Aiding Development or Aiding Politics? How Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa Impact the Efficacy of Official Development Assistance in Ethiopia

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Abstract

This article approaches the concept of sustainable development with a mind to the sustainability of the neoliberal economic philosophy through which official development is currently allocated. This article examines a contemporary aiddependent state in sub-Saharan Africa, Ethiopia, to question how governance strategies impact the efficacy of official development assistance. Much contemporary development literature neglects politics, concluding that aid effectiveness is contingent on economic variables. An increasing number of econometric studies consider the impact of aid on institutions, yet few discuss the political and developmental objectives, ultimately illustrating the naïveté of the neoliberal good-governance framework and the importance of recognizing how interests, ideas, and ideologies combine to create the specificities of politics in Africa. I argue that aspects of politics in Africa such as neopatrimonialism and patronage must be recognized as ends to governance strategies and that these may sometimes take precedence; however, whether these factors impede development depends on the regime's objectives. Although it accompanied its development efforts with human-rights abuses to secure the regime's future, the Meles Zenawi regime nonetheless made great strides toward economic prosperity.

Author's Note

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1. Introduction

The personalist and kleptocratic Zairean state designed by Mobutu Sese Seko was maintained using aid gained from playing the Cold War superpowers against each other and threatening chaos in his absence (Naniuzeyi, 1999; Young & Turner, 1985; Kabwit, 1979). Though extreme, Zaire exemplifies well how politics may impact aid's facilitation of development. The objective of this dissertation is to examine contemporary aid-dependent states in sub-Saharan Africa to consider how governance strategies impact the efficacy of official development assistance. Much contemporary development literature neglects politics, concluding that aid

effectiveness is contingent on economic variables (see McGillivray et al., 2006 for an overview). An increasing number of studies consider the impact of aid on institutions (e.g., Bräutigam & Knack, 2004; Burnside & Dollar, 2004; Dutta, Leeson, & Williamson, 2011), yet few discuss the political strategies that establish these institutions. Boone (1995) insinuated the relevance of this idea, concluding that regardless of the regime type, aid increases government consumption. Concern regarding the relationship between aid and rent-seeking led Svensson (1996) to encourage focus on the political processes shaping policy and aid use. But a regime's political strategies can only be meaningfully understood after correcting misconceptions about how politics work, a secondary objective.

Econometric studies drawing mathematical correlations between variables say little about how official development assistance is used, and their conclusions are complicated by aid's often-contested, conflicting, and geopolitical objectives. Therefore, this article aims alternatively to assess aid's impact using individual cases to discern how aid fits into political and developmental objectives. I argue that aspects of politics in Africa such as neopatrimonialism and patronage must be recognized as ends to governance strategies and that these aspects may sometimes take precedence; however, whether these factors impede development depends on the regime's objectives. Section two reviews literature on official development assistance and politics in Africa. Section three applies these ideas to Ethiopia, an aid-dependent country and an "aid darling." It shows how a regime trying to increase its food security may rationalize denying portions of the population human rights in order to maintain power. The final section includes comments regarding the applicability of the conclusions to other states.

2. Literature Review and Critiques

This section will first sketch the debates within the relevant literature around the efficacy and impact of aid. Second, it outlines characteristics of politics in Africa. While I will attempt to use phenomena particular to African politics to explain how aid is used, my undertaking in no way suggests that the 48 diverse countries of the sub-Saharan region are politically homogenous. Despite the non-econometric approach adapted in the analysis, the tradition of analyzing aid econometrically ensures that many referenced studies were conducted this way. The themes explored include the historical purpose of aid, the aid-effectiveness debate, the effect of aid on the receiving political environment, and politics in Africa.

I begin with a foundation of definitions. Following the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), I define official development assistance (ODA, henceforth used interchangeably with *aid*) as a type of foreign aid composed of flows to countries and territories on the DAC's List of ODA Recipients and to multilateral development banks and institutions. This assistance must be provided by official agencies or their executive counterparts, must be administered with the promotion of economic development and welfare as the primary objective, and must contain a grant element of at least 25% (OECD, 2008). Except where noted, aid statistics used stem from OECD reports and their Query Wizard for International Development Statistics, the most recent available being from 2010. I adopt Bräutigam and Knack's

definition of aid dependence: a situation in which government is unable to perform core governance functions without foreign aid and expertise, measured via aid allocation as a percentage of GDP (usually exceeding 10%). Clemens, Radelet, and Bhavnani (2004) contend that allocations in excess of 17% of GDP will saturate the economy, arguing that the 8% saturation point most studies identify is favorable for short-impact aid. Aid is currently being allocated in an era defined by a neoliberal philosophy derived from neoclassical economics. After considering the negative impact of rent-seeking and corruption (Krueger, 1974; North, 1981; Olson, 1997), the Washington Consensus initially suggested that predatory weak states should be checked with economic liberalization to minimize rent creation and corruption (see Naim, 1999). After the World Bank's structural adjustment programs failed, however, the Post-Washington Consensus shifted away from declaring government failure to emphasizing correcting market failure using institutions (see Khan, 2007; World Bank, 1997).

Any study considering the impact of foreign aid must first understand the goals of the aid. Structural economists like Nurkse, Prebisch, Singer, Lewis, and Rostow (1971) (Hunt, 1989; Easterly, 2006b), emphasized that industrialization and development accentuate shortages in foreign exchange and balance of payments disequilibria but do so at the expense of import capacity. Accordingly, they advocated a "big push" of aid. Contemporary econometric debates about whether aid works (e.g., Sachs, 2005; Easterly, 2006a) tend to neglect these impediments (Gerschenkron, 1962), a tendency that Fischer (2009) argues renders them irrelevant. Others elaborated on this foundation, claiming that aid could fill a finance, savings, or foreign-exchange gap (Harrod, 1939; Domar, 1946 and 1947; Rostow, 1971; Chenery, 1961; Chenery & Strout, 1966; Mikesell, 1968; Riddell, 1947, Chapter 8). Until the late 1990s, when the theory was largely discredited, whether aid worked or failed revolved around a development-oriented adaptation of the Harrod-Domar model determining the growth and investment rates to maintain full employment (Thirlwall, 2002, Chapter 1; see Solow, 2000 for an adaptation and Lucas, 1990 for its critique). McGillivray et al. (2006) classifies early studies beginning in the 1950s and ending with Boone (1995) as using poor econometric methodology and weak theory.

Only in recent decades has politics been introduced into the aid-effectiveness debate, generally to call attention to the politics behind aid allocation by donors rather than recipients (e.g., White, 1974; Collier & Dollar, 1999; Alesina & Dollar, 2000; Action Aid, 2005 and 2006; Grant & Nijman, 1998). The only two scholars to assert the latter have been economic-freedom advocates Milton Friedman and Peter Bauer (1981). Following in their footsteps, Boone (1995) argues that, regardless of whether the government was *laissez faire*, elitist, or egalitarian, aid given via political motivations fails to promote investment, growth, or improvement in the economic conditions of the poor and instead increases government consumption (i.e., spending that does not contribute to an increase in national productivity). Despite scrutiny (summarized by Hansen & Tarp, 2000a), his conclusion that allocations unequivocally increase government consumption has been upheld by both supporters (e.g., Burnside & Dollar, 2000 and 2004; Clemens, Radelet, & Bhavnani, 2004) and opponents of aid.

Boone's assertions led subsequent researchers to discern additional variables upon which the effectiveness of aid allocations could be conditional. One of the first attempts was a monumental World Bank (1998) study, which concluded that aid

is associated with higher growth if the receiving regime's policy environment proves appropriate (see also Cassen & Associates, 1994); this upheld the Post-Washington Consensus' "good governance" agenda, derived from new institutional economics, which considers an appropriate policy environment one in which the state's role is to establish frameworks such as rule of law, property rights, and contract enforceability that strengthen the market's ability to encourage development (World Bank, 1997). Other researchers remained within this paradigm (e.g., Dollar & Easterly, 1999), suggesting aid's effectiveness is conditional upon low inflation, a balanced budget, trade openness (Burnside & Dollar, 2000), an index of economic freedom (Ovaska, 2003) or institutional quality (Burnside & Dollar, 2004). However, Easterly, Levine, and Roodman (2004) discredit the econometric analysis of Burnside and Dollar (2000) from which many others derived their work, and cast a significant level of doubt, as results seem to be highly sensitive to indicator choice (Clemens, Radelet, & Bhavnani, 2004; see also Rajan & Subramanian, 2005; Hansen & Tarp, 2000a; Brumm, 2003; Easterly, 2003). Neoliberal discourse implies that by making aid allocations conditional on economic liberalization and democratization, aid is a means to better governance. Democratization and decentralization are thus valued for their ability to introduce political competition promoting accountability.

In spite of debates spanning nearly half a century around the effectiveness of aid (see Hansen & Tarp, 2000b for a summary), few studies consider aid's effect on the receiving political environment. Those that do tend to fit into the neoliberal paradigm or take a stance against it by suggesting that aid may degrade institutions and environments (e.g., Goldsmith, 2001, implying that aid encourages democratization by encouraging political and economic freedom, with Knack, 2004, refuting). Studies like Knack's (2001) and Bräutigam and Knack's (2004) discuss a tendency for aid to weaken government accountability in institutions crucial to development (called an "aid-institutions paradox" by Moss, Pettersson, & van de Walle, 2006) by encouraging corruption (Ovaska, 2003) and rent-seeking (Tornell & Lane, 1999; Svensson, 1996) in aid-dependent countries (Moss & Subramanian, 2005). Oya and Pons-Vignon (2010) contend that aid decreases policy space and disincentivizes mobilizing domestic resources while creating a logic of aid maximization; in doing so, the aid prioritizes appeasing donors instead of developing policies geared toward long-term development.

Dutta, Leeson, and Williamson (2011) consider both camps in the literature (i.e., that aid degrades policy environments, or that according to the good governance agenda, aid may make governments more democratic) to argue that aid has an "amplification effect" that enhances the tendencies already present. Two years earlier, Wright (2009) provided a more detailed causal explanation for similar observations: as the authoritarian leader's coalition increases in size, aid first increases the probability of democratization, and second, as economic growth decreases, aid decreases the likelihood of democratization. Similarly, Bueno de Mesquita and Smith (2008) contend that the effect of aid on democratization prospects depends on the institutional context and on whether a revolutionary threat is imminent. While aid seems to provide a social incentive to increase citizen welfare, unless the rulers face a revolutionary threat and their political coalition is large, aid actually provides the opposite political incentive and encourages autocratization. Kono and Montinola (2009) aim to draw out nuances in a connected inquiry concerned with whether or not aid advances political survival; they

conclude affirmatively but note that the degree to which regimes can stockpile aid and use it politically varies by regime type, with autocratic leaders being more able than their democratic counterparts to develop "slack resources."

To consider the political calculations that leaders make in employing aid, it is necessary to explore the nature of politics in sub-Saharan Africa (henceforth Africa). But a few additional definitions are in order. First, for Alence (2004), the term neopatrimonial is a characterization of a system in which the states possess formal modern bureaucracies yet utilize informal patrimonial principles like personalist political authority, weak checks and balances, and clientelism. Such structure is characterized and reproduced by insecurity. Second, like Erdmann and Engel (2007), I define clientelism as an exchange or brokerage of services and resources for political support, often via votes. Finally, patronage is the politically motivated distribution of favors to groups, primarily ethnically. While the former is a type of highly asymmetrical personal relations, the latter serves more as an instrument for maintaining political cohesion (pp. 106-108).

The idea that African governments will use certain policy instruments as part of their governance strategy is neither new nor specific to aid. Rulers have historically institutionalized their regimes by using parastatals and import licenses from quotas and agricultural marketing boards to intervene in markets and allow resources to flow to important constituencies (Herbst, 1990). Sandbrook (1985) maintains that the political instability, systemic corruption, and maladministration that stem from neopatrimonialism and personal rule impede economic activity. Bates (1981) attributes such decisions to the prioritization of political stability over economic growth with the belief that the economic irrationality is compensated for, something van de Walle's (2001) analysis of regime manipulation of structural adjustment programs echoes (see also Williams, 1994). For Chabal and Daloz (1999), politics in Africa "works" because patron-client relations pervading states' poorly institutionalized neopatrimonial systems allow actors to maximize returns despite uncertainty. Such personalist logic may cause politically insignificant citizens to be strategically neglected, a strategy that can result in the state losing legitimacy and acting oppressively to maintain control (Erdmann & Engel, 2007, pp. 13-15; Agbese, 2007, p. 41).

I briefly leverage four critiques whose implications will be illustrated through the case study of Ethiopia. First, I draw attention to the naïveté of neoliberal good governance. Despite the fact that neoliberalism was developed with the aim of breaking the corrupt and clientelistic connections pervading African states and stopping government failure, focusing on the institutions that shape the market (World Bank, 1997) neglects how rationally calculated governance strategies affect the shape of institutions and may even choose to disregard development in favor of political stability. Indeed, the market itself is a politically constructed and enabled institution (Craig & Porter, 2006). Considering these strategies yields an understanding of former Prime Minister Meles' desire to refuse food aid to communities affiliated with political opponents.

Second, I aim to understand the interests, ideas, and ideologies of politics and accept that, while different from the West, they are legitimate in their own right. Neoliberal economic philosophy (or rather, the organizations and donors developing it) should aim not to alter politics in Africa (Craig and Porter, 2006) but to work with them. Admitting that politics in Africa are unfavorable and

neopatrimonial (see van de Walle, 2001 for an example of this tendency and Pitcher, Moran, & Johnston, 2007 for a critique) does not advance one's understanding about how and why the phenomena that come hand in hand with neopatrimonialism, such as clientelism and corruption, occur and are rationalized. Rather than searching for "alternatives to corrupt and incompetent central governments in low-income states" (van de Walle, 2005, p. 63), or suggesting that states would become stronger by weakening the informal institutions around them (Migdal, 1988), I aim to understand why these traditions continue and how development may be realized within the confines of the political paradigm. Kelsall (2011) suggests that if economic rents can be centralized and focused over a long-term horizon (Olson, 1997) and pro-market, pro-rural policies are implemented, neopatrimonialism may indeed be harnessed for development.

This leads me to my third point. How do we know whether aid works in good policy environments as the current discourse anticipates (e.g., Burnside & Dollar 2000 and 2004 and Collier & Dollar, 1999) if no attempt is made to assess the politics that shape and sometimes even impede the nature of the system and the institutions that fuel growth? Failure to acknowledge the ways in which politics may impede development not only leads to inaccurate predictions about the impact of aid but also fails to understand the pervasiveness of, let alone resolve, corruption.

Fourth, and finally, it is necessary to question the shared optimism held by donors, academics (Burnside & Dollar, 1997; Dutta, Leeson, & Williamson, 2011) and international financial institutions (World Bank, 1997, Chapters 5-7), about aid and democratization. This optimism results from a failure to acknowledge that democracy in sub-Saharan Africa does not resemble Western liberal democracy (Diamond, 1999). Rose and Shin (2001) fear that the consolidation of liberal democracy has not been realized because the democratizing states are not modern Weberian states that have formal institutions establishing an efficient, autonomous bureaucracy and a monopoly of force (Jackson & Rosberg, 1982). In fact, Forrest (1988) articulated ways in which African states appear "soft": no structural autonomy, (e.g., clientelist connections shaping socioeconomic policy and generating regime support), local structures that are not integrated into the central administration, and limited capacity to extract resources or to ideologically persuade the populous states to act in their best interest.

There remains a question as to whether Western democracy can be sustained given the socioeconomic conditions, corruption, clientelism, and widespread poverty, but also whether its continuation would lead to higher standards of living (Owusu, 1992; Sandbrook, 1996). Therefore, fundamentally, failure to comprehend why certain state structures and political institutions are overdeveloped (i.e., patronage) in comparison to others (i.e., balance of power) stems from an inability to recognize the historical origin of how this trajectory originated and what fuels its continuation (Koelble & LiPuma, 2008, p. 11).

I apply the critiques and understandings of politics in Africa to Ethiopia in the next section. The concern is not only whether aid discourages policy reform by substituting private capital and insulating governments from political change, but also to what extent policy reform is relevant, given that Ethiopia ranked fifth in a list of the world's ten fastest-growing economies of the last decade (van de Walle, 2001, pp. 21, 50 and 52-53; The Economist, 2011). I hope that the clarifications and critiques leveraged in this section can provide understanding in how official

development assistance is used as a means to an end, whether that end is development, a political strategy, or a combination.

3. Case Study and Implications: Ethiopia

This section aims to understand the motivations and priorities of Ethiopia using scholarly and news articles, and analyses by international organizations and embassies. I first give a selective political-historical overview, followed by an analysis of how aid has advanced governance strategies. The section will show that while neopatrimonialism and patronage may impede development, whether they do depends on the governance strategy of the regime. In the case of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi's regime, while human rights abuses were often conducted to ensure regime security, strides were nonetheless made toward development objectives.

A few numbers help set the scene. Official development assistance has increased significantly, with the average between 2000 and 2010 reaching \$2.395 billion. In 2010, Ethiopia was largest aid recipient in Africa and the second largest in the world (OECD, 2012b). In 2011, its largest bilateral donor, the United States, provided \$847 million in aid, over a third of which was in food aid. In 2010, 34% of the aid went to social sectors, 17% was programmatic, and 16% was humanitarian (U.S. Department of State, 2012a; OECD, 2012a; OECD, 2012c; Furtado and Smith, 2007). Moss and Subramanian found in 2005 that 23% of Ethiopia's GDP was derived from aid, marking it as an aid-dependent country.

Although Ethiopia defeated colonial power Italy in 1896, it was briefly reoccupied in 1935-1936 (Novati, 2008). Pressured by economic crisis, drought,
famine, corruption, and the Eritrean nationalist movement, Emperor Haile Selassie's
regime yielded to revolutionary protests in 1974. The provisional administrative
council of soldiers (i.e., the Derg) that deposed him installed an infiltratory Marxist
government. Mengistu Haile Mariam's regime fared no better at alleviating drought,
and impoverishing socialist economic policies coupled with famine encouraged
through war against self-determinism caused millions to starve in the "Biblical"
famine of the 1980s (BBC, 2012; de Waal, 1997; Keller, 1992). In spite of the 1987
adoption of a new constitution that devolved power and established autonomous
regional governments, most nationalist movements coordinated military strategies as
the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) (Keller, 1995;
Donham, 1992; de Waal, 1997).

After the EPRDF took political control in 1991, elections in 1995 established a multiparty democracy. Yet it is a pseudo-democracy (or for Hagmann & Abbink 2011, a revolutionary democracy) that has increasingly reverted toward authoritarianism since the 2005 elections (U.S. Department of State, 2012a; Human Rights Watch, 2010; Clapham, 2004). Because the regime largely determines the country's development direction (and stability is seen as a prerequisite for development), critics are labeled "anti-development" or "anti-peace." In spite of the constitution's ethnic federalism, a centralized policy and decision-making structure is paradoxically maintained.

In an extreme bid for political control, the 2009 Anti-Terrorism Proclamation No. 652 uses the buzzword "terrorism" to gain favor as an ally in the war on terror and crack down on free speech and protests with minimal donor

complaints. In June 2011, parliament employed it to designate five groups as terrorist organizations: two separatist ethnic political organizations, one opposition political party, al-Qaeda, and al-Shabaab (U.S. Department of State, 2012a; Salisbury, 2011). Thus, not unlike Mengistu in the 1980s, in summer 2007 and fall 2011, amidst continuing drought and famine across the Horn of Africa, then-Prime Minister Meles Zenawi employed aid as a tool of repression, denying food, seed, and fertilizer to the Ogaden region while insisting its blockades merely prevented guns and material from reaching the separatist Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) (Gettleman, 2007a; Gettleman, 2007b; Waterfield, 2011; Garrison, 2011; BBC Newsnight, 2011; Keen, 1994).

In 1995, after Sudanese-backed Egyptian terrorists attempted to assassinate then-President Hosni Mubarak, whose regime had aided the TPLF in ousting Mengistu, Meles endeared himself to the West by supporting the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) (Verhoeven, 2012b). His positions on Somalia later made him the United States' junior sheriff in the Horn of Africa (The Economist, 2008). Despite his disrespect of human rights and political and civil liberties, Meles earned a reputation for being technocratically focused on pro-poor sustainable development (Dowden, 2012a; Furtado & Smith, 2007). Although an aid darling, Meles defied neoliberal prescriptions, making centralized economic decisions and leaving land government-owned and businesses affiliated with the ruling party, a tendency furthered by a pervasive patronage system (Furtado and Smith, 2007). For these reasons, the regime was developmentally patrimonial, or focused on achieving long term economic development for itself and others in spite of its political intolerance (Vaughan & Gebremichael, 2011). The country has maintained an average growth rate between 8% and 11% since 2000, primarily the result of foreign investment in the country's agricultural and manufacturing sectors (African Economic Outlook, 2012a).

Given the tendency of food aid to be used politically and geopolitically (Thurow and Kilman, 2009; Keen, 1994), I examine the agricultural sector. Ethiopia remains a low-income food-deficit country (Rosen, 2012). Food insecurity is a product of the population's low purchasing power and poor infrastructure. There is also a direct correlation with the amount of food imported (and food aid received) and the volatility in the price of exports, more than 75% of which are agricultural (Adenew, 2004). While economic liberalization was necessary to escape the damage of import substitution industrialization from the Derg era (Vaughan and Gebremichael, 2011), the regime's prudence is appropriate; too closely following neoliberal prescriptions may defeat efforts to improve food security (Oya, 2005; Adenew, 2004; Porter, 2012).

I now draw broader implications about the situation reviewed. The case study shows how a regime aiming to increase its food security denies portions of the population a human right in order to maintain power. In doing so, this study ultimately disagrees with Whitfield and Fraser (2008), who argue that only weak negotiating countries use foreign aid to stabilize their political regime. In spite of its current account deficit, Ethiopia has more control over aid negotiations than nearly all of sub-Saharan Africa because its state and planning institutions are strong and well established (Furtado & Smith, 2007).

However, questions have been raised about the future of Ethiopia given the death of Meles Zenawi on August 21, 2012. Meles was a shrewd political negotiator

who influenced American strategies on Sudan and Somalia, sat on Blair's Commission for Africa, represented the African Union in climate-change negotiations, and peacefully managed South Sudan's succession (Verhoeven, 2012a and 2012b). Although the EPRDF elite stresses that Meles' deputy and successor, foreign minister Hailemariam Desalegn, will maintain his vision, concerns about the future of EPRDF's coalition have made his premiership largely a figurehead role to avoid shifts in power for the state and military (Woldemariam, 2012a; Blunt, 2012; Abdi, 2012). Perhaps he will manage to hold together Meles' pan-Africanist visions, but grievances connected to ethnic and income inequality could emerge as a result of Meles' economic modernization policies and political intolerance. Furthermore, much of the unlikely partnership between a regime with Marxist roots and Western donors stem from Meles' charisma and negotiating skill. However, the U.S. has thus far supported him, hoping that his non-Amharic or -Tigrayan roots will allow him to foster broader political support (Woldemariam, 2012b).

The study yields a number of conclusions. First, the case illustrates the benefit of individualized analysis to examine each country's politico-economic utilization of aid. It is difficult to conclude that aid is facilitating a "big push" (Sachs et al., 2004) since the objective of the bulk of aid received (particularly with Ethiopia's large percentage of food aid) is not meant to impact economic growth, or, in the case of most social expenditures, cannot do so in the short term (OECD, 2012a).

Second, neoliberal standards regarding economic governance ignore the political considerations that influence the regime's effort to maintain power (Meyer, 2012a). When overlooked, decisions to withhold food from communities defy conditionalities, (or, as other neighboring countries have done, fund a rebel movement, maintain violence in part of the country, or pay voters to maintain the status quo) may appear illogical (Cammick, 2007). Ultimately, this underscores the importance of understanding the interests, ideas, and ideologies of politics in Africa, as applying a political lens allows us to recognize why outcomes include corruption, patronage, clientelism, and political violence.

Third, neopatrimonial systems need not be juxtaposed with development objectives, or impede economic activity as Sandbrook (1985) alleged. The case study, an example of developmental patrimonialism (Booth & Golooba-Mutebi, 2012), shows that contrary to the good governance agenda's assumptions, corruption and patronage need not derail economic growth. This upholds a conclusion noted by Allen (1995), Sandbrook (1985), Kelsall (2011), and Jackson and Rosberg (1982): the personalized nature of governance makes some strategies more developmentally effective, stable, or skilled than others.

Fourth, the Ethiopia case study illustrates the difficulty of realizing neoliberal expectations that aid might encourage democratization. This seems to uphold Moss, Pettersson, and van de Walle's (2006) conclusion that substantial aid revenues may make regimes less accountable; however, the differing nature of democracy in Africa and the use of patronage and clientelism to connect with politically relevant citizens make identifying causality difficult (see Sandbrook, 1996; Owusu, 1992, Koelble & LiPuma, 2008). Ironically, in some circumstances, there is donor complacency about politics and aid misuse (Alesina & Weder, 2002), perhaps out of a willingness to pick battles, even when the compromise means ignoring the governance strategies that the neoliberal philosophy aims to counter.

4. Conclusion

This article argues that whether aspects of politics in Africa such as neopatrimonialism or patronage impede development depends on a regime's governance strategy. While the case study of Ethiopia is unique because of the amount of food aid it chronically receives and the level of donor significance it has as an ally in the war on terror, the conclusion about whether politics impairs development objectives may be applied to other sub-Saharan states by examining how aid fits into their governance strategies.

Rwanda has used aid to promote regional and internal stability by backing the Tutsi M23 rebellion in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (Reyntjens, 2010 and 2004; Hayman, 2007; Meyer, 2012b), while Uganda's Museveni has used aid to prolong the conflict with the Lord's Resistance Army and corruption in the military meant to fight them to maintain his hold on power (Doom and Vlassenroot, 1999; Prunier, 2004; van Acker, 2004; Tangri and Mwenda, 2006). Despite the high level of aid dependence that the Zambian economy has shown since Kaunda, the summer of 2010 yielded the suspension of health aid by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, while the European Union suspended infrastructure aid—a result both of evidence of embezzlement of public funds and of graft by subsequent regimes (Rakner, 2003; Mfula, 2010; Fraser, 2007; IOL News, 2010). In Malawi, the United Kingdom suspended general budget support in 2011 as a result of concerns over mismanagement and human rights violations; but the change in leadership following President Mutharika's death in April has altered the political strategy, and thus, improved relations between the countries and respect for economic conditionalities (BBC News, 2012; Farrell, 2012). The 2008 inaugurated coalition government in Zimbabwe has also behaved differently, and its increased efforts to improve freedom and prosperity have led the European Union to ease some aid restrictions (Croft, 2012).

This does not, however, mean that these regimes (whose sometimes violent responses against perceived threats to their stability support Agbese, 2007's assertions) are juxtaposing security with development. Their actions resemble Samudavanija's (1991) conception of a three-dimensional state, which retains legitimacy by tackling three objectives: security, development, and participation, with the first being made paramount. One final point of clarification to allay skepticism: I could not possibly suggest that all official development assistance is "misused." Skarbek and Leeson (2009) argue that aid which can solve the simple problem of a lack of capital for a singular, predetermined end, such as the production of vaccines, has the potential to be most developmentally effective because it provides a means to a clearly delineated end (see also Sachs, 2006). Some aid is fungible (Pack & Pack, 1993; Devarajan & Swaroop, 1998), and some may be co-opted into governance objectives, but these need not be derailed. My aim is to call attention to differences in regional politics and how recognition and acceptance of such differences may yield better understanding of the reasoning behind, and the varying paths toward, certain outcomes. By understanding why such phenomena like corruption and patronage continue, we can more accurately understand Africa's needs as it breaks from the hopeless, violent, and impoverished stereotypes of its past.

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