Introduction: aid and authoritarianism in sub-Saharan Africa after 1990

Tobias Hagmann
and Filip Reyntjens

Introduction

This book explores the motives, dynamics and consequences of international aid given to authoritarian African governments.[1] The relationship between foreign aid and autocratic rule in sub-Saharan Africa has a long-standing historical precedent (see for example McVety, 2012), but it is of renewed interest and salience. In the past decade, important donors have gradually traded their earlier commitment to political reform in Africa for the achievement of increasingly technocratic development successes such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and, more recently, the 'development effectiveness paradigm' with its focus on growth and productivity (Eyben, 2013). In 2013, four of the ten most important aid recipients in Africa – Ethiopia, Mozambique, Uganda and Rwanda – were ruled by one-party regimes that do not allow for democratic participation and criminalize political dissent. While bilateral and multilateral donors constantly claim to be promoting democracy, good governance and human rights in Africa, many are effectively complicit in fostering development without democracy. The recent revival of the complicity between foreign aid and authoritarianism in the name of 'development' is not only problematic, but also went largely unnoticed by both academics and the broader public. This book is thus a first – and certainly incomplete – attempt to draw attention to some of the illiberal effects of aid channelled to authoritarian political regimes in sub-Saharan Africa.

A significant body of scholarly work exists on why and how donors disburse aid, explaining both positive and negative impacts of development assistance with regards to economic growth, poverty, development and domestic governance. Yet much of this literature suffers from one of two shortcomings: it either conceives of aid in technocratic, managerial and ultimately apolitical terms or, alternatively, it seeks to explain the relationship between foreign aid – typically modelled as the independent variable – and democracy or democratization or the lack thereof – often represented as the dependent variable. In other words, while economists and political scientists have scrutinized how and whether foreign aid contributes to democracy in recipient countries, the more

sinister hypothesis that foreign aid strengthens autocracies has rarely been explored in the literature. Consequently, published research on the relationship between foreign aid and authoritarian governance in sub-Saharan Africa after 1990 – namely in countries that benefit from substantial aid flows – is close to non-existent.

The collusion between donors and one-party regimes or dictatorships in sub-Saharan Africa raises numerous questions. A main empirical puzzle, which has motivated the editors of this volume, is the following: why do donors not only support, but also align their policy agendas with authoritarian rulers who reject the very liberal democratic values that Western donors endorse? Where does this creeping 'African democracy fatigue', as Nicolas van de Walle puts it in his concluding chapter, emanate from and what is its significance for previous, current and future development paradigms? But donor assistance to undemocratic regimes also raises many moral questions, in particular concerning the manner in which prominent donor agencies such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the UK Department for International Development (DFID) or the European Commission's (EC) various country development programmes have recently revised their earlier stances on democratization in favour of more narrow 'developmental' objectives that are easily quantifiable, but come without freedom (Sen, 1999). This shift is also due to competition from so-called emerging donors. More problematically, donors' rhetoric about the supposed trade-off between political rights and economic development is neither approved nor shared by taxpayers living in donor countries nor by 'beneficiaries' in Africa. Rather, the decision to continue or increase funding to authoritarian regimes is essentially the outcome of an elite bargain between donor and recipient governments.

Two main themes are at the centre of this book. They pertain to *i)* donors' motives for giving substantial amounts of aid to undemocratic recipient countries in sub-Saharan Africa (the 'why' question) and *ii)* the political and economic consequences that these aid flows generate (the 'what' question). While some of the chapters in this volume focus more on the 'why' question of donor motives to fund autocracies (Chapters 1, 3, 5 and the conclusion), others pay more attention to the 'what' question of aid impact in authoritarian contexts (Chapters 2 and 6) or do both (Chapter 4). The inquiry into the nexus between foreign aid and authoritarian rule in sub-Saharan Africa sparks many more vital questions, which this book does not or only partly addresses. These questions concern the various processes by which 'aid' contributes to oppression, but also the perceptions of those involved, both target groups and development agents. This includes issues such as the impact of aid on the daily workings of authoritarian regimes and how it affects those living under their rule, the reaction of local societies to donor-funded authoritarian regimes' policies and practices, the types of aid that are more prone to enhancing

repressive mechanisms, and the reconciliation by donors – including their staff based in recipient countries – of their official rhetoric of promoting liberal goals with their support for authoritarian governments. Finally, we do not address the agency of domestic actors, and how aid can or should relate to local demands for democracy and human rights.[2]

Before we dwell on the issues raised in this book, three clarifications are in order. First, 'aid' can be conceived of in starkly different terms. While its vernacular use associates aid with altruism, solidarity or even an obligation of helping the poor, economists predominantly view international aid as a rent that accrues to recipient countries, often with negative effects (see Bräutigam & Knack, 2004: 265). From a policy perspective, aid represents a 'particular form of external influence' that limits recipient countries' policy autonomy (Brown, 2013). In this book, we use a generic definition of aid as consisting of material flows between donors and recipient countries, i.e. official development assistance (ODA) as defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC).[3] Evidently, close aid and diplomatic relations between donor and recipient countries also generate symbolic capital and recognition, but we are less concerned with these more immaterial dimensions of foreign aid. Foreign aid thus takes place in variegated forms, ranging from direct budget support to funding for particular policies, programmes and projects in a broad range of sectors and involving a multitude of intermediaries and implementers such as local and international NGOs and state, para-statal or community organizations.

Second, the analysis offered in this book is confined to interactions between selected sub-Saharan African countries and Western, meaning European and North American, donors. Even though very pertinent, apart from Chapter 5 and the conclusion, this book does not consider non-Western, namely Chinese and other non-DAC, donors and their interactions with African autocracies (see Bräutigam, 2009; Kragelund, 2008). This is both an omission and a plea for future research as a comparison between DAC and non-DAC donors' interactions with authoritarian African states potentially provides important and surprising new insights, debunking commonly held assumptions about the liberal or illiberal character of particular donors. For instance, Dreher, Nunnenkamp and Thiele (2011) find that, while new donors care less for recipient need than old donors, both behave similarly in several respects, and that new donors do not generally exhibit a stronger bias against better governed countries. On the whole, 'new donors resemble the old bunch in one important respect, namely that both categories disguise considerable variation within these groups with regard to need, merit, and self-interest as motives underlying aid activities' (Dreher, Nunnenkamp & Thiele, 2011: 1961). Similarly, although Northern Africa has been the home of several long-standing

autocracies with long histories of external support, both civilian and military, we do not look at Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia.

Finally, aside from occasional references to the Cold War period, this book concentrates on donor–recipient relations in the post-1990 period. While this periodization is partly a matter of convention and while more historic research into long-term development practices is necessary (see Chapter 4), the choice of the post-Cold War era is motivated by the emergence and triumph of the (neo-)liberal donor agendas – namely democratization and liberalization – that are currently being redefined in Africa's development landscape. In keeping with the two main foci of this book, i.e. donors' motives for giving aid to undemocratic regimes and the consequences of their aid, the next two sections review the scholarly works on these subjects. Subsequently, we propose a number of more conceptual suggestions that aim to reframe the nexus between aid and authoritarianism and that have so far been overlooked by the existing literature. We then introduce the various chapters and case studies that make up the bulk of this book.

Donor motives for funding autocracies

How can we account for Western donors' support for authoritarian governments in Africa in the name of 'development'? The comparative literature provides numerous clues as to why donors may decide to give or withhold foreign aid. In-depth case-study research unearths the particular mix of motivations and considerations of an individual donor, a particular aid relation, or a particular time period (see Schraeder et al., 1998). Scholars are essentially in agreement that 'donor aid levels are not critically linked to needs in Africa' (Riddell, 1999). In other words, even though donors routinely profess to aiding the 'poorest of the poor', aid flows do not primarily reflect recipient countries' development needs, but rather donor priorities (Schraeder et al., 1998: 302). National security interests, cultural similarity, colonial past, economic potential for domestic economies, ideological proximity, the maintenance of aid budgets, and a host of other domestic and international factors explain donor calculations with regards to aid allocation (Olsen, 1998; Schraeder et al., 1998; Alesina & Dollar, 2000; Goldsmith, 2001; Fuchs et al., 2014).

Yet donor motives must not be seen in isolation from recipient governments' behaviour and assets. On the basis of eight case studies, Whitfield (2009: 329) argues that the ability of a recipient government to project non-negotiability and the confidence that its actions will not lead to donors pulling out (or that it can manage on its own if they do) distinguishes more from less successful recipient negotiating strategies. Contemporary Ethiopia and Rwanda are prime examples of the 'negotiating capital' identified by Whitfield. The volume of aid relative to the recipients' economies – and therefore their aid dependency – does not necessarily impact that capital: Rwanda, Ethiopia and Uganda, in that

order, are major recipients of aid in sub-Saharan Africa in the time period, but their aid dependency has not affected their policy independence. The similarities between the two authoritarian one-party states and 'donor darlings' Ethiopia and Rwanda are striking in a number of regards. Both managed to convince donors that governance was 'technocratic' and 'developmental' and thus unrelated to politics and rights, both silenced their internal and external critics, and both obtained more aid as they became more dictatorial over time (for Rwanda see Reyntjens, 2013; for Ethiopia see Borchgrevink, 2008; Feyissa, 2011; Abbink & Hagmann, 2012). Ideologically, they both have a clearly articulated vision of state-led development. Geopolitically, they are key allies of the United States and the United Kingdom, though Ethiopia more so than Rwanda. Institutionally, 'a culture of discipline and performance pervades government and the civil service' in Ethiopia (Furtado & Smith, 2009: 132). In addition, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF)-dominated regime has been able to claim moral authority over donors as a result of the genocide, using 'the legacy of the genocide to de-legitimize external interference in the country's domestic affairs' (Whitfield, 2009: 340). Uganda shares the geopolitical asset of Ethiopia and Rwanda, but its ideological asset has weaned off, and the institutional confidence that Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM)-led regime once inspired has eroded. This may explain in part why aid to Uganda has decreased over the last five years, suggesting that there may be a 'tipping point' at which the divergence grows too large for some donors to maintain the illusion of consistency.

Self-interest, as opposed to rhetorical support of democracy, is an obvious donor rationale that explains assistance to authoritarian regimes. Emmanuel (2012) shows how one critical donor, France, was able to shield its client and former colony, Cameroon, from pressure to pursue liberalization. While other donors applied negative conditionality to Cameroon in the early 1990s, the massive influx of French aid during that period helped the Biya regime to thwart the efforts by Cameroon's domestic political opposition and the wider donor community to encourage genuine democratic reform. France's interest here was not economic but political, namely to maintain a Franco-phone client whose most popular opponent was the Anglophone politician John Fru Ndi (Emmanuel, 2012; Pommerolle in this book). While this case echoes long-standing paternalistic foreign-policy practices of France vis-à-vis its former colonies, commonly referred to as the *Françafrique* (Schlichte, 1998), the close alliance with ruling autocratic governments is not specific to former colonial powers as the US and British support to Rwanda, Ethiopia and Uganda demonstrates.

Among the diverse and often incoherent reasons for the mismatch between donors' rhetoric and the actual aid flows to African autocracies identified in the literature are donors' security concerns (counter-terrorism and intelligence

5

sharing), commercial interests, expectations about the effectiveness of sanctions (an issue linked to donor coordination), regional stability, the level of recipient aid dependency, the recipient country's linkage to the international community or political ties to donors (including voting behaviour at the UN), regimes' claims to domestic legitimacy or congruence of donor action with demands by national opinion, the regime's 'presentability', and a sense of fatigue with representative democracy, seen to engender conflict and chaos (Lynch & Crawford, 2011: 294–296; del Biondo, 2012; Grauvogel & von Soest, 2013; Nielsen, 2013; Resnick & van de Walle, 2013b). Studying US and European Union aid to Africa in the 1990s, Brown (2005: 188) concludes that 'donor motivations did not seem any less self-interested in the 1990s than they were during the Cold War, and recent years have further confirmed this'. More recently, Nielsen (2013: 11) found 'little evidence to support constructivist accounts that identify human rights norms as the foremost driver of rights-friendly foreign policies and principled ideals as the primary motivation for Western aid programs'.

Another major factor that intervenes in donor calculations and aid relations is the trade-off between technocratic and political governance, between the short to medium and the long term. This has recently been highlighted by the research conducted by the Africa Power and Politics Programme (APPP), funded by DFID, which asserts that 'developmental patrimonialism' can generate dynamic growth (Kelsall & Booth, 2010). However, others have claimed that 'the assumptions underpinning the grand visions of the illiberal state-builders are deeply flawed' and that counting on their ability to deliver 'may be a costly miscalculation' (Jones et al., 2013: 21). Donors' ambiguity is enhanced by lack of clarity on whether they believe that other values (such as business-friendly policies or security) are more important than democracy and respect for human rights, although they would prefer recipients to adhere to these, or if they actually think that authoritarianism can better promote development outcomes.

Beyond the aid nexus, there appears to be a more general trend towards the restoration and acceptance of authoritarianism. Cooley (2015) recently pointed at the resurgence of the primacy of state sovereignty and security, renewed challenges to liberal democracy's universalism and growing acceptance of 'civilizational diversity', and the defence of 'traditional values' by powers like Russia. Cooley argues that this evolution is also facilitated by new 'authoritarian regionalism' across Eurasia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America, and by the advent of new providers of international public goods as a consequence of the rise of emerging powers, in our case alternative donors.[4]

Managerial issues too play an important role in the everyday life of ODA programmes. Despite what appears as paying lip service to democracy, aid agencies tend to insulate aid from politics, as 'developmental states' and 'authoritarian enclaves' are more comfortable to cope with and seen as delivering

effective results, at least in the short and perhaps medium term. Developers' tendency of reframing political issues in host countries into technical development challenges has of course been a staple feature of international aid's 'anti-politics machine' (Ferguson, 1990). Brown (2005: 187) notes the technical bias of assistance when 'donors forget about politics'. Hout (2010) demonstrated how the World Bank's governance-related publications contain more frequent use of depoliticized notions such as 'management', 'public sector' or 'decentralization', whereas academic publications tend to associate governance with political issues and institutions as witnessed by notions like 'interests', 'conflict' or 'democracy'. Likewise, Uvin (2010: 176) notes 'a tendency towards the "technicalisation" of all political issues by the development community'. Consequently, some donors are content with procedural compliance and tolerate evading tactics by authoritarian regimes. As Young observed, already at the end of the 1990s (1999: 39), 'semi-democracy is probably sufficient to deflect international system pressures for more complete political opening, particularly if macroeconomic management earns external approbation'.

Another explanation for this is that decision-making by donors in Western capitals is often informed by their officials in the host countries who, not unlike diplomats, are immersed in close working relations with their counterparts whose viewpoints they begin to appreciate or even replicate. Brown (2011) found that locally based development agents frequently claim that their host country is more democratic than it actually is, or that it could not be any more democratic for the time being. His interviews show three recurrent methods to deflect criticism of the democratic credentials of recipients: *i)* focusing on election day, rather than the electoral campaigns and broader political conditions; *ii)* setting the standard very low ('don't expect too much'); and *iii)* setting a long time-horizon ('don't expect it too soon'). Because embassies and aid missions have short institutional memories as a result of permanent staff rotation and short postings, because it is easier to tolerate abuse than to prevent it, because career-wise it is better not to rock the boat and to follow the path of least resistance, because there is a strong need to 'feel good', and because of the 'Stockholm syndrome' that makes over-identification with host governments difficult to escape, Brown observes that these officials 'often express sympathy for autocratic behaviour – and when they do so, they use a remarkably limited set of faulty arguments and clichés' (Brown, 2011: 513). Brown's findings square with our own observations about the defensive reactions of foreign aid officials in both Ethiopia and Rwanda when confronted with criticism about their host countries' political record.

A final professional factor that shapes donors' attitudes towards authoritarian recipient governments is what Uvin describes as 'a lack of fine knowledge of (recipient) countries: donors largely see what they want to see, and largely interact with people who have a vested interest in making sure this continues' (Uvin,

7

2010: 176). Finally, for all sorts of reasons, donors sometimes differ radically in their assessment of the dynamics at play in recipient countries, thus preventing coordination and allowing recipients to play one donor against another.[5]

Foreign aid's impact on domestic governance

Since the end of the 1990s a growing body of large-N scholarship building on statistical datasets has examined the impacts of foreign aid on democracy and democratization in recipient countries. Most of this literature considers bilateral aid, using the OECD-DAC's official development assistance indicator as well as Freedom House, Polity and other indicators as proxies of regime type. Given that African countries figure prominently among aid recipients, much of this literature has focused on sub-Saharan Africa. The literature shows indecisive results, some studies suggesting a positive relationship between aid and democracy, others showing disparate impacts, and others still finding none, or a negative relationship (Resnick & van de Walle, 2013a: 3–5). Few authors conclude that foreign aid has contributed to democracy promotion on the continent. Among them is Goldsmith, who finds development assistance to be 'associated with slightly higher levels of political and civil liberty in Africa' (2001: 141) and with economic liberalism (144). Alesina and Dollar (2000: 34) find that countries that have improved their democratic record have benefited from a subsequent surge in foreign aid. This finding is supported by Hariri (2013), who shows that, while democracy is not generally associated with higher rates of economic growth, democratization is followed by growth that is accounted for by a substantial influx of aid into young democracies.

However, most studies challenge donor claims that aid furthers democratic governance. In his study on the impact of aid on democratization between 1975 and 2000, Knack (2004: 251) concludes that 'no evidence is found that aid promotes democracy'. To the contrary, Bräutigam and Knack (2004: 276) report a 'robust statistical relationship between high aid levels in Africa and deteriorations in governance'. The causal reason for this, the authors add, remains unclear. Similar conclusions have been drawn by scholars who study political conditionality in aid disbursements. In his study of democracy promotion in post-1991 Africa, Brown (2005: 182) notes that 'the relationship between political conditionality and democratization is unclear'. More significantly, he observes that donor enthusiasm for political conditionality quickly waned after the mid-1990s (Brown, 2005: 168) while security interests again started to override other concerns. Indeed, Fisher and Anderson (2015) show that the politics of Western aid and international development have become increasingly 'securitized', and that African governments have eagerly embraced that agenda. As a consequence of Western enthusiasm for supporting, training and arming the military and security services, 'illiberal states are emerging and growing stronger' (Fisher & Anderson, 2015: 131).

8

If foreign aid cannot be associated with democracy promotion, can it be correlated with the promotion of autocracies? In their paper aptly titled 'Does Foreign Aid Support Autocrats, Democrats, or Both?', Kono and Montinola (2009) argue that this is not the case either. Although long-term aid helps dictators more than democrats, large amounts of aid given to dictatorships reduce the marginal impact of current aid flows, and the latter are more beneficial for democracies. Dutta et al. (2013) provide maybe the most interesting explanation for the causal relation between foreign aid and domestic political institutions. They argue that foreign aid neither improves nor deteriorates governance in recipient countries, but that it essentially amplifies recipients' existing political–institutional orientations (Dutta et al., 2013: 209).[6] In their own words, 'Aid makes dictatorships more dictatorial and democracies more democratic.' The political implications of their statistical analysis, if correct, are far reaching for donors: whoever provides large amounts of aid to authoritarian governments in Africa and elsewhere is likely to enhance the regime's oppressive capacities rather than further democratization.[7]

Have authoritarian countries received more aid recently? In terms of aggregate patterns of increasing foreign aid, the answer appears to be a qualified yes. Table 1.1 offers an overview of the distribution of average ODA per capita to sub-Saharan African countries between 1990 and 2013.[8] Countries are categorized according to the Freedom House political rights score, with 1 representing the most free and 7 representing the least free.

The overall trend of ODA per capita to sub-Saharan African states is one of decline from the end of the Cold War to today (1990–2013), but that decline has been sharpest in countries in the lower score categories than those higher scores, and overall, more authoritarian states have seen a per capita increase. For example, in the years 1990–1994, countries with a score of 7 in political rights received an average of 36.28 USD ODA per capita, compared to 45.07 in the years 2010–2013. By contrast, countries with a score of 1, 2 and 3 all

Political rights score	Average ODA per capita (in constant 2012 USD)				
	1990–1994	1995–1999	2000–2004	2005–2009	2010–2013
1	165.59	22.58	21.06	53.68	77.17
2	69.21	58.80	58.43	45.70	43.07
3	101.33	72.07	62.63	70.38	68.62
4	85.77	29.15	24.33	54.92	28.86
5	21.33	44.95	35.63	36.03	54.97
6	61.69	37.42	43.91	43.02	46.95
7	36.28	16.51	28.97	52.28	45.07

Table 1.1 Political rights score (Freedom House) and average ODA per capita in sub-Saharan Africa (1990–2013)

9

witnessed a reduction of over 30 per cent in per capita aid in the same time period. While the data indicate that a general stagnation or decline in average ODA per capita across all categories of political rights occurred between 1990 and 2004, more importantly, the existing data reveal an overall increase in the levels of aid given to higher-scoring – or, more repressive – countries in particular. For example, average ODA per capita to countries in the most authoritarian categories (5–7) in 2010–2013 represents on average 150 per cent of levels in 1990–1994, compared to just under 60 per cent to countries in the least authoritarian categories (1–3).

Future inquiries into the aid and authoritarianism nexus

Existing scholarship on the politics of aid has been limited by its predominant use of highly aggregated data, its unilateral focus on the increase or decrease of democratic governance in recipient countries, and its overly technocratic and narrow institutionalist view of aid relations. There is a need to pursue a series of complementary research inquiries into the aid and authoritarianism nexus in Africa and beyond.[9] A more interdisciplinary approach that draws on qualitative research traditions such as the burgeoning anthropology of aid literature (Li, 2007; Mosse, 2005; Olivier de Sardan, 2006), diplomatic history or more ethnographic studies of international organizations and global policy regimes (Neumann, 2012; Stepputat & Larsen, 2015) appears very much relevant for a more fine-grained analysis of the micropolitics inherent in the nexus between aid and authoritarianism. In this section, we suggest four future strategies of inquiry, some of them taking on the form of propositions, for future empirical research.

Beyond donor speak Donor positions towards recipient countries are often gauged in function of their official intentions as manifest in policy documents, speeches or media statements. The exclusive focus on visible and audible donor speak misleads us into considering donor governments or agencies as homogeneous entities and to discount unofficial donor narratives and views. Within governments there is often competition and disagreement between and among line ministries, headquarters and country offices, different levels of hierarchy as well as personalities. Moreover, bureaucrats in development agencies might be – in their personal capacity – rather critical of their own government's policies and programmes. Although critics often accuse donors of naivety, there is every reason to assume that foreign ministries and development agencies are populated by self-reflective actors/individuals. The fact that several donors have instituted economy analysis and country risk assessments that aim to critically evaluate the potential impact of their aid in a particular country evidences a certain degree of organizational reflexivity (see Hout, 2012).[10] Increased attention to donor bureaucrats' perceptions of their work

in and for authoritarian regimes will add more nuance and provide a fuller picture of the often very complex and contentious relations between donors and recipient authoritarian countries. What might appear to outsiders as smooth cooperation and alignment between development partners might in reality be a very rocky aid relation prone to escalation into open confrontation despite substantial aid allocation.[11] A close examination of development officials' worldviews and experiences, but also their personal aspirations and concerns, will contribute to unpacking the everyday making of foreign aid in authoritarian polities.

The accountability gap A second, very different research angle consists in paying more attention to the 'accountability gap' that emerges in the aid and authoritarianism nexus. Development programmes financed by foreign donors and implemented in or by undemocratic administrations are characterized by an almost complete lack of accountability. As Martens (2005) argued, aid agencies exist primarily because they mediate the absence of direct accountability between donor-taxpayers and beneficiaries in recipient countries. As the two live in separate worlds, there is no 'feedback loop' between aid recipients and taxpayers in predominantly Western countries. Put simply, although foreign aid decisions are subject to scrutiny by national parliaments and although aid agencies – both governmental and NGOs – use a plethora of methods to demonstrate the ownership, sustainability and effectiveness of their activities, foreign aid is essentially not accountable to recipients (see de Renzio, 2006; Wenar, 2006). This absence of accountability is further compounded by the fact that Western publics have little interest in and knowledge about political dynamics in the countries supported by their governments. Consequently, domestic debates about development assistance are mostly informed by partisan positions about whether or not aid is effective and how much should be spent. An even greater lack of accountability exists in autocratic recipient countries; undemocratic regimes are not responsive to their citizens and operate with a near complete lack of accountability. 'Development' in these countries may well mean material progress for some, but policies are framed and implemented without consulting the citizenry. Foreign aid to authoritarian countries thus often operates with minimal accountability as domestic and foreign politicians, diplomats and development workers govern development programmes that affect the lives of millions of people who are only nominally involved in decision-making. This is not surprising as technical expertise and democratic accountability are contradictory organizing principles of modern governance, namely in the realm of global governance (Barnett, 2015). Barnett (2015) suggests that the balance between expertise and accountability is likely to more heavily favour the former in global governance, including international aid, as opposed to domestic governance.

11

Historical trajectories A third research strategy into the aid and authoritari-
anism nexus consists in historicizing the 'strategies of extraversion' (Bayart,
2000) that have figured so prominently in aid-dependent postcolonial Africa.
Our proposition is that foreign aid – in particular bilateral aid – is path
dependent and informed by historical relations between donor and recipient
countries. A case in point are aid flows between former colonial powers and
their ex-colonies, for example in West Africa's *Françafrique*. But there are also
long-standing bilateral and aid connections between countries without common
colonial history, for example between the US and Ethiopia and Egypt. The
important point here is that foreign aid needs to be seen in the *longue durée*,
allowing the changing justifications given by donors for supporting authoritarian
clients-cum-partners in the global South to be traced. Some of these aid relations
span several decades and survive government and even regime changes in both
donor and recipient countries. A good example is, again, Ethiopia, which has
a long history of aid-supported authoritarianism. In her book on the history
of US foreign aid to Ethiopia, McVety (2012) identifies numerous historical
continuities of US assistance towards Ethiopia from the imperial to the current
period (also see Fantini and Puddu, this volume). Among them are the imperial
Ethiopian government's ability to make use of 'development' discourse to obtain
funds, the alignment of US and Ethiopian interests towards the Middle East
and the realization, on behalf of American aid officials, that US aid contributed
to helping an unpopular autocrat in power, fuelling popular unrest, which
eventually led to the demise of Emperor Haile Selassie. An historical approach
to 'development aid' (Cullater, 2000) thus unearths the trajectories, continuities
and ruptures between past and present aid flows to African autocrats.

Autocratic modernities Finally, aid allocated to authoritarian governments in
the name of liberal internationalism is part and parcel of a modernity that
is concomitantly liberal and illiberal. Rather than conceiving of international
aid and its (neo-)liberal rhetoric of good governance, democracy and human
rights as being fundamentally at odds with autocratic politics in recipient
countries, what we see is the emergence of illiberal autocratic modernities in
recipient countries whose political elites effectively amalgamate authoritarian
politics with (neo-)liberal discourses emphasizing efficiency, effectiveness and
performance (see for example Jones, 2015). Illiberal democracies are thus not
pre-modern, outdated or on the road to perdition (Kagan, 2008). Rather,
they persist as an increasing number of 'competitive authoritarian' (Levitsky
& Way, 2010) regimes that have institutionalized selected elements of multi-
party democracy – namely elections – which are won by the ruling party.
Foreign aid may thus play a support role in generating, maintaining and
legitimizing contemporary illiberal African regimes that combine autocratic
rule with trappings of liberal democracy.

Case studies and contributions

The chapters in this book scrutinize donor motives for supporting authoritarian regimes in sub-Saharan Africa and the various, often negative, impacts created by foreign aid. Five of the seven chapters consist of country case studies that offer in-depth analyses of donor motives and development dynamics in authoritarian Rwanda, Uganda, Ethiopia, Cameroon, Angola and Mozambique. As is evident from this country list, with the exception of Angola these cases are all selected on the dependent variable, i.e. they all examine prominent recipient countries marked by the concomitance of important levels of foreign aid and domestic autocratic rule. This selection is deliberate and in line with the exploratory ambition of this book. We hope that future research into the aid and authoritarianism nexus will make use of more stringent cross-country comparisons that factor in variation of both aid levels and political regime type in recipient countries. While relatively few Africanists study foreign aid, considered as being 'non-African', many scholars who research foreign aid lack the kind of country-specific knowledge that results from long-term immersion. Although the contributors to this book employ different methodological and theoretical approaches, they are all country experts as well as long-time students of international development.

In Chapter 1, Rita Abrahamsen argues that the manner in which democracy is conceptualized in development discourse and democracy promotion has implications for the very practice of democracy. Among the consequences of development discourse's shifting conceptualization of democracy can be the support and maintenance of authoritarian practices, and in some cases even authoritarian regimes. Abrahamsen concludes that donor discourse that defines democracy as a means to another end, be it economic growth or security, inevitably risks undermining democracy as a value in itself. The diverse and often conflicting liaisons between aid and political regimes by both donors and recipients highlighted by Abrahamsen are very well illustrated and complicated by the six cases studies presented here. They all underscore a major thread of this book, namely that aid relations are influenced both by donor interests and priorities, and by recipients' agency and autonomy.

In Chapter 2, which focuses on Rwanda, Zoë Marriage challenges a core tenet of contemporary aid, namely that development, democracy and security reinforce each other. Conventional analysis assumes progressions towards liberal economy, democracy and peace, but Rwanda's recent history counters these assumptions. While economic and social indicators have shown impressive improvements, political opposition has been muted, and Rwanda's involvement in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has aggravated regional insecurity. Marriage addresses paradoxes of the ongoing aid relationship between donors and Rwanda. Hopes of donors that they could influence political governance through 'constructive engagement' have not materialized.

13

On the contrary, President Paul Kagame has been defiant in the face of donor demands, but this paradox is resolved by donors' acceptance of the Rwandan government's autocratic and violent behaviour as a central mechanism of the development indicators that donors demand.

Chapter 3 looks at Uganda, another (former) donor darling. David M. Anderson and Jonathan Fisher argue that Western donors not only offered muted or insignificant criticism of abuses by the Museveni regime, but also enhanced its capacity to do so by funding large parts of its budget, and by training and equipping its military and strengthening its security forces at home and abroad. The Ugandan government itself has played a pivotal role in fostering and maintaining this dispensation by capitalizing on major shifts in the international and regional contexts in order to 'securitize' its relations with donors and increasing international support for its military and security forces. The authors argue that by consenting to the gradual securitization of their relationship with the Museveni regime, donors have assisted in the creation of an increasingly militarized, illiberal state.

Chapter 4 focuses on Ethiopia, which has managed to attract an impressive amount of foreign aid, and has become one of the largest beneficiaries of ODA in sub-Saharan Africa in the past decade. While several explanations have been offered for this apparent paradox (e.g. the Ethiopian government's ability to manipulate international development discourse, donors' ignorance of local political dynamics, Western geopolitical priorities, the need of a showcase for the international aid industry), Emanuele Fantini and Luca Puddu highlight the historical continuities between foreign aid and authoritarian politics in Ethiopia, from the imperial to the current federal government. Using two case studies, one in the 1960s, the other in the 2000s, they demonstrate how high-modernist schemes carried out in the name of 'development' ordinarily work according to logics of exceptionality, circumventing the rule of law and thereby contributing to the authoritarian exercise of power. The two cases also show the internal plurality and contradictions among donors: rather than a homogeneous 'community', international donors operate in a competitive arena shaped by a multiplicity of actors, agendas and conflicting interests. This chapter also draws attention to the involvement of private contractors in implementing authoritarian development schemes.

Chapter 5 considers Cameroon, which, unlike some other countries discussed in this book, has not been a donor darling, as it was not seen as a model of political or economic reform. Apart from a brief period in the early 1990s, Cameroon has, however, benefited from constant financial and political support. When the USA and Germany reduced aid flows over concerns about the 1992 presidential elections, France increased its support. As Marie-Emmanuelle Pommerolle demonstrates, during the next two decades donors reached consensus on the 'acceptability of elections', endorsing the electoral

victories of Paul Biya, in power for over thirty years, and his Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM). The Biya regime has considerable political and economic leverage as Cameroon is not really dependent on donor funding. Pommerolle shows that, in an 'internationalized political field', donors interact with domestic political parties, state institutions and civil society actors. With regard to the running of elections in Cameroon, she finds that the latter are the results of political negotiations in which national actors and international donors need to safeguard 'credible' institutions to ensure the country's stability while abiding, even in contested ways, to international criteria of democratic credibility.

The comparison between Angola and Mozambique offered by Helena Pérez Niño and Philippe Le Billon in Chapter 6 is revealing for the way in which donors and recipients interact. Both countries have competitive authoritarian regimes, but there are important differences between the two long-standing regimes in terms of their economic and political power. Angola was never a significant aid recipient, and international actors have had very little leverage over the ruling People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). Mozambique for its part was already a darling of some Western donors during its wartime socialist period, and it remains one of the most aid-dependent countries on the continent. While the Angolan regime survived on the basis of patronage, co-option and disciplining mechanisms funded on natural-resource revenues, Pérez Niño and Le Billon argue that ODA has functionally sustained the ruling Mozambique Liberation Front's (Frelimo) undemocratic policies. Western donors' willingness to pick up a substantial share of social expenditure has provided a buffer that extended the dominance of Frelimo, protecting it from a popular backlash of its regressive fiscal, monetary, investment and natural-resource policies. They conclude that, if Angola exemplifies the advantages and pitfalls of restricted engagement with promoters of liberal peace-building, Mozambique represents the ambiguous effects of foreign aid on the 'political settlement' as the regime becomes more authoritarian.

In the conclusion, Nicolas van de Walle challenges the current academic and policy literature that promotes the idea of an authoritarian development advantage in Africa. He dissects donors' current 'democratic fatigue' in Africa by drawing attention to parallels with modernization theory of the mid-twentieth century, which provided an intellectual justification for authoritarian state-led development interventions. Van de Walle expounds the reasons for donors' endorsement of authoritarian African regimes, which reflect their disappointment with failed democratization on the continent as much as the aid industry's recent return to top-down expertise and centralized planning. He then confronts four sets of key claims made by the scholarly literature that advocates aiding authoritarian regimes in Africa, namely that multi-party elections are anathema to sound policy-making, that the relation between

states and capital is more important than political regime type, that the East Asian Developmental State model can be exported to Africa, and that good governance may delay economic growth driven by domestic rent seeking.

Taken together, our book highlights how donors increasingly abandoned their earlier commitment to democratic governance in recipient countries over the past decade in favour of a, once again, more technocratic approach to development that sits well with the authoritarian policies of a number of sub-Saharan African regimes. While withholding aid remains, at least in theory, a policy option for donors, the multiple agendas, interests and entanglements that link Western donors with a select number of African autocracies prove once more stronger, furthering development without democracy.

Notes

1 We are indebted to Lars Buur, Martin Doornbos, Rachel Hayman, Peter Kragelund and an anonymous reviewer for valuable comments on earlier versions of this chapter as well as to Caitriona Dowd and Lara Cockx for their help in statistical analysis. The idea for this book was sparked when the editors compared notes on how Rwanda and Ethiopia had both managed to attract mounting levels of donor support despite their shortcomings in terms of political governance and human rights. We explored the relation between foreign aid and authoritarian governments in Africa at a panel convened at the 5th European Conference on African Studies (ECAS) in Lisbon in June 2013. This introduction and three chapters of this book are revised versions of papers presented at this panel.

2 For instance, Afrobarometer (2015) found that African publics strongly support presidential term limits and resist leaders' attempts to extend their tenure.

3 http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/officialdevelopmentassistancedefinitionandcoverage.htm

4 On the global spread of authoritarianism and the current 'authoritarian resurgence', see the recent issues published by the *Journal of Democracy* (vol. 26, no. 2, 3).

5 A telling example with regard to Rwanda can be found in Uvin (2001).

More concretely on how the need for democratization in Rwanda was differently judged, see Silva-Leander (2008).

6 Their paper also explains why much of the previous large-N literature, which tended to focus on democratic governance, produced inconclusive results.

7 How aid impacts on domestic political governance also depends on its modalities of delivery. For instance, Gibson *et al.* (2015) argue that technical aid to African governments can be associated with increasing democratization.

8 The table excludes any country for which no political rights score was assigned, affecting all years pre-2011 in South Sudan, and two years (1990 and 1992) in Eritrea. At the time of writing, no ODA data for 2014 was available, meaning the final year group (2010–2013) is one year shorter than its comparison groups. For this reason, any observed decline in this final year group should be considered in light of the fact that the actual years are fewer, meaning we might expect a proportionate drop in aid corresponding to this. By contrast, an observed increase in this time period, in spite of the fact that this group contains fewer years, could be seen to indicate a greater increase.

9 A point shared by Bader and Faust, whose recent review paper concludes

16

that 'recipient behavior in authoritarian and semi-authoritarian settings still lacks sufficient academic attention' (Bader & Faust, 2014: 589).

10 We thank Lars Buur for this observation.

11 For example, when the US and other donors in 2013 cut military and other aid to Rwanda over a combination of Rwandan complicity in the violence in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and its assassinations of political opponents. Or when the British government decided to discontinue its support to the Ethiopian government's controversial Promotion of Basic Services (PBS) programme in the run-up to the May 2015 elections. We thank one of the reviewers for bringing this point to our attention.

References

Abbink, J & Hagmann, T (eds) (2012), *Reconfiguring Ethiopia. The politics of authoritarian reform*, Routledge, Abingdon.

Afrobarometer (2015), *African publics strongly support term limits, resist leaders' efforts to extend their tenure*, Afrobarometer, Dispatch No. 30, 25 May 2015.

Alesina, A & Dollar, D (2000), 'Who gives foreign aid to whom and why?', *Journal of Economic Growth*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 33–63.

Bader, J & Faust, J (2014), 'Foreign aid, democratization, and autocratic survival', *International Studies Review*, vol. 16, no. 4, pp. 575–95.

Barnett, M (2015), 'Accountability and global governance: the view from paternalism', *Regulation & Governance*, forthcoming, doi: 10.1111/rego.12083.

Bayart, JF (2000), 'Africa in the world: a history of extraversion', *African Affairs*, vol. 99, no. 395, pp. 217–67.

Borchgrevink, A (2008), 'Limits to donor influence: Ethiopia, aid and conditionality', *Forum for Development Studies*, vol. 35, no. 2, pp. 195–220.

Bräutigam, DA (2009). *The dragon's gift: the real story of China in Africa*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Bräutigam, DA & Knack, S (2004), 'Foreign aid, institutions and governance in sub-Saharan Africa', *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, vol. 52, no. 2, pp. 255–85.

Brown, S (2011), '"Well, what can you expect?": donor officials' apologetics for hybrid regimes in Africa', *Democratization*, vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 512–34.

Brown, S (2005), 'Foreign aid and democracy promotion: lessons from Africa', *European Journal of Development Research*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 179–98.

Brown, W (2013), 'Sovereignty matters: Africa, donors, and the aid relationship', *African Affairs*, vol. 112, no. 447, pp. 262–82.

Cooley, A (2015), 'Countering democratic norms', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 26, no. 3, pp. 49–63.

Cullater, N (2000), 'Development? Its History', *Diplomatic History*, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 641–53.

Del Biondo, K (2012), 'Norms, self-interest and effectiveness: explaining double standards in EU reactions to violations of democratic principles in sub-Saharan Africa', *Afrika-Focus*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 109–20.

Dreher, A, Nunnenkamp, P & Thiele, R (2011), 'Are "new" donors different? Comparing the allocation of bilateral aid between non DAC and DAC donor countries', *World Development*, vol. 39, no. 11, pp. 1950–68.

Dutta, N, Leeson, PT & Williamson, CR (2013), 'The amplification effect: foreign aid's impact on political institutions', *Kyklos*, vol. 66, no. 2, pp. 208–28.

Emmanuel, NG (2012), '"With a friend like this …": shielding Cameroon from democratization', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, vol. 48, no. 2, pp. 145–60.

Eyben, R (2013), 'Struggles in Paris: the

DAC and the purposes of development aid', *European Journal of Development Research*, vol. 25, no. 1, pp. 78–91.

Ferguson, J (1990), *The anti-politics machine: 'development', depoliticization, and bureaucratic power in Lesotho*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.

Feyissa, D (2011), 'Aid negotiation: the uneasy "partnership" between EPRDF and the donors', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, vol. 5, no. 4, pp. 788–817.

Fisher, J & Anderson, DM (2015), 'Authoritarianism and the securitization of development in Africa', *International Affairs*, vol. 91, no. 1, pp. 131–51.

Fuchs, A, Dreher, A & Nunnenkamp, P (2014), 'Determinants of donor generosity: a survey of the aid budget literature', *World Development*, vol. 56, no. 4, pp. 172–99.

Furtado, X & Smith, WJ (2009), 'Ethiopia: retaining sovereignty in aid relations', in L Whitfield (ed.), *The politics of aid. African strategies for dealing with donors*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 131–55.

Gibson, CC, Hoffman, BD & Jablonski, RS (2015), 'Did aid promote democracy in Africa? The role of technical assistance in Africa's transitions', *World Development*, vol. 68, no. 4, pp. 323–35.

Goldsmith, AA (2001), 'Foreign aid and statehood in Africa', *International Organization*, vol. 55, no. 1, pp. 123–48.

Grauvogel, J & von Soest, C (2013), *Claims to legitimacy matter: why sanctions fail to instigate democratization in authoritarian regimes*, GIGA, Hamburg, Working Paper No. 235.

Hariri, JG (2013), 'Foreign aided: why democratization brings growth when democracy does not', *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 45, no. 1, pp. 53–71.

Hout, W (2012), 'The anti-politics of development: donor agencies and the political economy of governance', *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 33, no. 3, pp. 405–22.

Hout, W (2010), 'Governance and the rhetoric of international development', Inaugural Address, Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam, 27 May 2010.

Jones, CW (2015), 'Seeing like an autocrat: liberal social engineering in an illiberal state', *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 24–41.

Jones, W, Soares de Oliveira, R & Verhoeven, H (2013), *Africa's illiberal state-builders*, University of Oxford, Refugee Studies Centre, Oxford, Working Paper Series No. 89.

Kagan, R (2008), 'The end of the end of history', *New Republic*, April 23.

Kelsall, T & Booth, D (2010), *Developmental patrimonialism? Questioning the orthodoxy on political governance and economic progress in Africa*, Africa Power and Politics Programme, London, APPP Working Paper No. 9.

Knack, S (2004), 'Does foreign aid promote democracy?', *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 48, no. 1, pp. 251–66.

Kono, DY & Montinola, GR (2009), 'Does foreign aid support autocrats, democrats, or both?', *Journal of Politics*, vol. 71, no. 2, pp. 704–18.

Kragelund, P (2008), 'The return of non-DAC donors to Africa: new prospects for African development?', *Development Policy Review*, vol. 26, no. 5, pp. 555–84.

Levitsky, S & Way LA (2010), *Competitive authoritarianism: hybrid regimes after the Cold War*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Li, TM (2007), *The will to improve: governmentality, development and the practice of politics*, Duke University Press, Durham and London.

Lynch, G & Crawford, G (2011), 'Democratization in Africa 1990-2010: an assessment', *Democratization*, vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 275–310.

Martens, B (2005), 'Why do aid agencies exist?', *Development Policy Review*, vol. 23, no. 6, pp. 643–63.

McVety, AK (2012), *Enlightened aid: U.S. development as foreign policy in Ethiopia*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Mosse, D (2005), *Cultivating development: an ethnography of aid policy and practice*, Pluto Press, London.

Neumann, IB (2012), *At home with the diplomats: inside a European foreign ministry*, Cornell University Press, New York.

Nielsen, RA (2013), 'Rewarding human rights? Selective aid sanctions against repressive states', *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 57, no. 4, pp. 791–803.

Olivier de Sardan, JP (2006), *Anthropology and development: understanding contemporary social change*, Zed Books, London.

Olsen, GR (1998), 'Europe and the promotion of democracy in post Cold War Africa: how serious is Europe and for what reason?', *African Affairs*, vol. 97, no. 388, pp. 343–67.

de Renzio, P (2006), 'Aid, budgets and accountability: a survey article', *Development Policy Review*, vol. 24, no. 6, pp. 627–45.

Resnick, D & van de Walle, N (2013a), 'Introduction: why aid and democracy? Why Africa?', in D Resnick & N van de Walle (eds), *Democratic trajectories in Africa. Unravelling the impact of foreign aid*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 1–27.

Resnick, D & van de Walle, N (2013b), 'Democratization in Africa: what role for external actors?', in D Resnick & N van de Walle (eds), *Democratic trajectories in Africa. Unravelling the impact of foreign aid*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 28–55.

Reyntjens, F (2013), *Political governance in post-genocide Rwanda*, Cambridge University Press, New York.

Riddell, RC (1999), 'The end of foreign aid to Africa? Concerns about donor policies', *African Affairs*, vol. 98, no. 392, pp. 309–35.

Schlichte, K (1998), 'La Françafrique – Postkolonialer Habitus und Klientelismus in der französischen Afrikapolitik', *Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 309–43.

Schraeder, PJ, Hook, SW & Taylor, B (1998), 'Clarifying the foreign aid puzzle: a comparison of American, Japanese, French and Swedish aid flows', *World Politics*, vol. 50, no. 2, pp. 294–323.

Sen, A (1999), *Development as freedom*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Silva-Leander, S (2008), 'On the danger and necessity of democratisation: trade-offs between short-term stability and long-term peace in post-genocide Rwanda', *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 29, no. 8, pp. 1601–620.

Stepputat, F & Larsen, J (2015), *Global political ethnography: a methodological approach to studying global policy regimes*, Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen, DIIS Working Paper 2015:1.

Uvin, P (2010), 'Structural causes, development co-operation and conflict prevention in Burundi and Rwanda', *Conflict, Security & Development*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 161–79.

Uvin, P (2001), 'Difficult choices in the new post-conflict agenda: the international community in Rwanda after the genocide', *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 177–89.

Wenar, L (2006), 'Accountability in international development aid', *Ethics and International Affairs*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 1–23.

Whitfield, L (2009), 'Aid and power: a comparative analysis of the country studies', in L Whitfield (ed.), *The politics of aid. African strategies for dealing with Donors*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 329–60.

Young, C (1999), 'The third wave of democratization in Africa: ambiguities and contradictions', in R Joseph (ed.), *State, conflict and democracy in Africa*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, CO, pp. 15–38.