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Still one size fits all? Uneven and combined development and African gatekeeper states

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Abstract

This paper critically evaluates 'one size fits all' characterisations of African states in the context of diverse change in Africa. It provides an original critique of Frederick Cooper's gatekeeper states concept based on a novel application of the theory of uneven and combined development. The theory draws attention to the unevenness of development across the international system, the production of multiple, combined forms of state and points to an expectation of heterogeneity among 'later developing' countries, questioning generalised characterisations of 'African' states as a *sui generis* category of state. The paper argues that Frederick Cooper's concept of the 'gatekeeper state' sits close to, though not entirely within, this pattern. This careful application of theory shows that while there are strong synergies between Cooper's empirical account of state formation and developmental processes highlighted by the theory, there is greater divergence over the question of heterogeneity. The paper argues that uneven and combined development helps to reveal the limits of 'one-size fits all' approaches and the potential for a broader theoretical grounding to Cooper's gatekeeper concept. In doing so it provides an important corrective to donor assumptions of general failings of African states and uniform policy prescriptions with which to address them.

Key words

Africa

Gatekeeper state

Uneven and Combined Development (U&CD)

International Relations

Frederick Cooper

Justin Rosenberg

Introduction[1]

This article presents an original critique of 'one size fits all' characterisations of African states in the context of rapid and diverse change in Africa. This is a significant issue because policy makers and international institutions often assume that 'all African states exemplify the same political system and the same political history…prone to political decay, incompetence and disintegration'.[1] This article tackles this question through a novel application of the theory of uneven and combined development to Cooper's notion of 'gatekeeper states'. Uneven and combined development (U&CD) is an approach to International Relations (IR) that emphasises the critical causal importance of 'the international' to processes of development and state formation. The theory draws attention to the unevenness of development across the international system, the production of multiple hybrid, or combined, forms of state, and to attempts to promote 'catch-up development' through, for example importing or emulating development in other societies. Importantly it suggests that we should expect heterogeneity rather than homogeneity among 'catch-up' or 'later developing' countries.

There is no shortage of analyses seeking to divine the character of, and diagnose the faults of, African states. From post-colonial critiques of neo-colonialism in the 1960s and 70s, to Jackson and Rosberg's identification of 'personal rule'[2], through to Bates' rent-seeking[3], analyses went on to questions of 'negative sovereignty'[4], 'extraversion'[5], 'bifurcated states'[6] and neo-patrimonialism, whether 'working'[7] or in 'decay'[8]. Despite significant differences, all these endeavours share two linked commitments: first, that the colonial era and its ending continues to shape the nature of the state in Africa; and second, that there is enough commonality to speak of generalisations about 'African' states almost as a *sui generis* category of state. The idea that all states in Africa share common characteristics has found ample reflection in policy, particularly among donors and international institutions. Here, *general* characterisations of African states are coupled to two further notions: that African states are deficient in some way that is particularly damaging to development prospects; and that a common set of liberal reforms to the political and legal make-up of the state and economic policy, are required for aid to 'work' and for development to prosper.[9]

Frederick Cooper's concept of the gatekeeper state sits close to if not entirely within this pattern.[10] His presentation of gatekeeper states is rooted in a rich historical narrative which emphasises the contingency of outcomes, dependent on 'the struggles that happened along the way'[11] and which draws strong continuities between the colonial era and the present. Cooper's emphasis on African agency and choice in shaping historical outcomes stands in sharp contrast to some of the more dismissive accounts of African politics and represents a distinctive take on African statehood. However, Cooper's account also shares a focus on the constraints within which such agency operates and how this plays out in relation to elite use of state revenue, institutional development, and the way that power is sought, secured and exercised. In addition, despite his emphasis on the fluidity and open-endedness of the processes surrounding independence, Cooper's account also emphasises strong commonalities among African states.

Three key arguments are presented in this article. First, though unconnected literatures, there are some interestingly strong commonalities between Cooper's empirical account of state formation in Africa and key developmental processes and outcomes highlighted by U&CD. Second, U&CD not only offers a potential international and social theoretical grounding for key elements of Cooper's account, it also helps to identify and provide an explanation of the international unevenness that frames African development. Third, however, U&CD points towards an expectation of heterogeneity among different national developmental trajectories, an outcome at odds with the gatekeeper state characterisation. This is particularly marked in the contemporary period where, even while gatekeeping behaviours continue, there are divergences between those states able to pursue some developmental objectives and those less able to do so. The picture we develop, of dynamic, varied change across Africa, makes a 'one-size fits all' diagnosis increasingly problematic for analysts and policy makers alike.

Gatekeeper states and uneven and combined development

This section provides a very brief introduction to both the gatekeeper state concept and U&CD, while the following section explores synergies between Cooper's account of gatekeeping and key processes highlighted by U&CD.

The gatekeeper state
Cooper's notion of the gatekeeper state is in many ways a beguiling idea. Though not formally theorised, it nevertheless informs much of the rich historical account presented in *Africa Since 1940*, providing the context within which Cooper traces the on-going developmental challenges in African countries. Interestingly, though it formed no explicit part of Cooper's following work[12] Cooper returned to the notion in his more recent *Africa in the World*, tracing the continuing negative effects of 'gatekeeping' in contemporary African states. Like many other accounts of African statehood, the roots of post-independence state structures lie in the colonial period when, in the absence of other options by which to sustain colonial rule, the gatekeeping state took form. As independence was won, African elites adopted rather than revolutionised the gatekeeping institutions, resulting in states hampered by their own limited inheritance:

> 'They had trouble collecting taxes except on imports and exports; they had trouble setting economic priorities and policies, except for the distribution of resources like oil revenues and customs receipts; they had trouble making the nation state into a symbol that inspired loyalty. What they could do was sit astride the interface between a territory and the rest of the world, collecting and distributing resources that derived from the gate itself; customs revenue and foreign aid; permits to do business in the territory; entry and exit visas; and permission to move currency in and out.'[13]

Cooper's conception of African states centres on control of the 'gate' as a focus of state revenue-raising and rent-seeking by state elites. However, the importance of gatekeeping for Cooper, also broadens out to other features of statehood and politics in Africa. The interface between the internal and external is not only the main source of state revenue but also the focus of states' capabilities and bureaucracy, limiting states' ability to project power or establish hegemony effectively. This in turn leads to the creation of vertical clientilistic ties lubricated by gatekeeper rents in order to bolster domestic support bases and reliance on

external recognition and support to consolidate rule. Limited economic development, and the focus of political power and opportunities for accumulation of wealth on a central point, also gave rise to damaging patterns of winner-takes all politics where those excluded from state power had few alternatives than to challenge for control of the state.[14] Fear of such opposition often led to authoritarian forms of politics and the use of rents accruing from control of the gate to secure political power, creating a reinforcing dynamic of weak economic and social development. In Cooper's work, the gatekeeper idea therefore describes a particular aspect of state development and elite behaviour but one which has much wider ramifications. Whether this justifies using 'gatekeeping' to characterise the state as a whole, is discussed later.

Uneven and combined development
Uneven and combined development is an emerging approach within International Relations whose origins lie in the writings of Leon Trotsky but which has received a contemporary exposition and considerable elaboration from Justin Rosenberg and his varied interlocutors[15]. Rosenberg's exposition of the theory begins with a series of 'transhistorical' claims about the nature of development and its relationship to the international. In any historical period, it claims, social development is uneven and multiple: 'at any given historical point, the human world has comprised a variety of societies, of differing sizes, cultural forms and levels of material development'.[16] Moreover, these unevenly developed societies co-exist and interact with one another in an active way: '… it is not just that societies coexist in some passive way, but rather that 'diplomacy' – in the broadest sense of the negotiated management of inter-societal relations – has been an institutionalised feature of just about every type (or case) of society'.[17] Such interaction occurs across a range of social fields, or what Buzan and Little[18] call the different 'sectors' of the international system: the political, military, economic and socio-cultural[19].

Perhaps the key dynamic highlighted by the theory is how any given society responds to and adapts to changes external to it, what Trotsky termed 'the whip of external necessity', while also maintaining internal authority and control. Those external changes might be the industrialisation of rival states, the arrival of imperial powers, military threats or potential alliances, or new economic competition or opportunities. However, because of the unevenness of development across the international system, societies facing such external pressures and constraints also draw on technologies, ideas, institutions and finance from outside of their own resources, utilising what Trotsky termed 'the privilege of historic backwardness'[20], to alter and accelerate their own development process. These external threats, opportunities and the 'national' responses to them should be seen as central causal factors in the developmental path of any individual society, internalising the 'international'. Moreover, because each 'national' process of development is therefore intimately connected to and an integral part of the wider international system, social development as a whole, seen across the international system, is itself a 'combination' of all the interactive, multilinear and uneven processes of development.

The theory is distinctive in how it poses the relationship between international relations and development and as such has considerable potential for both IR and development studies and the relationship between the two.[21] A key part of this is that it makes 'the international' – 'that dimension of social reality which arises specifically from the coexistence within it of

more than one society' – internal to how we understand development over time.[22] Societal multiplicity and unevenness, manifested in the different 'national' levels and pathways of development, is integrated into theory as a *causal factor* shaping the path of development within particular societies. In this it can claim to be distinct from national ('internalist') explanations of social development[23] and from 'externalist' approaches such as dependency theory, as well as other approaches in IR/IPE[24]. Likewise, while much of development studies touches on relevant processes such as emulation, incorporation, amalgamation and hybridisation, they don't get much of a *theoretical* presence. Even in modelling developmental states, external political and economic relations are 'additional factors' that 'need to be added'.[25]

Rosenberg's development of the theory makes some very general historical claims but also draws attention to a number of key features of developmental processes. In the next section, we go through three of these highlighting some interesting synergies between them and Cooper's account of Africa's gatekeeper states. Doing so allows us to see how U&CD can give Cooper's empirical account a more theoretical grounding in IR, one that situates the emergence of gatekeeper states in a wider account of the processes of development and a context of global unevenness. However, in the subsequent section we will also see some of the limitations of the gatekeeper state concept, at least as it has been developed thus far, in handling the divergent developmental trajectories between African states.

Combination, active importation and interventionism

This section deals with three propositions about developmental processes highlighted by U&CD: all development is a process of combination leading to hybridisation; states will actively import components of development to 'leapfrog' stages of development; and later developing states will tend towards interventionism and authoritarianism. In taking each in turn we can show not only how Cooper's account provides empirical evidence for these processes in the African context, but also how U&CD can provide a broader theoretical grounding for an understanding of African state formation.

Combined development results in hybridisation
Uneven and combined development argues that in responding to external changes and internal challenges, any given society invariably embodies within its development elements from outside that society, whether they be new technologies, forms of politics, organisational or institutional forms or new ideas about science, politics or culture. Such incorporation of elements from other societies into any particular society's development may be a voluntary act (state elites or business leaders, promoting the adoption of a new, foreign technology), done as a product of asymmetric interdependence (such as trade-offs of policy reform in exchange for financial resources as seen in aid bargains) or through more forcible means (such as imperialism or colonial conquest). Unlike most other theories of development, this is posited as a *general* feature of all social development, including the rise of the West itself.[26]

Each society in the international system can therefore be viewed as an amalgam or hybrid – a combined product – of processes of internal development and external interaction containing within it elements deriving from outside any 'indigenous' socio-cultural entity.[27] We should

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therefore expect to find in any individual state, fusions of old and new: pre-existing aspects of society are combined with the new imports; some sectors leap ahead while existing forms of production remain, older relationships between rulers and ruled are combined with newer modes of politics. No society can therefore be regarded as original or pure but as an amalgam that evolves over time comprising combinations of internal and external drivers of change.

Though a general feature of development anywhere, the focus on its combined character and hybridity of state and social forms is particularly useful in understanding modern African development. On the one hand it draws our attention to many shared external factors, arising from the global unevenness of development, that have historically shaped the continent's development, of which colonialism and the need to interact with the industrialised powers are central defining ones (and provides a theoretically-informed explanation of that framing condition).[28] On the other hand it also allows for an understanding of the different ways this has interacted with a range of national conditions producing a variety of individual cases.

In Cooper's account, combination is most clearly expressed in his general insistence that African and European history cannot be seen as distinct entities but as deeply entwined with each other. For Cooper, when looking at the interaction of Europe and Africa we are not engaging with neatly bounded entities but also seeing how:

>'the world in which both regions came to be defined was produced, via the uneven, power-laden forms of connection. Africa's economic present is a co-creation, emerging out of long-term interactions among non-equivalent political and economic structures.'[29].

Such co-productions for Cooper included novel forms of production and property and labour relations such as in cocoa farming in West Africa[30] or in the migrant labour schemes in southern Africa.[31] They were also expressed, for Cooper, in the nationalist movements that led Africa to independence including the weaving together of African and western ideas in pan-Africanism, négritude, the nascent notions of citizenship that emerged in the inter-war years,[32] and in the variety of religious movements that combined externally-introduced Christian beliefs with various re-imaginings of African traditions.[33] Indeed, African political leaders adapted many of the modernising strategies of the late colonial period in their own campaigns for national modernization.

We also have an idea of the state itself as a hybrid product of combined development: 'Gatekeeper states are thus not "African" institutions, nor are they "European" impositions; they emerged out of a peculiar Euro-African history'.[34] Indeed, the very fact that the colonial and post-colonial states were so focussed on managing the 'gate' owed much to the way in which European control of the continent unfolded and what the leaders of independent Africa did with that inheritance. In an account that has echoes of Mamdani's[35] description of the 'failure' of the European civilising mission, Cooper claimed that:

>'The British conception of "indirect rule" and the French idea of "association", both emphasized in the 1920s, were attempts to put a positive light on the colonial failure to remake African societies and to confine politics to tribal cages.'[36]

That is, having embarked on their respective missions into Africa, the European powers were confronted with the need to rule over their extensive and diverse acquisitions. Lacking the political and military means to carry forward the civilising mission (other than in a limited

sense of interventions to curb continuing practices of slavery) the Europeans fell back on arms-length governance of the African interior. The colonial gatekeeper state was the result.

Social and economic change – increasing urbanisation, political organisation and labour activism – all helped to undermine the fragile construction that was indirect rule. In the wake of strikes and revolts in colonies in Africa and the Caribbean in the 1930s and 40s, and the additional pressures created by the Second World War, British and French policy shifted in a renewed effort to regain control with the British Colonial Development and Welfare Act 1940, the French Investment Fund for Economic and Social Development of 1946 and the *loi cadre* in French West Africa in 1956 all intended to put a developmental impetus into colonial rule. Within this, various forms of representation and nascent forms of citizenship were conceded within the colonial gatekeeper state, albeit while continuing attempts to stabilise the rural-urban divide[37], an approach that reached its zenith (or nadir) in South Africa.[38] As Cooper argues, the elites who took power at independence worked with this inheritance, relying on receipts from the gate to retain power. But independence brought with it new external flows of financial resources in the form of aid as well as military support. New combinations unfolded – independence tied those in state power and in the offices of the bureaucracy into new networks with the wider society, something that was very different from the social and political ties that bound colonial officials and rulers.[39]

U&CD therefore allows us to see Cooper's gatekeeper states a particular African example of a more general phenomenon – as hybrid products of combined development. They are African and European, fusing elements of modern statehood with a range of different forms of political community and authority existing, or being brought into being, through colonisation.[40] The gatekeeper states, both under colonialism and afterwards, were products of this history of interaction rather than expressions of essential and unchanging African cultures. The contemporary policy corollary of all this is also important: 'African problems' for Cooper are in fact Euro-Afro-American co-productions with implications for how we think of responsibility for addressing them.[41]

Actively importing components of development to 'leapfrog' stages of development
Although processes of combination can be driven from 'below' through diffuse processes of international interaction, they are also driven forward by state elites responding to external threats and opportunities. In the modern capitalist era, such active importation has become a key element of catch-up development whether one is talking about railways in India, iron production in Germany, liberal political and economic reforms in Africa in the post-1980 period or the influence of the so-called 'Beijing consensus' more recently.

One of the advantages of being able to import technologies, forms of organisation and ideas from more developed societies is that catch-up economies can 'leapfrog' stages of development and adopt leading-edge technology. For example, while modern industry took a long time to develop and emerge in its original British heartlands, modern production methods can be imported into today's industrialising societies ready-formed. This gives catch-up economies, in Trotsky's view, a 'privilege of historical backwardness', accelerating their developmental trajectory. It is in fact a widely recognised feature of development, classically in Gerschenkron's analysis[42] but also in more recent debates on Africa including UNECA's promotion of green technology and President Obama's claim Africa could 'skip

certain stages of development'.[43] U&CD gives this empirical recognition a theoretical grounding residing in the general temporal and spatial unevenness of development as a whole.[44]

Following independence, Cooper argues, African elites had two main aims – to 'build something' and to remain in power. And African elites, including those who utilised rhetoric of 'African tradition', imported a great deal from outside in pursuit of both. African rulers from Nkrumah onwards sought to kick-start industrialisation, supported from the outside by external agencies like the World Bank. As Cooper's account of the 1960-80 period shows, this included utilisation of resources, technologies and ideas from outside including dams, power plants, factories, aid, military hardware, know-how, and ideas and techniques for planning development and running economies.[45] Nor were all such efforts unsuccessful: from 1965-73 industry expanded twice as fast as GDP and though mining dominated, manufacturing grew at 7 per cent per year 1960-80.[46] The use of external resources also enabled many African countries to expand state social expenditure leading to improvements in life expectancy, child mortality rates, education and literacy.[47]

But Cooper also emphasizes that attempts to 'build something' were undermined by the other priority – staying in power – and the limitations of state capacity:

> 'They had trouble collecting taxes except on imports and exports; they had trouble setting economic priorities and policies, except for the distribution of resources like oil revenues and customs receipts; they had trouble making the nation state into a symbol that inspired loyalty.' [48]

By the 1980s, as cross-border flows declined, a new kind of more coercive import took over, in the form of structural adjustment and liberalisation.

State interventionism and authoritarianism

Neoliberals excepted, many analysts argue that some form of state intervention, guiding industrialisation, is important: 'Latecomers … face a number of competitive disadvantages which can hardly be overcome without pro-active government action'.[49] Whether authoritarianism is necessary for late industrialisers is a different matter, though the huge social stresses entailed in the process of industrialisation – what Alice Amsden called 'thunderous social change'[50] – could be seen to militate in this direction, a point borne out by many twentieth century examples of industrialisation.

U&CD locates this tendency within its conceptualisation of the tensions arising from catch-up development. In responding to competitive challenges or opportunities from without, states as active agents in driving change, have necessarily been interventionist. However, internal unevenness resulting from the combination of new and old forms of production, social classes, political organisation and authority often create unstable and politically-volatile situations. The absence of the middle classes and civil society who might provide political grounding for industrialisation creates additional vulnerability to regimes pursuing catch-up development. Combinations of modern statehood and capitalist social relations on the one hand with non-capitalist social relations and particular local 'traditions' on the other mean that authoritarian forms of politics often arise as a means of maintaining order.

Cooper's account again gives us an empirical recognition of this in the African context. In seeking to 'build something' and 'remain in power', African states were interventionist and authoritarian. The priority of maintaining order shaped much that the colonial state did and drove the reliance on indirect rule in the early part of the 20th century. The need to maintain order became even more pressing in the wake of the First World War when Africans who had served in the war began acting 'like citizens', demanding welfare and pensions because of their contributions to the war effort.[51] What followed was something of a rear-guard action by colonial states to limit urbanisation and keep 'African ambition' corralled into 'tribal cages' and, in the context of demands of financial self-sufficiency, to keep the colonial state afloat by raising revenue from international transactions.

With independence, this unsatisfactory mix of weak institutional development, limited economic transformation and pressures from African activists from below framed and constrained the new states. Yet many rulers adopted similar strategies as used by the colonial state.[52] With the end of colonialism, the gatekeepers had to maintain their hold on power and independence added the need to weave patron-client relations within the state.[53] Some of this had already begun before independence. As Allen argued, the ministries that were transferred to African control before independence were often spending ministries, allowing those who had gained positions within the state to extend and consolidate their support bases through distributing state resources.[54] Limited internal political development and the hurried use of elections in the final years of colonialism and in the process of granting independence accelerated the need to construct vertical ties between officials – the new 'political class'[55] – and supporters, bequeathing a reliance on clientilist forms of politics.[56]

Regime survival also rested on external recognition and the resources that came with it. The emphasis then prevalent on state planning was useful for African governments wary of independent domestic power-bases such as farmers or labour unions.[57] Having targeted the unfair pricing practices of marketing boards during the campaigns for independence, they then kept them in place in order to try to generate resources from agriculture to fuel industrialisation.[58] And yet, having trouble projecting power inwards[59] they instead sought to use those interventions – 'collecting and distributing resources that derived from the gate itself' – to sustain political support.[60]

In the African context therefore, a particular form of interventionism – gatekeeping – was entwined with a series of broader authoritarian state practices. However, the particular combinations of authoritarianism and interventionism had different impacts in different contexts. Though in many places the reliance on clientilistic ties and repression led to damaging forms of politics, there were also developmental achievements, as Cooper notes. It is to this question of the heterogeneity of developmental outcomes that we now turn.

Heterogeneity and contemporary African development

For Rosenberg (and for Trotsky) combination and the political tendencies of later development don't result in homogenisation of the different states and societies within the international system as a whole. In any given society, importing technologies or ideas from outside removes them from their original socio-cultural context and brings them into contact

with a different socio-cultural setting. They are thereby combined with the new context and result in something new be it forms of state, ways to organise and regulate the economy, norms or cultural creations. In a famous phrase, criticising Marx's claim that 'The country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future'[61], Trotsky responded, 'England in her day revealed the future of France, considerably less of Germany, but not in the least of Russia and not of India'.[62]

'Catch-up' development therefore exhibits a constantly unfolding process of creating new developmental paths which in turn then change the context for those other societies that coexist with them. Seen from the perspective of the international system as a whole, U&CD thus presents us with an expectation of seeing multilinear, divergent developmental experiences and heterogeneous forms of state.

Cooper and heterogeneity
As we have seen, Cooper's account of African development and politics highlights well key processes contained within U&CD. The theory's prediction of heterogeneity, however, sits less comfortably with Cooper's gatekeeper state concept. This is not because Cooper rejects the idea of heterogeneity empirically, quite the opposite. Rather, it is that the under-specification of the concept of gatekeeper states makes it difficult to identify different trajectories among African states.

As noted earlier, characterising Cooper's account as a 'one size fits all' approach would be an overstatement. Not only does Cooper state that Africa is characterised by 'vast differences'[63] but illustrates this in the rich historical detail in his work. Cooper was also aware of the variety of outcomes that combined development could lead to – import 'European' political ideas into a new setting and they will produce a different outcome than in Europe:

> 'It may be that the ballot box is a "European" institution, but that does not mean that the way it is used in Ghana has the same meaning and consequences as the way it is used in Switzerland'.[64]

Even within Africa, Cooper notes, the introduction of elections under colonialism had markedly different impacts. In places such as such as Gabon and French Congo, where elections were held with little pre-existing political mobilisation, politics took on a more ethnicised logic than in places such as Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal, where there were already political parties and 'horizontal' institutions like trade unions.[65]

Nevertheless, Cooper's awareness of variation within Africa is never cashed in conceptually. In surveying the contemporary period, Cooper doesn't identify clear examples of states that have escaped 'gatekeeper' status.[66] Perhaps Cooper notes, South Africa is one example, where citizens can accrue wealth without controlling the gate and where organisations promoting social progress, independent from the state, exist.[67] Yet even here other commentators see the rise of gatekeeping rather than its transcendence.[68] For all his commendable emphasis on contingency and agency, therefore, the gatekeeper characterisation remains a defining feature of African states in general.[69]

Yet the scale of contemporary change in Africa asks us to asses how far this is the case: has external change lessened or consolidated gatekeeping practices? Is gatekeeping still trapping all African states in the negative dynamic Cooper identified? And what signs are there of

strategies alongside or instead of gatekeeping that are impacting on development prospects? These aren't questions that are easily answerable within the gatekeeper concept itself. However, we can begin to address them utilising analytical steps internal to U&CD: a changed external environment confronting African development; the national responses to those changes; and the new, heterogeneous processes of combined development that are resulting.

A changed external environment
The past decade and a half have seen dramatic changes in Africa, perhaps nowhere more so than in the continent's growth rates. In contrast to the adjustment years, the 21st century saw an overall resurgence of growth in sub-Saharan Africa, averaging around 5 per cent in 2000-2010 with some countries experiencing high growth over virtually the entire period. As many have pointed out, this average masks a number of differences between different national economies with variations along a number of different variables. Typically, this resurgence of growth in Africa is associated with one of two major external changes: improvements in governance driven forward by aid donors, or the impact of the rise of China and other developing countries and the boost they have given to the demand for and price of commodities. Where the former is seen to lead to a decline in gatekeeping as opportunities for rent-seeking are curtailed by governance reforms, the latter is seen to reinforce gatekeeping. Both of these are overly simplistic.

The first claim, that African growth is associated with (or caused by) liberal governance reforms, draws on a number of indicators including improvements in governance, transparency, the ease of doing business, low inflation and lower budget deficits.[70] Such reforms, it is argued, have addressed the key faults of gatekeeper states and created the kind of business climate needed to attract investment and stimulate growth.[71] However, this account overstates the extent of liberal reform. Just as scholars (in Coopers' words, 'who like their colonialism very colonial'[72]) often over-estimated the power of colonial authorities to shape outcomes in Africa, so too, analyses of aid relationships overstate the power of donors to achieve desired reforms. A series of studies have emphasised the agency of recipient states in resisting pressure for reform[73]; the misapplication of pressure by donors[74]; the contradictions within underlying 'donor support rationale' structures and African states' ability to manipulate those[75]; and the limitations of attempts by donors to use aid to achieve political reform.[76]

The second claim, that African growth stems from the rise of fast-growing developing economies, draws attention to the latest phase of global uneven development and its impact on Africa through stimulating exports and investment in Africa by 'rising powers'.[77] This has certainly affected the strategic calculations and economic opportunities of many African states. However, some critical observers argue that a key impact has been to entrench existing elites in resource-dependent states, to limit the influence of liberal donors and to limit industrialisation efforts (or de-industrialise) African economies. As a result they have exacerbated the reliance of African regimes on rents from precisely the sources Cooper identified – trade in commodities and financial inflows.[78]

The effects of growth are also mixed. Past and current 'growth spurts' have all led to institutional change as state revenue bases change[79] and the claimed growth of an 'African

middle class' and its associated consumption expenditure[80] has led to some far-reaching claims about wider developmental changes.[81] The different interests of new powers add to divergent outcomes on the continent.[82] On the other hand, the dominant view is that *thus far*, economic growth in Africa has shown little evidence of underlying structural change[83]. In its study of industrial policy in Africa the UNECA noted: 'Structural transformation in Africa has been limited, and in particular has resulted in essentially no productivity growth through the expansion of manufacturing'.[84]

The impact of recent growth in Africa is therefore uneven and differentiated and neither a simple case of liberal change, nor of a continued resource dependency and gatekeeping. Differences in states' insertions into the international system, and variation in the policy and strategic responses of African elites have led to new and heterogeneous pathways of combined development.

National responses to 'external necessity'
As we have seen, U&CD emphasises the agency of later developing countries in responding to external threats and opportunities and active importation of technologies and resources. The extent to which these have altered developmental strategies, and whether these are leading to a decline or otherwise of gatekeeping, is a key question. For many states, contemporary changes have resulted in a manoeuvring between the twin impacts of donor policy and new sources of revenue. For some states, even small amounts of aid from the likes of India, China and Brazil provides more policy 'space', an example being Zambia's attempt to resist western pressures to increase privatisation.[85] Others such as Ethiopia and Angola have been able to avoid the loss of policy autonomy found in more 'liberalised' states such as Mozambique.[86]

Other states have sought to import components of development *strategy* itself, seeking to 'learn from abroad'. In her study of policy emulation in east Africa, Elsje Fourie examines the ways in which Kenya has sought to learn and adapt lessons from Malaysian and Singaporean development and argues against a simple dichotomy of 'indigenous' or 'externally-imposed' policy choices.[87] Instead, policy elites in Africa seek to emulate and adapt strategies and techniques in a process that is not reducible to a monolithic idea of a 'Beijing consensus'. Through such 'learning from abroad' Kenya seeks to accelerate its development trajectory, joining the ranks of East Asian success stories, or as one member of the Kenyan policy elite put it 'give me ten years, I will give you South Korea'.[88] Similarly in Ethiopia, there are active programmes of overseas training and research into policies that might be translated into the Ethiopian context.[89] These initiatives embody key processes of combined dvelopment, producing new outcomes: 'Whatever emerges from Kenyan emulation of East Asia' Fourie notes, 'will surely be a hybrid of actual East Asian development trajectories, Kenyan perceptions of those trajectories and material constraints on those perceptions'.[90]

Other national responses to change have focussed on the development of industrial strategy, even where gatekeeping practices continue. Tim Kelsall and his colleagues argue that: 'there is no shortage of evidence that neo-patrimonialism, or at least its associated phenomena of big-man politics, clientilism, corruption, and rent-seeking, is widespread on the continent'.[91] This accords with other literatures on developmentalism which emphasises the difficulties of

establishing effective industrial policy in underdeveloped economies.[92] Nevertheless, Kelsall et al argue that in some circumstances developmentalism can emerge within or alongside neo-patrimonial systems, a key issue being how rent-seeking is organised. In states where there is centralised control of rents and long-term rent management, then developmentalism, including effective industrial policy, can be achieved despite the continuation of neo-patrimonialism.[93] Notably, given the emphasis of U&CD on the authoritarian tendencies of later development, such political features are often accompanied by strong presidential leadership, constrained democracy, top-down patron-client relations and confident and competent economic technocracies.[94]

The examples identified by this research are Ethiopia and Rwanda, both of whom combined strong leadership, constrained democracy and efficient bureaucracy with long-term plans for transformation. In Ethiopia, political repression, curtailment of internal ruling party disputes and continuing state control of significant aspects of the economy were accompanied by efforts to insulate agencies overseeing industrial policy from political interference, and improvements in the civil service involving the use of merit- and results-based principles for appointments and advancement.[95] Yet despite continuing 'gatekeeper' practices such as personal patronage and clientilism, the state has not shown the kind of rampant personal enrichment of elites found elsewhere.[96] According to Alemu and Scoones[97] Ethiopia shows considerable bureaucratic capacity and use of its geostrategic positioning and south-south alliances to negotiate with external actors. It has been 'highly successful in mobilising, channelling and focussing external aid and investment towards developmental ends' avoiding the worst of the political distortion and corruption seen in some other countries'.[98] Echoing the emphasis of U&CD on the tendencies towards authoritarianism, Kelsall et al argue that 'it is unclear whether a more liberal regime could even survive, let alone preside over levels of social and economic progress which Ethiopia is apparently witnessing.'.[99] 'In current African conditions' they go on, 'highly competitive multiparty democracy tends to amplify clientilist demands, and make long-horizon rent centralization practically impossible'. [100]

In Rwanda's case, a combination of limited electoral competition and a close relationship between the ruling party and its wholly owned Tri-Star/CVL holding company has been key. The latter supplies the party with its own source of income, relieving officials of the need for corrupt practices to finance elections and allowing it to be tough on internal discipline.[101] For both Rwanda and Ethiopia, they conclude, 'there is little evidence to date to suggest that industrial policy initiatives have fallen prey to the kinds of unproductive rent-seeking the conventional wisdom associates with neo-patrimonial states'.[102] It's also worth noting that both Ethiopia and Rwanda are examples of 'liberation states' – that is states formed out of the military overthrow of previous African regimes. Such states, as Dorman notes, enjoy (at least in the early phase of their rule) a level of autonomy from societal actors, dominance over society and secure hegemony meaning that access to spoils is both centralised and controlled.[103]

Heterogeneity and combined development
As we have seen, U&CD suggests that because of multiple process of combination and differing national developmental histories, heterogeneity should be an expected outcome of development even within a particular geographic region. The ways in which politics is organised in different states and the extent to which some states are demonstrating

developmental practices that diverge from the gatekeeper characterisation – or in the case of South Africa states that seem to be adopting more gatekeeping practices[104] – also therefore differs greatly across the continent. Add to this the existence or not of conflict or democratisation and the picture of contemporary African statehood becomes even more varied. Even among those seen as in some senses 'developmental' – Kenya, Ethiopia and Rwanda – there are important differences both in the ways in which politics is organised internally as well as the preceding history of capitalist development in each country.

There is even divergence among states that arguably still lie more fully within the 'gatekeeping' mould. Some have continued to rely on well-established sources of rents (oil in Nigeria or Angola, diamonds in Botswana). Others have been forced to adapt their gatekeeping strategies, an example being Eritrea where declining export earnings, aid and foreign investment, has prompted the state to find new sources of revenue. Here, a key strategy has been to extract rents from the growing Eritrean diaspora as war, economic crisis and state repression prompts new waves of legal and illegal emigration.[105] Yet, as Poole notes, 'rather than being dismantled by the flight of its citizens, [the state] has been sustained via new strategies of gatekeeping'.[106] As a result, remittances make up a large proportion of Eritrea's GDP and have become the focus of state gatekeeping activity including directly tax the incomes of Eritreans abroad, enforced through various threats to emigrants' families.[107] Thus while the nature of the interface between the internal and external is changing, control of the gate remains key. However, somewhat in contrast to Cooper's portrayal of gatekeeper states as internally weak, the Eritrean state exercises quite far-reaching control of its citizens.[108]

The multiple impacts of new international drivers of development, the different ways in which different African states have reacted to those drivers, and the legacies of previous histories of development, have produced diverse combinations within Africa. These include modern bureaucracies (or modern components within bureaucracies), sometimes encouraged by donor governance reforms, combining with dominant parties or 'big man' politics; multiparty systems existing alongside authoritarianism and clientelism; East Asian-inspired industrial policy alongside continued gatekeeping practices; and 'islands' of export-production and manufacturing amid un- or semi-transformed rural sectors. While an understanding of the changing practices of gatekeeping, and its erosion or consolidation is an important part of the picture, U&CD allows us to situate that within a broader understanding of the international dynamics and heterogeneous products of developmental processes.

Conclusion

Cooper's idea of the gatekeeper state is engaging precisely because it directs our attention at the intersection of the national and international and demands that we understand those evolving linkages and how they shape the formation and direction of statehood, politics and development. Cooper's conception of gatekeeper states exhibits some strong synergies with developmental processes and outcomes highlighted by the theory of U&CD. However, while Cooper's account empirically acknowledges variation within Africa, the gatekeeper concept as it has been developed thus far is less adept at identifying heterogeneity in statehood either in the years after independence or in the contemporary period. To do this requires a greater

specification of state forms and actions than is currently given in literature on gatekeeper states, though some of that is emerging. The need to account for heterogeneity is particularly marked in looking at contemporary changes within Africa where there is some evidence that even while aspects of gatekeeping remain firmly in place (clientilism, rent seeking and neo-patrimonialism) there is also evidence of longer-term developmental endeavour. These include new efforts to import components of development from outside (such as the emulation of Asian developmental successes) and their combination with existing national conditions, as well as interventionism and authoritarianism. Over and above the much-commented on and varied growth performance of African economies, therefore, these processes may lead to renewed heterogeneity among African states.

The policy implications of all this for donors are important. First, it brings into question the claim that recent African growth owes much to the 'one size fits all' liberalising reforms of economic policy and governance promoted by donors, a point made in more recent work by Cooper himself.[109] In fact the African states showing clearest evidence of sustained developmentalism diverge from the path advised by donors in significant ways. Second, it presents donors who promote both economic and political liberalisation with the quandary that success in one field (economic growth and structural transformation) may come with limits on the other (continued authoritarianism). Finally, while donors navigate those two issues they will also have to develop more sophisticated country knowledge and greater nuance in dealing with the African actors – states, elites, businesspeople, citizens – they are hoping to influence.[110]

Finally, this paper has utilised propositions drawn from U&CD to frame the investigation of developmental change in Africa. The theory is useful in this because it draws our attention to aspects of development such as combination and hybridity, policy emulation, interventionism and heterogeneity in a way that integrates them into a generalised understanding of the inter-relations between development and international relations. It therefore offers a potential theoretical grounding for a number of key elements of Cooper's account of African politics and development whilst also providing a means to situate this within a broader account of the global unevenness that frames Africa's development now and in the past.

Central to this, and something Cooper would presumably have some sympathy with – is the emphasis on the combination of internal social change with external relations, that is, the role of 'the international' in social development. Rather than bringing this in as a contingent factor (as is arguably the case with the gatekeeper state concept) U&CD sees as *internal* to any explanation of state formation and development these myriad multilinear, interactive and above all international processes. By its emphasis on the combined production of heterogeneity across the international system, U&CD also helps us to see beyond 'thinking of Africa as peculiar and other places as normal' as Cooper put it.[111] From the perspective of U&CD, to some extent, everywhere is peculiar and heterogeneity is normal.

It also enables us to attend to Cooper's on-going concern to emphasise the co-production and co-responsibility of those inside and outside the continent in addressing and shaping Africa's developmental future. 'The patterns we often see' Cooper wrote, 'do not necessarily have the solidity we think they possess. They were born of contingent and contested political

processes…'. We need to remember, he went on, that 'the possibilities for the future…are multiple'.[112]

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1 Allen, 'Understanding African Politics', 302.

2 Jackson and Rosberg, *Personal Rule.*

3 Bates, *Markets and States.*

4 Jackson, *Quasi States.*

5 Bayart, *The State in Africa.*

6 Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject.*

7 Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works.*

8 Young, 'The End of the post-Colonial State in Africa'.

9 Booth, 'Development as a Collective Action Problem', 3.

10 Cooper, *Africa Since 1940;* Cooper, *Africa in the World.*

11 To paraphrase Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject.*

12 Cooper, *Colonialism in Question.*

13 Cooper, *Africa Since 1940,* 156-7.

14 *Ibid.,*159.

15 Some key sources in this expanding literature are: Rosenberg, 'Isaac Deutscher and the lost history', 'Globalization Theory: A post-mortem', 'Why is there no international historical sociology', 'International Relations – the "Higher bullshit"', 'The "philosophical premises', 'Kenneth Waltz and Leon Trotsky'; as well as various critiques such as: Allinson and Anievas, 'The uses and misuses'; Anievas and Matin, *Historical Sociology and World History*; Anievas and Nisancioglu *How the West Came to Rule*; Ashman 'Capitalism, uneven and combined development'; Hobson, 'What's at stake'; Rosenberg and Callinicos, 'Uneven and combined development'. The theory has prompted a series of related debates that cannot be addressed within this article.

16 Rosenberg, 'Why is there no international historical sociology', 313.

17 *Ibid.*, 320.

18 Buzan and Little, *International Systems,* 320.

19 [*Note to editors: this is in response to Reviewer 2's comment – it's a big issue but one I have to deal with very briefly. I have inserted it as a footnote but it could be a standalone paragraph in the main text where the footnote appears if that would be preferable*].
In the theory, the term 'society' is used to refer to the key units of the international system and the theory has something to say about social relations and societal actors, and the social structure as a whole, within each of the units as well as the development of state-society relations, the character of state institutions and the behavior of state elites. Within the modern era, the uneven and combined development takes the borders/boundaries of each society to be those of the nation state and, notwithstanding debates about the appropriateness of this in modern Africa (though see Brown,'Africa and international relations theory' and 'Sovereignty Matters'), and whether alternative terms such as 'polity' might be preferable, this is the approach taken in this article.

20 'Backwardness' here is used to denote a chronological condition – developing later than others – rather than in a more perjorative sense.

21 Explored in a small way in Brown, 'Reconsidering the aid relationship'; Brown and Hanlin, 'Introducing international development'.

22 Rosenberg, 'Why is there no international historical sociology', 308.

23 Rosenberg, 'The "philosophical premises"'.

24 On the latter, whereas both liberal and Marxist (including neo-Gramscian) approaches are very alive to the importance of capitalist development in shaping international relations, they are rather less clear on the importance of specifically international dynamics to the course of capitalist development. Where some attention is paid to the international, as in some Leninist and Marxist analysis, it tends to fall back on a quasi-realist understanding of IR. See for example Ashman, 'Capitalism, uneven and combined development', Rosenberg and Callinicos, 'Uneven and combined development'.

25 As acknowledged by Whitfield and Thirkilsden, 'What drives states', 16-17. This is a remarkable admission given that external contexts have been absolutely critical in the explanation of virtually every case of a developmental state one could think of.

26 As John Hobson has cogently argued, 'What's at stake'. Also see Anievas and Nisancioglu, *How the West Came to Rule*.

27 Bromley and Rosenberg, 'Uneven and Combined Development'.

28 See Rosenberg, 'International Relations – the "Higher bullshit"'; Anievas and Nisancioglu, *How the West Came to Rule*.

29 Cooper, *Africa in the World*, 91. One can extend this further too as Comaroff and Comaroff point out: modernity itself was 'a North-South collaboration…albeit a sharply asymmetrical one' Comaroff and Comaroff, 'Theory from the South', 116.

30 Cooper, *Africa in the World*, 24.

31 *Ibid.*, 21-22.

32 *Ibid.*, 76.

33 See Cooper, *Africa Since 1940*, 24-30; also see Comaroff and Comaroff, 'Theory from the South', 118.

34 Cooper, *Africa Since 1940,* 160.

35 Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.

36 Cooper, *Africa Since 1940*, 18.

37 *Ibid.*, 33-4.

38 Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.

39 Cooper, *Africa Since 1940*, 87. Such combinations have continued into more recent times. Recent work on democratization in African states has also highlighted the varied and hybrid nature of many regimes, neither fully democratic nor fully authoritarian, Brown S., '"Well, what can you expect?"'. The highly uneven and weakly applied pressure for democratisation from donors, 'half-hearted and ill-timed' in the case of Kenya (Brown S. and Raddatz, 'Dire consequences') has itself contributed to a further diversification of forms of government and political system. Although many adhere to the format of multiparty elections, the wider nature of regimes varies greatly (Brown S., '"Well, what can you expect?"').

40 That is, what was seen as, or came to be defined as, 'indigenous' or 'traditional' were themselves often products of change and transformation brought about through interaction with Europeans from the slave trade onwards, Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.

41 Cooper, *Africa Since 1940,* 203.

42 Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness*.

43 UNECA, *Dynamic Industrial Policy;* Obama, 'An Interview with'.

44 Rosenberg, 'The "philosophical premises"'.

45 Cooper, *Africa Since 1940*, Chapter 5.

46 *Ibid.*, 100.

47 *Ibid.*, 107-115.

48 *Ibid.*, 156-7.
49 Altenberg, 'Can Industrial policy Work', 2. Also see Whitfield et al, *The Politics of African.*
50 Amsden, *Asia's Next Giant.*
51 Cooper, *Africa Since 1940*, 18.
52 *Ibid.*, 18.
53 *Ibid.*, 157.
54 Allen, 'Understanding African Politics', 304
55 Dorman, 'Post-liberation politics'; Gabay, 'New Year; New Questions'.
56 Allen, 'Understanding African Politics', 304.
57 Cooper *Africa Since 1940*, 92.
58 *Ibid.*, 97.
59 See also Clapham, *Africa and the International System.*
60 Cooper, *Africa Since 1940,* 156-7.
61 Marx, *Capital*, 8-9.
62 Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, 378. Though it might be objected that dense processes of interaction would lead to homogenization, three factors militate against this: external pressures are uneven and therefore variable in their effects; 'internal' conditions are variable and therefore combine differently with similar external factors; and the agency of national actors matters in how societies respond to external change.
63 Cooper, *Africa Since 1940,* 160.
64 *Ibid.*, 15. This point is echoed by Booth who writes that '…the formal arrangements of liberal democracy have radically different effects in different kinds of social and economic context' ('Development as a Collective Action Problem', 50) and that 'Democracy [in Malawi] does not work as it does under capitalism because Malawi does not have a capitalist economy' (*Ibid.*, 57).
65 Cooper, *Africa Since 1940*, 48.
66 *Ibid.*, 180; also Cooper, *Africa in the World.*
67 Cooper, *Africa Since 1940*, 194-5.
68 Beresford, 'Power, patronage, and gatekeeper politics'.
69 It's worth speculating on why this might be. Perhaps for Cooper the concept is more a heuristic device serving historical narrative rather than a analytical model characteristic of political science. There have been some limited attempts to develop the idea further as we will see below. Specifically on Cooper's work, Hillbom's analysis of Botswana (and subsequent debate with Taylor); Poole's work on Eritrea, and Beresford on South Africa are recent examples. See, Hillbom, 'Botswana: a development-oriented gate-keeping state'; Taylor, 'Botswana as a 'development-oriented''; Poole, 'Ransoms, remittances'; and Beresford, 'Power, patronage'. Analysis of what is sometimes called 'developmental patrimonialism', while not explicitly using Cooper's ideas, are substantively close to it and explore some of the differences that have emerged in Africa. See, Booth, 'Development as a Collective Action Problem'; Kelsall et al *Business, politics and the State*; van Donge, 'The fate of an African Chaebol'.
70 The Economist, 'The Hopeful Continent'; McKinsey, *Lions on the Move.*
71 Kelsall et al, *Business, politics and the State.*
72 Cooper, *Africa in the World*, 55.
73 Whitfield and Fraser, 'Negotiating Aid'; Brown, 'Sovereignty Matters'.

74 Brown, S. and Raddatz, 'Dire consequences'.
75 Fisher, 'Structure, agency and Africa'.
76 Carothers and de Gramont, *Development Aid Confronts Politics*.
77 Taylor, *Africa Rising*; Vickers, 'Africa and the rising powers'.
78 Taylor, *Africa Rising*.
79 Jerven, 'African Growth Recurring'.
80 Dorman, 'New Year; New Questions'; Gabay, 'New Year; New Questions'; Ncube, 'Introduction'.
81 Ncube and Lufumpa, *The Emerging Middle Class*. This was modestly put by Ncube as: 'the capacity to increase domestic consumption; contribute to private sector growth and entrepreneurialism; boost demand for better governance and public services; improve gender equality; and raise standards of living…' (Ncube, 'Introduction', 1.)
82 Scoones, et al., 'New development encounters', 8-9; Alemu and Scoones, 'Negotiating new relationships'.
83 Normally defined as the movement of labour from low productivity sectors (agriculture) to higher productivity sectors (industry). Booth itemizes the key contemporary concerns of those promoting the need for structural change in Africa as: changes in the structure of the economy and exports; productivity breakthroughs in agriculture; accelerated formation of capitalist firms; and strategies to anticipate future comparative advantages (Booth, 'Development as a Collective Action Problem', 19).
84 UNECA, *Dynamic Industrial policy,* 52.
85 Kragelund, '"Donors go Home"'; Scoones, et al. 'New development encounters'.
86 Scoones, et al. 'New development encounters', 5; Niño and Le Billon, 'Foreign aid, resource rents'.
87 Fourie, 'Model students'.
88 *Ibid.*, 547.
89 Alemu and Scoones, 'Negotiating new relationships'.
90 Fourie, 'Model students', 562.
91 See research stemming from the DfID-funded *Africa, Power and Politics Programme* (APPP), Kelsall et al, *Business, politics and the State,* 24. Also see Booth 'Development as a Collective Action Problem'.
92 Whitfield and Thirkilsden, 'What drives states to support'; Whitfield et al, *The Politics of African Industrial Policy*; Altenberg, 'Can Industrial policy Work'; and Khan, 'Governance and growth challenges for Africa'.
93 Kelsall et al, *Business, politics and the State*
94 *Ibid.*, 17.
95 *Ibid.*, 100-101.
96 *Ibid.*,104-105.
97 Alemu and Scoones, 'Negotiating new relationships'; and Kelsall et al. *Business, politics and the State*.
98 Alemu and Scoones, 'Negotiating new relationships', 12.
99 Kelsall et al. *Business, politics and the State*, 119.
100 *Ibid.*,157.
101 Booth and Golooba-Mutebi, 'Developmental patrimonialism?'; Kelsall et al *Business, politics and the State*, 134-5. It is worth noting here van Donge's earlier study of Press Corporation in Malawi ('The fate of an African Chaebol'). Though under Banda's autocratic

regime electoral politics were not an issue, like Tri-Star in Rwanda the company served a key role in organizing and using rents and promoting developmental objectives .

102 Kelsall et al. *Business, politics and the State*, 151.

103 Dorman, 'Post-liberation politics in Africa', 1097.

104 Beresford, 'Power, patronage, and gatekeeper politics'.

105 Hirt, 'The Eritrean diaspora'; Poole, 'Ransoms, remittances, and refugees'; Styan, 'The security of Africans beyond borders'.

106 Poole, 'Ransoms, remittances, and refugees', 69.

107 *Ibid*.

108 *Ibid*.

109 Cooper, *Africa in the World*, 35.

110 Brown, S., 'Well, what can you expect?'; Carothers and de Gramont, *Development Aid confronts Politics*; Cammack, 'The logic of African neopatrimonialism'.

111 Cooper, *Africa in the World*, 37.

112 Cooper, *Africa in the World*, 101.