



Mark Simpson

Donors, Democracy and Development in Africa

Western Aid and Political Repression

- Focuses on Uganda, Ethiopia and Rwanda as the recipients of Western development assistance after the Cold War
- Adopts a multi-disciplinary approach to examining the role that Western countries play in supporting repressive regimes
- Highlights the skillful manipulation of Western development priorities by the ruling parties of the three countries

Uganda, Ethiopia and Rwanda have figured prominently in the post- Cold War relations between Western donors and Sub-Saharan Africa. Their 'new leaders' were embraced by Western countries as the antithesis of former Cold War-era African strongmen, and their countries became 'donor darlings', benefitting from regular and significant inflows of Western development assistance. To the dismay of African democracy activists and human rights defenders, such aid enabled the regimes in these countries to strengthen the repressive political and economic governance systems over which they preside.

Using a multi-disciplinary approach, this book examines the role of Western development assistance in supporting these authoritarian African regimes. It connects changing Western donor policies and priorities to developments within the three African countries, to the past of these ruling parties as armed liberation movements, to wider regional and global political, economic and strategic shifts, and highlights the skillful management by Kampala, Addis Ababa and Kigali of Western aid and international aid architecture to ensure regime preservation.

Edition No: 1

2024 . Approx. 430 p.

Hard cover

ISBN 978-3-031-74916-2

139.99 € | £ 119.99 | \$ 159.99

149.79 € (D) | 153.99 € (A) | CHF 165.50

“Mark Simpson has written a sobering account of how western aid donors, despite their public commitment to human rights and democracy, have been complicit in the resurgence of authoritarianism and repressive government in Africa, and in Ethiopia, Rwanda and Uganda in particular. The book is impressively researched and beautifully written in clear accessible prose. It deserves to be widely read.”

James Mayall FBA, Emeritus Professor of International Relations, University of Cambridge.

“ An essential examination of how Western development aid has helped entrench and prop up repressive regimes in Africa, and contributed to democratic backsliding. Simpson deftly lays out how authoritarian regimes nourished by Western aid are responsible not only for political repression at home, but also spiralling violence against neighbours. The book contains important lessons for academic, professional and lay audiences alike.”

Catherine Philp, World Affairs Editor, The Times of London.

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