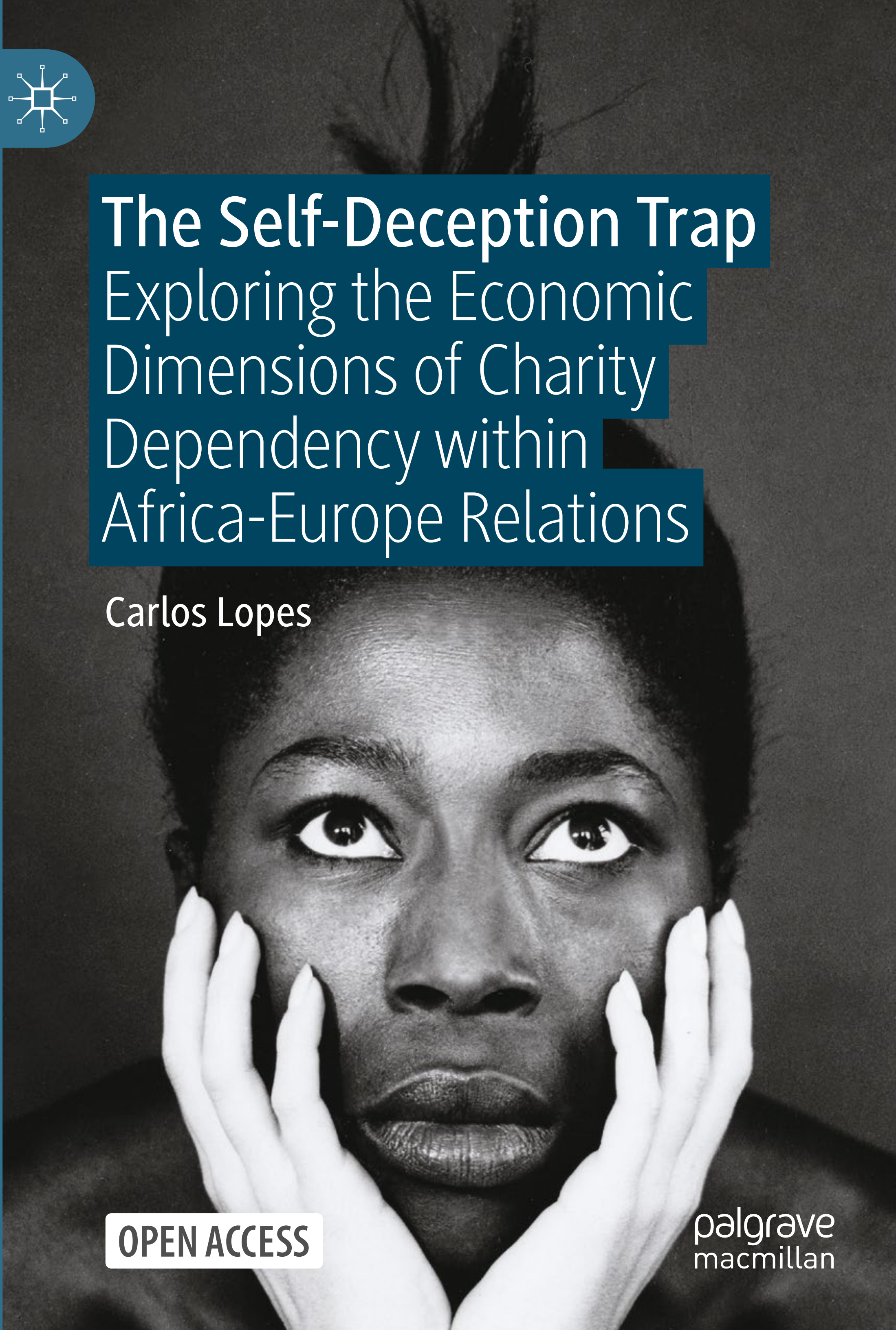
The Self-Deception Trap

Exploring the Economic Dimensions of Charity Dependency within Africa-Europe Relations

Carlos Lopes



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"This profoundly revealing book is logical and nuanced yet often enraging. Lopes shows how misconceptions about Africa—from maps to population projections to economic assessments—join with unequal power to shape interactions between Europe and Africa, to the detriment of both. Neocolonialism remains pervasive: in aid as charity; in the false promise of comparative advantage in trade; in the promotion of extractivism; in attitudes to migration; and in international negotiations. This short but effective volume is a challenge to established mindsets, a manual for self-respect in Africa and a wake-up call for everyone else."

—Jayati Ghosh, *Professor of Economics, University of Massachusetts Amherst, USA*

"There are few more subtle or erudite thinkers than Carlos Lopes on the topics of the policy failures that have contributed to Africa's poor development record and of the unjust international context in which that has played out. Here he delivers an essential read: a thought-provoking challenge to accepted wisdom about how the world is failing Africa and how Africa is failing itself."

—David Pilling, Africa Editor, *Financial Times*

"The Self-Deception Trap is a major contribution to understanding modern European Union-African Union relations. Carlos Lopes as an AU High Representative sought a more practical approach to the Europe-Africa partnership, seeking a unified, continent-to-continent approach and a move away from aid logic. This superbly written book documents the EU's passive-aggressive manoeuvres aimed to steer negotiations and African fragmentation with an eventual outcome that neither the EU's objectives nor the AU's aspirations were fully realised. This is a must-read study for academics, practitioners, and students wishing to understand the complex interplay of interests and the limitations of both sides' strategies and what the future may hold."

—Alex Vines, Director, *Africa Programme, Royal Institute of International Affairs/Chatham House and Assistant Professor, Coventry, University*

"Carlos Lopes has once again produced an insightful and scholarly work. Lopes utilizes his deep understanding of culture, language, history, and political economy to explain the multifaceted relationship between the EU and Africa. Lopes draws on his academic expertise and vast experience in the United Nations and diplomacy to provide the reader with a rich tapestry of insights on each of the pillars of Africa's relationships with the EU, including aid, trade, investment, migration, and political cooperation. This book should be essential reading for activists, policymakers, researchers, academics, and trade and climate negotiators who are concerned about Africa's future relations with the EU."

—Faizel Ismail, *Professor and Director of the Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance, University of Cape Town*

"Old ideas, and the attitudes they foster, die hard. As Carlos Lopes shows in this fascinating book, Africa has outgrown a relationship with Europe based on aid and trade preferences, yet colonial attitudes and power dynamics have prevented the emergence of a full partnership predicated on mutual benefits. Lopes offers an erudite and historically grounded commentary on the multiple pillars of the relationship, going beyond aid and trade to discuss diplomacy, geography, governance, investment, intellectual property, industrial policies, and migration. The book is deeply informed by scholarship but should be widely accessible. It skilfully explores Africa's complex and heterogeneous reality, offering a critical perspective on which the continent's future partnership with the EU will have to be based."

—Dani Rodrik, *Ford Foundation Professor of International Political Economy at the University of Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government*

"During the days of slave trade and colonialism, Europe exploited Africa in the most brutal way while drilling an inferiority complex into the minds of Africans. The end of colonialism ended the worst forms of exploitation, but the relationships between Europe and Africa remain highly unequal, overlaid with European paternalism and low self-esteem on the part of Africans. However, things are changing. The global economy is shifting, not least because of climate change and the rise of China. And in this context, a new generation of Africans is striving to redefine their relationships with Europe into one based on cooperation, mutual respect, and shared progress. Carlos Lopes, a leading international policymaker and a highly original thinker, is uniquely qualified to tell the story of a new Africa in this fundamentally changing world. This is an essential reading for those who want to make the world a better place for all."

—Ha-Joon Chang, Professor, *School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*

"This hard-hitting study of the frustrations of Europe-Africa relations is noteworthy at several levels. As the former AU High Representative for Partnerships with Europe with an intimate knowledge of the subject, Carlos Lopes has penned a study of rare, visceral honesty about how far, despite much promising rhetoric, we are from a genuinely constructive relationship that transcends obsolete paradigms. Building on his experience, Lopes meticulously outlines the problematic stance of EU institutions as well as the sometimes-divisive African dynamics undermining a common AU position. Regardless of one's views on this polarising question, this is essential reading for anyone interested in the enduring complexities of Africa's relationship with Europe, and in the future of African development more generally."

—Ricardo Soares de Oliveira, *Professor of the International Politics of Africa, University of Oxford*

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Lastly, I express profound gratitude to my wife, Maracimoni Lopes, whose unwavering support has been the bedrock of my ability to navigate numerous tasks with a smile.

This book stands as a collective achievement, and I am deeply thankful to all who have played a part in its realisation.

Contents

Acronyms

ACP	African, Caribbean, and Pacific
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AGA	African Governance Architecture
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AU	African Union
BRI	Chinese Belt and Road Initiative
CAP	Common African Positions
CBAM	Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism
CBDR	Common but differentiated responsibilities
CEMAC	Central African Economic and Monetary Community
CETA	Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement
CFTA	Continental Free Trade Area
CPI	Corruption Perceptions Index
CPIAs	Country Policy and Institutions Assessments
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EASO	Frontex and the European Asylum Support Office
ECCHR	European Centre for Constitutional and Human Rights
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDF	European Development Fund
EEAS	European Commission's External Action Service
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIU	Economist Intelligence Unit
EPAs	Economic Partnership Agreements
ESA	Eastern and Southern Africa

ESFP	European Security and Foreign Policy
EU	European Union
EUHR	EU High Representative
EUNAVFORMED	European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FOCAC	Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GPGs	Global public goods
GSP	Generalised System of Preferences
GVCs	Global value chains
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICS	International Chamber of Shipping
ICRG	International Country Risk Guide
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development's National Communication Mechanisms
IIASA	International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IP	Intellectual property
JAES	Joint Africa-EU Strategy
JORA	Joint Operations Reporting Application
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MFN	Most-Favoured Nation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NCM	National Coordination Mechanism on Migration
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
OACPS	Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OLG	Overlapping Generational
REC	Regional Economic Community
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SAR	Search and Rescue
SAT	Sustainability in All Trade
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TCN	Third-country national
TEI	Team Europe Initiatives
UK	United Kingdom

UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
USA	United States of America
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: A Masterclass in Dealing with Passive Aggressive Behaviour

In the lead-up to the 31st AU Summit in Nouakchott in July 2018, an unexpected honour came my way. The then AU Commission President, Faki Mahamat, approached me with a proposition that surprised me: the opportunity to guide AU's efforts in EU-ACP agreements post-2020. These discussions eventually led to an invitation to address the African Heads of State on this topic directly.

My familiarity with the AU Summit's atmosphere was grounded in my prior role as the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa. In that capacity, I had the chance to engage with the upper echelons of AU Summits, an experience I held with humility. I have contributed to several flagship initiatives throughout my tenure, including facilitating the inaugural interactive dialogue in 2013 that was foundational in shaping the subsequent development of the AU Agenda 2063, which I helped draft (African Union, 2013a).

As I stood before the Heads of State, my message was simple: there was a need to acknowledge the diverse pathways inherent in the European-African relations. While the ACP grouping covered many African states, it might not be the most suitable conduit for fostering a structural partnership with Europe. Subsequent developments proved me right.

I presented a trio of reasons supporting this viewpoint. Firstly, excluding North African countries within the ACP framework left a notable gap. Secondly, although sharing some affinities, including the Caribbean and Pacific regions bore the weight of historical categorisations that did not necessarily align with present realities. Lastly, the foundational principles

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underpinning the existing agreements did not align with Africa's evolving trade relationship with Europe, especially given the growing importance of the AfCFTA. I gently underscored that the proliferation of divergent trade arrangements could inadvertently hinder Africa's integration journey, fostering imbalanced dynamics due to misconceptions about the true extent of Africa's continental trade.

In conclusion, I offered a modest proposal; a more practical approach to the Europe-Africa partnership necessitated a unified, continent-to-continent perspective and a move away from aid logic. I shared my belief that equitable governance could be better achieved by avoiding fragmentation and differential treatment across countries and regions.

The reception of my proposals was mixed: enthusiasm from the backbenchers and a degree of cautious apprehension from certain influential Heads of State. In retrospect, I recognised that the factual presentation I had delivered, which vividly illustrated the extent of fragmentation within Africa, lacked a certain diplomatic finesse. This realisation dawned on me as I observed the growing resistance to my newly designated role in the aftermath of the Summit. Nevertheless, despite the initial hesitations, my appointment received the necessary Summit endorsement.

Subsequently, I set about assembling a small, dedicated team. This team, carefully chosen, was tasked with the vital mission of collating the necessary information, a task of paramount importance as we embarked on the journey of supporting the forthcoming multi-track partnership negotiations.

The challenges we faced were multifaceted. Navigating the political landscape demanded a balance between boldness and tact, a line I was conscious of treading. While my convictions regarding the need for change remained steadfast, I understood the value of approaching these deliberations with a measure of self-effacement.

Our mission acquired a renewed sense of urgency as my team and I delved into the data. We meticulously collected evidence to underpin our proposals and bolster our arguments with undeniable facts. The process involved comprehensive research, consultations with experts, and a discerning analysis of the intricacies of the existing agreements.

Through this diligence, a clearer picture emerged. Our findings underscored the challenges resulting from fragmented approaches and illuminated the vast potential that a unified strategy held for Africa's interests. Armed with this insight, we renewed the intent to garner support. The initial scepticism that had surfaced was not unexpected, and we were prepared to meet it with perseverance and a willingness to engage constructively.

Ultimately, it was not just about the AU High Representative's role but the possibility of reshaping a partnership that could genuinely serve Africa's collective aspirations. The journey had only begun, and the challenges were substantial, but the prospect of a more cohesive, equitable partnership kept our spirits high as we embarked on this consequential endeavour.

The AU 'multi-layered cake' represented a vulnerability throughout the process, setting the stage for competing interests that shrewd European actors would adeptly exploit. Within this intricate framework, the role of the AU High Representative became a delicate dance, requiring the deft balancing of varying viewpoints while fending off the EU's attempts to exploit internal discord.

The labyrinthine landscape of AU dynamics enabled the EU to employ a strategic manoeuvre: the proliferation of different meetings and configurations, as detailed in Chap. 5. This elasticity allowed European proponents to engage those African leaders and influencers amenable to their initiatives outside the official negotiation avenues guided by the AU. This adroit manoeuvre permitted various European actors, including the EU Commission, to advance proposals with fractured African backing, effectively fragmenting the cohesive front that the AU intended to present.

In the broader context, the ACP group introduced an additional layer of intricacy. The competition for leadership between the African Ambassadors stationed in Brussels and their counterparts based in Addis Ababa, representing the interests of distinct decision-making bodies they were affiliated with, amplified the discordant narrative. Simultaneously, the ACP Secretariat, a structure primarily funded by the EU, entrenched itself in spaces and roles that had long since become relics of the past. This situation engendered an impression that African representatives in Brussels were aligned with the EU Commission's hierarchy, undercutting the AU's negotiating clout.

The AU Commission's predicament was further underscored by its need for delegated authority from individual member states. Navigating the complex negotiation processes with the EU compelled the AU Commission to seek broad-based approvals across various instances, diluting its authoritative stance when faced with an EU wielding full negotiating authority.

Furthermore, the promise of European aid or preferential treatment, intrinsic to numerous initiatives, exerted a magnetic pull on African countries. The prospect of garnering benefits from specific initiatives often led some countries astray from the united position, necessitating a delicate balance between upholding the AU's consolidated voice and enticing immediate advantages.

Amidst these dynamics, a discernible pattern of competition unfolded. Certain African countries rallied behind a pro-ACP stance. In contrast, others astutely recognised the perils inherent in diverting continent-wide deliberations, endorsed by the AU, onto a trajectory that lacked inclusivity and rested heavily on the premise of aid dependency. The emergence of such dualistic approaches fomented divisions within the AU ranks, with each camp advocating for a distinct course of action.

Adding to this complexity was the fact that the EU, prior to AU deliberations specifying its positions, had already sanctioned a negotiating position for the post-Cotonou Agreement and a "Strategy for Africa" (European Commission, 2020; Gotev, 2017). This preexisting EU stance became an implicit benchmark against which the AU and its member states were expected to react.

The challenge posed by the AU High Representative's firm stance of not accepting such a course of action was often interpreted by European counterparts as counterproductive, suggesting it provoked confusion and needed more clarity. Contrary to this perception, the clarity was resolutely present: the AU had a comprehensive agenda, namely, Agenda 2063, meticulously outlining its developmental aspirations (African Union, 2013b). Moreover, two AU Summits had unequivocally underscored the necessity for any negotiations on the post-Cotonou Agreement to conform to AU-approved decisions—not the inverse. This encompassed prioritised areas, as elucidated in chapter 5, and a strategic posture aligned to safeguard African interests.

Hence, the heart of the matter did not stem from any deficiency in the AU's coherence but rather from the intricate challenge presented by the traditional EU-centric negotiation paradigm. Such a pivotal juncture offered a profound glimpse into the AU's necessity to chart its autonomous course while engaging from a standpoint that resonated with its collective choices and imperatives.

The EU Commission was resolutely convinced that its endorsed negotiation positions held a sacrosanct status (Gotev, 2017). Such a positioning was akin to a donor dictating terms, where the one providing the funds held sway. As the High Representative, I intended to shift the discourse towards common interests, transcending the prevailing mindset. This included framing discussions around migration and ageing, the symbiotic relationship between technology and Africa's burgeoning consumer market, and the indispensable role of strategic minerals and renewable energy in the climate discourse (Lopes, 2020).

The strategic approach I pushed was intended to underscore a vital truth: Africa's cumulative trade volumes wielded considerably more significant influence than the dwindling sums of foreign assistance.

The response from European counterparts exhibited a persistent inclination to marginalise the AU High Representative with a pattern of passive-aggressive behaviour. This manifested in attempts to curtail my participation in crucial processes and events they steered. Alternatively, they often chose to disregard the positions and communications I conveyed, justifying this stance by citing the requirement for the AU Commission to secure authority from member states for each decision (Lopes, 2019).

Passive-aggressive behaviour refers to expressing negative feelings, resentment, or opposition indirectly rather than openly and directly. It involves disguising hostility or resistance through subtle actions, avoidance, or manipulation instead of openly addressing conflicts or issues. Passive-aggressive individuals often use tactics like sarcasm, backhanded compliments, procrastination, silent treatment, and intentionally ambiguous communication. This behaviour can be frustrating and challenging, obscuring true feelings and intentions and making it difficult to address and resolve conflicts effectively.

Recognising the need to preclude resistance to my approach, we proactively engaged member-state negotiators at the earliest opportunity. Through briefings and nuanced political explanations, we sought to dismantle barriers and build, on several occasions, a common understanding. In tandem, we recognised the power of media outreach and academic engagement. We attempted to cultivate a belief in the imperative for partnership reform by crafting a narrative that resonated with the Africans.

The undermining of the AU High Representative's role progressively escalated, giving way to a regrettable atmosphere of hostility. The undermining tactics evolved from subtle insinuations to orchestrating messages aimed at media contacts and influential figures. These messages alluded to a perceived lack of support from African leaders for the AU High Representative. A carefully choreographed narrative unfolded, complete with a self-serving demonstration of his conspicuous absence from key gatherings, gatherings that, quite tellingly, happened to be those organised by the EU, particularly.

Interestingly, the reactions from the Foreign Ministries of prominent European countries stood in stark contrast to this overtly hostile atmosphere. Rather than echoing the antagonistic sentiment, they showed genuine interest in engaging with our critiques of the EU Commission's stance on the negotiations and its resistance to agree to the key proposal of having a mutually agreed governance system for the continent-continent partnership and not allowing the post-Cotonou Agreement to serve as the basis for defining the relations with the continent but rather a new instrument created explicitly between the EU and the AU.

We found fertile ground to construct compelling arguments on trade dynamics, climate change, and migration patterns in the engagements with European countries' Foreign Ministries. This parallel channel of engagement was, understandably, a source of frustration for EU Commission officials. Accustomed to maintaining a firm grip on the narrative, they grappled with the unexpected reality of the AU High Representative gaining space—space they systematically denied. This shift challenged their narrative control, leading to a palpable discomfort.

A striking example of passive-aggressive manoeuvring was the attempt to influence key AU bureaucrats by insinuating that the positions endorsed by the AU High Representative had the potential to erode the excellent and harmonious relationship they shared with the EU. Unfortunately, the stratagem bore some fruit.

The "Strategy for Europe"—a blueprint we developed aimed at steering the conversation away from merely reacting to the EU's strategy for Africa—faced consistent obstruction by some AU bureaucrats. Those responsible for transmitting the strategy to the African member states tactically omitted its submission, derailing possible firmer decisions. Paradoxically, the absence of this very document was subsequently employed by negotiators on both sides to assert that the African continent lacked a coherent strategy.

The rapport I established as the AU High Representative with the ACP lead negotiator for the Post-Cotonou Agreement, Togolese Foreign Minister Robert Dussey, was notably amicable. However, a distinct pattern emerged as the negotiations unfolded, with the EU consistently affording greater prominence to the ACP negotiator while downplaying the AU's role. The rationale they used to justify such an approach rested on the legal status disparity between the ACP agreement and the AU partnership; the ACP agreement bore a legal weight that the AU partnership did not possess. While this assertion held validity, it was a situation that could have been adjusted had the recommendations emanating from the Abidjan AU-EU Summit been heeded. The Abidjan Summit's final declaration carried an implicit impetus towards achieving such an elevated level of ambition, an aspect explained in Chap. 6.

During the post-Cotonou Agreement negotiations, a transformation became evident. What had been historically a trade and aid agreement underwent an evolution into a fundamentally political accord. Strikingly, this transformation occurred without the retention of aid allocations, while the trade dimensions were relegated to the EU-sponsored EPAs, as delineated in Chap. 8. Despite the reconfiguration that led to the removal of the perceived advantages linked to aid allocations, both sides of the negotiation table hailed the conclusion of the agreement on April 15, 2021, as a victory. EU International Partnerships Commissioner Jutta Urpilainen and Togo's Foreign Minister jointly sealed the new text (European Commission, 2021).

The agreement took so long to negotiate that it necessitated two prolongments of the previous one, expiring in 2020. However, despite the ceremonial culmination of the negotiations, a notable hitch persists. The agreement, albeit agreed upon, has yet to undergo the process of ratification. Given the prevailing circumstances, its implementation will remain deferred in the foreseeable future. These developments underscore the complexities inherent in international agreements and the multifaceted challenges that can hinder their practical realisation.

The transition from the ACP group to the OACPS was supposed to signify a step towards enhanced autonomy from the EU and, consequently, an improvement in the representational capacity of ACP countries. However, this shift hinged on securing financial contributions from ACP member countries, a requirement currently facing materialisation challenges.

Further complicating matters, South Africa's decision to withdraw from the OACPS and the post-Cotonou Agreement constitutes an additional setback. This exit highlights the intricate challenge of creating inclusive agreements harmonising with diverse interests and priorities. The departure of such a significant participant deals a significant blow to a process the EU had anticipated would greatly influence its engagement with most African countries.

North African countries have chosen a distinct path, opting to negotiate individually with the EU. The migration routes they can exercise control over have emerged as a leverage point, affording them the means to extract more favourable terms. This approach diverges considerably from the ACP negotiation format, as North African nations eschew processes they perceive as tainted by unwelcome political intervention. Their stance towards the AU-led continent-to-continent process has also remained ambivalent. While offering support to the AU High Representative when convenient, they exhibit a deliberate reluctance to commit, a way of safeguarding their manoeuvrability.

As the AU High Representative, navigating the currents of resistance underscored the delicate equilibrium between assertiveness and diplomacy. The evolving landscape revealed how underlying neocolonial tendencies shaped interactions, perpetuating a cycle of subverted intentions. While the EU's passive-aggressive manoeuvres aimed to steer negotiations, the eventual outcome unveiled a shared reality: neither the EU's objectives nor the AU's aspirations were fully realised. As the dust settled, the complex interplay of interests revealed the limitations of both sides' strategies (See Annex B).

A Book Is Born

This book was born out of my observations of these processes and seeks to underscore the critical need for proactive diplomacy, cohesive strategy, and vigilant resistance against passive-aggressive manipulation. It is a humble attempt to navigate the complex terrain of African-European relations, unpick historical threads, and decipher power dynamics. Ultimately, I seek to highlight how an authentic partnership transcends manipulation, pointing towards the necessity of recalibrating power dynamics to achieve equitable, enduring collaborations.

I believe that European and African leaders who head up the partnership between these two continents share a deeply ingrained mindset characterised by self-deception, and it is this mindset that I endeavour to unravel and elucidate within the pages of this book.

Self-deception in a medical context refers to a cognitive phenomenon where an individual knowingly or unknowingly distorts their perception of their health, symptoms, or well-being. It involves creating a mental framework that downplays or denies existing health concerns, often as a psychological defence mechanism against anxiety or distress. This can result in individuals avoiding medical attention, neglecting necessary treatments, or minimising the severity of their conditions, which may lead to delayed diagnosis and intervention. Self-deception in healthcare underscores the intricate connection between psychological factors and physical health outcomes, highlighting the need for a holistic approach to patient care that addresses both the medical and psychological dimensions.

In the realm of politics and diplomacy, a concept as delicate as self-deception does not often take centre stage. However, it can offer a lens through which we can decipher the complexities of decision-making and interaction at these levels. At its core, self-deception in politics and diplomacy entails the subtle art of bending reality to align with one's aspirations, beliefs, and self-perception. It is a psychological mechanism that weaves a comforting veil over inconvenient truths, subtly reshaping the narrative to fit personal inclinations. This can become a strategic tool that astute politicians and diplomats wield. It is a mechanism that enables leaders to tread the delicate line between managing public perception and safeguarding their own interests.

This artful orchestration often bridges gaps and forges pathways to consensus. Yet, those consensuses can become deceptive themselves and lack legitimacy.

Akin to the maestro's wand, self-deception can also harmonise the disparate voices within a political ensemble. Leaders adeptly use this tool to nurture unity, blurring the lines of disagreement and casting a spotlight on shared goals. Through this, they foster a sense of cohesion that bolsters collective strength. On the grand stage of international affairs, the judicious use of self-deception becomes an instrument of diplomacy itself. Politicians skilfully navigate public opinion by sculpting their self-image and painting policies with the brushstrokes of righteousness. Even in the face of controversy, this mechanism softens the edges of decision-making, imbuing actions with an air of moral rectitude.

However, as we unfurl this tapestry of self-deception, we must tread cautiously, for the boundary between strategic adaptation and delusional entrapment is perilously thin. Straying too far down the path of self-deception can lead to grave consequences, obscuring reality and stifling effective decision-making. When self-deception becomes a crutch, it impedes honest engagement, hampering collaboration and amplifying conflicts.

In what I hope is an exciting exploration, this book delves into the multifaceted layers of this phenomenon.

It dawned upon me that on both sides of the negotiating table, leaders are inexorably compelled to cater to the demands of their respective domestic or regional constituencies. In essence, this book endeavours to cast light on the complexities that govern—in the shadows—the partnership between Africa and Europe. It seeks to provide insight into the underlying currents shaping this relationship and offer a nuanced understanding of the motivations driving actions and decisions. In doing so, my aspiration is not to cast blame but to illuminate the underlying mechanisms that have perpetuated a cycle of self-deception and to foster a platform for more informed and authentic engagement moving forward.

The motivation behind this effort is rooted in a sincere quest to explore the historical nuances that have inadvertently relegated Africa to the periphery of global discourse and have unintentionally confined its economic interactions to the marginal role of a provider of commodities. With a respectful curiosity, I seek to illuminate the intricate influences subtly shaping such a role on the global stage. With a critical lens, I endeavour to dissect the concept of comparative advantages, laying bare its inadvertent limitations on Africa's economic identity. However, within this exploration, I also strive to challenge the prevailing belief that Africa cannot redefine its future. The book highlights instances that showcase the continent's latent potential for transformation.

Traversing the intricate path of African-European relations, I investigate the journey culminating in the Brussels Summit between the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU) in February 2022. A recurring theme emerges throughout my observed interactions—a calculated effort to fragment key African governments and other stakeholders.

The book dissects the European notion of partnership, revealing how it sometimes unwittingly perpetuates existing power dynamics (Smith, 2002). In my quest for understanding, I propose a shift in perspective that sidesteps traditional aid approaches. Instead, I imagine a path for a different relationship to harness the potential hidden within the three global megatrends: demography, environment, and technology. My focus centres mainly on the transformative potential of collaborative climate action.

The book assesses the influence wielded by stigmatised narratives—a subject I approach with profound reverence for its complexity. The aim is to carefully dissect how these narratives, laden with biases, shape the actions of pivotal actors and the intricate processes that define the landscape.

A discernible pattern emerges—European actors, often driven by benevolent intentions, perpetuate an image of altruism. Nevertheless, they may sometimes overlook the unintended consequences of their charitable endeavours, obstructing true transformation. Intriguingly, while voicing their reservations about European attitudes, African leaders paradoxically compete for attention, seeking to maximise aid and enhance their global standing. I contend that both these perspectives are the rooted cause of self-deception, where the quest for truth bends to the sway of individual interests.

The Africa in the pages of this book pertains to the member states of the AU. While this might appear self-evident, the reality unveils a more intricate picture. As a continent, Africa has been segmented into sub-groups by international stakeholders, often amalgamating its northern region with other continents. This amalgamation is, at times, linked to Arab culture. Although Arab culture is dominant, it is one among several cultures present in that region (Mazrui & Tidy, 2003).However, these divisions are not solely anchored in cultural considerations; other motives come into play. The application of economic criteria in such cases is fraught with complexities, as the disparities between a nation like Mauritania and a prosperous Gulf monarchy, for example, are vast and diverse.

Geographically, the prevailing use of the term “sub-Saharan Africa” tends to overlook the fact that some countries in this category are more Saharan in nature, while others excluded from this categorisation might be located further to the south. Within the context of relations with the EU, these divisions have been tactically employed to fragment negotiations into distinct interest groups, thereby undercutting the potential for a unified and stronger stance representing the entire African continent. This sub-division strategy has sometimes inadvertently weakened the continent’s collective voice in engagements with the EU.

The Europe discussed within these pages primarily pertains to the countries that are members of the EU and the European Commission itself, given its pivotal leadership role in contemporary times and its substantial influence in shaping the framework for engagement between European countries and Africa. Nevertheless, the United Kingdom (UK) is frequently encompassed in the analyses due to its historical significance in shaping the relations between the two continents and its instrumental role in moulding EU policies until the advent of Brexit. The behaviours of the UK continue to align closely with the patterns observed in other Western nations, not only EU member states but also countries that comprise the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), led by the G7.

What to Expect in This Book

The book is structured in three parts. The first part (Chaps. 1, 2, 3, and 4) delves into history, carefully tracing the roots and evolution of this intricate relationship. The second part (Chaps. 5, 6, 7, and 8) offers a panorama of current affairs, concentrating on the last three years of negotiations that have shaped the narrative between these two continents. The third and final part (the concluding Chap. 9) casts a contemplative gaze forward, addressing the challenges and opportunities ahead.

The book raises historical echoes in Chap. 2, unearthing the persisting influence of the colonial legacy that shapes perceptions on both sides. Here, the narrative engages with the philosophies of African luminaries like Frantz Fanon and Amilcar Cabral, presenting their insights on decolonising minds as part of the broader colonial and post-colonial context.

Chapter 3 navigates the terrain of aid effectiveness debates, revealing how structural adjustments and conditionalities have perpetuated a cycle of dependence. Building on this, Chap. 4 introduces a more profound lens, examining the concept of comparative advantages and its impact on the dynamics that kept Africa anchored to a colonial model of commodity dependency. Here, the narrative compares the developmental trajectories of African and Asian countries, exploring the repercussions of decades of aid on Africa's progress.

Chapter 5 paints a nuanced picture of Africa's disillusionment with development promises in the 1980s and 1990s. This chapter weaves a tale of high expectations and subsequent setbacks, highlighting European involvement in shaping Africa's developmental path.

In Chap. 6, the discourse explores the intricacies of European engagement, encompassing initiatives and agreements that shape the Africa-EU partnership. While not explicitly mentioned, the text tackles the layers of evolving strategies and diplomatic nuances.

Chapter 7 takes readers into the realm of migration, meticulously dissecting demographic shifts and the consequent European apprehensions that underscore the discourse about this hot topic. It provides an incisive analysis of migration policies and their implications, alluding to specific measures that undermine international humanitarian law.

Subsequently, Chap. 8 unravels the centrality of trade in the relationship, revealing how trade agreements have influenced Africa's position in the global economy. The text navigates this landscape, providing insight into the roles Europe plays in Africa's international trade, hinting at pivotal agreements that can impede Africa's integration.

Finally, in Chap. 9, the narrative weaves together the threads of self-deception that run through the book. Drawing upon the cumulative insights of the preceding chapters, it beckons for a recalibrated partnership that embraces pragmatic opportunities in critical areas. As the book concludes, readers are left with a renewed understanding of the Africa-EU relationship and the potential for transformative collaboration.

Guided by my previous works, this book is infused with storytelling, bridging the worlds of academia and accessibility. While avoiding the trappings of journalism, I draw from published materials, interviews, and the wisdom of relevant authors. And I use anecdotes gleaned from extraordinary instances, illustrating the subtle manifestations of self-deception.

What justifies my use of the term 'self-deception' is the interplay between official discourse, strong beliefs, and interests stemming from a desire for self-preservation of the key protagonists in the Africa-Europe relationship that I have observed over time. With a genuine sense of humility commensurate with the intricate nature of the subject matter, this endeavour aims to curate the wealth of existing knowledge thoughtfully. This curated insight is designed to resonate with the perceptive perspectives of political leaders, scholars, and policymakers while inviting a broader public engagement.

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CHAPTER 2

Empires of the Mind

Thought, Word, and Deed: A Parody of Misconceptions About Africa

In a speech delivered in October 2022 to aspiring European diplomats at the College of Europe in Bruges, the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Josep Borrell, used an analogy that appears to reflect the views of many European leaders today. "Europe is a garden. We have built a garden. Everything works", he quipped, going on to say that by comparison, the rest of the world is not a garden. "Most of the rest of the world is a jungle, and the jungle could invade the garden" (Borrell, 2022).

While intending to illustrate global dynamics, Mr Borrell's unfortunate garden-jungle analogy instead reinforces a troubling and outdated notion of otherness. Reducing vast and diverse regions of the world to a naïve metaphor of 'jungle' not only oversimplifies the complexities of many societies but also reinforces racial stereotypes that have long been condemned. Such reductionist rhetoric disregards the rich cultures, histories, and contributions of nations outside Europe, painting them as inherently chaotic and needing European guidance. In an era where inclusivity and understanding should be our guiding principles, Mr Borrell's words fall short and risk perpetuating harmful divisions and a narrative rooted in colonial attitudes and cemented over centuries.

In the late nineteenth century, European countries, notably Britain and France, attempted to create ideologies that backhandedly justified their penetration into Africa and their presence on the continent. They

C. Lopes, *The Self-Deception Trap*,
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persuaded Africans to accept European rule as beneficial. In collaboration with Christian missionaries, the colonial project pushed ideologies that framed Africa as a continent with a backward past. As a result, Africans became ashamed of their history (Ekeh, 1975).

Missionaries openly told Africans that ancestor worship was terrible and that they should cut themselves loose from their 'evil' past and embrace the present in the new symbolisms of Christianity and Western culture. Indeed, Africans were told that the colonisers and missionaries came to save them, sometimes despite themselves, from their past (Ekeh, 1975).

Thus, a distressing pattern emerged that persists to this day: African history is maligned, extending even to its ancient city-state civilisations. At the same time, perceived shortcomings in contemporary Africa's development are amplified. Undoubtedly, the colossal scale of the European colonial project has cast a long shadow, causing the substantial contributions of Africans to be minimised. At the same time, the triumphs of Europe take centre stage.

This discourse legitimised Europeans' downgrading of African contributions, casting the European coloniser as a benevolent ruler who graciously filled a void and brought Africa 'into light and history' (Ekeh, 1975).

The argument that European rule brought benefits is the standard justification for the presence of Europeans in Africa, from the Portuguese rape of Angolan resources to the godfather image of the French in the Ivory Coast or the British installation of surreptitious indirect rule in Kenya and Nigeria. It's an argument that pays little regard to the devastating impact of European colonial governments or the imposition of new credos through missionary activities throughout Africa. Colonial accounts were always presented in ways that showed that goods and produce in the colonies were 'bought' at reasonable prices when, in reality, the colonial market was monopolistic.

In the essay "Why Africa is not Poor", Frankema (2021) presents three arguments to explain the development of the prevailing narratives about colonisation.

- First, he contends that the conception of Africa as an impoverished region offers a highly attractive explanandum for empirical tests of historical persistence in which poverty is implicitly equated with economic and institutional stasis.
- Second, he argues that a preoccupation with proving persistence has led to a surplus of explanations of structural poverty and

underexposure of both the realities and possibilities of social, political, economic, and cultural change: Africa is neither as poor nor as static as the collective body of persistence studies suggests.
- Third, he claims that the overwhelming success of the persistence studies in unearthing correlations between historical and contemporary variables impels scholars working with the notion of path dependence to reflect more systematically on the relationship between forces of persistence and forces of mutability.

Ekeh's (1975) views are useful for understanding complexity. Ekeh explains the main sphere of influence in contemporary post-colonial Africa: the cadre of colonial administrators, primarily drawn from the rising bourgeois class in Europe and the African bourgeois class born out of the colonial experience itself. The intricate dynamics between these two publics underlie many of Africa's political challenges.

On the European side, the expansion of Europe and the colonisation of Africa are linked to the bourgeois class's attempt to acquire political power through colonisation commensurate with and to consolidate its power at home. The Europeans gained so much from the expansion and colonisation that the elite class justified their imperial expansion as beneficial to all the colonising nations and all taxpayers in Europe. In Ekeh's own words:

> The European bourgeois colonisers of Africa were also confronted with formidable problems in their conquest and rule. Although their superior technology, plus the fact that African political life had been softened by the slave trade that ravaged the continent in the previous three centuries, facilitated their conquest, the successful colonisation of Africa was achieved more by the colonisers' ideological justification of their rule than by the sheer brutality of arms. (Ekeh, 1975)

Language was a critical tool that Europe used to impress its superiority on Africans. In the case of the French, a founder of the Alliance Française, Mr Pierre Foncin, has noted that it was "necessary to attach the colonies to the Metropole by an exceptional psychological bond against the day when their progressive emancipation ends that they be and they remain French in language, thought and spirit" (IOL, 2017).

Using political and economic leverage, Europe simultaneously and consciously created empires of the mind through language, ideologies, and practices, empires that were in tune with their worldview and practical needs.

Enduring praise of colonial legacy is not only discernible in prominent European voices. Just before turning 82, the renowned African writer Chinua Achebe penned a poignant reflection on the Biafran conflict that fractured Nigeria from 1967 to 1970. His book, "There Was a Country" (Achebe, 2013), despite primarily delving into his personal experiences during the war, also serves as an extended contemplation on Nigeria's history and the underlying causes of its fragility as a nation. Achebe's analysis of the failings of Nigeria's political leadership is not unfamiliar, but what stands out is his unexpected assertion that a significant factor in the nation's vulnerability was its rejection of much of the colonial legacy inherited from the British. Interestingly, Achebe, celebrated for his anti-colonial stance, contends in his final work that certain aspects of colonialism in the lower Niger River region have left enduring and meaningful legacies.

There are many facets to understanding the depth of the colonial legacy's impact on African languages. As renowned Kenyan author and academic Professor Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o said in a 2017 lecture: "African languages were central in African scholarship, development and its relationship to the diaspora and the world. … African languages were not a lower rung on the ladder to an English heaven but equal partners in constructing a common but multilingual heaven" (IOL, 2017).

How does this square with the fact that the continent has embraced European languages, spoken and used by only 10 per cent of the population, as the language of power, commerce, education, law, and justice? According to wa Thiong'o, "In any independent African nation today, the majority are rendered linguistically deaf and mute by government policies that have set European languages as the normative measure of worth in every aspect of national life" (IOL, 2017).

Kwame Nkrumah, the first prime minister and president of Ghana, thinks this erasure of African language and identity is not a consequence of history but a fulfilment of a conscious imperial design and a long history of conquest (Hunter, 2017). Ireland, England's first colony, was the historical nursery of power relations patterns that the British would reproduce in Asia and Africa. Similarly, Imperial Japan made Koreans take on Japanese names and language when it annexed Korea in 1910, a policy that was only reversed after the defeat of Japanese colonialism, and when the United States of America (USA) annexed Hawaii, it banned the use of the Hawaiian language until 1978. In all such cases of colonial conquest, language was meant to complete what the sword had started, to do to the mind what the sword had done to the body (IOL, 2017).

Europeans gave Africans accents in exchange for their access to resources. Put differently, Europeans descended on resources while African intellectuals and leaders were busy perfecting their accents. This is the unfortunate story of the post-colonial Africa. However, African languages have refused to die.

In Africa today, intellectuals and opinion makers act like African languages threaten European ones. wa Thiong'o continues: "Whatever the explanations, origins, and processes, the resulting empires of the mind still negatively impact Africa and the developing world with corporate rule. Since the middle class in Africa talks and behaves as if it is needed, its shopping habits its goals, however self-serving, servile, and ultimately suicidal, are identical with the goals of the nation; when they talk about the national and official languages, they mean the language spoken and understood by the schooled middle class" (IOL, 2017).

The perspective on colonialism as a good influence is resurfacing in a contemporary context where certain conservative scholars from metropolitan areas of the empire advocate for a "balance sheet of the empire", aiming to assess the pros and cons of colonialism. Some within Africa also embrace a revisionist stance. For instance, Helen Zille, a prominent white figure in South Africa's opposition Democratic Alliance party, stirred controversy by asserting that apartheid and colonialism had positive aspects, attributing infrastructure and governance systems that black Africans currently utilise to colonial legacy (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2021).

At the same time, Africa's economic and political misfortunes get blamed on the victims. Elusive development and disorder are said to be the norm in Africa. Influential commentators blame African leadership for mismanaging African economies without acknowledging that colonialism and contemporary mechanisms derived from colonialism have a role in this drama. There is little argument that African leaders have contributed to some sour development, notably due to corruption. However, the real problems in Africa are structural, systemic, and institutional.

These narratives about Africa have persisted because the embedded mindsets underpinning them translate an iconic representation of Africa that largely ignores context. These mindsets create a gap between perception and reality regarding the transformative potential of the continent.

For example, Lopes and Kararach (2020) show that historically, Africa has been portrayed through an accepted view that minimises the continent's proper size and developmental achievements—quite literally. Mercator's 1569 cartographic depiction of the world, which became one of the most influential and widely circulated world maps in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, shrinks Africa, projecting its over 30-million square kilometre land mass into the equivalent size of Greenland—a distortion of roughly 14 times.

Arno Peters, who provided an alternative way of mapping the world to correct for what he perceived as the inaccuracy and racism being projected by the Mercator map in 1967, explains:

> Africa is easily as big as India, China, the US, and most of Europe combined. Africa's blue economy is even bigger than its land mass. The maritime zones under Africa's jurisdiction alone total about 13 million square kilometres, including territorial seas and approximately 6.5 million square kilometres of the continental shelf. (ECA, 2016)

While the initial projections of the Mercator map were created for navigation purposes to help early sailors calculate angles and accuracy, the map, unfortunately, became globally recognised, adorning the background of daily TV news, homes, schools, and the cover of many atlases. With these distortions intact, Google still uses such map as a basis of web projection, unwittingly reinforcing Western colonial attitudes towards Africa and an image of European dominance (Peters, 1993; Henderson & Waterstone, 2009).

In 1992, Saarinen conducted a study that attempted to investigate how people view the world, and his findings suggested a diminished view of the size and importance of Africa (Meffe, 2013). Meanwhile, Kai Kruse also attempted to address what he called 'rampant immappancy' and the extent to which the Mercator projection distorts the relative sizes of countries with a simple graphic illustration to depict just how 'immense' Africa is (The Economist, 2010).

This parody of misconceptions about Africa continues today, and these narratives can be summed up into three elements. First, geography does not reflect the actual spatial coverage of human activity. Second, the economy needs to capture true resource endowments and layers of complexity that a set of established key performance indicators like GDP cannot determine. Lopes and Hirsch (2021) argue that "If the real GDP were known, Africa would represent a bigger economy than India (with a larger population still), its debt-to-GDP ratio would diminish, and its consumer market would be resized considerably. Africa could qualify besides the G20, for a seat at the G7, G20, and other fora as a continent, the same way the EU does".

Third, demographics underestimate the current population boom that positions the African continent as the reservoir of youth globally while the rest of the world is ageing fast.

Samuel Makinda, Professor of International Relations & Security Studies at Murdoch University, sums it up as follows:

> Consequently, modern-day misperceptions about Africa not only concern the injustices of current cartography or erroneous views portrayed in contemporary literature or arts. They also permeate risk perceptions, levels of conflict, problems of political stability, and other spheres of human existence. Indeed, the global perception of Africa continues to be of a continent beset by crisis and as a risky environment for making investments. It is due, in no more part, to the nature of African conflicts and their world exposures, which attracts a different perception of endemic malaise. (Makinda, 2012)

The parody of colonial attitudes is perpetuated in the way that multilateral institutions, particularly the Bretton Woods institutions, continue to refer to 'Africa' in dealings with sub-Saharan Africa. Most analysts and scholars have made statements about Africa as a whole while only dealing with a portion of the continent. These and other simplistic reductions of the continent need to be revised. As Lopes and Hirsch put it:

> The colonial legacy of dividing Africa between black (in French, the expression 'Afrique Noire' is still used) and white endures. Even after the end of apartheid in South Africa, the country was not treated statistically as part of Africa, a remnant of the 'White Africa'. North Africa suffers from the same categorisation issue, being lumped together with the Middle East. These inconsistencies extend to the inclusion sometimes of Arab League countries such as Djibouti, Comoros or Mauritania as part of North Africa. (Lopes & Hirsch, 2021)

Geography is indeed another flimsy excuse that Afro-pessimists use to discredit Africa. Nevertheless, we should understand that geography often is a by-product of politics and history. The fact that original Arabs came from the Arabian Peninsula and their language became an instrument to consolidate national identities is unquestionable. However, there is a strong pushback from the authentic Maghreb Amazigh culture, with a revival of local identity sentiments that have required constitutional changes in countries such as Morocco and Algeria to accommodate such demands, not to mention the fracturing of Sudan, that can be traced to similar identity issues.

Lopes and Hirsch (2021) lament that the prevailing negative narrative around Africa is frustrating and often racist; however, even more concerning than this is the risk that the narrative completely clouds our understanding of what is happening.

Ali Mazrui, a famous Kenyan academic known for debating the African condition, enraged many when he contested the depiction of Africa in a PBS documentary "Wonders of the African World", anchored by a prominent African-American scholar, Henry Gates. According to Mazrui, Gates was a Black Orientalist due to his condescending, paternalistic, ideologically selective, superficial, and uninformed description of the continent. According to Ali, Orientalism refers to "the strange combination of cultural condescension, paternalistic possessiveness and ulterior selectivity shown by certain Western scholars towards non-Western societies in Asia, 'the Middle East' and Africa. Indeed, the concept of the Middle East, which is so Eurocentric, was born out of Orientalism" (Mazrui, 2000).

The Black Orientalist has a love-hate relationship with Africa that borders on derision, self-hate, masochism, and disdain, no less than ignorance, curiosity, and fascination. Black Orientalists generally play to the European gallery and are unwilling to understand Africa in its multifaceted and multidimensional capacity. Mazrui (2000 and 2013) argues that Black Orientalists invest minimal time and intellectual energy in understanding the continent's history, skim the surface, and declare themselves experts.

The colonial mentality also manifests itself in the risk perceptions associated with Africa. These can have real-world impacts. For example, the subjective assessments of credit rating agencies can affect government borrowing costs, resulting in capital flight and currency weakness. Although rating agencies insist that their ratings are opinions and not recommendations to buy, sell, or hold a security, ratings impact the conditions under which borrowers access debt markets. To date, the interest rates for borrowing from global financial markets are substantially higher for African countries than for economies in other regions. Yet these ratings demonstrate bias, unreliable methodologies, and a lack of understanding of African economic intricacies. Furthermore, the oligopolistic nature of the 'big three' rating agencies reinforces patterns of established corporations and interests rather than new entrants (Chirikure et al., 2022).

Consequently, in numerous African economies, the most significant and rapidly expanding spending segment pertains to interest repayments, where interest rates on ten-year government bonds range from 5 per cent to 16 per cent, in contrast to the near-zero or negative rates observed in European or American regions. The elevated interest rates Africans bear can be partially attributed to a discrepancy between the duration of the financial instrument and its utilisation, which might involve funding for long-term infrastructure endeavours. Given the governance dominance of powerful economies, African countries need more control over their market borrowing costs.

Over the last decade, several African countries have witnessed credit rating downgrades. Even as they responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, countries such as Botswana, Mauritius, Nigeria, and South Africa were downgraded, causing bond interest rates to spike. This meant governments were required to pay more on the same debt they owed. In addition, participation in relief programmes, such as the Debt Service Suspension Initiative initiated at the onset of the pandemic, fuelled fears of credit rating downgrades. Instead of doing what may have been best for the health of their populations or economic recovery from the pandemic, some governments thus prioritised debt repayments out of fear of being downgraded.

Africa and the New World: A Hidden History

In his remarkable book, "Born in Blackness", Howard French (2021) gives a candid account of the colonial narrative experienced by Africans in the modern world. He narrates that traditional accounts have accorded primacy to Europe's fifteenth-century Age of Discovery and the long-yearned-for maritime connection it established between West and East. Paired with this historic feat sits the momentous, if accidental, find of what came to be known as the New World.

At its core, Howard's book eloquently traces the intertwined and sorrowful narrative that binds Africa and Europe, stemming from the geopolitical clashes of the fifteenth century. These Afro-European encounters set Europeans on a trajectory driven westward, leading their continent to eventually surpass Asia and the Islamic world regarding wealth and influence. This ascent, however, was not a result of inherent European traits signifying superiority but rather hinged to a significant extent on Europe's intricate economic and political ties with Africa. Undoubtedly, the crux of this matter lies in the extensive, enduring transatlantic slave trade. Over centuries, enslaved Africans toiled in vast numbers in the New World, cultivating valuable crops like sugar, tobacco, and cotton on the plantations and helping to build European wealth. As late as the 1530s, well after the commencement of Portugal's more famous spice trade with Asia, Lisbon still recognised Africa as the leading driver of all that was new. João de Barros, a counsellor to that country's crown, for example, wrote: "I do not know in this Kingdom a yoke of land, toll, tithe, excise or any other Royal tax more reliable … than the profits of commerce in Guinea" (French, 2021).

However, as remarkable as Barros's acknowledgement of African vitality was, his omission of slavery as a pillar of the relationship may have been the first time that the centrality of black bondage to epochal social and economic change was denied or glossed over in an informed account of the experience of modernity in the West. It would not be the last.

French continues that when Barros was writing, Portugal overwhelmingly dominated Europe's trade in Africans, and slavery was beginning to rival gold as Portugal's most lucrative source of African bounty. By then, it was already on its way to becoming the foundation of a new economic system based on plantation agriculture that, over time, would generate far more wealth for Europe than African gold or, for that matter, Asia's famously coveted silks and spices.

Like an updated Barros, Malachy Postlethwayt, a leading eighteenth-century British expert on commerce, called the rents and revenues of plantation slave labour "the fundamental prop and support" of his country's prosperity and social effervescence. The British Empire, then in full flower, he described as "a magnificent superstructure of American commerce and naval power [built] on an African foundation" (French, 2021).

Around the same time, a prominent French thinker, Guillaume-Thomas François de Raynal, described Europe's plantations, worked by enslaved Africans, as "the principal cause of the rapid motion which now agitates the universe" (French, 2021). Daniel Defoe, the English author of Robinson Crusoe, but also a trader, pamphleteer, and spy, bested them both when he wrote: "No African trade, no negroes; no negroes, no sugars, gingers, indices, etc.; no sugar, etc. no islands no continent, no continent, no trade" (French, 2021).

French (2021) explains that through the development of plantation agriculture and a succession of history-altering commercial crops, including tobacco, coffee, cacao, indigo, rice, and sugar, Europe's deep and often brutal ties with Africa birthed a genuinely global capitalist economy. Slave-grown sugar hastened the coming together of the processes we call industrialisation. This link to Africa radically transformed diets, making much higher worker productivity possible. Moreover, in doing so, sugar completely revolutionised European society. Indirectly, it played a critical but largely uncredited role in anchoring democracy on that continent.

Thanks to sugar's wake, French (2021) demonstrates that cotton grown by enslaved people in the American South helped launch formal industrialisation and an immense second wave of consumerism. After plentiful calories, abundant and varied clothing for the masses became a reality for the first time in human history. As revealed here, the scale and the scope of the American antebellum cotton boom, which made this possible, were nothing short of astonishing. It made the value derived from the trade and ownership of enslaved people in America alone, as distinct from the cotton and other products they produced, more significant than that of the country's factories, railroads, and canals combined.

"Born in Blackness" (French, 2021) is partly an account of forgotten European contests over control of the African bounty that built the modern world. Spain and Portugal waged fierce naval battles in West Africa over access to gold. Holland and Portugal then unified with Spain and fought something short of a world war in the seventeenth century, with control of trade in the wealthiest sources of enslaved people in Africa, present-day Congo and Angola, flipping back and forth between them. On the far side of the Atlantic, Brazil, the biggest producer of slave-grown sugar in the early seventeenth century, was caught up in this same struggle.

As much as Howard French writes a story of a classical military struggle for control of the wealthiest plantation lands and the most prolific sources of enslaved people and of the economic miracles they produced at different stages of this history, his is also an account of another kind of conflict altogether, both unconventional and ceaseless: a war on Blacks themselves. This war, conservatively speaking, continued until the end of Jim Crow in America, where his book concludes. French highlights that during this time, the strategy was to beat Africans into submission and encourage Africans to enslave one another as well as to recruit Blacks as proxies and auxiliaries and secure territories from native populations of the New World or joust with European rivals in the Americas. This systematically undermined the possibility of Africans exercising agency, an attitude that still lingers.

Most sources estimate the number of Africans brought to the Americas to be hovering around 12–13 million. Lost in this atrocious but far too neat accounting is the likelihood that another 6 million Africans were killed in or near their homelands during the hunt for people to enslave. Estimates vary, but between 5 per cent and 40 per cent would have perished during brutal overland treks to the coast or while being held, often for months, in barracoons or holding pens as they awaited embarkation on slave ships. Furthermore, another 10 per cent of those taken aboard died at sea during an Atlantic transit, constituting an extreme mental and physical test for all those subjected to it. When one considers that Africa's total population in the mid-nineteenth century was probably around 100 million, one begins to gauge the enormity of the demographic assault that the slave trade represented (French, 2021).

The pivotal decades of interaction between Africa and Europe have laid the groundwork for the emergence of the modern world and the growth of the Western sphere. Remarkably absent from most accounts of Western history, these years have been overlooked for their profound impact on Africa's present condition. Western culture has diligently propagated notions of pre-colonial Africa as a realm characterised by unalloyed primitivism and an absence of human potential for progress. Consequently, the transition from a state perceived as savage to one of enslavement, marked by the seemingly unbroken trajectory from the Iberian-driven 'discovery' of sub-Saharan Africa to the initiation of the slave trade in the New World, often requires little explanation for many.

Restoring African Agency: The Relationship Between Culture, Freedom, and Colonial Domination

The origin of Africa's modern history as a strategically disputed landmass, characterised by fragmented territories divided by foreign interests, can be traced back to the pivotal year 1884 when the renowned Berlin Conference took place in Germany. At that time, European influence on the continent was limited, encompassing only around 10 per cent, primarily concentrated in the northern and southern extremities. However, by 1914, as a direct consequence of decisions made during the Berlin Conference, European monarchs and leaders had gained control over more than 90 per cent of Africa, with the borders they delineated during this conference continuing to shape much of the continent today.

This acquisition of territory by European nations largely disregarded the rich tapestry of African history, the legacies of indigenous empires, and pre-existing states. The intricate web of local languages was overlooked as regions were divided and subdivided, with scant regard for long-standing patterns of regional identity, trade, and even deep-seated ethnic tensions. The absence of meaningful consultation with Africans themselves further exacerbated the impact, giving rise to many weak and often dysfunctional states marked by inter-ethnic conflicts and communities needlessly divided by arbitrary borders. Others with little common ground were forced into unnatural coexistence.

While this legacy is undoubtedly damaging, it was preceded by an even more consequential and deadly scramble for Africa over several centuries, the ramifications of which remain largely unexplored and incompletely understood, even by experts. Driven primarily by the slave trade, the upheaval of these years manifested in various forms, starting with notable sea battles between Spain and Portugal along the Gold Coast in the late fifteenth century as they vied to secure control over the region's lucrative gold resources. In the seventeenth century, competition among European powers for supremacy over Africa intensified, driven by the wealth generated from labour on New World plantations. The extended contest in the South Atlantic, almost a quasi-world war in its complexity, engaged diverse alliances involving European and African states and their Brazilian counterparts.

Understanding the intricate dynamics and multifaceted nature of these historical struggles is crucial to unpick the complex fabric of Africa's past and its enduring impact on the present-day geopolitical landscape.

Within the customary accounts that trace the history of the modern world, academic establishments in Western countries have yet to acknowledge the significant contributions of Africa or its people. Olivette Otele, in her book "African Europeans: An Untold History" (2019), examines this oversight and describes how the definition of European and African evolved in Europe. It was not until a bold doctoral candidate from Trinidad challenged this prevailing narrative that the profound impact of Africa and its consequential slave plantation agriculture in the Caribbean was recognised. Otele (2019) asserts that the West's explosion of wealth in the nineteenth century, coupled with its swift industrialisation, owed a substantial debt to these interconnected factors.

Some individuals, notably Eltis and Engerman (2000) and Nunn (2008), have vehemently argued that the profitability of the slave trade was relatively marginal and thus incapable of exerting a decisive influence on the rapid ascent of England or Europe. However, these arguments fail to address a fundamental question. Otele (2019) asks why the powers of the Old Continent invested such extensive efforts, over a prolonged period and at great human and financial expense, in asserting dominion over both the primary sources of enslaved individuals in Africa and the destinations where they were sent to labour on plantations in the Americas. This commitment seems incongruent with the assertion that slavery held mere incidental significance in Europe's prosperity and the emergence of its New World colonies.

Otele's scholarship has also cast a critical light on the conventional understanding of the influence of the colonised. She pointed out that the rise of a colonised elite, often attributed to colonial officers' deliberate strategies to establish intermediaries, perpetuated an oversight of the broader colonial impact. Further and more detailed study of this elite's effect on colonisers in Africa and Europe remains to be carried out.

Furthermore, Otele's work delved into the dynamic interplay between colonisers and colonised individuals, highlighting instances where mutual influence was apparent. Establishing institutions like the Seminar for Oriental Languages in Berlin signalled Europe's early interest in understanding Africa. This interest eventually paved the way for the launch of the Colonial Institute in Hamburg. African diaspora figures like Cameroonian Njo Dibone contributed to the burgeoning field of African Studies in Germany, collaborating with scholars such as Carl Meinhof, an expert in African linguistics (Otele, 2019).

Otele also emphasised the underexplored contributions of African women within Europe during this period. While the roles of African American women in France are often discussed, Otele drew attention to the underestimation of black women's impact on anti-colonial movements. She highlighted the activism of figures like Paulette Nardal and her sisters, who were pivotal in shaping discussions on race, class, and gender. Their efforts and others laid the foundation for critical papers and journals that explored race consciousness, challenged stereotypes, and fostered dialogue across racial, class, and gender divides.

Otele's historical research has illuminated the often-neglected narratives that have shaped the complex interactions between Europe, Africa, and its diaspora. Her work has revealed the interconnectedness of these histories and challenged traditional accounts by highlighting the multifaceted contributions and influences that have played a crucial role in shaping the modern world.

Peter Ekeh (1975) helps us understand the enduring nature of the dualities that Otele's work exposes. His theoretical exploration of colonialism and its impact on African societies introduce the concept of two distinct public spheres—the primordial and the civic. Emerging from the legacy of European colonialism, these two publics exhibit contrasting dispositions and moral attitudes. The primordial public is akin to ethnic groups, nurturing sentiments and vulnerabilities, while the civic public encompasses the state and its bureaucracies, often viewed as exploitable. However, the intricate interplay of values within these publics has evolved into a complex dynamic in contemporary Africa.

Ekeh's analysis challenges the Western-centric view of politics, emphasising that a direct extension of Western conceptions of Africa can lead to conceptual and theoretical pitfalls. He proposes a nuanced perspective, highlighting the presence of two public realms in post-colonial Africa, each with distinct moral connections to the private sphere. The primordial public is deeply intertwined with primordial groups, sentiments, and actions, aligning its moral imperatives with those of the private realm. In contrast, historically tied to the colonial administration and popular politics, the civic public lacks such moral linkages, existing as an amoral entity characterised by civil structures like the military, civil service, and police.

Of particular significance is Ekeh's observation that African politics is characterised by a unique convergence of actors operating within both the primordial and civic publics. This dialectical relationship generates the distinct political complexities that define African political landscapes, offering insight into the multifaceted nature of the continent's socio-political interactions.

Furthermore, Ekeh delves into the differentiation between the 'native' and Westernised public, shedding light on the dichotomy within African societies and their interactions with external influences. This perspective enriches our understanding of the interplay between colonial legacies, traditional values, and evolving political dynamics in post-colonial Africa.

The hierarchical distinction between Westernised and 'native' sectors reached its zenith in the doctrine of indirect rule. Interestingly, the impact was more pronounced on Western-educated Africans, who became unwitting victims of this dichotomy. Africa's bourgeois class embraced colonial ideologies that sought to legitimise foreign dominion, and this underpins their belief systems. African bourgeois ideologies had a dual aim: to replace colonial rulers and assert control over their people. Both ideologies targeted the African masses, with the first, termed anti-colonial ideology, being wielded during colonial times against alien rulers. The second set, focused on legitimation, gained prominence in post-colonial African politics (Ekeh, 1975).

In post-colonial African nations, western-educated Africans, or the African bourgeoisie, have diligently showcased their education and administrative competence, striving to demonstrate equivalence, but never superiority, to their former colonisers. This ideology of high African standards originated during the struggle for independence. African leaders during this period boasted of their qualifications and capacity, paralleling English or French colonisers, emphasising their potential for 'democratic' rule and administrative efficiency akin to that in Britain or France (Ekeh, 1975).

The perspectives of Amilcar Cabral and Frantz Fanon (Quinn, 2017) on culture, psychology, and the colonised's attitude towards submission from the 1960s and 1970s provide rare insight into these post-colonial ideologies. Firoze Manji's analysis in 2017 sheds light on the profound influence that Cabral and Fanon had on global and national liberation movements, resonating to this day in South Africa, the US, and Palestine. Manji highlights that Cabral's perspective underscores the crucial role of culture in the dehumanisation process driven by capitalism's expansion. The obliteration or transformation of colonised cultures becomes pivotal to suppressing resistance and asserting dominance, as culture encapsulates history and humanity. Cabral and Fanon both emphasise that culture is not just an artistic manifestation but a historical expression and a powerful tool for liberation and resistance. This intrinsic subversive quality of culture counters the prevailing views of Enlightenment philosophers like Hegel, who wrongly deemed Africans as devoid of history.

Manji's analysis continues, shedding light on the systematic eradication of cultures, languages, histories, and creative capacities inflicted by European colonisers, enslavers, and the emerging capitalist class. This brutal process, from the transatlantic slave trade to imperial expansions, aimed to portray Africans as sub-human, justifying atrocities like genocide, enslavement, land confiscation, and cultural annihilation. Cabral reveals that imperialism forced people to abandon their history and embrace a foreign narrative, perpetuating a cycle of cultural suppression.

Cabral aptly recognises that maintaining domination necessitates perpetually repressing the cultural life of the colonised. This repression is evidenced through taxation, forced labour, economic exclusion, and the establishment of native authorities. Cabral further emphasises that while some instances, notably genocides, eliminated significant portions of the population, systematic cultural repression remained a crucial tool for maintaining dominance in the colonial context.

In essence, Cabral and Fanon's insights illustrate the pivotal role of culture in the psychology of submission and resistance among the colonised. Their perspectives unveil colonisers' deliberate and calculated efforts to eradicate cultural identities while underscoring the indomitable power of culture as a driving force for liberation and resistance against oppressive colonial forces (Manji, 2017). In Cabral's words:

> The ideal for foreign domination, whether imperialist or not, would be to choose: either to liquidate practically all the population of the dominated country, thereby eliminating the possibilities for cultural resistance or to succeed in imposing itself without damage to the culture of the dominated people—that is, to harmonise economic and political domination of these people with their cultural personality. (Cabral, 1973)

The use of violence to dominate a people is, argued Cabral, "above all, to take up arms to destroy, or at least neutralise and to paralyse their cultural life. For as long as part of that people have a cultural life, foreign domination cannot be assured of its perpetuation" (Cabral, 1973).

By denying the historical development of the dominated people, imperialism necessarily denies their cultural development, which is why it requires cultural oppression and an attempt at liquidating the essential elements of the culture of the dominated people.

Amid the complexities of colonial Africa, Amilcar Cabral and Frantz Fanon delve into the intricate relationship between culture, freedom, and colonial domination. Cabral's assessment unveils the harsh reality of Portuguese colonial laws, designating nearly the entire African population as 'uncivilised', subjecting them to colonial administration and settlers' whims. Nevertheless, Cabral contemplates the potential detachment of culture from emancipation, urging his party to recognise their humanity beyond their African identity. He emphasises aligning African interests with universal human values to transcend localised limitations.

This stance contrasts with the Negritude movement, championed by figures like Léopold Sédar Senghor and Aimé Césaire, which, while empowering, also veered into depoliticising cultural identity. Fanon astutely notes the Eurocentric construction of the 'Negro' by the white man while emphasising that it is the colonised who shape Negritude. Fanon's insight reflects the complexity of culture's relationship with identity and resistance, revealing that cultural revival should not cling to tradition at the cost of historical progress.

Both authors recognise the insidious impact of colonialism on culture. Cabral underscores that the colonial state's core mission was to perpetuate dehumanisation, necessitating the separation of culture from liberation. Fanon observes how colonialism distorts and damages the history of the colonised, creating an intricate struggle between retaining the heritage and forging a contemporary path.

The post-colonial era presents its challenges. Neocolonial regimes emerged, often subduing emancipatory movements, and blurring the line between colonial and post-independence structures. The depoliticisation of culture coincided with the rise of neoliberalism, atomising society and subverting collective action. The corporate media's dominance and NGO proliferation further contribute to cultural dilution and socioeconomic inequality.

In this complex tapestry, the voices of young generations rise, fighting against historical erasure. Fanon's notion that each generation must discover its mission resonates as underdeveloped countries grapple with preserving heritage while forging a progressive path. Amid these challenges, Cabral's call for cultural resurgence rests with the masses as the true bearers of culture and history, emphasising their role in shaping a future transcending colonial legacy.

The Language of Development

During the early stages of international development theorisation, the concepts used by prominent organisations such as the United Nations and the International Labour Organization were tainted by colonial language. Notably, the League of Nations championed the perpetuation of colonisation under the guise of a 'sacred mission of civilisation'. This justification exemplified the colonial powers' attempt to legitimise their expansionist agendas by portraying their actions as benevolent efforts to uplift and civilise the colonised territories. These international bodies' use of such language reflects the complex interplay between rhetoric, power dynamics, and ideological underpinnings that shaped the discourse of development and colonialism during that era.

In economics, the same lens was used.

In the 1950s and 1960s, classical and neoclassical economists shaped the discourse surrounding development, while the treatment of Africa in global agreements and systems revealed underlying colonial attitudes. Over nearly three decades, prevailing policies were guided by neoclassical economic principles, particularly as modernised by the Washington Consensus. This 'consensus' referred to ideas embraced by influential figures within Washington's power circles, including the United States Congress and Administration and institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, supported by prominent economists and think tanks (Lopes, 2019).

The core tenets of pure neoclassical economics encompassed a steadfast belief in the 'invisible hand' of the market, the rationality of economic agents' decisions, and a minimalist approach to state intervention in economies. The decline of development economics as a distinct field, previously dominated by theories such as the Dependency School, stood in stark contrast to neoclassical economics and its emphasis on methodological individualism. Many newly independent African governments, for instance, aimed to foster industrialisation, boost local production, curtail imports, enhance employment opportunities, elevate living standards, and challenge the trade patterns encapsulated in the Prebisch-Singer hypothesis (which posits that countries exporting commodities and importing manufactured goods will have unfavourable trade terms).

In analysing the marginalisation of Africa in international discourse, Adams Oloo (2016) highlights Africa's underrepresentation in global politics, particularly within international organisations, and underscores the challenges of effective African influence. Notably, despite increased quotas and voice for Africa in these bodies, meaningful representation remains elusive, with significant decisions often reflecting the interests of powerful nations rather than equitable global consensus. This is exemplified by the Bretton Woods institutions, initially designed to serve global interests but often swayed by the agendas of dominant powers like the United States and its allies. Oloo further examines the disparities in representation within organisations like the UN, where African populations disproportionately impacted by decisions often lack proportional voting influence.

Moreover, as Adebajo and Whiteman (2012) explored, the historical context of Europe's relationship with Africa reveals a complex legacy of colonial exploitation and economic dependency. The Euro-African relationship traces back to a colonial past marked by asymmetrical trade relationships. Africa exported raw materials to Europe for financial assistance and preferential access to European markets. While initiatives like the Lomé Convention appeared progressive, they often perpetuated structural dependence, hindering African industrialisation and genuine economic development. The association status of former colonies within the European Economic Community (EEC) further perpetuated neocolonial dynamics, with France exerting significant influence over policies and relationships with African states.

These historical dynamics and the discourse on African marginalisation in international relations resonate with Cabral and Fanon's critiques of colonial attitudes, cultural disempowerment, and struggles for genuine self-determination. Both Cabral and Fanon emphasised the need for African agency, unity, and the restoration of cultural identity to counter the dehumanising effects of colonialism. The challenges faced by Africa in international arenas reflect more significant issues of power imbalances, neocolonial legacies, and the quest for equitable representation—themes central to the works of Cabral, Fanon, and the analyses presented by Oloo, Adebajo, and Whiteman.

Adebajo and Whiteman (2012) highlight the enduring imbalance in EU-Africa trade relations, perpetuating Africa's export of primary products and discouraging industrialisation due to EU competition. Despite evolving through Lomé agreements, the EU's neoliberal shift in Lomé III led to conditionality imposed by international financial institutions, hindering the autonomy of African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries. While aimed at enhancing European capital, the Cotonou Agreement disrupted Africa's regional integration efforts by fragmenting trade policies. The EU's divide-and-rule approach is mirrored in the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) concluded in 2007 (see Chap. 8). While the EU touts benefits like increased investment and technology transfer, Adebajo and Whiteman critique that, by and large, trade relations have undermined regional integration and perpetuated colonial legacies. This is a reading that mirrors the neocolonial dynamics explored by Ochieng and Sharman (2004) and Kamidza (2014).

However, the EU's influence also compels African leaders to prioritise regional integration. The AU's resemblance to the EU's institutions raises questions about whether the European model can guide African development, considering historical and structural disparities. The struggle for an equitable partnership persists as African nations seek to reconfigure their relationship with the EU.

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CHAPTER 3

The Disappointing Discussion About Aid Effectiveness

Fruit of the Poisoned Tree: A Brief Account of Aid and Charity in Africa

"Foreign aid as an instrument of development must be accepted as 'tried and failed'", says Olusegun Obasanjo. Aid, the former Nigerian president continues, "has been more of a disincentive to development in most cases. No wonder people in developing countries are asking for trade and investment rather than aid" (Daily Maverick, 2022).

Obasanjo's comments reflect a growing critique of the Western paradigm of development assistance across Africa. Over $1.2 trillion of development assistance has been poured into the continent in the last 30 years, twice that if you include unofficial charitable giving. Yet, in that same time frame, sub-Saharan Africa's average per capita income changed by just $352, and the continent's share of global income has been falling steadily since mid-2000. These are troubling numbers and are part of why more and more Africans are asking if there is another way (Daily Maverick, 2022).

Providing aid to impoverished countries traces its origins back to the nineteenth century. Notable examples emerged in the 1920s and 1930s as affluent nations such as Germany, France, and the UK extended consistent assistance to their colonies, including financial resources to construct vital infrastructure such as ports, roads, and railways. However, foreign aid, characterised by the formal transfer of concessional resources aimed at catalysing enduring positive transformations, particularly poverty alleviation, in recipient countries, is a relatively contemporary paradigm in

C. Lopes, *The Self-Deception Trap*,
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international state relations. The post-World War II era heralded the emergence of foreign economic assistance on a new scale, underscored by initiatives like US aid to Greece and Turkey and the Marshall Plan's drive for European recovery.

In the 1940s, the apparatus of a multilateral development aid system was formed as victorious nations (known as Allied powers) came together to address post-war devastation and promote global stability (Browne, 1997). Three key international institutions were established during this tumultuous period, each with a specific mandate. First, the United Nations allowed the Allies to collaborate to maintain global peace after the war. Second, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), created in 1943, focused on addressing the human impact of conflict in Europe. This agency, a precursor to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), exemplified the earliest form of aid efforts. Third, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) commenced its operations in Europe, extending its initial loans by 1946.

By 1965, numerous industrialised countries had instituted aid programmes, complemented by substantial aid management from institutions like the United Nations or the World Bank. The 1970s witnessed an influx of public aid donors, encompassing petroleum-producing states, followed by the resurgence of aid initiatives from former socialist bloc countries and those integrating into the European Union or the OECD. Intriguingly, global assistance has since expanded further as 'developing countries' like China, India, Korea, Turkey, and the Gulf States actively engage in aid-giving endeavours, amplifying the diversity of the aid landscape.

By virtue of its historical roots, foreign aid is inevitably rooted in the paternalistic attitudes of the colonial administration of overseas territories and is characterised by charity. By contrast, the approach to aid practised by Nordic countries was largely driven by humanitarian concerns. Perhaps not insignificantly, Nordic countries, apart from Denmark, did not have colonial empires.

Charity is an age-old practice rooted in benevolent actions and the voluntary giving of resources, often directed towards aiding the less fortunate or supporting societal well-being. With deep religious foundations, charity has been a central tenet in various faiths and spiritual traditions, typifying the ideals of compassion, selflessness, and empathy. In Christianity, for instance, charity, known as "Caritas" or "Agape," emphasises selfless love and care for others. Similarly, Islam promotes “Zakat” and “Sadaqat”, obligatory and voluntary forms of giving, while other religions underscore the importance of aiding those in need.

Moral justifications for charity emanate from the ethical imperative to alleviate suffering, promote social cohesion, and cultivate a sense of community connection. Often framed as a duty incumbent upon individuals or societies, charity addresses inequality, provides for basic needs, and fosters a sense of collective responsibility. It bridges gaps in access to resources and opportunities, helping restore dignity and quality of life for marginalised individuals and groups.

These ideals of charity have been absorbed into the definitions of aid to developing countries. Thus, concepts of compassion, altruism, and societal welfare have indelibly shaped the approach to international assistance. As such, aid has evolved from being predominantly motivated by political and strategic considerations during the colonial era to encompass humanitarian and ethical dimensions.

This fusion of religion, charity, and development aid is evident in the 0.7 per cent aid pledge by OECD countries to spend that portion of their Gross National Income (GNI) on Official Development Assistance (ODA). This pledge, which is consistently reiterated in development discourse and acclaimed by aid defenders as the epitome of a moral obligation (Sachs, 2006), was originally proposed in 1958 by the World Council of Churches as 1.0 per cent and has its roots in the biblical tenet of tithing.

Beyond addressing immediate material needs, charity also resonates with the notion of improving the overall human condition, fostering a sense of shared destiny, and promoting a harmonious coexistence founded on principles of empathy and solidarity. This is a stance that is more aligned with the style of aid that was being promoted by Nordic countries, which included a focus on basic needs, including health, education, sanitation, and clean water that embody the essence of dignified living and social justice.

By prioritising basic needs within aid frameworks, international actors believed they could mitigate immediate hardships and lay the foundation for sustainable development and human progress.

This shift towards humanitarian-focused aid gained momentum after Robert McNamara assumed leadership of the World Bank in 1968. He advocated for donor-funded initiatives that addressed fundamental human needs such as health, education, water, and sanitation. By the late 1960s, given the growing awareness of persistent poverty in aid-receiving nations, a reassessment of the impact of aid on people's lives became unavoidable. It was becoming clear to many that the global aid industry shackles aid-dependent nations, keeping them perpetually reliant on the generosity of the wealthy.

The 1980s saw the landscape shift once more as the concept of addressing basic needs gave way to a focus on economic restructuring and policy reform. This change could be attributed to the global recession stemming from the 1970s oil shock. Developing nations burdened by debt received financial assistance from donor countries, but this was tied to economic restructuring and reduced social service spending, a strategy known as structural adjustment, which will be covered in more detail below. This perpetuated rather than alleviated poverty and inequality in these nations.

The shift away from a focus on basic needs in foreign aid was given momentum by two World Bank economists, Paul Collier and David Dollar, who proposed a new ethical focus on "duties of rescue", highlighting mutual efficiency, results, and "aid effectiveness" (Collier, 2016; Collier & Dollar, 2002). However, this approach oversimplified the intricate ethical considerations in aid, particularly regarding long-term development, cultural context, power dynamics, and the importance of providing alternative strategies beyond immediate relief. For example, Collier and Dollar's emphasis on tax-financed aid overlooked the contributions of diverse actors, particularly domestic ones, and their historical analysis disregarded complex geopolitical and economic influences.

While the ideas of Collier and Dollar provoked critical thought, the implementation of these has been ineffective with unintended consequences. In the case of Nigeria, despite significant financial support, pervasive corruption persisted within the government, undermining the intended impact of aid. Similarly, in Zimbabwe, substantial aid inflows often bypassed local communities due to ineffective distribution channels, hindering the prospects of sustainable development at the grassroots level. The timing for introducing this new approach was also quite peculiar as it has come to the rescue of well-crafted and policy-focused structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) that had delivered meagre results.

Furthermore, a comprehensive ethical framework for aid encompassing a broader spectrum of perspectives, addressing urgent humanitarian crises and systemic factors perpetuating global poverty, is still lacking (Collier & Dollar, 2002).

While Collier and Dollar's principles were supposed to enhance coordination, ownership, and accountability among donors and recipients, they often failed to account for differing national priorities, political dynamics, and contexts. As often happens in these situations, poor results were blamed on the recipients of aid, with very much the same logic as the beneficiary of charity being blamed for not improving his or her condition. The idea behind aid effectiveness revolved around rewarding "good performers", namely, those nations that meticulously adhered to the extensive conditionality list outlined by Bretton Woods institutions. This approach implied that only countries aligning with the stringent conditions established by donors were deemed deserving of rewards.

An unintended consequence of results-based management and quantifiable outcomes has been a narrow focus on short-term indicators, neglecting the complexity of long-term development. Additionally, the push for aid harmonisation and alignment with recipient country systems undermined local ownership and perpetuated power imbalances between donors and recipients. The call for reducing aid fragmentation overlooked the importance of diverse approaches and perspectives, stifling innovation and adaptability.

Lancaster (2009) highlights a fundamental challenge in assessing the impact of aid on development: aid is frequently driven by purposes beyond development itself. Donor governments often use aid to achieve diplomatic, commercial, or cultural objectives abroad, making it difficult to disentangle these motives.

Some argue that an honest discussion needs to be had upfront about whether aid is benign. In too many cases, the proclaimed intentions of the donor can mask underlying political or economic motivations for dispensing aid (Fukuda-Parr et al., 2002). The truth is that the multifaceted nature of aid-giving involves mixed motivations, of which development is just one aspect. Various countries allocate aid for diplomatic, commercial, and cultural reasons, reflecting different geopolitical ambitions and domestic political influences. The intricate interplay between domestic politics, international opportunities, and challenges shapes the motivations behind aid-giving, underscoring the complexity inherent in understanding the aid process.

While there needs to be more evaluation regarding aid's effectiveness in achieving these diverse goals, assessing aid based solely on its development outcomes is also unjust. Despite our knowledge of aid's successes and failures, it remains challenging to judge whether aid has effectively promoted development and alleviated poverty and to what extent (Lancaster, 2009).

The notion of human development, along with its associated index, cultivated and propagated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) primarily through its annual Human Development Reports (1990), was an indirect response to the need to re-centre the discussion about development away from aid or its supposed effectiveness.

Initially, a significant component of this counter-discourse challenged the prevailing viewpoint linked to the Bretton Woods institutions. Subsequently, shifts in the policies and perspectives of the UNDP and the World Bank have occurred, leading to substantial elaborations on this concept by both bureaucratic and academic actors. A comprehensive scrutiny of this transformative process was written by McNeill (2008), with his insights drawn from prior investigations into influential development policy ideas, such as 'social capital', suggesting that the 'human development' concept demonstrated comparatively more resilience.

Pioneered by Mahbub Ul Haq and Amartya Sen (UNDP, 1990), the human development framework has sparked heightened interest in academic research and policy initiatives. It has elucidated the nuanced relationship between institutional flexibility and scholarly investigation, shedding light on how the adaptability and responsiveness of institutions can significantly impact the evolving landscape of knowledge production. The intricate dynamics revealed underscore the crucial interdependence between institutional frameworks and the pursuit of knowledge, showcasing how adaptable and supportive structures can foster a more robust and dynamic scholarly environment.

Within the intricate tapestry of the dialogue, a collective whisper arose, unveiling a shared realisation that a crucial element in the machinery of progress had been overlooked. Like harmonising notes, voices united to echo the sentiment that an unnoticed discord—perhaps stemming from unaddressed challenges or overlooked complexities—had crept in, casting a subtle but impactful shadow on the collective pursuit of advancement.

One such voice was William Easterly (2006). In his notable critique of the development aid discourse, he drew inspiration from Rudyard Kipling's poem "The White Man's Burden". Originally penned by the British novelist and poet in February 1899, this poem urged the United States to take on the mantle of empire-building, following in the footsteps of Britain and other European nations. While Kipling's poem may have lacked poetic excellence, Theodore Roosevelt, on the cusp of assuming the vice presidency and later the presidency, acknowledged its insightful perspective on territorial expansion (SHEC, 2023).

Easterly's influential work "The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good" (2006) levelled a series of compelling critiques against traditional development aid. One fundamental critique revolves around the lack of accountability and participation inherent in top-down aid approaches. Easterly argued that aid efforts driven by large organisations and governments often fail to incorporate local input, leading to a disconnect between the intended goals of aid and the actual needs of the recipients. Moreover, he emphasised the need for more clarity of incentives within aid organisations, where focusing on securing funding and demonstrating quick results can overshadow the pursuit of meaningful and sustainable development outcomes. He believed this had fostered a cycle of dependency on aid rather than encouraging self-sufficiency.

Easterly's criticism extended to the complexity and bureaucracy of aid mechanisms. He suggested that the convoluted processes within aid organisations have hindered efficient resource allocation and timely project execution. He also questioned the short-term orientation of aid efforts, highlighting the necessity of addressing underlying systemic issues to achieve lasting development. Additionally, he underscored the significance of local entrepreneurship and market forces in the development equation, advocating for an approach that empowers local actors and institutions rather than imposing external solutions. In essence, Easterly's critiques centred on the need for a more flexible, context-sensitive, and market-driven approach to development aid, urging a departure from conventional practices in favour of strategies that prioritise the genuine well-being and self-determination of recipient communities (Easterly, 2006).

Charitable Shift: A Double-Edged Sword

As those working in development aid grappled with missed targets and subpar results, as highlighted by Easterly's critiques, charity-based approaches made something of a comeback even as SAPs were gaining ground. In this evolving landscape, initiatives like Live Aid and Band Aid gained prominence in the 1980s as tangible demonstrations of global concern for Africa's plight. These high-profile events, characterised by star-studded concerts and impassioned pleas for aid, showcased the humanitarian impulse to alleviate suffering on the continent.

For most African countries, the shift back to charity-based approaches represented a double-edged sword. On the one hand, these initiatives helped raise much-needed funds to address development gaps on the continent. On the other hand, these spectacles of charity inadvertently perpetuated a diminishing and degrading view of Africa, reinforcing a stigmatised image of perpetual misery and an inability to address its challenges independently. By presenting Africa as a helpless victim needing external rescue and projecting an image of the continent solely through the lens of suffering and dependence, these initiatives reinforced a perception of Africa as inherently incapable of self-sufficiency.

This framing had profound implications. It further entrenched the notion that Africa was defined by its inability to overcome its challenges without the benevolent intervention of external actors. Moreover, the emphasis on immediate relief diverted attention from the structural reforms and required capacity development, perpetuating a cycle of dependency and disempowerment. Africans were continually denied agency in their development trajectories.

These trends continued into the millennium, which witnessed the birth of an inspiring dream as the United Nations set forth ambitious Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with a vision to eradicate poverty, promote equality, and attain sustainable peace. However, the subsequent narrative associated with the MDGs has been marked by missed targets and a glaring absence of accountability, as exemplified by unmet goals accepted by donor countries in the frame of this new compact. The response to these shortcomings saw the rise of yet more charitable endeavours like 'Live 8' concerts and activism, driving public awareness and philanthropy.

Aid strategies continue to evolve in line with the slow transition from colonialist undertones to market-oriented approaches. However, this evolution brought complex challenges and critiques. SAPs designed to induce comprehensive reforms faced scepticism and yielded mixed results, especially in Africa, where negative or stagnant ODA growth was observed. Within these dynamics, the paradox of intent versus outcomes surfaced, prompting a re-evaluation not just of Collier and Dollar's (2002) effectiveness mantra but also of the aid approach itself, shifting the focus from its policies and utilisation to broader scrutiny of its overall efficacy. The onus to demonstrate efficacy, previously laid at the aid recipients' door, gradually shifted towards the providers. This meant donors had to become more transparent about their intent, exposing their possible hypocrisy.

Another layer of complexity was added as the deficiencies of globalisation converged with discussions on climate inaction and the crisis of environmental rejuvenation. In Africa, the examination of charity-inspired approaches took on an intellectual dimension. Observing the advancements achieved by other regions, a tangible sense of frustration emerged in Africa for constantly being perceived as the 'last resort' guinea pig for various experiments. It was felt that the unique and often overlooked challenges Africa faces while navigating developmental strategies were being overlooked.

Neglecting to address inequality as an incidental outcome of progress in diverse global development benchmarks carried noteworthy consequences, especially when considering the specific circumstances within the African context. This oversight not only hindered the accurate assessment of developmental success but also perpetuated disparities, impeding the region's journey towards sustainable and inclusive progress. Failing to recognise and rectify these inequalities hampered the effectiveness of development efforts and underscored the importance of a more nuanced and context-specific approach to ensure equitable and lasting advancements in Africa.

Thomas Piketty offers some insights on how such inequalities could be addressed. In his seminal work, "Capital in the 21st Century" (2013), Piketty unveils the critical relationship between the after-tax rate of return on capital and economic growth. When capital's rate of return surpasses economic growth, holders of capital accumulate wealth over time while income from labour grows more slowly. Stark inequality is the result. This unequal distribution of wealth, Piketty contends, catalyses societal and economic disruptions. To mitigate this, Piketty advocates for progressive wealth taxation, offering a solution to curbing inequality and preventing excessive wealth concentration among a minute minority.

Piketty's key findings underscore the universal nature of the elevation of the wealth-to-income ratio in developed countries. The so-called Old-World nations exhibit a distinct U-shaped pattern; they reach remarkable heights in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, then plummet during the mid-twentieth century, and resurge significantly from 1980. This trend is observable beyond Anglo-Saxon economies, such as the United States and Canada, extending to nations like France and Italy, where sluggish economic growth intensifies wealth accumulation.

In light of this, Piketty highlights the potency of augmenting economic growth and proposes nuanced approaches to wealth redistribution. This includes considering alternatives to broad wealth taxes, such as targeted land taxation and intellectual property (IP) reform. Notably, Piketty emphasises the resilience of land and resources, noting that rigorous taxation would not eliminate them. At the same time, IP reforms could limit the value of patents, including drug patents, and lower consumer costs.

It is worth noting that while an IMF working paper initially contested Piketty's claims, subsequent discussions within the IMF, just before the 2017 IMF/World Bank Spring Meetings, acknowledged the imperative of fiscal policies to tackle inequality (Goes, 2016; Gaspar et al., 2017). Recognising that a one-size-fits-all strategy is inadequate, the need for tailored redistributive measures considering a nation's specific circumstances, fiscal pressures, social preferences, and administrative capacities is finally being acknowledged (Gaspar et al., 2017). This discourse underscores the complexity of addressing the intricate challenge of wealth inequality.

Mind the Gap: The Compensation Debate

The profound historical injustices endured by nations subjected to enslavement, resource exploitation, and marginalisation have, in recent times, led to increasing calls for the need for compensation and reparations. Colonised countries played an involuntary role in the advancement of others, contributing to their development while suffering enduring disparities themselves. The same nations now bear the brunt of inequality and climate change despite having made minimal contributions to its onset. The ethical imperative behind the compensation debate lies in rectifying historical wrongs, acknowledging historical responsibility, fostering global equity, and recognising that addressing climate vulnerability is a shared responsibility for the common good.

Historical evidence underscores the significance of compensation in addressing historical—and economic—wrongs. For example, after World War II, Germany was required to provide reparations to countries like Greece and Poland. These reparations aimed to alleviate the economic devastation caused by the war, acknowledging the financial toll on the affected nations.

In the realm of colonial restitution, the Belgian government's acknowledgement of and compensation for its role in the exploitation of the Congo during the colonial era stands out. This compensation reflects an attempt to address the economic ramifications of historical injustices, including resource extraction and economic exploitation, and provides a tangible means of rectifying economic imbalances resulting from colonial practices. Italy also provided compensation to Libya following its colonial rule. In 2008, Italy formally apologised and agreed to a compensation package for the atrocities committed during the colonial period. This compensation represented a recognition of the economic impact of colonisation on Libya, including issues such as forced labour and the seizure of resources.

In the context of climate change, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) further amplifies the case for compensation. CBDR recognises that while all nations share a collective obligation to combat climate change, developed nations, which have historically contributed the most to carbon emissions and benefited from industrialisation, bear a heightened responsibility to support vulnerable and less developed nations (Tandon, 2008).

The principle is well recognised, for example, in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which recognises that developed countries have a historical responsibility to compensate developing countries for the loss and damage they (the developed countries) have caused to the environment during their period of industrialisation (Tandon, 2008). This historical responsibility is reflected in the UNFCCC's treaty provisions that oblige developed countries to provide new and additional financial flows (as well as technology transfers) to developing countries to support the latter's costs for implementing the objectives of the UNFCCC for mitigation and climate adaptation (Tandon, 2008).

Compensation is imperative due to the ecological repercussions of the former's industrialisation endeavours. However, it is noteworthy that there are significant discrepancies between the manifestation of this historical responsibility and the fulfilment of treaty commitments. This underscores the prevailing lacunae in addressing climate-induced exigencies. This disjuncture between rhetorical acknowledgement and pragmatic implementation becomes increasingly conspicuous when juxtaposed with the principle of CBDR, which serves as the fundamental tenet delineating the nuanced responsibilities between developed and developing nations, reflecting their distinct historical trajectories and varying degrees of contribution to the prevailing climate predicament.

Beyond the climate context, such compensatory financial obligations find parallels in contemporary negotiations between the ACP nations and the EU concerning Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), as explained in a different chapter of this book.

The profound structural entanglements arising from centuries of historical interaction cannot be readily disentangled within a few decades, thus warranting a just transition facilitated by compensatory mechanisms. The notion of "deeply embedded imbalanced structured relationships" (Tandon, 2008) evokes a poignant reminder that rectifying such intricate historical injustices demands a robust commitment to redressal. This commitment extends beyond immediate economic considerations, intertwining with the imperative of fostering self-sufficiency and a well-crafted exit strategy from the quagmire of aid dependency.

In the global public goods (GPGs) realm, the discourse resonates with the prevailing crises of our era—ranging from climate change mitigation to infectious disease control. The intrinsic interconnectedness of these challenges mandates a collaborative ethos that transcends geopolitical divides and historical imbalances. GPGs embody this universal interdependence, necessitating concerted efforts from all nations, irrespective of their developmental standing (Kaul, 2022).

The current landscape is marked by a disconcerting disjuncture between the theoretical commitments to GPGs and their operational realisation. This chasm, emblematic of institutional inertia, underscores the imperative of recalibrating the working mechanisms of international cooperation. As Inge Kaul (2022) aptly articulates, this recalibration should encapsulate a profound understanding of the intertwined nature of 'global' and 'good' within the GPG framework. The global implications of these goods, transcending territorial confines and temporal boundaries, necessitate a collaborative ethos that supersedes the conventional norms of international interaction.

In essence, the convergence of historical responsibilities, justice, and equity is pivotal in navigating the complex terrain of compensatory finance, ensuring the restitution of historical imbalances, and facilitating the transformational adaptation necessary to address contemporary challenges.

Getting Beyond 'Good Governance' and Why That Matters

Good governance is a cornerstone of the Western paradigm of developmental assistance. Aid effectiveness principles have influenced the emphasis on good governance in ODA, which is intertwined with efforts to combat corruption and instigate policy reforms. However, this framework of good governance falls short of fully embracing structural transformation. Instead, it tends to create the perception that unsuccessful outcomes are primarily the result of the recipients' deficiency in good governance rather than acknowledging broader systemic issues within global governance.

Daron Acemoglu and Robinson (2012), a prominent economist and scholar, has put forth several key ideas regarding governance, particularly in economic development. He is known for his nuanced critiques of the World Bank's positions on good governance.

The World Bank defines good governance as the exercise of power in managing a country's economic and social resources. This definition encompasses the processes through which decisions are made, policies are implemented, and resources are allocated. Good governance is characterised by transparency, accountability, participation, inclusiveness, and the rule of law. It implies effective, efficient, and equitable use of resources to achieve sustainable development and improve the welfare of all citizens. The World Bank recognises that good governance is essential for reducing poverty, promoting economic growth, and ensuring the effective delivery of public services (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012).

Acemoglu and Robinson's work delves into the relationship between political power and socioeconomic dynamics to highlight how those in authority often design institutions to serve their own interests, establishing either extractive or inclusive systems. His analysis challenges the notion that external interventions, such as the World Bank's 'good governance' framework, can bring about meaningful and lasting governance reform. Additionally, it underscores the concept of path dependence, illustrating how historical trajectories and initial institutional choices can have enduring effects on a country's development (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012).

While acknowledging the importance of inclusive and accountable institutions for sustainable development, Acemoglu contends that the World Bank's emphasis on select parameters such as anti-corruption measures and property rights protection oversimplifies the intricate web of institutional dynamics that shape governance outcomes. He argues that this approach fails to address the underlying complexities of governance challenges, emphasising that genuine and lasting institutional change cannot be externally imposed. Acemoglu's perspective emphasises the necessity of locally driven reforms that consider historical, cultural, and social nuances unique to each nation. By highlighting the political economy of institutions, the concept of path dependence, and the multifaceted nature of governance transformation, Acemoglu asserts that addressing systemic issues and power dynamics is crucial for meaningful improvements in governance and, ultimately, for achieving equitable and prosperous development.

In "Good governance is a bad idea", Katharina Pistor (2023) takes this further, arguing that the traditional emphasis on good governance as the critical solution for economic growth and development is flawed and has, in fact, evolved into an existential threat. Pistor contends that the good-governance agenda, though centred on procedural fairness and efficient decision-making, has overshadowed substantive outcomes, often favouring appearances over actual results. This has, in turn, crowded out outcome-driven political action and hindered efforts to address complex social and environmental challenges. Pistor (2023) illustrates that the climate crisis underscores the shortcomings of this approach, as indicators and labels dominate climate policy discussions while failing to yield tangible results. She asserts that accurate solutions require a shift from mere compliance and adhering to superficial checkboxes to tackling problems at their roots and engaging in power struggles. She also highlights the urgency of focusing on actual actions and systemic change rather than bureaucratic measures.

The fight against corruption is usually on the good governance checklists. Indeed, the obsession with corruption in Africa has become central in the development aid narratives and the business language of crucial actors such as investment advisors or rating agencies. It is a fact that African countries systematically rank poorly in an array of corruption-related indexes.

The landscape of corruption measurement is characterised by publicly accessible corruption indexes, encompassing approximately 140 data sets that scrutinise corruption across developing countries (Ganahl, 2013). Prominent among these are indexes like the International Country Risk Guide (ICRG) (Ganahl, 2013), Business International (now incorporated into The Economist Intelligence Unit) (EIU, 2022), Freedom House's "Freedom in the World" publication (Freedom House, 2023), Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) (TIZ, 2022), and the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutions Assessments (CPIAs) (World Bank, 2023) and KKZ or KKM indicators (Kaufmann et al., 1999).

An evaluation presented by Arndt and Oman (2006), articulated through the OECD Development Centre, unveils these assessments' convoluted nature and constraints. Their analysis spotlights how difficult it is to gauge corruption's multifaceted dimensions. It also facilitates cross-country comparisons and discerns evolving trends over time. Arndt and Oman's perspective further underscores concerns about the quality and utility of these indexes, prompting reflections on their inherent subjectivity and potential for misinterpretation by the business and donor communities.

The common thread running through these critiques is that governance discourse must evolve beyond the corruption rhetoric and assume an added complexity.

African leaders often parrot the traditional narratives around corruption and good governance to gain favour and recognition with international partners. Abdulrahman and Abraham (2016) point out parallels between how the AU and EU speak about these challenges despite a temporal gap of half a century, revealing an underlying continuity in governance paradigms. This alignment became even more evident following the dissolution of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the creation of the AU, with aspirations for heightened intra-African economic activities, political stability, continental unity, and global visibility.

In parallel, while the EU's governance ideals are intertwined with concepts of democracy and good governance, the difficulty of translating these ideals into tangible compacts and agreements, such as the Lomé and Cotonou agreements, illustrates that aspirational rhetoric alone is not enough. Abdulrahman and Abraham's analysis underscores the challenge of bridging the gap between principles and pragmatic execution, highlighting the intricacies of transforming moral superiority into practical, actionable governance frameworks.

In Africa, the governance theme needs to extend beyond corruption, good-governance measurements, or EU-Africa agreement dynamics to encompass broader issues, such as the global dialogue on illicit financial flows (Lopes & Oliveira, 2021). This topic introduces another layer of complexity, as the movement of illegal funds across borders further underscores the intricate interplay between lofty ideals and the multifaceted realities of effective governance implementation.

In sum, the post-colonial era has witnessed a continuation of colonial attributes and models, albeit repackaged with seemingly inoffensive terms like good governance and democracy. However, the appropriation of these concepts within a neoliberal framework has undermined the sovereignty of African countries. As highlighted by Rob de Vos in "Europe, Africa and Aid: Towards a Genuine Partnership" (as cited by Adebajo & Whiteman, 2012), these terminologies have been wielded as subtle tools of influence, perpetuating power imbalances and maintaining a façade of cooperation.

The persistence of these dynamics is evidenced in the EU-Africa dialogue, where a lack of clear and robust leadership on the African side has often led to perceptions of evasiveness and unpreparedness. This has been particularly evident in negotiations surrounding economic partnership agreements. Despite the optimistic prospects presented by initiatives like the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), the relationship between Europe and Africa remains multifaceted, extending far beyond financial aid. Consequently, there is a growing call for a more discerning approach to aid acceptance, selective engagement, and a nuanced understanding of African societies to guide European decision-making.

Considering the intricacies surrounding aid effectiveness and the broader EU-Africa partnership, both parties must adopt a more pragmatic and informed approach. The current donor-recipient architecture, as outlined by de Vos in the book by Adebajo and Whiteman (2012), is marked by complexity and wasteful duplication of efforts.

Accepting the need for comprehensive knowledge about the functioning of African societies, European leaders should strive to grasp the nuances of power relations and societal dynamics. This understanding is essential to curbing premature disillusionment and misconceptions.

Simultaneously, Africa must cultivate its analytical capacity to think critically and evaluate its circumstances independently. While external support and knowledge dissemination play a role, the continent must take ownership of its development narrative. The EU and Africa should heed the call to relinquish grand scenarios and unrealistic commitments, focusing instead on pragmatic goals that can be achieved within a foreseeable timeframe. Such an approach, rooted in mutual respect and genuine partnership, holds the potential to dismantle the vestiges of colonial legacies and empower both regions to work together to address the complex challenges the planet is facing.

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CHAPTER 4

Comparative Advantage Is an Old-Fashioned Trick

An Interplay Between Commerce and Conquest

David Ricardo, a renowned British classical economist, is chiefly celebrated for his contributions to various economic theories, including wages and profit, the labour theory of value, and comparative advantage. His work on comparative advantage, in particular, has been a cornerstone of international trade theory. In simple terms, Ricardo's (1817) theory posits that countries can benefit from trading with each other by focusing on making the things they are best at making while buying the things they are not as good at making from other countries. This concept was prominently illustrated in his influential book *The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, where he employed static models involving two countries, England and Portugal. He proposed that even if one country excelled in both cloth and wine production, a division of labour would lead to specialisation in the goods where each country held the most significant comparative advantage. In this scenario, both countries would benefit from trading according to their strengths, even if one country needed to be more efficient in both goods.

The theory of comparative advantage has been harnessed to bolster the doctrine of free trade, asserting that resources should shift from high-cost to low-cost production, ultimately boosting productivity. The theory also presumes that protectionism disrupts market functioning. Therefore, under the auspices of free trade policies, countries are expected to export goods for which they possess a comparative advantage, financing their

C. Lopes, *The Self-Deception Trap*,
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imports (for those goods and services where they don't have an advantage) through these exports.

It's a neat theory. However, it doesn't consider that the value of exports from developing nations largely hinges on global market demands and the pricing strategies of competing suppliers. Africa has suffered quite significantly from the crude interpretation of Ricardo's theory. It has justified decades of policy influencers' insistence that the fortunes of the continent's economies lie in its natural resources bounty and that its insertion in the global economy depended on exploiting such comparative advantage. Many experts and development-focused institutions were happy to identify the shortcomings of economic progress based on bad governance of such a significant advantage.

Without it being explicit, the theory of comparative advantage served as a basis for perpetuating a colonial model, where commodities were exported against the import of manufactured higher-value goods and where the prices of commodities were decided away from their centres of production and trade. As the architecture of Europe-Africa relations shifted and greater emphasis was placed on trade agreements for their inherent value, the flaws of the theory were thrown into sharp relief.

Ricardo's theory of comparative advantage was first employed as an economic policy during the period of economic modernisation in the late eighteenth century, as economies transitioned from agrarian and handcraft-based economies to industrialised factory-driven systems. In the 1950s and 1960s, economists delved into the long-term analytical implications of the theory, and it was integrated into neoclassical theory as the latter supplanted classical theory as the predominant paradigm in international economics. While certain incompatible elements were removed, the core of the theory of comparative advantage survived intact, and this modernised neoclassical interpretation argues that free international trade is mutually advantageous for all participating nations. The exchange rate mechanism is posited to automatically deliver these benefits under the sway of free trade (Goldin, 1990).

Economic theories have an undeniable influence on political decision-makers. This highlights the critical link between theory and practice (Schumacher, 2013). Both classical and neoclassical theories, for example, provide workable insights into the conditions and factors that govern international trade, including mobility of capital, transformations of capital and labour, balanced trade, and adjustment mechanisms. However, the theory of competitive advantage has significant theoretical insufficiencies and shortcomings when it comes to real-world application. It therefore needs to be revised to describe and understand international trade better.

Economic policies grounded in an incomplete theory can yield adverse outcomes and unintended consequences due to limited and potentially misleading assumptions. Nevertheless, despite its shortcomings, the theory of comparative advantage has widespread support and has thus, unsurprisingly, wielded undue influence over the development of international trade policies, historically and currently, with mixed results.

The theory's impact on global trade policies has been well-documented, particularly in trade liberalisation, characterised by dismantling trade barriers, championed by organisations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), IMF, and World Bank (Shaikh, 2003; Shell, 1995). Scholars argue that trade liberalisation offers nations the optimal path to reap the benefits of comparative advantage-based trade (Kowalski, 2011). Notably, the WTO consistently invokes the concept of comparative advantage to justify its advocacy for unfettered trade and its dedication to realising this vision. This perspective is underscored by the WTO's official stance, where the theory of comparative advantage is heralded as a potent insight into economics (WTO, 2013). Pascal Lamy, a Director General of the WTO, staunchly defended the theory of comparative advantage in a speech directed to its detractors, stating:

> There are those who now call into question Ricardo's theory that differences in relative productivity between countries lead to their specialisation in production and to trade. Doubt has arisen that this specialisation based on comparative advantage results in higher total output, with all countries benefiting from the increased production. … In my view, the analysis by Bhagwati, Panagariya and Srinivasan should convince us that the principle of comparative advantage, and more generally, the principle that trade is mutually beneficial, remains valid in the 21st century. (Lamy, 2010)

In contrast to the pronounced emphasis on trade liberalisation within WTO policies, the organisation's foundational objectives, outlined in the preamble of the Marrakesh Agreement, encompass a broader scope. These objectives cover the elevation of living standards, the assurance of full employment, the sustained growth of real income and effective demand, and the expansion of goods and services trade (WTO, 1994). However, the WTO's primary focus remains on facilitating unimpeded trade and the reduction of trade barriers, often at the expense of fully realising its other articulated objectives (Ismail, 2005; Rodrik, 2001). This prioritisation can be attributed to the reliance on the theory of comparative advantage, which guides the conclusion that goals like national welfare are optimally attained through trade liberalisation and the abandonment of protectionist measures. Consequently, alternative policy approaches tend to be marginalised. In this context, the pursuit of unrestricted international trade evolves into an end unto itself rather than merely a means to achieve overarching objectives (Schumacher, 2013).

The dominant Western instruments of control encompass aid (as explored in the previous chapter), trade, investment, and technology. Following the culmination of World War II (1939–1945), the Allied powers convened in Bretton Woods, USA, to reshape the global governance framework. It led to the establishment of three pivotal international institutions: the World Bank, the IMF, and the GATT. While the former two institutions were primarily concerned with financial and developmental matters, GATT focused on trade regulations and agreements. GATT was subsequently succeeded by the WTO in 1995, although GATT's rules remain integral to the WTO system. While ostensibly new creations, these institutions had their roots in the colonial and financial empires of old.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, European and American colonial and financial empires were deliberately structured to serve the interests of the colonisers rather than the colonised peoples. Coercion through political, economic, and military dominance compelled colonised nations to produce raw materials, food, and minerals that were exploited within these empires.

Post-1945, a shift occurred as colonised populations rebelled against imperial rule, and the USA demanded that European colonial powers open their colonies to American trade and investment. This dual pressure ultimately led European nations to grant their colonies political independence. However, while direct financial and trade controls were dismantled, new strategies were devised to uphold existing rules-based objectives, helping the US and European powers maintain their economic dominion over the former colonies.

The landscape shifted again after 1989 with the dissolution of the Soviet Union as the result of a seismic geopolitical shift that saw the end of the Cold War and the reshaping of the global governance agenda. Developed countries redefined their needs and priorities through new international trade agreements.

Trade liberalisation was exalted for the following decades as the 'engine of growth' within the Washington Consensus, a prominent pillar of contemporary neoliberal economic ideology. While the notion of unregulated markets thrived during the nineteenth-century zenith of British maritime dominance, the rise of American industrialisation in the latter part of the century spurred protectionist policies against 'free trade'. A similar surge in state support, protectionism, taxation, and fiscal incentives accompanied Britain's industrialisation of the eighteenth century.

In his illuminating work "David Ricardo's Comparative Advantage and Developing Countries: Myths and Realities", Kalim Siddiqui (2017) offers a compelling account of the Indian textile industry's historical trajectory, shedding light on the protectionist dynamics that shaped trade relationships in that country. Siddiqui unveiled a vivid picture of the Indian textile landscape in 1750 when it contributed to a substantial portion of the global textile output, predominantly driven by handicrafts and artisanal craftsmanship.

Challenging the conventional understanding of Britain's industrial ascendancy, Siddiqui's research highlights a significant departure from the widely held notion that Britain's productivity surge occurred in the eighteenth century. Instead, he reveals that this transformative growth manifested in the early nineteenth century, a temporal alignment with the implementation of protectionist policies that laid the foundation for the burgeoning British cotton textile industry.

Siddiqui (2017) underscores the pivotal role of British protectionism in this narrative, demonstrating how it bolstered the growth of domestic industries while inhibiting parallel advancements in colonial and semi-colonial sectors. He traces India's evolution from a prominent global producer and exporter of cotton textiles in the eighteenth century to being overshadowed by the UK by the mid-nineteenth century. This transformation was facilitated by Britain's imposition of free trade in its colonies and semi-colonies, effectively positioning itself as the world's largest capital exporter by the end of the nineteenth century, with a substantial proportion of British capital invested abroad.

Siddiqui's analysis lays bare the intricate interplay between economic policy, espionage, and political manoeuvring during the early modern period. This multifaceted approach sought to stimulate domestic industry, particularly in England, underpinning its quest for wealth, power, and dominance over neighbouring nations. Siddiqui underscores the instrumental role of protectionist measures in Britain, elucidating how tariffs, such as the First and Second Calico Acts of 1701 and 1702, aimed at curbing textile imports from India, propelled British woollen and textile production. Innovations such as Hargreaves' Spinning Jenny and the Arkwright spinning frame further catalysed the quality of British cotton production in the eighteenth century.

Siddiqui delves into the intricacies of this protectionist strategy, revealing how British cotton producers, despite technological advancements, struggled to compete with Indian cotton on price. Consequently, increased protectionist measures were demanded, culminating in heightened tariffs on Indian cotton goods in the 1780s. This protective wall bolstered the British cotton textile industry's survival and expansion and facilitated significant capital investments. Alavi (1982) highlights the necessity of safeguarding the British industry through substantial duties, with cotton textiles potentially priced at 50–60 per cent lower than their English counterparts. This protective framework eventually gave way to free trade as British industry matured, only to revert to protectionism when Indian textiles regained a competitive edge in the late nineteenth century (Robinson, 1974).

Siddiqui's exploration extends beyond textiles, shedding light on the decline of India's shipbuilding industry under the rule of the East India Company. The enactment of legislation in 1813 and 1814, which curtailed Indian ships' access to British markets, underscores the intricate relationship between protectionism, colonial influence, and economic shifts. These insights echo the sentiments of historical figures such as Jan P. Coen (as cited in Reinert, 2016) and Johan De La Court (as cited in Reinert, 2016), highlighting the interplay between commerce and conquest in international relations.

As Siddiqui demonstrates, protectionist policies, technological advancements, and geopolitical realities work together to shape trade dynamics. Through his comprehensive analysis, he paints a detailed picture of how protectionism and economic imperatives intertwine to mould the fortunes of nations, adding nuance to the broader narrative of international trade and demonstrating how comparative advantage theory can be manipulated.

The Dutch Disease

The potential of natural resource wealth to fuel economic growth, facilitate human development, and generate employment is a widely acknowledged premise. However, this promise has often been marred by adverse outcomes such as poverty, inequality, and violent conflicts. This complex phenomenon has been attributed to what is commonly referred to as the "resource curse", "Dutch disease", or, more seriously, the concept of "mineral-based poverty traps" (Morris & Fessehaie, 2014).

The term "Dutch Disease" in economics originated from a phenomenon observed in the Netherlands during the late 1960s and early 1970s (Moisé, 2020). It refers to the adverse effects that a significant increase in revenues from natural resource exports, particularly commodities like oil or minerals, can have on a country's economy.

The Economist magazine coined the term in a 1977 article: "The Dutch Disease" (Moisé, 2020). The article discussed the economic challenges faced by the Netherlands at that time. Having discovered sizeable natural gas reserves in the North Sea, the country had substantially increased its gas exports and government revenues. However, the influx of revenue had unintended consequences for the Dutch economy.

The rapid inflow of foreign exchange from gas exports strengthened the Dutch guilder (the national currency), making non-resource sectors of the economy, such as manufacturing and agriculture, less competitive internationally. This phenomenon was characterised by a loss of competitiveness in these sectors, as higher currency values made their products more expensive for foreign buyers and imports cheaper for domestic consumers. As a result, the Dutch economy's manufacturing and other non-resource sectors suffered, negatively impacting overall economic diversification and growth.

The concept of the Dutch Disease has since been widely studied and applied to other countries that have faced similar challenges when experiencing a resource boom. It highlights the complexities and potential pitfalls of managing a resource-rich economy and underscores the need for careful economic management and diversification to ensure sustainable development.

In the discourse surrounding resource-based industrialisation strategies, Morris and Fessehaie (2014) outline three primary lines of critique. Firstly, the contention arises that resource-based industrialisation encounters challenges akin to any other path of industrialisation. Simply possessing proximity to a commodity does not guarantee cost advantages sufficient to nurture competitive resource-based industries in African countries. Infrastructure, human capital, access to capital, and skills development are pivotal in determining final cost competitiveness.

The second critique relates to scepticism towards resource-based linkages and externalities. The argument posits that commodity sectors might not inherently foster these linkages, necessitating a proactive approach to utilise resource rents effectively. The authors advocate for strategies promoting broader, dynamic growth trajectories through linkage development, addressing concerns of resource rent dissipation.

Finally, the authors highlight the dichotomy between resource-based industries and Africa's factor endowments. This critique contends that resource-based sectors must align optimally with the region's economic landscape. In this context, *The Economist* (2015) underscores Africa's paradoxical natural resources disadvantage in an article citing the "Dutch disease" phenomenon, where booming commodity prices lead to exchange rate appreciation, impeding local manufacturing and trade.

The success of resource-based industries is a complex equation that extends beyond initial skills and capital levels. An array of empirical studies and industry analyses bear this out, highlighting the multifaceted nature of the factors influencing sustained prosperity in these sectors. Technological innovation, market dynamics, regulatory frameworks, and strategic adaptability all play a pivotal role in shaping the trajectory of resource-based industries, challenging simplistic notions, and underscoring the need for a comprehensive understanding of their operational landscape. Furthermore, the experiences of resource-rich countries like Venezuela, Argentina, Malaysia, and Thailand reveal that effective economic policies and entrepreneurship mobilisation are instrumental in fostering the growth of resource-based industries. Such policies have facilitated industrialisation despite initial limitations in skills and capital (Morris & Fessehaie, 2014).

Ferranti et al. (2002) also demonstrate the potential for commodity sectors to stimulate productivity growth, technological innovation, and linkages, given appropriate institutional frameworks and investments in human capital, and show that successful resource-based development hinges on a combination of policy interventions, investment in research, and robust institutions. Chile's resource-based development trajectory exemplifies the transformative potential of effective policies. The country's revival in copper production during the mid-twentieth century initially needed more domestic technical capacity. However, Chile invested in skills, research, and exploration to cultivate its mining industry over time. This strategic approach has led to sustained economic growth and diversification (Wright & Czelusta, 2004).

The blind assumption that resources alone are an endowment that propels development is, therefore, simplistic and naïve. Successful resource-based development is not solely determined by geological endowment but hinges on effective policies, investments, and institutions. As Africa stands at a crossroads of opportunity, responsible natural resource revenue management could foster sustainable human development, job creation, and poverty reduction (Morris & Fessehaie, 2014). Ultimately, the resource curse argument needs to account for the nuanced economic character of mineral resources and the concept of resource abundance.

The Challenges of Capital Flight

Africa's immense natural resources have attracted foreign investment, often channelled through offshore entities, with the British Virgin Islands a common choice. This influx of wealth has disproportionately benefited elites, while the population at large sees slight improvement in their livelihoods. Mismanagement of resources and lack of transparency have cost the continent billions of dollars annually: funds urgently needed for education, health, and infrastructure (Ndikumana & Boyce, 2021).

Extended by offshore opportunities, capital flight has further drained Africa's resources. Over the past decades, capital flight from several African countries has resulted in a staggering loss of trillions of dollars. Urgent measures are required to curb this financial haemorrhage and repatriate stolen assets (Ndikumana & Boyce, 2021). Capital flight from Africa exceeds inflows into the continent.

The phenomenon of capital flight, wherein significant financial resources exit a country's economy and find refuge abroad, has garnered substantial attention due to its far-reaching implications for developing countries. The works of Ndikumana and Boyce (2021) shed light on this critical issue, revealing the magnitude of capital flight from several African countries over the 1970–2018 period. Notably, the top five countries affected, including Nigeria, South Africa, Algeria, Angola, and Morocco, collectively lost over $1.2 trillion through capital flight (Ndikumana & Boyce, 2021). This loss of financial assets has profoundly impacted these economies, hindered their development prospects, and exacerbated existing challenges.

The loss of capital is particularly pronounced in countries endowed with abundant natural resources, thereby revealing a correlation between natural resource wealth and capital flight risk. It is observed that six of the top ten countries with the highest capital flight are oil-exporting nations. This suggests that the allure of resource exploitation, while offering potential economic gains, also opens avenues for substantial capital flight, potentially eroding the benefits that resource-rich countries could reap from their endowments (Fig. 4.1).

Addressing the challenges of capital flight and resource exploitation necessitates a multifaceted approach. As technological megatrends reshape the global economy, the paradigm of comparative advantage must adapt to encompass evolving factors such as security considerations, reshoring, and sustainable production practices. Circular economy concepts, emphasising resource efficiency, reuse, and remanufacturing, offer a potential framework for sustainable development, which requires broad societal engagement and policy support.

The intertwined issues of capital flight and resource exploitation underscore the complexities of economic development in resource-rich developing countries. Strategic resource governance, sustainable economic

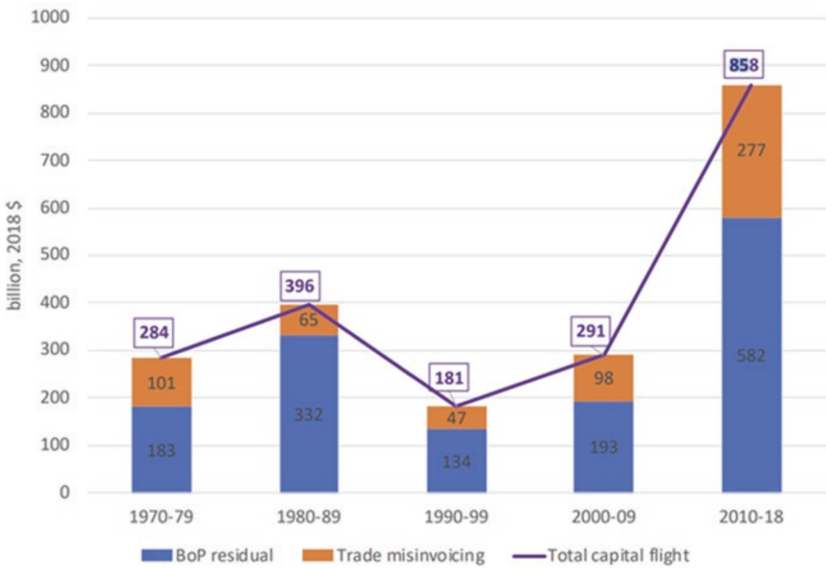

Fig. 4.1 Total capital flight from 30 African countries by decade ($ billion, 2018). (Source: Adapted from Ndikumana and Boyce (2021))

diversification, and innovative economic theories are imperative for overcoming these challenges and steering these economies towards a more equitable and prosperous future.

The Yoke of the Global Value Chain

Walter Rodney (1972) gave a good account of what he called "How Europe Underdeveloped Africa". Rodney narrates that Western Europe and Africa had a relationship that ensured wealth transfer from Africa to Europe. The transfer was only possible after the trade became genuinely international, and that takes one back to the late fifteenth century when Africa and Europe were drawn into common relations for the first time—along with Asia and the Americas. Africa helped to develop Western Europe in direct proportion to Western Europe's underdevelopment of Africa. The first significant thing about the internationalisation of trade in the fifteenth century was that Europeans took the initiative and went to other parts of the world. Europeans used the superiority of their ships and cannons to gain control of the world's waterways, starting with the Western Mediterranean and the Atlantic coast of North Africa.

From 1415, when the Portuguese captured Ceuta near Gibraltar, they maintained the offensive against the Maghreb. Within the next 60 years, they seized ports such as Arzila, El-Ksar-es-Seghir, and Tangier and fortified them. By the second half of the fifteenth century, the Portuguese controlled the Atlantic coast of Morocco. They used their economic and strategic advantages to prepare for further navigations, eventually carrying their ships around the Cape of Good Hope in 1495. When the Portuguese and the Spanish were still in command of a significant sector of world trade in the first half of the seventeenth century, they bought cotton cloth in India to exchange for enslaved people in Africa to mine gold in Central and South America. Part of the gold in the Americas would then be used to purchase spices and silks from the Far East. The concept of metropole and dependency automatically appeared when parts of Africa were caught up in the web of international commerce.

A handful of European countries decided on the role to be played by the African economy. In many ways, Africa was considered to be an extension of the European capitalist market. As far as foreign trade was concerned, Africa was dependent on what Europeans were prepared to buy and sell. At the same time, Europe exported goods already being produced and used in Europe to Africa, including Dutch linen, Spanish iron, English pewter, Portuguese wines, French brandy, Venetian glass beads, German muskets, and so on. Europeans could also unload the goods from the African continent back in Africa once they had become unsaleable in Europe.

Essentially, Europe had the authority to dictate what Africans should export, showcasing their dominance. Nevertheless, to assume that Europe possessed an unassailable military might would be wrong. In the early years of trade with Africa, it was the novelty of what European manufacturers offered, even although goods were often of poor quality, that attracted Africans. Esteban Montejo (1968), an African who ran away from a Cuban slave plantation in the nineteenth century, recalled that his people were enticed into slavery by the colour red. He said:

> The scarlet did for the Africans; the kings and the rest surrendered without a struggle. When the kings saw that the whites were taking out these scarlet handkerchiefs as if they were waving, they told the blacks, 'Go on then, go and get a scarlet handkerchief', and the blacks were so excited by the scarlet they ran down to the ships like sheep, and there they were captured. (Montejo, 1968)

Class divisions, too, contributed to the ease with which Europe imposed itself commercially on large parts of the African continent. The African-centred class situations, characterised by communal and flexible social structures, unintentionally played into the hands of Europeans during the era of colonial trade, who leveraged their understanding of hierarchical structures and economic divisions inherent in their own societies to weaken African structures. In many African societies, where class distinctions were more fluid and based on factors such as lineage and age, the lack of a rigid economic hierarchy made it challenging for local communities to negotiate with the more stratified European colonial powers. Europeans, using their economic and technological advantages, exploited these internal dynamics. They often engaged with specific groups or leaders within the African societies, taking advantage of existing power structures or creating dependencies, which enabled them to establish and control trade relationships to their benefit.

The more centralised and hierarchical nature of European societies allowed for a more cohesive and systematic approach to colonial trade, giving them an edge in negotiations and economic exploitation.

The historical ramifications of the transatlantic slave trade have indelibly marked the collective consciousness of both European and African societies, giving rise to profound feelings of guilt and moral responsibility. While recognising their active participation in this reprehensible enterprise, European nations confront the stark reality of their complicity while African societies grapple with the knowledge that certain factions within their midst collaborated in facilitating the operations of slave ships.

Three factors delineate the intricate contours of the Euro-African relationship: an inherent power disparity, historical and cultural interlacement, and the legacy of colonial discourse.

Inherent Power Disparity

An inherent and enduring power asymmetry lies at the heart of the African-European relationship. An explanation encompassing the fusion of economic and power dynamics is imperative to grasp what underpins this imbalance. While the economic facet undoubtedly exercises a crucial influence, it is just one element within a broader, multi-dimensional schema.

Historical and Cultural Interlacement

The roots of the African-European relationship extend over a century and are interwoven with the very bedrock of institutional frameworks, cultural milieus, and societal behaviours endemic to both sides. Untangling the complex skein of dependence that characterises one side and the overbearing dominance emblematic of imperial culture on the other necessitates protracted and concerted endeavours. Even with advances since the onset of Africa's wave of independence, inaugurated by Ghana's autonomy in 1957, the journey towards autonomy remains prolonged and demanding.

The Persistent Legacy of Colonial Discourse

An enduring legacy emanates from the discourse and negotiation paradigms shaped during the colonial epoch, constituting a critical facet warranting meticulous examination. Within their original contextual dimensions, three pivotal terms: 'preference', 'reciprocity', and 'non-reciprocity' have been assimilated into the parlance of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

A dissection of historical discourse evinces that terminologies such as 'preferences' are rooted in the colonial framework, wherein African entities were coerced into subserving foreign objectives at the cost of their intrinsic well-being. This alignment was often to satisfy Europe's strategic imperatives, which, as catalogued by Tandon (2015), include facilitating the supply of inexpensive commodities to fuel European industries, engaging in fierce competition with other imperial powers, creating markets for manufactured goods, and establishing control over monetary systems and credit, forming the bedrock for capital accumulation.

To fulfil these needs, European powers undertook a series of actions, including employing military might to reshape pre-colonial societies in service of imperial goals, establishing systems of imperial governance at the political level, and constructing intricate financial, banking, transport, and insurance structures, to facilitate the movement of goods to and from the colonies. In addition, Europe instituted a 'preferential' framework at the economic level, granting colonial produce preferential access to specific markets, such as England, over others, like Japan.

However, the concept of 'preference' was not a genuine concession to Africa, as it is often portrayed today. Instead, it represented a concession by Africa to Europe—an inherent trap in its very conception. During colonial times, countries like Uganda prohibited the export of their coffee or cotton to potentially more lucrative markets where prices were higher, like Japan, because of these 'preferences'. This was in direct conflict with the principles of free trade (Tandon, 2015). Nevertheless, Africans were led (and continue to be led) to believe that their survival hinged on the 'preferences' they (supposedly) enjoyed in the European market. This situation is akin to a debt-laden enslaved person who relies on the 'preferences' bestowed by the master for survival in service to the master.

This unsympathetic treatment of Africans is all the more astonishing when you consider that many African countries, along with other colonies (not the USA), played a pivotal role in sustaining Europe during World War II. The substantial loss of life among soldiers from the colonies on various war fronts contributed to significant physical devastation in African nations, with proxy wars waged in the colonies to satisfy European demand.

The pernicious effects of an unfavourable trade system on Africa are glaring. Waves of industrialisation in the West, followed by countries like Japan and others in East Asia, have brought elevated economic growth and higher per capita incomes to these regions, introducing greater complexity into value chains. These economies predominantly export manufactured goods rather than primary commodities, underscoring their compelling industrialisation trajectory, while many African countries continue to focus on commodities as their primary comparative advantage and are falling further behind (Siddiqui, 2017).

Developed countries embraced protective industrial policies throughout their early industrialisation phases, diverging from an open trade approach, employing interventionist trade policies, consolidating their industries, and attaining confidence before adopting a free trade stance. However, today's prevailing mode of engagement with the global economy hinges on participation in global value chains (GVCs).

The post-colonial era witnessed a complex transformation as complex value chains burgeoned in trade and manufacturing, gradually evolving from mostly national or regional networks to assume a more global form as GVCs or global production networks in the twenty-first century (Nathan, 2018). Since then, GVCs have been criticised for exacerbating the exploitation of international labour cost disparities by leading firms from developed economies to reap extraordinary profits or rents. As such, the evolution of capitalism, characterised by imperialism, extends beyond the export of capital, an observation that resonates with Lenin's understanding of imperialism.

In recent decades, advanced economies have seen a substantial decline in the share of manufacturing, from 31 per cent in 1945 to less than 16 per cent in 2010. Simultaneously, services have risen as the paramount sector, constituting over 70 per cent of GDP in 2010, up from 41 per cent in 1945 (Siddiqui, 2017). Comparatively, between 1980 and 2010, the trajectory diverged for African and Latin American countries. While Asian nations experienced a growing share of manufacturing, industrialisation slackened in Africa and Latin America, marked by a decline in industrial growth. Regrettably, Africa's economic reliance has disproportionately leaned towards the primary sector for income and employment. To access the advantages of GVCs, Africa is pressured to liberalise trade and investment policies, bolster intellectual property rights, and abandon state-supported industrial initiatives.

For instance, multinational corporations have found it more lucrative to outsource certain production stages. This model has allowed companies to conserve capital investments while suppliers manage production, providing heightened flexibility. Such practices are not confined to manufacturing alone; electronic companies have also adopted them, indicating the broader applicability of this approach.

An active industrial policy is essential for developing African countries aiming to leverage GVCs. Establishing specific production capabilities is vital for effective participation and GVC integration. Notably, WTO negotiations typically focus on tariff and quota reductions, differing from the proactive industrial policies pursued by developmental states. These states concentrated on designing, regulating, and coordinating industrial development within their borders, fostering technological upgrading, and learning through GVC engagement.

Furthermore, sectors wherein developing nations possess comparative advantages, such as agriculture and clothing, often benefit from more extensive worldwide protection than other sectors. Agreements like the Bali and Nairobi WTO declarations strive to reduce bureaucratic obstacles and compel members to undertake regulatory reforms, fostering compliance. These agreements also target the elimination of export subsidies in agriculture by 2020 for industrialised nations and by 2023 for developing countries.

GVCs play an increasingly central role in the global economic landscape, with UNCTAD estimating that over 80 per cent of world trade is organised through GVCs. The International Labour Organization (ILO) highlights that more than 400 million jobs in the OECD and Asian economies are tied to GVCs, accentuating their significance (ILO, 2015).

Key to a GVC is the segmentation of production tasks, encompassing design, marketing, manufacturing, and branding. This segmentation arises from specialised firms producing various components, driving outsourcing. The development of ICT and the container revolution have amplified production coordination, overcoming geographical distances. The rise of manufacturing capabilities in low-wage developing economies further reinforces this trend.

Offshoring of production involves diverse forms of international arbitrage, including labour cost differentials and the strategic utilisation of knowledge. Knowledge, embodied in technology and design, enables the mechanics of GVCs. However, knowledge distribution inequality begets an imbalance in capturing rents within GVCs.

More recently, the reshoring of production has sparked deindustrialisation across several less-developed countries, particularly in Africa, South America, and Central Asia. Globalisation's structural change has yielded mixed outcomes, influencing industrial employment and macroeconomic stability. Additionally, fragmented GVCs and just-in-time production models incur environmental costs, often excluded from product prices, thus distorting market dynamics.

But international relations are evolving. In the current era, multilateralism faces increasing legitimacy challenges, reflected in the WTO's marginalisation, the rise of bilateralism, and trade tensions between major economies. Protectionist policies have also gained additional momentum. In Africa's context, its marginalisation throughout successive waves of change juxtaposed against Asia's ascent raises pertinent questions. Policymakers and scholars in Africa seek to glean lessons from Asia's experiences, navigating the complexities of their 'late' industrialisation status (Oqubay, 2020).

A Different Path: Lessons from Asia and Ireland

Asia's transformative experience highlights the central role of the state, strategic industrial policies, and purposeful global integration in fostering industrialisation and development. Africa's aspirations would benefit from adopting a similarly proactive approach, leveraging institutional innovations, and reimagining global trade dynamics for mutual progress.

Asia's remarkable journey towards industrialisation hinged on the sustained development of technological capability and learning. The state's multifaceted role—from leader and catalyst to supporter of economic progress—was pivotal to this success, although its roles varied across sectors, countries, and developmental stages (Chang, 2002).

Moreover, Asia's experience underscores that while openness is conducive to industrialisation and transformation, it must be paired with strategic actions and effective industrial policies (Hausmann & Rodrik, 2003). Therefore, for African nations aspiring to industrialise and advance along the development trajectory, robust state support is imperative to enhance technological capability and learning. Equally crucial is the guidance of an engaged and supportive state operating within a strategic industrial policy framework.

Challenging prevailing biases that misrepresent Africa as a perpetual tragedy and the tendency to homogenise its diverse countries impede accurate understanding and inhibit dynamic learning (Killick, 1980). The experiences of Asia demonstrate the importance of insertion into the global economy and an open macroeconomic policy environment. Unlike African counterparts, Asia's well-structured states and cultures facilitated independent policy formulation and pursuit of national development objectives.

A critical lesson for Africa from Asia's journey is that global insertion must be strategic, involving purposeful integration rather than passive engagement. Openness creates an enabling environment for market development, accompanied by effective industrial policy implementation and an active state (Amsden, 1989).

In the context of dynamic industrial policy, Dani Rodrik (2017) underscores that conventional narratives about trade's benefits to developing economies omit a vital aspect of their success. Prosperous countries like China and Vietnam employed a hybrid strategy combining export promotion with policies that challenge contemporary trade norms, such as subsidies, domestic content requirements, intellectual property, and selective trade barriers.

Rodrik advocates reimagining multilateral rules for Africa to enable greater policy flexibility and promote economic diversification. This includes broadening the scope of the WTO's 'safeguards' clause and incorporating a 'development box' in trade agreements, empowering poorer nations to carve out autonomous economic paths.

Historically, during industrialisation, countries freely exchanged innovations as they prioritised their economic progress. However, the past century has witnessed a shift as developed nations zealously safeguard their intellectual property. This property consciousness has engendered an inequitable distribution of knowledge, with developed countries sharing amongst themselves while building barriers around their innovations. The present system of monopoly control over industrial knowledge (by most accounts, the developed countries hold about 95 per cent of all patents worldwide) is one of the main reasons for the delayed or retarded industrialisation of Africa.

At the WTO, the USA and the EU have consistently blocked any changes, allowing the above trajectory to prevail. African countries have fought for trade to be treated as a means towards an end: development. Each victory towards that goal, the most significant being the WTO Doha Round, has been met by a complete blockade of possible changes and implementation (Chow, 2019).

President Michael D. Higgins (2023), in an inspiring speech reflecting on lessons from a colonised Ireland, emphasised that Europe and Africa need a renewed relationship, departing from colonial models that imposed rent-seeking dynamics. He underscored the need to reshape international relations to foster equitable development.

The legacy of colonisation in developing countries, particularly in Africa, has been extensively studied. The colonial venture followed the decline of the slave trade, its abolition, and the rise of the European industrial revolution. It involved a complex interplay of economic, political, and social forces. One key aspect often overlooked is how colonialism entrenched rent-seeking behaviour among local elites, especially in the extractive sector (Frankel, 2012).

The ‘Scramble for Africa’ resulted from a convergence of economic imperatives, such as the need for raw materials and markets, alongside inter-European power struggles and social factors like rising unemployment in Europe. European agents competed fiercely to occupy different parts of the continent, often through exclusive trade claims, tariffs against rival European traders, and control over vital commercial routes (Inikori, 2002).

The arbitrary drawing of national boundaries during colonisation led to enduring ethnic conflicts due to forced separations and assimilation of ethnic groups within newly created states (Herbst, 2000). Although colonialism has ended, its repercussions persist. Elites in some African countries maintain ties with former colonial powers, perpetuating corrupt practices that drain the region’s resources. Instances like the Panama Papers highlight how these elites divert enormous sums of money, exacerbating poverty and impeding development (Ndikumana & Boyce, 2021).

Colonialism also led to the formation of single-crop economies in agriculture-dependent societies, leaving African economies vulnerable to market fluctuations and crop failures (Frankel, 2012). Initially applied to Middle Eastern oil-rich nations, Rentier state theory has been extended to resource-rich countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, highlighting how unearned income can hinder governance and suppress democratic aspirations (Aidi, 2019).

Towards a Fairer Trade System

Strategic alliances such as bilateral trade agreements and investment treaties wielded by Western countries amplify their economic interests, perpetuating the status quo. Yet, the intellectual property system is a relatively recent addition to capitalism’s evolution. It contradicts principles of fairness and endangers marginalised populations. The commodification of knowledge is a threat to the global commons, epitomised by the control exerted over seeds, vaccines, or biodiversity.

Developing nations must re-evaluate the intellectual property regime's impact on their development trajectories to chart a more equitable course. These countries can reclaim agency in pursuing sustainable development by building on the scientific knowledge derived from climate change, showing the damage each region and trajectory has caused the planet. As the intricacies of trade and development intersect with the environment, a recalibration is imperative for a more just and inclusive global economic landscape.

Colonisation's far-reaching impact on Africa encompassed economic, political, and social dimensions. The effects persist in economic exploitation, corruption, and resource mismanagement. Addressing these challenges requires acknowledging historical injustices, effective policies, and a different approach to international cooperation. Europe and Africa have a chequered history requiring a mindset that incorporates these three elements.

Moreover, the prevailing economic development theories, particularly the concept of comparative advantage, have been instrumental in shaping policies for resource-driven economies. However, the experience of many African countries, which have diligently followed Western development advice, raises questions about the effectiveness of these theories in achieving sustained economic transformation. The concentration on raw extraction and the limited value addition have left countries vulnerable to external market fluctuations and resource depletion.

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CHAPTER 5

Lost Decades or Blessing?

A Narrative of Extraction and Foreign Interference

While serving as the capital of Belgium, Brussels also holds the status of the capital of Europe. However, for many Africans, it bears a stain from the late stage of direct European colonial rule.

A legacy of external manipulation, exploitation, and colonial brutality taints the history of Belgium in Africa and its engagement with the Congo. Central to this narrative is the infamous King Leopold II of Belgium, whose actions, characterised by ruthless ambition and naked greed to maximise the exploitation of rubber and ivory resources, reverberate through history. Leopold II treated the Congo as his fiefdom despite never visiting the territory himself. Under his reign, a harrowing era of terror unfolded, marked by forced labour, mutilations, and mass killings. This oppressive phase was epitomised by the activities of the Force Publique, a paramilitary force directly controlled by Leopold II, which committed numerous atrocities against the Congolese population (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2007).

Leopold II's Congo Free State became a crucible of untold suffering for its inhabitants. Villages endured gruesome punishments for failing to meet rubber production quotas, with the infamous practice of hand severing becoming a haunting symbol of the brutal regime. The scale of this cruelty was staggering, resulting in a catastrophic loss of life. Historians estimate that the Congolese population may have been decimated during this period, with conservative estimates suggesting a death toll ranging

C. Lopes, *The Self-Deception Trap*,
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from 10 to 15 million individuals due to a combination of violence, forced labour, and diseases exacerbated by the appalling working conditions (Hochschild, 1999).

The saga of Leopold II and his legacy in the Congo is a stark testament to the depths of inhumanity that unchecked power and insatiable pursuit of profit can precipitate, foregrounding the urgent need for historical reckoning and critical reflection.

As a result of international condemnation and outcry, Leopold II was eventually forced to transfer ownership of the Congo to the Belgian state in 1908. However, this ‘transaction’ did little to ameliorate the profound scars left by his exploitative regime, especially as the eulogising of Leopold II’s role persisted, even as evidence mounted against his exploitative regime (Hochschild, 1999). Formal colonial rule set the tone for continued interference by foreign powers in the region despite the fact that, unlike the French in Algeria, Belgium’s presence in Congo never amounted to significant settlement by Belgians. A mere 3000 Belgians were living in the colony in 1906 (Crawford Young, 1965).

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) formally gained its independence on June 30, 1960, but its complex post-colonial historical trajectory was beset with crises that underscored Belgium’s persistent interference. Four events stand out. First, the assassination of popular Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba and the secession of Katanga post-independence showcased the limited impact of formal sovereignty on Congolese destiny (Trefon, 2004). Subsequently, the 1970s witnessed foreign-led military interventions during the ‘Shaba wars’ (De Witte, 2002). The third crisis culminated in 1996–1997, resulting in the fall of the Mobutu regime. Lastly, the 1998–2003 ‘Great War of Africa’, exacerbated by foreign involvement, left an indelible mark, claiming an estimated 5.4 million lives due to war-induced effects (Reyntjens, 2009).

Belgium distanced itself from Mobutu’s regime at the end of the Cold War. This paradigm shift stemmed from the Flemish Socialist Party’s disengagement decision, marked by a hands-off approach (Trefon, 2004). However, pivotal moments like the police raid on students in Lubumbashi in 1990 and subsequent evacuations exhibited the continuing complex Belgian-Congolese interactions (Van Reybrouck, 2014).

To comprehend the intricate paradox that defines the DRC to this day, one must acknowledge the consistent presence of Western involvement and the ceaseless exploitation of its remarkable mineral wealth.

The challenges the Congo faced following its independence led to a sequence of UN interventions ostensibly focused on bringing security and stability to the region. These interventions persist within the DRC, justified by concerns over 'threats to international security', and have, regrettably, come to symbolise the inability to catalyse positive change within one of Africa's most resource-endowed nations.

In the wake of Congo's post-independence struggles, a striking narrative unfolds, underscoring the enduring pursuit of Belgian and French interests in the vast wealth of the DRC. Against this backdrop of colonial exploitation, the contemporary story of cobalt is instructive. DRC-born Belgian journalist Erik Bruyland crafts a compelling narrative in his book *Cobalt Blues* (2021) that unearths the economic and industrial tragedy that unfolded in the DRC between 1960 and 2020. The focus is on the copper belt, an expansive region abundant in cobalt, copper, manganese, and other minerals vital for technologies like rechargeable batteries, smartphones, and electric vehicles.

Paradoxically, although the DRC is the world's largest producer of cobalt, the nation remains impoverished, with a GDP per capita that scarcely reflects its mineral wealth. The root of this paradox lies in the intricate web of interests forged in the colonial era that still lingers as Belgian and French interests maintain their foothold in mineral markets and strategic partnerships.

Bruyland's (2021) inquiry illuminates the roles of Congolese and Belgian leaders, foreign corporations, and end consumers, who unknowingly consume products forged from minerals extracted under inhumane conditions. The tale extends back to Mobutu's era. Although Mobutu sought to assert Congolese control over resources, Belgian influence remained entrenched. Unyielding agreements thwarted Mobutu's attempts at renegotiation, ultimately leaving the country indebted and economically compromised.

Unfortunately, this narrative of extraction is not confined to history. The battle for DRC sovereignty is ongoing. President Félix Tshisekedi's pledges to revise contracts with China reflect a desire to regain control. However, each new president has fallen prey to the dynamics of the same extractive model based on giving external actors access in exchange for support to retain power and for their regimes to be treated with a sympathetic eye. As a result, the DRC's abundant mineral discoveries have not benefited its people. Instead, foreign corporations that exploit offshore structures and tax havens divert wealth from the nation, a lamentable continuum from the days of King Leopold II. The story of the DRC aptly illustrates the complexity of global power dynamics and the challenges facing African countries.

Late Colonialism Is Not that Old

While the story of the DRC exemplifies the rent-seeking and extractive approach of foreign interests in Africa, such examples of late colonialism are, sadly, widespread across the continent.

The Republic of Djibouti, nestled in East Africa, is Africa's smallest nation. With an area of 23,200 square kilometres and a population of 830,000, this tiny nation has been indelibly shaped by foreign interests. Its origins trace back to French engagement in the region during the mid-nineteenth century, driven by the rivalry between France and Britain for control over the entrance to the Red Sea.

While Djibouti achieved independence only in 1977, the presence of a French military base in the country underscores the complex relationship between the two countries. Djibouti's strategic location at the entrance to the Red Sea and its proximity to critical maritime routes made it a region of continued interest to France, leading them to establish the Djibouti Armed Forces (Forces Armées à Djibouti, FAD) that remains operational to this day. This base has served various purposes, including supporting French military operations in the region and contributing to regional stability.

The French presence in the Indian Ocean has deep historical roots. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, France held maritime dominance, overseeing territories like the Comoros, Madagascar, and Reunion. Even today, France retains considerable regional influence, with Reunion and Mayotte remaining under French jurisdiction.

France's enduring presence in the Indian Ocean aligns with its maritime heritage and modern geopolitical interests. Firstly, France maintains exclusive maritime rights and access to seabed resources due to its island territories. Additionally, the Indian Ocean is a vital maritime route between China and Europe, crucial for securing Europe's energy demands and facilitating oil imports as global energy demands surge. This strategy involves nurturing diplomatic ties with African nations to bolster France's influence and secure its regional economic and security interests.

Security is also paramount. French defence activities primarily focus on countering piracy, necessitating naval bases for patrolling and response.

The French Island of La Reunion's Pointe des Galets houses vessels and a frigate. At the same time, Mayotte Island (which was separated from the Comoros Union at independence and was kept French) accommodates a Foreign Legion unit for maritime surveillance.

Late colonialism was also present in Portuguese colonies until 1975. Portugal clung to its African territories of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, and S. Tomé & Principe, bolstered by its dictator leader António de Oliveira Salazar. The 'Salazar Doctrine' upheld the colonies as integral to Portugal's national identity. Supported by European allies that shared similar ideologies, economic interests, and Cold War considerations, Portugal resisted decolonisation and diplomatic pressure for independence. At the same time, economic investments by European companies in Portuguese colonies and the fear that decolonisation would push Portugal towards the communist bloc also played a role. Only mounting international pressure, liberation movements, and internal shifts eventually compelled Portugal to relinquish its colonies, leading to independence for its former colonial holdings.

The case of Zimbabwe, a modern saga of European domination, began in 1889 when the British South Africa Company (BSAC) received a Royal Charter to administer the territory North of the Limpopo River. Named Rhodesia after BSAC's founder, Cecil Rhodes, this early act of white dominance set the tone for the future of southern Africa. White settlers were attracted by mining, particularly gold, and commercial activities such as agriculture. The settler government, which eventually became the Republic of Rhodesia following the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965, established white rule and institutionalised colonial nationalism.

However, native Zimbabweans fought back, leading to the Rhodesian Bush War in the early 1970s. The Lancaster House Constitutional Agreement ended the war in 1979–1980, but the new constitution's compromises regarding land reform postponed a resolution, perpetuating land inequality. The constitution protected white property rights and neglected the plight of victims of the colonial system, contributing to later tensions. Meanwhile, in South Africa, European banks like Belgium's Kredietbank and its subsidiary in Luxembourg supported this government by facilitating illicit money flows that enabled weapon purchases despite UN arms sanctions. These banks profited from these transactions, yet they have evaded accountability for their complicity in crimes against humanity despite efforts to bring evidence to international accountability frameworks (OECD, 2018).

In a similar vein, the historical backdrop of South Africa's apartheid era illustrates how European powers leveraged and shielded the apartheid regime to serve their geopolitical ambitions and interests, even as they condemned its human rights abuses. This exploitation extended to strategic alliances during World War II, when the British, for example, leaned on South Africa's resources and support. The strategic location and resources of the region made it a critical asset for the war effort.

As a result of these dynamics, the UK, France, and others hesitated to impose comprehensive sanctions in the post-war period, fearing disruption to their trade and strategic partnerships. Europe's strategic calculations often muted the calls for decisive action against apartheid. While the United Nations voiced condemnation and initiated arms embargoes, key European players strategically refrained from fully endorsing these measures. With its historical ties and economic interests, the UK continued to engage with South Africa through trade agreements despite mounting international pressure to sever such links.

In essence, the exploitation of apartheid for geopolitical and economic gain underscores a complex moral dilemma. Driven by their interests, European powers sometimes indirectly sustained the apartheid regime by prioritising alliances and strategic interests over human rights and justice. This historical perspective is a stark reminder of how global politics can shape and distort responses to grave social injustices.

Structural Adjustment: New Face, Same Old Ideas

Numerous scholars and researchers have put forward the idea that there are intricate linkages connecting Africa's history of late colonialism and its experiences during the era of neocolonialism to the global oil crisis of the 1970s (Nkrumah, 1970; Rajhi et al., 2005; Smith, 2005). This crisis had far-reaching impacts on economies across the globe. In the aftermath, Africa became enmeshed in a narrative that obscured the universal nature of the crisis.

The crisis, triggered by geopolitical tensions and supply disruptions, sent shockwaves through the global economy. The subsequent oil price hikes and supply shortages impacted both oil-producing and oil-consuming nations. While the oil crisis was a universal phenomenon, the portrayal of Africa's plight as a symptom of inherent inadequacies conveniently sidelined the broader global factors.

As Western powers grappled with the consequences of diminished energy resources and heightened inflation, Africa's role in the crisis narrative became paradoxically amplified. Academic discourse on this subject underscores the inherent complexity of this distortion, which wrongly blamed the continent's seemingly vulnerable economic and political frameworks (Killick, 1980; Rodney, 1972). One of the ways this manifested was through the notion that Africa's debt was insurmountable unless significant structural adjustments were made to their economies (Amin, 1973; Ferguson, 1990). This misrepresentation positioned African countries as architects of their economic turmoil, often obscuring the broader structural issues ingrained in the global economic system. This was not accidental.

In 1979, governors of the World Bank directed a memorandum to the Bank's president, ostensibly expressing concern over the economic prospects of sub-Saharan African nations. However, it became apparent that this gesture was nothing more than a prelude to a carefully orchestrated endeavour to advance a shift in how the region was treated (McNamara & Berg, 1981). The "Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Agenda for Action" memorandum emerged as a calculated tool to establish a period of substantial influence over the formulation of policies for African economies. The document delineated factors that accounted for Africa's sluggish economic growth while concurrently endorsing policy alterations that conveniently aligned with the World Bank's inclinations. Furthermore, the report advocated for an augmentation in aid while advocating adherence to principles rooted in monetarist neoliberal ideologies (World Bank, 1981).

Cloaked in the rhetoric of internal structural deficiencies, the report downplays the significant role of external factors in Africa's economic woes during that era. While it briefly acknowledges external influences, the report focused on blaming supposedly flawed African policies, such as the desire for industrialisation and state intervention. The report conveniently ignored structural inequalities and historical injustices (World Bank, 1994).

Critics pointed out that this shift in priorities signalled a change from the basic needs, or poverty alleviation, priorities of the previous era of development aid. The focus was now on growth-oriented policies that would provoke a trickle-down effect (Daniel, 1983).

Termed the 'Washington Consensus', these economic policies encapsulated a certain disregard for the nuanced realities of local contexts. The assertive implementation of measures anchored in the liberalisation of trade, alongside the elimination of price distortions, highlights a notable level of economic self-assuredness on the part of the Washington, D.C.-based institutions behind the manifesto, notably the IMF, World Bank, and US Department of the Treasury. The overt dismissal of the potential for more intricate structural and institutional reforms further underscored the limited comprehension of the intricate challenges faced by African countries (Lopes, 2019).

Within the framework of the Washington Consensus, several distinct economic tenets were promoted. These included pursuing new fiscal policies, often necessitating public expenditure reductions and the reallocation of resources from industrial transformation and social investment endeavours. The push for trade liberalisation aimed to open markets but often failed to consider the vulnerabilities of domestic industries in developing countries. Additionally, the endorsement of privatisation and deregulation further reflected a broader shift towards market-oriented ideologies, with less consideration for potential social and economic ramifications (Williamson, 2004).

The subsequent implementation of these policies in African and later in Latin American countries starkly demonstrated the disconnect between the Bretton Woods institutions' purported intentions and the dire realities these nations were facing. Sub-Saharan Africa bore the brunt of this ill-conceived approach, with GDP growth stagnating, investments plummeting, and export shares diminishing significantly (Lopes, 2019).

In addition, the reckless push for rapid and unchecked liberalisation in African economies gave rise to volatile capital flows. The 1997 Asian financial crisis, which can be partly attributed to similar unregulated liberalisation efforts, laid bare the devastating effects of these policies on vulnerable economies, further undermining the credibility of the World Bank and IMF's approaches (Lopes, 2019).

The prevailing power imbalance within the governance structures of these institutions is equally apparent. At ideological, representational, and crisis-response levels, the interests of wealthy countries consistently outweigh those of the poorest. For instance, the preferential treatment extended to European countries during the European debt crisis, compared with the response to African countries facing a similar crisis, is a glaring testament to the inherent inequity underscoring World Bank and IMF policies (Lopes, 2019).

In the annals of African economic history, the lost decades from the 1980s to the early 2000s are a stark reminder of the complexities and challenges inherent in pursuing development. Structural adjustment and SAPs were marketed as panaceas for economic revitalisation. However, a comprehensive analysis of statistical evidence exposes the failure of these programmes to catalyse meaningful progress for African nations.

Persistent Poverty and Widening Inequality

Despite the promises of SAPs to stimulate economic growth and alleviate poverty, the reality on the ground pointed to a different trajectory. A study by Collier and Gunning (1999) investigating the impact of SAPs in sub-Saharan Africa found that poverty rates remained alarmingly high, with only marginal improvements over time. Moreover, SAPs' focus on reducing government expenditures often translated into cuts in social services, exacerbating inequality and marginalising the most vulnerable segments of society (World Bank, 2000).

Stagnant Industrial Diversification

The aspiration of SAPs to promote export-led growth led to a heavy reliance on primary commodity exports, thereby impeding industrial diversification. According to Ravallion (1997), this limited diversification hindered economic resilience and perpetuated Africa's vulnerability to international market volatility. The failure of SAPs to spur industrial transformation contributed to an overreliance on external factors, a characteristic antithetical to sustainable development.

Erosion of Food Security

In pursuing market-oriented policies, SAPs often encouraged the cultivation of cash crops for export, sidelining domestic food production. The World Development Report (1988) highlighted this trend, pointing out that SAPs' focus on agricultural liberalisation led to a decline in food self-sufficiency in many African nations. As a result, these countries became increasingly reliant on imported food, jeopardising their food security and exacerbating vulnerabilities to global price shocks.

Escalating Debt Burdens

SAPs were introduced to reduce debt burdens and foster economic stability. However, statistical data reveals a contrary outcome. According to World Bank figures, external debt as a percentage of gross national income (GNI) in sub-Saharan Africa increased from 45 per cent in 1980 to a staggering 190 per cent in 2000 (World Bank, 2000). This alarming rise in debt levels reflected the failure of SAPs to achieve sustainable debt reduction and highlighted the detrimental impact of their policy prescriptions on fiscal stability.

Social Interest and Political Turmoil

The implications of SAP failures extended beyond economic indicators to encompass social and political unrest. A comprehensive study by Bates and Collier (1995) linked the implementation of SAPs to heightened levels of civil conflict in Africa. The exacerbation of inequality and reduced public services contributed to a volatile environment conducive to protests and political upheavals. This dimension underscores the broader repercussions of failed economic policies on a nation's social fabric and political stability.

As we navigate the complex landscape of Africa's lost decades, it becomes clear that the indicators of SAP failures were not isolated occurrences. They were interconnected manifestations of a flawed policy approach. The process of straight-jacketing Africa, characterised by restrictive policy options and hindered development, can be understood by examining the intricate dynamics that unfolded.

SAPs emerged as a significant channel through which external influence constrained African economies. European countries, particularly those with colonial African histories, played a substantial role in shaping these programmes. Conditions tied to aid packages formulated by international financial institutions narrowed the policy autonomy, compelling African countries to adhere to pre-defined economic restructuring paths.

Export-oriented growth strategies added another layer of constraint. The dependency on primary commodity exports exposed African economies to the volatility of global markets. This dependence hindered diversification efforts and curtailed the ability to control critical sectors, intensifying the straight-jacketing effect.

Mounting debt burdens induced by SAPs and compounded by external borrowing further constrained African nations. The obligation to service these debts diverted resources away from crucial developmental investments. Consequently, the capacity of African governments to pursue policies aligned with their developmental priorities was shelved, contributing to the perpetuation of economic straight-jacketing.

Technological disparities and established intellectual property asymmetries further exacerbated the constraints facing African economies. Uneven access to technological advancements limited the competitiveness of African industries on the global stage. Additionally, unequal trade relationships entrenched neocolonial dynamics, favouring the interests of Western economies.

The European Union (EU) has consistently supported conditionality SAPs as instruments for shaping African economic policies. This position reflects a complex interplay between economic rationalisation, diplomatic influence, and policy prescription, rooted in the belief that these mechanisms could foster stability. The EU aimed to address fiscal imbalances, mitigate inflation, and stimulate market-oriented growth by linking financial assistance to specific policy reforms.

The EU's steadfast support for conditionality and SAPs established a prevailing narrative and unified European approach, restraining critical evaluations of the multifaceted consequences of those strategies. As a result, the EU's stance has inadvertently hindered the exploration of diverse economic frameworks and innovative policy solutions.

The EU has exhibited a discernible reluctance to engage critically with concerns directed towards its conditionality policies applied to African countries, opting instead to defend its strategies and adhere to established objectives, economic considerations, and institutional structures. While some modifications have been introduced over time, the EU has consistently upheld the efficacy of its policies in the face of valid concerns and is reluctant to embrace alternative perspectives or fundamentally reconfigure its approach. Three examples serve to illustrate this stance.

First, the EU's steadfast commitment to austerity measures and macroeconomic stability embedded within its conditionality framework has drawn censure for perpetuating social inequities and impeding economic expansion. Critics contend that these measures disproportionately impact marginalised segments of society. Despite this, the EU remains resolute, asserting the necessity of fiscal prudence and macroeconomic equilibrium. References to the potential long-term dividends stemming from these measures continue to underscore the EU's adherence to its policy paradigm (Bandeira et al., 2022).

Second, the EU's conditionality directives have attracted reproach for potentially fostering aid dependency and eroding the autonomy of African nations in shaping their development trajectories. Sceptics posit that such policies may undermine the sense of national ownership over developmental priorities. While the EU acknowledges these concerns, its responses pivot around the imperative of accountability and harmonisation with globally recognised norms, occasionally tempering concerns regarding sovereignty and self-determination (Mustapha, 2002).

Third, critiques directed at the EU's trade and agricultural policies vis-à-vis Africa highlight their potential to disadvantage African economies and thwart their competitiveness. Such policies have been deemed inconsistent with the overarching objective of cultivating sustainable economic advancement. In response, while acknowledging these complexities, the EU has often underscored its economic imperatives, accentuating the intricate global landscape of trade dynamics. Proposed adjustments have tended to be incremental and partial, sidestepping the fundamental considerations raised (Maertens & Swinnen, 2012).

Good Wishes Are Hardly Convincing

France is frequently cited as a country that sought to extend its influence in Africa by intervening in post-independence economic mechanisms. A notable instance is its pivotal role in the inception of monetary frameworks embraced by many countries, collectively recognised as the CFA Franc system.

The CFA Franc arrangements have drawn criticism for their perceived role in perpetuating an unequal balance of power between France and its former African colonies. One significant shortcoming lies in the limited economic sovereignty member countries retain due to the fixed exchange rate with the euro and the requirement to deposit a significant portion of their foreign reserves with the French Treasury. This framework effectively curtails the ability of these countries to implement independent monetary policies. As a result, their economic decisions remain subject to the influence of external factors, including those stemming from the Eurozone.

Furthermore, the CFA Franc system's trade dynamics have been flagged as problematic. The fixed exchange rate often leads to an overvaluation of member countries' currencies, rendering their exports less competitive globally. This situation, in turn, contributes to a reliance on imports, disproportionately benefiting France. The interplay between trade preferences, foreign aid distribution, and adherence to French interests underscores the perpetuation of a lopsided economic relationship. Countries that align with French policies may receive greater economic support, deepening the disparities between compliant nations and those seeking more independent paths.

Central to the CFA Franc system is the requirement for member countries to align with directives set forth by the Bank of France. Moreover, the presence of French experts to aid in the administration of the CFA system deepens this influence. These experts, often dispatched to member countries, provide technical assistance and guidance on currency management and monetary policy matters. While intended to facilitate effective implementation, their presence also reinforces a dynamic of reliance and subordination, where economic decisions continue to be influenced by external forces.

A combination of compliance requirements and advisory support solidifies France's role in shaping and perpetuating the CFA system to align with its interests. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated example. The list of European well-wishers trying to help Africa is quite long (see Chap. 3 on aid).

In Somalia, a quintessential recipient of foreign aid, the complex relationship between aid and infrastructure development is embodied in the highway connecting the capital, Mogadishu, to the southern port of Kismayo, a segment of which leads to an abrupt precipice. The road's inception between 1982 and 1983 was made possible through a $100 million contract awarded to a Milanese contractor in an open tender by the EU. Remarkably, however, the burden of repaying the EU's long-term, low-interest loan fell to the Somalian government. Repayments have extended all the way into 2023 despite the fact that the highway's deteriorated state since 1988 has rendered it virtually unusable (Achtner, 1993).

Characterised by subpar engineering and inadequate surveying, the road's deteriorating condition has compelled vehicles to bypass it altogether. This practice then led to deep gullies alongside the road, accelerating erosion and degradation (Achtner, 1993).

Was this an isolated blow? Sadly not. During the period spanning from 1981 to 1990, Italy embarked on a comprehensive endeavour to 'uplift' Somalia's developmental landscape, initiating a total of 114 projects with an expenditure exceeding $1 billion. However, evaluating these projects reveals a disconcerting pattern, marked predominantly by futility and prodigality. Despite a select few instances, notably, the successful execution of a vaccination programme orchestrated by non-governmental organisations, most Italian-sponsored ventures within Somalia proved illogical and were characterised by wastage (Achtner, 1993).

Similarly, European humanitarian interventions in Africa have frequently encountered substantial challenges and limitations, often prompting critical analysis of their effectiveness. One such instance is the NATO-led military intervention in Libya in 2011. While the intervention initially aimed to protect civilians from the repressive forces of Muammar Gaddafi, its outcomes were far from unilaterally positive. Although it managed to prevent an imminent massacre in Benghazi, the intervention also inadvertently contributed to the country's destabilisation, culminating in a protracted period of internal conflict and political fragmentation.

In his work *Lords of Poverty*, Graham Hancock (1989) delves into the intricate dynamics of aid agencies operating in developing countries and their impact on allocating and utilising aid resources. Hancock critically evaluates the roles of aid agency employees, who are responsible for interpreting the needs of impoverished populations and ensuring efficient and timely assistance. He highlights that whether aid originates from charitable donations or government taxes, the presence of foreign expertise, particularly from Americans and Europeans, is often central in disaster relief efforts in the Third World.

Hancock cites a comprehensive study of refugee relief in Southeast Asia to underscore aid agencies' vast and complex operating costs. These costs, encompassing personnel expenses and miscellaneous expenditures, frequently contribute to an imbalanced distribution of resources. The book illustrates mismanagement and wastage within aid agencies, such as recruiting inexperienced and ill-equipped personnel to manage refugee camps in Somalia. These personnel needed to gain more training and often prioritise evangelism over effective administration, leading to wasteful decisions and inadequate aid delivery.

Furthermore, Hancock details the repercussions of these misjudgements, including failed construction projects and cancelled immunisation campaigns. The book underscores how intertwining religious agendas with aid operations can lead to detrimental outcomes for vulnerable populations. Through such narratives, Hancock (1989) paints a vivid picture of the challenges and shortcomings within aid systems, emphasising the need for more effective and conscientious management practices to address the needs of the impoverished effectively.

Even a global body like the UNHCR is not exempt from these failures. The UNHCR does not directly execute operational activities; instead, it procures funding from member states of the United Nations, which is then channelled to contracted charitable entities from the Global North responsible for executing on-the-ground initiatives. Consequently, the oversight mechanisms exhibit patterns of laxity or complete absence that can facilitate misconduct.

Regrettably, instances arise where the allocated finances from UNHCR fail to reach the host country of refugees, let alone the refugees themselves. Inexperienced personnel often assume camp management responsibilities over hundreds of thousands of vulnerable refugees, some of whom may possess unused or discounted qualifications.

Humanitarian assistance frequently harbours imprudence, irrelevance, and occasionally perilous ignorance, an aspect that aid organisations understandably mostly choose not to publicise. But these organisations project a relentlessly optimistic facade through their press releases while disaster-stricken populations are left to grapple with the practical realities of the aid provided.

Furthermore, the practices of European charity organisations in fundraising and implementation have raised ethical concerns, challenging the alignment between their proclaimed compassion and the competitive nature of their endeavours. The compelling appeals often used by these organisations, featuring distressing imagery of suffering individuals and populations, may not always reflect a genuine concern for the welfare of those in need. Instead, these appeals can be seen as manifestations of a "capitalism of mercy", where aid organisations vie for recognition, growth, and prestige, potentially overshadowing the primary objective of aiding the vulnerable (Smith, 2005). This situation introduces ethical considerations regarding the integrity of the organisations' intentions and actions.

The transformation of fundraising methods into ends in themselves is a troubling phenomenon observed in European charity practices, incentivised by the EU requirements for sub-contracting. The emphasis on organisational expansion and reputation underscores the complexities of charitable efforts. While the debate over whether the ends justify the means persists, the perpetuation of organisational growth and prominence often remains a central concern (Jones, 2011).

In 1984, a French television company organised a humanitarian convoy called 'Trucks for Hope'. The convoy aimed to deliver vital supplies to West African Sahel countries, yet a significant portion of funds was allocated to maintaining live satellite communication with France. Additionally, the quest for dramatic footage to engage viewers led to the destruction of medical equipment due to the prioritisation of visual impact over aid efficiency (Brown, 1995).

The triumph of Live Aid in 1985 showcased the effectiveness of utilising negative media imagery to mobilise support. However, this strategic approach had unintended repercussions in subsequent initiatives, exemplified by Spon Aid's efforts. Spon Aid, launched to foster self-help development, paradoxically regressed into employing distressing media imagery, echoing stereotypes of helplessness. The infamous promotional video, created in a controlled studio setting, depicted famine victims in dire circumstances, inadvertently reinforcing preconceived notions of helplessness. These disaster appeals, whether intentional or not, perpetuated the perception that disadvantaged populations in the Third World were inherently incapable. This narrative implied their reliance on external intervention from more affluent and influential nations. These cases underscore the careful equilibrium required in humanitarian communication, emphasising the importance of avoiding the perpetuation of dependency narratives and prioritising empowerment and agency among marginalised communities.

In too many cases, these narratives reflect a concerning transformation in the nature of aid from impartial material support to a dynamic where the wealthy impose their will upon the less fortunate, a shift that fails to recognise the deep knowledge and resilience inherent in the very communities it seeks to assist.

This patronising perspective was succinctly articulated by Britain's Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who commented on Ethiopian peasant farmers, suggesting the need to educate them about fundamental agricultural practices: "I think we have to do quite a lot of teaching about what we know: about husbandry—in that kind of land, in that kind of soil. We have quite a lot of knowledge" (Thatcher, 1985).

The reality, of course, is quite different. Ethiopian farmers are resilient and resourceful and possess a profound understanding of their craft. Over millennia, they have honed their expertise in cultivating sustenance, and even surplus, from the challenging and eroded mountainsides of their homeland.

In the face of growing ecological challenges, if any assistance is provided to these individuals, it could be channelled towards sustaining their productivity.

The Setting of Universal Goals Inaugurates a New Millennium

The 1990s witnessed a surge in global conferences, exemplified by key gatherings like the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, and the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, among others. These conferences were pivotal in setting the global agenda, fostering collaboration, and nurturing a shared commitment towards addressing multifaceted challenges.

In this context, the MDGs introduced at the dawn of the new millennium aimed to provide a comprehensive roadmap for global development. The MDGs were a prominent endeavour to structure a comprehensive framework centred around eight goals. Yet, an intriguing dichotomy arose in the accountability mechanisms embedded within these goals. While most of the MDGs were subjected to rigorous scrutiny and tracking, Goal 8, focusing on global partnerships, notably evaded comparable levels of accountability. This asymmetrical approach inadvertently underscored a recurring narrative wherein recipient nations bear the burden of accountability while their wealthier counterparts remain less scrutinised.

In the realm of global development goals, Africa's complex journey was obscured by the imposition of uniform indicators. A misleading narrative emerged when universal benchmarks, such as halving poverty rates, were uniformly applied without consideration for the continent's diverse contexts and stages of development. Beneath this facade, the measurement focused not on gauging the effort relative to individual starting points but on a uniform standard. This approach underscored the importance of a more nuanced evaluation that appreciates universal aspirations and distinct developmental trajectories, offering a more accurate representation of progress.

Africa's developmental diversity clashed with the use of standardised indicators. The uniform translation of globally applicable goals could have encapsulated the varying socio-economic contexts across the continent. This oversight led to the misperception of a collective lag in achieving development objectives. Crucially, this narrative should have accounted for the incremental strides made by nations on distinct developmental paths.

The EU played a crucial role in shaping the various development strategies. Its endorsement of conditionality, followed by a shift towards goal-centred policies, reflects a dynamic evolution that considers the need to bury failures and engender new interpretations that justify its interventionism. Nevertheless, adopting uniform evaluation criteria presents a quandary wherein historical context is overlooked, raising questions about the EU's commitment to nuanced and contextually sensitive approaches. This departure from tailored strategies resonates as a potential attempt to disassociate from colonial legacies despite their lively resonance due to the late colonial era's ramifications and disregard for Africa's political-economy landscape. These historical echoes contribute to Africa's persistent calls for decoloniality and a paradigm shift in perspectives, urging the exploration of Africa's development within a comprehensive historical continuum.

According to the Nigerian political scientist Claude Ake, "We are never going to understand the current crisis in Africa … as long as we continue to think of it as an economic crisis" (Taylor, 2013).

In many instances, Brussels has refused to acknowledge that many policies it has pushed under the 'good governance' agenda have been nothing but development rhetoric. As Claude Ake noted, "One of the most amazing things about the literature on development in Africa is how readily it assumes that everyone is interested in development and that when [African] leaders proclaim their commitment to development and fashion their impressive development plans and negotiate with international organisations for development assistance, they are ready for development and for getting on with it" (Ake, 1991).

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CHAPTER 6

The Good Samaritans Lose Their Way

A History of Asymmetry

Europe's influence on constructing an architecture of engagements with Africa has evolved over time, with historical roots extending beyond the post-World War II era. Various factors, including the decoloniality agenda, the Cold War, and economic considerations such as trade and investment agreements, have shaped the dynamics of Africa-Europe relations. The trajectory of these relations took a significant turn in 1975 with the signing of the first Lomé Convention between the EU and the ACP group of countries, marking the formalisation of engagements between the two entities. The subsequent Cotonou EU-ACP Partnership Agreement signed in 2000 further institutionalised the relationship.

The genesis of the ACP group can be traced back to colonial days and the power dynamics that shaped the post-colonial world order. The group emerged as a collective entity representing former colonies with shared historical ties to European powers. The colonial logic behind its formation reflects a paternalistic approach, wherein European nations sought to maintain influence and strategic interests in regions that were once under their dominion.

The exclusion of Northern Africa from the ACP group is telling. Linked to European colonial powers through the Mediterranean region, Northern Africa was often perceived differently from the sub-Saharan ACP countries. The exclusion underscored a regional differentiation rooted in historical ties, geopolitical complexities, and divergent post-colonial

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trajectories, revealing the nuanced and often uneven dynamics that shaped the formation of the ACP group.

The overarching goals of the Lomé and Cotonou Agreements were ambitious, aiming to promote sustainable development, contribute to poverty eradication, expand international trade, and enhance production capacities by guaranteeing ACP countries preferential access to EU markets. Additionally, the agreements sought to create an environment conducive to attracting investment to foster a mutually beneficial partnership.

However, despite the noble intentions outlined in these agreements, the practical outcomes have not always aligned with the aspirations for African development. One significant challenge has arisen from the EU's strategic negotiation stance, which often prioritises preserving its commercial and governance privileges over its African partners. One of the main principles of the Cotonou Agreement explicitly states that the fundamental principles governing partnership relations are built on equality (Eur-lex, 2021). However, the reality behind the execution of these principles is quite different. Firstly, the Cotonou Agreements and systems were based on preferential trade agreements between select countries. This approach created fragmentation within the ACP-EU partnership and divided the ACP by generating differences between the countries rather than promoting integration.

Additionally, Africa's integration into global affairs also remained limited. While the EU has strategically deployed regional integration processes to facilitate Africa's gradual integration into the world economy, ensuring that these instruments do not perpetuate a pattern of asymmetrical power dynamics in favour of the EU has remained a challenge.

As the new century unfolded, significant developments reshaped the international landscape. The United Nations 2000 Millennium Summit marked a pivotal moment, shifting the focus from prescriptive development policies to concrete goals. It was the beginning of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Simultaneously, there was a shift away from the centrality of structural adjustment policies. The inauguration of the Africa-EU Partnership took place during the first Africa-EU Summit in Cairo the same year, setting the tone for ongoing collaborative engagement between the AU and the EU.

Anchored by the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES), officially adopted during the second EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon in 2007, the Partnership encompasses political dialogue, economic cooperation, and development initiatives. The JAES consolidated about 50 years of trade and development cooperation between Africa and the EU relations and sought to strengthen political dialogue and enhance cooperation at all levels. Prioritising governance, democracy, and conflict prevention, the joint strategy aims to bolster trade, investment, and sustainable development while fostering people-to-people contacts and cultural exchanges. With regular summits and oversight by the AU-EU commissions, this collaborative endeavour addresses shared challenges and leverage opportunities, serving as a vital platform for mutual understanding and coordinated efforts in peace, security, and socio-economic development.

Part of the 2007 vision of a renewed Africa-Europe relationship was the idea of Africa becoming fully integrated and better regarded within global and multilateral decision-making frameworks. This trend started with the UK initiative 'Commission for Africa' and the invitation to prominent African leaders to attend the G8 and G20 nations meetings to discuss global economic governance matters and represent the continent at those meetings. This was a request from African leaders following the creation of the African Union in 2002 as a successor to the Organization of African Unity.

In 2009, the Lisbon Treaty marked another pivotal moment in the evolution of EU-African relations. For the EU, the treaty ushered in a new era of governance and redefining its role in international affairs. It aimed to consolidate the EU's strength by emphasising solidarity as a central element among European countries, fostering collective efforts and actions. The goal was to enable the EU to assert a dominant international position with a coordinated voice on foreign policy matters (Qobo, 2010).

However, concerns arose regarding the treaty's impact on Africa's position within the new EU foreign policy framework. The Lisbon Treaty formally recognised the European Council as an EU institution responsible for providing the impetus for the Union's development and defining its general political directions and priorities. Despite having no legislative functions, the European Council played a crucial role in shaping the EU's external actions, especially concerning ACP countries. The treaty signalled a significant evolution in how the EU managed its global relationships, attributing more competencies to the EU and involving new actors in its institutional landscape (Qobo, 2010).

These changes, in turn, necessitated more coordination between the EU High Representative (EUHR) and the intergovernmental EU Common Foreign and Security Policy, the European Security and Defence

Policy, and the European Commission's External Action Service (EEAS) areas. Unifying all geographic desks under the EEAS ended Africa's special treatment within the EU, requiring the continent to reassert its space in the dialogue with the EUHR.

The immediate consequences of this were that it became increasingly challenging to coordinate the eight thematic areas of cooperation under the JAES, covering peace and security, democratic governance, human rights, trade, regional integration, infrastructure, millennium development goals, energy, climate change, migration, mobility, employment, and science. This occasionally led to the establishment of conflicting programmes and hindered efforts to assess the impact of interventions and measure progress during EU-Africa ministerial meetings.

The new governance arrangements also undermined earlier discourses of joint continent-to-continent governance articulated in 2007, causing tension within the EU Commission. For example, in 2011, the EEAS unilaterally formulated geographical strategies for the Horn of Africa and the Sahel that deviated from the previous approach of waiting for African perspectives, signalling a shift in governance dynamics. The EEAS's proactive stance unsettled some within the EU Commission, especially the 'development' specialists who traditionally held primacy in the Africa-EU relationship (Qobo, 2010).

Historically, the EU-Africa partnership prioritised trade, but the JAES document adopted by the Lisbon Summit (2007) was ahead of its time in many ways. In its preamble, the EU and African states/continental organisations spelt out political ambitions that announced a 'paradigm shift' in the partnership. A few excerpts:

> "The purpose of this Joint Strategy is to take the Africa-EU relationship to a new, strategic level with a strengthened political partnership and enhanced cooperation at all levels. The partnership will be based on a Euro-African consensus on values, common interests and common strategic objectives".
>
> "This partnership and its further development will be guided by the fundamental principles of the unity of Africa, the interdependence between Africa and Europe, ownership and joint responsibility. … In the light of this new partnership, both sides also commit themselves to enhance the coherence and effectiveness of existing agreements, policies and instruments".
>
> "Both sides will treat Africa as one and upgrade the Africa-EU political dialogue to enable a strong and sustainable continent-to-continent partnership, with the AU and the EU at the centre".

The partnership will seek to "jointly promote and sustain a system of effective multilateralism … and to address global challenges and common concerns" (European Commission, 2008).

Soon after the adoption of JAES, EU member states delegated trade negotiations to the EU Commission Director General for Trade. This approach framed negotiations as free trade talks, sidelining the development aspects proposed by the ACP based on their Lomé experiences. Pressure to meet WTO artificial deadlines, as well as the eagerness of the Director General for Trade to fast forward controversial agreements, resulted in crisis negotiations and limited interim agreements.

The EU's focus on liberalisation through EPAs raised concerns about the focus on Europe's access to African markets rather than fostering development in partner countries. The EU's trade policy, influenced by the Common Agricultural Policy, faced criticism for hindering developing countries' agricultural exports and contributing to market access challenges. The intricate dynamics between trade, debt markets, and development cooperation underscored the complexities of the EU-Africa partnership, with profound implications for the continent's socio-economic development (see Chap. 8 for more extensive coverage of this)

The End of an Era: Cotonou Agreements Expire While the World Enters a Lockdown

The Cotonou Agreements expired in 2020, ushering in a period of reflection where stakeholders had the opportunity to better understand the various actors and agendas that were guiding the AU in formulating alternative strategies to tackle the challenges that lay ahead.

This was an interesting time to be watching the evolving dynamics of the relationship between the EU and the AU. Within the AU, there were two camps. One camp comprised countries that were ready to shift towards a more equal continent-to-continent relationship that abandoned a colonial approach based on trade concessions and aid and were against a large degree of interference. The group of countries in the second camp was worried about shaking the ACP architecture and feared seeing aid reduced and partnership terms becoming unpredictable.

In March 2018, in Kigali, the AU Executive Council chose to negotiate a new continent-to-continent partnership with the EU rather than pursuing a post-Cotonou deal within the ACP group. The importance of this post-Cotonou Agreement was reiterated at the AU Summit in Nouakchott (July 2018). This Summit also recognised the need for further consultations to solidify Africa's common position, but in areas that would not interfere with the AU priorities.

As a result, the AUC Chairperson requested a postponement of negotiations until Africa finalised its consultative process, a request that was accepted by the ACP group and the EU. However, uncertainties persisted about the unfolding processes. While Brussels-based ACP actors continued preparations, the European Commission and certain member states had expressed openness to an AU leadership role but remained committed to existing EU negotiating directives.

Amid this uncertainty, the AU faced strategic and procedural questions requiring urgent attention. Understanding the ACP group and EU responses to the AU's preference for a continent-to-continent partnership was crucial. Additionally, identifying potential political constraints within the AU's common position was essential. The AU had to articulate the strengths of a continent-to-continent approach, consider past obligations in formulating the negotiating position, and rally support for such a stance.

The AU's preference for a comprehensive partnership with the EU, independent of the ACP, had raised concerns that were rooted in the desire for African countries to shape their destiny and maintain solidarity with the Caribbean and Pacific states. Caribbean states may have found negotiating a regional deal less appealing than a broader African partnership, a scenario they did not anticipate. Brexit and an EU focused on core priorities close to home had contributed to fears of further marginalisation in the Caribbean and Pacific regions.

Arguments favouring the original ACP-EU foundation over regional alternatives included continuity, stability, predictability of resources, and political leverage in multilateral fora, but these needed more evidence. The AU had already been a primary political interlocutor for the EU, and ACP's claims of global influence were questionable. Concerns about the AU's ability to secure aid resources post-2020 through new channels were mentioned as a potential risk.

In the initial stages of the post-Cotonou process, certain EU member states, notably Germany and France, demonstrated an inclination to transcend the ACP-EU framework. Despite this, a nuanced compromise materialised within Europe, as the EU Commission formulated a mandate endorsing an all-ACP-EU foundation, supplemented by three regional partnerships—one for Africa, one for the Caribbean, and one for the Pacific—as the preferred modality.

This approach represented an endeavour to sustain the existing order, a subtlety underscored by prior arrangements with the ACP, which included a mechanism to regulate European Development Fund (EDF) allocations. Contrarily, the new EU negotiating mandate explicitly indicated the EU's intention to terminate the EDF, transitioning into an agreement that centralised decision-making on budgets and allocations within the EU. This shift added a layer of complexity to the negotiations, introducing a departure from established practices in fund management and allocation decisions.

The fear of the unknown and the perception of the AU as a problematic partner had contributed to the reluctance to adopt the EU negotiating mandate to cater for direct continent-to-continent talks. Preserving the 'acquis' of Cotonou became crucial for the EU Commission, reflecting a reluctance to listen to the AU priorities.

In 2016, the EU proposed to enhance the JAES but was hesitant to engage directly with the AU in negotiating governance and accountability rules, citing legal and normative reasons. This presented a challenge for African negotiators who had to contend with potential misinformation and warnings about potential long-term implications of the proposals under discussion. Navigating these complexities to ensure effective negotiations proved to be a minefield. Significant external resistance persisted despite the AU's efforts to assert control over its agenda and partnerships. The end result was that there was no mechanism to jointly evaluate what the various Summits had approved, and it was difficult to organise ministerial-level meetings as envisaged in the various deliberations.

Various actors preferred adhering to the familiar Cotonou system for reasons ranging from concerns about relinquishing power and control to a general mistrust of the AU as the primary actor in this context. The AU's endeavour to shape a new narrative encountered resistance, reflecting the ongoing struggle to establish autonomy in the face of entrenched norms and interests.

In late 2018, the need to organise further consultations to solidify the AU's 'Common African Position for post-Cotonou negotiations' became imperative. The AU's legal status, not being a direct 'party' to the Cotonou Agreement, challenged its involvement in the intergovernmental negotiation. However, a significant development occurred when a clear majority of African states, including North African states, formally and explicitly mandated the AU to engage in the process on behalf of the continent. This shift in political dynamics rendered previous legal arguments obsolete since this was an AU decision (Pichon, 2021).

At the time, key initiatives were recommended to enhance Africa's interests, including:

- Developing a robust political narrative around the Common African Position underscoring the urgency of establishing a modern continent-to-continent partnership that addressed shared interests and challenges. Notably, caution was advised against accepting a long-term arrangement that could constrain Africa within a less favourable framework.
- Providing detailed assurances to African states that were hesitant to follow the AU's path, convincing them their interests would be better served under an upgraded AU-EU political partnership post-2020.
- Conducting targeted outreach and effective communication to key stakeholders within Africa and the EU institutions/member states, highlighting the stakes in the post-Cotonou debate and the imperative to shift to a continent-to-continent negotiation between the AU and EU.

The Common African Position already contained compelling arguments for a single political cooperation framework with Europe. These arguments included the fragmented nature of current EU policy and institutional frameworks towards Africa, suboptimal effectiveness in critical areas, the necessity to prioritise Agenda 2063—the AU's key strategy—and the lack of legitimacy in the governance structures of both the Cotonou Agreement and the ACP group.

But while these arguments were relevant individually, they lacked a cohesive and attractive political narrative. To address this issue, the preamble of the JAES was revisited, and four strategic messages aimed at reshaping the political narrative and ensuring a more robust safeguarding of African interests were formulated. Despite losing momentum since 2007, the JAES's underlying political foundations aligned closely with the AU's objectives for the post-Cotonou process.

The four messages included:

Message 1:

The ACP-EU framework, in isolation, needs to be improved to safeguard Africa's interests and establish engagements with Europe beyond 2020. The African Union (AU) currently needs more involvement in the governance of the Cotonou Agreement. Moreover, the collective action of the ACP group in addressing global challenges has been historically limited. Preserving the ACP as the overarching framework is conditionally acceptable, contingent upon not compromising Africa's autonomous capacity to defend its interests. Notably, Africa and Europe collaborate on shared interests and challenges independent of the ACP's involvement.

Message 2:

African states stand to enhance the defence of their interests vis-à-vis Europe by collaborating through an African organisation endowed with undisputed legitimacy at the Heads of State/Government level. The proposition of a new continent-to-continent agreement between the EU and the AU is advanced to fortify Africa's political position, facilitating negotiations on pivotal issues such as migration and trade, for example, the EPA and the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA). This shift would also permit a transition towards an alternative form of political dialogue, moving beyond the confines of Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement. The AU's structures, particularly their ability to regularly mobilise at the Heads of State level, are accorded greater political credibility within European circles than the ACP structure.

Message 3:

Recognition of African institutions' central role and legitimacy at continental and regional levels is posited as imperative for the EU. Since 2000, Africa has diligently erected an institutional architecture encompassing entities like the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), the African Governance Architecture (AGA), and advancements towards a CFTA. This institutional progress is complemented by the development of an array of continental policy frameworks, prominently exemplified by Agenda 2063. Thus, the call is made for effectively utilising this progressively mature and legitimate institutional architecture in shaping a post-Cotonou deal, superseding reliance on the ACP format.

Message 4:

A recalibration of the funding strategy is advocated to underpin the new political partnership between the EU and AU. It entails formulating a more effective, coherent, and mutually owned funding strategy. Crucially, such a strategy should be attentive to the specific development cooperation needs of diverse African countries, ranging from Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and fragile states to small islands and middle-income nations. It is underscored that the new funding strategy must respect existing arrangements within various agreements, such as those of North Africa and South Africa, with a gradual trajectory towards harmonisation. Additionally, Africa is urged to proactively manage the funding challenge by intensifying resource mobilisation efforts, countering illicit financial flows, and enhancing self-reliance in funding both the AU and the Regional Economic Communities.

It was unequivocally communicated to all African states that any potential new continental agreement would not impact their bilateral arrangements with the EU, except in areas they had already decided to have a common approach: trade, climate change, peace and security, and migration (Kappel, 2021; Kotsopoulos & Mattheis, 2018). This assurance extended to those states associated with the Cotonou Agreement. Furthermore, it was imperative to alleviate concerns regarding the potential repercussions on aid resources post-2020 without the ACP-EU framework and EDF support. Such concerns arose due to the EU mandate, which delinked allocations from the prospective negotiated agreement. These efforts sparked immense controversy and resistance by the EU Commission negotiators, who agitated all kinds of fears and used tactics to sideline the AU and key negotiators from any meaningful process.

The Proof of the Pudding Is in the Eating: The Post-Cotonou Crash

On December 3, 2020, almost ten months after the expiration of the Cotonou Agreement, negotiators representing the EU and the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) achieved a significant breakthrough by finalising a political agreement to succeed it. The new agreement was the culmination of over two years of intense discussions involving a diverse array of experts, ambassadors, and ministers under the leadership of the chief negotiators Jutta Urpilainen, EU Commissioner for International Partnerships, and Robert Dussey, Togolese Foreign Minister, on behalf of the ACP group. In the middle of the negotiations, the traditional arrangement sustaining the ACP group secretariat in Brussels, with funding provided by the EU Commission, was replaced by launching a new structure, the OACPS, which was to be funded by its member states. The subsequent marginalisation of the OACPS secretariat during the post-Cotonou negotiations has proven that the EU distancing has not worked financially or otherwise.

The new EU-OACPS Agreement represents a notable departure from its predecessor in form and substance. In terms of content, the agreement outlines six equally crucial objectives, surpassing the previous focus solely on development. Notably, it explicitly articulates the goal of establishing a political partnership for mutually beneficial outcomes, aligning with the EU's approach in agreements with third states.

This shift in focus contrasts with prior agreements between the EU and the ACP, where the primary aim was promoting economic, social, and cultural development, with a central role in poverty eradication. Additionally, the absence of a specific financial instrument is noteworthy, as the EDF, historically dedicated to funding projects in ACP countries, has now been integrated into the EU budget. Furthermore, some other financially ring-fenced activities provided to ACP countries in areas such as peace and security have also been replaced by EU unilateral decision processes.

The expiration of the Cotonou Agreement sparked a vibrant questioning of the continued relevance of the EU-ACP partnership. The post-Cotonou era prompted discussions on whether it should be regarded as a historical artefact or if certain aspects of the existing cooperative framework warranted preservation. The diminishing interest from several EU member states, scepticism from select African nations regarding the ACP group's effectiveness, and the rising trend of regionalisation within the ACP group's three constituent parts had introduced uncertainties.

The adoption of cooperation strategies between the EU and Africa and between the EU and the Caribbean exacerbated these concerns. Concurrently, contentious negotiations on EPAs and the initiation of ad hoc processes on migration and mobility indicated that crucial policy areas were expanding beyond the scope of the EU-ACP partnership. The inconsistent performance of the Cotonou Agreement, particularly in terms of economic growth, rendered the continuation of the status quo impractical. Notably, negotiations became entangled with vested interest groups and manipulation, primarily aimed at circumventing the involvement of the AU, was common. This situation further complicated the preparatory processes undertaken by both sides to establish an optimal governance framework for their post-2020 relations.

Tensions among various African actors and certain European countries, as well as the EU Commission, necessitated two postponements of the expiration date for the Cotonou Agreement. When the new agreement was eventually signed, it coincided with a heightened focus on issues arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, such as access to critical equipment and medicines. Some African countries strongly perceived a lack of solidarity in terms of access to protective equipment, ventilators, and, subsequently, vaccines, which, in their view, underscored the marginal importance of the EU-OACPS Agreement.

This culmination of events resulted in a prolonged process of ratifications, and it is likely that the agreement may ultimately not be implemented despite the potential of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to advance the continent-to-continent approach to international trade negotiations (see Chap. 8 for more on this). This is akin to the challenges encountered by the EPAs in Africa.

Subsequently, South Africa's withdrawal from the OACPS (Soko & Qobo, 2017) was a political signal highlighting the divergence in perspectives favouring Africa's integration over maintaining a framework that competes with the AU's responsibilities.

Against this backdrop, and after numerous attempts to organise it, the 6th Africa-Europe Summit eventually took place in Brussels in February 2022.

Africans articulated clear priorities during the Summit. First, they sought the EU's support of pan-African projects like Agenda 2063, the AfCFTA, and the African Union Green Recovery Action Plan. Second, leaders emphasised the need to shift from a donor-recipient mindset to a true partnership in exploring investment opportunities on the continent. Third, they called for a monitoring mechanism to ensure more concrete outcomes following the Summit, highlighting the perception that prior EU commitments often remained unfulfilled.

This last point was the most challenging question during negotiations and had been repeatedly refused, but the EU eventually accepted the call for a monitoring mechanism. However, since then, the EU has selected the interlocutors for such an exercise and defined the process and framework that will make such accountability palatable to them. The AU Commission has been completely marginalised in these endeavours, while the monitoring mechanism has been effectively stolen from the AU member states.

The call for an equal partnership resonated strongly during the Summit, with EU officials emphasising their desire to be Africa's partner of choice. The Summit's focus on understanding each other and the concept of equal partnership was reflected in the final declaration, emphasising mutual respect, accountability, shared values, and reciprocal commitments.

As such, the 6th Africa-Europe Summit marked a shift in rhetoric, with African participants asserting themselves as equal partners, emphasising the need for a reset in relations. However, post-summit assessments reveal a disparity between EU rhetoric and policy practice on partnership equality. The divergence is attributed to the existing summit organisation, where each side presents vague 'wish lists' without proper prior consultations.

Other challenges arose during the Summit that highlighted the gap between rhetoric and practice. For example, the EU chose the Summit as a platform to launch its new Global Gateway initiative, positioned as a dynamic alternative to the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). However, the AU was only informed about the Global Gateway a few weeks before its launch. This initiative was presented during the preparatory ministerial meeting responsible for the Summit's declaration, and it was the subject of a formal exchange with the AU when the EU made its unilateral announcement. Such behaviour was reminiscent of the announcement of a plan for Africa made by EU Commission President Juncker just weeks before the previous Summit in Abidjan in November 2017 (European Commission, 2022).

The Global Gateway was eventually presented by EU Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen as a demonstration of the strength of the partnership with Africa and a testament to the seriousness with which she and her Commission approached their Africa Strategy (European Commission, 2022), but the impact of the earlier lack of communication lingered.

What are the lessons from one more Summit likely to disappoint? First, a joint preparatory process is crucial for effective decision-making. Second, clarifying the summit's main purpose is essential, whether for information exchange, informal consultations, or reaching concrete agreements on shared projects. Third, defining the type of interaction (development assistance, joint efforts, or spillover management) is vital for successful outreach activities. Fourth, agreement on financial resources is needed, specifying when funds flow to the AU Commission or other recipients. Fifth, clarity on these issues lays the foundation for establishing progress indicators and improved monitoring, possibly by an independent body.

Despite highlighting weaknesses in the current summitry, the 6th summit underscored the need for a reset and emphasises Africa's role as an equal partner, providing crucial insights for future improvements. Two elements could make a big difference at future summits. First, there is a need for a structural reform that will change the colonial commodity dependence model. Second, organising a joint preparatory process could enhance the voice of all stakeholders; improve initiative design, selection, and impact; and foster partner equality in the AU-EU relationship.

Without a change, EU efforts to showcase its African activities will not appeal to Africans. Research revealed that as things stand, Africans consider China and the USA, not the EU, their top partners (Afrexim Bank, 2022; Orbie, 2007; Tull, 2008). As Africa's largest trading partner (Afrexim Bank, 2022), the EU faces an opportunity to strengthen trade relations, increase foreign direct investment, and support continental projects.

Meanwhile, in Samoa, the EU and its member states inked an agreement with the OACPS in November 2023, which represents the long-delayed final step of the post-Cotonou negotiations. However, behind the celebratory rhetoric, the stark reality is that among the 79 non-EU countries, only 44 were willing to sign the deal. The withdrawal of South Africa and the non-signature by Nigeria, both influential economies in Africa, present significant challenges. Additionally, the omission of several mid-sized economies, including Senegal and Namibia, from the list of signatories further complicates the situation.

This raises questions about the agreement's diminished significance compared to its predecessors, notably evident in the absence of a dedicated financing stream, highlighting potential challenges in its effective implementation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023).

In addition, despite the initial signing of the agreement by 44 countries, the prospect of attaining the required two-thirds threshold for ratification remains uncertain. Even in the event of unanimous ratification, this would not be adequate for the agreement to come into force. As a result, the agreement is currently undergoing provisional application to maintain its viability, a status that has been effective since it was initialled in 2021. This prompts essential questions about its future. Two pivotal inquiries persist: first, which countries will emerge as signatories as EU country delegations in ACP countries escalate their efforts, and second, which of the 44 signatories will ultimately ratify the agreement?

Drawing comparisons with prior experiences, such as the EPAs in East and West Africa, it becomes apparent that concluding or signing an agreement does not necessarily denote unanimous agreement but rather indicates a sense of weariness. The fact that EU countries have chosen to opt out of specific clauses, particularly those pertaining to tax, transparency, debt, regular migration, and remittances—matters hard-fought for by African countries—introduces an additional layer of complexity and erodes confidence in the agreement's efficacy.

The overarching question remains: why would African countries commit to an agreement that appears to contradict their interests, especially since they have been operating without it since the early 2000s? Furthermore, given that the EU has changed its allocation system and decides unilaterally how to pursue financing commitments, future financing could be managed through focused agreements, barring the European Investment Bank (EIB), which is required to base its funding on some kind of agreement.

Essentially, the EU seems to grapple with challenges in maintaining the support of a substantial portion of African and Caribbean nations, fuelled not only by concerns about their negotiation style but also by the perceived lack of commitment from EU member states, exemplified by the limited high-level representation during the agreement's proceedings.

The Samoa Agreement appears destined to be consigned to the annals of history. It now stands as a testament to a bygone era, marked by grand expectations that, in hindsight, have amounted to nothing of substantial consequence.

Navigating the Impact of China's Influence on the European Agenda

When the EU launched its first Strategy for Africa in 2005, aiming to foster coherence among a myriad of actors and diverse European policies, it was doing so in response to the strong emphasis the newly established AU put on such an approach. The strategy centred on crucial pillars, including peace and security, good governance, economic growth, and investing in people. According to Ighobor (2013), the initiative outlined the EU's pledge to support integration endeavours for a decade, encompassing the entirety of the African continent. The approach introduced two critical changes: separating Africa from the Caribbean and the Pacific and giving corpus to a continent-wide approach as assumed by the AU.

The strategy further acknowledged regional and country-specific needs. It proposed an alignment with African countries' national strategies, with primary objectives focusing on achieving the MDGs and promoting sustainable development, security, and good governance. Emphasising partnership grounded in international law, human rights, equality, and mutual accountability, the strategy is built upon the progress achieved by African countries themselves.

In 2009, China became Africa's largest trading partner and a substantial investor, and its influence has been growing since then. This has stimulated the EU's interest in Africa, highlighting the evolving dynamics of international relationships on the continent (Ighobor, 2013). China has funded over 3000 infrastructure projects since 2009, many deemed crucial, as reported by the AidData Project (Schneidman & Wiegert, 2018). The financial commitment from China to African governments and state-owned entities was more than $86 billion in commercial loans extended between 2000 and 2014, averaging about $6 billion annually (Schneidman & Wiegert, 2018).

In 2015, President Xi Jinping made a substantial pledge at the 6th Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), promising $60 billion in commercial loans to the region (Marsh, 2018). If realised, this commitment would have resulted in an annual lending increase of at least $20 billion. However, the pandemic has considerably slowed down these ambitious targets.

The vigour and speed of Chinese engagements in Africa have redefined the continent's geopolitical landscape and prompted a reassessment of Western strategies. The multifaceted nature of China's involvement in Africa spans economic, geopolitical, and strategic dimensions, showcasing a remarkable vitality that has left Western countries both intrigued and, in some cases, apprehensive. The sheer scale of Chinese commitments, spanning infrastructure development, energy projects, and telecommunications, has fuelled robust economic growth across many African countries. This investment surge has helped address Africa's developmental needs and positioned Chinese companies at the forefront of the continent's growth trajectory.

Central to China's success in Africa is its adaptability to local contexts. Unlike some Western counterparts, China is willing to engage with Africans on their terms, respecting diverse governance structures and policies. This adaptability has allowed China to navigate the intricate political landscapes of Africa more effectively, forging partnerships beyond mere economic transactions. China's focus on long-term vision further distinguishes its approach. This contrasts with Western investors, often criticised for their short-term focus.

However, the rapid rise of China in Africa has not been without its challenges. Western nations, initially taken aback by China's assertiveness, pointed the finger at the economic dependency and environmental impact of China's investments, the potential adverse effects on local economies, and the spectre of unsustainable debt levels. Nevertheless, as the dynamics of China-Africa relations continued to evolve, calls for a reevaluation of Western engagement strategies became louder.

In addition, the Ukraine war has forced the EU and its member states to play a more vital geopolitical role and tested their collective resolve to ramp up all the instruments at their disposal, from diplomacy, sanctions, and military assistance to humanitarian support. Yet, in an era of increased geopolitical competition, Europe's visibility and influence in world affairs are being challenged by China, Russia, and other regional powers. In response, the EU has sought to develop new and better types of partnerships, notably with Africa, while seeking to establish a leading role on the global stage, protecting its interests and promoting its values.

For example, a few days after she was elected President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen embarked on her first official trip, a trip to Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, the headquarters of the African Union. It was symbolic and aligned with her calls for a "comprehensive strategy for Africa" (Fougières & Labastie, 2022). Africa remains at the heart of the EU's geopolitical ambitions.

This growing interest towards Africa is also underpinned by many recent diplomatic initiatives by the EU and its member states. Germany's Marshall Plan with Africa is encapsulated in the "Marshallplan mit Afrika: Partnerschaft für die Zukunft" document (Zeiss, 2020), emphasising an approach to revamp investments. On the other hand, the EU Commission President Juncker's vision was outlined in his 2017 proposal titled "Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa" (European Parliament, 2020). This document delineated the framework for sustainable investment and job creation, acknowledging the importance of enhancing economic ties between the two continents.

The EU frequently prides itself on being the world's largest donor of ODA and consequently claims to be a significant global actor in international development. Africa's transformation presents the EU with both an opportunity and a challenge: it may either diminish Europe's role in the global power contest further or pave the way for its geopolitical ascendancy.

Europe still holds the crown of being Africa's primary trading partner and source of foreign investment and development aid. However, the geostrategic landscape of Africa is shifting rapidly, and Europe risks losing credibility and influence in its broader southern neighbourhood if it fails to recognise the changing nature of its relationship with the continent.

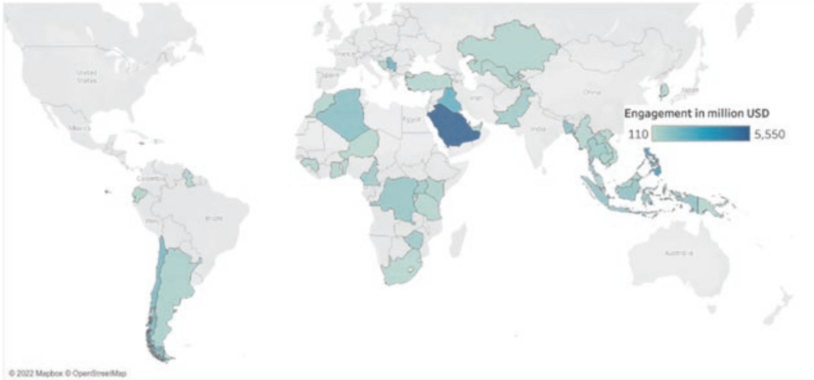

Fig. 6.1 Chinese total engagement in the BRI in 2022. (https://greenfdc.org/china-belt-and-road-initiative-bri-investment-report-h1-2022/)

The EU has been criticised for trying to replicate China's BRI through its Global Gateway Infrastructure Plan for Africa (Han et al., 2021). The BRI spent more than $83 billion on African infrastructure in 2022. Early in 2022, the EU focused its efforts on helping Africa develop its vaccines and has recently announced further development and investment assistance, including €150 billion through 2030 (Han et al., 2021).

The BRI and EU initiatives have played significant roles in shaping Africa's development landscape, yet a critical examination reveals disparities in their approaches and outcomes. The BRI has made a tangible impact on Africa's infrastructure development, fostering connectivity and economic engagement. In contrast, the EU's initiatives emphasise governance and other forms of conditionality. They often seek to translate lofty principles into concrete results. EU agreements and aid packages face criticism for their bureaucratic complexities and a lack of direct impact on grassroots development (Ingram, 2022). Furthermore, the EU's insistence on specific governance standards may be perceived as imposing Western values on Africa (Fig. 6.1).

Too Many Cocks: The Proliferation of EU Initiatives for Africa

The Zambian proverb "Too many cocks crowing at the same time make the dawn take too long" can be applied to the EU's engagement with Africa with regard to the number of new initiatives it has introduced on the continent. Between 1972 and 2020, the EU Commission or their member states introduced no less than 52 initiatives to strengthen partnerships with Africa (see Annex B). As the proverb suggests, a proliferation of initiatives, some occurring concurrently, may lead to a lack of clarity, potential competition between different initiatives, and a slower realisation of intended goals.

Despite numerous proclamations and declarations, the actual implementation of these initiatives often needs to be revised, leading to a credibility gap. While seemingly ambitious on paper, the abundance of strategies has resulted in a fragmented approach, with each initiative operating in isolation rather than contributing to a cohesive and comprehensive strategy for Africa. This inconsistency between rhetoric and action raises concerns about the EU's commitment to its stated goals, as the multitude of initiatives risks diluting the intended impact of any.

Contemporary political relations between the EU and Africa have been intricately woven into two overarching themes: governance and development policy. In turn, the convergence of these discourses has significantly amplified the regulatory influence that the EU has exerted over African countries. This influence, manifest in various realms, underscored the EU's pivotal role on the international stage, particularly in trade, European Security and Foreign Policy (ESFP), and military operations abroad (Stivachtis, 2012).

One of the outcomes of this influence has been that conditionality—specifically conditions attached to good governance outcomes—has become a cornerstone of EU-Africa relations. However, this has become increasingly hypocritical when juxtaposed with the EU's internal challenges. Certain EU member states, like Poland and Hungary, for example, have exhibited persistent breaches of good governance, the rule of law, and democratic principles, as indicated in the European Commission's Annual Report on the Rule of Law (Eur-lex, 2021).

Conditionality was introduced into the EU's development policy under the Cotonou Agreement in response to perceived shortcomings of the Lomé system (Zimelis, 2011). The EU wanted to adopt a more assertive stance with ACP member countries by emphasising human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy, and transparent governance as integral components of sustainable development. However, the vague definitions of these principles in the agreement have created ambiguity, challenges, and unintended outcomes (Zimelis, 2011). For example, in the case of Zimbabwe, political conditionality resulted in sanctions and suspensions (Del Biondo, 2009).

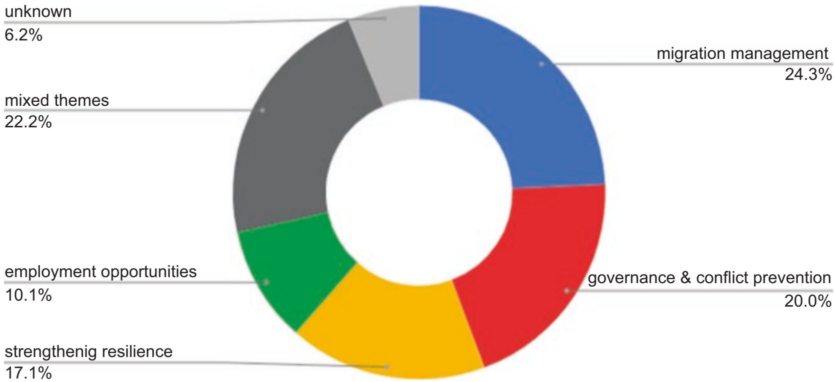

Fig. 6.2 Share of projects funded by the EU (2022). (Source: authors' compilation)

The EU's approach to conditionality mirrored that of the USA, which emphasises good governance and performance indicators. The EU's EDF served as a mechanism for policy conditionality, but challenges persisted due to the imprecise definition and application of critical principles, potentially undermining African agency. The sectoral allocation of EDF and other funds towards African countries reflects the EU's priorities (see Fig. 6.2).

The complex interplay of conditionality, differing interpretations of principles, and the imposition of external frameworks underscores the need for a nuanced and context-specific approach to EU-Africa relations.

Notably, the EU-AU Summit of 2020 announced new attempts at reforming the partnership. The Summit emphasised the importance of equal partnership, mutual respect, and shared values. The impact of these reforms on the dynamics of EU-Africa relations requires ongoing analysis and scrutiny to assess their effectiveness and implications for African agencies in political and developmental processes.

What is known is that the EU continues to engage the African continent with a layered set of siloed initiatives, with the countries of North Africa falling within the scope of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the remaining having a differentiated, more intrusive treatment (Fig. 6.3).

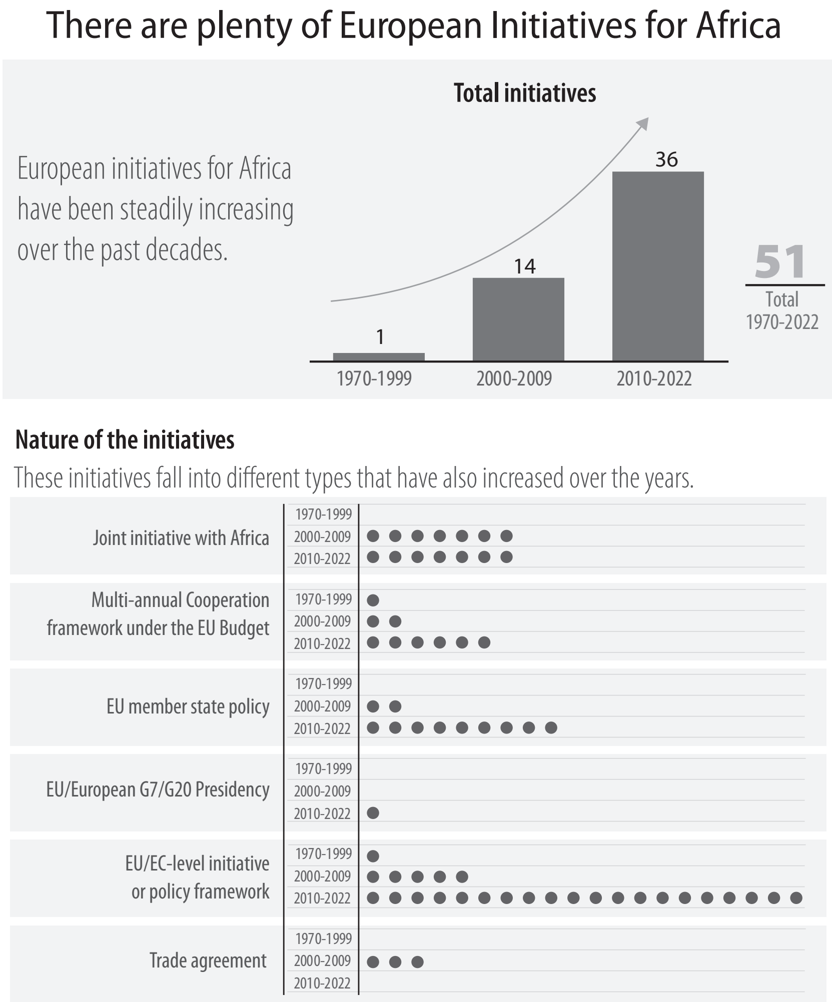

Fig. 6.3 EU initiatives in Africa, excluding trade agreements (1972–2022). (Source: Author)

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CHAPTER 7

Migration Takes Centre Stage

By 2050 One in Four People in the World Will Be African

Renowned British economist of the Enlightenment era, Thomas Malthus—best known for his 1798 masterpiece, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*—sparked both curiosity and controversy for his theory, which explores the relationship between population growth and planetary limits. Malthus's theory, which took shape against the backdrop of early nineteenth-century England, observed the delicate balance between burgeoning humanity and the land's bounty. Using the analogy of a garden overrun by weeds without a vigilant gardener, he believed that unchecked population growth would eventually surpass the earth's capacity to provide sustenance.

Yet, fate intervened in a whimsical twist. The wheels of industrialisation began to turn across the landscape Malthus had surveyed, bringing forth unforeseen change. Factories arose, machines hummed, and progress reshaped societies. Industrialisation led to a decline in fertility rates, defying Malthus's predictions. As economic fortunes grew, families got smaller, highlighting the intricate interplay between human behaviour and societal progress.

A similar trend has been observed in developing countries like Brazil, Indonesia, and even certain parts of China and India, previously known for having high birth rates, where fertility rates are decreasing. *The Economist*'s briefing in 2009 revealed that about half of the world has a

C. Lopes, *The Self-Deception Trap*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-57591-4_7

fertility rate of 2.1 or lower. This number, often called 'the replacement fertility rate', indicates a stable population. It is expected that sometime between 2020 and 2050, the global fertility rate will dip below this replacement rate in most countries.

This decline in fertility comes at a time when concerns reminiscent of Malthus's predictions are resurfacing, and there is apprehension about the consequences of overpopulation on our planet. The reduction in fertility rates is surprising and somewhat reassuring. However, modern Malthusians often downplay its significance. They argue that the world still has too many people, focusing on the absolute number, which is set to rise by approximately 2.4 billion over the next four decades. This paradox is due to demographic inertia. If previous generations had high fertility rates, there are more significant numbers of women of childbearing age in the present, resulting in more children being born even if each mother has fewer offspring. This leads to more, albeit smaller, families.

The world population has increased threefold in less than 70 years, from 2.5 billion in 1950 to about 7.5 billion today (UN DESA, 2022). If population growth continued unabated in this way, by the end of the century, there could be 22 billion people on the planet, likely stretching resources beyond sustainability. However, that is not going to happen. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) estimates that the global population will increase to around 9.2 billion by 2050, when it will stabilise, reaching just over 11 billion people by 2100 (*The Economist*, 2009). The International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) projections show lower numbers, peaking at around 9 billion in 2070 and declining slightly above 8 billion in 2100 (Lutz, 2021).

Population growth in today's giant, Asia, is slowing down and will peak around 2050, after which it will decline. Europe will decline slowly, and the Americas will grow slowly and stabilise. Africa is the only continent where population growth is likely to continue to increase to the point where its population rivals Asia by the end of the century. The world of tomorrow will be mostly Asian and African, with one in four people likely to be African by 2050 (Walsh, 2023).

The population of China, which is the world's largest, has proliferated, but its growth has slowed and will peak in the next 10 to 15 years, after which it will decline. By 2100, China's population will be just over 1 billion people (UN DESA, 2022). India's population is now about

1.3 billion and will soon surpass China's, but it will plateau and, in the next 30 to 40 years, begin to decline.

What is happening in China and India is happening all over the planet. Female fertility rates are plunging in Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and Brazil. Even in Africa, though its population is rising today, fertility rates in all countries are dropping. As fewer babies are being born and the population stabilises, people on our planet will keep getting older, which has profound implications for societies and economies as the number of workers declines relative to the number of consumers (Lee & Mason, 2012).

In the 1970s, only 24 wealthy countries had fertility rates of 2.1 or below. This count has surpassed 70 countries across all continents, including Africa. Within five decades, between 1950 and 2000, developing countries saw their average fertility rates decline by half, from six to three children per family. In contrast, Europe's fertility plummeted by almost half over the same period, from 2.65 to 1.42 children, only a 1.23-child drop. This decline in developing countries resembles the nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century European industrialisation patterns. Remarkably, South Korea achieved industrialised nation status in just 20 years, while Britain took 130 years (Prabhu, 2017).

Today's trends are even more rapid. Fertility rates have dropped more dramatically than in Japan and all Southeast Asian countries (excluding the Philippines). Bangladesh saw its fertility rate halve from six to three in just two decades (1980 to 2000), while Mauritius achieved the same decline in only ten years (1963–1973). The most astonishing tale comes from Iran. When the clerical regime took over in 1979, the mullahs abolished the country's family planning system. Fertility rose, reaching seven in 1984. Yet by the 2006 census, the average fertility rate had fallen to a mere 1.9, and just 1.5 in Tehran. From fertility that is almost as high as one can get, to below replacement level in 22 years, social change can hardly happen faster. No wonder the explosion on the streets of Iran this year seemed like a clash between two worlds: 15–29-year-olds, who make up one-third of the population and are better educated, against the established regime and the traditionalists (The Economist, 2009).

The population growth rate encompasses both the rate of natural increase and the impact of migration. Consequently, a substantial natural increase rate can be mitigated by a significant net out-migration, while a modest natural increase rate can be counterbalanced by a substantial net in-migration. This dynamic is particularly relevant when examining population trends, such as the influx of African migrants into Europe, where migration patterns play a crucial role in shaping demographic outcomes.

Despite the fact that Africa has the fastest-growing population globally, this does not translate into high numbers of migrants, as many fear.

In 2017, more than half of the global migrant population originated from just 21 countries. Notably, the top ten nations contributing the highest proportions of emigrants were India (6.4 per cent), Mexico (5 per cent), Russia (4.1 per cent), China (3.9 per cent), Bangladesh (2.9 per cent), Syria (2.7 per cent), Pakistan (2.3 per cent), Ukraine (2.3 per cent), the Philippines (2.2 per cent), and the UK (1.9 per cent) (The Economist, 2009). None are African. It is essential to emphasise that among these figures, the African nation with the most significant emigrant population was Egypt, ranking 19th globally. Approximately 36.3 million individuals have left African countries, accounting for a mere 0.5 per cent of the global population and contributing to only 14.1 per cent of the world's migrant population (The Economist, 2009).

Contrary to the notion of Africa as a continent experiencing mass exodus, data sets highlight a different narrative. Africa's role in the global migrant population is significantly smaller than other regions. Asia and Europe, for instance, account for 41 per cent and 23.7 per cent of the global migrant population, respectively (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2019). Hence, Africa's share of migrants is notably lesser in scale.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that a substantial proportion of sub-Saharan African migrants (70 per cent) choose to stay within the continent's borders. While migrating beyond Africa, a notable portion heads towards Europe, representing approximately 25.7 per cent of the African migrant population (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2019). The EU stands out as a destination, accommodating around 9.1 million African migrants in 2017. It includes 5.1 million migrants from North Africa and 4 million from sub-Saharan Africa (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2019). Notably, France emerges as the leading host for African migrants, with a significant share of 10.5 per cent, surpassing even the numbers in various African host countries.

This perspective underscores the importance of understanding migration dynamics within the African context. It dispels the misconception of Africa as a continent experiencing a mass exodus, highlighting that its contributions to the global migrant population are comparatively modest. While Europe hosts many African migrants, most sub-Saharan migrants choose to remain within their continent, challenging the conventional narrative of massive outward migration (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2019).

The Fixation on Linearity

Stanford biologist and ecologist Paul Ehrlich (1970) published his controversial book *The Population Bomb*, foreseeing dire consequences from rapid population growth. Inspired by Malthusian ideas, this perspective briefly amplified discussions on population concerns following a surge in the global population after World War II (Linnér, 2003) as a result of advancements in public health. Concerns were raised about potential social and ecological upheaval. While many advocated for family planning and education, Ehrlich's stance was more extreme. Rejecting incremental approaches, he asserted that population control was essential.

Despite technological advancements, such as the Green Revolution, which increased agricultural yields, Ehrlich found arguments to persist in his extreme views, for instance, warning about the potential environmental repercussions, including pesticide resistance (Ehrlich, 1970). While instrumental in steering attention towards population concerns, Ehrlich's warnings were criticised for their pessimistic outlook. Eminent critics, such as economist Julian Simon, voiced counterarguments by emphasising the power of human adaptability and technological innovation in addressing resource scarcity.

Simon's *Ultimate Resource* theory challenged Ehrlich's dire predictions, asserting that human ingenuity and inventiveness have historically led to the development of new technologies and solutions to alleviate resource constraints (Simon, 1981).

Ehrlich's ideas offer a cautionary tale on the limitations of relying solely on extreme prognostications. While his work undoubtedly spurred vital discussions, the subsequent critique highlights the importance of nuanced analysis. The story of Ehrlich's predictions illuminates the significance of incorporating a multifaceted understanding of the factors shaping our global landscape. As we examine the legacy of Ehrlich's extreme perspectives, it becomes evident that they must be accompanied by a balanced appreciation of the intricate web of variables that influence the trajectory of our societies.

Complexity science underscores the nonlinearity inherent in natural and societal systems. As the butterfly effect exemplifies, small changes can yield disproportionately large outcomes (Lorenz, 1963). Similarly, the relationship between population growth and resource availability is not unidirectional; it involves intricate feedback loops that can amplify or dampen trends. Technological advancements, while transformative, do not follow predictable linear paths. For instance, the exponential growth of computing power outlined by Moore's Law only linearly translates to some domains.

Systems thinking emphasises that the trajectory of our world emerges from the intricate interplay of factors and urges us to embrace complexity rather than relying on linear projections (Moore, 1965). However, international organisations tend to focus on African population growth through a neo-Malthusian lens, emphasising scarcity, incapacity, unemployment, and other negative undercurrents. This view is influenced by a complex interplay of historical legacies, prevailing narratives and policy paradigms. The historical context of colonisation has left a lasting imprint on Africa's socioeconomic landscape, engendering structural inequalities and fostering a perception of resource scarcity (Mamdani, 2007). This narrative converges with neo-Malthusian beliefs about overpopulation straining resources. Moreover, development paradigms prioritising economic growth may view population growth as a hurdle, potentially exacerbating unemployment and resource limitations (Lush et al., 2000).

In this context, prevalent narratives and reporting often amplify negative aspects of African countries. Additionally, external actors' concerns over instability or migration pressures driven by population growth can also align with neo-Malthusian ideas, shaping policy strategies (Mamdani, 2007). Policy approaches and funding priorities of international organisations can consequently become oriented towards addressing these perceived challenges rather than focusing on creating new value.

Nonetheless, within international organisations, diverse perspectives also recognise the need for a more holistic understanding of African population dynamics that goes beyond the constraints of the neo-Malthusian framework. These voices advocate for nuanced approaches considering social, economic, and cultural contexts, striving to reflect the complexity of factors influencing Africa's development.

In 2017, French President Emmanuel Macron's remarks at the G20 summit illuminated a complex interplay between media obsession, humanitarian justifications, and underlying fears regarding overpopulation and fertility. In response to a question about Africa's development, Macron's statement, "The challenge of Africa, it is totally different, it is much deeper, it is civilisational", ignited a flurry of reactions (Attiah, 2017).

While President Macron's full remarks resembled typical discourse within international development agencies, his words carried historical weight. In a 2023 interview, when asked about the riots that were observed in France throughout the year, mainly to contest retirement age, he stated that it is necessary to "significantly reduce immigration, starting with illegal immigration". While reinforcing his belief that countries of origin need to be re-civilised, President Macron emphasised that although it is 'untrue to claim' that France is 'overwhelmed' by immigration, the current situation is 'unsustainable' (Le Monde, 2022).

Furthermore, he believes "we have an obligation to produce results". According to him, France's migration policy would be built upon the foundation of "protecting the external European borders", as he views the nation as "a secondary immigration destination for foreigners who have entered another European Union country".

The term 'civilisational' has often been employed to subtly attribute a nation's successes and failures to essentialist characteristics. This is reminiscent of colonialist justifications. This rhetoric, intersected with overpopulation concerns, echoes neo-Malthusian fears that fertility rates in certain regions, such as Africa, might exacerbate resource scarcity and social instability.

In a separate incident, Prince William's comments on African population growth sparked controversy in November 2021. He suggested that population growth was contributing to the endangerment of wildlife. In reality, the connection between population growth and environmental issues is complex and fraught with ethical considerations. Critics drew attention to the 'eco-fascism' concept, which posits that specific populations bear more responsibility for environmental degradation. This notion carries racist undertones, blaming overpopulation and its environmental consequences on marginalised communities, especially in regions like Africa (BBC, 2021). William's statement highlighted the intricate nature of discussing population dynamics within environmental contexts, necessitating careful consideration of the historical baggage and implicit biases such discussions can carry. This incident resonates with concerns about a population explosion.

Such implicit bias was also evident within Western media narratives on the Ukraine refugee crisis, as exposed by Hellyer H. in *The Washington Post* (Hellyer, 2022). Charlie D'Agata's remarks about Kyiv's 'civilised' and 'European' nature inadvertently perpetuate a biased perception that conflict is less likely in such regions, reinforcing negative stereotypes about non-European areas. This prejudiced representation was further underscored by comments from various sources, suggesting that Western media and politics often prioritise the suffering of White Europeans over that of non-White communities facing similar struggles. This bias was evident in statements made on French news programmes Aljazeera (2021) and ITV News, illustrating how deeply embedded these discriminatory attitudes are.

Instances of discrimination extend beyond mere media rhetoric, finding disturbing resonance in the treatment of African and Asian migrants at Ukrainian border points with Poland, Romania, and Belarus. (Bergmann & Kijzer, 2022). African students seeking refuge from the conflict in Ukraine were met with barriers and mistreatment from Ukrainian security officials and civilians. The experiences recounted by these individuals highlight stark disparities in treatment based on their skin colour, causing Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari to emphasise the universal right to safe passage for those fleeing conflict, regardless of ethnicity or passport colour. The ordeal faced by African students, as narrated by Samuel George, a Nigerian software engineering student, underscores the harsh realities and challenges they endured, including being denied passage and subjected to physical violence.

The research of Bergmann and Kijzer (2022) brings into focus the EU's response to the Ukraine conflict, highlighting a heightened level of determination and unity. Within an astoundingly brief timeframe, the EU demonstrated solidarity and implemented sanctions as part of its response to the crisis. However, the pivotal moment arrived with the EU's decision to supply lethal military equipment to Ukraine through the European Peace Facility, marking an unprecedented shift in EU policy and action. This alteration underscores a new geopolitical approach. Nevertheless, when juxtaposing these actions with the racial biases and discrimination unearthed in media coverage and the treatment of migrants, a disconcerting pattern emerges, questioning the consistency and impartiality of Western attitudes and responses, particularly concerning distinct regions and populations.

Beneath the surface of these media-covered statements lies a more profound concern: migration. Population growth often intersects with migration, employment, and resource distribution discussions in international discourse. The latent fears surrounding these issues fuel debates around humanitarian justifications or ecological concerns.

The Mass Hysteria Around Migration

These discussions reflect broader debates about the potential impact of overpopulation on migration patterns and the socioeconomic fabric of nations, underscoring the need for a nuanced understanding of these issues and holistic approaches to address interconnected challenges.

The discourse surrounding migration is increasingly fraught with mass hysteria driven by media sensationalism and political agendas. Vincent Chetail's work, *Demystifying Migration: A Call for an Evidence-Based Narrative* (2019), demonstrates how emotions and perceptions often overshadow facts and rationality in discussions about migration. Chetail points out that the current misperceptions primarily reveal the shortcomings of mass media and political discourse rather than reflecting the true nature of migration.

Chetail's evidence-based approach challenges prevailing stereotypes about migration. He emphasises that migrants constitute only 3.5 per cent of the global population, a far cry from the frequently portrayed invasion narrative. Contrary to the disproportionate focus on irregular migration, most migrants travel safely and legally for work, family, or study reasons. Undocumented migrants are estimated at around 10–15 per cent of the migrant population globally. Additionally, Chetail dispels the myth of the male migrant leaving his family behind, revealing that women constitute 48.4 per cent of the global migrant population.

The narrative propagated by media and politics obscures migrants' significant contributions to their destination and origin countries. Migrants are pivotal to host countries' economic growth, filling critical roles in key sectors. Contrary to misconceptions, migrants pay more taxes and make more social contributions than they receive and contribute to entrepreneurship and innovation. Remittances sent by migrants greatly bolster their home countries' economies, too, surpassing development assistance more than threefold.

In 2022, Africa received an injection of around $95.6 billion from migrant remittances (World Bank, 2023). These funds, sent through various channels, including banks, money transfer agencies, and fintech companies, constitute 2 to 3 per cent of Africa's GDP and support the living expenses of roughly 200 million relatives. The potential to utilise a portion of these remittances for long-term projects like infrastructural development is gaining traction, contingent upon African governments forging solid connections with their diaspora, which consists of approximately 160 million people originally from the continent (World Bank, 2023).

Chetail (2019) goes further and highlights that the visibility of migrants has increased, offering both challenges and opportunities for the countries they inhabit and originate from. However, migrants often become scapegoats, masking politicians' failure to address socioeconomic challenges. Chetail notes that in a politically charged atmosphere, advocating for an evidence-based approach to migration is often perceived as partisan or even an affront to democracy. In such a climate, Chetail calls for developing a pedagogy of migration to foster a better understanding of migration's normalcy and safeguard democratic discourse from demagoguery.

In the historical context of human mobility, UN DESA's (2022) data reveals a gradual rise in international migrants, increasing from 173 million in 2000 to 281 million in 2020. This constitutes 2.8 per cent and 3.6 per cent of the global population, respectively, with women accounting for 135 million (3.5 per cent of females) and men for 146 million (3.7 per cent of males). The International Organisation on Migration (2021) also highlights that the stock of international migrants outside their birth countries reached 281 million by mid-year 2020, compared to 173 million in 2000 and 153 million in 1990. While the absolute numbers have grown, the share of international migrants as a proportion of the world's population has remained relatively stable between 2.9 per cent and 3.6 per cent from 1990 to 2020. Notably, the COVID-19 pandemic is believed to have caused migrant populations to fall by nearly 2 million between mid-2019 and mid-2020.

Migration across extensive distances is an enduring facet of human history. Over the ages, individuals have journeyed across the globe, seeking sustenance, security, and prosperity while leaving indelible marks on their cultures, languages, ailments, and genetic traits. The dawn of the New World presented unprecedented avenues for amassing wealth and fostering production and trade, but the scarcity of labour posed a significant challenge. The demand for labour consistently outstripped supply, leading to high associated costs. Preceding the nineteenth century, migrations of coercion and contractual arrangements dominated the intercontinental movement. The transatlantic slave trade epitomised these dynamics, witnessing the harrowing transportation of around 12 million enslaved individuals to the Americas (mainly South America and the Caribbean) amid dire conditions and elevated mortality rates. Brazil alone had received 4.5 million enslaved people by 1850 (Ferrie & Hatton, 2013).

As the nineteenth century unfolded, the movement to dismantle the slave trade gained momentum, particularly in Britain, the United States, and various European nations, giving way to new forms of migration. Leading up to 1820, Europe was a substantial source of migrants to the Americas, with approximately 2.6 million Europeans making the journey. Many embarked on this voyage through indentured contracts or as convicts, contributing to the burgeoning labour force. The indenture system was introduced in 1607 when the Virginia Company recruited labourers from England to work in its Jamestown colony. Workers agreed to serve for a fixed term, after which they were free. In exchange for their service, servants received the costs of their passage and subsistence during their term (Ferrie & Hatton, 2013).

After World War II, a further wave of migration saw Italians, Germans, British, and individuals from various backgrounds relocating to countries in South America, such as Argentina, Australia, and New Zealand.

During this period, some countries implemented policies to attract migrants of European descent, often emphasising 'whiteness' while concurrently imposing restrictions or rejecting migrants from other backgrounds. These policies, driven by racial biases and socioeconomic considerations, profoundly impacted the composition of migrant populations and the societies they joined (Gabaccia, 2000; Fitzgerald & Cook-Martin, 2019).

In his transformative work, *Move: The Forces Uprooting Us*, Parag Khanna (2021) offers an insightful narrative of the coming phase of human civilisation characterised by mobility and sustainability. Khanna's book underscores the multifaceted challenges facing our world, including geopolitical divisions among powerful nations, demographic imbalances, economic upheavals stemming from technological advancements, and the far-reaching impacts of climate change.

As the title suggests, Khanna explores the dynamic nature of the global movement, illustrating how people are continually relocating, reshaping the world map in the process. A notable revelation in his book is the prediction that, in the next decade or two, the number of Asian Europeans will surpass that of Asian Americans. This projection challenges prevailing assumptions in today's hyper-nationalistic landscape. Khanna advocates for a paradigm shift away from outdated notions of sovereignty, emphasising the crucial link between relocating people to resources and deploying technologies to individuals, all essential for achieving a new equilibrium (Khanna, 2021).

Khanna contends that the unrestricted movement of people across borders is integral to human social dynamics and offers economic advantages to countries despite recent stringent immigration policies observed in various regions, including Europe and the United States, under the Trump administration. Furthermore, Khanna delves into the emergence of generational identities overshadowing national allegiances, particularly among the younger population. He prognosticates that the growing impact of climate change will lead to the formation of 'climate-resilient zones', with regions such as Alaska gaining desirability. At the same time, acute water shortages might displace populations from Egypt and the Sahel region.

Age-Old Truths: How Ageing Populations Are Changing the Face of Economies and Societies

It is well known that, as the baby boom generation retires, OECD populations will age rapidly over the next several decades. According to recent demographic projections by the United Nations (2023), the share of the old-age population is expected to double, on average, in major industrialised countries over the next 50 years, and the dependency (ratio of dependants to the working-age population) is set to rise substantially. There is growing concern about this demographic. Changes will have significant macroeconomic effects and pose complex fiscal policy challenges.

Ageing may also influence economic growth, depending on the adjustments of factor inputs and government policy responses. However, the neoclassical Overlapping Generational (OLG) models used in previous studies cannot capture these effects because they feature diminishing returns in the reproducible inputs and exogenous technological change, implying that growth is also fuelled by technological progress and independent of economic forces in the long run.

The convergence of increased life expectancy and declining fertility rates drives the ageing and demographic dynamics, shaping the trajectory of average population age (Prabhu, 2017). Projections predict a nearly doubled proportion of elderly individuals in the next five decades, with Italy and Japan undergoing the most pronounced demographic shifts (Prabhu, 2017; Inada, 2021). In contrast, Sweden's ageing trend appears less dramatic, with Canada, France, the US, and the UK ranking in the middle (Prabhu, 2017; Inada, 2021).

Japan, known for its remarkable longevity rates, confronts an unparalleled demographic challenge with global repercussions (Inada, 2021). Japan's demographic challenges are magnified by plummeting fertility rates and declining birth figures (Weller, 2017). The nation is the world's oldest, with over 29 per cent of its population aged 65 or older, in stark contrast with figures in Africa, where the average age is under 25 (Inada, 2021).

Japan's National Institute of Population and Social Security Research forecasts a staggering reduction of nearly 40 million from its population of 127 million by 2065, despite the government's stated goal of maintaining at least 100 million inhabitants (Weller, 2017). This phenomenon is attributed to waning interest among younger generations to initiate families and low immigration rates (Weller, 2017). A telling 2016 study reveals that many unmarried Japanese men and women lack relationships despite expressing intentions to marry (Weller, 2017).

Although endeavours to revitalise the population have faltered, a linguistic innovation has emerged to grapple with Japan's ageing dynamics (Inada, 2021). The term 'pre-old age', advocated by both the Japan Gerontological Society and the Japan Geriatrics Society, is gaining prominence to redefine the 65 to 74 age range (Inada, 2021). This lexical adaptation illuminates Japan's evolving understanding of ageing, acknowledging a life phase beyond traditional delineations.

This linguistic evolution aligns with Japan's shifting work patterns and societal roles (Inada, 2021). Many, like Norihiro Aizawa, a 38-year-old part-time farmer, intend to contribute actively into their 70s, signifying a societal re-evaluation of age and productivity (Inada, 2021). Japan's agricultural sector perceives those in their 60s and 70s as being at the zenith of their careers, redefining ageing as a continuous contribution rather than a simple transition into retirement (Inada, 2021).

Japan's experience offers vital insights into the intricate interplay between demographics, societal values, and the evolving human journey (Weller, 2017). Today's median age in Japan is 46 years old and is expected to increase to 55 by 2100. Because it has very little immigration, Japan is like a microcosm of the world itself. We know that its economy has been sluggish, its schools are closing, and more and more elderly people are looking after each other because there are no longer young people for those tasks. The deceleration that looms over Japan as its population ages is the same phenomenon occurring in Europe, with ripple effects extending to governmental policies, societal norms, and economic dynamics (Edmond, 2019).

The old-age dependency ratio amplifies the impact of age distribution, exemplified by the rapid growth of this ratio in Japan and Italy (Prabhu, 2017; Inada, 2021). Conversely, other countries foresee a gradual rise until 2100, followed by a more rapid ascent (Prabhu, 2017; Inada, 2021). Canada, France, and the US anticipate dependency ratio surges of 130 per cent, 100 per cent, and 90 per cent, respectively, contrasting with the UK and Sweden's projected increases of 60 per cent and 50 per cent (Prabhu, 2017; Inada, 2021).

Within this global demographic landscape, Prabhu notes a paradigm shift (2017). Concerns of overpopulation are replaced by the realisation that transitioning demographics will pose challenges, particularly for nations with limited immigration. Europe is pivotal, as demographic shifts shape policies and societies (Prabhu, 2017; Inada, 2021). The resulting economic, societal, and innovative implications resonate worldwide. How will governments cope with declining revenues as tax bases no longer increase and new short-term expenses supplant capital expenses?

For example, labour shortages, illuminated by Whiteman (2022), could be one of the most far-reaching consequences of changing demographics. Healthcare costs are also set to rise. With fewer people in the workforce, tax collections decline, houses are empty, and schools close. The infrastructure requirements, such as roads, bridges, dams, and airports, will decline. Innovation, too, could be a casualty of ageing populations. Much of the innovation of the past 50 years has been driven by young people, who have helped create new and remarkable technologies such as the internet, smartphones, social media, automation, and artificial intelligence. Older people need help adapting to these new technologies. What will happen to innovation as certain countries' populations grow older?

These impacts are exacerbated by crises and conflict. For example, the war in Ukraine has intensified the logistics sector's labour shortage, first observed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Sanctions impede recruitment for seafarers and drivers and a host of low-skilled labour. International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) data notes that Russians account for 10.5 per cent (198,123) of the global shipping workforce, with Ukraine providing 76,442 (or 4 per cent) and warned restrictions on Russian crew could hinder a sector already hit by labour shortages (Whiteman, 2022). The interconnectedness of trade and labour markets necessitates unrestricted movement (Whiteman, 2022).

Other sectors are also struggling. In 2021, 28 occupations in Europe, ranging from construction and healthcare to engineering and information technology, suffered from shortages, and the Digital Economy and Society Index shows that four out of ten adults who work in Europe need basic digital skills (Soler, 2023). As a result, the European Commission has implemented mitigation measures to reduce regional and industrial-specific labour shortages.

"Labour shortages have a catastrophic cost. Of course, an economic cost. In Germany alone, €86 billion per year in lost output", said the EU Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson. The EU is working to reduce the unfilled vacancy rate among the 27 member states and combat the working-age labour force, which is projected to fall from 70 per cent to 56–54 per cent by 2070, according to the latest Eurostat figures (Soler, 2023).

Johansson affirms that in today's Europe, two working people support somebody who does not work. However, in 2070, it will be one-to-one unless something is done about it (Soler, 2023). This urgency should have made Africa's young population an asset for the partnership between the two continents. However, the opposite appears to be true.

EU Migration Policies and Pathways to Transcend Neocolonial Trends

In their comprehensive analysis, Moreno-Lax et al. (2021) scrutinised the EU's approach to Mediterranean migration from the eruption of the 2015 refugee crisis to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study's findings show a persistent absence of fully unified standards despite concerted efforts towards harmonisation at the EU level. Particularly evident within asylum policy are enduring discrepancies in practices and standards across member states and a lack of EU law coverage for legal entry routes, including humanitarian visas. Moreover, the EU's legal framework still needs to be completed regarding legal migration, leaving many categories of third-country national (TCN) workers outside EU regulations.

The New Pact on Migration and Asylum, proposed in September 2020, introduces several contentious propositions. In legal migration, national schemes are set to continue in parallel with EU initiatives, while comprehensive EU-wide mobility for TCNs remains largely elusive. Within asylum policy, the foundational tenets of the Dublin system persist and, in some instances, are reinforced. However, the proposed border procedure's envisioned link between asylum and repatriation raises concerns about compromised protection for migrants and asylum seekers. The externalisation of international protection obligations, which involves redirecting asylum seekers and refugees to other countries without adequate safeguards, underscores potential vulnerabilities in the EU's asylum policies, heightening apprehensions about the influence of foreign political interests on the decision-making process.

Furthermore, the report reveals that despite a substantial decrease in asylum applications and arrivals at EU external borders since 2015, the discourse and strategies around crisis management endure. Unfortunately, solidarity within the EU is often a response to emergencies rather than a fundamental aspect integrated into common asylum and external border control policies; a situation mirrored in various African regions. For instance, in the face of crises like displacement due to conflict or natural disasters, African countries often resort to ad-hoc and reactive measures, lacking a cohesive, pre-established framework for collective response. This fragmented approach, akin to the EU's current predicament, highlights the need for a more systemic integration of solidarity into policies that address humanitarian needs, ensuring a more proactive and unified response to challenges across diverse contexts.

The lessons learned from the EU's reassessment could potentially inform and inspire a more comprehensive and integrated approach to addressing humanitarian challenges in Africa and beyond (EUAA, 2019).

In 2019, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) signed an updated cooperation plan that strengthened their cooperation in their respective work on asylum, border control, and migration management. Their augmented and combined authority has led to significant shifts in the implementation of EU asylum and external border control policies. This change raises concerns about independence, executive powers, accountability, and compliance with fundamental rights, which have yet to be comprehensively addressed.

Established in 2004, Frontex is the European border agency responsible for aiding EU countries and Schengen-associated nations in managing their external borders. Its broader mission encompasses the harmonisation of border controls across the EU. The agency is pivotal in fostering collaboration among border authorities within EU member states, offering indispensable technical support and expertise. The Federal Ministry of the

Interior and Community in Germany has indicated that Frontex, in response to escalating migration levels, has expanded its personnel at its Warsaw headquarters, growing from approximately 400 in 2016 to 655 by the close of 2017 and further exceeding 1000 by 2020 (Moreno-Lax et al., 2021). These expansions are accompanied by a parallel budget growth, ascending from €254 million in 2016 to €302 million in 2017, with a projected increase reaching €346 million by 2020 (Moreno-Lax et al., 2021).

Moreno-Lax et al. highlight deficiencies within the European Commission's plan for a new standard approach to search and rescue (SAR), which risks formalising ongoing irregularities by Frontex, the European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation (EUNAVFORMED), and member states' bilateral arrangements with third countries, some of which have faced legal contestation in European courts and other forums. Current SAR practices, both in their present form and within the New Pact, contravene the principle of treating rescue as an exception to the broader rule of preventing unwanted arrivals. This deviation from SAR conventions heightens the risk of normalised use of techniques such as pullbacks and related abuses, regardless of their implications for human rights.

Another pivotal concern arising from the study by Moreno-Lax et al. is the criminalisation of humanitarian assistance by SAR NGOs. This issue remains politically significant, with the Commission either incapable or unwilling to end it. The inadequacies of the Commission's Guidance on the Facilitation Directive are laid bare alongside the challenges SAR NGOs encounter in their daily operations across various member states, hindering their ability to fulfil their mandate. The current focus of the Guidance on 'mandated by law' humanitarian assistance leaves room for legal ambiguity, potentially fostering disparities among member states and eroding the cohesion of EU law. Beyond their immediate humanitarian role, the Guidance fails to acknowledge the broader responsibilities civil society organisations bear in overseeing the implementation of human rights standards. Hence, there is an urgent need for an effective monitoring and redress mechanism to safeguard civil society organisations as defenders of human rights and champions of democratic values.

Lastly, the study delves into the external dimension of migration and asylum policy, tracking the influence of significant documents such as the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility, the EU Agenda on Migration, and the Migration Partnership Framework within the Commission's New

Pact on Migration and Asylum. This includes an assessment of the utilisation of EU funds in this context.

Three case studies on EU collaboration with Turkey, Libya, and Niger reveal a predominant focus on combatting irregular migration, with limited regard for the rights of TCNs. Furthermore, the prioritisation of migration management within EU funding mechanisms has led to the misallocation of development and humanitarian aid, often disregarding the genuine needs and interests of the involved parties, even when the adverse impact on fundamental rights is evident from multiple sources.

In their insightful book *Dictators as Gatekeepers for Europe*, Jacob and Schlindwein (2019) shed light on opaque European strategies to secure borders and markets. This work explores European states' intricate governance tactics and their approach to migration management. The book uncovers a profound reality: the EU has taken concrete steps to restrict mobility within the African continent, driven by its domestic policy agenda. The authors highlight a series of agreements with countries such as Turkey, Libya, and Sudan, which serve to obstruct migrants' routes to the European continent, evoking parallels to a modern-day 'Berlin Wall' that extends beyond Europe, resulting in the militarisation of borders across Africa.

Through interviews and meticulous documentation, Jacob and Schlindwein expose the mechanics of border outsourcing and elucidate the EU's multifaceted strategy. First, the Dublin Regulation assigns responsibility for asylum seekers to the states through which they enter the EU (primarily southern Europe). Then, strategic interventions militarise border zones between Europe and Africa, as evidenced in cases like the Spain-Morocco border. At the same time, coastal states such as Turkey and Libya are incentivised to intercept and detain individuals attempting to reach Europe. Finally, those who succeed in reaching Europe face deportation to their initial entry points or states willing to accept them.

Beyond unveiling the EU's collaboration with contentious figures like Sudanese Major General Hamdan Daglo and the dire conditions endured by migrants detained by Libyan militias, the book underscores the historical continuity between European colonial practices in Africa and current policies. It illuminates the echoes of colonialism reverberating in modern strategies, exemplified by instances such as the German Development Minister likening a summit to the largest Africa conference since 1884 and advocating for establishing special economic zones for migrants.

While unveiling the complexity of the dialogue between Europe and Africa, *Dictators as Gatekeepers for Europe* also offers insights that suggest pathways to transcend neocolonial trends.

In 2022, Lighthouse Reports initiated an investigation into Frontex's operations, unearthing instances of human rights violations and maritime law breaches that confirm the concerns expressed by Jacob and Schlindwein. Despite Frontex's repeated denials, a collaborative investigation involving Frontex's internal database and cooperative efforts with media outlets Der Spiegel, SRF Rundschau, Republik, and Le Monde exposed a far-reaching involvement of Frontex in illegal pushbacks in the Aegean, a situation more extensive than previously acknowledged (Lighthouse Reports, 2022).

A Le Monde report reveals an internal document spanning several million lines, acquired by Le Monde and its investigative partners from the Lighthouse Reports, which chronicles numerous cases of illegal pushbacks of migrants (defined as a set of state measures by which refugees and migrants are forced back over a border—generally immediately after they crossed it) under the guise of 'prevention on departure' operations from Turkey between March 2020 and September 2021.

The publication of these findings led to significant repercussions, notably the resignation of Frontex's executive director, Fabrice Leggeri, shortly after the investigation became public (Lighthouse Reports, 2022). Cross-referencing data from Frontex's internal Joint Operations Reporting Application (JORA) database with external sources confirms that Frontex was involved in at least 22 verifiable cases wherein individuals were placed on life rafts before being forcibly returned to Turkey over 18 months from March 2020 to September 2021 (Lighthouse Reports, 2022).

JORA data indicates that the estimated 957 individuals involved were subjected to hazardous and life-threatening situations after encountering Frontex assets in the Aegean. Alarmingly, two instances underscore individuals being placed on life rafts and set adrift in the open sea despite having reached Greek islands prior (Lighthouse Reports, 2022).

However, the scale of pushbacks implicating Frontex is likely even more significant. The Lighthouse Reports (2022) expose Frontex's involvement in illicit practices at the EU's borders and shed light on the agency's use of misleading terminology within its reporting system, potentially serving to obscure instances of human rights violations. Between March 2020 and September 2021, Frontex recorded its direct involvement in 222 incidents categorised as 'prevention of departure', affecting a total of 8355 individuals, according to the Lighthouse Reports. This term, often used to describe practices that amount to pushback, is recognised as illegal under Greek, EU, and international law. As documented by the Lighthouse Reports, interviews conducted with sources within Frontex and Greek authorities corroborate this (Lighthouse Reports, 2022).

Despite these revelations, it is clear that Frontex has the full backing of the EU. The EU's emphasis on border control and deterrence has garnered notable attention for its disproportionate nature. This situation can be traced back to decisions taken in 2016 when the European Commission assented to provide Turkey with a substantial €6 billion fund to retain Syrian refugees within Turkish borders.

For those who managed to traverse the perilous journey to European shores, their confinement to five Greek islands, aptly termed 'hotspots', entailed adherence to stringent asylum regulations primarily aimed at facilitating their return to Turkey or their countries of origin (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2020).

In 2020, EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen lauded Greece as the 'shield' of Europe, unveiling an allocation of an additional €700 million earmarked for border management, infrastructure enhancement, and intensified repatriation efforts (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2020). This financial commitment followed the Greek government's proclamation on March 1, 2020, of emergency measures designed to temporarily suspend the right to seek asylum for individuals entering the nation. These measures encompassed swift deportations of new arrivals without formal registrations, complemented by the reinforcement of borders through the deployment of augmented military and security personnel (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2020).

On March 3, 2020, the highest echelons of EU leadership embarked on a symbolic flight across the Greek-Turkish border, utilising a military helicopter as their vessel. Von der Leyen was seeking to convey the significance of sustaining order at the Greek external border and safeguarding Greece and Europe (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2020).

Remarkably, the initial response did not encompass denunciations or expressions of concern regarding the escalation of violence, the suspension of asylum, or the imperative need for essential protection for those at the border. Rather than vocalising condemnations, the Commission deployed Frontex's Rapid Intervention Team, supplemented by an influx of border guards, vessels, helicopters, and essential equipment. This was accompanied by financial provisions dedicated to enhancing migration management (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2020).

In the wake of widespread criticism stemming from the EU's perceived silence, President von der Leyen subsequently emphasised the paramount significance of upholding 'the individual right to ask for asylum'. Nonetheless, Greece's emergency measures remain in effect (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2020).

Deterrence from a Distance: The Unfolding of a New European Strategy

The overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi, the long-time leader of Libya, marked a turning point in the EU's approach to the migration crisis. Marked by the intervention of European powers and the notable resistance from the AU to this, the Libyan crisis began with a popular uprising against Gaddafi's rule in early 2011. As the conflict escalated, external actors, primarily European nations supported by the UN, intervened militarily, leading to Gaddafi's downfall. Concurrently, the AU attempted to mediate and find a peaceful resolution, showcasing its opposition to external intervention.

The European intervention was framed as a response to the Libyan government's violent suppression of the popular uprising. The UN Security Council authorised the establishment of a no-fly zone and using 'all necessary measures' to protect civilians. This provided the legal basis for a coalition of European nations, along with some Arab allies, to launch a military campaign. NATO played a significant role in carrying out airstrikes and supporting anti-Gaddafi rebel forces. The intervention, however, sparked controversy and debate as it evolved from a mission to protect civilians into active support for regime change.

In response, the AU stance was firm, advocating for mediation and a peaceful resolution. In an attempt to find a political solution to prevent further bloodshed, the AU proposed a roadmap that included an immediate ceasefire, the protection of civilians, and a negotiated settlement. However, these efforts were met with scepticism by France and the UK, which led to the charge for Ghaddafi's overthrow. AU efforts were eventually sidelined as the conflict escalated and external military intervention gained momentum.

The differing approaches of Europe and the AU reflected broader divisions within the international community. While European powers and their allies believed that Gaddafi's removal was necessary for stability and democratisation, the AU and other countries like Russia and China warned against the unintended consequences of military intervention. The AU's "African solutions to African problems" stance and resistance to external interference were driven by its commitment to African sovereignty and its concern over the potential for long-term instability in the region.

Indeed, the aftermath of Gaddafi's overthrow has demonstrated the complexities of intervention and the challenges of post-conflict stabilisation. Libya descended into chaos, with competing factions and armed groups vying for power. The vacuum left by Gaddafi's removal contributed to the proliferation of arms and the rise of extremist groups. Ironically, the country became a central transit point for migrants attempting to reach Europe, exacerbating regional and international challenges.

Martin (2013) documents a distressing incident involving 72 individuals, including two infants, who departed from Libya for Italy in March 2011. Their ill-fated boat drifted at sea for 14 days, with the passengers enduring extreme food and water scarcity. Eventually, a helicopter came across the vessel, distributing eight bottles of water and a handful of biscuits. Despite being informed of the dire situation, the Italian and Maltese authorities refrained from acting due to their conflicting interpretations of SAR obligations. Tragically, 63 lives were lost before the vessel eventually returned to Libyan shores.

This heartrending episode, later called the Left-to-Die Boat case, prompted the Council of Europe to launch an inquiry into the incident. A year later, Rapporteur Tineke Strik concluded that a 'catalogue of failures' had transpired, urging NATO, the military authorities of the UK, France, Spain, and the Italian and Maltese search and rescue entities to account for their neglect (Martin, 2013).

In another tragic incident on October 3, 2013, 366 migrants lost their lives off the coast of Lampedusa, prompting the EU's establishment of the Task Force for the Mediterranean to confront the pressing issue of seabound fatalities along its southern border (Martin, 2013). Despite this response, initiatives such as Italy's Mare Nostrum and the EU's Mediterranean Task Force have been marked by their limited scope and a prevailing focus on security considerations.

Mare Nostrum has successfully rescued nearly 30,000 migrants at sea since its inception. However, the EU's and its member states' paramount concern remains the prevention of migrants and refugees from departing from southern Mediterranean countries and reaching EU territories. Consequently, efforts to mitigate the loss of lives at sea are either undermined by or inherently linked to strategies aimed at curtailing access to the EU (Martin, 2013).

In 2022, Human Rights Watch brought to light disturbing revelations concerning the use of aerial surveillance by Frontex to facilitate the Libyan Coast Guard's interception of migrant boats. This practice knowingly exposes migrants and asylum seekers to systematic and widespread abuse upon their forcible return to Libya, effectively implicating Frontex in these grave violations. Judith Sunderland, associate Europe and Central Asia director at Human Rights Watch, pointedly remarked, "Frontex's rhetoric around saving lives remains tragically empty as long as the border agency does not use the technology and information at its disposal to ensure that people are rescued promptly and can disembark at safe ports" (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

Furthermore, on November 29, 2022, the European Centre for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR) complained to the International Criminal Court (ICC), contending that European responsibility for crimes against humanity committed against migrants and refugees in Libya should be acknowledged.

Aerial surveillance is a pivotal component of the EU's emerging strategy to prevent migrants and asylum seekers from reaching European shores by boat, effectively distancing itself spatially, physically, and legally from its responsibilities. European authorities have meticulously woven an intricate web of aerial surveillance across the central Mediterranean as they progressively withdrew Frontex and other EU vessels from the region. This was coupled with the delegation of responsibilities to Libyan forces, thereby hindering the vital operations of non-governmental rescue groups.

While Frontex underscores its maritime law obligation to alert relevant coastal authorities about distress situations at sea, it must be viewed in tandem with its commitments under regional and international human rights law. This includes its responsibilities concerning the right to life, the prohibition against torture and inhumane treatment, and the concomitant prohibition on *refoulement*, safeguarding individuals from the threat of torture, persecution, and other forms of grave harm under human rights and refugee law. However, in too many instances, these rights are not being realised.

The story of Kouassi, a 23-year-old who fled Côte d'Ivoire and was later sold to human traffickers in Libya, mirrors the reality that many migrants actually face upon reaching Libya.

After being rescued from a perilous boat in the central Mediterranean by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) search and rescue ship *Geo Barents*, Kouassi revealed that he had been detained in Libya for three months in 2020 after crossing the Algerian border. During his detention, he experienced shackling, beatings, and torture while the guards demanded a ransom of $900 for his release (MSF, 2023).

Thousands, including women, children, and men, are subjected to kidnappings, captivity, and extortion by militias and traffickers. Discrimination, persecution, and mass arrests also await migrants living in cities. The Italian Government's bilateral agreement with Libya, supported by the EU, has led to support for the Libyan Coast Guard to intercept migrant boats. This arrangement aids human rights abuses as migrants intercepted at sea often end up in Libyan detention centres, as highlighted by Human Rights Watch (2022).

Despite international reports and evidence of these grave violations, European governments, including Italy, have agreed to prioritise border defence over human rights. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Migration signed between Italy and Libya in 2017 and renewed in 2020 has contributed to the exploitation and abuse of migrants. Under this agreement, Italy and the EU have supported the Libyan Coast Guard financially and with technical assets. At the same time, migrants intercepted at sea are frequently subjected to the Libyan detention system.

Considering this dire situation, MSF and numerous advocates urge the Italian government and EU institutions to cease supporting returning migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers to Libya and detaining them there. The current approach perpetuates a cycle of suffering and abuse. At the same time, safe and legal alternatives remain elusive for those seeking to escape Libya's turmoil and cross the Mediterranean Sea in search of safety and freedom.

The 2023 "strategic partnership" between the EU and the Tunisian government, signed by Tunisia's President Kais Saied in the presence of Von der Leyen and extreme-right Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni in the realm of migration, has also garnered scepticism and criticism from those most affected. Although currently a MoU, the agreement aligns with a broader pattern of European deals with North African nations. Despite its intentions, this pact has raised concerns among human rights activists, who argue that it perpetuates a trend of restricting migration pathways and asylum opportunities for refugees.

Critics contend that the deal favours the EU's interests, leaving migrants vulnerable to exploitation, violence, and abuse. The increasingly autocratic actions of Tunisia's president and his blatant racist anti-sub-Saharan African positions since taking power in 2021 raise doubts about the agreement's democratic foundation. Moreover, the deal's support for the Tunisian economy is viewed as superficial, with the real focus being on deterring irregular migration to Europe. Reports of migrants being abandoned in harsh desert conditions and Tunisia's tough stance on sub-Saharan asylum seekers underline concerns that the deal could lead to more deportations and further entrenchment of the migrant crisis (Knipp & Guizani, 2023).

The EU's explanation that the agreement aims to combat people smugglers is met with scepticism, as critics argue that providing legal pathways to migration would be a more practical approach. The deal has been criticised as inconsistent with international humanitarian law.

The EU's migration strategy demonstrates a dual-pronged approach akin to a carrot-and-stick dynamic, prominently visible in its interactions with African nations. This tactic perpetuates historical colonial power dynamics, reinforcing existing inequalities. A compelling illustration of this can be found in Niger, a country at the geographical centre of the Saharan conflicts and routes resulting from the Libya war. The EU effectively wielded its influence to orchestrate the passage of legislation in Niger about detention, all in exchange for financial aid dedicated to development. This intricate mechanism starkly underscores the perpetuation of historical imbalances, ultimately extending the EU's dominion over Africans.

Similarly, the EU's recent collaboration with Niger to counter migrant smuggling and bolster border security, unveiled as the "Partnership to Combat Migrant Smuggling" in July 2022, prompts questions regarding the EU's migration management approach. While the initiative aims to preserve lives and curtail rights abuses, sceptics argue that this strategy could merely displace the predicaments of irregular migration and asylum seekers onto other nations, potentially entrenching cycles of vulnerability and exploitation.

Furthermore, the emphasis on border security and the dismantling of criminal networks could eclipse the imperative to address migration's fundamental triggers and offer bona fide economic alternatives for individuals wanting to pursue better prospects. The various agreements and partnerships initiated by the EU epitomise a broader trend wherein EU member states seek to dissuade migration by outsourcing border control to non-European countries, potentially jeopardising human rights and engendering intricate challenges for all parties involved (Sanderson, 2022).

Although no longer an EU member, the United Kingdom's (UK) collaboration with Rwanda to tackle migration and border management resonates with the broader trend of European countries seeking to externalise their border control measures. This bilateral agreement, established in 2019, reflects a strategy to prevent irregular migration and asylum seekers from reaching the UK by investing in the border control capabilities of partner countries. The UK-Rwanda deal involves financial support to enhance Rwanda's border security infrastructure, training for Rwandan officials, and measures to discourage migrants from embarking on dangerous journeys to the UK.

Like the EU-Niger collaboration, this agreement has sparked concerns about potential human rights violations and the lack of emphasis on addressing the root causes of migration and providing adequate protection for asylum seekers. Critics argue that such arrangements might merely shift the burden of border control while sidestepping the broader humanitarian and human rights obligations.

EU-AU Agreements and Partnerships for Migration

A plethora of agreements and partnerships between the EU and Africa have been formed over the past two decades in an attempt to address the migration question.

The Rabat Process, launched in 2006, represents a significant framework for dialogue and cooperation on migration between the EU and African states. Focused on the Dialogue on Migration and Development, the Rabat Process has four pillars: organising mobility and legal migration, improving border management and combating irregular migration, strengthening synergies between migration and development, and promoting international protection. While it has identified priorities such as migration and development and border management, critics argue that its emphasis on security and containment can undermine the rights and well-being of migrants (Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development, 2006).

Another initiative, the Khartoum Process, was launched in 2014, focusing on addressing migration and human trafficking along migration routes in the Horn of Africa. While its objective was to strengthen cooperation and coordination among participating countries, critics contend it often prioritised border control and security measures over safeguarding human rights. Such an approach can lead to rights violations and harm to vulnerable populations as insufficient attention is paid to the root causes of migration.

Similarly, the 2015 Valletta Summit convened EU and AU leaders to discuss migration and development and produced the Valletta Action Plan, which outlines commitments to tackle migration through development assistance and cooperation. Critics, however, argue that the emphasis on development aid as a migration solution oversimplifies the intricate factors driving migration. Such agreements can inadvertently instrumentalise aid for migration control instead of fostering genuine development efforts (European Commission, 2015).

Established in 2018, the EU-AU Partnership for Migration, Mobility, and Employment aimed to establish legal migration pathways and enhance job opportunities for African youth. Despite commendable intentions, various factors undermine the effectiveness of this partnership, including failing to comprehensively address economic inequality, lack of access to education, and political instability in many African countries that continue to drive migration. Additionally, the focus on border security and containment can overshadow efforts to ensure the safety, dignity, and human rights of migrants (IOM, 2018).

At the core of the discourse between the two continents is a fundamental dichotomy of cooperation and partnership versus confrontation and isolation. Federica Mogherini, the EU High Representative and Vice President of the European Commission, articulated this during the Valletta Senior Officials Meeting in 2017. Mogherini emphasised the importance of collaboration in managing migration effectively, rejecting the notion of building walls and closures as solutions. This reflects the ongoing tension between those advocating comprehensive cooperation and those favouring more security-focused measures (Mogherini, 2018).

The AU-EU Summit in Abidjan marked a significant effort to bridge the gap between the two sides. Building on the framework established in Valletta and the Rabat Process, the Abidjan Declaration emphasised five critical pillars for a holistic migration strategy: support for the developmental benefits of migration, promoting legal migration and mobility, ensuring protection and asylum, preventing and combating irregular migration and human trafficking, and facilitating return, readmission, and reintegration (AU & EU, 2017).

Despite Abidjan's spirit, the EU's collaboration with Niger, launched as the "Partnership to Combat Migrant Smuggling" in July 2022, raised concerns about its approach to managing migration. As discussed earlier in this chapter, while the initiative aims to save lives and prevent rights violations, critics argue that this approach merely shifts the challenges of irregular migration and asylum seekers to other nations, potentially perpetuating a cycle of vulnerability and exploitation. In addition, the focus on border security and criminal network dismantling may overshadow the need to address the root causes of migration and provide genuine economic alternatives for people seeking better lives (European Commission, 2022a).

In December 2022, the EU and African Partners launched Team Europe Initiatives (TEI) to address migration challenges along the Atlantic/Western Mediterranean and Central Mediterranean migratory routes. These initiatives aim to harness joint efforts by member states and the EU in response to the surge in irregular flows and abuse by smuggling networks in North Africa. The TEI endeavours to implement the external dimension of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, promoting comprehensive cooperation and coordination among EU states while embracing a whole-of-route strategy (European Commission, 2022b).

These initiatives serve as platforms for collaboration among countries of origin, transit, and destination from Africa and Europe, offering opportunities for coordination with international partners and UN Agencies. The TEI for the Central Mediterranean Route supports operational actions aligned with the EU Action Plan for the Central Mediterranean. The initiatives prioritise enhancing migration governance across various domains, including the prevention of irregular migration, countering human smuggling and trafficking, facilitating legal migration and mobility, ensuring protection, enabling return, readmission, and sustainable reintegration, as well as fostering migration and development efforts, as articulated in the Joint Valletta Action Plan.

Equally, the EU-AU 2022 Brussels Summit outcomes underscored yet again the urgency and complexity of addressing migration. With the rhetoric surrounding asylum and migration becoming increasingly contentious at national and EU levels, the conclusions of the European Council's summit that preceded it highlight this polarisation (Zanker, 2019). The European policy focused on reinforcing border control and deterrence rather than prioritising enhancing domestic asylum systems or creating secure and legal pathways for refugees. The conclusions of the European

Council that preceded the 2022 EU-AU Summit lack any explicit mention of support for refugees and access to asylum in Europe, except in the context of Ukrainian migrants (Zanker, 2019).

Central to the discourse was the EU's shift towards externalising asylum responsibilities beyond its borders, a point of consensus among member states. The conclusions underscore the imperative for increased external engagement, which involves collaborating with countries of origin and transit. This collaborative effort is aimed at preventing the influx of asylum seekers and streamlining the process of returns, achieved through mechanisms such as development aid, trade initiatives, and visa agreements.

The question of migration and refugees was recognised as a major international issue for the first time in 2016 when the 193 UN member states came together in New York to discuss a comprehensive approach to human mobility and enhanced cooperation at the global level. This led to the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and set in motion a process of intergovernmental consultations and negotiations towards the development of a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. This process concluded on 10 December 2018 with the adoption of the Global Compact by the majority of UN member states at an Intergovernmental Conference in Marrakesh, Morocco, followed closely by formal endorsement by the UN General Assembly on 19 December (UN Migration, 2023).

Despite their substantial support for the compact, African countries found that rather than supplanting existing arrangements, it has functioned as an augmentation to them.

A Chatham House (2023) report highlighted the limitations of the new compact, indicating that while it was intended as a fresh start, it failed to ensure reliable responsibility-sharing among member states. Instead, it diminished human rights safeguards, focusing on returns, deterrence, and the externalisation of migration control to non-European countries. Negotiations were delayed as the EU resisted the African interpretation that the new compact would supplant existing agreements with the EU, but in 2022, the French EU presidency achieved a breakthrough on crucial legislative matters, including reforming Schengen border codes, screening, and the Eurodac regulations. An approach of incremental reform, rather than comprehensive restructuring, could help progress in the long-delayed EU asylum reforms and secure mini-deals before the parliamentary term concludes in 2024.

As things stand, several factors are undermining the effectiveness of the various agreements and partnerships between the EU and Africa. These include the lack of comprehensive measures to address economic inequality, lack of access to education, and political instability in many African countries that continue to drive migration. Additionally, the focus on border security and containment often overshadows efforts to ensure the safety, dignity, and human rights of migrants (European Commission, 2018).

The ineffectiveness of these deals can be attributed to factors such as power dynamics between the EU and AU, inadequate attention to root causes, limited consideration of migrants' needs and rights, a focus on short-term security measures, and the rise of European extreme-right racist positions. As a result, many critics argue that the agreements often fail to address the complex realities of migration and risk exacerbating vulnerabilities and human rights violations facing those on the move.

From an African perspective, it becomes evident that the proliferation of negotiations and partnerships, driven by various processes imposed by the EU, contradicts the AU's expressed desire for a unified framework spanning the entire continent. This fragmentation of approaches weakens African agency and undermines the cohesive stance that the AU seeks to establish.

Addressing migration challenges requires multifaceted responses, particularly among youth. A comprehensive strategy for migration and mobility could save lives, combat criminal networks, and generate employment opportunities, especially for Africa's 18 million new labour market entrants each year. Balancing short-term crisis management and long-term solutions addressing the root causes of migration is a nuanced challenge. Not to mention that the African youth play a pivotal role in shaping the future of an ageing Europe (Zanker, 2019).

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CHAPTER 8

The Free Trade Fantasy

Tilting the Balance in Favour of Europe

The trading relationship between the EU and the ACP group can be traced back to significant conventions such as Yaoundé I and II and Lomé I-IV. On July 20, 1963, 18 African countries and six European states officially signed the Yaoundé Convention, an agreement that aimed to foster cooperation for economic and social development within the respective territories. Subsequently, in 1969, the European Commission entered into separate trade agreements with Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific. Building on this, a year later, the European Commission unified these agreements, bringing the ACP nations into a standardised trading system under Yaoundé.

At the core of these trade agreements was the commitment from EU countries to provide free access to their domestic markets for products from Africa, thereby establishing close economic ties between the two continents. At the same time, ACP nations retained the authority to raise tariff barriers or impose other restrictions on the entry of EC goods into their territories to safeguard their nascent industries.

The overarching goal of this partnership was twofold: to create a free trade area and to foster the industrialisation and development of African economies. Accordingly, a dual emphasis was placed on liberalising trade across a territorial expanse and safeguarding the sensitive sectors of ACP nations' economies. These aspects formed the complementary foundation of the trade cooperation between the EU and the ACP countries.

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The shift from the Yaoundé Conventions to the Lomé Conventions signified an evolution in the EU-ACP partnership, progressing from focusing on economic and social development to a more comprehensive collaboration encompassing trade, aid, and political dialogue.

The inaugural Lomé Convention was forged during the Cold War, which underscored Europe's vulnerability in world politics and heightened its dependence on commodity imports, particularly minerals. This was exacerbated by the oil price surge in the 1972/1973 crisis. Grilli (1994) highlights that, in the early 1970s, Europe identified itself as the industrial region most susceptible to actions by commodity producers. Africa was Europe's primary source of critical materials. Together, ACP countries supplied significant quantities of commodities to the EU, including tropical timber (46 per cent of EU imports), iron ore (21.5 per cent), manganese ore (31 per cent), and ores of uranium and platinum (99 platinum). Viewing the Lomé Convention as a strategic means to secure access to these vital minerals was a logical argument at the time.

However, as concerns about raw material shortages diminished, it became evident that the Lomé Convention, initially designed to address Europe's pressing economic needs, had a lasting impact that tilted the balance in favour of Europe rather than Africa. As the convention transitioned from its origins in Lomé, its focus shifted to creating a free trade area for African economies, shaping a dynamic where Europe benefitted most. For example, the sugar protocol, which assured ACP countries access to the EU market for fixed quantities of sugar at preferential prices, involved an annual negotiation of prices to import 1.3 million tons of raw sugar into the EU (European Commission, 2005). In 2004, reform packages initiated a 33 per cent reduction in preferential prices over three years, with additional cuts of 20 per cent in 2005 and subsequent reductions of 8 per cent and 5 per cent. The EU argued that these changes were necessary to align its sugar policies with global frameworks, but these alterations significantly impacted ACP countries, leading to revenue and employment losses in the sugar sector, compounded by limited diversification in other sectors (CEPAL, 2005). The sugar protocol fell away entirely in 2006 as EU prices surpassed those applied at the international level.

ACP member states opposed the reform package, citing excessive price cuts that disregarded the ACP/EU initial sugar protocol, which guaranteed market access and prices. The EU, in response, pledged to assist ACP countries in diversifying their economic activities or enhancing competitiveness in the sugar sector. However, member states noted that the reform package favoured beet producers, discriminating against sugar producers.

ACP lobbying efforts successfully delayed the implementation of the reform package and expedited accompanying measures, including further price cuts, in June 2005. The reduction spanned four years from 2006/2007, with the EU compensating farmers at an average of 64.2 per cent for the loss due to price cuts. Countries surrendering at least 50 per cent of their quota received a 30 per cent payment for income loss over five years.

Lomé I to IV provided ACP countries preferential and non-reciprocal market access to EU markets for various exports. Yet, most Caribbean preferential sugar producers faced production costs exceeding international levels. Challenges emerged in the Banana, Rice, and Rum regimes due to tariff quota issues as the EU moved towards WTO requirements. The WTO contended that European preferences for Africa were incompatible with reciprocity principles and unfair to other Caribbean and Pacific countries in the ACP trading community.

Replacing the Lomé Agreement in 2000, the Cotonou Agreement became the new framework for trade and cooperation between the EU and ACP member states, aiming to eradicate poverty and integrate ACP countries into the world economy.

The WTO: A Missed Opportunity to Build a Fairer Global Trade System

In line with WTO rules, the Cotonou Agreement recognised the principle of differentiation, acknowledging varying levels of development and the diverse needs of the countries involved. This led to a significant shift in the way some African countries were treated under the new agreement. Departing from the non-reciprocity principle of the Lomé Conventions, the Cotonou Agreement introduced WTO-compliant trading arrangements whereby LDCs continued to receive non-reciprocal trade preferences while non-LDCs were offered reciprocal EPAs.

This led to the gradual removal of trade barriers and preferences aimed at integrating ACP countries into the multilateral system and aligning EU-ACP trade relations with WTO standards and GATT rules (CEPAL, 2005). Effectively, these changes meant that ACP countries were subjected to sudden and intensified global competition. The economic transformation required significant adjustments, including the loss of export earnings, potential import surges due to declining tariffs, and increased vulnerability in sectors like agriculture and manufacturing.

The EU imposed asymmetric demands on vulnerable ACP countries, emphasising adherence to seemingly fixed and immutable WTO rules, neglecting their political construct. Could things have played out differently? Montoute et al. (2017) contend that the EU, a powerful player in shaping new WTO rules, linked 'good governance' with 'sustainable development' despite differing views within the ACP group.

Altering these rules through a genuine partnership could have provided a robust alliance in shaping the multilateral trading system. For example, the EU and ACP could have cooperated to amend GATT Article XXIV relating to meaningful special and differential treatment (Onguglo & Ito, 2003). The combined voting strength of the two parties, constituting a two-thirds majority in the WTO, could have facilitated flexibility in WTO rules. However, the EU needed more support to pursue this cooperative approach.

While negotiating further waivers with other WTO members, the EU hesitated due to concerns about potential impacts on ACP market access to the EU. Despite the ACP's unreadiness to liberalise, the EU aimed to conclude EPA negotiations by the end of December 2007, highlighting a need for more alignment in priorities and a potential imbalance in the negotiation process.

WTO decisions, binding even for absent countries, compelled Africa's compliance despite its non-participation (Onguglo & Ito, 2003). WTO regulations identified trade preferences with Africa as unfavourable for other southern countries, such as the Philippines. In response, the EU transitioned from preferential trade arrangements to reciprocity, a strategic shift in its trade policy. Initially driven by the pursuit of cost-effective commodities, the EU's decision underscores a departure from unilateral preferences towards a more balanced and reciprocal trade framework. This change enhanced Europe's economic competitiveness and encouraged diversified trade partnerships beyond the ACP. However, the implications for the ACP were less sanguine. The move posed challenges such as the potential loss of preferential treatment, negotiation disparities, and the risk of economic marginalisation.

The EU's historic extraction of mineral resources and use of cheap labour from Africa to drive its industrialisation contributed to Africa's structural underdevelopment. Over time, the preferential trade system has perpetuated this by creating dependencies on the EU for processed products that are exacerbated by fiscal policies, including tax structures and incentives designed to support and incentivise the production and export of these goods. In addition, African countries have been systematically prevented from protecting their 'infant industries' through subsidisation. This has put the continent at a disadvantage, leading to fierce competition from more established EU industries, resulting in fiscal revenue losses.

Even though the preference system was not a genuine concession to Africa, when the WTO mandated dismantling the preference system, Africa was placed at further risk. Notably, it faced the risk of losing duty-free access to Europe. Stripping Africa of its customs duties proved detrimental to its fragile economy. The prospect of losing this privilege posed a significant threat to the continent's economic stability. The removal of customs duties, which allowed African nations to export goods to Europe without facing additional tariffs, had been a crucial element in sustaining the fragile African economy. This loss of duty-free access would not only undermine the competitiveness of African products in the European market but also disrupt the economic equilibrium by imposing additional financial burdens on African exporters. The consequence was a potential setback for Africa's economic growth and development, reflecting the delicate balance between trade preferences and the resilience of emerging economies.

In the context of extensive trade liberalisation, the loss of revenue from customs duties must be substituted by alternative income sources, such as direct taxes. However, some of these alternatives may need to be revised and consistent with the proclaimed poverty reduction objectives of EPAs (as developed further below).

Divide and Conquer: The Coming of the EPA to Africa

The primary goal of the EPAs was to assist ACP countries in addressing globalisation challenges by fostering stronger regional economies (Nnamdi & Iheakaram, 2015). Recognising that capacity constraints and underdeveloped economic and social infrastructure prevent countries from reaping the benefits of increased market access, EPAs were negotiated to support investment and help develop productive capacity in specific regions.

EPA negotiations were configured based on regional, geographical, political, and historical affiliations. The general premise was that ACP countries within each region or grouping shared equal or sufficient interest in signing the EPA to craft a shared WTO-compatible package (McDonald et al., 2013). At the start of the negotiations of EPAs, Africa was configured into four regional groups, totally disregarding existing regional organisations. The four configurations are the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA). The Caribbean and Pacific, by comparison, represented one regional bloc.

When EPA negotiations failed to yield the intended inter-regional outcome in Africa by the WTO-imposed deadline of December 31, 2007 (WTO, 2007), the EU opted to initial interim EPAs with individual countries rather than reconsidering its position on an all-Africa EPA. With limited options at their disposal, developing African countries chose to join these EPAs to maintain preferential access to the EU market. In some instances, countries within intra-African customs unions, such as Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana in ECOWAS or Cameroon in CEMAC, diverged on EPA accession. Such regional divisions complicate the ability to form a unified position, presenting challenges at regional and continental levels.

African countries would be better positioned if they were able to negotiate as a unified bloc, leveraging their collective strength to maximise negotiating leverage. In the past five years, the continent has taken a decisive step towards achieving this objective with the implementation of a continental free trade area and a standard external tariff (AfCFTA). However, threats to this goal persist, primarily stemming from the fragmented approach to trade relations between African countries/regions and third parties.

One significant concern for African countries regarding EPAs is the sustainability of exporting raw materials to the EU while allowing the EU free access to African markets for high-value-added goods. This arrangement hampers the development of indigenous value-adding industries in African countries.

Within the framework of EPAs, African countries appeared to pursue a strategy aimed at tempering the reciprocity principle by introducing notable asymmetry in the market opening, both across sectors and throughout the temporal trajectory. This approach involved a deliberate effort to secure substantial development aid as supplementary considerations for agreeing to the terms of the EPAs. Regrettably, this tactic has proven ineffective, as the anticipated benefits or outcomes have not materialised. Despite seeking asymmetry as a means of safeguarding its interests, the African negotiating stance, backed by requests for development aid, has faced challenges in achieving the desired results within the EPA framework.

The EU has long contended that pre-existing trade preferences have failed to achieve the desired developmental changes in Africa. Consequently, it proposed capacity building in terms of aid for trade, believing it would enhance the agreement. The EU made a noteworthy commitment in this regard, allocating €13.5 billion over five years to ACP countries through the European Development Bank to fund economic development projects and assist in adjusting to new market conditions. For the Western African region, a commitment of around €6.5 billion was earmarked for 2015–2020 as an aid for trade support (European Commission, 2002; UN, 2022).

Despite this, the negotiation techniques employed by the EU regarding the EPAs were largely perceived by Africa as akin to blackmail or ultimatums, pressuring them to sign EPAs or face the cessation of economic aid from the EDF. Furthermore, discussions within the WTO's Development Round and EPA negotiations suggested that increased development funding, especially in infrastructure, could compensate for the losses resulting from the heightened openness of African economies. African governments found themselves in an unenviable position, needing more knowledge of the consequences of signing or not signing EPAs while simultaneously facing pressure from the EU and domestic exporters to do so.

The EU consistently emphasised that, in the absence of EPAs, the only legal option was to utilise the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) system, implying increased tariffs for African exports to the EU. This scenario was viewed by many as a 'looming nightmare', as expressed by a Cameroonian banana-producing association (Pefok, 2007). The pressure intensified, with the African private sector fearing disproportionate impacts, particularly in losing access to markets for tea, cocoa, beef, grapes, fish, and fish products.

Some African countries accused the EU of exploiting imposed deadlines to 'arm-twist' the ACP into making more concessions on market access (Gerrit & Orbie, 2009). African and European NGOs levelled accusations of 'dirty tricks' and 'bullying tactics', asserting that the EU was ‘strong-arming’ the ACPs into signing agreements they did not genuinely desire (Financial Times, 2008).

The imperative of WTO compatibility compelled negotiations to focus more narrowly on the political energy directed towards achieving Sustainability in All Trade (SAT) through tariff liberalisation. This negotiation shift homed in on a subset of countries whose commodity exports to Europe enjoyed preferential margins and whose governments relied less heavily on border charges, thus exhibiting lesser concern over potential revenue losses associated with trade.

In addition, the EU approach insisted that the development dimension for poverty eradication and economic development could be reached through trade and investment liberalisation. By contrast, the ACP’s approach strongly emphasises the structural transformation of ACP economies as the plausible means of enabling them to expand and diversify trade in high-value-added products, achieving the three end goals underlying the Cotonou Agreement.

Another unreasonable part of the negotiations was the EPA’s focus on achieving the SAT in goods. This formed a strong incentive for ACP concessions. At the beginning of negotiations, ACP countries were offered a well-crafted agreement that reflected each country’s policy goals, including revenue protection, domestic employment, food security, and rural development. The SAT incentive is also problematic in the case of future Free Trade Areas (FTAs). While the irrationality of concessions on purely statistical grounds may cause minimal revenue or production impacts due to low imports from the EU, future FTA partners—with much larger imports making trade threats more pronounced—will likely demand the same line-by-line treatment from ACP countries.

A report from the Institute for Development Studies by Stevens and Kennan (2005) revealed that ACPs could potentially lose over 40 per cent of their tariff revenue due to EU imports, highlighting the adverse effects of premature reciprocal arrangements.

Upon the realisation that EPA negotiations were approaching the deadline, by the end of 2008, the EU successfully argued that ACP countries should liberalise 80 per cent of their imports from the EU within a 15-year period. This is based on a total EU-ACP liberalisation threshold of 90 per cent when combined with the EU’s offer of duty-free, quota-free treatment (Kwa et al., 2014). Thus, the 80 per cent EU proposal reflected a measure of political risk management rather than an actual legal interpretation.

However, the question remains whether those ACP countries that signed EPAs at the 80 per cent threshold conceded too much or too little in the name of WTO compatibility. The 80 per cent by-value threshold used by the EPA partners could be better, given that other possible measurements to achieve the SAT requirement could have provided significantly more protection for some ACP countries.

A liberalisation threshold based on a percentage of tariff lines, for example, does not rely on ambiguous definitions, nor is it dependent on the choice of base periods or data sources, given that the overall number of lines in any given national tariff is unlikely to change significantly over time, even with periodic revisions to the Harmonized System. This makes it easier for ACP negotiators and other parties to handle and evaluate the level of liberalisation in the agreement. Even though EPAs were initially presented as instruments that could enhance Africa's integration, they have caused more problems for Africa's regional integration efforts than they have solved. In fact, the hasty and premature liberalisation has further marginalised ACP countries in the global economy.

The EU was committed to concluding EPAs despite the low level of regional integration among African regions compared to intra-EU trade (Karingi et al., 2005). By contrast, at the continental level, the AU, with structural similarities to the European Union, including an AU Council, Commission, Parliament, Court of Justice, and Economic and Cultural Council (Kühnhardt, 2008), kept calling for a continent-wide approach to trade.

Given that many African countries were members of more than one regional integration body, the definition of regional integration could have been more straightforward. The four negotiating groups that emerged early in the EPA process did not coincide perfectly with the existing integration bodies. Thus, the SADC negotiating group was much smaller than the group that had agreed to the SADC Trade Protocol in 1996, and the ESA group was much smaller than the COMESA membership. This 'shake out' results from ending double memberships, which is considered positive for regional integration. However, this also indicated the low initial commitment to existing regional integration bodies, which did not bode well for the smooth internal process of developing common positions concerning issues that had been—and must still be—negotiated with the EU.

In addition, the EU opted to conduct negotiations with the six regions of the ACP rather than the ACP bloc; this is a common strategy used in divide-and-rule tactics. The fragmented trade arrangement caused division in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, making deeper economic integration challenging to attain. In the case of Africa, the EPAs discourage the production of manufactured goods, and the EU classifies and designates Africa as an exporter of raw materials. EPAs have also led to disruptions in regional integration. For instance, countries have deviated from their regional commitments to secure trade preferences. Additionally, there has been a divergence in focus between different regions, such as SADC and ESA, causing further challenges (Tandon, 2015).

Moreover, evidence suggests an inequality in the ACP-EU relationship and a power imbalance within the EPAs. Throughout negotiations, the EU adhered to a mercantilist approach, neglecting the development needs of ACP countries. Their strategy aimed to dominate ACP markets and enhance access for EU producers. Scholars like Tandon Yash (2015) have characterised this as a persistence of colonial narratives within the relationship.

The diversification envisioned by the EPAs has yet to yield the anticipated improvements for Africa. Figure 8.1 illustrates that the continent predominantly exports raw materials or unprocessed goods. Out of the 54 African countries, only a limited subset, including Algeria, Morocco, South Africa, Egypt, Tunisia, Lesotho, and Eswatini, amounting to approximately seven nations, engage in the export of manufactured goods.

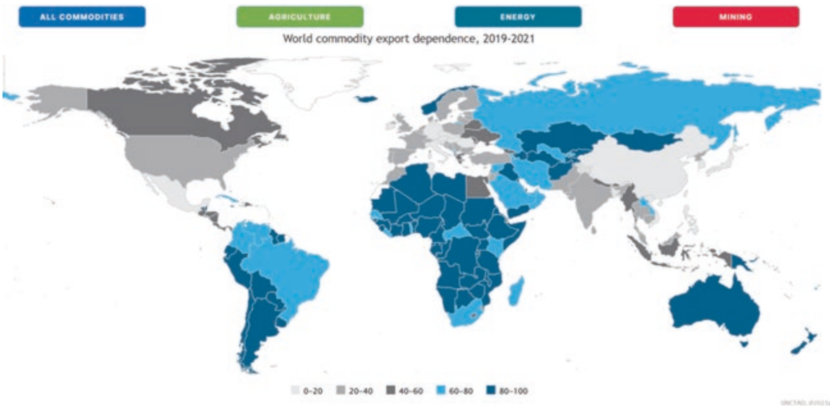

Fig. 8.1 Developing countries Commodity dependency, 2019–2021. (Source: UNCTAD, 2023)

Additionally, EPAs have encountered challenges in ratification, reflecting a complex interplay of economic, social, and political factors. One central point of contention revolves around the perceived inequality in the terms negotiated between developed and developing countries. The potential impact on domestic industries is a critical concern contributing to the hesitation in ratifying EPAs. The requirement to open markets to international competition, a central aspect of many EPAs, raises fears of increased competition that could adversely affect local industries, particularly those that may not be globally competitive.

Social and environmental considerations further complicate the ratification process. Civil society and environmental groups in Europe and Africa frequently voice concerns that these agreements have given insufficient attention to social and environmental standards. Critics argue (Global Witness et al., 2021) that specific provisions may not adequately address potential negative consequences, raising concerns about the well-being of local communities and ecosystems.

Political dynamics also play a pivotal role, with internal opposition within a country acting as a significant hurdle to ratification. Disagreements among political leaders or parties on the merits of an EPA have led to delays or even a complete refusal to ratify the agreement.

The multifaceted nature of challenges faced by EPAs in the ratification process underscores the need for nuanced considerations that encompass economic disparities, social and environmental impacts, political dynamics, public sentiment, and practical implementation capacities. The evolving landscape of international trade further emphasises the importance of ongoing research and analysis to understand comprehensively the complexities surrounding EPAs.

Separating Cousins: The Different Treatment Reserved for North Africa

The historical narrative of the EU's relations with North African countries in the context of trade unfolded against a backdrop of complex geopolitical dynamics, economic interests, and cultural exchanges from the post-World War II era to the contemporary landscape.

In the aftermath of World War II, Europe embarked on a path of reconstruction and integration, laying the foundation for what would later become the European Union. Concurrently, having gained independence from colonial powers, North African nations sought to assert their economic autonomy. The ensuing decades witnessed a complex interplay of economic cooperation and diplomatic negotiations between the two. The 1960s marked a significant juncture, with bilateral agreements between European nations and North African countries to foster economic ties. These agreements often centred on trade preferences and sought to address historical imbalances while fuelling economic growth. However, challenges emerged as debates intensified over the equitable distribution of benefits and the impact on local industries.

The consolidation of the EU in the 1990s brought a new dimension to these relationships. The Barcelona Process, initiated in 1995, aimed to establish a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area, heralding a commitment to deeper integration. The subsequent Euro-Mediterranean Partnership further propelled economic collaboration, fostering dialogue and cooperation on issues ranging from trade facilitation to sustainable development.

Numerous studies, including Cestepe et al. (2015), indicate that North Africa's trade volume and performance fall below expectations and potential, considering the countries' relative sizes, geographical distances from demand centres, and linguistic and colonial ties. Additional research underscores the region's low intra-regional integration, attributed to non-complementary production structures and numerous non-tariff barriers, further leading to limited integration into global value chains.

Dadush and Myachenkova (2018) argue that trade agreements did little to stimulate export growth and diversification in North Africa. They highlight that European tariffs were already low before the agreements, failing to significantly liberalise tariffs on agricultural products, where EU tariffs remained relatively high. This development contributed to a decline in development indicators; in 2002, employment issues led to a roughly 5 per cent and 6 per cent decrease in Tunisia and Morocco, respectively.

Ali et al. (2019) emphasise that North African countries have long had access to EU markets under the GSP. However, subsequent trade agreements yielded disappointing results regarding foreign direct investment (FDI) and trade. The importance of preferences varies significantly by country, primarily due to differences in export composition to the EU.

Since the Barcelona conference in 1995, which aimed to establish a free trade area with North Africa and the EU, the FTAs have had limited impact on fiscal revenues for MENA states. While trade integration improved, FDI did not experience significant increases. North African states contend that Barcelona agreements represent unilateral tariff dismantlement without concessions from the EU, benefiting only EU exports into North Africa.

Dadush and Myachenkova (2018) reveal that North Africa's Herfindahl concentration index indicates little change in export diversification, even during the pre-crisis period (1997–2007). Algeria, primarily exporting petroleum products to the EU, experienced slower export growth to the EU compared to the rest of the world.

The period from 2008 to 2016 saw a negative growth rate of gas and petroleum imported by the EU, including Algerian products. Similarly, Tunisian exports to the EU showed modest diversification, with the main categories being machinery, clothing, and petroleum. While Tunisia gained market share in EU machinery imports, the share of clothing in Tunisian exports to the EU declined from 1990 to 2016.

Morocco's exports to the EU displayed only modest diversification, improving in recent years. The country mainly exports transport equipment, machinery, fruits, and vegetables to the EU. Despite the EPAs, Africa's move away from low-value primary production is perceived as unsuccessful, with limited overall impact on North Africa's economic structure. Trade imbalances, concerns over agricultural subsidies, and the intricate web of regulations governing access to EU markets have been recurring themes, while global economic shifts and regional geopolitical challenges also influenced trade dynamics between Europe and North Africa.

Another facet of the relationship between Europe and North Africa has been the establishment of Association Agreements, which were pursued bilaterally instead of by grouping countries because they are not ACP members. Morocco signed an Association Agreement with the EU, which came into force in 2000, seeking to create a free trade area and enhance economic cooperation. This comprehensive agreement covers diverse aspects, including liberalising trade in goods and services. Similarly, Tunisia entered into an Association Agreement with the EU in 1998, encompassing economic collaboration, political dialogue, and cooperation in various sectors. Egypt has been in an Association Agreement with the EU since 2004, reflecting shared economic development goals and strengthening political ties.

In its pursuit of closer ties with the EU, Algeria implemented an Association Agreement in 2005, emphasising trade liberalisation and economic collaboration. Despite these agreements, challenges persist, prompting a nuanced examination of their impact on North African economies, particularly in diversification and industrial development. A critical analysis of these agreements, considering their evolving nature and geopolitical shifts, underscores the importance of ongoing research to comprehensively understand their implications on the EU and North African nations.

In recent years, the EU has sought to enhance its relationships through initiatives such as the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Union for the Mediterranean. These frameworks aim to foster stability, prosperity, and mutual understanding through enhanced economic integration. Nevertheless, debates persisted over the efficacy of such policies and their ability to address the diverse economic landscapes of North African nations.

As the historical trajectory unfolded, it became evident that a continual process of negotiation and adaptation characterised the relationship between Europe and North Africa on trade. The narrative encapsulated economic considerations and the socio-political contexts that shaped these interactions. This historical exploration provided a foundation for understanding the contemporary challenges and opportunities inherent in the intricate tapestry of trade relations between Europe and North African countries.

Reassessing the Scale of Africa's Trade with the EU

Since the turn of the century, African economies have exhibited significant momentum, with average growth rates of approximately 5.4 per cent per annum between 2000 and 2010, dropping back to an average of 3.3 per cent per annum in the period 2010–2015. Meanwhile, the performance of the EU lagged behind African economies as it registered 1.4 per cent per annum between 2000 and 2010 and slowed down further to 1.0 per cent per annum over a five-year period (2010–2015), below the world average of 3 per cent and 2.9 per cent during the two periods (McKinsey Global Institute, 2016).

Although African trade volumes surged around the end of the first decade of the millennium, they retreated to about 2.3 per cent of the global volume in the second, resembling levels recorded in 2000. Simultaneously, the share of EU economies in world merchandise trade fell from 38 per cent to about 33 per cent (UNCTAD, 2023).

Despite increased trade volumes, the relative weight of the EU as a destination for Africa's exports diminished from 58 per cent in 2001 to 30 per cent in 2017. The EU's significance as a source economy for African imports decreased gradually from 47 per cent to 33 per cent over the same period. In 2017, the EU remained Africa's leading trading partner, followed by China. African economies represent nearly three per cent of the EU's external trade, making them the EU's third most important trading partner, alongside Switzerland, after the US and China (UNCTAD, 2023).

African exports to the EU increased by nearly 50 per cent between the first (2000–2010) and second periods (2011–2022), from $106 billion to $150 billion, but this did not entail a significant shift in the composition of African exports. Exports continued to be skewed towards commodities, with exported primary products exceeding $121 billion in 2010 and hitting a peak of $153 billion in 2023, overshadowing other main export categories. Machinery and electrical products, foodstuffs, and textiles represented around $9–10 billion of Africa's exports to the EU (UNCTAD, 2023).

Imports from the EU rose across all categories, resulting in an overall increase from $91 billion to $158 billion. The most significant rise in real terms was observed in mineral products. However, the most significant relative increase occurred in the leading machinery and electrical goods category (approximately 40 per cent increase to about $41 billion) (UNCTAD, 2023).

During 2010–2017, African imports amounted to $158 billion annually, with imports more evenly distributed among individual categories, signalling a more diversified composition of the EU's exports to Africa. Principal imports from the EU were dominated by processed and manufactured goods, with machinery and electrical goods (hitting $103 billion in 2010 and marginally rising to $104 billion in 2022), transportation and chemicals averaged $37 billion in 2022, down from $35 billion in 2010 of Africa's imports from the EU (UNCTAD, 2023).

The vast asymmetries between the EU and Africa extend beyond economic significance, encompassing trade and FDI. Power asymmetries also exist, as the EU possesses strong institutional structures advantageous in negotiations, a well-resourced bureaucracy, and a team of highly skilled negotiators under the authority of the European Commission. In contrast, many African countries lack the operational structures, technical expertise, and highly skilled human resources necessary for effective negotiation, providing the EU with a substantial advantage in crafting trade agreements for the African region (Adebajo & Whiteman, 2012; and Lopes, 2020).

As of July 2018, the EU had engaged in 21 FTA negotiations, including two with African countries: Tunisia and Morocco. An additional ten trade-related agreements are under negotiation. Since 2017, the EU has successfully concluded FTA negotiations with Armenia, Canada, Japan, and Vietnam (Lopes, 2020). These comprehensive agreements address various facets, including tariff reduction and elimination, removal of non-tariff barriers, opening public tenders to foreign entities, rules about intellectual property, state-owned enterprises, geographical indications, and dedicated trade and sustainable development chapters.

Several investment clauses within the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) are notably innovative, with critical provisions meticulously outlined to enhance interpretative clarity. All these agreements envision establishing a standing investment arbitration body to handle Investor-State disputes, a departure from the current ad-hoc system (Garbe, 2011). This is in stark contrast to the kind of deal struck with Africans, despite the fact that trade volumes with Africa are substantial, surpassing the abovementioned countries.

In 2022, Africa accounted for $203 billion worth of EU exports and $174 billion in imports, resulting in the EU's most significant positive trade balance ($29 billion). Japan is Europe's second-most important trading partner in this context, while Vietnam represents the most profound trade deficit for the EU among the sampled countries (UNCTAD, 2023).

Aligned with African counterparts, the EU's primary export categories across all countries include machinery, electrical products, transportation, and chemical and allied industries. Notably, the EU's imports from Africa primarily consist of primary commodities. The import patterns from other countries in the sample vary across individual economies.

Recent data (Global Affairs Canada, 2021) indicate that Canada leads in mutual investment relations, with FDI stocks nearly evenly split between the two economies ($296 billion of EU stocks in Canada and $278 billion of Canadian stocks in the EU). However, the volume of EU's outward stocks in Canada is second only to those in Africa.

Economic data underscore that African economies have gained relative global economic strength since the signing of the Cotonou Agreement in 2000. Despite the EU's diminished global power and trade significance in Africa, it remains the most crucial trading partner for African economies, ranking third overall. While the African continent represents a more substantial market than key economies with recent trade agreements (Canada, Japan, and Vietnam), trade patterns with Africa remain reliant on commodity exports.

AfCFTA: A Transformative Paradigm Shift in African Trade Dynamics

Regionalism in Africa presents a mixed picture, characterised by formal initiatives and overlapping membership across various regional organisations. This complexity, identified by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) (Mangeni & Atta-Mensah, 2022), poses challenges to deepening regional economic integration. The implementation of the seminal AfCFTA could go some way towards reducing this complexity.

A pivotal element within the developmental framework of the AU's aspirational Agenda 2063, the AfCFTA exemplifies Africa's dedication to fostering economic integration. Its roots trace back to the 18th Ordinary Session of the AU's Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in January 2012, where the decision to establish the free trade area was mooted. At the same time, the Action Plan for Boosting intra-African trade was embraced as a key initiative for promoting socio-economic growth and development across the continent. At its core, the AfCFTA aspires to expedite intra-African trade and elevate Africa's standing in global trade by fortifying a unified voice and policy space in international trade negotiations.

AfCFTA aims to create a single African market for goods and services and facilitate the movement of people within the continent. Additionally, the agreement aims to liberalise the market for goods and services through successive rounds of negotiations, contribute to the movement of capital and natural resources, and lay the foundation for a Continental Customs Union in the future. It seeks to foster sustainable and inclusive socioeconomic development, gender equality, and structural transformation, all while enhancing the competitiveness of State Parties' economies on both the continental and global stage.

Formally inked on March 21st in Kigali, Rwanda, the AfCFTA Agreement came into force on May 30, 2019. Operational Instruments governing trade under the AfCFTA regime were subsequently launched in Niamey, Niger, in July 2019, marking a crucial step in the operationalisation of the agreement. Trading under the AfCFTA regime commenced on January 1, 2021, which is a significant milestone.

Negotiating collectively under the AfCFTA significantly strengthens Africa's bargaining power in global trade discussions. The AfCFTA's unified voice enhances Africa's negotiating stance, making it challenging for external partners to exploit divisions among member countries (Lopes, 2020). At the same time, diversity within the AfCFTA contributes to Africa's attractiveness as a comprehensive trading partner (Mangeni & Atta-Mensah, 2022). By fostering economies of scale in a market boasting over one billion people, coupled with more seamless intra-African economic activity, AfCFTA can significantly enhance the attractiveness of the African market to external partners.

The AfCFTA's emphasis on harmonising trade policies and regulations streamlines negotiation processes, presenting external partners with a more consistent framework. This coherence enhances the predictability of the AfCFTA, making it more appealing to potential collaborators (Lopes, 2020). This will also help to boost intra-African trade, which is currently limited.

Empirical evidence by Mevel (2020) shows that intra-African exports and imports represent just 16.4 per cent and 13.3 per cent of total exports and imports, respectively. A report by UNECA (2018) shows that intra-Africa exports as a per cent of African exports increased from about 10 per cent in 1995 to around 17 per cent in 2017 (see Fig. 8.2). However, it remains low compared to levels in Europe (69 per cent), Asia (59 per cent), and North America (31 per cent).

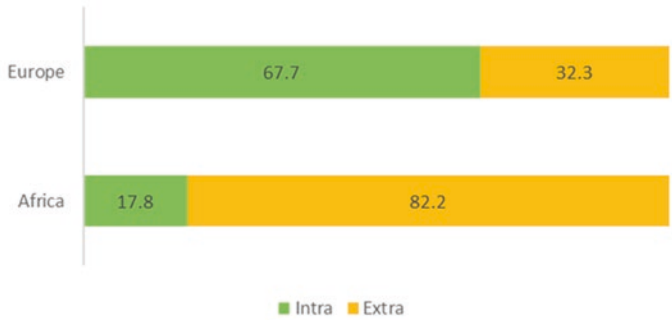

Fig. 8.2 Intra- and extra-regional African exports 2020, percentage of total exports. (Source: UNCTAD stats and author's calculation)

Part of the difficulty of intra-African trade is because markets are small, fractured, and partly isolated. Many African countries resorted to development strategies after gaining independence, including establishing Regional Economic Communities (RECs). However, several RECs have overlapping memberships and can increase complications instead of facilitating trade relationships among African countries (UNCTAD, 2020). High trade costs have also constrained intra-Africa trade, diverting it into predominantly informal channels and hindering the development of regional value chains. The prevalent challenges, including high tariffs averaging 8.7 per cent and formidable non-tariff barriers such as inadequate infrastructure, onerous regulations, and cumbersome customs processes, create significant obstacles for intra-African and extra-African trade.

A 2018 UNECA study projects a promising future, suggesting that implementing the AfCFTA could amplify intra-African trade by 40 per cent by 2040. This potential surge could elevate the share of exports within the continent from 17 per cent to approximately 25 per cent of total exports, signifying a transformative impact on Africa's trade landscape.

The AfCFTA has and will continue to impact Africa's external trade relations, too, particularly with the EU. While the EU has formally endorsed the AfCFTA and even committed significant financial support for its implementation, some of its actions around trade in Africa are undermining this support.

When African countries engage in intra-continental trade, they exchange more manufactured and processed goods, facilitating knowledge transfer and creating additional value. However, the trade regime governing relations between Africa and the EU introduces complexities based on geographical considerations (such as whether an African country is located in North Africa or below the Sahara), the level of development (least developed or developing), and the presence of existing EPAs or the GSP that may apply to exports. Initially presented as instruments to bolster Africa's integration, EPAs have posed challenges to regional integration efforts thus far. The segmentation introduced by EPAs, distinguishing trade relations between North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa, undermines the overarching goals of the AfCFTA. These variations, existing within each African regional economic community, often force African countries into a challenging position where they must decide between adhering to their regional commitments and aligning with the trade regime established by the EU.

Many African countries, cautious of the potential threat to their domestic policy space, have opted for a measured approach, refraining from deeper commitments to integration. This stance complicates efforts to establish a continental customs union. With diverse pressures and incentives, African governments exhibit varying appetites for engaging in reciprocal bilateral trade agreements with external partners, such as the EU. Moreover, the EU's changing tactics and aims have made African governments hesitant to delegate negotiating powers to the AU, a critical prerequisite for effective continent-to-continent trade negotiations.

The negotiation and implementation of the AfCFTA are expected to enhance the capacity of African governments and support institutions in navigating complex trade agreements, positioning them more effectively for pursuing a continent-to-continent FTA with the EU.

To date, the structure and negotiation dynamics of EPAs will likely impede deeper intra-Africa integration and complicate efforts to establish a continental customs union, given the EU's varied pressures and incentives exerted on individual countries or regions. Furthermore, the EU's reluctance to allow the AU to represent Africa in trade negotiations further underscores the complexities surrounding EPAs, which are integral to the EU's Comprehensive Strategy with Africa. In North Africa, the EU is concurrently negotiating Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) agreements with several countries.

In light of these challenges, Africa faces a pivotal decision on whether to persist with the prevailing practice of negotiating trade agreements at the regional and national levels, as exemplified by the EPAs or to elevate these engagements to a continental scale.

The consolidated data presented in Fig. 8.3 suggests that adopting a pan-African approach could empower African countries with a unified voice proportional to their collective economic influence. Such an approach, rooted in a joint articulation of trade and investment policy priorities within a broader development agenda, could reshape the partnership with the EU to better align with African objectives.

Such input, in turn, holds the potential for deeper integration of African companies into global value chains and enhanced value addition in products and exports. Ultimately, this could accelerate economic growth and poverty reduction across the continent. Additionally, a collective agreement of this magnitude could play a pivotal role in influencing global trade rules, especially between regions at disparate stages of development.

Year	Products		2019	2020	2021
ECOWAS	TOTAL	All products	32,140,198	22,115,904	29,744,997
EAC	TOTAL	All products	2,334,124	2,630,049	2,671,633
COMESA	TOTAL	All products	33,431,582	16,932,997	42,929,394
SADC	TOTAL	All products	34,522,819	29,510,718	44,305,310
CEMAC	TOTAL	All products	5,306,821	4,587,239	7,057,055

EU's exports to African regions

Year	Products		2019	2020	2021
ECOWAS	TOTAL	All products	33,977,107	30,784,764	37,693,305
EAC	TOTAL	All products	4,171,150	4,601,585	5,061,922
COMESA	TOTAL	All products	38,140,598	35,952,039	42,900,172
SADC	TOTAL	All products	40,949,535	30,661,270	37,265,103
CEMAC	TOTAL	All products	4,787,055	4,693,487	5,375,211

Fig. 8.3 Africa Regional Exports to the EU. (Source: Data extracted from the ITC stat, International Trade Centre, Trade value)

An additional advantage of a mega-regional trade agreement lies in its potential to align the external and internal dimensions of the AfCFTA, which is slated to evolve into a customs union.

In preparation for negotiations at the AfCFTA level, suggestions have been made to halt the ongoing EPA negotiations temporarily (Lopes, 2020). However, it is crucial to acknowledge a potential drawback of a collective approach: an inevitable loss in the flexibility of individual African countries to pursue their unique national visions. Building on the outlined advantages and aligning with contemporary perspectives linking trade and development, a unified approach creates an environment conducive to innovation and ambition in negotiations. This unity extends to critical areas such as investment and combating illicit financial flows, presenting an opportunity to set new standards and foster a more prosperous future for the African continent.

African countries have been cognisant of the potential anti-development ramifications associated with EPAs, mainly due to the principle of reciprocity. This reciprocity risks inundating African markets with inexpensive goods from the EU, posing a threat to nascent markets and potentially causing disruptions without sufficient safeguards. These challenges, however, hold the potential to generate new trade interests and fuel increased demand from African firms and consumers for deeper continental integration, as well as stronger economic ties with Europe.

A comprehensive study conducted by Karingi et al. (2005) delved into the impact of EPAs on Sub-Saharan Africa. Their model forecasts a decline in the production of natural resources and energy, accompanied by a marginal increase in fishing, crops, and vegetables. However, the study underscores that these gains are susceptible to erosion under conditions of complete reciprocity. Moreover, the research anticipates a substantial decline in heavy, low-tech, clothing, and textile industries, emphasising the multifaceted challenges associated with implementing EPAs in the region (Karingi et al., 2005).

Muluvi et al. (2016) extend the study of Karingi et al. (2005), focusing on Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya. The authors reveal that the losses of EPAs outweigh the benefits, especially for Kenya, as the fierce EU competition will rattle the country's manufacturing sector.

This is also the case in the ECOWAS region; Busse and Großmann (2004) explored the impact of EPAs on West African countries and found that in most cases, trade creation effects outweigh the trade diversion effects, leading to harmful government deficits.

EPAs incorporate a regional integration clause designed to mitigate the adverse effects stemming from variations in the country aggregation of RECs and EPA regions (Schmieg, 2020). Additionally, they provide preferential rules of origin for African products, allowing for input cumulation and processing across EPA regions if fully implemented (Grumiller et al., 2018).

Conversely, the divergence in import tariff schemes and phase-out periods for EU imports among different EPA regions complicates intra-African trade, especially for products destined for further processing, necessitating effective control of rules of origin in intra-African trade. The Most-Favoured-Nation (MFN) clauses in the EPAs imply that the EU would benefit from tariff reductions if intra-African tariffs were lower than those on EU products (Grumiller et al.). Furthermore, the EPA infant industry clauses differ from the unique and differential treatment clauses of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) (Sommer & Macleod, 2019).

Removing tariffs on EU imports impacts public revenues alongside intra-African tariff removals (Tröster & Janechová, 2021). Additionally, ongoing negotiations between the EU and Northern African countries for deep and comprehensive trade agreements, incorporating regulatory approximation of national legislations to EU standards, can potentially widen regulatory gaps between African regions. This stance contradicts the goals of the AfCFTA, which aims to close these gaps to foster more significant intra-African trade and integration. Given the intricate and potentially adverse interactions between the AfCFTA and diverse EU trade arrangements, Luke (2023) advocates for a more strategic sequencing of trade liberalisation, prioritising intra-African integration before liberalisation with the EU occurs. Considering that the ratification and application of the EPAs are still pending for several African countries, this presents a new entry point for negotiations with the EU and reviews of applied EPAs (Schmieg, 2020; Grumiller et al., 2018; Tröster & Janechová, 2021; Sommer & MacLeod, 2019; Luke, 2023).

In conclusion, the AU faces a critical decision in shaping the trajectory of its trade relationships, particularly with the EU. The existing asymmetrical trade dynamics and the overlapping commitments of EPAs and the AfCFTA pose challenges to intra-African trade and the Pan-African vision.

To safeguard the integrity of the AfCFTA market and minimise the potential exploitation by third parties, the AU might consider adopting a strategy akin to the West African EPA. This approach ensures that the EU does not receive more favourable treatment unless reciprocal benefits are extended to African, Caribbean, or Pacific states.

The current trade relationship with the EU presents a dilemma for African nations, forcing a choice between pursuing regional integration through the AfCFTA or securing short-term gains from EPAs. The existing patchwork of agreements with the EU raises concerns, particularly regarding subsequent trade commitments.

In moving forward, African countries must prioritise preserving market access to the EU while seeking deeper access. Justifications for continued access include addressing the developmental challenges faced by many African countries and aligning with the EU's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and poverty eradication.

Furthermore, a focused dialogue with the EU on stringent requirements and standards, particularly for agricultural products, is crucial.

These standards and EU subsidies to its farmers significantly hinder African agriculture and agro-manufacturing exports.

Lastly, the AU should explore trade agreements modelled after the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement, emphasising matching implementation capacity with obligations. Seeking explicit rules, rather than vague language, in a post-Cotonou Agreement ensures that new commitments align with the capacity to implement, fostering a development-friendly approach.

In navigating these complexities, the AU has an opportunity to redefine its trade relationships in a way that prioritises African interests, aligns with continental goals, and contributes to sustainable development.

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CHAPTER 9

Conclusions: A New Era of African Agency

A Long History of Asymmetry

This book offers a comprehensive examination of the complex dynamics shaping the strained relationship between Africa and Europe over centuries. It starts by delving into the emotional dimensions that underpin this relationship, emphasising the enduring legacy of colonial history on both continents.

During the colonial era, Africans, convinced of the benefits of European rule, embraced new cultures from the West, initiating a distressing historical pattern that endures. The European penetration of Africa was rooted in pursuing political and economic power through colonisation, mirroring power dynamics at home. Language was wielded as a tool to assert European superiority, perpetuating a narrative that misrepresented and downplayed the continent's size and developmental achievements, thus creating enduring stereotypes about Africa that helped justify colonial conquest and racially based exploitation.

The book invites readers to reframe the narrative and recognise these nuanced realities: Africa's challenging geography does not accurately represent human activity and development on the continent; economic assessments of the continent must be broadened to encompass its true resource endowments; and the continent's burgeoning youth population should be acknowledged as a potential global reservoir of talent. Additionally, colonial legacies shaping risk evaluation on the continent need revaluation, steering clear of biases.

C. Lopes, *The Self-Deception Trap*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-57591-4_9

The argument for reconfiguring Africa-EU relations along these lines parallels the imperative for all countries to cooperate in addressing weakest-link GPGs, such as climate change mitigation. Scott Barrett's work, *Why Cooperate? The Incentive to Supply Global Public Goods* (2007), emphasises that non-excludable and non-rivalrous GPGs resonates with the interconnectedness essential for fostering cooperation between Africa and Europe. The spectrum of GPGs, from single best effort to weakest link and aggregate effort, offers a nuanced perspective, aligning with countries' varied challenges.

The historical dimensions explored in Chap. 2 laid the groundwork for understanding the influence of aid and charity frameworks that have dominated African development discourses over the past century discussed in Chap. 3. Colonialism helped create the perception of Africa as a recipient in need of assistance rather than as an active participant in its own development, a view that, in turn, contributed to the inadequacies of aid programmes in tackling much-needed structural transformation on the continent.

The failure to account for differing national priorities, political dynamics, and contextual nuances resulted in a flawed international development system that inadvertently rewarded 'good performers'—nations that adhered to the extensive conditionality list outlined by Bretton Woods institutions—while failing to address the unique challenges faced by individual countries. This blind spot encouraged the perpetuation of charity-based models of aid that have continued to diminish and degrade Africa, reinforcing a stigmatised image of perpetual misery and of a continent that is incapable of independently addressing its challenges.

This ethos has unfortunately persisted. For example a critical analysis of the MDGs introduced in the early 2000s reveals the absence of context-based targets to foster accountability, ownership, and results-oriented programmes. Beyond the MDGs, Chap. 3 underscores the importance of addressing historical responsibilities as well as justice and equity in compensatory finance. Frameworks around governance are also scrutinised.

A critical examination of the traditional emphasis on 'good governance' as the panacea for economic growth and development reveals the fundamental flaws of this approach. The critique highlights the need for a more nuanced and comprehensive approach, pushing the governance discourse beyond the rhetoric of corruption, procedural fairness, and efficient decision-making to encompass a broader and more systemic perspective that focuses on tangible development outcomes. For instance, the fight against corruption demands more sophistication than checkboxes and slogans. African leaders are cautioned against adopting superficial narratives to gain favour and recognition. Instead, they need to cultivate the analytical capacity for independent critical thinking.

It is essential for both Europeans and Africans to abandon grand scenarios and unrealistic commitments, advocating instead for pragmatic goals that can realistically be achieved within a given timeframe. The right combination of attitudes and incentives is explained in Lopes and Theisohn's (2003) ten default principles for capacity development (see Fig. 9.1).

Chapter 4 explores how the economic theory of comparative advantage, established in the colonial era, has also played an important role in perpetuating an unequal power dynamic between Europe and Africa. This model, often presented as neutral, sees commodities flow out of Africa while higher-value manufactured goods are imported. This reinforces misleading assumptions about African economies and fails to recognise their true complexity and nuance. The analysis demonstrates how such flaws in the interpretation of comparative advantage theory have been minimised, perpetuating a skewed architecture of relations between Europe and Africa that does not accurately reflect the dynamics of trade and collaboration between the two entities.

It is evident, for example, that terminologies like 'preferences' were rooted in the colonial framework, coercing African entities to serve foreign objectives at the expense of their intrinsic well-being. The adverse effects of this trade system, which disadvantaged African countries, continue to echo in contemporary economic policies. The need for active industrial policies was constantly shot down by the European 'preferences' for commodities, incentivised through a sophisticated web of rules and the use of aid. This played down the imperative for African countries to establish specific production capabilities for effective participation and integration into global value chains.

As a result, multilateralism is now facing legitimacy challenges and the WTO is becoming more marginalised, giving rise to neo-protectionism and trade tensions. The importance of policy-led, smart protectionism to grow economies is exemplified in Southeast Asia's experience. Having more robust export-led industrial policies in place helped ensure that region's rapid growth. For African countries aspiring to follow Southeast

Fig. 9.1 Ten default principles for capacity development. (Source: Lopes & Theisohn, 2003)

Asia's development trajectory, robust state support and strategic industrial policy frameworks are therefore imperative.

The challenges posed by foreign investments and capital flight, which is draining Africa's resources, also need to be addressed. Measures to curb this financial haemorrhage and repatriate stolen assets are required. The evolving global economy demands a recalibration of the comparative advantage paradigm to encompass factors like security considerations, reshoring, and sustainable production practices.

As part of this process, it is vital to assess strategic alliances wielded by European countries, such as bilateral trade agreements, that amplify their economic interests and perpetuate the status quo. The impact of the intellectual property regime on developing countries' development trajectories similarly requires revaluation.

The Lost Development Decades of the Twentieth Century

The late 1980s marked a turning point in the EU's strategic interest in Africa. While previously focused primarily on exploiting the continent's economic potential, a shift occurred to include geopolitical, security, and migration concerns. However, structural imbalances persisted and Africa's socioeconomic development needs or changing trade patterns continued to be neglected. In short, the new African-European Partnership struggled to reconcile the fundamental inequalities between the partners leading to the further marginalisation of the continent.

Chapter 5 turns its attention to the repercussions of these lost development decades of the twentieth century. The implementation of SAPs in African and later in Latin American countries starkly demonstrated the disconnect between the Bretton Woods institutions' purported intentions and the dire realities these countries faced. While SAPs were intended to deliver free-market reforms to boost socioeconomic development, the Washington Consensus they promoted gave them an unparalleled influence that ensured external influence continued to constrain African economies. Conditions tied to aid packages formulated by international financial institutions narrowed policy autonomy, compelling countries to adhere to pre-defined economic restructuring paths.

Africa bore the brunt of the SAP's ill-conceived approach, with GDP growth stagnating, investments plummeting, and export shares diminishing significantly.

The prevailing power imbalance within the governance structures of the Bretton Woods institutions has become equally apparent. At ideological, representational, and crisis-response levels, the interests of wealthy countries, with a large number being European, consistently outweighed those of the poorest, mostly African, countries. More recently, the differential treatment shown during the pandemic and the economic and financial repercussions of the war in Ukraine bear glaring witness to this enduring inequality, underscoring questionable practices of the current international financial architecture.

It is evident that Africa's rich developmental diversity has collided with the imposition of standardised policy prescriptions. Regrettably, this same approach is evident in the frameworks surrounding the MDGs and the SDGs. Rather than liberating Africa from the straitjacket of SAPs by shifting the focus from prescriptive policies to goals, the unthinking translation of globally applicable goals into national frameworks, devoid of consideration for diverse socioeconomic contexts, has perpetuated the stigma of an ostensibly incapable Africa, now portrayed as unable to achieve universally endorsed goals.

The EU has played a crucial role in shaping these various development strategies. Its endorsement of conditionality through SAPs as instruments for shaping African economic policies, followed by a shift towards goal-centred policies, reflects a dynamic evolution that considered the need to bury failures and engender new interpretations that justified its interventionism. As a result, the EU's stance inadvertently hindered the exploration of diverse economic frameworks and innovative policy solutions to address African development challenges.

The Pushback: Strengthening Africa's Role on the Global Stage

Chapter 6, titled "The Good Samaritan lost their way," refers metaphorically to how, over time, Europe has deviated from the benevolent and altruistic stance it consistently adopted in its post-colonial interactions with Africa. The colonial logic underpinning the Africa-EU trade formation in the post-Cotonou era, for example, reflects a paternalistic approach that was camouflaged by numerous programmes and policy decisions that promised to bring sustainable growth and economic transformation.

This paternalism is evident in the many instances where Europe has acted unilaterally. For example, in November 2023, the AU and the EU were slated for their third foreign affairs ministerial meeting in Brussels. Regrettably, just a week before the scheduled event, it was deferred. The grounds for the postponement remained elusive, possibly another indicator of the challenges confronting the partnership in an unpredictable global context. However, two previous ministerial meetings suffered similar setbacks, suggesting a pattern rather than an episode.

Africa, meanwhile, is taking steps to strengthen its position in the global negotiating arena. While the AU currently lacks a direct mandate to represent member states globally, it has invested in various formats to amplify its influence. The Common African Positions (CAPs) is one such example, where African states, under AU's leadership, decided on a collective response to global issues including the post-2015 UN agenda, climate change, humanitarian effectiveness, migration, and UNSC reform. Recent AU initiatives include appointing representatives for political negotiations or securing a debt moratorium, access to capital for COVID-19 recovery, or joint procurement of vaccines.

In September 2023, the AU achieved a significant milestone by securing permanent membership in the G20 (hopefully soon to be renamed as the G21), underscoring Africa's escalating strategic importance on the global stage. Following this achievement, in November of the same year, the Africa Group at the United Nations in New York achieved a remarkable feat: garnering unanimous support from 125 countries in the Global South for a resolution on tax systems. This marked one of the most notable instances of a perfect North-South divide in a UN General Assembly vote.

These noteworthy developments not only signify the continent's steadfast rejection of marginalisation but also its resolute commitment to shaping discourse and influencing decision-making in the global economy. However, despite these successes, the continent has much work to do. Realising the full potential of G20 membership requires the AU to establish effective mechanisms for shaping and contributing to the agenda. This undertaking serves as a litmus test for the AU's capacity to represent its member states in international fora, an arena where its mandate is inherently limited. The AU's ability to navigate and contribute meaningfully to global discussions within the G20 will undoubtedly determine its effectiveness in advancing the collective interests of its members on the international stage.

These African efforts, facilitated by the AU and other means, underscore Africa's readiness to be a global player despite economic, political, and security challenges. But the EU appears to perceive this unified African stance as pushback, in part because it clashes with the established EU-Africa relationship's aid paradigm and challenges giver-recipient dynamics and the carrot-and-stick approaches.

Furthermore, the lack of an overarching strategy on the part of the AU is stopping Africa from playing a more proactive role in its external partnerships and putting African countries at a disadvantage. This can be seen in negotiations with the EU where, despite common African positions on migration, energy access, climate adaptation, and vaccine access demonstrating African assertiveness, African countries have struggled to formulate strategic priorities with the EU beyond thematic and reactive proposals.

Despite pushback against the EU's values agenda on governance, Africa also grapples with its own governance challenges. Recent coups, constitutional manipulations, and election irregularities highlight the challenges. The AU and its member states struggle to use structures like the African Peace and Security Architecture, the African Peer Review Mechanism, and others due to factors like conflict internationalisation, insurgency spread, and a lack of continental political leadership (Handy & Djilo, 2021).

This is an opportune moment to change the status quo because the global political situation is shifting, and Europe is recalibrating its stance towards Africa as a result of a range of factors, including China's growing role in global commerce and industry. Europe aims to 'de-risk' and stimulate growth in specific sectors while investing in critical fields like batteries and chips. Simultaneously, discussions on strategic autonomy and European defence and security sector development are gaining prominence.

To safeguard its interests in Africa and maintain global influence, the EU must deepen existing partnerships and seek new ones to ensure it has a significant bloc of votes in Africa. European states and the EU have said several times that they seek to move away from a donor-aid-recipient approach, reframing international cooperation as partnerships. Nevertheless, despite Africa prioritising trade and investments, in practice, offers for grant aid and financial support continue to be the central negotiating point.

In reimaging their relationship and leaving colonial logic behind, both Africa and Europe can take key lessons from their previous summits and engagements. These include the cruciality of a joint preparatory process for effective decision-making, clarifying the summit's main purpose, defining the type of interaction, and agreeing on financial resource channels. A reform package and joint preparatory processes could enhance stakeholders' voices, improve initiative design and impact, and foster partner equality. For the moment, such prospects have been curtailed by a dominating EU that can pick and choose its African interlocutors due to the fragmentation it actively foments in its engagements with the African continent.

A reset of traditional relations is needed to tackle the mounting challenges facing the world, not the least of which is the migration crisis. In Chap. 7, the spotlight shifts towards the intricate tapestry of migration, revealing a narrative that defies conventional European public views of Africa as a continent undergoing mass exodus. Delving into the wealth of data sets, a nuanced story unfolds, accentuating Africa's comparatively modest role in the global migrant population, compared with other regions.

A notable revelation surfaces. While the European discourse surrounding African population growth and migration is neo-Malthusian in character, rife with narratives of scarcity, incapacity, and unemployment, the reality is that the bulk of African migrants consciously opt not to leave the continent. The European view further fails to acknowledge the enduring impact of colonisation on Africa's socioeconomic landscape, fostering structural inequalities and perpetuating a perception of resource scarcity.

In navigating this convoluted terrain, international organisations have tough choices to make. The prevailing policy approaches and funding priorities seeking to address perceived migration challenges demand a recalibration. The media, a potent influence, is not exempt from scrutiny with migration discourse often succumbing to mass hysteria fuelled by sensationalism and populist political agendas spreading across Europe.

Aligned with Khanna's perspective, this book contends that unrestricted human movement across borders is a cornerstone of social dynamics, offering economic advantages to nations (Khanna, 2021). However, stringent immigration policies designed to clamp down on migrants implemented in Europe in recent years and the United States during the Trump administration stand as stark contradictions to this ideal.

At the same time, at the opposite end of the scale, many EU member states are establishing individual job-matching platforms to attract non-EU nationals with scarce skills, potentially contributing to a brain drain of skilled professionals from Africa. This focus on skilled migration will almost certainly have a negative impact on Africa, as it restricts the movement of non-skilled individuals and contributes to a loss of local talent. The efficiency of labour migration systems and legal pathways vary across member states, with room for improvement in processes like visas, work permits, and skills recognition. Collaboration between interior ministries and labour market authorities will be essential to develop more effective labour migration strategies going forward.

Tackling migration challenges demands a multifaceted and holistic response that balances short-term crisis management with long-term solutions addressing the root causes of migration and acknowledging the inherent power dynamics between the EU and AU. However, right now this is not happening. Notably, the proliferation of negotiations initiative by the EU with individual African countries is at cross purposes with the AU's expressed desire for a unified continental framework on migration. This fragmentation weakens African agency, undercutting the cohesive stance the AU aims to cultivate. By contrast, a comprehensive strategy could not only save lives and combat criminal networks but also generate employment opportunities, crucial for new labour market entrants in Africa each year.

In the intricate tapestry of migration narratives, European discussions often cast doubts on African states' ability to govern migration effectively, and this is fuelled by media depictions of desperate journeys across the Mediterranean. But in fact, the continent has valuable solutions to share with EU member states, notably the National Coordination Mechanism on Migrations (NCMs) in the East and Horn of Africa (Okoth, 2023).

The NCMs are government-led interagency platforms that facilitate dialogue and holistic policy formulation and foster coherent and inclusive migration governance. The AU's Migration Policy Framework provides comprehensive guidelines and mechanisms like the Intergovernmental Authority on Development National Communication Mechanisms (IGAD's) NCMs. These mechanisms strive to integrate migration into national development through a collaborative government and societal approach, promoting efficiency, avoiding duplication, and optimising limited resources.

In contrast, EU member states often compartmentalise migration within interior ministries, formulating policies primarily from a security standpoint that perceives migration as a threat. Despite evidence showcasing migrants' positive contributions to economic and social development, the EU emphasises externalisation over regular migration pathways. Furthermore, outsourcing migration management has proven ineffective, with the summer of 2023 witnessing a record-high influx of migrants to Italy (Okoth, 2023).

IGAD member states, particularly Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Djibouti, offer a model worth emulating. Their progress in implementing NCMs provides a blueprint for EU countries to revamp their migration approach.

Chapter 8 turns its attention to the centrality of trade in the current and future Europe-Africa relationship. In the post-Cotonou era, negotiations between the EU and the ACP countries have revealed an unequal trade dynamic that, unless addressed, could undermine the future of economic collaboration between Africa and Europe.

Preferential trade, ostensibly portrayed as a concession from Africa to Europe, underscores a subtle power play. The EU's deliberate engagement with the six ACP regions instead of treating them as a unified bloc reflects a 'divide-and-rule' strategy. This deliberate fragmentation has not only sown discord within Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific but also impeded progress towards deeper economic integration.

Furthermore, the negotiation tactics employed by the EU echo a mercantilist agenda, often at the expense of the developmental needs of ACP countries. The overarching focus leans towards dominating ACP markets and securing preferential access for EU producers. The profound asymmetries extend beyond economic realms, with the EU capitalising on robust institutional structures, a well-resourced bureaucracy, and skilled negotiators, thereby establishing a notable advantage over many resource-limited African counterparts.

The AfCFTA injects transformative potential into the relationship. Collective negotiation under the AfCFTA umbrella will augment Africa's bargaining power in global trade deliberations, providing a unified voice commensurate with its collective economic influence. This takes precedence over national endeavours.

To safeguard the integrity of the AfCFTA and mitigate the risk of potential exploitation, the AU needs to adopt a strategy reminiscent of the West African EPA. Such a strategic alignment would ensure that the EU receives no preferential treatment unless reciprocal benefits are extended to all ACP states.

Moving forward it is vital that Africa preserve market access to the EU while concurrently seeking avenues for deeper engagement. This involves addressing developmental challenges and advocating for equitable treatment in trade. A focused dialogue with the EU on stringent requirements and standards, particularly for agricultural products, emerges as a strategic imperative. The existing standards and EU subsidies to its farmers pose significant impediments to African agriculture and agro-manufacturing exports.

The Future Beckons

The AU is poised at a crossroads. Right now, it has an opportunity to redefine its trade relationships. By prioritising African interests, aligning with continental goals, and steering away from ambiguous commitments, the AU can ensure that trade can become a catalyst for mutual growth and prosperity for both itself and the EU.

This also makes sense as a shield against new forms of protectionism based on climate considerations. For instance, the implementation of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) demands careful consideration of its implications for Africa, particularly its potential negative effects on industrial exports. The transition to a lower carbon economy, while holding promise, should not unfairly burden African nations. A more inclusive global order is essential to ensure Africa actively participates in and benefits from green industrialisation opportunities. As CBAM takes effect, clear guidelines on its specific targets and potential counteracting duties will be crucial for navigating its impact on Africa's economic landscape.

Africa's growing global influence, exemplified by achievements like G20 membership, signals a continent ready to assert itself. Challenges persist in EU-Africa relations, but the trajectory forward involves redefining engagement. The EU's shift to partnerships and initiatives like AfCFTA present opportunities for mutual growth.

Looking ahead, a call to action emerges: to abandon unrealistic commitments and embrace pragmatic goals. The global landscape invites a new chapter marked by cooperation, mutual respect, and shared progress. In this dynamic context, the future beckons for a fresh and equitable partnership between Africa and Europe.

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Annex A: Report of the AU High Representative for Partnerships with Europe to Member States (May 2019)

African Union/European Union Relations
How To Develop African Agency And Consistency
Key Issues and Guidance for Negotiations

Acronyms

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Agreement
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AU	African Union
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EU	European Union
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
ODA	Official Development Assistance
UN	United Nations

Executive Summary

Since the launch of the Africa-EU partnership in its current format in 2000, the foundation on which the relationship between the two continents was built has been altered by new dynamics, both international and endogenous to the two continents. For African countries, in particular, several developments are important to note. On the trade front, the continent has registered a systematic trade deficit since 2013, therefore raising

C. Lopes, *The Self-Deception Trap*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-57591-4

the question of the value of the current trade agreements without diversification. The place of the EU as the largest provider of Official Development Assistance (ODA) is no longer unchallenged as its share (EU member states and institutions combined) among the OECD Donors group has declined in recent years, largely due to increased ODA from other donors.

Internal dynamics within Africa have also resulted in the role of the EU shifting over the years. While the EU continues to be relevant, expectations of its role have changed. This is driven by the creation of regional processes and actors, for instance, in the context of the AU's African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), which have emerged as principal players in the field.

At the same time, the needs of Africa today are no longer the needs it had yesterday. Partnerships should be adapted accordingly. International partnerships and investment should, for instance, be leveraged to support country-led policies in areas such as job creation for the youth, industrialisation and mobility.

Reviewing partnerships, including with the EU, is therefore imperative. Today, Africa and Europe stand at a crossroads as several significant partnership frameworks governing their relationship are about to expire. This is an opportunity to make a dent in the partnership frameworks that are likely to structure relations between the continents for the next 20 years.

A Two-Track Approach to the Negotiations

The AU Assembly has agreed to a dual approach to negotiating post-2020 relations with the EU. Through the revised Cotonou Agreement, the ACP framework will continue to govern relations between African countries that are members of the ACP Group and the EU. Such relations, being largely bilateral in nature and focussing on aid disbursements, are complemented by a second track: a continent-to-continent AU-EU framework. This framework brings together all members of the AU and builds on the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and the Declaration of the AU-EU Summit held in Abidjan in November 2017. It focuses primarily on securing key commitments in strategic areas affecting the continent collectively while safeguarding the regional integration agenda in critical areas, namely trade, migration and peace and security. The two frameworks will be complementary in content, and coordinated negotiations will ensure that African countries are not exposed to incompatible measures.

It is important to recall that the AU and the EU have entered into several agreements regarding trade, peace and security, and migration and mobility since 2001. With the exception of peace and security, results have fallen short of expectations. Adopted approaches have not contributed to creating a partnership spirit based on cooperation and mutual benefit as wished by leaders of the two continents in 2017 when they spoke of a "spirit of shared ownership, responsibility, reciprocity, respect and mutual accountability and transparency".

As negotiations start, it is important to note that there are both risks and opportunities for the continent, particularly regarding the critical issues of trade, peace and security, and migration and mobility. Africa must negotiate with a unified voice aligned with a shared vision of an integrated continent. The points below form the key negotiating parameters to help realise this shared vision.

Trade Relations

Collectively, African economies are the EU's most important trade partner after the United States and China. The continent is also a prime destination for EU foreign direct investment stocks. However, Africa remains dependent on commodity exports and has struggled to integrate successfully into global value chains and grow value-adding industries.

Africa must negotiate a continent-to-continent trade agreement that is based on agreed frameworks, notably the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), which is now confirmed to come into force in 2019. The AfCFTA provides a mechanism to leverage the economies of scale offered in a market of more than 1 billion people and to offer investors seamless intra-African economic activity. A new trade agreement must also go beyond trade in goods to encompass services and other trade-related areas. It should emphasise and serve Africa's interests and priorities, including enabling a programme of industrialisation and transformation.

Peace and Security

Both African leaders and the EU are increasingly questioning the approach to peace and security. In response to domestic concerns, the EU is focusing on and diverting funding to measures to contain conflict in northern African countries. However, Africa wants to strengthen its focus on preventing conflict through mediation and reconstruction activities after conflicts. The likely shift in funding mechanism from the African Peace Facility to a new European Peace Facility will exacerbate these tensions. Africa is also focused on building its partnership with the United Nations (UN) to address institutional capacity development needs and to increase predictable financial support.

A new agreement must recognise the AU's de facto prime role in managing peace and security on the continent. The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) must be reaffirmed as the primary mechanism for peace and security operations on the continent. Ongoing funding for these operations, as well as for building capacity and preventing conflict, needs to be secured from international partners. Funding should be directed through the African Peace Fund, which is positioned as a central financial mechanism.

Migration and Mobility

Africa and the EU have made several agreements since 2006 that aimed to develop a relationship based on shared interests. Over time, the focus has shifted to irregular migration rather than supporting the mobility of African citizens. Mobility is a crucial issue for Africa because of the significant financial contributions made by migrants through remittances. Various plans and dialogues have fallen away, and the EU is following a regional approach focused on the Horn of Africa migration route. Funding is diverted to this focus area to the detriment of other programmes. This approach ignores the reality that only 6 per cent of Africans in Europe are unprocessed asylum seekers and that there has been a dramatic decrease in irregular migration to the EU.

The negotiations must ensure that any agreement aligns with Agenda 2063's ambition to promote the free movement of Africans within the continent. There is a need for a comprehensive dialogue on migration and mobility issues that includes setting management standards and principles that are compliant with the African Common Position on Migration and Development. Establishing joint mechanisms to track migration and related data would benefit policymaking for Africa and the EU.

Purpose of the Document

Existing partnership frameworks between Africa and the EU are about to expire. These include the Abidjan Action Plan (2018–2020) based on the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (2007), the second Multi-Annual Indicative Programme of the EU's Pan-African Programme (2018–2020), and the legally binding Cotonou Agreement (2000–2020) with the ACP Group of States, and its financing instrument.

The AU Commission, at the request of the Executive Council, has tabled the future of the post-2020 Africa-EU relationship for discussion over the course of several meetings.

The Assembly of the Union at its 11th Extraordinary Session in November 2018 adopted Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.4(XI), which outlines a dual approach to a revised partnership agreement:

- The ACP-EU framework will continue to govern post-Cotonou negotiations within the mandate agreed to by the parties.
- The AU-EU framework should continue to govern the continent-to-continent partnership post-2020. This will build on the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and the Declaration of the AU-EU Summit held in Abidjan in November 2017.

The report highlights the need to ensure that Africa speaks with one voice, that there is cohesion between the Post-Cotonou Agreement and the Post-2020 Continent-to-Continent Partnership, and that continental priorities are consistently reflected.

The 2019 Joint AU-EU Ministerial Meeting confirmed the intention "to continue the AU-EU continent-to-continent partnership post-2020, backed by commitments on both sides and appropriate instruments and frameworks". The AU Ordinary Summit in February 2019 asked the Chairperson of the Commission to work with the Permanent Representatives Committee to conclude an enhanced continent-to-continent partnership. This agreement will be discussed at the second AU-EU Ministerial Meeting to be held in Africa before the end of 2019 and at the AU-EU Summit in 2020.

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of key issues for negotiations with the EU within the framework of the AU-EU continent-to-continent partnership.

Scope

At its 11th Extraordinary Session, the Assembly of the Union defined the scope of the continent-to-continent partnership as peace and security, trade, migration and climate.

Principles

The principles to be followed in the negotiations are:

- Promote the regional integration agenda for the African continent.
- Respect the sovereign right of member states to enter into agreements with international partners, such as the Cotonou Agreement.

- Ensure coherence and complementarity between the continent-to-continent agreement and other international agreements entered into by AU member states.
- Present a united front in negotiations across the various partnership platforms.

A new agreement must support Africa in reaching its economic and social development potential. It needs to enable the continent to implement its own mobility and migration, peace and security, and governance solutions. It must position Africa as a stronger player in the global arena and help the continent achieve the targets set out in Agenda 2063.

Introduction

Twenty years is a long period in the life of a partnership. It is shaped and matured by different factors to eventually give way to its successor, one that is adapted to new realities. Since the launch of the Africa-EU partnership in its current form in 2000—continent-to-continent or through frameworks such as the Cotonou Agreement—the foundation on which the relationship between the two continents was built has significantly been altered by new dynamics, both international and endogenous to the two continents.

Europe has enjoyed the status of a privileged partner for Africa for decades. It was the main source of development aid and a primary source of international trade revenue. However, while it undoubtedly continues to be an important partner for the continent, the last 20 years have witnessed an increasing erosion of the EU's exceptional status driven by internal limitations within the EU and Africa itself, as well as increased interest in Africa by other partners.

In the trade area, for example, Africa has, for decades, benefited from a trade surplus with the EU despite its dependence on EU-sourced goods. Africa is, in fact, the EU's third most significant trading partner, above other strategic EU partners such as Japan or Canada. However, the continent has struggled to reap the benefits of such a privileged partnership. Indeed, while exports from Africa have substantially increased compared to 2001, the continent has registered a persistent trade deficit with the EU since 2013. The tide has, therefore, turned, driven largely by the lack of diversity in the economic structure of several African countries, a factor that has long been neglected in favour of ambitious trade deals.

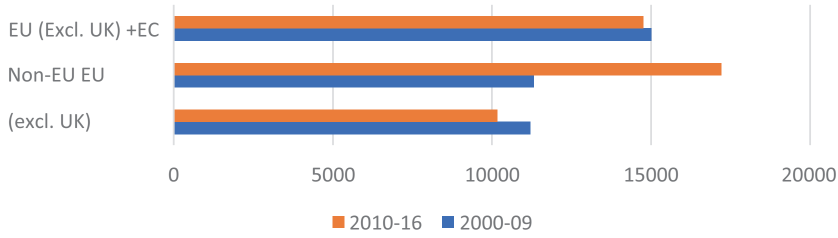

Fig. A1 US$ Million, ODA to Africa from OECD DAC Donors (OECD Development Aid at a Glance, Statistics per Region. Africa. 2018 edition. https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/Africa-Development-Aid-at-a-Glance-2018.pdf) (Source: OECD, 2018)

Similarly, in the area of development aid, traditionally dominated by the EU, the combined share of EU institutions and EU member states decreased by 1.58 per cent between the period 2000–2009 and 2010–2016, while aid from other OECD DAC members, which was initially lower, increased by 52 per cent to bypass the EU significantly (see Fig. A1).[1]

Changes have occurred within Africa itself, which have reshaped the partnership in their own right. In 2000, the African Union was yet to be born. Regional structures, such as the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), were mere ambitions for the future. Today, they are a reality. The anticipated entry into force of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), should it be adequately implemented, may have similar catalytic effects as the APSA in the course of the 20 years to come.

While the partnership has arguably served its purpose for decades, the trends and evolutions above call for a strategic reflection on the future direction of the partnership. The needs of African countries today are different from what they were yesterday. A partnership that does not look at the past or the present but rather at the future is, therefore, key. In important areas, experience so far has shown that African countries will need to rethink their engagement.

Trade agreements alone are no panacea for a meaningful integration into the global trade system. Africa will need to pay attention to productive sectors not just as a basis for trade but to create jobs for its increasing

[1] These figures are based on the official definition of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and do not reflect data on aid received from non-OECD DAC members.

population. With estimates flagging the target of 12 million jobs annually to allow African countries to absorb new labour market entrants over the next 20 years, industrialisation becomes key. Any international partnerships need to be strategically aligned to these objectives. Similarly, we need to be aware of the pressures that our partners are under domestically, which could shape their relations with Africa in a manner that does not serve the continent's long-term interests. The dialogue on migration is a case in point. The continent will need to reduce its vulnerability to funding shocks in key areas such as peace and security by intensifying its engagement with the international peace architecture, among others.

Strategic partnerships are imperative for the development of Africa. Cooperation frameworks, such as those currently under negotiation, are important vehicles to implement this vision. Reviewing what they delivered and drawing lessons from their limitations is, therefore, key.

The 20-Year Journey to a New Eu-Africa Partnership

In April 2000, representatives of the Organization of African Unity and the EU met in Cairo to discuss, for the first time, a continent-to-continent agreement that would strengthen areas of cooperation and benefit both parties. The Cairo Declaration focused on regional integration in Africa, integration of Africa into the world economy, human rights and governance, peace and security, and sustainable development. The declaration noted that,

> To give a new strategic dimension to the global partnership between Africa and Europe for the 21st century, in a spirit of equality, respect, alliance and cooperation between our regions, we are committed to the basic objective of strengthening the already existing links of political, economic and cultural understanding through the creation of an environment and an effective framework for promoting a constructive dialogue on economic, political, social and development issues.

The practical implementation of these ambitious intentions was, however, challenging. Giving a *new strategic dimension* was an ambition to be built on pre-existing mechanisms with little change. But opportunities at the time were lacking. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was still transitioning into the AU structure, and bilateralism was the key mechanism at the time. And so, the Cotonou Agreement between the EU and

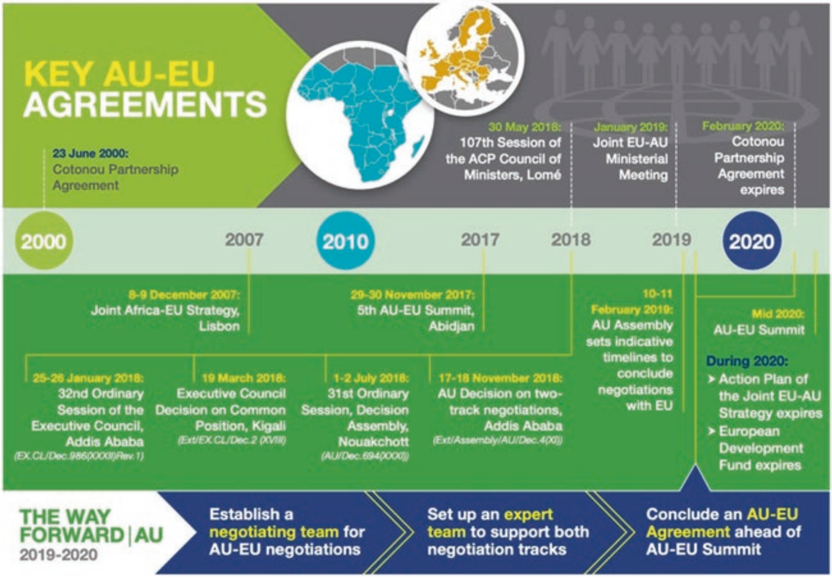

Fig. A2 Timeline of AU-EU relations and negotiations

ACP countries was signed in June 2000, with the Barcelona Process remaining in place to guide EU relations with North African countries (Fig. A2).

By 2005, the AU was established, and the EU followed with the adoption of its Strategy for Africa. This strategy established a framework for development programmes on the continent and directed EU funding through the European Development Fund.[2] However, it was unilaterally developed, and as African countries became assertive, the pressure resulting from their criticism of a unilateral strategy subsequently resulted in the launch of the Joint EU-Africa Strategy in Lisbon in 2007. The Lisbon Declaration focused on jointly identified priorities and provided an implementation roadmap, but without a coherent funding framework, its realisation has been hampered.

[2] Commission of the European Communities. EU Strategy for Africa: Towards a Euro-African pact to accelerate Africa's development. COM (2005) 489 final. Brussels, 12.10.2005. Pg 36.

The institutional and political structure for managing the partnership was slowly dismantled between 2010 and 2014. In 2014, a new €845 million Pan-African funding envelope was established, and the Brussels EU-Africa Summit proposed a new managing structure for the partnership. This included incorporating college-to-college meetings between the EU and the AU commissions, meetings between the Peace and Security Council and political and security committees, and summits for EU and African heads of state to encourage dialogue. While this partnership was politically palatable, the implementation mechanism followed a programming logic that excluded systematic and structured consultations with African actors to deliver concrete and mutually beneficial outcomes. Furthermore, as the migration discourse started to take over different aspects of the partnership, the lack of structural consultations grounded in an agreement further weakened the potential of leveraging the partnership to deliver win-win results.

The Joint EU-Africa Strategy was reaffirmed as the desired partnership framework in Abidjan in 2017. Leaders called for a "paradigm shift to an even stronger, mutually beneficial partnership in the spirit of shared ownership, responsibility, reciprocity, respect and mutual accountability and transparency".

However, the partnership continued to face challenges. The absence of a partnership instrument including significant funding dedicated to the partnership so far and the fragmented approach adopted by the EU have resulted in a cherry-picking approach, whereby the partnership, at least as articulated on paper, provides the convenience of a comprehensive approach to relations between Africa and Europe but the flexibility (in favour of the EU) and limited accountability limit the ability of African countries and institutions to fully reap the benefits of the partnership.

The ongoing negotiations for the continent-to-continent framework and an Africa Pillar under the Cotonou Partnership Agreement provide the continent with an opportunity to address some of these weaknesses and to secure frameworks that serve them as much as possible. It should also be recalled that these negotiations do not take place in a vacuum. The EU's ongoing negotiations for its Multi-Annual Financial Framework and its legal instruments as of 2021 are important gauges of the future orientation of the EU's engagement with Africa. Noteworthy is that there is to date still no security concerning the future of the European Development Fund (EDF); that financing for Africa has been integrated under an €89.2 billion Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation

Instrument (NDICI) with sub-Saharan Africa and the Neighbourhood receiving almost a similar share of funding (compared to 1 per cent for Americas and the Caribbean and 2 per cent for Asia and the Pacific).

A Future Instrument

As agreed by the heads of state and government, the continent-to-continent framework focusing on critical regional priority areas remains an important component of future relations with the EU. The AU has several instruments around which the partnership could be structured to ensure a unified and integrated approach to the partnership (see Fig. A3).

The lessons of the past 20 years indicate that Africa will need to focus its attention on the following aspects when negotiating the continent-to-continent framework:

- A clear governance structure that reflects the spirit of partnership,
- A funding mechanism that is aligned to the ambitions of the partnership and respective of the governance structure,

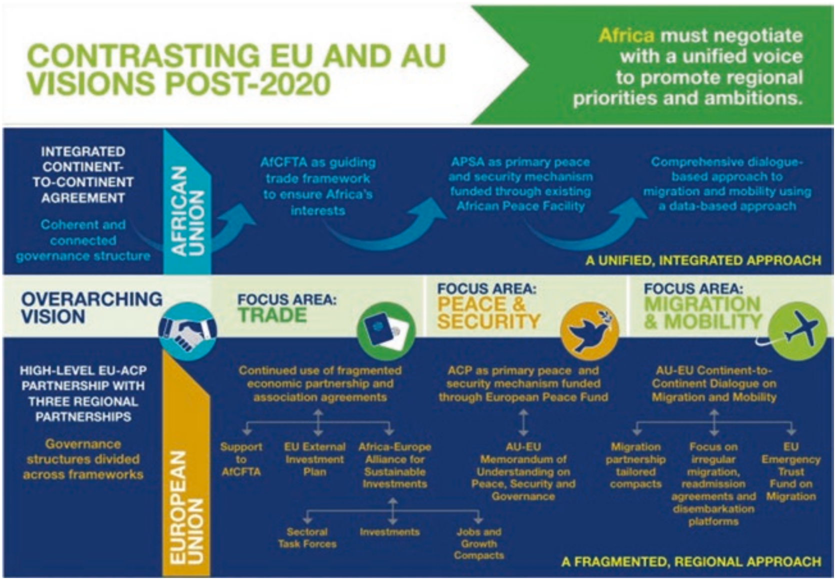

Fig. A3 From fragmented approaches to an integrated and unified approach

- Coordination and complementarity with other frameworks involving African countries.

Focussing the partnership on key areas where the AU has an added value is equally important. It is in this spirit that heads of state and government agreed that the continent-to-continent partnership should focus on specific areas.

Key Focus Areas for Africa

In preparing for negotiations to secure the continent-to-continent agreement, it is important to explore the opportunities and risks for African countries when engaging with the EU on trade, migration, peace, and security. The section below addresses these issues and provides guidance on the main negotiation orientations.

Trade Relations

Background
Trade between African economies and between the continent and the world remains weak despite promises of trade agreements made by the EU and other trading partners. Africa's share in global trade was estimated at 2.7 per cent in 2017; the share of intra-African trade was 15 per cent.[3] With the exception of a few more diversified economies, most African countries are net raw commodity exporters and importers of manufactured products. This is partly due to the historical nature of trade ties to primary trading partners and the inherently weak industrial structures found in most African countries.

The EU remains Africa's largest single trading partner even though the share of trade with non-European partners accounts for more than two-thirds of total trade by value. African economies, in turn, represent nearly 3 per cent of the EU's external trade. This makes Africa the EU's third most important trading partner after the United States and China, putting it on par with Switzerland.

African exports and imports have grown since 2001, but the continent has had a persistent trade deficit with the EU since 2013, totalling $45 billion in 2016. The overall increase in African exports to the EU of nearly

[3] EXIM: Africa Trade Report, 2018.

50 per cent between the first (2001–2009) and second period (2010–2017) from $115 billion to $172 billion did not entail a major shift in the composition of the African exports.

Mineral products make up 58 per cent of all exports and generate about $100 billion annually. Machinery, electrical goods, foodstuffs, and textiles generate about $9 billion annually.

Imports from the EU rose across all ten categories, resulting in an overall increase from $97 billion to $172 billion. In real terms, the most significant increase in imports from the EU was for mineral products. Still, in relative terms, the most significant growth was in the machinery and electrical goods category. This category grew by 40 per cent to reach a value of $41 billion. Imports are generally more equally distributed across categories and tend to be dominated by processed, manufactured goods, followed by mineral products, transportation, and chemicals. The last three categories accounted for about $20 billion.

Despite the trade deficit, Africa's trade with the EU is not insignificant compared to the EU's trade with other parts of the world. Two of the EU's 21 current free trade agreement negotiations are with African countries—Tunisia and Morocco. The EU has, since 2017, concluded agreements with Armenia, Canada, Japan, Singapore, and Vietnam, and it is negotiating with five other countries. These agreements cover a range of issues such as the reduction and elimination of tariffs, the removal of non-tariff barriers, the opening of public tenders to foreign companies, rules on intellectual property, state-owned enterprises and geographical indications, as well as chapters on trade and sustainable development.

African economies combined represent a more significant trading partner than the countries mentioned above. Taken together, Africa represents a larger trading partner than any of the countries in the sample above. In 2017, Africa accounted for $164 billion of the EU's exports and $152 billion in imports. The EU also realised its biggest positive trade balance with African economies ($12 billion), followed by Japan from this sample. The EU's most significant trade deficit was with Vietnam in 2007 to the value of $39 billion. When combined, African economies also represent a more important market for trade and investment stocks than Canada, Japan, and Vietnam. The latest available data indicates that Canada leads foreign direct investment stocks with a near-equal split: $296 billion of EU stocks are in Canada, and $278 billion of Canadian stocks are in the EU.

But the volume of the EU's outward stocks in Canada is second to those placed by the EU in Africa. A key difference is that trade patterns between the three countries and the EU have high levels of trade diversification, while African trade is still highly dependent on commodities.

The recent trade agreements made with Canada, Japan, and Vietnam serve to illustrate the EU's current approach to external trade. For example, its agreement with Canada clearly sets out the scope of important clauses to ensure they are easy to interpret. All of the agreements envisage the establishment of a standing investment arbitration body to deal with investor-state disputes arising from the agreements as opposed to the current ad hoc system.

Current Context

The current trade relationship between Europe and Africa is governed by diverse trade regimes. These include:

- Association agreements with Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, and Morocco.
- A set of fragmented 'interim' economic partnership agreements (EPAs) covering trade in goods. These have been signed by subsets of regional economic communities or individual African countries (15 in total).[4,5]
- Duty- and quota-free unilateral trade preferences ('Everything but Arms') to all least-developed countries (applicable to 30 countries).[6]
- A Generalized System of Preferences for non-least-developed countries (Congo and Nigeria) and Most Favoured Nations treatment (i.e., no special trade preferences) for Gabon and Libya.

A third of African countries have signed and ratified association agreements or EPAs with the EU to guarantee market access for their products.

[4] Countries currently implementing EPAs: five Eastern and Southern African countries, namely Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, and Zimbabwe; six countries of the Southern African Development Community, namely Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, Swaziland, South Africa, and Mozambique; Cameroon in Central Africa; Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana in West Africa; and Kenya in East Africa.

[5] The association agreements and the EPAs are reciprocal (though asymmetric) agreements, whereby the EU and African countries committed to provide free or preferential market access for their partner's goods.

[6] 33 African countries are eligible for Everything but Arms preferences. However, three (Comoros, Madagascar, and Rwanda) currently trade within the framework of EPAs.

This was considered necessary at the time to compete against lower-cost Asian exports, but the agreements were made in the absence of solid regional and continental frameworks.

EPAs have had mixed results. In some cases, they restrict African countries' ability to enact appropriate development policies, and they can reduce the revenue traditionally derived from tariffs. For example, the proposed ban on export taxes hinders the ability to add value to raw commodities. Some EPA provisions negate aspects of the AU's policy frameworks, including the African Mining Vision, the Accelerated Strategy for Industrial Development, and the forthcoming AU Commodity Strategy. There is, therefore, insufficient evidence that these agreements have supported Africa's development prospects or integrated the continent into global trading markets.

The AfCFTA adds further complexity to this trading landscape. Fifty-two countries had signed the AfCFTA agreement by March 2019, and 22 countries have ratified it to date. It will come into force in 2019. It needs to be implemented sequentially with future trade agreements to ensure that Africa's integration agenda and attractiveness as an investment destination are not compromised. Africa will require more investment in technologies, skills, and financial mechanisms to help it achieve its goals of an agricultural-based industrial revolution and upgrade its service infrastructure in energy, transport, finance, and digital networks.

However, investment incentives need to be implemented in the spirit of partnership. The EU has recently launched the European External Investment Plan (EIP) with two key objectives in sight:

- Tackle the root causes of migration and
- Mobilise and leverage sustainable public and private investments to boost investments in Africa.

The €4.5 billion fund relies on guarantees and blended financing to leverage an estimated €44 billion in investments. While available evidence on the potential of blending leveraging investments indicates that on average, for every $1 invested from ODA funding, private finance mobilised amounts to just $0.37 in low-income countries and $1.06 in lower-middle-income countries and just $0.65 for upper-middle-income countries, therefore casting doubt on the grand promises of the EIP, it can nonetheless be a useful model to encourage some European investors to enter the Africa market. The impact will, however, depend on the degree to which

African countries are involved, a factor far from guaranteed in the current governance structure of the Plan.

Future Continent-to-Continent Framework

The EU remains Africa's single largest trading partner. The information presented would suggest that a pan-African approach to trade would provide African countries with a single voice that matches their cumulative economic clout. A new agreement with the EU based on common trade and investment priorities located within a broader development agenda would be more conducive to integrating African companies into global value chains, supporting the growth of value-adding industries, and growing exports. This would encourage faster economic growth and help to reduce poverty on the continent. A mega-regional trade agreement would also help to shape global trade rules, particularly between regions at different stages of development. Another advantage is the potential alignment of the internal trade agreement and external mechanisms of the AfCFTA, which may become a customs union. It will enable economies of scale in a market of more than 1 billion people, and seamless intra-African economic activity will strengthen the continent's appeal to outside investors. A unified approach also creates opportunities for further innovation and greater ambition in negotiations, including in the areas of investment and combating illicit financial flows.

The AU's approach regarding trade in a continent-to-continent framework aims to:

- Create the conditions for Africa to progressively reposition itself in the global value chain and shift to producing and exporting value-added products.
- Advance the regional and continental integration programme as a priority and as a basis for third-party engagement.
- Enable and facilitate a programme of industrialisation and transformation.

Negotiation Parameters for Trade

- **A coherent approach and appropriate sequencing/timing.** Africa must ensure that a continent-to-continent agreement is based on commonly agreed frameworks. Most African countries (36 of 55) have not yet committed to association agreements or EPAs with the EU. Existing agreements must be upheld to ensure continued, particularly preferential, access to EU markets. However, the AU would urge member states engaged in ongoing negotiations with the EU or other partners to align agreements to the AfCFTA. The bilateral agreements that have been made will continue and must be respected, but the focus must be on promoting frameworks such as the AfCFTA, which supports regional integration.

- **An understanding of and reflection on Africa's priorities and ambitions.** Current trade agreements focus on trade in goods. They need to be more ambitious, reflecting twenty-first-century trade realities and include services and other trade-related areas. A new trade agreement must emphasise Africa's interests and priorities.

Peace and Security

Background

Through the creation of the APSA, Africa has a complex set of institutions to formulate regional responses to conflict. Since the establishment of the APSA, the AU, regional economic communities, and regional mechanisms have intervened in an increasing number of crises and violent conflicts. They have done so through various crisis response instruments, including diplomacy, mediation, sanctions (such as asset freezes, travel bans, or AU membership suspensions), and peace support operations.

The APSA is 'owned' and managed by Africa but receives significant financial support from the EU through the African Peace Facility. The facility, underpinned by the Joint EU-Africa Strategy, was created in 2003 to support continental and sub-regional responses to peace and security. It has a continental pan-African focus with eligible beneficiaries limited to AU and relevant regional organisations. It does not extend to the Caribbean and Pacific countries. It is closely aligned with the APSA and the Joint EU-Africa Strategy and uses the accompanying roadmap as its overarching policy framework. The African Peace Facility is a crucial building block in the EU-Africa partnership on peace and security and a contributor to the APSA's operations.

The European Development Fund, which has its legal basis in the current Cotonou Agreement, allocated €2.7 billion to the African Peace Facility between 2004 and 2017. Most of this funding (91 per cent) is for peace support operations; for example, it was used to cover troop per diem payments and to provide equipment support. These peace operations have included a variety of different interventions, including large and robust operations such as AMISOM in Somalia, smaller-scale security missions such as ECOMIB in Guinea-Bissau, and short-term activities paving the way for UN peacekeeping operations (such as AFISMA in Mali or MISCA in the Central African Republic). A further 7.3 per cent of funding contributed to building the capacity of the AU and regional economic communities/mechanisms to support the operationalisation of the APSA, strengthen planning, and conduct capabilities for peace support operations.

This includes providing support for the development of early warning systems, the payment of AU Commission staff salaries, and the procurement of a Command, Control, Communication and Information System.[7] About 1.2 per cent has been reserved for an Early Response Mechanism to allow for quick and flexible responses to urgent crises across Africa.

Current Context

EU institutions are discussing the creation of a European Peace Facility with a budget of €10.5 billion. This would likely replace the current African Peace Facility from 2021. Funding would originate from a separate funding instrument outside of the EU budget.[8] The new facility would have significantly more financial resources at its disposal, but it would no longer be restricted to Africa and would expand the type of support it offers to include, for example, direct bilateral support. It also poses a risk to the centrality of the APSA as Africa's primary peace and security mechanism. Africa needs to ensure that EU-AU dialogues on peace and security are structured through a direct cooperation framework.

The EU also engages in African peace and security initiatives through its Common Security and Defence Policy, which is funded through the Common Foreign and Security Policy and supported by the military of EU member states. Through this mechanism, it operates three of its six military operations and four of its ten civilian missions. This includes military training missions in Mali, Somalia, and the Central African Republic and police capacity-building missions in Niger and Mali. The EU also

[7] African Peace Facility annual report, 2017.

[8] The Commission proposes to "budgetise" the EDF. This means moving away from the longstanding practice of having an EDF as a separate fund financed by member states on top of the regular EU budget. Budgetisation has been tried in the past without success. The option remains for agreement on a new EDF, possibly including funds for peace and security in Africa.

funds projects focused on crisis response, conflict management, prevention and peacebuilding in Africa through its instrument contributing to Stability and Peace in Africa.

These African initiatives have absorbed over a third of the €912 million allocated to all projects under this instrument.[9]

The roles formally attributed to ACP-EU structures under the current agreement have effectively already been regionalised, and the legitimacy and relevance of the AU in this domain are uncontested. Dialogues between the EU and the regional economic communities and regional mechanisms are irregular despite the growing role of regional bodies in responding to peace and security challenges.

Both Africa and the EU are increasingly questioning the modalities and approach to peace and security. The dialogue structures that underpin the partnership need to be reviewed, particularly because the EU has shifted its focus to challenging security concerns to contain migration. At the same time, Africa wants to strengthen its focus on conflict prevention, mediation, and post-conflict reconstruction. The likely restructuring of financing mechanisms is also a factor.

Africa's increased focus on its partnership with the UN is also key. The AU has taken various steps to reinforce this partnership, including a new Joint UN-AU Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security. This framework explores the need to increase predictable financial support and addresses institutional capacity development needs. African peace support operations play an important role in complementing UN peacekeeping operations on the continent because they can be mobilised quickly and have more robust mandates than the UN, including those related to counterterrorism.

Future Continent-to-Continent Cooperation

The African Peace Fund has three components: peace support operations, institutional capacity, and mediation and preventive diplomacy. There needs to be more strategic engagement with the EU to support ongoing fundraising efforts and discussions with the UN's Security Council regarding the AU benefiting from UN contributions to Security Council-sanctioned but AU-led operations.

While the EU and the AU have enjoyed a relatively successful partnership in the area of peace and security, it will need to be adapted. A new

[9] European Commission, no date.

agreement should reflect recent developments, such as the launch of the African Peace Fund in late 2018 and provide greater political support to AU initiatives. Existing approaches must be complemented with a stronger focus on preventing conflict and building peace, as well as assessing the extent to which interventions are sufficiently sensitive to the context of the conflict. A future agreement must provide strategic guidance and support to confront the unpredictable nature of threats, criminality and conflict. This requires administrative, procurement and funding systems to be able to respond quickly and at an adequate scale.

Negotiation Parameters for Peace and Security

- **Reaffirm the APSA as the primary mechanism for peace and security support.** The continent-to-continent agreement should reaffirm that engagement in Africa should primarily be conducted through the APSA framework while respecting the EU's prerogative to structure its funding mechanism as it sees fit.
- **Ensure that international partners assume co-responsibility for global peace.** Security is a global good, and the AU should not be entirely responsible for financing support for African peace and security operations. It is important to safeguard the necessary resources through an agreement that secures the commitment of international partners.
- **Increasingly direct funding through the African Peace Fund.** The fund will be a central financial mechanism to ensure funding for the APSA's focus areas. With the EU and the UN as key board members and an accountability mechanism in place, it will be important to channel international partner contributions through the fund.

Migration and Mobility

Background

Discussions focused on migration issues started in earnest in 2006. The 2006 Joint Africa-EU Declaration on Migration and Development (the Rabat Process) set the goal of developing a comprehensive cooperation framework focused on migration between Africa and Europe. The Joint EU-Africa Strategy provided the opportunity to embed this ambition into a cooperation framework by outlining the intention to shift the donor-recipient relationship to one that was based on jointly identified, mutual and complementary interests. At this time, the dialogue was based on the fact that one-quarter of migrants to Europe were from Africa and 94 per cent of them were legal residents.[10] This has a significant development impact on Africa as it loses human capital and gains remittances. African migrants contribute significantly to African economies, particularly those in Europe and North America. The World Bank estimates that remittances are expected to reach $41 billion in 2019.[11]

However, the debate on legal pathways to migration has stalled since 2010, with ongoing dialogues mainly focused on irregular migration. The EU became increasingly reluctant to focus on issues of common concern. Africa and the EU agreed on a Migration, Mobility and Employment Partnership and an Africa-EU Migration Action Plan (2008–2010). This was soon discarded in favour of a Migration and Mobility Dialogue (2014), which also fell away. The EU has become disinterested in discussing mobility and, in 2014, adopted a regional approach through the EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative (the Khartoum Process). This initiative focused on human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants from the Horn of Africa into Europe. Only ten African states are involved in this initiative: Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Somalia, South Sudan, Tunisia, and Uganda.

In 2015, the Valletta Process sought to refocus the discussion on matters of common interest. In practice, however, both focus and funding have increasingly been diverted to halting the flow of migrants from Africa into Europe. These migrants were, in fact, mostly refugees fleeing Syria. A key delivery instrument for the Khartoum Process was the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, which diverted funds from the European Development Fund's national and regional programmes, the European Neighbourhood Instrument, and the Pan-African Program.[12] About €3.5 billion of the pledged €3.9 billion was reallocated for this purpose. The fund implemented activities aligned with the EU's unilateral Partnership Migration Framework (2016) through migration compacts with Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal. Resources were thus diverted to support the EU's pre-existing instruments on migration, which represent an envelope of €13 billion[13] and aim to support the EU's border and

[10] UN DESA Migration Stock Data, 2015.
[11] World Bank.
[12] European Commission, 2018.
[13] Ibid.

migration management. Resources from the Trust Fund were also used to finance AU-EU-UN Tripartite Task Force (2017) activities. In its proposal to its member states on the future financial instruments of the EU, the European Commission proposes to increase EU funding for borders and migration in the EU from the current €13 billion to €34.9 billion, far above the €400 million for Africa.[14]

Africa acknowledges the importance of continuing efforts to work with the EU to tackle the negative impact of irregular migration, particularly human trafficking and smuggling. But it is critical that dialogue on this matter is reframed to acknowledge the realities of migration patterns. Europe's tendency to focus on illegal migration and the repatriation of failed asylum applicants blurs the nature of migration from Africa to Europe.

Current Context

Only a quarter of African migrants are in Europe; half are in other African countries, and the balance is found mainly in North America and Asia.[15] Of those in Europe, only 6 per cent are unprocessed asylum seekers, with the vast majority having gained legal residency. There has been an increase in the number of asylum requests from African nationals arriving on the northern Mediterranean shores.[16] However, this is because asylum is requested as the first step of entering the EU. Africans are not the primary source of asylum applications. In 2017, the top three nationalities were Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. African nationals—from Nigeria, Eritrea, and Guinea—represented 29 per cent of applicants from the top 10 nationalities of origin of asylum seekers (Fig. A4).[17]

Furthermore, there has been a dramatic decrease in migration, particularly irregular migration, between Africa and the EU in recent years (see Fig. A5). The number of African nationals intercepted by Frontex, the EU border agency, decreased by 69 per cent between 2016 (183 458 people) and 2018 (56 980 people). The current level of interceptions is at a five-year low. Migration from the EU to Africa, however, grew by 19 per cent between 2010 and 2015.[18]

[14] Ibid.
[15] UN DESA Migration Stock Data, 2015.
[16] UNHCR situation monitoring data.
[17] EUROSTATS.
[18] UN DESA Migration Stock Datasets, 2010, 2015.

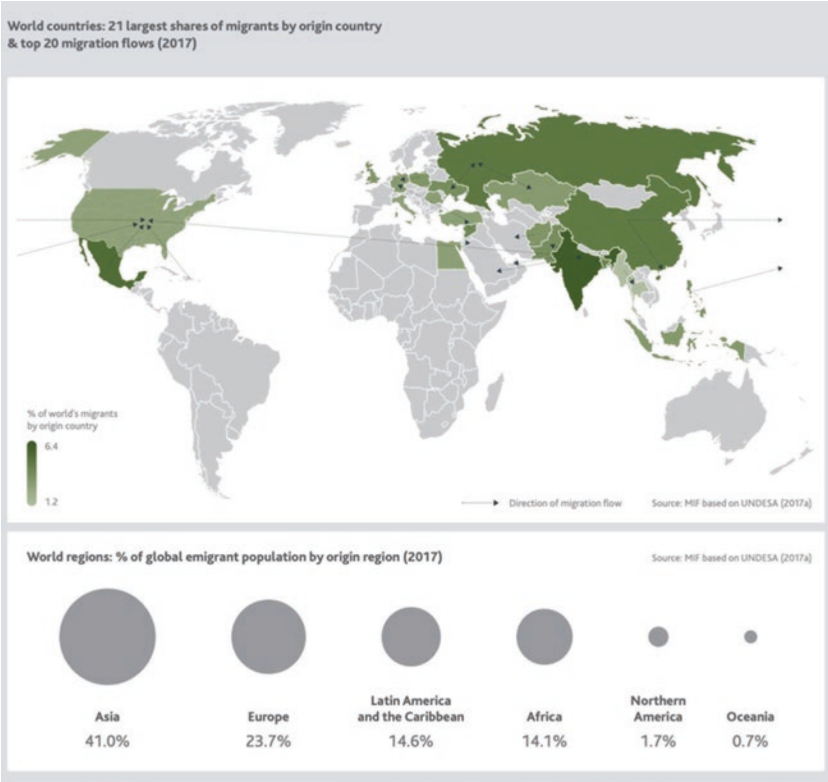

Fig. A4 Migration flows from Africa are not as significant as those from Asia and Europe (Source: Mo Ibrahim Foundation)

Despite this significant improvement in curbing migration, legal migration routes have been further restricted. African countries systematically dominate the list of highest refusal rates for Schengen visa applications (see Fig. A6). The percentage of rejections has grown from 10 per cent in 2015 to 23 per cent in 2017. In 2017, eight of the top 10 countries with the highest refusal rates were African,[19] with an average refusal rate of 37 per cent compared to 0.8 per cent for Russia and 0.3 per cent for China (see Fig. A7).

[19] In order: Nigeria, Eritrea, Guinea, Central African Republic, Senegal, Comoros, Ghana, Algeria.

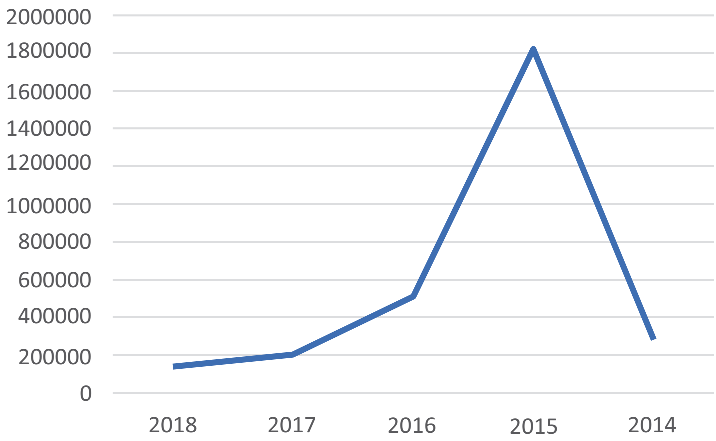

Fig. A5 Detected illegal crossing originating from Africa (Source: FRONTEX)

In addition, the EU has doubled its efforts to conclude readmission agreements with African countries. Yet, there are already some guarantees in existing agreements. Article 13 of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement provides the legal basis for the readmission of own nationals. There are also clauses in the association agreements with North Africa to that effect. However, readmission agreements currently sought by the EU aim to go further by incorporating the legal obligation of countries to accept third-country nationals, which the EU deems necessary, particularly with transit countries.

As of January 2019, the EU had only one such agreement with an African country (Cape Verde), which was signed in October 2013. A visa facilitation agreement was also concluded in 2012. With Tunisia and Morocco, the EU launched negotiations to conclude such legally binding agreements, while non-binding agreements have been reached with other African countries. It is worth noting that the agreement conferred legal obligations to Cape Verde but did not lead to increased mobility. Mobility for Cape Verde nationals has been restricted rather than liberalised, with refusal rates sharply increasing from 22.4 per cent in 2014, the year the agreements came into force, to 30 per cent in 2017.[20]

[20] EU. Schengen Visa Info. 2019.

Country where consulates are located	Uniform visas applied for	Uniform visas not issued	Not issued rate for uniform visas
NIGERIA	83647	43901	52,48%
ERITREA	2331	1114	47,79%
GUINEA	13432	5837	43,46%
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC	4295	1848	43,03%
IRAQ	60537	25160	41,56%
SENEGAL	69250	26225	37,87%
COMOROS	4292	1559	36,32%
GHANA	31806	11505	36,17%
ALGERIA	779152	279740	35,90%
AFGHANISTAN	3256	1163	35,72%
SYRIA	389	138	35,48%
CONGO (DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC)	31117	10843	34,85%
PAKISTAN	80807	27909	34,54%
HAITI	8032	2689	33,48%
BHUTAN	3	1	33,33%
LIBYA	9846	3276	33,27%
DJIBOUTI	3477	1128	32,44%
BANGLADESH	28849	8858	30,70%
PANAMA	5385	1653	30,70%
CAPE VERDE	18334	5623	30,67%

Fig. A6 Top 20 countries in terms of highest refusal rate (2017)

In June 2018, the EU Council called for the launch of negotiations with African countries to establish so-called disembarkation platforms. Such agreements would be modelled on the agreement concluded between the EU and Turkey in 2016. The deal, which would see Turkey readmitting third-country nationals who have crossed its borders to reach the EU, was backed by a financial envelope of €6 billion—almost double of what African countries were promised. Beyond the financial incentive, the Turkey deal committed the EU to "support[ing] existing Member State and EU resettlement schemes and programmes". By December 2018, the EU had only resettled 18,094 of the 3.6 million Syrian refugees in Turkey. This experience illustrates the difficulty of securing compliance for EU resettlement because of structural weaknesses within the EU asylum system.

Country where consulates are located	Uniform visas applied for	Total uniform visas issued	Uniform visas not issued	Not issued rate for uniform visas
RUSSIAN FEDERATION	3885899	3826151	52770	0,0136
CHINA	2533905	2447041	83635	0,033
TURKEY	971710	903644	63122	0,065
INDIA	920699	837109	78681	0,0855

Fig. A7 Sample of countries with a low refusal rate

Future Continent-to-Continent Cooperation

Migration remains a contested issue between the EU and Africa. The negotiations must provide the opportunity to engage in holistic dialogue focused on both irregular and regular migrations. The principles outlined below would provide an appropriate framework:

- Commitments on migration should align with Agenda 2063's ambition to promote the free movement of Africans within the continent.
- Africa must advocate with strategic partners to open more regular channels of mobility and foster international cooperation and governance of migration.
- Any agreement on migration should incorporate the developmental dimension, including migration as a source of development finance for Africa.

Remittance inflows into Africa amounted to $264.5 billion between 2014 and 2017. If the inflows between 2018 and 2020 are excluded, this figure is ten times higher than the funding from the European Development Fund for the period 2014 to 2020 and is comparable to remittance inflows within the EU itself. Africa must find a way to optimise the contributions made by migrants and the diaspora to the sending, hosting, and receiving countries. These contributions include remittances to Africa and the diversification of skills and culture to recipient countries.

Negotiation Parameters on Migration and Mobility

- **Embark on a comprehensive dialogue on migration and mobility.** This dialogue should set the standards and principles for managing all aspects of migration. Those standards should comply with the African Common Position on Migration and Development and the UN's Global Compact for Migration.
- **Establish joint mechanisms to track migration and other relevant data.** This is essential for policymaking for Africa and the EU. The AU-EU partnership would govern these mechanisms but would build on existing Khartoum and Rabat processes. Where possible, they should engage with mechanisms established under strategic partnerships, such as the Africa-Arab partnership.
- **Ensure co-managed and dedicated funding.** This should be used to fund capacity building and reintegration programmes, among others.

Way Forward

Africa must take the opportunity provided by the negotiations for a post-2020 agreement to ensure that it creates an enabling environment to realise its vision of integration. This involved ensuring that the continent retains its right to determine actions to realise peace and security on the continent to secure the mobility of African citizens, particularly given their significant contribution through remittances, and to assert its right to set the agenda for trade in the framework of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Achieving such an objective requires concerted efforts and coordination. The calendar of the negotiations provides the opportunity to ensure synergy between the different processes. In this respect, a number of measures have been taken to ensure that the outcome takes into account the ambitions set above:

- Launch of the AU-EU negotiations following the decision of the AU Summit and the joint AU-EU Ministerial Meeting simultaneously with the negotiations on the Africa Pillar of the Post-Cotonou Agreement.
- Coordinate the negotiations through the provision of an AU team of experts with the mandate of providing technical support, ensuring

coherence between the framework and respect for AU regional instruments.
- Engage member states in the AU-EU negotiations through their national experts to develop and finetune the continent-to-continent agreement.
- Engage the AU decision-making structures, notably the PRC, to conclude a draft agreement to be submitted to the AU-EU Joint Ministerial meeting in the fall of 2019.
- Launch the new framework during the AU-EU Summit in 2020.

The calendar is ambitious but feasible. As to the opportunity to reshape the partnership, it is now more significant than it has been in the last 30 years. It should not be missed.

Annex B: List of European Initiatives towards Africa 1972–2022

C. Lopes, *The Self-Deception Trap*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-57591-4

EU-Africa initiatives	Year	framework Trade agreement	Joint initiative with Africa	Multi-annual Cooperation framework under the EU Budget	EU member state policy	EU/European G7/G20 Presidency	EU/EC-level initiative or policy
European Political Cooperation (EPC)	1972			x			x
Cotonou Agreement	2000	x	x				
Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) launch	2002	x					x
African Peace Facility (APF)	2004			x			x
European Neighbourhood Policy	2005						x
Union for the Mediterranean	2005		x				x
Europe-Africa Dialogue on Migration and Development (Rabat Process)	2006		x				
First African Plan (Spanish)	2006				x		
EU-South Africa Joint Partnership	2007	x	x				
Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES)	2007		x				
EU-Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund (EU-AITF)	2007			x			x
Africa-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP)	2007		x				
Africa-EU Infrastructure Partnership	2007		x				
Second African Plan (Spanish)	2009				x		
AU-EU High Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) on Science, Technology and Innovation	2010		x	x			
EC Communication on the Joint EU-Africa Strategy	2010						x
EU Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa	2011			x			x
European Union Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel region	2011			x			x
EU-Africa Action Plan on Human Trafficking	2011		x				
EU Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa	2011						x
Khartoum Process (EU-Horn Migration Route Initiative)	2014		x				
EU Dev Pan-African programme	2014			x			x
Africa Investment Platform (AIP)	2015						
Valetta Action Plan	2015						x
European Union Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF)	2015			x			x
Germany Marshall Plan with Africa	2017				x		
Joint AU-EU-UN Task Force on migrants in Libya	2017		x				
Skills Initiative for Africa	2017						x
EU External Investment Plan (the Juncker Plan)	2017						x
AU-EU Digital Economy Task Force (AU-EUDETF).	2017		x				
Africa–Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs	2018						x
MoU between AU and EU on Peace, Security and Governance	2018		x				
Global Ireland: Ireland's Strategy for Africa to 2025	2018				x		
Biarritz Declaration for a G7 and Africa Partnership	2019					x	
Hungary's first strategy for Africa	2019				x		
Long-Term Partnership on Renewable Energy (LEAP-RE)	2020						x
Malta's first strategy for growth and partnership with Africa	2020				x		
EU Proposal for a new strategy with Africa	2020						x
Estonia's first strategy for Africa	2020				x		
Finland's Africa strategy – Towards stronger political and economic partnership	2020				x		
Italy and Africa: "Value Oriented Diplomacy" in Action (strategy)	2020				x		
EU-Global Gateway's Infrastructure Plan for Africa	2020			x			x
Creation of Africa-Europe Foundation	2020						x
Build Back Better World (B3W) Partnership	2021						x
Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation instrument	2021				x		x
New Europe-ACP Agreement	2021		x				
NaturAfrica	2021						x
EU-Africa food crisis	2022						x
Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development	2010-2015						x
Third Plan Africa-Focus Africa 2023;(Spanish Foreign Policy III for Africa)	2018-2025				x		
European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP)	Launched in 2003, renewed in 2014						x

■ Joint initiative with Africa
▨ Multi-annual Cooperation framework under the EU Budget
□ EU member state policy
▤ EU/European G7/G20 Presidency
■ EU/EC-level initiative or policy
□ framework Trade agreement

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[1] Note: Page numbers followed by 'n' refer to notes.

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