5 STAGNATION IN AFRICA: DISENTANGLING FIGURES, FACTS AND FICTION

Paul Hoebink

The pile of books on Africa on my desk is growing quickly. The titles are alarming. Africa is being described as "A shackled continent" and its development is termed "stalled". Some titles are more neutral, like "The State of Africa", but others clearly point at failure: "The Trouble with Africa: Why Foreign Aid Isn't Working". They suggest that Africa is back in the 1980s where book titles were even more dramatic: "A Year in the Death of Africa" and "Africa in Crisis". Those were the years of hunger and starvation; in the new millennium Africa seems to be the continent of stagnation.[1]

Stagnation in Africa is also in the centre of international debate. Tony Blair, then prime minister of the UK, called together a Commission for Africa, which produced a report in 2005 under the title "Our Common Interest", with clear reference to the titles of other famous international reports like "Common Crisis" (the second Brandt Commission report) and "Our Common Future" (the Brundtland Report). It is not surprising that at the subsequent G8 Summit in Gleneagles that year, Blair and his Minister of Finance Gordon Brown put Africa high on the agenda. It ended in a promise of an extra $ 25 billion per year of foreign aid to Africa in 2010, with total official development assistance rising from about $ 100 billion to $ 150 billion. Recent OECD and UN reports, however, assessed that in particular the G8 countries were falling short of their promises.[2]

Where Africa was the continent of drought, starvation and refugee camps in the 1970s and 1980s, it seems now to be the continent of little or no progress in development and of failed international efforts to get it out of poverty traps. Africa is compared with Asia, and to demonstrate the differences between the two continents, the Ghana-Korea equation or Zambia-Korea has become very popular. At the end of the 1950s, the national incomes of Ghana, Zambia and Korea were more or less equal, but by the end of the 1980s or 1990s there was a huge gap between the countries in the two continents.[3] As I will try to show in this article, this comparison is one between a steel factory and a cocoa farm. The income between these countries might have been more or less equal; the composition was totally different, as were the social indicators. In this article we will investigate stagnation in Africa, starting with the question, "Is there stagnation in Africa and where can we see it?", and then we will try to examine the most probable causes for this stagnation, to disentangle the figures and the facts from the fiction, to see where Africa stands in the era of globalization. We will also have a brief look at the development policies of the main donors, to see what changes took place and how donors reacted to the 'African crisis'.

It is important to stress right at the beginning, as Alex Thomson (2004: 3) does, that Africa is not homogeneous, and there are huge differences in surface, population, ethnical diversity, colonial rule, income and political history between the 53 independent states. In surface area, France fits twice in Niger and Italy three times in Mali. But Guinea Bissau is the size of the Netherlands, and the Comoros and Mauritius are smaller than Luxembourg. Nigeria has 129 million inhabitants, Djibouti 480,000. Population density in Rwanda is 280 per km^2, in Niger it is 7.1 per km^2. Oil-rich Gabon has a per capita income of $ 14,000, Burundi $ 372. Angola has three large ethnic-cultural groups and at least 7 other ethnic groups. Tanzania has more than 120 ethnic cultural groups, of which nine have more than a million members. Chad has more than 200 distinct ethnic groups, and more than 100 languages and dialects are spoken in Chad alongside the official languages of French and Arabic. In short, African countries differ from each other at least as much as European countries. Still there is a tendency to consider at least sub-Saharan Africa as one entity with the same straits, waiving away the differences. In this article we shall try as much as possible to see the differences in social and economic development between the African countries.

5.1 STAGNATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

It is clear that growth rates in East Asia have been much larger over time than those in sub-Saharan Africa. But it has to be stressed that growth rates in the 1960s and part of the 1970s in most African countries were not that low and better than those in South Asia. South Asian growth started to rise only in the 1980s and just recently reached the peaks of East Asia. What is also clear is that in terms of economic development, sub-Saharan Africa saw two decades of stagnation in the 1980s and the 1990s. Economic growth was only 1.7 per cent per annum in the 1980s and only 2.1 per cent on average over the two decades. Only since 2004 have growth rates reached higher levels, 5.8 and 6.3 per cent for the whole region. This means that between 2006 and 2008, sub-Saharan Africa has been growing faster than Latin America.

This stagnation is in particular seen in the agricultural sector – especially important for Africa. Agricultural growth in developing countries has been considerable, particularly in East Asia. Sub-Saharan Africa also showed significant growth of 3 per cent per year in the last 25 years, but per capita growth has only been 0.9 per cent and this is considerably lower than in East Asia and Latin America. We have to acknowledge, however, that a few countries, like Sudan, Mozambique and South Africa, did remarkably better in agricultural production than others which had zero to negative growth due to economic crises and civil wars.

Looking more specifically at per country growth rates, the first thing to be observed is the high volatility of growth rates. Even in politically stable countries,

Table 5.1 **Economic growth of developing countries (percentage change of real GDP from previous year)**

Region	1960-1980	1980-1990	1980-200	2006	2007	2008
Sub-Saharan Africa	4.3	1.7	2.1	5.8	6.1	6.3
East Asia	5.6	10.2	8.0	9.7	10.5	8.6
South Asia	3.7	5.6	5.4	9.0	8.2	6.6
Latin America	5.5	3.2	2.2	5.6	5.7	4.5
All developing countries	6.2	2.9	3.3	7.6	7.8	6.5

Source: The World Bank, *Global Development Finance.* Washington, several years.

economic growth might float between nearly negative in one year to highly positive in the next year. What we have seen since 2002 is that some oil producers like Chad or Angola have profited from the hike in oil prices, but the effects are rather limited for other oil producers like Gabon, Nigeria and Sudan. Zambia and other mineral producers like Niger and Namibia show highly fluctuating growth. Countries that do depend on agricultural exports with stable governments like Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda are doing much better in the last ten years, with much lower fluctuations in economic growth. It shows that African countries are still extremely dependent on the world market of one or two products. We will come back to that below.

Table 5.2 **Economic growth of some selected African countries (percentage change of real GDP from previous year)**

Country	1999	2002	2004	2006	2007	2008
Angola	3.2	14.5	11.2	18.6	19.8	11.5
Burkina Faso	6.2	1.7	4.6	6.1	4.3	4.7
Cape Verde	11.9	5.3	4.4	10.8	6.6	7.6
Chad	-0.5	8.5	33.7	0.2	-0.3	3.2
Ghana	4.4	4.5	5.6	6.2	6.0	6.0
Mali	5.7	4.2	2.3	5.3	4.2	4.7
Mozambique	7.5	8.2	7.5	8.0	7.2	7.0
Nigeria	1.5	1.5	6.0	5.6	3.2	6.2
Niger	1.0	5.3	-0.8	4.8	5.0	4.7
Tanzania	4.8	7.2	7.8	6.7	6.6	6.5
Uganda	8.2	6.4	5.4	6.8	5.1	6.0
Zambia	2.2	3.4	5.4	6.2	5.8	6.3
Zimbabwe	-3.6	-4.4	-3.8	-4.8	-6.2	-4.5

Source: OECD/African Development Bank, *African Development Report 2008*, Paris: OECD.

The picture changes again if we look at indicators for social development. The Human Development Index, designed by Mabub Ul Haq and now the subject of an annual UNDP report, comprises life expectancy, adult literacy and enrolment in schools, and GDP per capita; for many African states it shows signs of progress over the years. Notable exceptions, because of severe slowdowns in the economy and the AIDS pandemic, are Zambia and Zimbabwe. But countries like Burkina Faso and Mali which come from the bottom ranks in human development are slowly and gradually improving (see Table 5.3).

Most probably the best indicator of social progress is life expectancy. Most aspects contributing to a better life – food, health, education – are expressed in longevity. Due to civil wars and HIV/AIDS, some African countries are showing a reduction in life expectancy, in particular Congo and Rwanda, but most notably in Zambia, Zimbabwe and (the economic and political success story) Botswana.[4] But twice as many countries, like Senegal and Gambia,[5] show good progress on this important social indicator. In life expectancy sub-Saharan Africa went from 46.1 years to 49.1 years between 1975 and 2005, and while that is not much, without the AIDS pandemic, as the particular example of Botswana shows, progress would have been tripled.

Also regarding adult literacy and in particular school enrolment we see great progress in the last few years in particular. In Tanzania, for example, adult literacy went up from 59.1 per cent in the 1990s to 69.4 per cent in 2005, and school enrolment from 49 per cent in 1991 to 91 per cent in 2005. Similar progress can be seen in Malawi and Uganda, and with lower figures in Senegal, Mali and Burkina Faso.[6] The under-five mortality rate, considered an important indicator for progress in children's health and welfare, has been reduced in sub-Saharan Africa from 243 per 1,000 in 1970 to 160 in 2006, even given slow progress in the 1980s.[7]

Of course, all these nice figures on social progress cannot hide the fact that the countries of sub-Saharan Africa are still on the bottom of the lists of all indicators of social development. Of the 177 countries listed in the Human Development Index, the bottom 35 are from sub-Saharan Africa. According to World Bank estimates, the number of people living on $ 1 dollar a day or less did grow from 161 million to 303 million in sub-Saharan Africa in the two decades between 1981 and 2001. And their share of the population grew from 41.6 per cent to 44.0. At the same time East Asia saw an enormous decline (from 57.7 per cent to 11.6%), but Latin America had only a small reduction, and the Europe/Central Asia region saw a clear rise in poverty.[8] UNCTAD estimates are even more negative, indicating that the proportion of the population living on less than US$ 1 a day in the least developed countries of Africa has increased continuously since 1965-1969, rising from an

Table 5.3 **Trends in human development for some selected African countries**

Country	1975	1980	1990	1995	2000	2005
Angola	....	....	....	....	....	0.446
Burkina Faso	0.256	0.277	0.308	0.312	0.330	0.370
Cape Verde	....	....	0.628	0.679	0.711	0.736
Chad	0.269	0.272	0.335	0.344	0.357	0.388
Ghana	0.438	0.467	0.511	0.531	0.555	0.553
Mali	0.232	0.258	0.285	0.309	0.332	0.380
Mozambique	....	0.302	0.316	0.330	0.364	0.384
Nigeria	0.317	0.376	0.407	0.419	0.433	0.470
Niger	0.234	0.250	0.246	0.254	0.268	0.311
Tanzania	....	....	0.437	0.423	0.420	0.467
Uganda	....	....	0.411	0.413	0.474	0.505
Zambia	0.470	0.477	0.464	0.425	0.409	0.434
Zimbabwe	0.548	0.576	0.639	0.591	0.525	0.513
For reference:						
Indonesia	0.469	0.532	0.626	0.665	0.682	0.728

Source: UNDP, *Human Development Report*, New York, several years.

average of 55.8 per cent in those years to 64.9 per cent in 1995-1999 (UNCTAD 2002).

5.2 THE LOW SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CAUSE

If we are trying to look for causes of the differences in progress between sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, the low level of social development in health and education is the first cause that springs to mind. The starting positions of East Asia and sub-Saharan Africa were totally different. There are important differences in social development between sub-Saharan Africa and East and South Asia, not only now, but already at the time of independence in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. The figures of life expectancy are very indicative: they were 14 to 15 years higher in East and South Asia in 1970 than in sub-Saharan Africa (see Table 5.4). This corresponds to great differences in human health and health care, as well as nutrition and education between the regions.

Also on other social indicators there are big gaps between sub-Saharan Africa at the start of independence in the 1960s and other developing countries. Primary school enrolment stood in 1960 at 5 and 7 per cent respectively in Ethiopia and Mali and around 25 per cent in East-African countries, whereas it was close to 100 per cent in East Asia. While there were some sub-Saharan African countries

Table 5.4 Differences in social development between East and South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa

Region	Life Expectancy (years)		Adult literacy (per cent)		Youth Literacy (per cent aged 15-24)	
	1970	2005	1985	2005	1985	2005
Sub-Saharan Africa	46.0	49.1	54.2	59.3	54.2	59.3
South Asia	50.3	60.9	47.6	59.7	47.6	59.7
East Asia	60.6	71.1	...	90.7	...	97.8
World	58.3	66.0	76.4	82.4	83.5	86.5

Source: UNDP, *Human Development Report*, New York, several years.

(Ghana, Malawi, Congo) with enrolment figures of around 60 per cent for primary education, enrolment in secondary education stood typically at 2-3 per cent for Africa as a whole, and enrolment in tertiary education was below 0.5 per cent. For the Philippines these figures were 26 per cent and 13 per cent. And even in India, which had a primary school enrolment in those days of only 41 per cent, enrolment in secondary and tertiary education stood at 23 per cent and 2 per cent.[9]

Literacy presents more or less the same picture, but also shows the progress that has been made in sub-Saharan Africa. In 1970 literacy rates stood at 27.8 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa, while in East Asia it was more than double at 57.5 per cent. Literacy subsequently increased from 37.8 per cent in 1980 to 49.9 per cent in 1990 and 59.7 per cent in 2000-2004, and that is better than South and West Asia. In Latin America and East Asia literacy was around 90 per cent in 2000.[10]

This colonial heritage in education could also be found in limited educational spending and in allowing a parallel education system. The British colonial authorities in Tanganyika spent about 1 per cent of their revenues on education at the beginning of the 1920s, and twenty years later it was less than 5 per cent. In Tanganyika the deliberate policy was to have three parallel education systems: one for Europeans, one for Asians and one for Africans (Coulson 1982: 84-85). In the African system there was also a special school for children of chiefs. At independence there were 28 Africans working in academic professions in Tanzania, mostly physicians and some veterinarians. At that time only fifteen Tanzanians had graduated from Makerere College in Uganda, and when Dar es Salaam University College opened eight weeks before independence in 1961, it started with fourteen students.[11]

Tanzania was not an exception. In the French colonies Africans could receive the status of "assimilé" when they adopted the French language and culture, a system copied by the Portuguese in their African colonies.[12] In the French colonies these "assimilés" could even be elected to the French parliament, the "Assemblée

Nationale". Less than 1.0 per cent of the population of French West Africa was able to obtain that status. In Angola the number of "assimilados" was about 1.5 per cent, but in Mozambique it was less than 0.5 per cent. Before the Second World War only 12 black students from West Africa obtained university degrees.[13] Belgian colonialism did even worse: at independence only 17 Congolese had university degrees.[14] Not to forget: the same type of segregation could be seen not only in Tanzania but also in other African countries, in the health system.[15]

The impact of this low social development should not be underestimated. It reflects itself in all parts of society. It could be seen in market parties with "very limited entrepreneurial heritages" (Acharya 1981: 115). It can be seen in civil society, which is generally described as being weak in sub-Saharan Africa (Michael 2004; Howell and Pearce 2002; Chabal and Daloz 1999). It can also be observed in state capacity: how to rule a country after independence with only a few academics and people with leadership capacities at hand? The low educational level could also be found in education itself, where after independence foreign (old colonial) staff was heavily needed in the universities.

5.3 THE NOT-A-NATION-STATE CAUSE

Most sub-Saharan African states are not a nation. They are colonial constructs, created by the coincidence of colonial occupation in the "scramble for Africa" at the end of the 19th century and arbitrary new divisions and creations in the decolonization process of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s of the last century. In half a generation Africa was "sliced up as a cake" between five rival European nations and King Leopold II, adding 10 million square miles and "110 million dazed new subjects" to Europe (Pakenham 1991). Decolonization took much longer, more than 40 years between the independence of Libya (1951) and that of Namibia (1990) and Eritrea (1993).

Whether it was under the direct rule of the French or the indirect rule of the British, it is a fact that all colonizers had to rule over multi-ethnic colonial entities, and they used the ethnic divide as an instrument in colonial rule. What is also a fact of history is that there were differences between the colonizers: smaller (Belgium) and less-developed colonial nations (Portugal) were more inclined to cling to colonial rule, to be more brutal and to prepare less for independence than the UK.[16] Others, like France, kept close control by placing French technical advisors in all the strategic ministries after independence. But it is another fact that they all used ethnic minorities in their colonial armies, administration and plantations as sergeants and supervisors, administrators and slave drivers.

Of course, ethnic division and imperial wars existed in pre-colonial Africa also. There were kings like Mwene Mutapa, the "lord of the ransacked lands". Slavery for the conquered existed on a limited scale also in these ages. Uneven development was seen in pre-colonial Africa with gatherer-hunters like the Khoisan in present-day Namibia and Bozo fishermen at the borders of the Niger in Mali on the one side, and Ethiopian and Shona Kingdoms with all their wealth, in isolation or with broad trade relations with coastal East Africa. But these were 'natural' stateless nations or 'natural' full states with huge armies and big courts and administrations.[17] The point then is that the colonial creations of African states are 'unnatural', they are in fact artificial nation-states, with a flag, a national hymn and a soccer team, but only a limited national identity even after 50 years of independence. If history had taken a different course, present-day Nigeria most probably would have been three nation-states, one of the Yoruba, one of the Ibo and one of the Hausa-Fulani (Arnold 2001: 22-23). In terms of ethnicity, language and religion this would have been a 'European solution', an imitation of the way most European states were formed, most recently in the Balkans. And what is more, by using ethnic divisions in its colonial rule, using some of the ruled to rule over the other ruled,[18] colonialism also became the birthplace of strong ethnic tensions after independence in many African countries.

Another inheritance of colonial times is the arbitrary boundaries, externally imposed with no concern for the populations. How arbitrary is often illustrated by a contested story about the border between Tanzania and Kenya. This border line follows a straight line and only at Moshi it takes a turn around Mount Kilimanjaro. It is said that this was not because of geographical reasons, but because Queen Victoria in 1886 gave it away to her grandson, the later emperor, Wilhem II.[19] Fact is that, for example, the border between Kenya and Uganda cuts across ten ethnic-cultural groups. The northern border of Angola crosses the lands of the Bakongo, the eastern border that of the Uvimbundu (or Ovimbundu) and the southern border that of the Herero and Ovambo.

This is not a matter of geography,[20] but deeply political. When ethnic identity is often closely related to cultural and religious identities and to national identity and when these identities vastly overlap, national identities in African states must by definition be weak. When ethnic identities prevail, it is clear that in the African context of a "highly complex set of ethno-linguistic configurations",[21] it is an almost impossible task to create a homogenous population with regard to their relation to the nation-state. In general, in most sub-Saharan Africa countries ethnic loyalties are much higher than loyalty to the nation-state. There are countries, like Zambia and Tanzania, where a national identity has been built by domestic policy debates and foreign policy initiatives, overcoming the ethnic divide. But on the other side of the spectrum, we have seen ethno-nationalism being used by many African political leaders, often ruthlessly, to gain and to cling to political power. Countries with many ethnic groups, like Tanzania, seemed to have been in a better position to overcome the ethnic divide than countries with a limited number of ethnicities, like Uganda or Nigeria.

5.4 THE DEPENDENCE ON RAW MATERIAL EXPORTS CAUSE

In one of the first books on African economic development, World Bank economist Andrew Kamarck indicated that African countries were involved much more in foreign trade than other developing countries. Per capita exports in sub-Saharan Africa were remarkably higher than those in Asia and Latin America, in particular some of the richer African countries, like Ghana and Ivory Coast. He concluded that economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa depended much more on foreign trade and that export was the only driver of economic development. At the same time there was a big danger in this dependency, what Kamarck called the "commodity problem" (Kamarck 1971: 93-96). With only a few exceptions, sub-Saharan Africa's exports consisted (and consist) mainly of one or two agricultural raw materials and minerals. Dependency on primary products however, wrote Kamarck, complicates economic growth and makes it more difficult, because of the fluctuations in prices and total receipts, and because demand grows much more slowly than incomes in the industrialized countries. If incomes grew by 1 per cent in the developed world, the demand for African raw materials would expand only by 0.5-0.6 per cent. A raw material exporter is thus much less in a position to profit from growth in world consumption than a producer of industrial goods. Looking back 40 years since this analysis, one cannot but conclude that Kamarck's analysis had unintended prophetic value and that we arrive here at a third cause for lack of progress and again an important difference between East Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.[22]

All sub-Saharan Africa countries, with the exception of Botswana, suffered a loss in their terms of trade in the 1980s. Annual losses varied between 0.3 per cent for Senegal and 11.5 per cent for Guinea Bissau. On average, the terms of trade in the two decades between 1975 and 1994 declined by 1 per cent annually for sub-Saharan Africa (Mshomba 2000: 142-143). This excludes again Botswana, but also Nigeria, which did a bit better in the 1970s, and South Africa, which saw its terms of trade grow between 1984 and 1994. Some 24 non-fuel commodities, all of importance for African exporters, declined by an average of 1 per cent a year between 1965 and 2004 (UNCTAD 2008a: 63). This decline continued in the 1990s. Coffee exports lost two-thirds of their value between 1995 and 2002; copper, cotton and sugar export prices were halved.

In 1975 coffee prices reached a peak of more than $ 4 a pound. Since then coffee prices have been falling to reach an all-time low in 2001 of $ 0.44. Between 1995 and 2001 alone, coffee prices fell by 68 per cent. Coffee prices at the beginning of this 21st century were only one-quarter of what they were in 1960. It is estimated that developing countries had an annual loss of $ 7 billion because of the drop in coffee prices. At the brink of the new century, Ethiopia's income from coffee was nearly halved in two years' time, while Uganda lost 30 per cent in a year's time.[23] The ills of market concentration in the industrialized countries are especially felt by commodity exporters, limiting their possibilities to move up the scale of production, like in the case of coffee or the exemplary case of cocoa and chocolate (UNCTAD 2008a).

Cotton prices, of particular importance for some West African (Sahel) countries like Burkina Faso and Mali, were 52 per cent lower in the beginning of this 21st century than six years before. But, unlike coffee, this was mainly because of high subsidies to farmers, in particular in the US but also in the EU. It was calculated by the International Cotton Advisory Committee that cotton prices would rise by 75 per cent if these subsidies were abolished. More than 10 million farmers in these countries are dependent on income from cotton production, and cotton contributes between 30 per cent and 40 per cent to the export income of countries like Benin and Mali. Income losses were calculated at 9 per cent to 12 per cent annually.[24] Policy coherence (for development) – in particular in agricultural trade and agricultural policies – has, to say the least, not been the strongest aspect of European and American policies (Hoebink 2008). It is easy to imagine that with their dependence on primary commodities exports, this lack of coherence has hurt a series of African exporters the most.

It is clear that its comparative advantage is not getting African economies out of their stagnation. Diversification into other tropical agricultural products has been recommended by international organizations to African governments for many years, but has become a slogan of "doing more of the same", not leading to more sophisticated exports, not contributing to a better competitive advantage. The jump in agricultural primary commodity prices between 2003 and 2007, in particular for coffee, maize and sugar, has stimulated growth in several African countries.[25] Mineral exporters profited even more when some prices, like copper, tripled or grew fourfold. But also in these years primary commodity prices were volatile. And the future might resemble what we saw from 1979 onwards: not only a decline in the prices of primary products, but also a decline in exported volumes, due to a decline in demand from the contracting industrialized economies. Primary commodities exporters are thus punished twice.

5.5 THE GREEDY POLITICIANS CAUSE

Colonial legacies, also after 35 or more years of independence still have their influence on African economies and societies today, as indicated above. But looking at stagnation and limited growth in Africa, they are only one side of the coin, one side of the complex set of causes which underlie this limited progress. The most popular explanation found in nearly all recent books on Africa with the alarming titles is that African political leaders after independence made a mess of what they inherited from the colonialists, and that the irresponsible behaviour of these politicians are the root cause for Africa's miseries at the moment. In its worst expressions these analyses come close to the prejudiced European views on Africa of the 19th and early 20th century, depicting African leaders as primitive or, more nicely, irrational. African leaders are seen as irresponsible either by embracing socialism and bringing their countries to bankruptcy or by stealing the little wealth that could be found in the coffers of their governments. Sometimes this whole process was described as an "Africanization" of colonial administrative and political structures, of embedding these 'modern structures' in patron-client networks, in relations of ethnic patronage.

Looking at recent African history, there is of course a grain of truth in this argument: who would deny the horrible acts of Emperor Bokassa or Idi Amin? They are – to stay away from a more horrific recent European past – as undeniable as the acts of emperors like Caligula or Nero. There is no denial either that greed and corruption have brought African states to bankruptcy, to disorder and civil war. In the Top 5 of the most corrupt politicians of the last two decades up to 2004, Transparency International included two African leaders, Mobutu and Abacha.[26] But at least four points should be added to this analysis of corrupt African leadership. First, there is the low level of social development that can also be found in the backgrounds of a series of these political leaders or dictators. If coups d'état are typically staged by generals in Asia, by colonels and generals in Latin America, then in Africa it is the sergeants, like Idi Amin (Uganda), Étienne Éyadéma (Togo) and Joseph Desiré Mobutu (Congo), with as an exception flight-commander Jerry Rawlings (Ghana).[27]

A second point, that is often overseen, is that in most African economies there were few economic alternatives for the rising black elite and middle class than the state. For economic entrepreneurship the margins were small, and those positions that could have brought economic opportunities were mostly already occupied, if not by whites then by Indians in East Africa or by Lebanese in some countries in West Africa. The only vehicle to gain standing and wealth thus is often the state, which then does not necessarily attract people with high ideals.

A third point is that none of these African leaders was governing and stealing in international isolation. Éyadéma had close links with Franz-Joseph Strauss, the 'king' of Bavaria; Mobutu came to power in a coup staged by the Belgian colonial army and the CIA[28] and was always the first African leader to visit American presidents like Ronald Reagan and George Bush Sr. and Jr.; Emperor Bokassa had close links with Giscard d'Estaing. Western powers had close links with many of these corrupt leaders, not least in mineral-rich African countries. In particular, the "Françafrique" and "Foccartisme", the defence of French interests in Africa like the oil exploitation by ELF and Total, came under heavy criticism and investigation by the Assemblée Nationale.[29] Many African dictators were brought to power and pampered by Western powers, often with a Cold War excuse, but in general to defend mineral and other interests. In dependent economies like those in Africa, rents were and are earned by collaboration with the colonial authorities and by diplomatic, military and economic external alliances after independence (Bayart et al. 1999: xvi).

In the last fifty years Africa has also seen a series of African leaders who were not corrupt and greedy and, as was the case with Julius Nyerere, tried to fight corruption by introducing a leadership code already at a very early stage.[30] This brings us to a fourth point, because despite this lack of corruption and the attempt to fight against it, African economies under the leadership of this type of leader did not develop that much better. This indicates that greed and corruption can only bring us a partial explanation of stagnation in Africa.

5.6 THE WEAK STATES AND WEAK POLICIES CAUSE

In his description of the troubled state of Africa at the beginning of the 1990s, the famous Africa historian Basil Davidson asks himself: "What explains this degradation from the hopes and freedoms of newly regained independence? How has this come about?" He continues by stating that "human blunders and corruption can supply some easy answers", but that human failures "can seldom reveal the root of the matter" (Davidson 1992: 9-10). Davidson, like some other authors, then looks for causes in the relation between the "modern" African state institutions and old African ways of governing societies. He sees an alienation from the original rules of governing and from codes of conduct deriving from traditional African religions as one of the root causes for the "curse of the nation-state". In adopting or accepting state structures and legislation of and from the colonisers, African leaders alienated themselves from their African past. It is said that Africa's new tenants of power have no traditional culture of leadership and no leadership codes (Van der Veen 2002: 420), and the artificial democratic structures from the new constitution quickly vanished or were reformed to the will of the new leadership.

This rather romanticist[31] argument stands in nice contrast to those observers who see the root of evil in political leaders who brought in African "traditional values", like ethnic patronage systems, to modern states structures and in that way shipwrecked systems of government that are in principle also well suited to modernize African societies. In their influential book on the African state and African politics, Chabal and Daloz conclude: "In most African countries, the state is no more than a décor, a pseudo-Western façade masking the realities of deeply personalized political relations" (Chabal and Daloz 1999: 16). If an institutionalization of state structures appears, it is "devoid of authority". They not only regard African states as weak, but also as "vacuous" because central political power has not been emancipated from the overriding dominance of localized and personalized political contests (Chabal and Daloz 1999: 1). They stress that the logic of Western modernization does not fit in the African context and that Africa has its singular experience of "modernization". A course of modernization that is not easy to comprehend in existing paradigms and can best be explained by the instrumentalization of disorder: the boundaries of the political are not clear, which means that seemingly non-political issues might become politicised; politics are played out in often contradictory registers, e.g. rationality versus the occult; political causality in Africa might not be easily explained by the words and concepts we use to explain them (Chabal and Daloz 1999: 148-154).

It is rather easy to criticize this analysis, using their own words:

> "It often seems that analysts are more concerned to find confirmation of their own theoretical or conceptual predilection than to seek to understand the realities of the structure of political power as they are in fact to be found in post-colonial African societies" (Chabal and Daloz 1999: 3).[32]

But I think that it is more important to keep two of their observations in mind. The first is that African state institutions are weak and strong at the same time. They are weak in policy implementation, but often strong in control over African societies. Second, it is very important to look behind the façades: what might look like 'modern' institutions are often very different 'animals', dressed in Western fashion. The other side of that coin is – and that is what authors like Chabal and Daloz seem to ignore – that these institutions are also 'modern' or 'Western', that there is an ideology of citizenship, of efficiency and effectiveness that surrounds them and has its own influence, that is not fully dominated by patronage and ethnic networks. This is because many of the civil servants populating these institutions are trained in 'Western' schools and universities.

But of course patronage and clientelism have their influence. Even public sector reform, privatization and market reform, pushed by the IMF and the World Bank, have been subjugated to the whims and patronage of the ruling elites, as several authors conclude (Tangri 1999). Private sector development and privatization have been primarily subject to the political interests of those in state power. Lately, the role of a free press has been growing and also that of an independent judiciary, thus checking corruption and abuse of state funds and capacities, but developments are uneven, and in many countries the politics of patronage are still prevalent. Analyzed in this way, it could be argued that African political elites misused the 'wise' and 'realistic' policy advice they received from the IMF and the World Bank in the 1980s and 1990s.

5.7 THE WASHINGTON CONSENSUS CAUSE

"Structural adjustment emerged as the primary Western response to the African debt crisis" is most probably an overstated conclusion.[33] The fact is that the austerity programmes imposed by the IMF and the World Bank were felt most deeply in sub-Saharan Africa. African debts went from \$ 6 billion in 1970 to \$ 80 billion in the mid-1980s and, despite structural adjustment, climbed further to \$ 112 billion at the end of the 1980s. Because African governments could not fulfil the obligations of these debts by paying interest and repayments, they had to look for restructuring of these debts or for debt forgiveness. Western and multilateral donors would only allow this on a set of conditions, a conditionality that would be labeled as "structural adjustment". From the mid-1970s or at least from the beginning of the 1980s most African governments stood under the surveillance of the IMF and the World Bank, under what has been dubbed by John Williamson "the Washington consensus".

In a recent book Howard Stein traces back the roots of the structural adjustment policy in Africa, focusing on how economists became hegemonic in the World Bank.[34] He states that from its inception, these policy measures or structural adjustment packages assumed that growth and development would arise from the stabilization, liberalization and privatization of economies.

Stein argues that the major reason why stabilization became a core policy in bilateral and multilateral official lending had less to do with the IMF and more to do with changes in the World Bank (Stein 2008: Ch.2). During the 1950s and 1960s, the Bank as a relatively small institution primarily lent funds for infrastructure. But under the presidency of Robert McNamara (1968-1982), the World Bank expanded quickly and became more concerned with 'redistribution', through rural development projects in particular. There was quite some concern among the economists in the Bank that too much of the economic growth would be sacrificed for consumption, as Ayers (1983) also argued. Ayers, however, places the change in Bank policies under the umbrella of the new Reagan administration and the appointment of the conservative Clausen as World Bank president.

Stein sees the appointment of Ernest Stern in July 1978 as the Bank's vice-president in charge of operations and chair of the loan committee as the beginning of this change (Stein 2008: 31). Another "very conservative" economist, Anne Krueger, became chief economist for the Bank in 1982. The second oil shock raised the need for balance of payments support wrapped with strings of conditionality. McNamara, according to Stein, saw the opportunity to increase lending and the profile of the Bank, while Stern saw an opportunity to promote his new policy framework. Stern commissioned Elliot Berg, an economist at the University of Michigan and expert on Sahelian countries, to write a report on Africa's problems to provide him with a justification for the new policies. The Berg report *Accelerated Development in sub-Saharan Africa* (1981), blamed the weakness of African industry on the countries' bias against exports and the incentive systems created by state-imposed trade, exchange rate and price interventions. It also blamed state intervention for a bias against agriculture since it lowered the internal terms of trade, creating a disincentive to producers. The report almost entirely ignored, as several authors commented, the underlying structural causes of African economic weaknesses, like its dependency on primary products exports.

Accelerated Development, argues Ake, came to be regarded by African leaders not as an independent view of an impartial referee, but as a highly "political and ideological document masked as economics". To these leaders the issues were misleading, the agenda was wrong, and the solutions were irrelevant. A paper analyzing the report and adopted by UNECA, the AfDB and the OAU found it "analytically defective, disingenuous and contradictory to African interests" (Ake 1996: 24-25).

Ravenhill concludes that the World Bank placed "the primary blame on the performance of African governments and heavily discounted the role of exogenous factors such as the deterioration in the terms of trade". On the other hand, the Organization of African Unity's *Lagos Plan of Action* had, as Ravenhill emphasizes, a typical "dependency" approach, seeing the malaise in Africa's economies as part of the colonial legacy of exploitation and an integration in the world economic system on unequal terms. In that way the Berg report can be seen as an antidote to the external orientation of the OAU's visions.[35] But then at least, the antidote as it was presented by the Bank was technocratic and seemed to presuppose that adjustment and policy change would be painless and would not meet with resistance from elites faring well on unrealistic exchange rates or urban dwellers faced with rises in food and urban transport prices (Ravenhill 1986: 2-5).

The World Bank's follow-up report *Toward Sustained Development in sub-Saharan Africa* (1984) is seen by some as more balanced and showing greater awareness of both external and internal constraints, but in the policy prescripts it showed little changes. Or, as Berg himself stated, "many of the general arguments of the report reflect the conventional technocratic wisdom as observable in country economic reports, sector analyses, and project appraisals of the World Bank".[36] But again, as the *Accelerated Development* report, it stood alone in its empirical approach, based on large data-sets and its overview of articulated policy proposals. As such, both reports were much more easily embraced by the international donor community than the longer-term, rather vague as well as radically different proposals of the OAU. The intellectual superiority of the Bank vis-à-vis not only African governments but also the donor community, as it evolved in the McNamara years, was clearly visible in the adoption of these Africa strategies in the 1980s.

The Bank also overtook the IMF in its change from project lending to lending for structural adjustment programmes. As Stein (2008) indicates, between 1980 and 1983, the net flow of IMF loans to sub-Saharan African countries reached $ 4.4 billion; from the World Bank this was only $ 2.83 billion. But by 1983, it was clear that the economic crises on the continent were not resolved and that pending repayments to the IMF would threaten the sustainability of the new strategy. The World Bank made a major financial and intellectual commitment to adjustment, which also allowed the IMF to be repaid. Between 1984 and 1987 the Bank loaned $ 4.7 billion at the same time as the IMF took out $ 3.22 billion. With these new funds, and strong reassertion of the importance of adjustment, the Bank rapidly filled in for the Fund, to perpetuate the reform agenda. Its commitment to structural adjustment went from $ 0.9 billion from 1980-83 or 13 per cent of the total to the region to $ 3.3 billion or 36 per cent of the total in 1984-87. Other bilateral donors got on board. Japan, for example, was committing 25 per cent of their aid to Africa for structural adjustment by 1990.

In retrospect, structural adjustment became a major failure and one of the major causes of stagnation in Sub-Sahara Africa in the 1980s and 1990s. Structural adjustment, the 'Washington Consensus', increased poverty at the same time that East Asian countries, following a totally different economic route, were growing and reducing poverty. With its emphasis on de-investing, on high interest rates, on ignoring the social sectors, the IMF and the World Bank, supported by the wider donor community, directed Africa to routes that enhanced underdevelopment and poverty, that only accumulated Africa's debt burden. In that sense all the programme aid of the 1980s and 1990s only helped Africa to survive through the economic downturn, but finally at a cost of a debt burden that at least doubled or tripled, despite debt forgiveness by most Western bilateral donors. It is easy to conclude with Stein that the World Bank, let alone the IMF, "never once fundamentally questioned their role in this outcome" (Stein 2008: 252). We could add that bilateral donors also did not evaluate their role in sub-Saharan Africa in those years. In general, they shared the ideas of the World Bank and the IMF and followed their policies uncritically,[37] or they did not have the intellectual capacity to present convincing counter-arguments. In fact, they financed structural adjustment programmes to a major extent, since the IMF always has little money on offer and since the contribution of the World Bank never reaches the volumes of the EU and its member states.

There are of course other explanations.[38] In his review of public sector reform in Africa, Tangri (1999) concludes that reform and privatization tended to be slow, since they were initiated by the IMF and the World Bank and supported by Western donors in the beginning of the 1980s. Policy packages across Africa have been similar, "seeking essentially to reduce the role of the state and as well as to enlarge the scope of the private sector". The similarity of the programmes demonstrates that "they have been largely initiated by external actors" (Tangri 1999: 147). Over time there has been very little 'ownership' of these programmes and, despite claims of the IMF and the World Bank to the contrary, they have never been 'home-grown'. They have never been supported by local politicians, trade unions and other social movements or African civil society. Neither have these organizations participated in the formulation of these structural adjustment programmes.

On the other hand, the World Bank and the IMF had, according to several authors, very little influence on the implementation of the structural adjustment programmes. Tangri (1999: 54-61) presents the example of privatization in Kenya and Uganda to show that the IMF and the World Bank even turned a blind eye to the way Kenyan and Ugandan politicians used privatization to enrich themselves or their cronies. The pace of privatization seems to have been more important to the two Washington-based institutions than the fact that the buyers of state enterprises received all kinds of 'sweeteners', in particular lengthy pay-off periods in times of high inflation, which gave them the enterprises at a bargain price. Van de Walle in his extensive overview of structural adjustment in Africa states that structural adjustment programmes "have rarely been fully implemented" and thus cannot be blamed for Africa's poor economic performance (Van de Walle 2001: ch.2). The point here is that externally imposed programmes did not need to be fully implemented as they did not show the directions policies should take and did take.

5.8 OTHER TRAPS AND CURSES

Are there other traps and curses in which sub-Saharan African countries are caught and that are root causes for slow economic and social progress in sub-Saharan Africa? In his book on *The Bottom Billion* Paul Collier (2007) discovers four of them: 1. they are in civil war, 2. they have abundant natural resources which lead to greed, 3. they are landlocked countries with bad neighbours, and 4. they are badly governed. We have dealt with the fourth one, and it is obvious that some, but not all by far, African countries are trapped in the first one.[39]

My problem with Collier's analysis starts with the natural resources trap. Is there a natural resources trap if we look at Norway, Canada, the Emirates or even Dubai? Of course not, it becomes a trap, as Paul Collier also indicates, when the resources fall in the hands of greedy politicians and that phenomenon is not limited to resource-rich countries. This is caused by resource rents, and was also no Dutch disease trap.[40] So what we might see here in sub-Saharan Africa is not a natural resources curse or trap but – with reference to Bayart (1993) and Chabal and Daloz (1999) – a robber baron's or a kleptocrat's trap, as we have indicated above.[41]

A much more important 'trap' is poor infrastructure, more important even than being landlocked. There are ten landlocked African countries with poor neighbours and another four bordering on South Africa. In general, we cannot conclude that they do better or worse than the coastal states. What certainly forms a very special problem is their infrastructure connections with these coastal neighbours, but that is the same problem that interior provinces or districts of the coastal states also have. Poor infrastructure is a general problem in sub-Saharan Africa, increasing transaction costs and making products less competitive.

A last cause or curse that is often presented in the recent literature is the "aid dependency trap". Many sub-Saharan Africa countries, with the exception of some resource-rich countries, are heavily dependent on foreign aid for government investments, for technology and knowledge, for capacity building. It is argued that this aid dependency fosters corruption, but the arguments and analysis are not convincing.[42] In the past, countries like South Korea and Taiwan were heavily dependent on aid, much more so than most African countries are now.[43] Aid in itself does not corrupt; however, the way it is given and its conditionality might 'enslave' politicians and institutions.

If we could present the history of aid to Africa in three lines, we might say that development cooperation was dominated by tied aid in the 1960s and 1970s, leading to a wide range of "white elephants".[44] The 1980s and 1990s were characterized by programme aid in line with structural adjustment programmes, just keeping African countries alive. In the new century new aid instruments have been introduced, like general budget support and sector-wide approaches, under the banners of poverty reduction and the MDGs of the Paris Agenda with its emphasis on "ownership", coordination and task division. In fact, in recent years we are seeing a 'silent revolution' in development cooperation. Lip service to the idea of 'aid recipient in the driver's seat' and to coordination and task division has been heard for nearly 20 years. These days we see it practised from Accra to Dar es Salaam.[45]

The famous Dutch parliamentarian Ayaan Hirsi Ali, for a few weeks spokeswoman on development cooperation for the conservative liberal party, stated in parliament: "If we observe the situation in sub-Saharan Africa ten, twenty and thirty years ago, and compare it with the present situation, we can speak of stagnation or decline. I quote again the book of Roel van der Veen. The development assistance as it was given has not been effective."[46] It is a typical quote of a conservative politician these days. Of course we can explain that there is no stagnation in some fronts in sub-Saharan Africa and that where we see progress (in the social sectors), it has often been funded by development assistance. But the only right answer is that the politician in question believes in miracles and magic.[47]

Whoever expects development assistance, in particular looking at the small per capita volumes, to finance progress against the economic tide greatly overestimates its potential. What aid has been doing in effect in the 25 years of recession and structural adjustment between 1979 and 2004 is paying for the survival of sub-Saharan Africa. The potential of aid that is untied and coordinated can be judged better from the progress in health and education in recent years in countries like Zambia, Uganda and Tanzania.[48] It means that aid can help, if there is a real intention to help, when African governments give it the possibility to help and when the global economies don't "mishelp".

5.9 CONCLUSIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

Since the beginning of this century, a series of African countries have shown real progress in economic growth rates and social development. This was certainly stimulated by the rise in prices for primary commodities in the world markets, as a result mainly of the formidable economic expansion of China. It remains to be seen whether this growth in countries like Tanzania and Mozambique will be sustained in the new recession with falling export prices and export volumes. Although sub-Saharan Africa has made little economic progress in the 1980s and 1990s, it has not been stagnating. There was social progress, in particular in countries which were not hit by civil wars or the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The reasons for slow economic progress cannot simply be reduced to corrupt and destructive African leaders and the failure of development assistance, as seems to be very popular in most of the recent publications on Africa. The reasons are, as we tried to describe, much more complex.

Guy Arnold (2001) rightly observes: "Much of Africa's political and economic history since 1960 has been a matter of coming to terms with the legacies left behind by colonialism". And he adds: "These include language, religion, administration, military traditions, trade patterns, and a residual dependence that is most apparent in the aid relationship". I have tried to sum this up in a different way. In social terms, colonialism left Africa with extremely low levels of social development, in particular compared with (East) Asia. The low levels of education in particular have had a severe influence on the administrative and political capacities. If the aid relationship between African governments and its donors differs so much from those prevailing in Asia, the roots for this can certainly be found in the capacities of African ministries and other government bodies. Capacities to come up with their own realistic programmes and negotiating capacity to convince donors to support them.

The political legacy of colonialism has certainly been very negative and destructive, leading to civil wars and tens of thousands of deaths. African countries are only very gradually becoming the nation-states that they certainly were not at the time of independence. Artificial states were created by the former colonizers with ethnic divisions that produced long-lasting disorder in many African countries. These divisions were aggravated by the continued European scramble for Africa's mineral riches. The Cold War played a role here, but its role is generally overestimated compared with the drive to exploit Africa's diamonds, gold and oil. In the

French, Belgian and Portuguese Africa policies, the Cold War played no role at all, and one could even question the role it played in reality in US Africa policy.

Cruel, corrupt and greedy African dictators can stand comparison with their Latin American counterparts, so aptly described by writers from Achebe to Asturias and Márquez. Their greed and misgovernment brought African states to the edge of bankruptcy. But it should be underlined that they were often seen by American and European political leaders as their allies and comrades in arms, and they were even, as was the case with Mobutu Sese Seko, brought to power by combined European (Belgian, French) and American action.

In economic terms, the colonial legacy of specific trade patterns still hampers development in sub-Saharan Africa. The reliance of export income on one or two primary commodities and the reliance of economic growth on these exports have obstructed Africa's economic progress for more than 25 years between 1978 and 2004. This was sustained by the Structural Adjustment Programmes that the IMF and the World Bank proscribed to African governments since the mid-1970s and in particular in the 1980s. Whereas an emphasis should have been made on investment (in health, education, agriculture, infrastructure), disinvestment was the rule, and development assistance during those years was mainly used to keep Africa alive.

This specific social, political, economic and administrative potion worked disastrously in many sub-Saharan Africa states from post-independence years to now. Change came only recently. In the last ten years we have seen more and more responsible African leadership in sub-Saharan Africa, more democracy and growth of a more vocal civil society. We acknowledge a change in donor policies with more attention paid to investment and poverty reduction, to the social sectors, with new aid instruments, and an emphasis on coordination and good 'donorship'. The Paris Declaration of 2005 is a remarkable and symbolic step forward, underlining the new aid relationship. This of course did not bring Africa much new money and it remains to be seen whether the other promises will be kept. The biggest danger that might push sub-Saharan Africa off the road again is the worldwide economic recession. Africa might just hope that the lesser dependence on Europe and the US, which allowed it to grow again in the last five years, will keep it out of the ditch now.

It means that now and in the future, sub-Saharan Africa is in a better position than in 1960 to reap some of the benefits of globalization. It is better educated, and most countries are in better health; its governments will not believe in state-funded industrialization and state farms anymore. Its markets are more diversified, and a slump in one of them might not hit so hard. Donors will hopefully refrain from tied aid, coordinate better and try to come to a really complementary task division.

That might be the road for policies in the years to come: stay on the path that has been taken in the last ten years of more ownership, coordination and dialogue, of higher aid volumes and freer aid instruments; do not combat the recession with the recipes of the 1970s and 1980s but with investments in infrastructure and the social sectors; look for real niches in the global markets and support private investment in them. The road will be slippery and hilly. Let us hope that it leads to an end of African poverty.

NOTES

1 I use the word Africa in this text continuously, mostly referring to sub-Saharan Africa. This article is not about Mediterranean Africa.

2 MDG Africa Steering Group, Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Africa. New York, July 2008.

3 In the 'Africa bestseller' *Afrika van Koude Oorlog naar de 21e eeuw* Roel van der Veen states: 'Around 1960 the African countries could still measure themselves in terms of economic development with the countries of East- and Southeast-Asia, but in the 1980s there was a huge gap between these regions' (p. 63. My translation P.Ho.). In his concluding chapter he makes the Thailand-Ghana and the Zambia-South Korea comparisons (also found in e.g. Calderisi 2006: 14-15). This book of the former Director of the Africa Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands is translated into English with the title: *What Went Wrong with Africa: A Contemporary History.* What we see in this book and several others mentioned in the introduction of this article is a weak economic analysis, a huge underestimation of the colonial legacy as well as a half-baked analysis of the aid system.

4 Zambia: from 50.1 years on average between 1970 and 1975 to 39.2 years in 2000-2005. Zimbabwe: from 55.6 years on average between 1970 and 1975 to 40.0 years in 2000-2005. Botswana: from 56.0 years on average between 1970 and 1975 to 46.6 years in 2000-2005.

5 27 out of 41 SSA countries for which data are presented in the latest Human Development Report show progress. Senegal: from 45.8 years on average between 1970 and 1975 to 61.6 years in 2000-2005. Gambia: from 38.3 years on average between 1970 and 1975 to 58.0 years in 2000-2005.

6 Figures from Human Development Report 2007-2008.

7 Figures from UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 2008*. New York: UNICEF 2008.

8 World Bank, *World Development Indicators.* Washington, several years. The number of people in the region Europe and Central Asia living on less than $ 2 grew from 20 million to 76 million and 4.7 per cent to 16.1 per cent.

9 Figures from UNDP and Acharya.

10 Figures from UNESCO (2005 and 2007).

11 Coulson (1982: 90-91, 224-225). Sixteen years later the University of Dar es Salaam had 3,000 students on campus and already 5,000 graduates (which could also be called a success story of development assistance since a lot of American, British and Scandinavian, later also Dutch, support was used in those years to build the university).

12 This is not to say that these 'Gallicized' or 'Anglicized' Africans – 'bounties' as they most probably would be called these days – were accepted as being really and fully French or British. They remained second-class citizens, and the system was still racist, as some authors (e.g. Davidson 1992: 27-30) stressed.

13 John Reader on education in the African colonies (1998: 620-627).

14 Remember that Congo is the third largest country of Africa in area and fourth in population.

15 Walter Rodney (1972: 225) for example indicates that in Nigeria in the 1930s there were 12 modern hospitals for 4,000 Europeans living in the country, while there were 52 hospitals for more than 40 million Africans.

16 See for a maybe pro-British overview Tordoff (1993), Ch. 2.

17 For an overview of African history and also the history of European prejudice on African societies, see Davidson (1984 and 1992), Reader (1997), Meredith (2005) and Collins and Burns (2007). Walter Rodney (1972) stressed that societies which eventually reach feudalism were 'extremely few'. Most of Africa was in his eyes living under communalism in pre-colonial times.

18 This was particularly strong in British colonies, e.g. the role of the kingdom of Baganda in Uganda, but also other colonisers used this system, e.g. the role of the Cape Verdians in Guinee Bissau, São Tomé and Principe, and in Angola.

19 This story is also quoted as being true in scientific texts, e.g. Thomson (2004: 24). The fact is that the German explorer and conqueror Peters signed treaties with Chagga chiefs and got 'ownership' of Africa's highest mountain already in the beginning of the 1880s. Most probably Kilimanjaro was traded against Mombasa at the Berlin conference as maps brought into the conference by the Germans and British show. See also: Graichen and Gründer (2005)

20 In his zeal to attribute everything that went wrong in sub-Saharan Africa in the last fifty years to African political elites, Van der Veen (2002: 418-419) dismisses this argument. He sees it as a geographical and purely practical problem and not as a stumbling block for state formation. Funnily enough, he quotes the borderlines between the Netherlands and Belgium, which he sees as 'absurd', to show that this is not an obstacle for state formation. But Belgium is still, some 170 years after its formation, amply demonstrating that it is not a nation.

21 Simpson (2008: 2) alludes to this problem in his introduction to a collection of articles on language and national identity in Africa, by pointing to the fact that Cameroon (16 million inhabitants) has over 250 spoken languages, Sudan (28 million) 140, Nigeria (40 million) 400, and Tanzania (60 million) 200. Single language policies are thus not possible in most African states, which means that in most cases the colonial language was recognized as the official language and the language of instruction. The colonial language might also be a guarantee for 'ethno-linguistic neutrality'. In contrast with Europe, language nationalism does not play a role in Africa, with the exception of some cases where there is a lingua franca like Arabic or Swahili.

22 Kamarck opened his last chapter with a quote from Dante's *Inferno* in which Dante expresses his belief that all forecasters should belong in Hell. But he was rather optimistic that in particular mineral exporters might have sustained high

growth rates of more than 7 per cent. For agricultural products exporters he saw chances only if they could expand their markets when others would fail because of mismanagement (Kamarck 1971: ch. XII).

23 Figures from Malhotra (2003) and Oxfam (2002) in constant 1990 dollars.

24 This is a famous case brought before the Trade Negotiations Committee of the WTO in June 2003. The Netherlands supported the production of a report on the cotton market. The US also forces textiles and clothing producers that want to import to the US market to use American cotton or fibre. Stiglitz and Charlton (2005: 59-62) indicate that American corn (-20%) and wheat (-42%) are also exported below production costs.

25 UNCTAD (2008b: 23). Between 2002 and 2005 the coffee price rose by 125.6 per cent, cotton by 36.8 per cent, bananas by 28.6 per cent, cocoa by only 9.8 per cent and tea by 18.2 per cent. But copper rose 356.5 per cent.

26 *The Guardian*, 26 March 2004. Mobutu was third and gathered about $ 5 billion during his 32 years of rule; Abacha was fourth and collected between $ 2 and 5 billion in five years. They are of course the top of the pyramid.

27 Jean-Bédel Bokassa could be called an exception too, since he was also a sergeant-major in the colonial army, but he was able to climb to the rank of captain by fighting in Indo-China and following courses after the Second World War.

28 First secretary at the American embassy in Kinshasa in those days was the later CIA deputy director, Frank Carlucci, who was also in Santiago de Chile in 1972-1973 and American ambassador to Portugal in 1974-1977. For evidence of CIA-staged coups and assassination plans, see the Senate commission report under chairmanship of Senator Frank Church (1975) and the less well-known Pike Committee of the House of Representatives.

29 See the books by François-Xavier Verschave (1998 and 2000), and for a historical overview, the book by Stefan Brüne (1995). The parliamentary report of the investigation on French oil interests was presented by the MPs Marie-Hélène Aubert and Piere Blum (1999). 'Foccartisme' is derived from the name of Jacques Foccart, who started as the main Africa advisor and planner of the French Africa policies under De Gaulle and served several presidents as such in the 1960s and 1970s and later under Chirac in the 1980s and 1990s.

30 Nyerere introduced this already in 1968. See Coulson (1982: 176-184) and Legum/Mmari (1995: ch. 6 and 13).

31 Romanticist because it seems to suggest that there were universal African systems to govern and universal religious systems for checks and balance. Romanticist also, because Davidson saw in the liberated areas in the Portuguese colonies embryonic forms of an 'African' way of state organization with mass participation (Davidson 1995: 202-206).

32 Chabal and Daloz start from a Weberian vision of the state and superimpose that on African states. Their analysis to show that African states are not 'modern' is then rather anecdotical and dismisses the 'modern' mainly for some elements only, like anecdotes on the recruitment of civil servants.

33 Walton and Seddon (1994: 137). Overstated, because the same kind of approaches could already be found in earlier IMF programmes in countries ranging from e.g. Chile to Portugal.

34 One could argue if this was a return to policies that earlier were at the forefront of critique from Latin America as voiced in Theresa Hayter's Penguin Pocket *Aid as Imperialism* (1971).

35 Ravenhill (1986), pp. 2-5.

36 Elliot Berg, The World Bank's strategy. In: Ravenhill (1986), p. 58.

37 Only after the *Adjustment with a Human Face* reports of UNICEF, did we see from time to time more critical remarks and discussions in the international donor community, in particular from the like-minded donors towards the Bank and the IMF, e.g. on health policies.

38 There is a vast literature on the effects of structural adjustment (in Africa). Evaluations from the World Bank and the IMF are not always sincere in their methodology, as John Toye, Jane Harrigan and Paul Mosley (in their *Aid and Power*) indicated. There are general overviews by scholars like John Williamsson, Tony Killick and Graham Bird, famous UNICEF reports under the leadership of Richard Jolly (*Adjustment with a Human Face*) and a series of country studies. On Africa in particular there are volumes collected and edited by Bade Onimode, Kidane Mengisteab and Ikubolajeh Logan, by Willem van der Geest and Rolph van der Hoeven, by Rolph van der Hoeven and Fred van der Kraaij, by Giovanni Cornea and Gerald Helleiner, by Magnus Lundström and Mats Kundahl, and a very interesting volume written for the Danish Parliament by Paul Engberg-Pedersen et al. And not to forget the nice general overview of Africa by Nic van de Walle. There is also the earlier critical and very first review of IMF programmes by Cheryl Payer. I am not going to list them all and go into detail on all these diversified visions, but in general they are all very critical and adhere to the points of criticism I raised in this section.

39 I will not deal with the way Paul Collier treats these 'traps' in this article. I have done so in abundance in a longer essay (http://www.ru.nl/cidin/research/publications_cidin/publications) and in a shortened review in the *European Journal of Development Research*.

40 The 'Dutch disease' explanation suggests that a high income from natural resources raises a country's prices and thus also the price of other export products, which make them uncompetitive. My point here is that the Netherlands in this period, like other Western European countries, became uncompetitive in (old) labour-intensive industries against cheap imports from Mediterranean and Asian countries.

41 In a recent paper Christa Brunnschweiler and Erwin Bulte criticized the causality that Collier and Hoeffler find in their papers on the resource trap and the relations between resource rents and conflict. They conclude: "The last word in the resource curse debate is far from having been spoken; but economic advisors should be aware that natural resources do not necessarily spell doom for develop-

ment. Instead, their development can be a valuable part of a sustainable development strategy": Are Resource-Rich Countries Cursed? Linking Natural Resources to Slow Growth and More Conflict. In: *Science*, 320 (May 2, 2008): 616-617. The two background papers are: Christa Brunnschweiler/Erwin Bulte, 'The resource curse revisited and revised: A tale of paradoxes and red herring', *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management,* 55 (2008): 248-264; and: 'Natural resources and violent conflict: Resource abundance, dependence and the onset of conflict', February 2008 (paper submitted to the Oxford Economic Papers).

42 See e.g. the paper: Simeon Djankov, José Montalvo, Marta Reynal Querol, The Curse of Aid. December 2007. This is an updated version of the paper under the same title of April 2005: http://www.doingbusiness.org/documents/Djankov_curse_of_aid.pdf (retrieved 31 January 2008). The paper is mainly a cross-country regression analysis based on dubious databases and some anecdotic examples. On 14 May 2008 the Dutch morning paper *de Volkskrant* opened with the headline 'Development assistance is promoting corruption', based on an interview with Simeon Djankov.. In that interview Djankov presented as evidence the case of Zimbabwe, and he actually states: 'Look at Zimbabwe that was a donor darling in the seventies, look where it stands now'. Just to note: Zimbabwe did not even exist in the 1970s, and when it came into existence in the 1980s donors were very reluctant to provide assistance, because fighting between ZANU and ZAPU more or less started immediately'.

43 E.g. aid paid for more than two-thirds of the imports in the 1950s and for three-quarters of *all* (so not only government) investments (Krueger et al. 1989: 231-232). Similar figures could be presented for Taiwan.

44 For a series of examples, in particular regarding Dutch aid, see my dissertation: Hoebink (1988). Also Calderisi (2006) cites some examples of overoptimistic project planning in those years. Most literature on aid to Africa is written from the political perspective of the Cold War and its aftermath. There is rather little, apart from project evaluations, on the effectiveness of aid in the 1960s and 1970s. One of the exceptions is Carlsson et al. (1997). Another overview, based mainly on donor and OECD reports, is Lancaster (1999).

45 There is no space here to deal with recent changes in what is called the New Aid Architecture. For recent reports on the (monitoring of) Paris Agenda see the website of the OECD DCD-DAC and the Accra Agenda of Action (2008).

46 Handeling van de Tweede Kamer, vergaderjaar 2003-2004, 29 234 en 29 200 V, nr. 17, pp. 14-15 [Acts of Parliament, session 2003-2004]. The translation is mine (P.Ho.). The book of Roel van der Veen has only a few sections on development cooperation and only states that there are 'no clear answers' to the question of whether aid slowed down or held back development or that it made no difference (Van der Veen, ch. 9).

47 As I wrote in my newspaper reaction; 'Hirsi Ali gelooft in toveren' [Hirsi Ali believes in magic']. In: *de Volkskrant*, 22 November [illegible]. See also my critique on

the neo-conservative critique in the Netherlands in Civis Mundi (updated version in: *The Netherlands Yearbook on International Cooperation 2008* (forthcoming).

48 Of course this "enormous progress" (quote from the evaluation reports) does not stem from development assistance alone, but is also due to the efforts of the respective governments, teachers, doctors, nurses and others involved in the education and health sectors. See the recent evaluations of the Evaluation Unit (IOB) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and multi-donor evaluations on e.g. health in Tanzania.

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