with the need to extend this government-led project to other needy communities in Cameroon, while addressing identified challenges, and considering social capital (e.g. belonging to a group or network) as collateral security. These, the authors believe, will increase participation, reduce poverty and enhance sustainable livelihoods in beneficiary communities.

The literature on government-led development has tended to downplay the dynamics and impacts of projects carried out by local governments with (or within) local communities. In chapter eight, Sonkey Louis Ntu and Augustine Ilome Kombe address these two issues by assessing the impact of local government-implemented FEICOM infrastructural projects on community wellbeing in Cameroon. Their study draws a purposive sample of 400 respondents in infrastructure development projects executed between 2016 and 2021. Using the Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to estimate the impacts, the study shows that all the four types of FEICOM funded infrastructural projects examined in the study (council chamber, water, school and hospital projects) positively influenced community wellbeing in the study region. However, only the influences of hospital and school facilities are significant. In terms of the magnitude of their effects on the community

wellbeing, the findings suggest that FEICOM funded hospital projects have the highest influence on community wellbeing, followed by educational, water and council chambers in descending order of importance. Sonkey and Ilome conclude that the examined government infrastructure projects have overall positive effects on community wellbeing. The authors recommend that FEICOM increases its community investment projects while reallocating resources based on their welfare-enhancing potentials.

In chapter nine, Peter Shillie NGEK, Mondji Boja Nji and Roland Azibo Balgah assess the differentiated contribution of government-led PCP-ACEFA counselling and financial support programme on the livelihoods of beneficiaries in Cameroon, using quantitative data from a representative sample of 120 smallholder producers. Agricultural production was significantly higher for project beneficiaries who received both counselling and financial support, as compared to those who received only counselling. The average number of livestock kept was significantly higher for beneficiaries who received only counselling as compared to beneficiaries who received counselling and finance. Overall, 88% of all beneficiaries reported an increase in agricultural production and household livelihoods from counselling and financing support provided by PCP-ACEFA. Based on these results, the authors conclude that both counselling and financing enhance agricultural productivity livelihoods improvement, albeit in different ways. The study recommends the PCP-ACEFA program's approach of combining counselling and financing for better results. However, the high but differentiated benefit of counselling as a stand-alone package warrants further research.

Although impact assessment scholarship in Cameroon is growing, gender-disaggregate studies especially for government-funded projects are extremely scarce. To stem this knowledge gap, Fuso Ngwamunde and Kester Azibo Ngwa undertake a gender analysis of the contribution of the Cameroon government-funded Grass Field Participatory and Decentralised Rural Development Project phase II (GP-DERUDEPII) on beneficiary livelihoods in the North West Region of Cameroon (chapter ten). They collect and analyse gender-disaggregated primary data from 120 (60 male and 60 female) beneficiaries using a structured questionnaire informed by the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework. Most beneficiaries in their sample reported high project impacts with only slight gender differences. However, female beneficiaries accumulated higher membership in groups and networks, while their male counterparts extended their friendship ties due to project implementation. More female than male beneficiaries held additional leadership positions in social groups after project implementation. Overall, with the exception area of land cultivated and income changes



that were significantly higher for male beneficiaries, livelihood outcomes were not much different by gender. The authors conclude that government (and other) projects like GP-DERUDEP II should increasingly include gender perspectives in designing development efforts in order to achieve more gender balanced impacts.

The poultry sector in Cameroon benefits from the ban on the importation frozen imposed by the government in the 1990s, and the growing market in the CEMAC region. Unfortunately, Cameroon continues to import huge amounts of animal protein, in spite of its local production potentials. In order to stimulate local production Cameroonian government in partnership with the Islamic Development Bank initiated the Livestock and Fisheries Development (LIFIDEP) programme to boost local livestock production. In chapter eleven, Prudentia Yenshi Lawan, Njegani Ngangsa and Solomon Ebane Monongo analyse the social and economic contributions of this government-led subsidised day-old chick programme on beneficiaries, using quantitative data collected from 160 randomly selected project beneficiaries in the North West Region of Cameroon. Analysing the human and social variables of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, the authors identify project benefits such as new knowledge and significant changes in human and social capitals attributable to project intervention. These results allow the authors to conclude that LIFIDEP holds greater prospects for improving livelihood outcomes for beneficiaries. The study recommends the continuation of LIFIDEP-like programs in Cameroon, given the significant livelihood effects.

One way to enhance youth employability is to allocate resources through programs that prepare and support young people for the job market. To reduce youth unemployment the Government of Cameroon (GoC) and its partners conceived and executed The National Youth Agro Pastoral Entrepreneurship Promotion Programme (Youth AEP) across the national territory. Herman, Chik Yiva and Bime Mary-Juliet Egwu analyse the contribution of Youth AEP on beneficiary livelihoods in the North West region of Cameroon (chapter twelve). They collect empirical data from 149 beneficiaries using a standardised, pretested questionnaire developed on the basis of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework. The percentage of female beneficiary youths was 18 percentage points higher than the programme's targeted female quota. Positive and significant programme impacts on beneficiary livelihoods from the perspective of natural, financial, and social capitals were documented. Based on these results the authors conclude that Youth AEP reduces poverty and enhances

the livelihoods of youth entrepreneurs in the North West region of Cameroon, and recommend continuity.

The relevance of agriculture in Cameroon's economy makes it an attractive sector for livelihoods and economic development projects in SSA. However, accessing the impacts of projects on beneficiary livelihoods is not always carried out especially over long periods. In chapter thirteen, Wajuku Theophilus Ongum assesses the impacts of a government-led Livestock and Fisheries Development Project (LIFIDEP) on the livelihoods of beneficiary fish farmers in the North West region of Cameroon, about 5 years into the project. He applies purposive sampling to select 102 project beneficiaries from 4 beneficiary municipalities, and uses a structured questionnaire to collect data through a cross sectional survey, in which a before-after intervention approach was applied. Survey results indicated that LIFIDEP's fish development project had significant impacts on beneficiary livelihoods. Gender inequality was, however, observed as most beneficiaries were men. Major challenges faced by the beneficiaries as reported in the study were unfavourable government policies, difficulties in input acquisition and capital expansion, limited credit access, limited market access, and unavailability of tools. Based on these results, Wajuku recommends that LIFIDEP reaches out to more beneficiaries taking into consideration gender balance, and addressing the identified challenges.

## **NGO-Led Development Projects and Livelihoods Outcomes**

The World Wide Fund for Nature's green business initiative in Cameroon aims at linking sustainable livelihoods and natural resource conservation in protected areas. In chapter fourteen, Jude Ndzifon Kimengsi and Roland Azibo Balgah assess the outcomes of WWF's green business model (GBM) in Cameroon. They conduct household surveys in communities with seven conservation beneficiary cooperatives in Cameroon who benefitted from WWF's services, capturing their preferences and perceptions with regards to the GBM initiative. The survey was complemented by field observations and key informant interviews with eight WWF and partner CSO representatives. Their conclusions reiterate the role of knowledge and experience in addressing key shortcomings of the GBM, livelihood improvement and external capacity to influence green business choices. The need to switch to alternative green business options and the negative effects of unclear benefit sharing were highlighted by the authors, who advocate for a

paradigm shift in WWF's GBM to better capture improvement in knowledge, by paying more attention to the livelihood needs of local populations in conservation areas as a prerequisite to achieve livelihoods improvement and resource conservation.

The role of urban and peri-urban agriculture for food security in African cities is common knowledge. Yet, impact assessment of Urban and Periurban Agriculture (UPA) projects on urban livelihoods in African cities are difficult to find. Che Nathans Kimbi, Mathias Fru Fonteh and Njegani Ngangsa use a case study NGO, the Sustainable Development and Humanitarian Service – SUDAHSER to assess the impacts of UPA on the livelihoods of farmers in Northwest Cameroon (Chapter Fifteen). They apply purposive and snowball sampling approaches to select 90 project beneficiaries and 90 non-beneficiaries (control group) respectively. A structured questionnaire informed by the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework–SLF was used to collect data through a cross-sectional survey, for before-after intervention comparison. ANOVA was used to assess the changes in livelihood assets attributable to project intervention and to compare the differences between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. Results indicated that SUDAHSER's intervention had significant impacts on the livelihoods of project beneficiaries. Changes in social, human and physical capital for beneficiaries increased significantly after the intervention compared to non-beneficiaries. A positive gender effect was observed as most beneficiaries (93%) were women. The reported challenges faced by the beneficiaries were price fluctuation of farm product, insecurity and instability, inadequate storage, inadequate capital, and inaccessibility to farmland. Based on the results, the authors recommend an expansion of the SUDAHSER NGO project to reach out to more beneficiaries while addressing the challenges for maximum impact.

In sub-Saharan Africa where current population growth exceeds economic growth, agriculture remains the life wire for many households. Adopting agricultural innovations can improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers. While this is truism, empirical evidence on the technology adoption – livelihoods nexus remains silent with respect to organisational form. This contribution from Roland Azibo Balgah, Mathias Fru Fonteh and Gaston Gwemelang Ngochembo (chapter sixteen) presents a comparative analysis of adoption outcomes (changes in poverty) for beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of a development-oriented non-government organisation's (DevNGO) fish farming technology transfer project in Cameroon. Their results indicate flaws in targeting the poor, as adopters were originally better-off than non-adopters. Both adopters and non-adopters remained poor after project intervention. However, adopters

consumed and shared about 80% of harvested fish, thus improving their animal protein intake while enhancing the social capital of adopters. Adopting fish farming technologies promoted sustainable natural resource management by increasing water catchments protection activities and significantly up-scaled organic fertiliser use among adopters. Overall, the impact of technology adoption on the livelihoods of beneficiaries was suboptimal. The authors attribute this to the limited size of the technology transfer package and targeting inefficiency.

The role of agriculture in economic growth, food security, poverty reduction and livelihoods is highlighted in Cameroon's Vision 2035 policy document. Agricultural development is therefore a priority sector for livelihoods development in Cameroon. Joy Ade Epouse Alima and Kester Azibo Ngwa examine the effects of a livelihood support project implemented by HUTSEED NGO in Diamare sub-division one of Cameroon's poorest regions, the North region of Cameroon (chapter seventeen). They collect empirical data from a random sample of 90 direct project beneficiaries, using a structured questionnaire developed from the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework. All beneficiaries reported increased livelihoods improvement at household level after project implementation as recorded through the accumulation of social, human, and financial capitals, and increased farm inputs of the beneficiaries, with cumulative significant positive livelihood impacts. The authors recommend the participation of NGOs such as HUTSEED to enhance sustainable livelihoods in Northern Cameroon where poverty remains high.

Conflicts and environmental disasters inflict economic, psychosocial and livelihood consequences on victims. Internal displacement often requires humanitarian assistance to improve livelihoods in the short-run, and adequate policy for long-term livelihood restoration. Mercy Arango Nguti, Fabien Sunjo and Michael Fon Nsoh spotlight the extent to which NGO-driven humanitarian assistance has affected the livelihoods of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the North West region of Cameroon (chapter eighteen). Their study compares the livelihoods before and after assistance, identifies preferred form of assistance, and assesses the effects of cash and non-cash assistance on the livelihoods of 251 IDPs in the three subdivisions in Bamenda city in Cameroon. Results from an ordered logistic regression reveal that cash transfers were preferred over in-kind assistance and had a significantly higher positive effect on the livelihoods of IDPs than noncash assistance. However, as both forms of assistance had positive effects, the authors recommend that NGO humanitarian assistance to IDPs focus more on cash assistance while identifying circumstances under which non-cash assistance will be more appropriate.

Access to energy is a key obstacle to sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa. The gap between energy demand and supply is increasingly narrowed by adopting green (renewable) energy sources such as wind, solar and biogas. Since the 1970s, Cameroon has experimented renewable energy sources such as biogas in line with international policy discourses on human-nature-livelihood interactions, and the sustainability of socio-ecological systems. Unfortunately, there is limited empirical evidence on the contribution of biogas on livelihoods in Cameroon. To narrow this cleavage, Kester Ngwa Azibo and Roland Azibo Balgah evaluate the impacts of biogas adoption on the livelihoods of beneficiaries in the North West Region of Cameroon (chapter nineteen). They use primary data collected from beneficiaries of a Heifer Project International Biogas Program, combining quantitative tools (questionnaires) and qualitative ones (focus group discussions and field observations). The results reveal that adopting biogas technology significantly increased human, physical and financial capitals for adopters, and enhanced social capital accumulation, while doing no harm to the environment. The authors conclude that adopting biogas technologies has livelihoods and environment-enhancing potentials in the study region and, therefore, recommend wider dissemination.

The twentieth chapter by Emmanuel Yenshu Vubo examines whether communities can be effective and viable actors in their development and, if so, in what domains. He starts from the assertion that communities are concerned with their own development and, as such, have a development as a social demand. Working on three communities in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon, the author shows that local communities can identify their needs but their visibility is limited. As such, social infrastructure projects are most in priority while environment and economic-based projects (improvement in incomes) are less in view. Their participation is also limited to decision making if they are in control, although externally conceived projects may be simply imposed and too heavily funded beyond the scope of the communities. There are also considerable limits in terms of financial capabilities and technical expertise such that local people are aware of the role and in-puts of other actors such as the state and civil society actors (NGOs in the main) who can intervene with heavier inputs (capital, technological expertise).

## **Methodological considerations**

With the exception of chapter eight, which draws on the wellbeing concept, and chapter twenty that looks at the role of rural communities in their development, all empirical case studies drew on the Sustainable

Livelihoods (SL) as the central framework for analysis. SL framework has been widely used in assessing project-related livelihood impacts, especially in Cameroon, which is the source of the empirical studies (Balgah et al., 2015; Epule, 2016; Muluh et al., 2019). Its strength lies in capital portfolios (natural, human, economic, physical, and social capitals) whose fluctuations, if well captured, can provide evidence of livelihood changes attributed to an intervention (Chambers and Conway, 1992).

Methods applied in chapters contributed in this volume are diverse, ranging from discourse analysis (chapters one to three), systematic reviews (four and five), textual analysis (chapter six) and empirical case studies (chapters seven to twenty). Quantitative methods are applied in about 71.5% (10 of 14) empirical chapters: eight to twelve, fourteen, and sixteen to nineteen. Three chapters (seven, fifteen and nineteen) accounting for 21.5% of the empirical chapters applied mixed methods, while only chapter twenty (7%) applied purely qualitative approaches. A plethora of methods applied strengthens the validity of consistencies observed across the empirical chapters. Questionnaires were applied in all the empirical case studies, making it the dominant instrument. However, interview guides for focus group discussions and key informant interviews were applied on a choice basis in studies that applied mixed methods (chapters seven, fifteen, and nineteen) and qualitative methods only (twenty).

The before-after approach was used in collecting and analysing empirical data in most of the studies. Therefore, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used across the studies. In many cases, panel data was constructed for the same group, and analysed before and after project intervention, which changes attributed to the (government or NGO-driven) project. This is a popular approach to impact assessments. One chapter (fifteen) applies the difference-in-difference approach to compare differences between beneficiaries and matching non-beneficiaries before and after project intervention, in order to minimise measurement errors from extraneous variables, such as other projects, whose impact might be (wrongfully) attributed to the intervention being assessed. Other interesting and robust analytical methods used include partial least square structural equation modeling PLS – SEM (chapter eight), Pair-wise correlation (chapter fourteen), Principal Component Analysis – PCA (chapter sixteen), and ordered regression analysis (chapter eighteen). The diversity of analytical methods provides robustness to the results observed across the empirical contributions.