<Book Review>

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Bernard Berendsen, Ton Dietz, Henk Schulte Nordholt, and Roel van der Veen, eds. *Asian Tigers, African Lions: Comparing the Development Performance of Southeast Asia and Africa*. Leiden: Brill, 2013, xiv+524pp.

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Asian Tigers, African Lions: Comparing the Development Performance of Southeast Asia and Africa

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The title "Asian Tigers, African Lions" is exactly the issue addressed by this monograph. The tiger and the lion are viewed as the kings of beasts in Asia and Africa respectively; even people who are not interested in fauna find this to be a metaphor they can relate to. However, the two creatures have a vital difference: the lion, with his admirable mane, waits for the lioness to bring back the prey without doing anything himself; by contrast, the tiger is solitary and both males and females go hunting alone.

The Netherlands played a significant part in the reduction of poverty in Indonesia for 50 years (1949–99). From this successful experience, the Netherlands developed a poverty reduction project in Africa. It looked into agricultural development for 50 years in both Asia and Africa to identify the main reasons why Asian countries became richer while African countries remain poor.

Asian Tigers, African Lions: Comparing the Development Performance of Southeast Asia and Africa is the outcome of a research project financed by the Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation in 2006. Eight countries were selected from Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Cambodia) and Sub-Saharan Africa (Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda). The project set-up was innovative, with both African and Asian researchers being included to conduct research that was strictly comparative.

The monograph starts with an introduction to the project. The main part of the monograph consists of comparisons between four Southeast Asian and four African countries in diverse stages of development. The eight countries are divided into four pairs and compared. Each pair was selected such that the two countries have some similarities.

In Part 1, Chapter 1, "Tracking Development," Bernard Berendsen and Roel van der Veen note that Sub-Saharan African countries have not become richer after independence while countries in Southeast Asia have. Why are there Asian tigers but no African lions? This monograph focuses on the bifurcation point between Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa in their development trajectories. With both regions still substantially under European rule in the middle of the twentieth century, they have some historical similarities. However, Africa was strongly affected by the slave trade; and the economy and proprietary industries did not develop as a result of their losing labor (Fukui *et al.* 1999). The authors point out that the most remarkable difference between the two regions was the strong emphasis on agriculture in Southeast Asia.

In Chapter 2 David Henley and Jan Kees van Donge analyze the diverging paths of the two regions' development. Southeast Asia and Africa have some historical and geographical similarities:

since the 1960s both regions have been characterized by corruption and a lack of "good governance." However, their development has followed different paths. This chapter analyzes development issues in Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Governments in Southeast Asia are growing faster, and the economies have sustained macroeconomic stability. African regimes have been far less effective in macroeconomic oversight.

In his study of cross-regional development comparisons, Peter Lewis considers a historical approach, structural approach, policy choice, institutional approach, and political context. On the African continent, national borders were created by colonial countries without consideration of geography, demography, social groups, and composition of the economy. Even after the colonial era ended, many of the large enterprises in Africa were under foreign control. Foreign investment, while crucial, can also have unwelcome effects. In many circumstances, transnational companies create few linkages within host economies and crowd out local entrepreneurship. Geographically, since many African countries have no access to the sea they have limited channels for trade. That limitation can be mitigated through the government's provision of public goods: transportation infrastructure, health programs, agricultural research, extension services, and irrigation.

Policy choices and institutional development depend on the preferences of political leaders. For example, most African governments fixed their exchange rates and encouraged protectionist trade and investment regimes. Because of this, African economies were severely buffeted by external shocks, especially during the oil spikes and international recession of the 1970s. This chapter concludes that leadership, consensus, coordination problems, and coalition building are integral to the politics of development. Southeast Asia is more successful in its political development, while Africa continues to face political challenges.

Ton Dietz notes that differences in the performance of the agricultural sector help to explain "Southeast Asia's economic miracle" and "Africa's economic stagnation." He compares the performance of agriculture and livestock against population growth in the eight countries between 1961 and 2009, as well as the speed of demographic and agricultural change in the eight countries. Dietz's chapter compares yields of cereal, root, and tubers as well as the number of livestock within the eight countries. The top three countries in overall rank among the eight are in South Asia. There are a few reasons why Africa has lagged in agricultural development. Africa is the only place where livestock rearing has overtaken agricultural development. Due to the dryness of the land there, the continent has a history of pastoralism rather than agriculture (Kitagawa and Takahashi 2004, Ch. 1). Compared to Asian countries, Africa may have an environment in which agriculture is difficult to develop.

Parts 2 to 5 of this monograph are comparative studies, with countries formed into pairs based on certain similarities between them. The first pair is Nigeria and Indonesia. They have both experienced long periods of military rule, are similarly ranked in the Corruption Perceptions Index, and are large and densely populated. They are also rich in natural resources, such as oil. The second pair is Kenya and Malaysia, both of which have gone down the capitalist road, relying on private ownership. The next pair is Tanzania and Vietnam, which rely on state ownership and direct government intervention. The last pair is Uganda and Cambodia, two cases of post-conflict reconstruction.

In the case of Nigeria and Indonesia, there is a discussion on the impact of corruption on economic development. From the studies, it is clear that corruption is harmful to development. The majority of poor countries face high levels of corruption in politics. Capital, influential politicians, and local entrepreneurs are inseparable especially in countries with low GDP.

The country pair of Kenya and Malaysia is discussed with respect to foreign direct investment. Both countries have a long history of reliance on FDI in economic development. However, two questions are significant: First, what are the determinants of FDI? Second, what is the economic impact of FDI on economic growth? FDI was an important trigger for the development of the Malaysian economy; by contrast, in Kenya it did not have a significant effect. J. B. Ang (2008) finds a positive and significant impact of FDI on infrastructure in Malaysia in the long term. On the other hand, Kenya neglected its infrastructure over the years, and this has been a concern to many foreign investors. This problem is not unique to Kenya but is found in Sub-Saharan Africa generally. Most of the Asian success models are not applicable to Africa. Kitagawa Katsuhiko and Takahashi Motoki (2004) remark that the African continent keeps evolving its own history.

Vietnam and Tanzania both put a great effort into cashew marketing as well as their textile industry. Cashew cultivation is an important source of income and employment in both Vietnam and Tanzania. Unlike the many literature reviews in this monograph, the chapter on these two countries is based on fieldwork. Blandina Kilama explains that cashew production is responsible for the economic disparity between the two countries. Vietnam has a higher yield per hectare than Tanzania because its density of cashew trees is much higher.

In the case of Cambodia and Uganda, Kheang Un discusses their road networks, especially in rural areas. He says that road development is directly linked to poverty reduction. With most Southeast countries having coastal access, development of the road network from the sea is an important factor in economic development due to trade. However, since many African countries do not have direct access to the sea, they are at a disadvantage in terms of distribution (Obayashi 2003). Kheang Un points out that the condition of the rural road network is better in Cambodia than in Uganda. Cambodia appears to have placed a much higher priority on investing in its rural road network. In addition, the road development patterns in Uganda and Cambodia are different because Cambodia is ethnically homogenous while Uganda is ethnically diverse; Uganda's diversity makes for more difficult financial planning and decision making.

This monograph considers and discusses the economic development of Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa over 50 years. The contributors describe the situation in these two regions from the point of view of historical leaders, law enforcement, agriculture policies, primary education, and infrastructure development against an economic paradigm. Abundant case studies and details are summarized well. It is regrettable that I was left with the strong impression that Southeast Asia is a developmental success while Africa is not. Why have many African countries been unable to utilize foreign aid successfully for their own development? Probably the potential of Africa is beyond the range of our understanding.

Even though the colonial era ended a few decades ago, the idea persists—often unintentionally—among those who try to impose something upon the continent that African people are still underdeveloped or inferior (Shigeta 2001). I wonder whether such thoughts interfere with the development of African countries. With the advent of new leaders, and well-formed governance and policies, once African countries find their own way they have the potential to develop dramatically.

Although they belong to different species, Asian tigers and African lions are classified in the same family and genus, as well as being at the vertex of the food chain in their respective region. But their habitat, behavior, and ecological history are different. It is not impossible for African countries to be African lions. African lions have their own life history that is different from that of Asian tigers.

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