Adaption und Kreativität in Afrika — Technologien und Bedeutungen in der Produktion von Ordnung und Unordnung

Felix Müller

MODEL TRANSFER IN THE MAKING:

CHANGING DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES OF, AND EXPECTATIONS TOWARDS, THE STATE IN ETHIOPIA AND GHANA

DFG

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Contact:

Richard Rottenburg (Co-Spokesperson)
DFG Priority Programme 1448
Adaptation and Creativity in Africa

University of Halle
Social Anthropology

Reichardtstraße 11
D-06114 Halle

Ulf Engel (Co-Spokesperson)
DFG Priority Programme 1448
Adaptation and Creativity in Africa

University of Leipzig
Centre for Area Studies

Thomaskirchhof 20
D-04109 Leipzig

Phone: +49/(0)341 973 02 65
e-mail: info@spp1448.de

www.spp1448.de

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Felix Müller

University of Leipzig, Centre for Area Studies
SPP 1448 Project "Changing stateness in Africa"

Content

1. Introduction[1]

This paper aims to contribute to the debate on the nature of the state in Africa by focusing on the subjective experiences of changing stateness in Africa. In the SPP 1448 sub-project "Changing stateness in Africa: Cameroon, Ethiopia and Ghana compared" we assume that the functions states have to perform, as well as the expectations of people regarding what states should do, are changing as a result of uneven processes of globalization. Firstly, we are interested in how, under these circumstances, state institutions master the adaptation and cultural coding of creativity when they translate external concepts of "state" into local ones — thus producing forms of order. Secondly, we investigate how core actors in these processes of adaptation and cultural coding — meaning discourse entrepreneurs such as academics, journalists, NGO representatives and "traditional" authorities — imagine and practice changing stateness in Africa.

The rather normative debate in the humanities and social sciences on the state in sub-Saharan Africa has been informed by a certain interpretation of Max Weber's writings on authority. Based on this, a model of statehood which is said to exist in the Western world has commonly been taken as a basis for scholarly engagement with politics in Africa. States in Africa have then often been measured in terms of deviations from this idealized model. In noteworthy contributions to the debate, states in Africa were interpreted as "overdeveloped" (Leys 1976), juridically yet not empirically legitimized "quasi states" (Jackson and Rosberg 1982; Jackson and Rosberg 1986), "fictive" (Sandbrook and Barker 1985), or "swollen" (Diamond 1987). They were seen as "weak states" (Reno 1997, 1998), "shadow states" (O'Brien 1998), "criminalized states" (Bayart, Ellis, and Hibou 1999), "privatized states" (Tangri 1999), "failed states" (Herbst 1996; Cliffe and Luckham 1999), "collapsed states" (Zartman 1995), "inverted states" (Forrest 1998), or "states in decay" (Joseph 1999; von Trotha 2000). In order to understand the exercise of power of central states in post-colonial Africa, a theory of neo-patrimonialism was developed (Clapham 1982; Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Chabal and Daloz 1999; van de Walle 2001) and reconsidered (Therkildsen 2005; Erdmann and Engel 2007; Pitcher, Moran, and Johnston 2009; Mkandawire 2013), and it was suggested to distinguish different "degrees of statehood" (Clapham 1998).

Many of these insightful ideas remain important until today. They relate to the post-1960 period during which practitioners and academics had high expectations towards the newly independent African states. By the late 1970s, however, it became increasingly obvious that many of these expectations had not been met, which gave rise — particularly in political science — to the development of regime typologies that aimed at explaining African states' partial "failure" to deliver. Yet this approach is often focused on what states in Africa *lack*, on what they are *not*. Little energy has been invested in finding creative ways to think about the nature of the state in Africa. This matters especially in the post-Cold War context, in which the disappearance of bloc ties and the emergence of new donors have arguably increased African states' ability to maneuver. In order to go beyond a rather formal way of looking at states in Africa, we ask how they are actually interpreted and experienced by state and crucial non-state actors who perform and live in these states. In order to be able to compare a large range of experiences with

stateness, we have been focusing on Cameroon (mainly French-colonial background), Ghana (mainly British-colonial background), and Ethiopia (no colonial background), of which the latter two are central to this paper.[2] The research was based on semi-structured and open qualitative interviews as well as document and newspaper analysis. Due to our qualitative approach, we refrain from large-scale generalizability at this point.

During October and November 2013, 21 interviews with Ethiopian state officials, former state officials, intellectuals not affiliated with the state, NGO representatives, and one foreign expert were conducted in Addis Ababa. In February and March 2014, 29 interviews with Ghanaian state officials, "traditional" authorities, non-state intellectuals, NGO representatives, and foreign experts followed in Greater Accra and Ghana's Eastern Region. In both Addis Ababa and Accra, newspaper archives were consulted. The present paper is mostly based on the findings of these two research trips.

Aiming at the identification of concrete phenomena based on which our core interest in the adaptation of externally originated state concepts, and the resulting changes in stateness, could be examined, field work indicated that a focus on the transfer of the developmental state model, and on interviewees' perceptions of both the model and its transfer, would be promising. It needs to be stressed that the open design of the interviews ensured that it was always the interview partners themselves who brought up this particular model, which is commonly associated with East Asia. Thus, in this paper I examine how the success of Asian economies has been interpreted among Ghanaian and Ethiopian state representatives and intellectuals, and how these perceptions have influenced their policy choices (i.e. adaptation) and expectations towards the state.

I argue that in the process of increased attention to several Asian countries' economic rise starting in the 1960s, a social technology which is usually referred to as *developmental state*[3] has become an influential source of inspiration for policy makers and intellectuals looking for development strategies that might be applicable to their domestic contexts. Contrary to the assumption of a diffusion of ideas from powerful areas to less powerful ones, the developmental state model has made its way to Ethiopia and Ghana as a result of deliberate considerations of policy makers and intellectuals. Its journey is understood here as processes of cultural transfers (Tenbruck 1992; Espagne 1999; Middell 2000). The concept of cultural transfers was developed by French cultural historians in the late 1980s, in an attempt to find an analytical framework for the study of interactions between different societies. Almost simultaneously, and also inspired by the study of translation, the literature on travelling concepts emerged. While this project started out from the cultural transfer literature, it has also been permeable to the idea of travelling concepts, and acknowledges that it derives from the search for answers to similar observations (Middell 2014; see also Czarniawska and Joerges 1996; Behrends, Park, and Rottenburg 2014).

The central assumptions of the cultural transfer approach are that strategic groups identify certain deficits in their society and make use of intermediaries who actively search for ideas or models in other cultures. Some of these ideas or models are then identified as appropriate

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2   In phase III of the SPP 1448, we are introducing Mozambique (Portuguese-colonial background) as a fourth case study.

3   The concept of the developmental state was coined by Chalmers Johnson (1982) with regard to Japan. However, in its rise to prominence in the development discourse, the concept was increasingly associated with the so-called tiger states (UNECA 2013). For further information, and for a critique of pessimistic arguments regarding the transferability of the model to African settings, see especially Mkandawire (2001).

problem solving devices (social technologies), followed by key actors' attempts to integrate them into the domestic realm (often with the support of particular media), either by hiding their external origin or by making it explicit. Overall, these assumptions correspond to those which form the basis of the travelling concepts approach. Undoubtedly, a dimension of external agency and attempts at enforcement must be considered in the African context (colonial borders, bureaucratic legacies and structural adjustment programmes are the most obvious examples). Furthermore, my findings suggest that orientation towards models developed elsewhere is facilitated if actors in the domain of origin who already have experience with the model in question are willing to engage in, and actively support, a process of transfer.

In order to shed empirical light on processes of adapting external state concepts, I examine a) Ethiopian and Ghanaian key actors' analyses of internal challenges and their incentives to orientate themselves towards East Asian state models, b) the interaction with the role model countries, and c) the relevance of the compatibility of new models with already familiar ones. This examination will also widen our understanding of the role which other development paradigms play today in policy making and imagining an ideal state in Ethiopia and Ghana.

2. Case study: Ethiopia

After more than a decade of civil war of various insurgency forces against the *Derg* regime, the *Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front* (EPRDF), led by the *Tigrayan People's Liberation Front* (TPLF), managed to seize control over Addis Ababa in May 1991 (Pankhurst 2001, 276-77). From the beginning of its rule, and despite its own Marxist-Leninist roots, the EPRDF argued that socialism, which had been the former official state doctrine, was no longer a viable option. Against the background of the demise of the Soviet Union, and probably due to the necessity to offer something other than the former leaders, there was lots of talk about the introduction of free market policies in the government newspaper *Ethiopian Herald* in the second half of 1991. Nevertheless, representatives of the transitional government simultaneously stressed the need for state involvement in the economy (*Ethiopian Herald*, July 9, 1991; September 13, 1991). Even though policies of market liberalization were adopted within the framework of structural adjustment, "power, policy-making, and resources [have been] controlled by, and in the direct interests of, the TPLF [...]" (Alemayehu 2008, 119).

According to Sebhat Nega, who has been with the TPLF since it was established, the essential elements of the developmental state model were discussed within the EPRDF already before its successful grip on power in mid-1991 (even though the term itself may not have been used at that time). When I met Sebhat in November 2013, he directed the Ethiopian International Institute for Peace and Development (EIIPD), a training facility for diplomats of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). He argued that there had also been plans to establish a free market economy, but since there was no capitalist or middle class, the EPRDF had to step in. Within the party network, the middle class has been seen as

> *the owner of the system, free market economy. [...] The free market economy cannot function by itself, especially under Ethiopian condition. Therefore, there must be a devel-*

opmental state which intervenes selectively whenever the market fails (interview n° 18, November 10, 2013).[4]

Sebhat Nega pointed out that "from day one, before we entered Addis, we were talking about what should be the role of the government in a free [...] market economy" (interview n° 18, November 10, 2013), and that it was common sense that the government would have to play a role. Thus, even though Ethiopia's political leaders initially spoke in the neoliberal jargon of the early 1990s, their conviction that the state needs to guide the economy had remained strong.

A senior researcher of the EIIPD stated that "in 2010 EPRDF declared that it is the dominant party in Ethiopia, and its political economy doctrine is democratic developmental state model" (interview n° 2, October 16, 2013). Like Sebhat Nega, he emphasized that Ethiopia had been implementing the vision of a *democratic* developmental state, making it "different from authoritarian type of the Far East, and from state capitalism type of the West" (interview n° 2, October 16, 2013).[5] These statements should be read against the background of a scholarly debate on the compatibility or incompatibility of democratic and developmental governance (Leftwich 2005; UNECA 2013; on related issues Rodrik 1992). As the developmental state model is commonly associated with authoritarian governance, it seems that Ethiopian state representatives feel they need to justify their version of the model by emphasizing its allegedly democratic element.

Elaborating what he understands by democracy in the Ethiopian context, the state-affiliated researcher argued that Ethiopia's multicultural and multiethnic nature make the country different from Asian ones; therefore, "the principle of democracy" in Ethiopia is to address linguistic, cultural, and religious diversity, and to distribute resources equitably (interview n° 2, October 16, 2013). This view is connected to a specific reading of nations going back to Stalin's understanding of the concept, based on which Ethiopia was redefined and restructured from a centralized to a federal multinational state under EPRDF rule (Abbink 2006; Clapham 2002; Dereje 2008). In a similar fashion, an official document on *Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy* states that

> *[d]emocracy guarantees that the members of the various nations, nationalities and religions in Ethiopia live in an atmosphere of tolerance. In the absence of a democratic order, national and religious divisions will invariably intensify... (FDRE 2002, 6).*

On a related note, the late Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi (1955–2012) argued in a scholarly article that a developmental state "must achieve broad support for its development agenda" (Meles 2011, 168), but "[w]hether it builds such a consensus in the context of a fully democratic order or not does not determine its characteristics as a developmental state" (idem, 169). In other words, Meles was convinced that a developmental state (i. e. the Ethiopian state) does not have to be democratic (in the liberal sense) in order to achieve its goals.

Which particular countries do actually serve as role models to the Ethiopian state? A senior official from the MoFA said that inspiration for policy making came primarily from South Korea, Taiwan, China, India, and Vietnam. In his view, the reason for orienting towards these role

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4   A similar argument has been made comprehensively by Ethiopia's late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi (2011). Many interviewees described Meles as a very well-read leader exerting strong influence on the EPRDF government's policy decisions before his death in August 2012.

5   It seems that the interviewee did not use the term *state capitalism* to mean, for example, a state owning enterprises and making a profit from them, but rather a state whose policies are informed by capitalist ideology.

model countries is that Ethiopia can learn from them how to implement the idea of a developmental state. The official was convinced that the government needs to dominate activities like the building of dams and railways, and the provision of information technology. If private companies, especially multinational ones, were allowed to prevail in these areas, they would only divert money out of Ethiopia in his view (interview n° 3, October 21, 2013).

The MoFA senior official emphasized relations with China and described them as non-conditional in principal, but added that in the context of loans, Ethiopian officials are often asked to open a bank account in Hong Kong, so that someone from China can transfer money to that account in order to try to bribe the official. Cooperation with China injects corruption into Ethiopia's political system in the interviewee's view. He also pointed out that there is direct exchange with representatives of the Asian role models among the ministries, the EPRDF, in businesses, and among NGO workers.

> *We are following [South Korea's] path. From the ministries of trade, investment, technology, development, tourism, and agriculture, people go to South Korea and China, mainly, and are trained there (interview n° 3, October 21, 2013).*

According to the senior official, the major areas of training are institutional empowerment and work efficiency, and he was convinced that the trainings abroad have a substantial influence on the work of Ethiopians after their return. The importance of especially party-level exchange between Ethiopia and China was also mentioned by a researcher of the rather independent Ethiopian Economics Association (EEA) (interview n° 8, October 23, 2013).

A high-ranking EPRDF representative who has been to China himself explained that the deliberate orientation towards China had increased over the 2000s, following a split within the ruling party which strengthened the position of the "modernizers" vis-à-vis the proponents of more classical socialism.[6] Considering the interview with Sebhat Nega mentioned above, it seems clear that the relationship between the state and the economy has for a long time been discussed within the EPRDF. After the split in 2000/2001, the specific idea of the Ethiopian democratic developmental state took shape, which according to the EPRDF representative implied the necessity to increase exchange with those countries which had "miraculously" developed their economies through developmentalist policies. The stated intention has been to learn from their experiences in order to address internal challenges (interview n° 13, October 28, 2013). By and large, this strategy of cultural transfer was laid out officially in 2002:

> *Asia could play a very important role in our development. It provides the main example of successful development. In addition it is from Asia that we can get highly trained manpower and technical assistance inexpensively. We also need to take advantage of the remarkably growing Asian economy (FDRE 2002, 149).*[7]

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6   In early 2001, the combination of long-established personal rivalries, differing approaches to the war with Eritrea (1998–2000), and ideological disagreements caused a split within the TPLF leadership which in the long run strengthened the position of Meles Zenawi (Clapham 2009, 184). Several government members resigned. The interviewee used the term "modernizers" to refer to those within the party who argued in favor of developmentalism.

7   In this document, Japan is emphasized as a source of financial assistance (FDRE 2002, 149-51). Even though the "Japanization" (Bahru 2008) of Ethiopia in the first half of the 20th century is not mentioned, the text presents

Reflecting the defeat of what my interviewee called the classical socialists, the document states that "[i]t is only when we accept the fact that we have no choice but to enter the global economy […], we can realize democracy and development" (idem, 19).

Mutual visits of Chinese and Ethiopian officials have played an important role in shaping Ethiopians' perceptions of the Chinese state model, and these perceptions have in turn shaped certain features of the Ethiopian developmental state. For example, according to the EPRDF representative, the China Executive Leadership Academy Pudong in Shanghai served as a role model for Ethiopia's Meles Zenawi Leadership Academy, which is most of all involved in the training of civil servants. Ethiopian experts and five high officials had been sent to Shanghai for two weeks to observe how the Pudong Academy works. The team also included one member of the EPRDF executive committee, which makes the final decision on any proposal developed through a delegation's experience abroad (interview n° 13, October 28, 2013). In November 2014, representatives of the Meles Zenawi Leadership Academy and the Beijing Administrative College discussed in Addis Ababa how to strengthen their cooperation. As stated on the EPRDF's online presence, the Ethiopian Academy "wants to draw lessons in the areas of Curriculum Development, Teaching Methodology and Research from the best experiences of Beijing Administrative College" (EPRDF 2014).

It is, however, not only the training facility itself that served as a role model here; the interview also revealed that the Communist Party of China is seen as a party that has perfected its leadership — unfortunately, this was not described in more detail (interview n° 13, October 28, 2013). It seems that eventually, the EPRDF aims at emulating its imagination of the Chinese style of leadership; setting up leadership academies similar to China's is an intermediate step towards this overriding goal.

Another measure which has been directly influenced (and in fact made possible) by the Chinese experience is the establishment of a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Ethiopia.[8] The EPRDF representative associated SEZs directly with China and stressed that "[w]e believe that we need to have these zones" (interview n° 13, October 28, 2013).[9] He went on to say that Ethiopia's ruling party had established an "agency" for the development of SEZs, and that this agency was in direct contact with the China Association of Development Zones. So far, Chinese experts have been leading the Ethiopian agency for SEZs — by which the interviewee most likely referred to the Ethiopian Industrial Zones Development Corporation — which, according to the EPRDF representative, is due to their experience in implementing policies that are likely to attract foreign investment. He added that the obvious long-term goal was to learn how Ethiopians themselves could take care of zone development and attract investors.

Being engaged in party-level relations with China was described in the interview as very convenient, due to China's general courage to cooperate with African countries. This stands in stark contrast to the way in which the interviewee saw the cooperation with Western actors. He argued that they generally preferred neoliberal policies for Africa, and since an implementation of these would lead to a reduced role of the state, cooperation with countries like China

Japan as a development role model to learn from. During the interviews, however, Japan was rarely mentioned in this regard.

8   The Ethiopia Oriental Industrial Park, which has been developed by the private Qiyuan Group, is situated about 30 km outside of Addis Ababa and mainly produces "steel and other construction materials for Ethiopia's booming construction industry" (Bräutigam and Xiaoyang 2011, 36).

9   Even though such zones are of course not a Chinese invention, Ethiopian policy makers nowadays associate them almost exclusively with China.

was closer. Western parties were not interested in close cooperation and a true exchange of ideas, which in the view of this party representative has worked to further intensify Ethiopia's cooperation with Asian parties and governments.

Apart from China, the interviewee emphasized Ethiopia's strong relations with South Korea and the historical ties between the two countries. During the Korean War (1950-53), Ethiopian troops fought on the side of South Korea, which in the view of the EPRDF representative is one of the reasons why the South Korean government today feels it has the responsibility to assist the Ethiopian development effort. There is student exchange going on between the two countries, and in the last years several members of the Ethiopian ruling elite have gone to South Korea to learn about economic development. In fact, even though China is the primary role model in terms of leadership and leadership training, South Korea was described as most important regarding economic development:

> *Even though we have a lot of experiences even from China, we feel that the economic model that we are adhering is much more resemble the South Korean, the economic model (interview n° 13, October 28, 2013).*

Thus, the EPRDF representative shares the view of the MoFA official cited above, who stated that Ethiopia was most of all following the South Korean development path.

In more concrete terms, the party representative referred to Saemaul Undong, South Korea's New Village Movement introduced in the 1970s commonly described as President Park's self-help based rural development strategy that complemented the state's focus on export-oriented industrialization (see Jemal, Fikadu and Kim 2013; Claassen 2011; Korea Saemaul Undong Center 2014). According to the interviewee, many in the EPRDF think that due to South Korea's development progress, the concept is going to be obsolete there soon, but that Ethiopia can still benefit significantly from the idea. In 2012, South Koreans and Ethiopians agreed in Addis Ababa to set up a Saemaul Undong-related research center in which initially South Koreans will be involved, with the long-term goal of handing over the center entirely to Ethiopian leadership. The interviewee stated that the contract for this center had already been signed with the Ethiopian Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (interview n° 13, October 28, 2013).

An Ethiopian expert on NGO affairs experienced the transfer of development ideas between Ethiopia and South Korea personally. Accepting an invitation of the South Korean embassy in Ethiopia, the activist and other Ethiopians went to Korea for a two weeks stay some years ago.[10] At the Korea Saemaul Undong Center, the Ethiopian delegation was joined by around fifty people from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, who all participated in the training on how to make developmental states work, with a particular focus on how to mobilize the masses for the developmental cause. According to the activist, this training is primarily aimed at government advisers, and felt to him like training in a military camp. The participants regularly had to get up early, do sports, sing a Saemaul Undong song, and (apart from planned trips) were not supposed to leave the "camp", which is situated in Yeongdong-daero, Gangnam-gu, around 75 km southwest of Seoul. The stated goal of the training is to share

> *successful experiences of Saemaul leaders in Korea and the Korean Saemaul leader training programs with other countries. These efforts to globalize Saemaul Undong will*

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10   In order to guarantee the interviewee's anonymity, certain information has to remain rather vague here.

hopefully lead us to our ultimate goal of building a wealthy global community... (Korea Saemaul Undong Center 2014).

Accordingly, lectures on the history of Saemaul Undong in Korea were followed by field tours to villages in rural areas and to industrial sites, after which the participants discussed and presented on how to adapt Saemaul Undong to their respective countries of origin. In the Ethiopian case, emphasis was put on making more use of the country's own natural, human and social resources, and the need for improved mass mobilization tools as well as a development song.[11] Furthermore, the Ethiopian delegation highlighted that the competitive element of South Korea's village-based development program should be introduced in Ethiopia. The NGO worker presented the experience in a highly positive light and said that the Korea Saemaul Undong Center was where he understood the true meaning of the developmental state (interview n° 6, October 23, 2013).

Ethiopian policy makers' interest in the developmental state model, and in Saemaul Undong in particular, requires some further explanation. Shortly after its seizure of power, the EPRDF's main political activity had been to restructure Ethiopia from a centralized into a federal state. Based on recognizing ethnic, or national, diversity in Ethiopia as the major challenge to be dealt with, the federal program with its emphasis on more local self-determination also served as an important source of legitimacy (Dereje 2008, 139–40; Kassahun 1998, 90). However, over the past years, the federal agenda has come under severe criticism from various parts of Ethiopian society (interview n° 4, October 22, 2013; interview n° 8, October 21, 2013; Abbink 2006; Alemante 2003; Dereje 2008; Müller [forthcoming]; Wondwosen and Záhořík 2008; from a defensive point of view Mulugeta and Fiseha [unpublished]), including high-ranking civil servants (interview n° 3, October 21, 2013). Whereas all-Ethiopian nationalists, especially Amhara, consider the current form of federalism a threat to the country's unity (Keller 2002, 33), those proclaiming to represent the Oromo, Somali, and other ethno-national groups often argue that Ethiopia is not federal enough yet (interview n° 3, October 21, 2013; International Crisis Group 2009: ii). Especially since the regime's violent behavior after the 2005 elections, the federal model "is in trouble and seems to stagger" (Abbink 2006, 390). Thus, the increasing official emphasis on the government's developmental agenda and high rates of economic growth should—apart from a genuine desire for development—be seen against the background of the need for new legitimation. In this context, Saemaul Undong in particular may seem attractive because it makes it possible to link up the federalist and developmentalist narratives. Both the ideas of Saemaul Undong and Ethiopian federalism stress the importance of the local, regarding development initiative and self-determination respectively.

Even though the official introduction of the developmental state model has provoked diverse criticism on the part of intellectuals not affiliated with the Ethiopian government, it has by no means been entirely rejected. In fact, Ethiopian intellectuals have also found inspiration in East Asian development models. For example, a researcher of the EEA was convinced that laissez-faire existed only in textbooks, and that even though President Park of South Korea was a ruthless dictator, he had developed the country very well. Thus, he approved of the introduction of the developmental approach in Ethiopia, but added that the Ethiopian version should be complemented by the Western system of checks and balances. Ethiopia's political development

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11 Meles Zenawi also emphasized the importance of broad support for the development agenda, referring to hegemony in the Gramscian sense (Meles 2011, 167–68).

should follow the example of Brazil and South Africa, where in his view the developmental state model (which he associated with South Korea, Malaysia, China, and authoritarianism) and the principle of separation of powers (which he associated with western European democracies) had been combined successfully (interview n° 8, October 23, 2013).

A professor of political science at Addis Ababa University also approved in principal of the idea to introduce the developmental state model in Ethiopia. However, he emphasized that the government's role models — China, Taiwan, South Korea — have been able to make developmental policies work due to characteristics which Ethiopia lacks: widespread nationalism, a capable bureaucracy which sticks to the rule of law, and a political elite free from parochial and partisan influences (alluding to the EPRDF's omnipotence which the interviewee criticized). He described China and South Korea as places where all these things are intact: even though the laws there may be harsh, they apply left and right, making China and South Korea role models for the adherence to the rule of law. He also stated that China was trying to insulate the professional bureaucracy, within which jobs were allocated in a meritocratic way, not based on patronage like in Ethiopia. South Korea and other East Asian countries were serious about fighting corruption and creating an environment in which the political system was predictable, all of which resulted in the capacity to translate policies into practice.[12] In fact, the interviewee was convinced that the Ethiopian state had only increased its cooperation with Eastern governments because of their disinterest for human rights and democracy, not because the Ethiopian leaders did really intend to create a developmental state. Yet the professor also emphasized that he would not want to call the government "anti-development", since the leaders were truly trying to achieve improvements in the areas of infrastructural development, access to electricity, and education at different levels (including university level) (interview n° 7, October 23, 2013).

The crucial point here is that the interviewee's criticism, like that of many others, is most of all informed by his positive conception of what developmental states are really about. This conception has strongly influenced his expectations towards the Ethiopian state. He expected Ethiopia's leaders to have a clear direction, to come up with viable policies, and to be able to convince the people that government acted in their best interest — thus, to really live up to the label "developmental state". He added that he is "not very much a fan of democracy", for democracy is mainly about "pretensions and posturings" in his view (interview n° 7, October 23, 2013).

The goal of the next section is to outline the situation in Ghana with regards to the impact of Asia's rise on policy makers and intellectuals, in order to provide comparative conclusions subsequently.

3. Case study: Ghana

During interviews conducted in the Greater Accra Region and Akosombo in February/March 2014, a majority of state officials and intellectuals advocated the view that the kind of politics

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12 Measuring a developmental state by the autonomy of its bureaucracy was also suggested by Meles Zenawi. However, contrary to the professor who problematized parochial and partisan influences, Meles stressed that a state needs to be shielded from the interests of the private sector in order to implement developmental policies effectively (Meles 2011, 166–68).

they associated with Ghana's Fourth Republic had significant strengths, but also weaknesses. Established political liberties like the freedom of speech were unanimously seen as important achievements that need to be preserved; also, peaceful and orderly changes of government constitute important elements of a sense of regional and continental superiority — most commonly, Nigeria was mentioned as a negative contrast. Countries like the United Kingdom, the USA, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, and Sweden were named as the most prominent role models in this context (for example interview n° 25, February 11, 2014; interview n° 26, February 11, 2014; interview n° 30, February 18, 2014; interview n° 39, February 26, 2014; interview n° 50, March 08, 2014).

Simultaneously, however, the democratic cycle of holding elections every four years is experienced as a serious obstacle to long-term planning and focused project implementation free of party politics; it is seen as a source of disorder in Ghana. Many state representatives and intellectuals argued that Ghana would profit from a stronger orientation towards Asian developmental states, of which the PR China and Malaysia were mentioned most prominently. In more concrete terms, calls for increased orientation towards developmental states usually meant a demand for stronger, more assertive leadership, and for more long-term development commitment, yet in a continued context of political pluralism. Suggestions as to how to bring about the desired changes ranged from rather vague calls for a change in attitude (interview n° 26, February 11, 2014), to constitutional changes (interview n° 50, March 08, 2014), to the view that it is unfortunately too late for a democratic country like Ghana to incorporate elements of developmental states, except for institution building (see below). Partly, these views are reminiscent of the debate on the compatibility or incompatibility of democratic and developmental governance mentioned above.

A civil servant in favor of the latter view stated that instead of rushing into democracy, skilled leaders of South-East Asian countries had organized everything before they joined the "world of democracy". In his view, Ghana had not had leaders like Malaysia, where he stayed at a technical cooperation training center for one month. Now, he found, it was unfortunately too late to learn from Malaysia about governance, since democracy had already been established in Ghana. The only thing left to be learned was "how to run businesses", meaning institution building. Nowadays, institutions in Malaysia worked, whereas in Ghana they did not. In the future, Ghana will most likely (and hopefully, in his view) move towards the US system of non-partisan institutions (interview n° 43, March 03, 2014). Dr. Nana Yaw Boampong Sapong from the Department of History of the University of Ghana shared this view in principal (interview n° 45, March 04, 2014), in which democratic and developmental governance seem to constitute incompatible opposites.

Other interviewees were less bothered by such issues, emphasizing the need for more determined leadership in Ghana instead. Without making reference to a particular country, a professor of development economics said that in Ghana

> there's lack of political will in the continuation of policies and programmes. So we are in a country where there is a change of government, programmes change, strategy change, while we all know the ultimate goal is the same. […] We all know that we want to educate every young person in this country, which is good. And every government that comes in tries to do that, the only difference is the approach. And one government comes and stops this approach and starts another. And you see, the […] life of a government is only four years, you see. And we've been battling with such things and, and we're not making that progress. […] I think we've been talking about a long-term development policy for

the country for a long time, and we need a government that will push for that. [...] I can say that yes, democracy is good, but I think we need a dictator who is democratic, 'cause we cannot continue to allow discussions to go on, go on, go on — it has to stop somewhere (interview n° 32, February 21, 2014).

In this professor's view, the leader should listen to what other people have to say, but he should be able to reject everything if he is very convinced of his plan. This should go along with full responsibility of the leader in case the plan does not work out. At the same time, "going democratic, I think that is the best thing Ghana had done. I mean, nobody's even thinking of going military rule or having a coup attempt — it will not be feasible". The downside of "going democratic" is, in his opinion, that it is expensive in terms of time: decision-making in a parliamentary system takes too long (interview n° 32, February 21, 2014).

Another professor of economics put forward similar views. Following the shift towards the World Bank and the IMF in the 1980s, which in his view had led to the stabilization of Ghana's economy,

we went into this political pluralism, ok, party politics. Now the idea was because the economy was in good shape, and hard decisions were taken, you know under Jerry Rawlings, [13] *when the party system, that political pluralism comes in, it will be easier for the people to use their influence to dictate what type of policies and programs are implemented. But unfortunately, with the political pluralism, things rather degenerated. [...] I have everything for political pluralism, democracy, etcetera. But you must have a developmental state, a government that is focused enough to know what must be done. And that was what Jerry Rawlings stood for, and that was why he was able to change the system from 1983 until 1992. [...] In fact, even in his first four years until 1998... things were quite better, because he could exert discipline, call for compliance (interview n° 33, February 21, 2014).*

Thus, this intellectual (like many others) established a causal link between political pluralism, party politics, and the stagnation of Ghana's development, and saw an introduction of the developmental state model as the potential solution of the problem: "The developmental state should implement the rules and then the regulations, ok. I mean, just do the right things, ok. It doesn't matter who is the guilty party". Comparing China's and Russia's recent economic history, he found that in Russia, similar to Ghana, the introduction of political pluralism had caused economic development to decline. In China, however, "[t]hey have liberalized the economic foundation, but the political structure, you see that it's still strong, making sure that the right decisions are taken." Contrasting his conception of the current behavior of the Ghanaian state with his ideal image, he longed for

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13   Jerry John Rawlings, born 1947, first seized power in Ghana in a military coup in June 1979, and handed over to a civilian government in the same year. He staged a second coup in December 1981, after which he ruled Ghana as a military dictator until he became the first elected president of the Fourth Republic in January 1993. His second and final term as president ended in 2001. In 1982, Rawlings had turned to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for financial assistance, embarking on a path of structural adjustment that has strongly shaped Ghana's economic policy up to the present (Gocking 2005, chs. 10–12). He is still an active public figure and regularly comments on Ghanaian politics.

a state that is focused to make sure that if a road must be built here, it is built. If there is going to be a school that has to be built here, it is built. Not a state that would even tax the people, you can see that there's a need for the road to be built, but the road not built (interview n° 33, February 21, 2014).

However, the Ghanaian developmental state which he desires should differ from China's in terms of respecting the needs of laborers more. A challenge to the introduction of the developmental state model in Ghana could be that

[t]he East Asian countries are, are good examples to, to pick up from, but again unfortunately their cultural characteristics and work ethics are grossly different from, you know, ours (interview n° 33, February 21, 2014).

A sympathetic view of developmental governance is not confined to economists. A professor of history of the University of Ghana was also convinced that Ghana would profit if it were to orientate itself more towards China, meaning "orientation to China to the extent that you want to copy the Chinese example". However, in order to really make this happen, Ghanaians would have to "change their attitude" in his view, because they had become too used to consuming foreign goods — a complaint also mentioned in many other interviews. But since people were unlikely to change their attitudes themselves, it was the state's responsibility to reduce reliance on imports, even if confronted with significant resistance:

For me, governance is all about leadership [...]. As far as I'm concerned, a leader must lead. Everywhere people are shouting and crying, you still lead. [...] People will protest, people will dislike you, but you must lead. People will like you only when they see the ends: 'Oh, I see, we didn't know that he was taking us to this nice place, but we were already tired when walking one mile' (interview n° 41, February 28, 2014).

State representatives also raised considerable criticism towards the Ghanaian state, and found inspiration in Asian examples in their quest for solution strategies. A senior civil servant — who is not the same person as the afore-mentioned civil servant — stated that he sees

Ghana to be like an East Asian country, but in an African way. We don't say Germany, US, or Japan. Malaysia, South Korea, Indonesia — the South-East Asian. They are our mentors, we look at their transformation (interview n° 39, February 26, 2014).

In practical terms, this meant to him to attempt to create a skyline similar to that of Seoul. But it was Malaysia which this civil servant was most strongly inspired by. Contrary to the Ghanaian state, he explained, the Malaysian one had secured land ownership, and it had intervened to provide cooking gas to common households, making charcoal obsolete. Responsible leaders had brought the country on a sustainable way of economic growth in his view.

As in the case of the civil servant mentioned earlier, his positive understanding of the Malaysian state is connected to a personal stay. For one month, he was trained on economic planning in a Malaysian technical cooperation training center; the trip was paid for by the Malaysian government. Similar to the South Korean-Ethiopian training, participants came from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The program consisted of lectures, discussions, and presentations given by each delegation. The training group also traveled Malaysia by bus and visited "district

assemblies" in order to share ideas with their members. The civil servant stated that due to the trip, he now wished that "Ghana could be more like Malaysia". The most important thing to him which he had learned during the training was that Malaysia's consistent long-term plan of 25 years was better than Ghana's three years medium-term planning model. After his return, he had started to work towards convincing others of this perspective. Interestingly, he said that virtually all African countries suffered from short-sighted development plans, except for Ethiopia, which at least planned for five instead of the usual three years (interview n° 39, February 26, 2014; interview n° 42, March 03, 2014).

A Member of Parliament representing the current ruling party complained that Ghana lacked a leader who can enforce what is necessary. Today, it would not be possible anymore to implement, for example, the structural adjustment programs of the 1980s — instead, any attempt to introduce far-reaching reforms nowadays would only lead to a never-ending dispute in court. Thus, similar to the intellectuals not affiliated with the state, the Honorable saw a link between democratic decision-making processes and stagnating development in Ghana's Fourth Republic. He stated that Ghana wanted "to marry" China just as much as the West, because China treated Ghana like an adult and provided more money. However, despite his nostalgia for the effective decision-making under Rawlings' *Provisional National Defence Council* (PNDC, 1981–93), he said that he considered democracy — which had been perfected in the USA in his view — worthy of preservation, and did not want "marrying" China to translate into emulating China's style of governance (interview n° 37, February 22, 2014).

4. Conclusions

African state actors and intellectuals are increasingly inspired by East Asian development role models. Under different circumstances, intellectuals and policy makers in both Ghana and Ethiopia have arrived at the conclusion that their respective country would profit from a more pronounced orientation towards East Asian states, whose material success is seen as the outcome of strong and assertive, yet benevolent leaders being heavily and continuously involved in economic affairs. In both countries under review, key actors' perceptions of, and also interactions with, role model states have played a significant role in the formulation of policy choices (on the part of state officials) and expectations towards the state (on the part of intellectuals not affiliated with the state).

Most of the Ethiopian interviewees saw their perception of Asian developmentalism as a modern alternative to socialism, capable of preventing market failure which was associated with neoliberalism. The developmental state model can be linked up with already existing imaginations of stateness within the ruling coalition EPRDF, and within Ethiopia at large. The adaptation of a development model focused not only on market, but more so on state power, is facilitated by the Ethiopian leaders' background in socialist ideology. What is more, the dominant party approach, which characterizes the Ethiopian developmental state, ties in well with earlier concepts of authoritarian rule in the country, which despite all attempts to get rid of them have had a long-term impact. This is also noticeable in the criticism of intellectuals, which is often aimed at the way *how* the developmental state model is implemented in Ethiopia, rather than at the model and its implications for state control per se.

In Ghana, most of the interviewees interpreted the developmental state concept as a governance model capable of overcoming political dead ends. The latter were usually traced back to a hasty, or not yet fully matured process of democratization. As in the Ethiopian case, the idea of the developmental state can be linked to already existing perceptions and experiences of stateness. The nostalgia for Rawlings' PNDC military government associated with quick and effective decision-making often serves as a reference point when the belief that Ghana would profit from a reorientation to China or Malaysia is explained. This should not be understood to imply that mainly NDC supporters (the party which Rawlings belongs to) argue in favor of more orientation towards Asian developmental states. Interviewees with a critical view of Rawlings also held that Ghana had rushed into democracy, and that they would have appreciated a slower transition organized by a leader comparable to Malaysia's (interview n° 43, March 03, 2014). Widespread worship for the authoritarian leadership of Ghana's first president, Kwame Nkrumah, also provides fertile ground for positive interpretations of developmental governance in East Asia and elsewhere.

During the interviews, talking about "the state" quickly led to discussions about economic policy, and in this regard, most interviewees in both countries distinguished—sometimes implicitly—two extreme forms: command, or planned economy, which they associated with socialism; and competition-oriented market economy, often dubbed capitalism. Virtually all interviewees agreed that "pure" capitalism does not fit Africa, and that socialism was outdated, even though it was considered better by some. The developmental state model was usually seen as some kind of a third way in between, combining significant state control of the economy with partial competition and market forces. In a similar vein, Meles Zenawi wrote that "state direction has been much more intrusive and comprehensive [in East Asia] than was the case in Europe" (Meles 2011, 165) and contrasted the "theory of the developmental state" with the "neoliberal paradigm" (idem, 170).

Of course, African intellectuals and policy makers have paid attention to Asia's rise at least since the early 1980s. However, until the 1990s, financial support could mainly be obtained from the Western and Eastern blocs. Initially after the end of the Cold War, the rules of the game were determined by Western donors making democratization and liberalization a condition for development money (see Villalón 1998). What has changed since then is that several Asian (and other "developing") countries have emerged as financially strong development partners of African governments, resulting from the formers' consistently high rates of economic growth. Between 1990 and 2000, China's GDP grew by an annual average of 10.6%; South Korea's GDP grew by 5.8%. The East Asian region altogether grew by 8.5% in that period, and continued to grow at comparable rates in the subsequent decade (Agarwal 2012, 39). This has increased and restructured the range of donors from which African policy makers can choose (see Hugon 2010; La Fontaine 2013, 25–26; Sidiropoulos, Fues and Chaturvedi 2012, 1–10), and this process comprises more than the usual suspects, like IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa) or the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa).

With the ability and willingness of China and South Korea, the Ethiopian state has been able to implement its vision of a developmental state, challenging other development strategies in the process. While the Ghanaian state has maintained closer relations with Western donors, enthusiasm for Asian partners and state models has gained substantial ground there as well. Whether this will translate into a restructuring of the Ghanaian state and increase cooperation with Asian partners even more remains to be seen. The classification of Ghana as a lower middle income country has already made it more difficult for it to secure financial support from

the IMF and the World Bank (see Moss and Majerowicz 2012), making a strengthening of the ties with Asian actors rather likely.

A majority of the interviewed Ghanaians and Ethiopians does not share the widespread assumption that democracy fosters development, the latter of which was usually understood as economic growth with widely shared benefits. On the contrary, in Ghana, democracy is often seen and experienced as a development obstacle. Current political discourse in Ghana demonstrates that—in line with Leftwich's (2005) arguments—democratic governance and rapid economic transformation are not easily combined. The Ethiopian case suggests, on the other hand, that the developmental state model and its success can be hijacked for the purpose of legitimizing an authoritarian regime.

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