

development remains an industry whose power base remains in the global north, efforts to decolonize development will fail to restructure the development episteme.

### Further Reading

On the civilizing mission and colonial policies, see Alice Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895–1930* (Stanford University Press, 1997); Martin Chanock, *Law, Custom, and Social Order: The Colonial Experience in Malawi and Zambia* (Heinemann, 1998); Benjamin N. Lawrance, Emily Lynn Osborn, and Richard L. Roberts, eds., *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks: African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2006); and Lynn Thomas, *Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction, and the State in Kenya* (University of California Press, 2003).

On the creation of “tribes” in the context of imperialism and colonialism, see Mary French-Sheldon, *Sultan to Sultan: Adventures among the Masai and Other Tribes of East Africa* (Arena Publishing Company, 1892); Nathaniel Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa, Descriptive of the Zoolus, Their Manners, Customs, Etc., Etc., with a Sketch of Natal* (Edward Churton, 1836); Frederick D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (Frank Cass, 1922); Leroy Vail, ed., *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (James Currey, 1989).

On the psychology of colonialism and decolonizing the mind, see Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (Grove Press, 1967); Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014 [1970]); Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (Orion Press, 1965); Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (Oxford University Press, 1983); and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (East African Educational Publishers, 1981).

## Part II

### Implementation of the Development Episteme

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## CHAPTER 5

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### The Salvation of Science

On December 9, 1920, British explorer and botanist Sir Harry Johnston promoted the work of the Royal African Society (RAS) in his address as president of the organization. The RAS was a nonprofit organization dedicated to scientific exploration and study in Africa. It mobilized a new cadre of scientific specialists. Johnston bemoaned the lack of financial support for the RAS.

During the past eighteen years I have lectured and privately pleaded . . . on the need for a Society like ours, which undertakes the scientific study of Africa. I have pointed out that to maintain successfully and permanently our enormous commerce with Africa and our rule over such a large proportion of that continent, we must come to understand Africa, and to understand, not only British Africa, but also self-governed South Africa, French Africa, Italian, Spanish, Belgian, and Portuguese Africa, and the native states that are either independent or at any rate self-governing. But I have preached to deaf ears. Individual men and commercial associations that are making thousands a year – a million a year, maybe – out of Africa will not contribute even a guinea a year to our maintenance, though if they read our Journal diligently they might light upon many a notion for making Africa an even better paying proposition than it already is.<sup>1</sup>

The cost of research, Johnston explained, fell on the shoulders of “poorly paid workers in Africa itself, who are building up the vast wealth of our African commerce.” Though he was referring to European researchers and colonial officials like himself, it is difficult not to think of the many thousands of Africans whose labor directly

<sup>1</sup> Harry H. Johnston, “Sir Harry Johnston’s Address on Retirement from the Presidency,” *Journal of the Royal African Society* 20:78 (1921) 83–88 at 86.

fueled colonial industries. Johnston's call to businessmen spoke to the prevailing idea then and now that significant and lasting economic development was only possible with ongoing investment in scientific research. This was especially important for those interested in "unfamiliar" regions of Africa.

Understanding the continent's environments and societies was crucial to colonial development, but colonial scientists were not the first or only people to record information about African societies. For centuries before European conquest Africans in the kingdoms of Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, the Swahili Coast, and many other places wrote about their own histories and cultures and those of their neighbors. Foreign travelers, explorers, merchants, missionaries, and early colonizers had been cataloguing their journeys to Africa for centuries as well. Early European representations of Africans, such as seventeenth-century drawings of Khoikhoi people in southern Africa, vacillated between depicting them as "grotesque" and "noble" and became emblematic of ideas about the "savage" in Africa.<sup>2</sup> Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt in 1798 emphasized scientific study as a vital component of European conquest. He employed dozens of researchers to study linguistics, geography, biology, medicine, and poetry. By 1829 the project included more than 150 scholars contributing to twenty-three volumes of material discussing Egyptian culture and history. Napoleon's military and scholarly invasion of Egypt initiated the academic field of Egyptology and was, as Edward Said described it, "the very model of a truly scientific appropriation of one culture by another."<sup>3</sup> The desire for knowledge was instrumental to the business of imperialism.

As Europeans consolidated colonial control in Africa, scientists from across the disciplines found a whole new world to explore and experiment, new terrain on which to test out old theories, and further scientific knowledge about the natural and social world. The pseudosciences of race that emerged during the late nineteenth century (discussed in Chapter 3), along with the capitalist demands on research and technology, set the course for foregrounding scientific study in the development projects of the twentieth century. As social Darwinism and eugenics gave way to sociology and (ethno)psychology, and physical anthropology expanded to include social and cultural

<sup>2</sup> George Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa* (University of Chicago Press, 2007), 75–134.

<sup>3</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Pantheon Books, 1978), 42.

anthropology, development discourses on race morphed into those about culture. Economics, agriculture, veterinary sciences, environmental studies, and industrial technologies informed colonial government and private investment in monocrop production, dairy farms, mining ventures, and public works projects. Geographers, naturalists, biologists, medical doctors, nutritionists, sociologists, economists, and anthropologists employed scientific methods to exploit African resources and to modernize African societies. Collectively, these sciences produced their own genre of knowledge, which formed the foundation of the development episteme.

Furnished with their own mission to modernize, the scientific development experts of the twentieth century supplanted the Christian missionaries as the moral and intellectual authorities on progress for Africa. Despite its humanitarian origins, the majority of development funding during the early colonial era was designed to jump-start the decimated economies of post-World War I Europe—not Africa, especially during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Development policies of the interwar period focused on large-scale infrastructure, industrialization, and agricultural projects that would generate sizeable returns for the metropolises and employment opportunities for Europeans. Colonial development funding bolstered the budgets of colonial departments of public health, agriculture, forestry, mining, commerce, and education. Tasked with facilitating the exploitation of African resources and labor, colonial technologies offered scientific salvation for Africa.

These scientific studies were not merely imposed on Africa and Africans but were often the product of western engagement with African systems of knowledge. As historian Helen Tilley explains,

[S]cientific research began to decolonize Africa by challenging stereotypes, destabilizing Eurocentric perspectives, and considering African topics on their own terms. . . . By misapprehending, mislabeling, and facilitating new forms of control, emerging sciences had the potential to coerce. Yet, by introducing new concepts, new ways of knowing, and new methods for understanding, these disciplines had the potential to liberate. In the end, they did both.<sup>4</sup>

The scientific work of the development episteme was sometimes subversive, even anticolonial, but it always reinforced development as the organizing principle of the colonial project.

<sup>4</sup> Helen Tilley, *Africa As a Living Laboratory: Empire, Development, and the Problem of Scientific Knowledge, 1870–1950* (University of Chicago Press, 2011), 24–25.

Africa served as a vast and diverse laboratory for research and experimentation. For scholars and officials like Harry Johnston, the quest for knowledge drove scientific projects as much as the promise of profitable results, but financial support would only come where the potential for profit existed. To be sure, some businesses saw large returns, though many endeavors were unsuccessful and companies went bankrupt. Researchers and officials regularly misunderstood African environments and European scientific knowledge often failed to secure its desired outcomes; yet faith in the salvation of the development episteme endured.

### THE RISE OF THE DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST

As European colonialism took hold across the continent of Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the prevailing idea of progress shifted from one rooted in the civilizing mission to one dependent on scientific research. This ideological shift brought about a change in the focus on intervention, from the building of churches, schools, and hospitals by private organizations or religious groups to the building up of colonial infrastructure, the extraction of resources, the recruitment of labor, and the modernization of African subjects. European Christian missionaries and explorers who came to Africa during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries defined progress in terms of the abolition of slavery, the spread of literacy, improved health, and Africans' adoption of western norms. Some like Mungo Park, Paul Du Chiallu, David Livingstone, and Johannes Ludwig Krapf fancied themselves botanists, geographers, zoologists, ethnographers, and biologists. They recorded volumes of information about newly "discovered" people, places, plants, and animals. By the late 1880s a cohort of specialists trained in Europe derided the amateurism of these earlier generations of travelers and missionaries. Scientific curiosity had been integral to European engagement with Africa for centuries, but it did not become the primary tool for engineering the continent's progress until the colonial era solidified the scientific approach to the development episteme.

Much of the early twentieth-century scientific research in Africa was geared toward identifying potential sources of profit. The French term for development in the colonies, *mise en valeur*, or "making value" out of the colonies, captured the capitalist ethos of European colonial states. Before

the Second World War colonial development meant the expansion of infrastructure for economic and political functions and, more importantly, revenue from the production, harvesting, and export of cash crops and raw materials. A capitalist approach prevailed in South Africa, which was in the process of transforming from a British colony into a nascent nation-state under the terms of the 1910 Union of South Africa. There the white minority government shared with colonial officials elsewhere on the continent certain administrative goals: consolidation of territory and the segregation and control of migrant labor for the lucrative industries of mining, agriculture, and other extractive schemes. From studies calculating the precise motions of workers in factories and mines to those determining the best extraction and cultivation methods, scientists were at the forefront of capitalist endeavors across the continent in the early twentieth century.<sup>5</sup>

Large-scale development initiatives had been a central feature of European colonialism since at least the time of the Scramble for Africa in the 1880s. King Leopold II of Belgium planned to build research stations across Africa in order to exploit the natural resources of the continent. He failed to implement this vision because he could not convince rival European states to cooperate in the project. To this end individual European colonizers constructed their own research stations. The English opened a botanical station in Lagos, Nigeria in 1887.<sup>6</sup> A year later the Royal Niger Company began an experimental plantation at Asaba, which reverted to the colonial government in 1901. Germany created one of the best-funded research stations on the continent when it opened the Kwai Farm in the Usambara region of German East Africa (present-day Tanzania) in 1896. The success of this experiment inspired them to establish the Amani Research Institute in 1902.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Brett M. Bennett and Joseph M. Hodge, eds., *Science and Empire: Knowledge and Networks of Science across the British Empire, 1800–1970* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Joseph Morgan Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert: Agrarian Doctrines of Development and the Legacies of British Colonialism* (Ohio University Press, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> Europeans developed botanical gardens across their colonies in Asia and Australia in the earlier part of the century. By the 1860s the Cape colony in South Africa had several botanical societies, but none of these were fully experimental stations as founded in Nigeria. See Kate B. Showers, "Prehistory of Southern African Forestry: From Vegetable Garden to Tree Plantation," *Environment and History* 16:3 (2010) 295–322.

<sup>7</sup> Christopher A. Conte, *Highland Sanctuary: Environmental History in Tanzania's Usambara Mountains* (Ohio University Press, 2004), 41–67. During the German period, the Amani Research Institute was known as the Biologisch-Landwirtschaftliche Institut.

### 5.1 The Amani Research Institute

The Amani Research Institute (see Figure 5.1) held a unique place in colonial development in Africa. The scientific goals of the Institute were both theoretical and practical. German scientists experimented with varieties of coffee, sisal, rubber, and cucumbers in search of economic gains in German East Africa. They studied plant pathology and the chemistry of soils in the tropical environment. As Andrew Zimmerman explains, the scientists also examined labor issues by testing "the speed at which these workers could perform various tasks, such as clearing land or planting seeds, and determined the cost in wages per hectare."<sup>1</sup>



**FIGURE 5.1** The Agricultural College, Amani Institute, German East Africa, ~1910s. Source: Haeckel collection/ullstein bild via Getty Images

At the end of the First World War Britain took over the Amani Institute when it took control of German East Africa, which then became the League of Nations Mandated Territory called Tanganyika. Alex Holm, the director of agriculture in Kenya, believed the Institute should be used primarily for technical support of colonial industries while Dr. David Prain, the director

of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in London, emphasized its value as a center for scientific research. Tensions between agricultural officials and researchers continued. Alleyne Leechman, who became the director of the Amani Institute in 1920, brought in employees from the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew and the University of London's Royal School of Science in order to bolster the Institute's scientific reputation. After a few years of uncertainty Amani was rebranded as the premier center for agricultural research in East Africa, though its long-term funding remained in jeopardy.<sup>2</sup>

Under both German and British administrations Amani was one of the few independent, government-sponsored research institutions on the continent. The Amani Institute represented a new model in which specialists collaborated on issues common across a broad region including multiple colonial territories. Directly funded by metropolitan grants and the Empire Marketing Board instead of individual colonies' budgets, Amani was free to take on scientific studies that might otherwise have been dismissed as frivolous spending by local administrations. The Institute's academic associates stressed the applicability of scientific research to the day-to-day work of the departments of agriculture in the territories of Tanganyika, Kenya, Uganda, Zanzibar, and Nyasaland (Malawi). Amani scientists advised the local European settler communities, the colonial technical departments, and other researchers investigating continent-wide development problems. As a scientific body exempt from the constraints of specific colonies' needs, the Amani Institute could invest in building abstract knowledge for improving commodity production. It was a manifestation of nineteenth-century European scientific ideals realized with twentieth-century colonial development funding.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Zimmerman, "What Do You Really Want in German East Africa, Herr Professor?" *Counterinsurgency and the Science Effect in Colonial Tanzania*, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 48:2 (2006) 419–461 at 436.

<sup>2</sup> UKNA CO 533/601, East Africa, Reestablishment of the Amani Institute, May 1926.

<sup>3</sup> Conte, *Highland Sanctuary*, 55–67.

Early twentieth-century colonial economic initiatives had mixed results. Colonial officials had to be experts in multiple fields. Europeans' unfamiliarity with African environments, farming practices, and cultures of labor checked their successes. The rudimentary colonial surveys of the early twentieth century necessarily ballooned into all-out scientific investigations by the interwar period in order to better inform officials and scientists. Increasingly after the First World War colonies established government departments for agriculture, forestry, public health, medicine, and education with highly technical and specialized staff.

The interwar period was the age of expansion for scientific research in Africa. In British territories the number of technical officers rose from around 600 in 1919 to nearly 2,000 in 1931. The colonial administration's interests in science culminated into the African Survey under the directorship of Lord Hailey, the results of which were published in 1938. Bucking the trend among colonial officials who regarded the work of academics with suspicion, Lord Hailey consulted with social scientists like Audrey Richards for the project.<sup>8</sup>

Likewise, French colonial officials took more interest in academic and scientific research. The French government brought the Academy of Colonial Sciences under the purview of the Ministry of Colonies in the mid-1920s. In 1931 a colonial exhibition in Paris became the premier venue for parading the scientific discoveries of the French Empire. Louis Hubert Lyautey, the son of an engineer who helped Joseph Gallieni secure French rule in Madagascar at the turn of the twentieth century, oversaw the exhibition. His work in Madagascar planting rice, cotton, coffee, and tobacco and building western schools convinced him that science was crucial to empire.<sup>9</sup>

By the end of the interwar period faith in science had come to replace faith in religion as the means to "convert" and "civilize" Africans. When it came to development planning, western scientific discourses often delegitimated African knowledge even as they relied on African "informants." Many European specialists based their assessment of African conditions on mere days or

weeks of research in the field, and sometimes they relied on only secondhand information provided by people with limited experience of their own. In the absence of deeper understandings of African economic ideologies, decision-making practices, and knowledge of their own environments many Europeans relied on preconceived notions of Africa and Africans based in nineteenth-century social Darwinism. They formulated complex, long-term, and transformative schemes out of snapshots of the people and places. As we elaborate further in Part III of this book, European scientists and officials brought to Africa their own assumptions and visions for the construction of domesticity, the rearing and socialization of children, health and healing, and productive use of the environment, which were the essential components of the development episteme. At the same time, African responses to these interventions and their own development initiatives often forced European scientists to rethink their approaches.

The scientific turn in colonial Africa produced a cadre of technical experts who genuinely believed in the power of science to improve the lives of Africans. The rise of the scientific expert in African development helped to shift colonial attention toward the welfare of Africans during the interwar period. In particular, development schemes singled out women, children, and others considered vulnerable to poverty, disease, or abuse. The cry of development specialists in 1930s Africa was for "social welfare," the "welfare of women and girls," and "infant and child welfare," themes that coincided with the global response to the Great Depression and grabbed the attention of western feminists. Many European and American women came to Africa in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s to work in anthropology, nutrition, hygiene, child and maternal health, and education. In the Belgian Congo, for example, this work began when the Ligue pour la Protection de l'Enfance Noire (The League for the Protection of Black Children) took up the issues of breastfeeding and birth spacing.<sup>10</sup> However, metropolitan development funding was only available for such endeavors when direct economic

<sup>8</sup> Tilley, *Living Laboratory*.

<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth Ezra, *The Colonial Unconscious: Race and Culture in Interwar France* (Cornell University Press, 2000), 13–16.

<sup>10</sup> Nancy Rose Hunt, "'Le Bebe en Brousse': European Women, African Birth Spacing and Colonial Intervention in Breast Feeding in the Belgian Congo," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 21:3 (1988) 401–432.

benefits were evident. Investment in the health of wives and mothers, for instance, flowed only after officials recognized that this would increase the productivity of laborers, generate wealth for colonial industries, and reinforce the racialized colonial economy. In one way or another, the science of development always served interests in profit.

## COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Scientific development in colonial Africa emerged simultaneously with the specialization of the modern social sciences of anthropology, sociology, psychology, economics, and political science. Ethnography (the study of people and cultures) in particular permeated colonial development research. Evolutionary anthropology, which dominated European discourses on African culture until the interwar period, echoed the biological racist arguments of nineteenth-century physical anthropologists discussed in Chapter 1. The new branch of social anthropology that emerged in the 1920s challenged these theories of race, evolution, and social hierarchy, yet cultural racism – that is, the assumption that white societies are more “civilized” than so-called primitive, nonwhite societies – endured in anthropology until at least the 1960s. This theme of backwardness gave shape to the idea of development. The western superiority perpetuated by the development episteme still haunts the contemporary development discourse when organizations report that economies are “stunted” or “stagnant” or that certain African “tribes” reject “modernization” for cultural reasons.

Ethnography was essential to colonial development projects. During the twentieth century it was commonplace for European colonial officials to study the languages and cultures relevant to their posts. French officials such as Maurice Delafosse, based in French West Africa, integrated ethnographic and linguistic fieldwork into their administrative work and helped to found L'Institut ethnographique international de Paris (The International Ethnographic Institute of Paris) in 1910.<sup>11</sup> As early as 1908, Harry Johnston, the colonial official

<sup>11</sup> Emmanuelle Sibeud, “The Elusive Bureau of Colonial Ethnography in France, 1907–1925,” in Helen Tilley, ed., with Robert J. Gordon, *Ordering Africa:*

and anthropologist quoted at the beginning of this chapter, urged the British government to provide a grant for ethnographic research as part of its administration in Africa. The grant request was denied, but such interventions positioned the science of anthropology as part of the practical work of development. Similar to the French, the British government established the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures in 1926 to facilitate the fieldwork of colonial officials. The Paris and London institutions managed their own journals, *Revue d'ethnographie et de sociologie* and *Africa: Journal of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures*, respectively. In the inaugural issue of *Africa*, British colonial official Sir Frederick Lugard outlined its agenda. The “distinctive characteristic of the Institute,” Lugard explained, was to bring about

a closer association of scientific knowledge and research with practical affairs. All of the work of the Institute will be based on strictly scientific principles and carried out by scientific methods. It will undertake and assist in anthropological and linguistic investigations. But it will at the same time attempt to relate the results of research to the actual life of the African peoples, and to discover how the investigations undertaken by scientific workers may be made available for the solution of pressing questions that are the concerns of all those who, as administrators, educators, health and welfare workers, or traders, are working for the good of Africa.<sup>12</sup>

Colonial officials' research at times rivaled that of professional anthropologists and sociologists, though they struggled to gain scholarly recognition for their work within academic circles.

In reality, most European officials and researchers working for colonial governments in Africa did not stay long enough in one territory to become fluent in local languages or acquire a solid understanding of local customs. The few officials with personal experience or deeper knowledge of African communities acted as cultural liaisons. For example, Louis Descement, the *métis* (mixed-race) secretary to the French governor of Senegal in West Africa, published a Wolof-French dictionary in 1864 in aid of the colonial administration.<sup>13</sup> As Fiona

*Anthropology, European Imperialism, and the Politics of Knowledge* (Manchester University Press, 2007), 49–66.

<sup>12</sup> Frederick D. Lugard, “The International Institute of African Languages and Cultures,” *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 1:1 (1928) 1–12 at 2.

<sup>13</sup> Fiona McLaughlin, “Can a Language Endanger Itself? Reshaping Repertoires in Urban Senegal,” in James Essegbey, Brent Henderson, and Fiona McLaughlin,

McLaughlin points out, Descement promoted a particular elite, urban form of Wolof that included words of French origin. Colonial officials who became more integrated into local cultures prided themselves on their expertise. Charles Dundas, author of *Kilimanjaro and Its Peoples* (1924), was a district official stationed in the Mount Kilimanjaro region of the Tanganyika Territory (Tanzania) then under British rule. Dundas claimed that his knowledge of Chaga customs earned him the honorary title of "elder."<sup>14</sup> Colonial officials and professional anthropologists tended to consult with elder men and chiefs as the premier experts on local cultures. African men in positions of power often reified patriarchal interpretations of tradition as the means to control the behavior of women and young people. Colonial interventions, academic ethnography, and cultural nationalism thus reinforced patriarchal interpretations of custom.

Ethnographic information facilitated the codification of customary law where colonial powers implemented indirect rule, which helped district or provincial officials mediate between local communities and central colonial authorities. Officials and scholars employed social scientific theories and methods in order to generate this knowledge. Often social scientists – anthropologists in particular – saw themselves as defenders of African rights and interests in the face of colonial encroachment and westernization. Africans were not mere objects of study but active participants in this knowledge production. African interlocutors shaped western anthropologists' understanding of their cultures, and African scholars often initiated academic debates about custom.

Ethnographic information about Africans directly informed colonial development policies. In Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, for example, research conducted by Egyptian social scientists helped to formulate the government's economic and social reforms of Sudanese peasant life.<sup>15</sup> The establishment of the Institut français d'Afrique Noire (French Institute of Black Africa) (IFAN) in Senegal with branches across French West Africa in 1936, the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute

eds., *Language Documentation and Endangerment in Africa* (John Benjamins, 2015), 131–152 at 136.

<sup>14</sup> Charles Dundas, *Kilimanjaro and Its People: A History of the Wachagga, Their Laws, Customs and Legends, Together with Some Account of the Highest Mountain in Africa* (H. F. & G. Witherby, 1924).

<sup>15</sup> Omnia El Shakry, *The Great Social Laboratory: Subjects of Knowledge in Colonial and Postcolonial Egypt* (Stanford University Press, 2007).

(RLI) in Northern Rhodesia (today Zambia) in 1937, and the East African Institute of Social Research (EAISR) in Uganda in 1948 enabled collaboration between anthropologists, sociologists, African scholars, indigenous experts on custom, and colonial policy makers. Government officials consulted with researchers at these institutes as they drew up plans for community development programs during the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>16</sup>

As mentioned in Chapter 3 some scholars have argued that anthropology is the "handmaiden" of empire. V. Y. Mudimbe explains, "Only from the eighteenth century on is there, thanks to the Enlightenment, a 'science' of difference: anthropology. It 'invents' an idea of Africa. Colonialism will elaborate upon the idea."<sup>17</sup> James Ferguson has expanded on this point to argue that development is the "evil twin" of anthropology, both being derived from social Darwinist ideologies.<sup>18</sup> The new branch of social anthropology emerging in the 1920s and 1930s sought to distance itself from this legacy. Unlike western imperialists, missionaries, and colonial officials, inter-war social anthropologists did not wholeheartedly embrace the civilizing mission. While they employed the language of the day to describe African cultures as "primitive" and western cultures as "civilized," many rejected the idea that the former needed to transform into the latter. Anthropologists often butted heads with government officials over what they saw as the negative impact of westernization and "modernization" on Africans. For instance, Godfrey Wilson, the first director of the RLI, brought to the attention of colonial officials the fact that migrant labor systems introduced by European companies were destabilizing families and devastating rural communities.<sup>19</sup> These modern colonial development efforts undermined progress in Africa.

The new branch of social anthropology that emerged during the 1920s and 1930s thus complicated the relationship between ethnography, colonialism, and development. Innovative scholars Franz Boas at Columbia University and Bronislaw Malinowski at the London

<sup>16</sup> Today IFAN stands for Institut fondamental d'Afrique noire, the Fundamental Institute of Black Africa.

<sup>17</sup> See also V. Y. Mudimbe, *The Idea of Africa* (Indiana University Press, 1994), 30.

<sup>18</sup> James Ferguson, "Anthropology and Its Evil Twin: 'Development' in the Constitution of a Discipline," in Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard, eds., *International Development and the Social Sciences* (University of California Press, 1997), 150–175.

<sup>19</sup> Godfrey Wilson, *An Essay on the Economics of Detribalization in Northern Rhodesia*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 5–6 (Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, 1941–1942).

School of Economics promoted the theory of cultural relativity, which solidified the shift from race to culture in the science of anthropology. The theory of cultural relativity stated that the only way to understand other cultures is to examine them not in comparison to one's own but from the perspectives of those who live within those cultures. Malinowski introduced a new research method for achieving this level of understanding called "participant observation," which became the backbone of British social anthropology. Participant observation required the researcher to live among his/her research subjects, learn their language, and participate in their normal day-to-day activities, important rituals, and other aspects of work or leisure. At the same time, the researcher had to maintain objectivity through observation in order to interpret the cultural logic of the community and translate it for a general audience. Observation ensured the anthropologist's allegiance to the scientific method while participation allowed for a deeper understanding of the observed cultures. The end result was a new type of ethnography, the systematic study of a people's history, beliefs, and customs. Anthropologists and other Africanists have since challenged some of the assumptions built into participant observation methods, such as the concept that one could or should categorize Africans into distinct cultural units or "tribes," as many scholars have done. While contemporary anthropologists are aware of these biases, the basic principle of cultural relativity and the method of participant observation continue to shape anthropological research today.

Like their British counterparts, leading francophone Africanist scholars of *ethnologie* (ethnology/anthropology), *ethnosociologie* (ethno-sociology), *ethnohistoire* (ethnohistory), *ethnolinguistique* (ethnolinguistics), and *ethnogéographie* (ethnogeography) challenged the racist assumptions of evolutionary anthropologists. Scholars such as Marcel Griaule, who served as the chair of anthropology at the Sorbonne starting in the 1940s, promoted both a cultural relativist approach for understanding African societies and a universal humanism that challenged essentialist arguments about racial difference.<sup>20</sup> After World War II, as British social anthropology became increasingly structural functionalist, francophone anthropologists like Griaule

<sup>20</sup> Pierre Alexandre, "Introduction," in Pierre Alexandre, ed., *French Perspectives in African Studies: A Collection of Translated Essays* (Oxford University Press for the International African Institute, 1973), 1–10.

researched "values, beliefs, and Weltanschauung (world view), rather than kinship systems and political structures."<sup>21</sup>

Many anthropologists believed that, due to their deep knowledge of African cultures, they were better suited than colonial officials to devise long-term policies for Africa's social, economic, and political development. At the same time, colonial and postcolonial state officials contended that anthropologists were more adept at developing abstract theories than concrete plans, even as officials increasingly adopted ethnographic methods (participant observation, study of local languages, and the attempt to understand cultures from their own perspectives). The tensions between anthropologists and colonial administrators increased with the rise of cultural nationalism starting in the 1930s. The popularity of works such as Léopold Senghor's Négritude poetry and Jomo Kenyatta's *Facing Mount Kenya* demonstrated the growing influence of African cultural nationalists in shaping debates about the impact of colonialism on Africa and Africans during the interwar period. It was no coincidence that both Senghor and Kenyatta went on to become the leaders of their newly independent nations in the early 1960s. Across the continent, Africans who became literate in European languages and trained in anthropology, sociology, economics, and other social sciences contributed to – and at times reshaped – anthropological knowledge about Africa and Africans.<sup>22</sup> By the 1950s and 1960s Africans fighting for independence from colonialism employed African authored works about local customs, histories, and beliefs as tools of nationalism. African cultural nationalists sometimes also drew on western scholarly works and amateur anthropological research conducted by colonial officials to assert Afrocentric interpretations of modernity and development. The relationship between anthropology, imperialism, and development was ambiguous and always in flux.

Anthropology was not the only social science to mature alongside colonialism in Africa. The African continent also served as a site for the development of sociology, economics, political science, and psychology. During the early twentieth century the delineations between different social sciences were still somewhat artificial in that anthropologists, sociologists, economists, political scientists, and psychologists working

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>22</sup> Gaurav Desai, *Subject to Colonialism: African Self-Fashioning and the Colonial Library* (Duke University Press, 2001).

in Africa often employed the same methodologies, mainly ethnology, ethnography, and linguistics. Colonial officers, translators, and intermediaries acted as government "sociologists" until the Second World War when academics became more willing to lend their services to colonial administrations. The colonial administration in German South West Africa directly sponsored sociological studies during the time of the Herero genocide (1904–1908) when colonial concentration camps transformed quite literally into laboratories for studies of eugenics, evolution, and racial difference.<sup>23</sup> Starting in the late 1930s colonial government-funded studies of "race relations," ethnopsychology, poverty, and social and economic development contributed to the professionalization and specialization of social scientists.

The social sciences simultaneously fostered colonialism, justified colonial development interventions, and problematized the assumptions behind both. They became a tool for implementing colonial policies of economic exploitation and political oppression, but they also carved a path for scientifically based criticism of development policies.

### 5.2 The Rhodes-Livingstone Institute

The Rhodes-Livingstone Institute opened in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) in 1937 and became the iconic center for social scientific research in British colonial Africa. The first director, Godfrey Wilson, was a social anthropologist who studied at the London School of Economics under the guidance of Bronislaw Malinowski. He and his wife, Monica Wilson – a South African anthropologist, did fieldwork in Tanganyika, Nyasaland, and Northern Rhodesia. They and other academics based at the Institute sought to document the history and customs of African communities as well as the impact of colonialism. The British colonial administrations of central Africa provided the bulk of funding for the RLI, though some researchers came to Africa on individual scholarships or grants. Private companies and individuals with varied interests in the region also contributed financially to the work of the Institute. The RLI expanded

rapidly to include a museum that doubled as a cultural center. The museum displayed art and artifacts collected from fieldwork across the region, including what is today the countries of Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Tanzania, Botswana, and South Africa. The museum featured exhibits, dances, and other performances to celebrate African customs and history. Fieldwork, however, remained the central focus.

Initially the scope of work at the RLI included both social and biological sciences, but the latter pursuits did not pan out and the Institute remained a center for social anthropology and sociology. The Institute published a journal that was read widely among European and American social scientists. The primary issue facing the RLI and Northern Rhodesia more generally, according to Director Wilson, was that 44 percent of the "able-bodied male population ... are always at any one time in European employment," which usually required long stints far from home.<sup>1</sup> Wilson, like other anthropologists of the time, was concerned about the economic, social, and cultural disruptions associated with the colonial migrant labor system. His research ruffled the feathers of colonial development officers and mining company officials, an affront that led to his resignation in the early 1940s.

South African social anthropologist Max Gluckman, who joined the Institute while conducting fieldwork in Zululand (South Africa) during the 1930s, replaced Wilson as director. His influence continued well after he left in the late 1940s to pursue an academic career in Britain. Thereafter, the RLI became a hub for the type of social anthropology that promoted the theory of structural functionalism. First promoted by Gluckman and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, an anthropologist who conducted research in the Upper Nile region of Sudan, structural functionalism was a macro-level study of societies designed to demonstrate how all of a society's components (customs, beliefs, and institutions) coordinate in order to maintain the stability of the whole structure. Scholarly fascination with African social structures shone a light on the economic and social disruptions that colonialism brought to these systems.

Under the directorship of American anthropologist Elizabeth Colson (1947–1951), the RLI continued to foster ethnographic

<sup>23</sup> Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*.

research that illuminated social conflict. Colson's own fieldwork traced the long-term transformations of Tonga families in Zambia and Zimbabwe sparked by displacement from the building of the Kariba Dam. The RLI scholars documented not only the cultural and social logic of African societies but also Africans' impact on, perceptions of, and reactions to the colonial economy. In doing so RLI publications served as an invaluable resource in administrative debates about colonial development policies.

Lyn Schumaker recounts the history of the RLI and, in particular, how the Institute engaged Africans who facilitated and sometimes directed the ethnographic and sociological research. Schumaker argues that Africans who participated in fieldwork, whether as research assistants, interlocutors, or cultural experts, directly shaped the anthropological theories and methods western scholars developed. In doing so they "Africanized" anthropology at the RLI.<sup>2</sup>

Today, the RLI lives on as the Institute of Economic and Social Research at the University of Zambia. After Zambia's independence in 1964 research sponsored by the Institute became more interdisciplinary and academic. However, its tenuous relationship with the government and its ability to directly shape development policies remained.

<sup>1</sup> Godfrey Wilson, "147. Anthropology in Northern Rhodesia," *Man* 38 (1938) 130.

<sup>2</sup> Lyn Schumaker, *Africanizing Anthropology: Fieldwork, Networks, and the Making of Cultural Knowledge in Central Africa* (Duke University Press, 2001).

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By the interwar period the western scientist replaced the Christian missionary as the savior of Africans in development discourses. The colonial drive for profit through "modern" technological advancement sparked this move. At the same time, innovations in social research brought about colonial investments in social welfare. Science was integral to both. Academics, government officials, humanitarians, and private investors argued over whether anthropology should be practical or theoretical, whether subsistence farming or migrant labor was to blame for African poverty, and whether to prioritize technology

and profit or social and political stability. The methods and goals of development were in flux, but reliance on science became a cornerstone of the development episteme in the twentieth century.

The sciences employed in colonial Africa were not necessarily cutting-edge. Governments and researchers had to contend with tiny budgets, and private companies looked for the most immediate return on investment. Yet research hubs like the Amani Research Institute, IFAN, and the RLI offered a broader perspective. They brought academics and government officials together and forced compromises between practical and theoretical pursuits. Harry Johnston recognized these tensions in his 1920 speech referenced at the beginning of this chapter. Though scientific research was intended primarily to secure profit in colonial Africa, ultimately it became an end of its own as the continent became a "laboratory" for researchers. Scientific research sometimes brought economic and political inequalities into sharp focus. As the next chapter details, African frustrations with the colonial economy ultimately led to a wave of protest in the late 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s demanding a shift in colonial development policies. Social scientists took notice of these issues and drew attention to the intersection between colonial labor systems, poverty, disease, and political upheaval. Despite the ambiguous impact of scientific progress in Africa, the emphasis on science as *the* solution to development problems remains unchallenged.

### Further Reading

On the rise of the development specialist and the role of science in colonial and postcolonial Africa, see Saul Dubow, ed., *Science and Society in Southern Africa* (Manchester University Press, 2000); Toyin Falola and Emily Brownell, eds., *Landscape, Environment and Technology in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa* (Routledge, 2012); and Joseph Morgan Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert: Agrarian Doctrines of Development and the Legacies of British Colonialism* (Ohio University Press, 2007).

For a history of social sciences and colonialism in Africa see Lyn Schumaker, *Africanizing Anthropology: Fieldwork, Networks, and the Making of Cultural Knowledge in Central Africa* (Duke University Press, 2001); George Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa* (University of Chicago Press, 2007); and Helen Tilley, ed., with Robert J. Gordon, *Ordering Africa: Anthropology, European Imperialism, and the Politics of Knowledge* (Manchester University Press, 2007).

## CHAPTER 6

### Challenges to Development

The British governor of Nigeria, Bernard Bourdillon, wrote to the secretary of state for the colonies in October 1941 to request colonial development funding free from the stipulation that it should be matched by local revenues. He warned the Colonial Office in London that many military officers returning from visits to Italian-occupied Ethiopia, Vichy French-controlled Senegal, and other colonies of Britain's enemies were "impressed" with the amount of money these European powers spent on African welfare. In contrast to these regions, the poor living conditions of British West Africa, such as the "Lagos slums" of Nigeria, were "absolutely shocking." In the propaganda sphere of the Second World War (1939–1945) European powers demonized their enemies as oppressors and sought to convince Africans that their version of imperialism was benevolent. Bourdillon worried that Britain was losing this battle over the "hearts and minds" of colonial subjects because the Colonial Office had not entirely "overthrown the fetish of the Balanced Budget." Bourdillon argued that Britain might see new labor strikes like those that spread across the Caribbean and Africa during the 1930s if it did not address the situation. Destabilization in the colonies could spread through colonial armies and result in British losses on the actual battlefronts as well.<sup>1</sup>

The passing of the Atlantic Charter in August 1941 put colonialism on the defensive. The Atlantic Charter recognized that all people had a right

<sup>1</sup> UKNA CO 859/81/15, B. H. Bourdillon to Lord Moyne, October 24, 1941, correspondence marked "secret and personal."

to "self-determination." Though the Charter sought to address Germany's aggression against its neighbors, nationalist leaders in Asia and Africa began to adopt the language of self-determination to argue for their independence. The years during and immediately after the Second World War saw the rise of nationalism in French Indochina (Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia), Italy's forced withdrawal from Libya and the Horn of Africa, Indonesia's declaration of independence from the Netherlands, and the ending of nearly ninety years of British colonial rule in India. The threat of nationalism was real and it was spreading. In Africa the threat was also an economic one. Social scientific surveys of the 1920s and 1930s alluded to the economic problems arising from policies of self-sufficiency in Africa, but labor protests that erupted in the late 1930s and 1940s made it impossible to ignore (see Table 6.1). The development episteme had to

Table 6.1 Comparative timeline of events, 1929–1948

Dates	Labor Strikes	Colonial Development Plans	International Political Events
1929		Colonial Development Act (Britain)	Great Depression (to 1933)
1935	Copperbelt Labor Strike		
1936	Dakar Labor Strike		
1938	Caribbean Labor Strike		
1939	Copperbelt Labor Strike; Mombasa General Strike		World War II begins in Europe
1940	Copperbelt Labor Strike ends	Colonial Development and Welfare Act (Britain)	
1941			Atlantic Charter; the United States enters World War II
1943			Widespread famines
1944		World Bank and International Monetary Fund founded	

Table 6.1 (cont.)

Dates	Labor Strikes	Colonial Development Plans	International Political Events
1945			World War II ends
1946	South African Mine Workers Strike	FIDES (France) established	
1947	Gold Coast Port Strike; Mombasa General Strike; beginning of Dakar Railroad Strike		Indian independence
1948	Dakar Railroad Strike		

adjust to the new political reality on the continent, and European colonial powers had to demonstrate a sincere interest in the welfare of their subjects in order to justify their continued rule in Africa.

Great Britain's Colonial Development and Welfare Act (CDWA), passed in 1940 and expanded in 1945, was a start. France followed suit with the establishment Fonds d'investissements pour le développement économique et social (the Investment Fund for Economic and Social Development) (FIDES) in 1946. Unlike pre-World War II colonial development policies that demanded self-sufficiency, these new initiatives provided significant metropolitan funding for economic and social programs in Africa without the stipulation that they result in a direct return on investment. As Chapter 7 explains, the end of World War II was also the moment when international development expanded beyond formal colonialism with the establishment of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. European colonial development in Africa was no longer simply investment in colonial industries; now it claimed to promote the welfare and general well-being of African people. Imperial powers envisioned postwar development as a solution to growing dissent in Africa and budding anticolonial movements across the globe at the end of the war. The new colonial development policies signaled a desperate attempt to keep colonialism alive at a time when it seemed perilously out of date.

## ECONOMIC CRISIS BEFORE AND DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The Second World War was a turning point in the history of development in Africa, but not only because of the emergence of CDWA, FIDES, the IMF, or the World Bank. The war brought to light the severe economic devastation facing African communities, and European powers could no longer deny that colonialism was at least partly to blame. From the time of Europe's conquest of Africa under the guidance of concessionary companies in the late nineteenth century, African territories were expected to be both self-sufficient and profitable. Very often they were neither. The policy of self-sufficiency dictated that African colonial administrations maintain budgets based on the revenues earned from local taxes and profits; however, the reality was more complicated. Colonial expenditures varied, but in many regions payroll for European staff was the most expensive item in the budget. Roughly half of the colonial budgets in West Africa went toward the salaries of European officials.<sup>2</sup> Everywhere the salaries of European employees far exceeded those paid to non-European employees because both positions and salary rates were racially determined. Table 6.2 shows the racial breakdown of wages in British colonial Zanzibar as an example.

Table 6.2 Salaries by ethnicity in the Zanzibar Protectorate, interwar era

Employee	Ethnicity	Salary in Rupees per Year
Public Health Department sweeper; court policeman; Sanitation Department pumper	African	Rs. 19–20
Clerks Grades I–III	Asian	Rs. 200–400
District Officer	European	Rs. 7,980–12,236
British Resident (top official)	European	Rs. 31,920

Source: UKNA CO618/40/2, Pensions and Gratuities of non-Europeans and CO850/16/5, Pensions of Europeans in Zanzibar<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Anthony Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa* (Routledge, 2014), 190.

<sup>3</sup> Calculations are based on the 1930 Zanzibar Annual Report that pegged the rupee at 1 shilling, 6 pence. In that period the pound was the equivalent of 20 shillings, thus 13.3 rupees to 1 pound. British salaries were calculated in pounds but African and Asian salaries were paid in rupees.

Exorbitant European salaries bloated colonial budgets with high overhead that could not be met by revenues from customs duties or taxes imposed on Africans.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, some tax revenue from exports went directly to the metropolises, where the raw materials from Africa were manufactured into consumer products. In reality, "self-sufficiency" meant colonies had to pay for colonial extraction.

During the Second World War declining imports and exports, increasing demands for labor, decreasing or stagnant wages, and redirection of resources toward the "war effort" resulted in widespread poverty and outbreaks of famine across the continent. Decades of redirecting labor efforts away from subsistence farming and toward cash crops resulted in severe malnutrition, famines, and droughts even before the war broke out. Investments in the production of coffee, tea, cotton, sisal, tobacco, and other exports left African territories dependent on food imports. Africans suffered the devastating consequences when these products became scarce during the Second World War. The price of meat, flour, sugar, oil, and other staples shot up. Famines erupted globally, for example in Bengal in 1943 when Winston Churchill redirected rice from Bengal to Europe in order to stockpile food supplies for the military. By the mid-1940s thousands had perished from starvation in Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya, Nigeria, Burundi, Cape Verde, and Somalia.<sup>5</sup>

The African food crisis during the Second World War owed a lot to the decline in availability of rice, the favored staple in many regions of the continent. When Japan occupied French Indochina in 1940 and British Burma in 1942 it cut off the main supply of rice to much of sub-Saharan Africa. The rice industry in India, which fed many East Africans, suffered its own environmental and economic crisis during the war. In French West Africa (AOF) rice imports all but disappeared, decreasing from about 63,000 metric tons in 1940 to just 1,000 metric tons two years later. In British territories as well local production of rice was minimal compared to the amount imported. In Zanzibar

<sup>4</sup> Hopkins, *An Economic History*, 190.

<sup>5</sup> Lizzie Collingham, *The Taste of War: World War II and the Battle for Food* (Penguin, 2011); Judith A. Byfield, Carolyn A. Brown, Timothy Parsons, and Ahmad Alawad Sikainga, eds., *Africa and World War II* (Cambridge University Press, 2015); Nicholas Westcott, "The Impact of the Second World War on Tanganyika, 1939-49," in David Killingray and Richard Rathbone, eds., *Africa and the Second World War* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1986), 143-159 at 147-148; Daniel Nyambariza, "Les Efforts de Guerre et la Famine de 1943-1944 au Burundi, d'Après les Archives Territoriales," *Cahiers CRA Histoire* 4 (1984) 1-18.

90 percent of locally consumed rice was imported before World War II. In South Africa rice imports decreased from about 70,000 tons of rice per year before the war to 31,000 tons in 1943, and then down to the lowest levels at about 20,000 tons in 1945.<sup>6</sup>

In order to deal with shortages of rice, colonial administrations urged local production with varying success. Some African regions like Niger had been producing rice of their own but at a much higher cost and lower output than the production in Asia. The French government also cultivated rice in the Ivory Coast, Senegal, and elsewhere in AOF, requiring farmers to meet quotas in order to replace the lost imports. In Nigeria and Tanganyika Britain's wartime Grow More Food campaigns included local rice cultivation. As part of the "war effort," African farmers were forced to grow food crops, and soldiers and laborers had to work on farms engaged in food production.<sup>7</sup> The Southern Rhodesian Compulsory Native Labour Act, for example, redirected African labor away from private industries toward government-run food farms. The government provided enormous subsidies to white farmers to offset their loss of labor. Generally labor recruitment laws applied only to able-bodied men, but in Northern Rhodesia women were compelled to work as well. Some of the mandatory crops grown in Africa went toward feeding the soldiers fighting in European armies. Forced food production reduced the amount of land and resources devoted to export crops and small farm production, thus contributing to overall economic decline. Despite the "war effort," high labor costs and low output prevented colonial industries from meeting Africa's demand for food during the war.<sup>8</sup>

Amidst the crisis European administrators urged people to consume locally produced crops like cassava and maize in place of rice. Cassava had been a safeguard against famine since the nineteenth century. However, many Africans had an aversion to consuming cassava because they did not like its taste and considered it the food of the poor. It is also much less nutritious than sorghum or millet and

<sup>6</sup> Judith A. Byfield, "Producing for the War," in Byfield et al. eds., *Africa and World War II*, 24-42; Collingham, *The Taste of War*.

<sup>7</sup> Elisabeth McMahon, "Developing Workers: Coerced and 'Voluntary' Labor in Zanzibar, 1909-1970," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 92 (2017) 114-133.

<sup>8</sup> David Killingray, "Labour Mobilisation in British Colonial Africa for the War Effort, 1939-46," in David Killingray and Richard Rathbone, eds., *Africa and the Second World War* (Macmillan, 1986), 88.

poisonous if not cooked properly. In order to help address the food crisis, Ethiopia and Egypt provided wheat, maize, and millet to other territories of Africa and the Middle East, and Dakar imported wheat from France and Morocco.<sup>9</sup> Maize production intensified in places like Kenya and South Africa where maize-based "mealie rice" became the primary substitute for imported rice. In South Africa supplies of wheat for human consumption were limited by the high demand for livestock feed. In 1944 the South African government inaugurated the Food Control Organization and imposed new regulations on the Livestock and Meat Industry Control Board in order to help manage the supply and price of produce and meat for local markets.<sup>10</sup>

### 6.1 Cooking cassava

In the Zanzibar Islands of East Africa during the early 1940s, female teachers from Zanzibar Town conducted food demonstrations for women in villages across the islands in order to promote the consumption of cassava and maize. One teacher, Zeyana Ali Muhammad, recalled a demonstration in Mangapwani where she and her colleagues explained to a group of eighty women why they needed to learn how to cook cassava to survive the war. Access to food staples was difficult in Zanzibar at that time, and the government required all able-bodied adults to grow cassava. The government also instituted price controls on locally produced goods. Muhammad remarked, "Had it not been for the government keeping a watchful eye on shopkeepers, prices of goods would be deadly."<sup>11</sup> While she painted a positive picture of the government interventions and the teachers' cooking lessons, some people resented the government's insistence that they eat cassava and maize instead of rice. Cassava and maize were generally associated with poverty, and in wartime Zanzibar food rations were determined based on ethnicity. As historian Laura Fair explains, rice was a staple for nearly everyone on the islands before the war,

<sup>9</sup> Byfield, "Producing for the War," 35–36.

<sup>10</sup> James Maddison Tinley, *South African Food and Agriculture in World War II* (Stanford University Press, 1954).

but only those with ration cards classifying them as "Asians" or "Arabs" were eligible to purchase rice during the war, while "Africans" were expected to eat cassava and maize.<sup>2</sup> Wartime ration policies exacerbated ethnic and class tensions that erupted with increasing violence after the war. The link between economic hardship, wartime rations, and ethnic politics in Zanzibar echoes the growing politicization of economic issues across the continent during and after the Second World War.

<sup>1</sup> Zeyana Ali Muh'd, "Wartime in Zanzibar," in Amandina Lihamba, Fulata L. Moyo, M. M. Mulokozi, Naomi L. Shitemi, and Saïda Yahya-Othman, eds., *Women Writing Africa: The Eastern Region* (Feminist Press at City University of New York, 2007), 140–143.

<sup>2</sup> Laura Fair, *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890–1945* (Ohio University Press, 2001), 48–51.

The war led to a decrease in the number of vessels available for shipping and thus to the closing of markets and an overall decline in exports such as coffee, cocoa, bananas, groundnuts (peanuts), sisal, tea, rubber, and other items. Just before the Second World War French West Africa exported 1.2 million tons of produce. Half of these exports came from Senegal's groundnut industry, which relied on the tedious, non-mechanized labor of migrant workers from Mali, eastern Senegal, Guinea, and Burkina Faso. In Senegal the production of peanuts plummeted from 70,000 tons in 1938 to 25,000 in 1941 and did not rebound to prewar levels until after the war ended.<sup>11</sup> On top of dealing with reduced income from exports, farmers had to pay a new tax in kind (crops) to help supply the Free French military and administration as part of the *effort de guerre* (war effort). Likewise, in British territories as well as southern Africa, exports had begun to recover from the global depression of the 1930s but declined drastically after 1939. In the late 1930s British Gold Coast (Ghana) and Nigeria, for example, exported half of the cocoa beans sold in global markets. Wartime interruptions led to overproduction, forcing Britain to purchase surpluses at very low prices. Unsurprisingly, Gold Coast cocoa producers protested this move. The British Colonial Office established the West African

<sup>11</sup> Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 165. On the longer history of labor practices in the Senegalese peanut industry, see Martin A. Klein, *Slavery and Colonial Rule in French West Africa* (Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Cocoa Control Board in 1940 to deal with the crisis. The board subsidized private companies to guarantee purchase of the crop and prevent bankruptcy among the producers. By 1942 the newly expanded West African Produce Control Board oversaw the production and sale of other West African crops as well, including palm oil, copra, and groundnuts.<sup>12</sup> In South Africa Britain agreed to purchase the bulk of excess wool produced, as it had done for Australia and New Zealand. While some products saw declining prices in their crops, other goods produced specifically for the "war effort" boomed. For instance, between 1937 and 1944, Nigeria's rubber trade nearly quadrupled and Mozambican cotton production increased almost sixfold.<sup>13</sup>

Decreased revenues devastated African economies and left many Africans struggling without a safety net. Without the cash value of exports, colonies were limited in their ability to import needed food crops. The combination of declining export income and limited local food production fueled inflation in African cities. By 1942 coastal towns in French West Africa saw a 50–75 percent increase in the cost of living. Officials attempted to limit the shock of inflation by instituting price controls on locally produced commodities, but, like the bulk purchasing of surplus goods, this adversely impacted African farmers and laborers.

During the war European imperial powers buckled down on the policy of self-sufficiency, what Bourdillon called the "fetish of the Balanced Budget." Investments in development had to come from either local revenues or nongovernmental sources. However, profit from colonial industries fluctuated greatly. Copper and gold mines were lucrative, but agricultural schemes were less reliable. Income from taxes on Africans posed another challenge. Herders had few possessions and most African farmers produced only enough to feed their families and engage in small-scale bartering. To make matters worse, European salaries bloated the overhead expenditures of colonial administrations, and development planning was costly and time-consuming. When crises emerged, as they did during the war, colonial administrations found it nearly impossible to put out the fires. As a result, the economic problems development was meant to solve grew exponentially. More often than not, the state identified the supply

<sup>12</sup> David Fieldhouse, "War and the Origins of the Gold Coast Cocoa Marketing Board, 1939–40," in Michael Twaddle, ed., *Imperialism, the State and the Third World* (British Academic Press, 1992), 153–182.

<sup>13</sup> Ashley Jackson, *The British Empire and the Second World War* (Hambledon Continuum, 2006), 221–223; Byfield, "Producing for the War," 35.

and quality of labor as the main obstacle to growth. Concerns about labor in Africa lay at the center of interwar and World War II development practices, but the problem of labor was much bigger and more involved than officials, economists, and entrepreneurs envisioned.

## LABOR MOBILIZATION AND PROTEST

With declining revenues from exports and a food crisis on their hands, colonial states in Africa turned to conscripted labor during the war. Soldiers, nurses, cooks, and clerical staff worked for the French West African Tirailleurs Sénégalais, the British East African King's African Rifles, and other colonial militaries while civilians labored on government-owned farms or in private industries. In South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, and Kenya white farmers had the political clout to demand fixed minimum prices for their products and a guaranteed labor supply, a luxury out of reach for a majority of African producers. Massive wartime labor mobilization programs were also instituted in Swaziland, Sierra Leone, French Equatorial Africa, French West Africa, Nigeria, Morocco, Belgian Congo, and Tanganyika. The French imposed labor conscription quotas for each village, sometimes for each family. In Gabon Africans engaged in colonial industries like gold mining were recruited to build roads and collect rubber.<sup>14</sup> In Belgian Congo new demands for labor arose with the boom in the export of rubber and uranium, which the United States used to build the atomic bombs it deployed on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.<sup>15</sup> All able-bodied Africans in Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi were required to work for the government for a minimum of 120 days annually. High labor demands and poor work conditions in wartime São Tomé and Príncipe echoed those of the islands' slave plantations in previous centuries. The demand for workers in both food and nonfood colonial industries during the war redirected labor that otherwise would have gone toward the cultivation of subsistence crops. These policies left many families vulnerable to starvation.

<sup>14</sup> Eric C. Jennings, "Extraction and Labor in Equatorial Africa and Cameroon under Free French Rule," in Byfield et al., eds., *Africa and World War II*, 200–219 at 204.

<sup>15</sup> Gabrielle Hecht, *Being Nuclear: Africans and the Global Uranium Trade* (MIT Press, 2012), 3–4.

Wartime labor demands and food crises had a devastating impact on Tanganyika (mainland Tanzania). The British colonial government forced 35,000 people, or about 11 percent of the workforce, to work for the "war effort" in 1944. Workers received minimum wages and had to work for nine months of the year. Most went to sisal farms, where unsanitary housing and miniscule food rations left many workers struggling to survive.<sup>16</sup> The removal of male labor, drought, and famine devastated the rural areas. Farmers sold off crops and herders unloaded cattle at below market prices to survive. These sacrifices, which the government considered the people's contributions to the war effort, made economic recovery after the war that much harder.

Africans grew tired of the "war effort" and particularly resented the forced labor programs. Inspired by earlier strikes in Africa and the Caribbean several protests erupted in colonial Africa, including the 1939 and 1940 Copperbelt Strikes in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), the dockworkers' strike in Mombasa, and protests in Dar es Salaam in 1939. In Dakar a milder wave of dissent erupted in 1936 and 1937, but more serious strikes took hold of the city and spread throughout French West Africa after the war, culminating in the 1947–1948 railway strike that encompassed a large swath of French West Africa. Workers and soldiers demanded higher wages and better working conditions, rations, and housing. Workers on mines and in urban areas insisted on the right to bring their wives and children to the labor compounds and demanded a "family wage" to care for them. This launched debates about whether migrant workers were permanent residents in the cities and towns adjacent to colonial industries.

Protests and strikes arose out of frustration with forced conscription into armies and labor camps, disruption of families torn apart by migrant labor systems, a lack of social services like education and healthcare, and a decline in economic viability of African families everywhere. Men and women affected by these systems formed new social networks and relationships. New urban cultures led to the adoption of social values based as much on class and religion as on language or ethnicity.<sup>17</sup> Whether adopting the values of the civilizing mission or vying for rights as workers and soldiers, Africans began

<sup>16</sup> Killingray, "Labour Mobilisation in British Colonial Africa," 85.

<sup>17</sup> Michael O. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898–1965* (Indiana University Press, 2002).



**FIGURE 6.1** A troop of colonial soldiers consisting mainly of the Tirailleurs Sénégalais from West Africa marching on the Avenue des Champs-Élysées in Paris, July 14, 1939. Source: AFP via Getty Images

mobilizing politically by World War II. The political crisis around labor precipitated the overhaul of colonial development policies in the 1940s.

## COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE IN ANGLOPHONE AFRICA

The British Colonial Office, already dealing with protests in the Caribbean in the late 1930s, became concerned when labor strikes resurfaced in Africa. The Colonial Office was forced to see that social and political issues reflected problems with the system as a whole and were not simply a reflection of local circumstances. Lord Hailey's 1938 *African Survey*, sponsored by the American Carnegie Corporation, revealed trends in increasing poverty and declining health and economic status among Africans everywhere.<sup>18</sup> As the *African Survey* illustrated, the 1929 Colonial Development Act (CDA) repaired the British economy at the expense of the colonies. Furthermore, much of the money sent to African territories came in the form of loans with

<sup>18</sup> Lord Hailey, *An African Survey: A Study of Problems Arising in Africa South of the Sahara* (Oxford University Press, 1938).

high interest. In Nigeria, home to the "Lagos slums" Bourdillon mentioned, a third of the colony's revenue went toward repaying the capital and interest on development loans.<sup>19</sup> Given also the high cost of European officials' salaries and other overhead charges, colonial budgets had little left for social services and general welfare. After his visit to East Africa to investigate the question of education Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies Earl De La Warr stated that "the real development needed in Africa today is not the investment of large sums of capital, but the improvement of the human material."<sup>20</sup>

Britain's CDWA, passed in July 1940, superseded the 1929 CDA. The 1929 Act had funded British companies to carry out large infrastructural projects such as road and railway construction in the colonies in order to facilitate exports and to raise revenue for the British government and British private enterprise. The 1940 CDWA provided funding for both "development," meaning infrastructure necessary for the export economy, and "welfare," meaning better housing, education, and healthcare for colonial subjects. Though welfare was new to this empire-wide development program, it was not new to administrators in Africa; colonial officials in Africa had been arguing for at least a decade that investment in health, reproduction, child welfare, and other social projects produced a larger, more productive workforce and, therefore, greater economic profit.

Prior to 1940 monies spent on welfare in Africa came out of local revenues for each territory. During the early 1930s the Colonial Development Advisory Committee repeatedly stated that welfare schemes "fell outside the scope" of the 1929 CDA. By the end of the decade the committee began to pressure the Colonial Office to expand coverage of the legislation. Under the terms of the 1940 CDWA the Colonial Office provided £5 million annual funding for improvements in public health, education, agriculture, research, and other economic and social endeavors across all British colonies.

Staffing shortages caused by the war made it impossible to fully implement the 1940 CDWA. The funds the 1940 CDWA provided did not even amount to £5 million over the course of the next five years. Only about £835,000 per year was spent during the war, and

<sup>19</sup> Hopkins, *An Economic History*, 190.

<sup>20</sup> Earl De La Warr quoted in D. J. Morgan, *The Official History of Colonial Development*, Vol. 1 (Humanities Press, 1980), 59.

the West Indies received the bulk of this funding. Half of the money went toward agriculture, forestry, and veterinary services. The other half was split between social amenities like schools and hospitals, housing, public transportation, and communication services. The new secretary of state, Lord Lloyd, essentially put the legislation on hold in order to direct resources and energy toward the war effort.

The 1940 Act envisioned development funding as seed money to help colonies achieve economic self-sufficiency. Some Africans interpreted self-sufficiency as self-government, but even as the end of colonialism came into view, Colonial Office personnel framed self-sufficiency as a *prerequisite* for self-government. Colonies had to prove they could be financially independent for a sustained period of time, and Britain saw decolonization as a very gradual process. Britain passed a new CDWA just before the war ended in 1945 in order to make up for the lack of spending during the previous five years. The 1945 CDWA increased the amount of metropolitan funds available to £120 million over a ten-year period. The CDWA was intended to silence critics, like those Bourdillon referenced in 1941, who argued that imperial powers were not doing enough to take care of their colonial subjects.

During the war the British experimented with cost-saving development programs. In 1943, when it became clear that funds from the CDWA would not be readily available, the Colonial Office's Advisory Council for Education in the Colonies put forth a new policy for Africa called "mass education."<sup>21</sup> Mass education went far beyond schooling and literacy programs to include "soil conservation," "better sanitation," and "hygiene and infant and maternity welfare." Mass education trained Africans to carry out development work. By the early 1950s officials began using the term "community development" instead of "mass education" to disavow Africans of the notion that the government promised to provide universal schooling. While officials worried that expanded education would contribute to the rise of anticolonial movements, they hoped community development would buy the allegiance of African subjects.

<sup>21</sup> Great Britain Colonial Office, *Mass Education in African Society* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1944).

## 6.2 Development and the rise of apartheid in South Africa after the Second World War

Though no longer a colony during the Second World War, the Union of South Africa received assistance from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund as a member of the British Commonwealth. Despite inroads in education and welfare programs for indigenous Africans and the mobilization of labor unions, the 1940s brought drastic and unexpected changes to South African politics culminating in the establishment of apartheid ("separateness") in 1948.

The 1930s and 1940s was a time of rapid industrialization and economic growth in South Africa, especially in the gold mining regions. The income from gold was so extensive that it offset the country's wartime debts. For this reason, South Africa fared much better than other regions of the continent, and the boom brought new employment opportunities to Black South Africans. During World War II 150,000 whites, mostly Afrikaners (whites who spoke Dutch-based Afrikaans rather than English as their first language), joined the armed forces, vacating their positions in the mines and in other industries. A greater number of indigenous Africans migrated from the rural areas to cities like Johannesburg to occupy the semiskilled and skilled positions abandoned by white soldiers.

The Second World War was a time of optimism for Black South Africans when the radical African National Congress Youth League was founded, African labor unions successfully lobbied for better work contracts, and the CDWA allowed the state to expand its welfare programs for the urban poor. However, things shifted dramatically after the war. When white soldiers returned to South Africa, they found that African trade unions were demanding increased wages, better pensions, and other terms that would define Black workers as equal to white workers. Some responded by joining the Afrikaner-dominated National Party (NP) that advocated for increased racial segregation and whites' sustained control over the central government.

The rise to power of the NP and the apartheid state in South Africa's 1948 election was a backlash against the economic and political inroads Black South Africans made during the early and

mid-1940s. By the end of the decade South Africa's ruling NP ushered in the policy of "separate development," which destroyed the state-based welfare system and intensified the impoverishment of nonwhites until apartheid ended in 1994. The legacies of this system are still widely apparent in the country's ongoing and widespread economic inequalities. South Africa may be an extreme example, but the apartheid policies of the late 1940s and 1950s mirrored the mindset of colonial officials and white minority governments elsewhere on the continent who feared Africans' greater political empowerment during the postwar era.

## FIDES IN FRANCOPHONE AFRICA

The argument that postwar colonial development was a direct response to political upheaval was even more evident in francophone Africa than it was in the British colonies, though this political conflict centered on France itself. During the war France was fractured by German occupation and divided between the German-allied Vichy Regime and Free French Forces. Both sides used France's African colonies as pawns in their struggle to control Paris (see Figure 6.1). Charles de Gaulle, head of the Free French Forces, held a conference in Brazzaville, Congo in 1944 where he promised Africans citizenship as part of France *outré-mer* ("France overseas"). De Gaulle was seeking support among colonial subjects and anti-imperialist allies like the United States. These and other changes he proposed in 1944 did not go into full effect until the end of the war.

The establishment of FIDES on April 30, 1946, was the first major step toward realizing the ideals set forth at the Brazzaville Conference. The acronym FIDES also referred to the Latin word for "fidelity," which served as a useful rhetorical move to keep the colonies loyal to the metropole. The FIDES projects entailed funds dispersed from the metropole as well as contributions from the colonial accounts, funds collected from local taxes, and other sources of revenue. This funding structure set a precedent for France's policy of offering bilateral aid to its former colonies after independence. FIDES was a major shift from the prewar policies of *Pacte Colonial* (Colonial Pact), which, like British colonial development, insisted on economic self-sufficiency.

In October 1946 the creation of the Union Française (French Union) formally acknowledged French citizenship for Africans in France's colonies. The postwar era ushered in a gradual extension of the franchise among Africans and greater African political mobilization within French metropolitan politics. The French Union officially put an end to the *indigène* (indigenous) status of colonial subjects and gave Africans representation in the French Assembly. Also in 1946, the new government abolished the long-standing practice of *corvée* (forced labor). African representatives had limited power to shape French metropolitan politics, but they did wield considerable influence in Dakar. Alioune Diop, a prominent figure in the Négritude movement, was the *chef du cabinet* for the governor of Senegal. He and other African intellectuals and politicians checked the power of the French settler community in West Africa.

Like the British CDWA, FIDES was one of the first steps in declaring a new colonial policy designed to bind the colonies closer to the metropole and quash anticolonial sentiment. The French metropolitan government had provided direct loans to the colonies during the war, but FIDES offered large grants to the colonies for the first time. It had two divisions: the *section générale* (general section) and the *section d'outre-mer* (overseas section). The *section générale* included state grants for research as well as investment in public sector and public-private endeavors, whereas the *section d'outre-mer* earmarked funds for infrastructural development and the modernization of colonial economies. Development projects involved road and bridge construction, expansion of health and education services, town planning, the provision of clean water and electricity, and housing construction. Colonial officials used development funding to deal with some of the difficulties that arose from rapid urbanization and economic devastation of villages and towns before and during the war. These projects were by no means comprehensive. In large, predominantly rural territories public amenities such as paved roads, electricity, and access to sanitary water were limited to the urban centers.<sup>22</sup>

Between 1946 and 1956 nearly 65 percent of FIDES funding was spent on public works and other projects designed to build up the infrastructure of the colonies. The rest was divided between general social services and production of raw materials for export. In nearly all

<sup>22</sup> Martin Atangana, *French Investment in Colonial Cameroon: The FIDES Era (1946–1957)* (Peter Lang, 2009).

cases these funds had to be matched by money from local colonial revenues. When revenues through export income or local taxes did not produce the funds needed to match the FIDES aid, the colonies borrowed more money from the Caisse Centrale de la France d'Outre-Mer (Central Bank of France Overseas). FIDES partially contributed to colonies' indebtedness and perpetuated a relationship of dependency between the colonies and the metropole that became normalized by postcolonial loans from the World Bank and the IMF, a topic explored further in Chapter 7.

Neither the CDWA nor FIDES was successful in preparing colonies for economic self-sufficiency. Both policies pressured colonial governments to match metropolitan funding through local revenues or additional loans. Both Britain and France focused most of their energies on developing infrastructure to aid large-scale production and other export industries. During the 1950s many African families continued to face the same financial problems they encountered during the war. These experiences contradicted the notion that European imperial powers cared about the "improvement of human material" and the recognition of African citizenship. Furthermore, the lack of economic stability in the colonies became Europeans' primary justification for continued colonial rule with no end in sight.

### 6.3 The Dakar railway strike, 1947–1948

The Dakar railway strike of 1947–1948, which engaged 20,000 railway employees, their families, and their communities, is today remembered as a key moment marking the shift toward decolonization in French West Africa. The export of peanuts, timber, rubber, cotton, palm oil, cocoa, and other lucrative raw materials on the Dakar-Niger Railway nearly came to halt as the strikers disrupted traffic for more than five months. Building off earlier strikes at the ports and across Senegal in 1945 and 1946, the workers fought for higher pay, better housing, better leave terms, and accommodation for families. Most symbolically, the workers demanded that a *cadre unique* (a "single, nonracial job hierarchy") replace the colonial hierarchies, or *cadres*, that categorized laborers according to race and status.<sup>1</sup> The majority of African employees belonged to a rank that offered lower pay and fewer benefits than were available to workers of French descent.

As historian Frederick Cooper argues, they drew on the ideals of French assimilation more than on anticolonial sentiment to make their case for labor rights.<sup>2</sup>

The families of workers aided strikers by offering food, shelter, and the transfer of information. Ironically, the railway itself served as a conduit for the sharing of information and supplies among the protesters while its normal functions as the primary avenue for exports came to a stop. Writer and filmmaker Ousmane Sembène elegantly demonstrated this point in his novel *God's Bits of Wood* (1962), a dramatic take on the strike and its place as a centerpiece of Senegalese nationalist politics. Sembène also emphasized the central role of women in the strike, though he took some poetic license in manufacturing a women's march as a watershed event. Historians have taken issue with some of Sembène's interpretations of the strike, but they agree that the strike generated a sense of solidarity among the workers, their families, and the communities impacted by the railway.

The strike was somewhat disconnected from formal politics and some African politicians remained ambivalent during the event. Léopold Senghor, who had recently been appointed as a Senegalese representative to the National Assembly under the terms of the 1946 French Union, appeared to agree with the idea of a *cadre unique* in principle but never publicly endorsed the strike. The Senegalese strikers received political and financial support from railway workers across the region, including what is today Mali, Guinea, Ivory Coast, and Benin. The politicization of labor unions across French West Africa took a decidedly more class-centered rather than overtly anticolonial approach to politics. In the end, the railway companies, partly owned and controlled by the French West African government, offered concessions by raising the pay and status of certain categories of workers. The government did not eliminate the separate *cadres* until the passing of the Loi-Cadre of 1956, a broad set of reforms that set a clear path toward the decolonization of French African territories.

The Dakar railway strike of 1947–1948 highlighted the broken promises of wartime shifts in colonial development policies. European imperial powers declared their hopes for a new relationship with their African colonies wherein Africans would be treated more like citizens than subjects and development funding

would be directed as much toward African welfare as it would toward projects guaranteed to generate profit. The railway strike was successful because it brought major concerns about colonialism to the surface of French West African politics even while the strikers focused on the gains particular to their cause. It is no wonder that it became celebrated by artists and historians as a turning point in Senegalese nationalist politics.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cooper, *Decolonization*, 242.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick Cooper, "Our Strike": Equality, Anticolonial Politics and the 1947–48 Railway Strike in French West Africa," *Journal of African History* 37:1 (1996) 81–118.

<sup>3</sup> See Cooper, "Our Strike," and James Jones, *Industrial Labor in the Colonial World: Workers of the Chemin de Fer Dakar-Niger, 1881–1963* (Heinemann, 2002).

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From the 1940s on colonial development had two fronts. The first angle of attack was through large infrastructural projects, many of which had been proposed in the 1920s and 1930s but had not yet materialized. The second approach aimed to develop human capital and the productivity of labor through the expansion of social welfare. These efforts were not to benefit Africa and Africans alone. As with the Great Depression, European countries destroyed by World War II looked to their colonies to revitalize metropolitan economies. Before the Second World War colonial administrations devoted minimal funds toward social welfare projects, and only those that were financially sound. While some people benefited from these efforts, they were designed to maintain a "balanced budget."

It was only when it became politically expedient to invest in the health and welfare of Africans that Britain and France adopted new approaches to development through the CDWA and FIDES, respectively. European officials hoped that the new development policies ushered in during and after World War II would help mitigate rising dissent among Africans. Labor unionization, strikes, and public protest forced imperial powers to recognize the need for economic relief, and perhaps a rethinking of colonial labor policies and practices. Workers demanded higher pay, better housing, support for their families, and recognition of their skills and status in companies. While many of these early wartime and postwar protests concentrated on

terms of employment rather than the ideology of nationalism, they ignited a political fire that could not be extinguished.

African challenges to the development episteme during the Second World War forced European officials to reconsider colonial development policies. The principle of self-determination celebrated in the 1941 Atlantic Charter rang hollow among colonized Africans forced to fight and work for colonial oppressors. The contradiction between the anti-fascist rhetoric of the Allied forces and Africans' experience of colonialism during the war sparked new forms of dissent and planted the seed for nationalism. More and more, development had to simultaneously bolster colonial economies and address the day-to-day concerns of colonial subjects. As the next chapter demonstrates, postwar colonial development policies would offer only temporary relief for economic devastation and could not stop the rise of African nationalism.

### Further Reading

To read more about food insecurity during the war see Lizzie Collingham, *The Taste of War: World War II and the Battle for Food* (Penguin, 2012); Bruce F. Johnston, *The Staple Food Economies of Western Tropical Africa* (Stanford University Press, 1958); and James Maddison Tinley, *South African Food and Agriculture in World War II* (Stanford University Press, 1954).

On labor mobilization and protest during and after the war see Judith A. Byfield, Carolyn A. Brown, Timothy Parsons, and Ahmad Alawad Sikainga, eds., *Africa and World War II* (Cambridge University Press, 2015); Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge University Press, 1996); James Jones, *Industrial Labor in the Colonial World: Workers of the Chemin de Fer Dakar-Niger, 1881–1963* (Heinemann, 2002); and David Killingray and Richard Rathbone, eds., *Africa and the Second World War* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1986).

For more on shifting development policies and funding see Martin Atangana, *French Investment in Colonial Cameroon: The FIDES Era (1946–1957)* (Peter Lang, 2009); Anthony Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa* (Routledge, 2014 [orig. Addison Wesley Longman, 1973]); and D. J. Morgan, *The Official History of Colonial Development*, Volumes 1–5 (Humanities Press, 1980). See also the following British government reports: Great Britain Colonial Office, *Colonial Development Advisory Committee Reports, 1933–1940* (His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1934–1941); and Great Britain Colonial Office, *Colonial Development and Welfare Acts: Report on the Use of Funds Provided under the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts, and Outline of the Proposal for Exchequer Loans to the Colonial Territories* (Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1959).

## CHAPTER 7

### From Modernization to Structural Adjustment

In an October 25, 1961 speech at Chatham House in London, Senegalese president Léopold Senghor stated, “We have chosen the African way to Socialism, which will be a synthesis of Negro-African cultural values, of western methodological and spiritual values, and Socialist technical and social values.”<sup>1</sup> He argued for a balance between “vertical solidarity which binds us to Europe” and “horizontal solidarity with other African countries.”<sup>2</sup> Senghor was a cultural nationalist who, nonetheless, embraced certain aspects of modernization, the economic argument that so-called traditional societies could “catch up” to “modern” ones by industrializing and integrating into the capitalist global economy. Senghor contended that modernizing Africa required Africanizing modernity, which entailed adapting the development episteme to African national contexts. Though framed in terms of greater social freedoms, protection of African cultures, and socialist ideals, Senghor's development policies celebrated the educated elite as the embodiment of knowledge and the harbingers of development.<sup>3</sup> Yoking modernization to educational expertise,

<sup>1</sup> The speech was published as Léopold Senghor, “Some Thoughts on Africa: A Continent in Development,” *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs) 38:2 (1962) 189–195 at 191.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 189–190.

<sup>3</sup> Mamadou Diouf, “Senegalese Development: From Mass Mobilization to Technocratic Elitism,” transl. by Molly Roth and Frederick Cooper, in Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard, eds., *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge* (University of California Press, 1997), 291–319.

African nationalist leaders reinforced a key feature of the development episteme even as they insisted on the premier place of African cultures in national development.

Senghor and other African nationalist leaders of the 1950s and 1960s sought to (re)discover an African national identity and what it meant to be truly independent from European rule economically and politically. Many postcolonial leaders envisioned modernization as the solution to colonial and neocolonial economic dependence. However, modernization came at a price. Combined with nationalism, modernization in emerging African states called for big government and economic independence, yet modernization also required foreign development aid that had the power to bolster or undermine the authority of the new African leaders.

Historian Frederick Cooper has argued that, after the Second World War, "The development concept . . . allowed for an internationalization of colonialism."<sup>4</sup> As colonialism waned and African nation-states came into existence, international organizations and foreign governments replaced imperial powers as the primary investors in African development. The United Nations, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank were at the forefront of this movement. Swept up in the development episteme, African nationalists and the leaders of newly independent countries forged permanent ties to international development agencies, some staffed by former officials in the colonial development system. The development episteme also bound African countries to wealthy donor nations such as the United States and the Soviet Union, the post-World War II superpowers hoping to convince African rulers to support their side of the Cold War. The internationalization of African development expanded during the 1980s when the now widely criticized Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) of the IMF and the World Bank eroded both state power and state-sponsored social services in African countries. Rising political leaders who made big promises to their constituents in the era of independence during the 1960s found their hands tied by the internationalization of development and Cold War politics over the next two decades. Some, however, managed to play these politics to their advantage.

<sup>4</sup> Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 191.

## MODERNIZATION THEORY IN POSTWAR PLANNING

After the Second World War western economists developed what holistically became known as "modernization theory," which provided a map for how a society could transform a "traditional" economy into a "modern" one. These economists reified Western Europe and the United States as the pinnacle of economic advancement and the epitome of modernity. Modernization theory was the capitalist version of 1950s-era futurism that envisioned all "modern" nations as industrialized. Industrialization had been part of the discourse on modernity since the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century. Western capitalist economists who employed the concept of modernization in the 1950s did so as a way to distinguish between a "modern" capitalist economy (a definitive feature of the west) and other economic modes, such as the bartering system, non-mechanized subsistence farming, and artisanal trades. Even though communists also touted state planning, industrialization, and modernization as central tenets of their societies, many western capitalists lumped communism in with "backward" economies during the era of the Cold War.

The defining feature of the modernist development discourse in the postwar era was the macroeconomic scheme. Paul Rosenstein-Rodan, who first outlined his big push theory in a 1943 article on Eastern Europe, was one of the first to promote this concept.<sup>5</sup> Rosenstein-Rodan argued that "backward" societies needed a "big push" to modernize their economies and catch up with western nations. From this perspective, small-scale welfare programs were inconsequential at best and wasteful of valuable resources at worst. In their place, he emphasized macroeconomic projects that promised high output and profits. Initially, the big push theory was designed to industrialize Eastern Europe after the Second World War, but Rosenstein-Rodan's ideas became central to African development projects during the independence era of the 1960s.

According to Rosenstein-Rodan, the "big push" took place over a series of steps. The first was industrialization, or the transformation

<sup>5</sup> Paul Rosenstein-Rodan, "Problems of Industrialisation of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe," *Economic Journal* 53:210/211 (1943) 202–211. See also Paul N. Rosenstein-Rodan, "The International Development of Economically Backward Areas," *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs) 20:2 (1944) 157–165.

of a "feudal" society into a "capitalist" one. State-sponsored modernization of the agricultural sector would free up skilled labor for the newly established industrial sector. This differentiation of labor, combined with foreign investment and the growth of infrastructure, would launch the nation's economy into the global market. Increased production of exports and top-down economic planning would lay the foundation for domestic savings and investment in future growth. Small-scale industries, which were considered unproductive and unprofitable, would be phased out over time so that all labor could be redirected toward large, modern industrial pursuits.

By 1960 economist Walt Rostow expanded on Rosenstein-Rodan's big push theory. He proposed the following steps toward modernization in his *Stages of Economic Growth*:

1. Traditional society
2. Preconditions for take-off
3. Take-off
4. Drive to maturity
5. Age of high mass-consumption<sup>6</sup>

Economists like Rostow categorized African states as "traditional societies" with the exception of industrialized South Africa, and defined the continent by its lack of economic modernization. Rostow believed that nonindustrial societies (or "preindustrial," as he called them because all were destined for industrialization) existed in a status of equilibrium with a low cap on productivity and profit. Preindustrialized states could transform only when "modern" science and technology drove economic change. He estimated that a nation could "take off" in about twenty years and reach "maturity" after another four decades. He defined "maturity" as the stage at which the economy would be fully technology driven, diversified, and self-sustaining. The final stage of development was that of high mass consumption accompanied by population growth, two prominent characteristics of the American economy in the postwar era.

Rosenstein-Rodan's big push theory and Rostow's call for rapid technological advancement and mass consumption became models for the modernization of African nations after independence.

<sup>6</sup> Walt Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge University Press, 1960).

Modernization was more than industrialization; it was a comprehensive program meant to reshape the fundamental structures of African communities. However, modernization theory failed to recognize the ways in which African societies were already modern, even according to this definition. The notion that modernized societies were those that moved from a subsistence to a market economy presumed that they did not already have market economies. Instead of barter systems, "modernized" societies were those that used internationally recognized currencies, an ideal that failed to acknowledge the functional coexistence of barter and cash systems in Africa and many other places in the world.

The economic theory of modernization applied to political and social structures as well. Economists argued that political systems needed to develop democratic practices and cultures in order to bolster free trade, which boded well for Africans vying for independence from colonialism. In theory, a "modernized" society encouraged individual achievement and status criteria instead of ascriptive systems in which one's social status was defined at birth. Because of the focus on individual progress, however, extended families were meant to become less important to the overall economic system. Modernization of social groups implied reorganization into nuclear family units and a shift away from religion to secular political ideologies. Economic rationalists assumed that this process of modernization and industrialization would form organically out of societies in the same fashion as occurred in Western Europe and North America.

In this mid-twentieth-century debate, development amounted to a description of Western European historical change rearticulated as a model for the remainder of the world. It reiterated the fundamental theory behind the civilizing mission of the nineteenth century: all societies must be westernized in order to become modern. At the same time, because development and modernization were designed to create self-sustaining economies, these concepts became powerful political tools for African nationalists negotiating for independence from European colonial rule. Thus, development as modernization became a double-edged sword in the 1950s.

## SUCCESSSES AND FAILURES OF MODERNIZATION PROJECTS IN THE POSTWAR ERA

Postwar colonial development initiatives ushered in these new technologies and languages of improvement in African colonies. At the

same time, colonial development brought a resurgence of the civilizing mission that reasserted Europe as both the model for progress and the source of the technology and funding deemed necessary for African progress. Colonial governments designed modernist economic and social programs to quell frustrations and stem the tide of nationalism, yet development also became the paradigm through which African nationalist leaders could claim self-reliance and demand self-rule.

Postwar colonial development concentrated on infrastructure and large-scale production. In British-controlled territories officials expanded social services for the attainment of "mass education" and improved transportation, electricity, water, and sanitation systems. Though social services became more pervasive in the late colonial era, the ultimate goal remained increasing profits from the export-driven colonial economy. Some large-scale initiatives, such as the Tanganyikan Groundnut Scheme, were notorious failures. Other projects that focused on infrastructural development, the expansion of educational and medical institutions and training programs, and investments in agriculture were more successful. In Nigeria and Ghana, for example, the introduction of centralized marketing boards for cash crops resulted in a substantial stabilization fund, which offered producers consistent prices for cash crops and avoided the erratic nature of global markets. African crops were still funneled through government-run railways and ports, and independent cooperatives were carefully regulated. Wages increased and social services expanded, but the expectations of the 1940 and 1945 Colonial Development and Welfare Acts (CDWA) far exceeded the outcomes in British colonial Africa.

### 7.1 The Tanganyikan groundnut scheme

Britain's infamous postwar Tanganyika Groundnut Scheme in present-day Tanzania was an ambitious five-year project that began with a plan to clear 60,000 hectares of tsetse-infested forest in the first year alone. The 1946 scheme also included construction of a deepwater port at Mtwara and the expansion of the railroad to facilitate the transport of nuts to the Indian Ocean and beyond. Unilever, a Dutch-British company that specialized in palm oil production in British West Africa, first proposed the idea, but the British government took on the task of

implementing it. Officials hired 3,000 British employees and imported bulldozers to carry out the job as quickly as possible with minimal labor. The British government spent £35,870,000 on the project, an amount equal to the Tanganyikan colonial government's entire budget for those years.

The Groundnut Scheme faced three main obstacles resulting in its failure: a dearth of skilled laborers who could operate the machines, no maintenance plan for when the machines broke down, and ignorance of the environmental obstacles. The three main locations selected (Kongwa, Urambo, and Nachingwea) varied drastically in terms of annual rainfall and density of forest. Even the thinnest forest at Kongwa, where the project began, proved too much for the machines. The deep roots of the baobab trees, flooding, and an inexperienced workforce left abandoned bulldozers in the forest. By the end of 1947 only 3,000 of the first year's 60,000 hectares had been cleared. At the end of the following year only 20,000 hectares total had been cleared. A series of strikes involving dockworkers, railway workers, and groundnut workers demanding higher pay in late 1947 further challenged this and other development projects in the territory. A drought killed the plan for good in 1949, by which time the cost had far exceeded the initial budget.

News of the failed Tanganyikan Groundnut Scheme traveled far. A December 12, 1949, *LIFE* magazine article about this "scandal in peanuts" reported that the Overseas Food Corporation, the government entity overseeing the scheme, "issued a 156-page apologia for the failure of the peanut planning." The article included photos of bulldozers with twisted rakes and other machines trapped by trees with captions reading "useless road rollers." One photo featured women at work harvesting peanuts in order to show how "hired hands" had been employed in place of "inefficient machine harvesters."<sup>1</sup> A colossal and expensive failure, the Tanganyikan Groundnut Scheme demonstrated the need for greater understanding of local conditions and creating programs designed in collaboration with local communities.

<sup>1</sup> "Scandal in Peanuts: Britain Has Trouble Making a Nut Farm of Tanganyika," *LIFE*, No. 24, December 12, 1949, 46-48. See also John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge University Press, 1979), 440-442.

Development efforts in francophone Africa faced similar economic and political challenges to those in British territories in the postwar era. France's Fonds d'investissements pour le développement économique et social (FIDES) focused on infrastructure and the development of export commodities, and to a lesser extent, social services. FIDES, along with other postwar changes in colonial policy, was successful in reinforcing Africans' political and economic ties to France. The constitution of France's Fourth Republic (1946–1958) made concessions for African representation in the French Assembly and greater representation in the colonial administration, which opened new avenues for Africans to make political and economic demands. Frederick Cooper and others have argued that it was through the economic mobilization among labor unions and labor strikes that Africans articulated a “new vision of citizenship” based on political equality.<sup>7</sup> African workers demanded that France go beyond the abolition of the *indigénat* status and *corvée* (forced labor) to institute nonracial cadres and equal rights for African “citizens” of the newly created French Union. The promises of citizenship and incorporation into the French Union did not resolve the tensions of colonialism. The Algerian war for independence broke out in 1954 and blossomed into a crisis in 1958, by which time the call for independence had spread to other French territories on the continent. In response, Charles de Gaulle suspended the constitution and ordered the National Assembly to draw up a new one, leading to the establishment of the Fifth Republic in 1959. The African deputies and senators elected to the French Assembly between 1946 and 1960, including Léopold Senghor, helped to shape the discourse on modernization and development as African nationalists looked toward independence.

In many territories of francophone Africa FIDES-funded development projects created more problems than they solved. The postwar rhetoric on social and community development gradually gave way to schemes designed for maximum and immediate profit for private companies and external investors. For territories with extensive rural areas such as Chad, some funding went toward improvement of agriculture, forestry, and animal husbandry, but the majority of funds paid for the construction of roads, bridges, and airports in order to improve the transportation of exports into long-distance markets. Under the terms of FIDES, recipient territories had to match French development

funds from local revenue. Chad and other territories did so by borrowing heavily from the Caisse Centrale de la France d'Outre-Mer (CCOM), the French colonial bank, resulting in serious economic crises by the early 1950s. The French Treasury advanced large sums of capital to Cameroon including a deficit of more than 1 billion francs by the mid-1950s, which committed Cameroon to hefty annual repayments that ate away at the territory's resources. Tens of thousands of Cameroonians were laid off and Douala, the largest city, was devastated by unemployment and poverty. Meanwhile, the French brought in private companies to “develop” the exportation of coffee, groundnuts, cotton, cocoa beans, and bananas. They returned to the kind of private development reminiscent of the charter and concessionary companies that established European colonies in Africa during the late nineteenth century. Resentment toward these interventions aided the rise of nationalism in the cocoa-producing regions of Cameroon.<sup>8</sup>

Some areas of francophone Africa saw a rise in profits after the war, but much of this can be attributed to community efforts and price controls rather than to FIDES directly. In stark contrast to the failure of the Tanganyikan Groundnut Scheme, expansion in the production of groundnuts in Senegal during the 1950s resulted primarily from the mobilization of the farmers and laborers by Murid religious leaders. Similarly, in what is now Ivory Coast, followers of Muslim leader Yacouba Sylla formulated their own vision of “Islamic development” during the late colonial era, which later informed President Félix Houphouët-Boigny's postcolonial modernization programs in the country.<sup>9</sup> FIDES tended to make the biggest impact through the expansion of transportation and communication structures that supported local initiatives and existing industries.

It is important to follow the money trail in development projects in order to understand why some worked and others failed. Collaboration is another key factor. Many of the schemes that functioned well did so because of cooperation between officials and African community leaders or between government officials and scientists. The most successful case studies are those in which African leaders ensured that workers and their families would also benefit from the scheme.

<sup>7</sup> Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945–1960* (Princeton University Press, 2014), 26.

<sup>8</sup> Martin Atangana, *French Investment in Colonial Cameroon: The FIDES Era (1946–1957)* (Peter Lang, 2009), 53–64.

<sup>9</sup> Sean Hanretta, *Islam and Social Change in French West Africa: History of an Emancipatory Community* (Cambridge University Press, 2009).

## MODERNIZATION AND DECOLONIZATION

African nationalists of the 1950s and 1960s faced a conundrum. In order to claim the right to govern themselves, they first needed to convince colonial powers that they could be self-sufficient. They did so by embracing the development episteme, a theory that emulated the political, social, and economic structures found in western countries. In colonial Africa, where many economic resources were in the hands of European states, companies, and individuals, African negotiations for independence entailed assurances that their path toward development would not disrupt these economic relationships. Professing allegiance to modernization allowed nationalists to demonstrate their preparedness for independence and, at the same time, to promise their constituents and former colonizers a prosperous future. Despite political independence, African nations had to concede a degree of economic control to foreign investors if they wanted to succeed in the modern world. This compromise guaranteed the endurance of the development episteme in postcolonial Africa.

The history of landownership in Kenya's transition to independence demonstrates the continuation of colonial-era development policies into the postcolonial period. Land and cash crop agriculture were points of contention during the colonial era, as European settlers occupied the most fertile region of the territory and dominated the export industry beginning in the 1910s. During the anticolonial struggle of the 1950s, the British administration passed legislation that recognized individual landownership and Europeans' titles in legal battles over claims to land. When Kenya gained independence in 1963 under the leadership of Jomo Kenyatta, his administration sought to integrate Kenya into the world market. Kenyan landowners, previously confined to the production of subsistence crops for local consumption while European growers focused on cash crops, could finally break into the lucrative export markets by growing coffee and tea. Also, more Kenyans were able to purchase land. Kenyan historian William Ochieng' reported that by 1970 two-thirds of former settler farms had been transferred to African owners.<sup>10</sup> Yet many Kenyans were excluded from this deal. The percentage of people in the country living

<sup>10</sup> William R. Ochieng', "The Kenyatta Era 1963–78: Structural & Political Change," in Bethwell Allan Ogot and William R. Ochieng', eds., *Decolonization & Independence in Kenya, 1940–93* (James Currey, 1995), 83–109 at 87–88.

below the poverty line rose steadily between 1964 (38 percent) and 1981 (48 percent).<sup>11</sup> Decolonization brought an end to white settler domination in the Kenyan highlands, but it did not terminate the inequalities produced by the colonial agricultural industry.

African nationalists embraced modernization and top-down development schemes, both of which required a unified, independent state with a powerful central government. Many nationalist leaders worked to embed their visions of modernization within African cultures and value systems. Some, like Léopold Senghor discussed at the beginning of this chapter, also engaged with socialist principles and relationships with socialist countries in order to counter the economic influence of former imperial powers. They pointed to the rapidly expanding economies of the USSR and China as evidence that socialism was not only compatible with modernization but constitutive of it.

Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana and a torchbearer for pan-Africanism, helped to popularize African socialism across the continent during the 1960s. Nkrumah's 1965 book, *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, evoked Vladimir Lenin's anti-imperialist book, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1917). Neocolonialism, he argued, was the continued economic exploitation of Africa by former imperial powers and other nations. Nkrumah also encouraged African leaders to adopt a policy of nonalignment during the Cold War. Though Nkrumah publicly criticized western capitalists, he welcomed the support of the IMF, the World Bank, and foreign companies for large state-centered modernization projects. His widely advertised Akosombo Dam project, the planning for which began under British colonial rule, promised to modernize Ghana's national economy. The primary purpose of the dam was to jump-start industrialization in Ghana through the vertical integration of bauxite mining to aluminum smelting. Vertical integration occurs when the same company that owns the supply chain controls the manufacture of the final product. The American company overseeing the Akosombo Dam project, Kaiser Aluminum, began constructing the dam in 1961. The scheme, which involved the forced and voluntary resettlement of 80,000 Ghanaians, became an economic and

<sup>11</sup> Francis M. Mwea and Njuguna S. Ndung'u, "Explaining African Economic Growth Performance: The Case of Kenya," in Benno J. Ndulu, O'Connell, Jean-Paul Azam, Robert H. Bates, Augustin K. Fosu, Jan Willem Gunning, and Dominique Njinkeu, eds., *The Political Economy of Economic Growth in Africa, 1960–2000: Vol. 2: Country Case Studies* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 325–368 at 360.

political disaster for Ghana when Kaiser Aluminum refused to use Ghanaian bauxite while reaping much of the profit from the dam's cheap hydroelectric power.<sup>12</sup> Although Nkrumah espoused the rhetoric of African socialism and nonalignment, his willingness to embrace modernization and welcome foreign capital left Ghana vulnerable to neocolonial exploitation.

Julius Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania, ushered in a particular version of African socialism called *ujamaa* ("familyhood" in Swahili), which he outlined in the Arusha Declaration of 1967. As a nationalist politician in the late 1950s when Tanganyika was still a British Mandated Territory, Nyerere strategically adopted the term *maendeleo*, a Swahili word used widely to mean "development," in his plans for nationalist development and modernization. Its power came from the fact that colonial officials interpreted *maendeleo* as modernization and economic growth, but to the Swahili-speaking public it simply meant "progress" or "moving forward." In the context of *ujamaa*, the term *maendeleo* became shorthand for the economic and political progress of the independent nation.<sup>13</sup>

Nyerere's *ujamaa* program had mixed outcomes. It expanded and standardized Tanzania's education system and improved the health and standard of living of many Tanzanians. *Ujamaa* also promoted the philosophy of African socialism and community building that continues to hold sway in Tanzanian culture today. At the same time, it generated widespread frustration against the government for the hated Operation Vijiji (Operation Villages) program in which millions of Tanzanians (more than half the country's population) were forced to resettle into impoverished *ujamaa* village cooperatives. The 1973 oil crisis and the decline in value of key Tanzanian exports like coffee and cotton dealt a final blow to Tanzanian socialism. By the mid-1980s the country instituted neoliberal economic reforms.

In addition to the growing popularity of African socialism, modernization and decolonization unexpectedly contributed to a new wave of feminism in Africa, though after independence many African politicians turned their backs on the women who brought them to power. In

<sup>12</sup> Stephan F. Miescher, "No One Should Be Worse Off: The Akosombo Dam, Modernization, and the Experience of Resettlement in Ghana," in Peter J. Bloom, Stephan F. Miescher, and Takyiwaa Manuh, eds., *Modernization As Spectacle in Africa* (Indiana University Press, 2014), 184–204.

<sup>13</sup> Priya Lal, *African Socialism in Postcolonial Tanzania: Between the Village and the World* (Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Kenya, Tanzania, Guinea, Algeria, Nigeria, Mali, Senegal, Zimbabwe, and elsewhere, women rallied political support for nationalist parties, joined in public efforts to "build the nation," and took up the nationalist cause on behalf of all mothers, wives, and working women. During the 1940s and 1950s women in Senegal and Kenya provided crucial supplies and information for anticolonial protesters and freedom fighters. In 1950s Guinea some female supporters of Ahmed Sékou Touré served as "shock troops" to suppress the opposition. In Tanganyika Muslim women like Bibi Titi Mohamed became central political organizers for the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) before and after the country's independence in 1961. Women freedom fighters joined the front lines in the war against the Rhodesian Front in Zimbabwe during the 1960s and 1970s. Women who engaged in anticolonial movements perceived nationalism as the simultaneous liberation of the nation and of women. The promises of African feminism, however, suffered a debilitating blow with the arrival of independence. Very few women held elected positions in government, and national development came in the form of top-down, patriarchal modernization schemes spearheaded by "big men."<sup>14</sup>

Even while pressing for an African socialist approach to economic development, many leaders of new African nations accepted the basic principles of global capitalism. Decolonization promised freedom from colonial exploitation, but African leaders' allegiance to modernization theory created the perfect conditions for neocolonialism. Africa's postcolonial economic development entailed rapid industrialization and economic growth, which relied on investment from the global financial institutions (the IMF and the World Bank) as well as foreign nations, large banks, multinational corporations, and international development agencies.

## THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF DEVELOPMENT

Development became internationalized after World War II. International organizations argued that Africa's underdevelopment

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Elizabeth Schmidt, *Mobilizing the Masses: Gender, Ethnicity, and Class in the Nationalist Movement in Guinea, 1939–1958* (Heinemann, 2005) and Tanya Lyons, *Guns and Guerilla Girls: Women in the Zimbabwean National Liberation Struggle* (Africa World Press, 2004).

was a global issue to be dealt with outside the framework of colonialism. This spurred tensions between the United Nations and imperialists, and it spawned new development organizations like the Commission de Coopération Technique en Afrique au Sud du Sahara (CCTA), established in 1954 to improve public health and medical care in francophone colonies.<sup>15</sup> In order to understand the framework for development for the second half of the twentieth century it is crucial to examine the international development specialists and the intellectual and scientific principles that informed their work. Professional training of development specialists occurred in tertiary education systems in Europe and, especially, the United States. The American GI Bill, also known as the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, helped to expand the US state university system, which subsequently trained numerous experts in the new development fields. Collectively, the United Nations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), universities, and other international organizations produced an international field of development science specialists. Some of these specialists had been trained for work in colonial technical services and joined the United Nations (UN) and its subsidiary organizations (such as the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Labor Organization, UNESCO, and UNICEF) as "scientific consultants" after the collapse of imperialism in Africa. Whether trained under colonialism or not, these international specialists saw themselves as working toward the betterment of global society.

International macroeconomic development planning promoted a form of modernization that envisioned African nations as viable players on the world market and not merely the extensions of European capitalist centers. At the same time, international aid organizations framed their work within a set of intellectual narratives about Africa that were similar to the assumptions of former colonizers. Many believed that Africa must go through a process of rural and agrarian consolidation before reaching the higher stages of industrialization and capitalism, that Africans could not fully understand or adopt democracy until this process was complete, and that all development "problems" had technical solutions rather than political or social ones.

<sup>15</sup> Daniel Vigier, "La Commission de coopération technique en Afrique au Sud du Sahara," *Politique étrangère* 19:3 (1954) 335-349.

Over time, internationalization transformed the bureaucratic, macroeconomic, government-centered model of development planning into one that reified the role of international specialists overseeing specific development projects. During the late colonial and early post-colonial periods governments oversaw long-term, regular improvements in the technical and social welfare sectors, but the foreign entities that took the reins on development projects during the late 1960s and 1970s tended to have short-term visions. This shift in approach continues to haunt African governments, which have little economic incentive to provide long-term support for programs with temporary funding from international sources.

The United States, in particular, became interested in African development as African nations gained independence. If Europeans "discovered" Africa in the nineteenth century, Americans "discovered" the continent in the 1960s. The United States looked to these new nations as a battleground for Cold War politics. Investment in African economies sought to ensure their future as American allies. The early 1960s was a time of hope in American visions of Africa. Africa became the newest addition to area studies in the academy with the establishment of the African Studies Association in 1957, the same year Ghana gained independence. John F. Kennedy inaugurated the Peace Corps in 1961 partly in order to bolster the image of Americans in Africa.<sup>16</sup> By this time the IMF and the World Bank had also switched their focus away from recovery of Europe in the immediate postwar era toward international development programs in the "Third World."

## 7.2 America's "discovery" of Africa in the 1960s

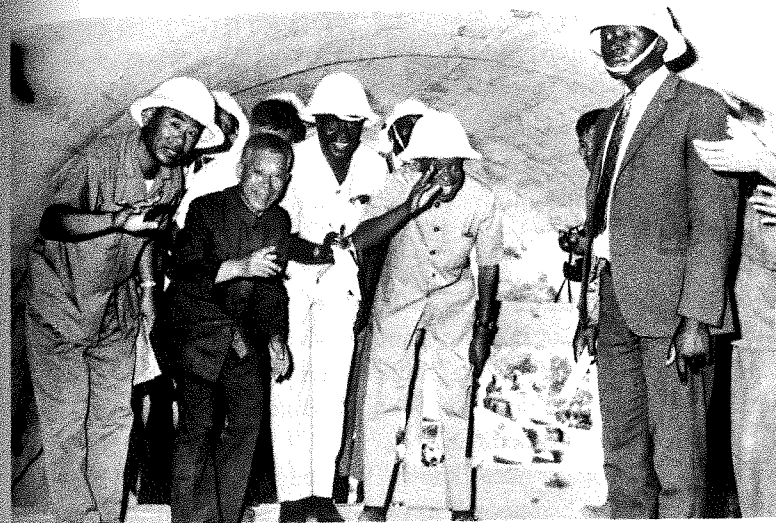
It is more accurate to say that the United States *rediscovered* Africa in the 1960s. Since the era of transatlantic trade, American missionaries, companies, humanitarian organizations, and politicians have had a long-standing fascination with the continent. The Anglo-American Corporation founded in 1917 invested heavily in South Africa. Liberia, a nation created by African American settlers and US politicians in the early nineteenth century, is still intimately linked to the United States, and the Firestone

<sup>16</sup> Larry Grubbs, *Secular Missionaries: Americans and African Development in the 1960s* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2009).

Corporation has maintained rubber plantations there since 1926. The United States also developed close ties to Ethiopia once it recovered from Italy's seven-year occupation between 1935 and 1942. In May 1953 the United States and Ethiopia signed a twenty-five-year treaty that allowed for American naval and air force bases and a communications center at the Kagnaw Station in Asmara, now the capital of Eritrea. The United States provided aid to Ethiopia for the construction of schools, hospitals, infrastructure building, and agricultural development. Relations between the two countries remained strong until 1974 when Ethiopia became a socialist country and civil war erupted.

Decolonization in the 1960s offered American companies new business opportunities in Africa, which fit well with the development goals of both African and US political interests during the Cold War. Americans intervened in African politics extensively in order to stem the spread of communism and socialism. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has been implicated in the death of Patrice Lumumba, the socialist-leaning popularly elected prime minister of Congo (now Democratic Republic of Congo, or DRC), in January 1961. During the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, the United States funded capitalist-leaning political parties and militias across the continent. Americans meddled in the civil wars of Angola and Mozambique by providing military aid for the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) as well as the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO), a group originally funded by the white-supremacist Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organization. While American involvement in political and military conflicts deflated public optimism about African development by the late 1960s, US businesses continued to profit by working with African political leaders.

African countries took advantage of the global power play during the Cold War era. For example, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Ghana actively sought aid from the United States while the socialist nations of Tanzania and Guinea looked to China and the USSR for assistance. The Tanzanian government sent young Tanzanians to the USSR for higher education and training in medicine, engineering, and other professions considered vital to national development. The Chinese government collaborated with Tanzania and Zambia to build the



**FIGURE 7.1** Kenneth Kaunda, the prime minister of Zambia, and Julius Nyerere, the president of Tanzania, visiting a tunnel constructed by a Chinese engineering team in Uhuru, Tanzania, August 10, 1973. Source: AFP via Getty Images

TAZARA railway system with Chinese engineering expertise and the training of Africans (see Figure 7.1). Between 1973 and 1989 East Germany sent aid to Zimbabwe, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe, Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Libya, Ethiopia, Zambia, Lesotho, and the Republic of Congo (today, People's Republic of the Congo), as well as communist-friendly political parties like the South West African Peoples' Organization (SWAPO) in Namibia and the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa. In reality, most African nations played both sides of the Cold War, pledging sympathy for one in exchange for aid. Ghana was both a US ally and a proponent of socialism. Tanzania received funding from Canada as well as several European communist countries of the Eastern Bloc. The Cold War brought international attention and funding to Africa but did not necessarily result in sustainable economic development.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Elizabeth Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror* (Cambridge University Press, 2013).

## THE IMF, THE WORLD BANK, AND STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMS (SAPS)

The IMF and the World Bank were born out of the Bretton Woods conference in 1944. These organizations facilitate international lending and aid, generally using funds collected from wealthier nations to invest in "least developed countries" (LDCs). Today the UN defines LDCs as "low-income countries confronting several structural impediments to sustainable development."<sup>18</sup> Both the IMF and the World Bank are owned and operated by member nations. Many African nations became members of the Bank within a decade of independence.<sup>19</sup> The membership of the two organizations is indistinguishable, but the functions of the IMF and the World Bank differ.

The World Bank (also known as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) was established to finance reconstruction of Western Europe after the Second World War. The purpose of the IMF was to ensure the economic stability of global markets amidst fluctuations in national currencies, imbalances in trade, and other issues influencing world markets. Essentially, the World Bank provides the funds and the IMF regulates the terms of those payments and the "code of conduct" for member nations.<sup>20</sup> The IMF also offers short-term emergency loans to its member countries, though this is not its primary function. The two organizations are interdependent, but most of the funding sent to Africa comes from the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA), established in 1960. The two decades after the inauguration of the IDA brought an eightfold increase in World Bank loans to Africa, mostly thanks to investment from members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Approximately one-third of these funds went toward agriculture, a quarter went toward transportation, and the remainder was split between education, water and sanitation, urban development, and general infrastructure.

<sup>18</sup> United Nations Development Policy & Analysis Division, Least Developed Countries (LDCs), [www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/least-developed-country-category.html](http://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/least-developed-country-category.html), accessed January 3, 2020.

<sup>19</sup> World Bank, Member Countries, [www.worldbank.org/en/about/leadership/members](http://www.worldbank.org/en/about/leadership/members), accessed January 3, 2020.

<sup>20</sup> David D. Driscoll, "The IMF and the World Bank: How Do They Differ?" International Monetary Fund website, [www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/exrp/differ/differ.htm](http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/exrp/differ/differ.htm), accessed January 3, 2020.

Despite their claims to political neutrality, the World Bank and the IMF served as tools for diplomacy in Cold War politics. For example, the World Bank and the IMF repeatedly aided the notoriously corrupt Mobutu Sese Seko during his thirty-two-year rule over Zaire (DRC) even after they discovered he embezzled funds and violently suppressed political enemies. Not until 1990, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the fading of Soviet power, did these organizations discontinue payments to Mobutu.<sup>21</sup> As with direct American funding for political groups in Angola, Mozambique, and elsewhere, grants and loans provided by the World Bank and the IMF rewarded loyalty to the western cause. Corruption in African countries was the price paid for Cold War security.

The IMF and the World Bank became Africa's primary source of development funding by the 1980s. The IMF also regulates the terms for bilateral aid from richer countries to poorer countries. As such, these institutions have had and continue to have considerable control over African nations' economic and political positions vis-à-vis the global market. Independent African governments that embraced the top-down modernization agenda came under attack by international economists for their costly bureaucracy, subsidies to national industries, corruption, and other characteristics common to "developed" western nations but that were perceived as inefficiencies in Africa.<sup>22</sup> What African nations really needed, development economists argued, was to create an environment more attractive and open to foreign investment and trade. This was the logic behind the IMF and the World Bank's SAPs introduced in the 1980s.

The SAPs continued the macroeconomic trend of 1960s modernization but encouraged greater foreign control over African finances. Under the SAPs, African countries were expected to promote "free trade" in the form of relaxed tariffs and reduced regulations governing foreign companies operating in Africa. The international financial institutions required African nations to guarantee repayment of loans and returns on foreign investment before spending revenues on social services for their citizens. As occurred in colonial industries, foreign companies operating in postcolonial Africa were engaged in the extraction of raw materials and other exports for the global market. International development experts believed

<sup>21</sup> Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa* (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2009), 22–23.

<sup>22</sup> See Kimberly Ann Elliott, ed., *Corruption and the Global Economy* (Institute for International Economics, 1997).

these changes would result in greater efficiency and rapid economic growth. During the debt crisis of the 1980s African nations desperate for external injections of money became especially vulnerable to the SAPs.

The SAPs failed to deliver on the promise of development. Though they resulted in meager increases in the gross domestic product (GDP) in select countries, these gains were overshadowed by a more significant increase in debt burdens due to the accumulation of interest on development loans. Meanwhile, African political leaders were stripped of their authority. The SAPs actually increased corruption because government officials had to contend with fewer and fewer resources.<sup>23</sup> The SAPs, which devoted very little attention and funding to poverty reduction, gender equity, and health services, adversely affected citizens in African countries. Since the early 2000s SAPs have required governments to earmark funding for poverty reduction and direct some resources toward reducing social inequalities. The long-term impact of these modifications is still unclear, but until recently SAPs have undermined African nations' ability to provide a safety net for their populations.

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Attempting to modernize Africa into a mirror of western societies was a central tenet of the development episteme. The modernizing states of postcolonial Africa repeated some of the same mistakes as their colonial predecessors, and modernization opened the door to both nationalism and neocolonialism. Globalization of financial institutions and the creation of the IMF and the World Bank coincided with the decline of direct imperialism in Africa. The internationalization of development for Africa in the postcolonial era reinforced the notion that modernization centered on macroeconomic changes like industrialization. The United States and the USSR viewed newly independent African countries as pawns in the Cold War, yet throughout this period African regimes played their own game, vying for financial assistance and access to global markets. The citizens of African nations were the losers in the game of modernization as they suffered corrupt governments, declining social services, and ever-constricting resources.

Today African economies are still largely dependent on foreign investment, the export of raw materials, and the expansion of large-

<sup>23</sup> Joseph Patrick Ganahl, *Corruption, Good Governance, and the African State: A Critical Analysis of the Political-Economic Foundations of Corruption in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Potsdam University Press, 2013), 33–35.

scale, export-oriented infrastructure projects. Serious concerns about social welfare faded into the background in the 1970s. The expansion of education and healthcare systems, the provision of clean water and electricity, and social services were common goals set out by leaders of newly independent nations, and some countries made limited progress in these areas. However, the primary concern for modernization theorists, nationalists, and international development experts who advocated structural adjustment was the individual countries' GDP and the rate of national economic growth over time. Lost in the "big push" of modernization was the plight of peasants, migrant laborers, traders, women, children, and others whose everyday labor fueled development. We see in the next chapter how international NGOs swooped in to fill this gap.

### Further Reading

On African nationalism, decolonization, and socialism see Peter J. Bloom, Stephan F. Miescher, and Takyiwaa Manuh, eds., *Modernization As Spectacle in Africa* (Indiana University Press, 2014); Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge University Press, 2002); William H. Friedland and Carl G. Rosberg Jr., eds., *African Socialism* (Stanford University Press, 1964); Priya Lal, *African Socialism in Postcolonial Tanzania: Between the Village and the World* (Cambridge University Press, 2015); Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (International Publishers, 1965); and Elizabeth Schmidt, *Mobilizing the Masses: Gender, Ethnicity, and Class in the Nationalist Movement in Guinea, 1939–1958* (Heinemann, 2005).

For discussions about modernization and development economics see Devesh Kapur, John P. Lewis, and Richard Webb, *The World Bank: Its First Half Century, Volumes 1: History and Volume 2: Perspectives* (Brookings Institution Press, 1997); Thandika Mkandawire and Charles C. Soludo, *Our Continent, Our Future: African Perspectives on Structural Adjustment* (CODESRA and Africa World Press, 1998); Walt W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge University Press, 1960); and Robert L. Tignor, *W. Arthur Lewis and the Birth of Development Economics* (Princeton University Press, 2006).

For more information about the internationalization of development in Africa see Larry Grubbs, *Secular Missionaries: Americans and African Development in the 1960s* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2009); Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa* (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2009); and Peter J. Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy toward Africa: Incrementalism, Crisis and Change* (Cambridge University Press, 1994).

## CHAPTER 8

## The New Missionaries

The rains failed to come again in 1983. It was the second year in a row that the Tigray and Eritrean regions of Ethiopia had this disaster visited upon them and the famine grew worse. The Derg, the military committee that ran Ethiopia after the 1974 coup, faced increasing armed resistance from opposition groups in these regions. The Derg found the famine a convenient weapon against the opposition and hoped to starve them into submission. Until 1984, many of the humanitarian groups working in Ethiopia collaborated with the Derg in an effort to reach some of the people who needed famine relief. In that year the government restricted humanitarian assistance to people who supported it in the conflict. At the same time, the US government refused to send relief aid as a pressure tactic against the Derg, who sat on the opposite side of the United States in the Cold War.<sup>1</sup> These political, environmental, and human conditions collectively transformed the famine into a crisis of epic proportions. The BBC filmed this crisis with excruciating detail in 1984. After watching the film, a spectacle of horrifying starvation, Irish singer Bob Geldof determined to help end the famine.

Geldof immediately gathered friends and recorded a song as a benefit for Band Aid, the nongovernmental organization (NGO) he had started. The single "Do they know it's Christmas" pathologized Africans, who would live in a place "where nothing ever grows, no rain or rivers flow." The lyrics called for Europeans to "say a prayer, to pray

for the other ones," and to "thank God it's them instead of you." Geldof's vision for development echoed that of missionaries like David Livingstone, who 120 years earlier gave public lectures in Europe urging that Christian salvation and western technological interventions would save Africans from poverty and the slave trade. "[R]ural poverty was spectacle," Maurice Amutabi explained. "NGOs ... presented similar historical similarities with European missionaries, with their production of the 'savage' needing to be 'saved' and 'civilized.'" <sup>2</sup> By replicating the relations of power embedded in the civilizing mission of earlier centuries, NGOs' emphasis on poverty and reliance on a discourse of saving seemed all too familiar to Africans. This chapter examines the shift in nongovernmental interventions in Africa's development from the civilizing mission of the late nineteenth century to the "NGOization" of African development in the twenty-first.

While the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the United Nations (UN) have largely dictated African nations' development policies, NGOs have been the primary agents on the ground in Africa since the 1990s. Until recently, the vast majority of these NGOs have been international NGOs (INGOs) established, run, and funded by Europeans or North Americans. These were the new missionaries, the "secular missionaries."<sup>3</sup> Like their predecessors who came to end the slave trade and bring "civilization" to Africa a century earlier, NGOs function on a platform of humanitarianism, human rights, and development for the poor. Whether in the form of slave narratives collected by abolitionist missionaries or television commercials asking for donations to help feed starving African children, not-for-profit entities have thrived on the poverty of Africans and the industry of fundraising in order to "save" them. Both Christian missionaries and NGOs picked up the slack of government regimes by offering social services to people excluded from the wealth of the state. In this way, both missionaries and NGOs have acted as mediators between the people, on one side, and international funding agencies and governments, on the other.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Edmond J. Keller, "Drought, War, and the Politics of Famine in Ethiopia and Eritrea," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 30:4 (1992) 609–624.

<sup>2</sup> Maurice N. Amutabi, *The NGO Factor in Africa: The Case of Arrested Development in Kenya* (Routledge, 2006), 21.

<sup>3</sup> Larry Grubbs uses the term "secular missionaries" to describe American development interventions in Africa since the 1960s. Grubbs, *Secular Missionaries: Americans and African Development in the 1960s* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Pádraig Carmody, *Neoliberalism, Civil Society and Security in Africa* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

Beyond the religious aspect many differences have emerged between the European missionaries of earlier centuries and the NGOs working in Africa today. While missionaries and colonial officials did not always see eye to eye, they generally found common ground. For example, European missionaries attending the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland agreed to instill respect for colonial authorities among their African congregations.<sup>5</sup> In contrast, NGOs often have few allegiances to African governments. They rely on African governments for access to their citizens or cooperation over development funding, but NGO employees and volunteers often view African bureaucracies as obstacles rather than facilitators.

While many NGOs have vastly different agendas for and approaches to development than missionaries, their relationship to civil society and their tendency to concentrate on issues like poverty and what we now call "human rights" replicates much of the work early missionary societies did leading up to and during the colonial era. As Walt Rostow, the author of *The Stages of Economic Growth* and a founding economist of modernization theory, reminisced, "most of us felt, I suspect, some kind of moral or religious impulse to help those striving to come forward through development. In that sense we were in the line that reached back a century and more to the missionaries from Western societies."<sup>6</sup> This desire to help and a belief that one could and should help develop African societies has driven humanitarian interventions on the continent for the past 200 years.

## POVERTY RELIEF IN PRECOLONIAL AFRICA

Many African societies had traditions of poverty alleviation and communal welfare systems long before the influx of European missionaries and colonial officials. African political leaders gained legitimacy by distributing largess to their constituents and allies. Africans were adept at protecting themselves and their families during times of crisis. Cattle, considered a valuable commodity, could act as a savings bank to be cashed in for food or other goods when necessary. Agricultural communities such as those of Great

<sup>5</sup> Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Eerdmans, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> Rostow quoted in Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 70.

Zimbabwe (ca. 1250–1450 CE) developed elaborate storage systems to ensure a steady supply of grain during the non-harvest seasons. If stored properly, grain could last months or even years. Farmers planted crops resistant to drought and a variety of crops with staggered harvests to protect against low yields or failures. Shared labor practices, customs governing land use and land-ownership, flexible terms regarding bridewealth payments, and adjustable bartering systems allowed flexibility for individuals and families to deal with fluctuations in crop outputs and food supplies.<sup>7</sup> Muslim brotherhoods (*tariqa*), mosques, and indigenous churches offered hospitality, health services, poverty relief, and other forms of charity. Ethiopian Christian organizations, for example, have a long tradition of catering to the destitute, elderly, and diseased.<sup>8</sup>

John Iliffe argues that before European colonialism most Africans faced primarily conjunctural poverty, temporary poverty resulting from a crisis such as warfare or famine. Structural poverty, or the "long-term poverty of individuals due to their personal or social circumstances," generally applied to slaves or those who were "incapacitated" and therefore incapable of performing labor.<sup>9</sup> The word used to describe a poor person in many African languages translated as someone without kin rather than someone without property or income. Iliffe explains that structural poverty was less common in many areas of the continent where land was abundant before the colonial era. Conjunctural poverty resulting from natural disasters, warfare, drought, or famine could lead to structural poverty, and some crises left permanent marks on African societies. When famine struck, some people went in search of fresh grazing and farming land. If this was not available, people resorted to more drastic measures such as warfare or pawning their children or themselves.<sup>10</sup> For instance, under Shona customary law in colonial Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) a man with no access to land or property could become an "adoptee" of a wealthy person

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Diana Wylie, *Starving on a Full Stomach: Hunger and the Triumph of Cultural Racism in Modern South Africa* (University Press of Virginia, 2001), 46.

<sup>8</sup> John Iliffe, *The African Poor: A History* (Cambridge University Press, 2009 [orig. 1987]), 9–29.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Boubacar Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), 108–109.

and was treated like a son.<sup>11</sup> He was bound to work for his "father" for the rest of his life. In exchange his adopted parent provided him housing, food, and sometimes even one of his daughters for marriage. To be sure, this was a relationship of servitude, but many preferred it to starving.

Temporary relationships of servitude were designed to help individuals or families deal with economic shocks. Parents temporarily pawned their children when they knew they could not feed them. They gave their children over to distant relatives with the resources to care for them, hoping their children could return in better times. Children could live and work with neighbors or kin to pay off debts their parents had incurred. Though during the height of the transatlantic slave trade these relationships more frequently led to permanent enslavement, the original intention of such institutions was temporary reprieve from a disaster and the prevention of permanent or structural poverty.

During the twentieth century, John Iliffe argues, structural poverty became more pervasive than conjunctural poverty and sometimes families became a liability rather than a resource. When European settlers and colonizers claimed land in Africa, they often introduced new practices of land tenure that emphasized individual ownership, which limited Africans' access to viable farmland. Migrant labor systems brought on new forms of structural poverty in which able-bodied young men and the families they left behind were regularly impoverished by unemployment and low wages.<sup>12</sup> The increase in monogamy among Christian Africans reduced the size of extended kin networks to call upon during times of crisis. Abolition of slavery also removed the possibility of pawning children and other forms of temporary servitude that helped families mitigate hardship. Some forms of poverty alleviation endured during the colonial era, such as charity and hospitality offered by Muslim brotherhoods or Christian churches. Overall, however, the social and economic changes that came with colonialism left more Africans facing structural, long-term poverty.

<sup>11</sup> J. F. Holleman, *Shona Customary Law: With Reference to Kinship, Marriage, the Family and the Estate* (Manchester University Press, 1969 [orig. Institute for Social Research, University of Zambia, 1952]), 125.

<sup>12</sup> Iliffe, *The African Poor*, 276.

### 8.1 Usufruct land tenure as a safety net

Usufruct land rights confer the rights to use land, usually on a temporary basis, to those who do not have ownership claims to the land. According to Ambe Njoh, land in the forest and coastal zones of West Africa "was always a collectively held usufruct" in the sense that individuals applied to chiefs or elders for permission to cultivate.<sup>1</sup> Though individual landownership was recognized in the Asante kingdom of Ghana during the nineteenth century, landless members of the kingdom were not left to starve. As historian Gareth Austin explains, "cultivation rights were virtually a free good. Land-owning stools offered the right to grow food, literally *didi asaseso*, 'to eat on the soil,' without charging anything that could be described as rent, to both subjects and non-subjects, providing that they performed the duties of subjects."<sup>2</sup> Similarly, a *mothami* (one with usufruct rights) in Kikuyuland, Kenya would be given access to land as long as he agreed to help with clearing, house building, and other communal tasks.<sup>3</sup> If he refused or caused disruptions in the community, his usufruct rights could be revoked. In colonial Zimbabwe the Shona community ward, or *dunhu*, conferred land use rights onto individuals.<sup>4</sup> Anyone recognized as a member of the *dunhu* had building and cultivation rights there. Community membership was based on residence rather than kinship, so as long as someone was accepted into the *dunhu* they could access these resources. These mechanisms for providing propertyless people access to land – whether temporary or permanent – helped alleviate hardship for many farmers and herders during the precolonial era. They offered individuals with no or few kin to support them a safety net and a way to build or rebuild their wealth and status.

While some of these practices continued during the twentieth century and in some cases still exist today, colonial policies of land tenure led to the alienation of land for many people. Jomo Kenyatta argued that European settlers who arrived in Kikuyuland in the early twentieth century exploited Kikuyu "generosity." Not only did they claim ownership over lands for which they had acquired only usufruct rights, but they did not fulfill their obligations to respect Kikuyu customs and ways of

life. The British colonial administration upheld and in some cases conferred the settlers' right to landownership because they mistook communally held land as a resource up for grabs. The transition from kinship-based ownership and usufruct land rights to private, individual landownership, especially in agricultural societies, increased structural poverty. People without landed property became dependent on their labor, a less lucrative asset in the colonial economy, as their primary source of income. This is exactly the scenario that resulted in the impoverishment of "squatters" in Kikuyuland and ultimately sparked the Mau Mau anticolonial movement in 1950s Kenya.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ambe J. Njoh, *Tradition, Culture and Development in Africa: Historical Lessons for Modern Development Planning* (Ashgate, 2006), 73.

<sup>2</sup> Gareth Austin, *Labour, Land, and Capital in Ghana: From Slavery to Free Labour in Asante, 1807–1956* (University of Rochester Press, 2005), 103.

<sup>3</sup> Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu* (Vintage Books, 1965 [1938]), 34–35.

<sup>4</sup> Holleman, *Shona Customary Law*, 11–12.

<sup>5</sup> Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau, 1905–63* (James Currey, 1987).

## MISSIONARIES AND COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT

Christian missionaries came to Africa equipped with the rhetoric of salvation and financial backing from Europe and North America. Their antislavery campaign offered a compelling justification for intervention. Western abolitionist discourses described African slavery as oppressive and unproductive, void of both humanity and economic development. Missionaries saw pawning and other forms of enslavement not as temporary means to deal with conjunctural poverty but rather as the fundamental impoverishment of African cultures. As Chapter 1 explains in greater detail, missionaries viewed Africa as a blank slate for spreading Christianity, "legitimate commerce," and "civilization." This religious movement for universal humanism launched the first foreign-led development initiative as well as what would become known as "human rights" in Africa.

The reality of mission work was quite different from the ideal. Missionaries did not anticipate that African leaders would perceive them as rival chiefs or that "legitimate" trade could perpetuate slavery

rather than bring about emancipation. Many products Europeans encouraged, such as cloves from the Zanzibar Islands and rubber from the Belgian Congo, were produced, collected, or transported by enslaved or forced labor. By advocating for legitimate trade, missionaries (and, later, colonial officials) unwittingly supported industries that employed coercive labor tactics and reinforced or replicated master-slave relationships.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, Africans who allied with missionaries often did so not for their message of salvation so much as their ability to access valuable foreign imports like guns, and for diplomatic reasons. Chief Moshoeshoe of the Sotho Kingdom in southern Africa invited the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) to his kingdom in 1832 to protect his people from invading rivals and raise his profile as a powerful and respected ruler. When the alliance became detrimental to his political authority, he distanced himself from the mission. Missionary interests conflicted with those of African leaders in the Buganda Kingdom as well. In 1888 a Muslim man named Kalema became the king of Buganda and drove out European missionaries and their Christians converts. British colonial forces came to the aid of the missionaries by ousting King Kalema and claiming a protectorate over Buganda in 1900.

The Buganda case reminds us that, whether intentional or not, missionaries paved the way for colonialism and colonial development programs. Missionaries relied on grants-in-aid from governments to run their churches and schools. In return, missionaries carried out much of the day-to-day work of colonial development and helped to forge the practical aspects of the development episteme. In Italian and Portuguese African colonies the Catholic Church and the state collaborated explicitly to "civilize" Africans, one parish at a time. Before the French West Africa administration imposed the separation of church and state in colonial affairs, religious leaders like Charles Lavigerie, founder of the White Fathers mission, held enormous sway in government affairs. British colonial welfare policies consistently relied on missionaries to carry out community development projects. Colonial welfare programs implemented across the continent in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s could not have existed without the volunteer efforts of private organizations. In emphasizing self-help, self-sufficiency, cooperatives, and neighborhood savings schemes, European officials looked to civil society to create its own safety net. When and where indigenous systems of support collapsed

<sup>13</sup> Frederick Cooper, *From Slaves to Squatters: Plantation Labor and Agriculture in Zanzibar and Coastal Kenya, 1890–1925* (Yale University Press, 1980).

under colonialism, Africans turned to missions for help. They sought out missions to educate their children, access medical care, find housing, and care for their families when food was scarce. Missionaries provided many of the social services that kin were unable and colonial governments were unwilling to offer, becoming the first line of defense against poverty.

Missionaries' role in the politics of colonial development became evident during the rise of nationalism in the 1950s. In Kenya, for example, missionaries joined the British government's effort to suppress the anticolonial movement, Mau Mau. The Christian Council of Kenya (CCK) directly intervened in the conflict by helping to "rehabilitate" suspected Mau Mau supporters among the Kikuyu. Missionaries made education, healthcare, and other social welfare benefits available to those who denounced Mau Mau. Many Kikuyu people obliged, though they had little choice in the matter. While clearly opposed to Mau Mau, the CCK did criticize the colonial administration for its violent and inhumane tactics against suspected rebels.<sup>14</sup>

By the 1950s and 1960s many missions that came to Africa in earlier decades had morphed into indigenous African churches with African leadership. From that point on the new foreign missionaries who arrived fell into the same category as any nonlocal, nongovernment development organization, what we now call INGOs (international nongovernmental organizations). Most Christian INGOs hired Africans to work for their organizations at the local level but kept westerners at the helm. The language of the missionary movement had shifted. As Firoze Manji and Carl O'Coill note, "It was no longer that Africans were 'uncivilized.' Instead, they were 'underdeveloped.' Either way, the 'civilized' or 'developed' European has a role to play in 'civilizing' or 'developing' Africa."<sup>15</sup> There are certainly ideological differences between the projects to free slaves, "civilize" and convert "heathens," and develop the poor. However, the pivotal role of contemporary INGOs in Africa's development work, their prevalence in African civil society, and their interventionist agendas expose their uncanny resemblance to colonial-era missionaries.

<sup>14</sup> Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya* (Henry Holt, 2005), 299–303.

<sup>15</sup> Firoze Manji and Carl O'Coill, "The Missionary Position: NGOs and Development in Africa," *International Affairs* 78:3 (2002) 567–583 at 574.

## 8.2 Missionaries in the twenty-first century

Independence in Africa did not spell the end of Christian missionaries to the continent; quite the contrary, in fact. Between short mission trips, long-term missionaries, and gap-year mission trips for young people, more missionaries are going to Africa in the early twenty-first century than any time in the past. Some of the language of missionizing has changed; for instance, Methodists now send "mission cow-orkers" instead of "missionaries." Nevertheless, the goal of proselytization through development work remains remarkably similar. Like missionaries of the nineteenth century, those of the twenty-first also build schools for Africans, in part so that converts can learn to read the Bible. The framing of missionizing has changed in the past fifty years from proselytism to humanitarian work, even though speaking about Christian doctrine is still a part of the process. Six of the seven most prominent international evangelical missionary organizations concentrate their efforts on "relief and development."<sup>1</sup> The largest of these groups is World Vision with a budget of \$2.6 billion and more than 40,000 employees across the world. World Vision, which defines its employees as evangelical humanitarians, began in 1950 when American Bob Pierce sought to support the work of missionary organizations in Asia. He focused on orphanages and quickly pioneered child sponsorship programs, the leading method of fundraising for evangelical groups in the 1940s and 1950s. The fundraising combination of humanitarian child sponsorship with Christianization still accounts for almost half of World Vision's annual budget. World Vision introduced programming in Africa once African countries gained independence in the 1960s and 1970s. Today religious groups constitute a significant minority of NGOs in Africa.

<sup>1</sup> David King, "The New Internationalists: World Vision and the Revival of American Evangelical Humanitarianism, 1950–2010," *Religions* 3:4 (2012) 922–949 at 924.

## HUMANITARIANISM, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND THE NGO IN AFRICA

The idea of natural rights emerged from the Enlightenment and, more importantly, the Haitian, French, and American Revolutions, as well as the global antislavery movement. The discourse on human rights became more pervasive as humanitarian work became more secular during the twentieth century. The interwar period was a fertile time for discussions of human rights, humanity, and humanitarianism, but it was in the wake of World War II with the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and the rise of independence movements in Asia and Africa that the language of human rights became popular in Africa. No clear or single definition of "human rights" existed. Cultures, circumstances, and experiences produced widely disparate understandings of this concept.

The 1948 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights listed thirty different articles defining universal human rights. Among others, the articles included freedom from discrimination due to "race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status" (Article 2); freedom from slavery (Article 4); the "right to a nationality" (Article 15); the "right to freedom of opinion and expression" (Article 19); and the "right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives" (Article 21). Article 21 goes on to state that "the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of the government" and that "universal and equal suffrage" shall be in place. The hypocrisy of imperial powers drafting this document in 1948 was not lost on Africans, most of whom remained under colonial rule until at least 1960.

Africans were likewise frustrated with the conception of human rights as enshrined in the UN's declaration because their position was proof that these rights were not "universal." Bonny Ibhawoh argues that African concepts of rights differed in three ways from those of the Enlightenment tradition in the west. First, rights are generally understood within the context of the family or community rather than the abstract individual. Second, African societies tended to link rights with duties, so that "[f]or every right to which a member of society was entitled, there was a corresponding communal duty."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Bonny Ibhawoh, *Imperialism and Human Rights: Colonial Discourses of Rights and Liberties in African History* (State University of New York Press, 2007), 23.

Third, whereas Europeans and Americans defined and conferred rights through legal systems, Africans did so through negotiation, education, or other forms of socialization. Ibhawoh demonstrates that, in the case of Nigeria, many Africans adopted the western language of "human rights" after 1948 in order to argue for independence or, at the very least, greater representation in colonial administrations. In Africa the history of "human rights" as defined by the UN is therefore inextricably tied up with the history of anticolonial nationalism. African demands for human rights, now disconnected from a sense of duty, translated into all sorts of campaigns for equality: equal pay for equal work, men's and women's enfranchisement, the right to form labor unions and negotiate for better pay and benefits, and many other movements that fueled anticolonial sentiment in the 1950s and 1960s.

The growing importance of NGOs coincided with the standardization of human rights discourses and the secularization of humanitarian interventions in Africa and elsewhere. Usage of the term "NGO" or "nongovernmental organization" came out of the creation of the UN in 1945. The charter for the UN, which is an intergovernmental organization, gave non-state agencies observer status at UN meetings. This designation was initially used for international organizations not associated with any government or political party. Eventually, the term "NGO" gained greater usage, especially in the 1970s, and referred to any not-for-profit organization unaffiliated with a government. NGOs are no longer confined to international organizations and can be found at the local, regional, national, and international levels. Scholars have recently distinguished between internationally funded NGOs (INGOs) and local NGOs (LNGOs), a clarification that is key to understanding the history of development in Africa.

INGOs that arrived in African nations in the postcolonial era embraced the discourse on human rights, but they generally interpreted this to mean individualized rights, not collective ones. INGOs used the language of human rights to pressure development agencies and governments to fund the extension of education, healthcare, housing, and environmental resources. They framed these issues as African humanitarian problems that required a western development solution. Michael Barnett notes that "human rights activists argued in favor of a form of cultural relativism that accepted that Western peoples were indeed superior, but that also respected local cultures and envisioned that Africans would eventually attain the 'ability to run their own

affairs.”<sup>17</sup> This was a neocolonial version of the civilizing mission; Africans could eventually govern themselves, but not until they were enlightened through western intervention.

The discourse of human rights resurfaced in the 1990s and early 2000s when European politicians hypocritically condemned African leaders for not protecting their citizens’ rights, the very rights European colonial powers denied Africans at the time of the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Western governments’ push to identify human rights abuses in Africa allowed them to claim moral superiority without recognizing the legacies of colonialism. For example, when the World Bank withdrew Uganda’s development funding in response to the country’s anti-homosexuality law in 2014, it punished a postcolonial regime for doubling down on a law first implemented under British colonialism. It is important to disentangle the recent politics of human rights discourses, which largely characterize African leaders as despotic and inhumane, from the longer history of humanitarian intervention and the shifting meaning of “rights” in Africa.

## THE NGOIZATION OF AFRICA

Anthropologist James Ferguson has stated that the IMF and World Bank’s Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) were intended to counter state oppression by generating “a newly vital ‘civil society’” and promoting “a new sort of ‘governance’ that would be both more democratic and more economically efficient.” This is the essence of neoliberalism, or the revived call for economic liberalization (the “free market”) and the notion that these economic policies foster a liberal social and political environment. Instead of democratic engagement between civil society and African governments, Ferguson argues, these changes brought on “swarms of new ‘nongovernmental organizations’ (NGOs),” drawn to Africa because of “the shift in donor policies that moved funding for projects away from mistrusted state bureaucrats and into what were understood as more ‘direct’ or ‘grassroots’ channels of implementation.”<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Cornell University Press, 2011), 74.

<sup>18</sup> James Ferguson, *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order* (Duke University Press, 2006), 38.

The NGO has replaced the state as the primary entity directing development work in Africa. This process has been termed the “NGOization” of Africa. During the final decade of the twentieth century, the macroeconomic drive of nation-states gave way to NGOs, the non-state entities providing direct services and aid to local communities. In his study about the creation of “the Sahel” as a site for humanitarian intervention, Gregory Mann traces the origins of the NGOization of African societies back to the postwar period when emerging nationalists directed economic policies toward local communities and identified “social forces as the primary constraint on economic growth.”<sup>19</sup> As newly minted nations embraced grand visions of modernization, development experts began to perceive rural and “traditional” social groups as obstacles. In the case of the West African Sahel, Mann argues, the NGO performed the work of management and intervention, or what is called “governmentality,” that should have been done by the nation-state. This form of governmentality, which is actually “nongovernmentality,” identifies local or regional communities (“the Sahel”) – rather than the nation – as the target of specific development interventions. Such a focus on a particular region or group, especially one that did not exist within the boundaries of the nation, required an international approach by an INGO.

As Ferguson outlined it, NGOization has permeated African civil society. Many political scientists and sociologists agree that an active civil society is vital to a functional democracy, but the assumption in such a statement is that civil society consists primarily of citizens. However, by the end of the twentieth century, the majority of the organizations, institutions, and people that have comprised “civil society” in African countries originated in the west; they were not citizens of African countries. Even where citizens, locally owned business, and national or community-based religious organizations have actively participated in the public sphere and engaged in social and political movements, one often discovers the overwhelming influence of foreign financing and directives (see Figure 8.1).<sup>20</sup> This NGOization of African civil societies demonstrates the extent to which the development epis-teme and development funding has permeated everyday life in Africa.

<sup>19</sup> Gregory Mann, *From Empires to NGOS in the West African Sahel: The Road to Nongovernmentality* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), 8.

<sup>20</sup> Jane I. Guyer, “The Spatial Dimensions of Civil Society in Africa: An Anthropologist Looks at Nigeria,” in John W. Harbeson, Donald Rothchild, and Naomi Chazan, eds., *Civil Society and the State in Africa* (Lynne Rienner, 1994).



**FIGURE 8.1** NGO signs on the road leading into Balaka District in southern Malawi. Source: Photo taken by Donald J. Treiman. Printed with permission of photographer

## AFRICAN WOMEN AND THE RISE OF THE LNGO

The NGOization of Africa has led to increased attention and funding for African women, but this is not the first time African women have entered the development spotlight. Nineteenth-century missionaries offered concubines refuge from the slave trade, humanitarian agencies such as St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance rallied against female circumcision and forced marriage of African girls in the 1920s and 1930s, and feminist-oriented NGOs of the twenty-first century continue to fight for the rights of African girls and women. The controversy over female circumcision (more recently called female genital cutting [FGC]), as discussed in Chapter 4, is one example, but other colonial campaigns were waged against forced marriage, child marriage, polygamy, bridewealth exchange, and Muslim practices of veiling or secluding women. Some African women embraced these efforts to change their lives, while others fought vehemently against what they considered "westernization." International feminist intervention into the lives of African women intensified in the postcolonial period and drew strength from African women's own political and social mobilization after the Second World War. Today much international and local funding has been earmarked for work specifically dealing with

women and gender. African women and girls have become the key to unlocking valuable development dollars, but they have also taken advantage of this financial interest in their lives to build their own LNGOs.

The international campaign to save African women and girls took off during the 1930s and 1940s. European women's groups in Africa, such as the East African Women's League (EAWL) in Kenya and the Ligue pour la Protection de l'Enfance Noire in Belgian Congo, promoted work among African women to reduce infant mortality and improve child welfare. Some women's organizations in Africa were initially designed to aid white women living in the colonies and turned their attention toward African women after World War I. For example, until the mid-1920s the EAWL focused on white women's enfranchisement and fears about the sexual assault of European women by African men. Not until the 1930s did it advocate for African women's instruction in hygiene, nursing, sewing, and welfare.<sup>21</sup> Middle-class and elite African women in Nigeria, Mali, Congo, Gabon, Zanzibar, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Senegal, and elsewhere – those who viewed themselves as "modern" and respectable – launched their own campaigns to eradicate prostitution, child labor, crime, and diseases, and many fought to expand girls' education. These women launched some of the first LNGOs and helped to bolster an African civil society in the colonial and postcolonial era.

Women's issues became sidelined during the 1960s as national governments put their energies toward top-down modernization projects, but African women kept up the pressure. Activists such as Wangari Maathai, who established the Green Belt Movement in the late 1970s and fought hard for women's political and economic rights in Kenya in the 1980s and 1990s, helped to shift the focus of the development discourse back toward gender. Rather than emphasizing the impact of African culture on women, African women's rights activists have linked gender to development problems like political oppression and concerns about the environment. African women leaders continue to define development on their own terms and challenge the agendas of international development agents. The Maasai

<sup>21</sup> *East African Standard*, January 10, 1920, 12A, and June 19, 1920, 17; Kenya National Archives (KNA) AB/14/47, Report on the Education of Women and Girls in Kenya, 1944; KNA MSS/61/274, Circular from T. G. Benson, Principal of Jeanes School, Jeanes School Kenya, 1937.

Women's Development Organization (MWEDO) in Tanzania is a case in point. Dorothy Hodgson explains how this group of Maasai women created an LNGO to put their interests and needs ahead of those other women and development agents had identified for them. MWEDO not only decentered human rights in the development discourse, which others had defined as the need to eradicate FGM, but also challenged foreign and national stereotypes about Maasai communities.<sup>22</sup> By doing so MWEDO and other African women have challenged the push for individual versus collective rights.

Arturo Escobar contends that the increased "visibility" of women, peasants, and the environment in the development discourse does not necessarily represent their empowerment so much as it represents the power of this discourse to direct its gaze onto these objects of intervention.<sup>23</sup> The success of African women's LNGOs in their own countries and communities, however, indicates that African women have found ways to redirect this discourse and its gaze to their benefit. Community revitalization in Africa has depended on voluntary labor and women's grassroots organization. Despite the long history of international intervention in African development, especially where it concerns African women, LNGOs headed by African women have made a difference in development policies, and they have reshaped civil society to suit their needs and interests.

### 8.3 The Green Belt Movement

The late Wangari Maathai started the Green Belt Movement (GBM) in 1977 by organizing a group of women to plant trees and form a "green belt" in the city of Nairobi, Kenya. The Green Belt Movement is a "grassroots" NGO, which, according to Maathai, means that it works toward "community development" and insists that "the community must own the project."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Dorothy Hodgson, "These Are Not Our Priorities": Maasai Women, Human Rights, and the Problem of Culture," in Dorothy Hodgson, ed., *Gender and Culture at the Limit of Rights* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 138–157.

<sup>23</sup> Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton University Press, 2012 [1995]), 155.

Maathai described how the movement spread in her 2006 memoir, *Unbowed*.

By the mid-1980s, the Green Belt Movement had grown significantly and I had never been busier. I was working up to eighteen hours a day. By now, nearly two thousand women's groups were managing nurseries and planting and tending trees and more than a thousand green belts were being run by schools and students. Together, we had planted several million trees. Eventually, the Green Belt Movement would help establish more than six thousand nurseries, managed by six hundred community-based networks; involve several thousand women, and men, in its activities; and, by the early years of the twenty-first century, have planted more than thirty million trees in Kenya alone.<sup>2</sup>

Maathai's Green Belt Movement challenged the developmentalist agenda of the Kenyan state, which had pushed for infrastructural expansion and urbanization at the expense of the environment. The GBM was not only an environmental organization but also a women's community grassroots movement. Its success rested on the fact that women across Kenya and eventually in other areas of the continent worked tirelessly to organize their communities and restore the green spaces in their cities. The GBM became a model for what an LNGO should be: a community effort that challenged the state's destructive development schemes and fought for the rights of its citizens on their own terms.

<sup>1</sup> Wangari Maathai, *The Green Belt Movement: Sharing the Approach and the Experience* (Lantern Books, 2004), 86.

<sup>2</sup> Wangari Maathai, *Unbowed: A Memoir* (Anchor Books, 2006), 175.

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Foreign humanitarianism has been a critical factor in Africa's welfare and development programs since the influx of European Christian missionaries during the nineteenth century. Like these missionaries the international nongovernmental organizations of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries view themselves as humanitarians, this time saving lives rather than souls. Both missionaries and INGOs used the rhetoric of western superiority, whether in terms of "civilization" or "development," to justify their intervention in Africa. Both also highlighted the issues of poverty and human

rights, problems that became structural during the colonial era and intensified in the late twentieth century. Missionaries and NGOs have both set their sights on the local community (often an ethnic group), region, or continent rather than the colony or nation-state. This history recounting the rise of the NGO in Africa thus highlights the ways development has been broad in scope but narrow in practice and exposes the gaps in the macroeconomic policies of states and international development agencies. The ad hoc nature of development created a landscape of inequality, with differentiated experiences of education, health, and standards of living across Africa, a point we develop further in Part III of this book. This inequality, in turn, has perpetuated the demand for development interventions, and humanitarian nongovernmental organizations have responded in ways that hamstring postcolonial nations and attempt to remake African culture through human rights.

Africans have not been mere victims or recipients of development interventions. Many people have forged LNGOs that seek to revitalize African civil society and challenge the assumptions and tactics behind development policies of government authorities and INGOs. Some LNGOs have had to adopt western discourses of development in order to access funding that otherwise would go toward foreign development agents working in their communities. However, the work of LNGOs sheds light on the diverse interpretations of human rights and development that exist across the continent.

### Further Reading

- On poverty alleviation see John Iliffe, *The African Poor* (Cambridge University Press, 2009 [orig. 1987]); Nina Munk, *The Idealist: Jeffrey Sachs and the Quest to End Poverty* (Doubleday, 2013).
- On the role of missionaries in development see Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport, eds., *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social, and Cultural History* (University of California Press, 1997); Adrian Hastings, *The Church in Africa, 1450–1950* (Oxford University Press, 1994).
- On humanitarianism and human rights see Bronwen Everill and Josiah Kaplan, eds., *The History and Practice of Humanitarian Intervention and Aid in Africa* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Dorothy Hodgson, ed., *Gender and Culture at the Limit of Rights* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); Bonny Ibhawoh, *Imperialism and Human Rights: Colonial Discourses of Rights and Liberties in African History* (State University of New York Press,

2007); Linda Mahood, *Feminism and Voluntary Action: Eglantyne Jebb and Save the Children, 1876–1928* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Paul Tiyambe Zeleza and Philip J. McConaughay, eds., *Human Rights, the Rule of Law, and Development in Africa* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

On development and NGOs see Gregory Mann, *From Empires to NGOS in the West African Sahel: The Road to Nongovernmentality* (Cambridge University Press, 2015); and Sarah Michael, *Undermining Development: The Absence of Power among Local NGOs in Africa* (James Currey, 2004).

On gender and development see Corrie Decker, *Mobilizing Zanzibari Women: The Struggle for Respectability and Self-Reliance in Colonial East Africa* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Abosede A. George, *Making Modern Girls: A History of Girlhood, Labor, and Social Development in Colonial Lagos* (Ohio University Press, 2014); April Gordon, *Transforming Capitalism and Patriarchy: Gender and Development in Africa* (Lynne Rienner, 1996); and Michael Kevane, *Women and Development in Africa: How Gender Works* (Lynne Rienner, 2004).