

ern 'sanctions' in shaping relations between political parties in the PG. ZANU-PF manipulated Western sanctions to the fullest advantage by refusing to fulfill its GPA obligations "until they were removed" and to mobilise support in the 2013 election campaign. It gave Mugabe and ZANU-PF the opportunity to present themselves as victims. They took the anti-imperialist rhetoric to a crescendo, in the process gaining sympathy from SADC and the African Union and complicating negotiations for political and governance reforms required during the tenure of the PG.

But that said, this book is an important contribution to knowledge and will be useful to academics and students in disciplines such as political science and history who want to understand the merits and perils of power sharing. Power Politics in Zimbabwe is no less important for policy makers, political mediators and politicians who might find themselves tempted to form PGs in future.

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Jerven, Morten, *Africa. Why Economists Get It Wrong*. London: Zed Books 2015, 160 pp.

Morten Jerven has in recent years occupied an important niche and discourse as regards assessments of economic development in countries in sub-Saharan Africa. By deconstructing the common assumptions guiding most of the econometric exercises leading to all sorts of prognoses, he has challenged the mystification practised by mainstream economists. This has made him unpopular not only among those Western colleagues long considered to be the ultimate authorities on economic assessments of development trends in African economies, but also those in charge of statistics in African countries, who did not always treat him with respect.

As Jerven summarises, "the response was not always polite and was not always limited to collegial replication studies; some officials in statistical offices in the region felt personally aggrieved, to the extent that the Zambia Statistical Office accused me of being 'a hired gun meant to discredit African National Accountants'". This was linked to the accusation that he would only aim to create more room for European consultants (p 122). Meanwhile, most such consultants and experts are part of the

trade with figures and data, which Jerven critically questions. He is a nuisance to all those who continue to cultivate a certain kind of faith in figures, which are created to extrapolate trends and claim to substantiate predictions. But at a closer look these, despite pretending to be of an objective nature, are often based on (often wrong or misleading) assumptions or correlations, which resort to distorting generalisations. Jerven's work, summarised in this popular monograph, presents some of the reasons why there is absolutely no reason to trust economists and their analyses more than any other effort to come to terms with the notion and nature of development. He suggests "that, in order to reach a better understanding, a bit more humility among many economists would be useful; in particular, a better understanding of the limits of their own datasets and statistical testing is needed". (p 10)

Pali Lehohla, the South African Statistician-General considered Jerven's work, published in a first monograph entitled 'Poor Numbers: How we are misled by African development statistics and what to do about it' (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 2013) as blasphemy. He felt personally offended to such a degree that he managed to prevent Jerven — already on his way to Addis Ababa — from delivering a talk he was invited to give there at a conference of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in 2013. Lehohla declared in an interview with 'Africa Renewal' (August 2015, p 28), Jerven suggests that "Africa misleads the world with poor numbers". Meanwhile, the issue really is, that poor numbers mislead Africa, as Jerven is eager to show. And the culprits are not by definition African but include big names in so-called development economics. Suffice to mention the well-known escapades by the renowned journal 'The Economist', managing within a decade to declare Africa a hopeless continent of doom and one of hope being on the rise. Of late, the hype about a so-called middle class as new torch-bearer of progress and development might serve as another example to illustrate how data can construct or invent so-called realities, which at a closer look, and with the necessary scrutiny, are not really existing in the suggested forms.

By looking beneath the often far-too-generally aggregated statistical surface, which abstracts from specific cases at specific times and thereby promotes misleading conclusions, Jerven simply reminds us that socio-economic realities are more than number crunching — the misleading use of GDP serves here as a prominent example. More modesty as regards the relevance of the findings would be another necessary adjustment: in agreement with and reference to Dani Rodrik and others, Jerven recom-

mends "for economics to be relevant to economies, development economists should stop acting as advocates for very specific models of economic development" (p 131). Put differently: the 'one size fits all' approach econometrics often at least implicitly seem to advocate, at times combined with a scent of Eurocentric bias (in the sense that 'learning from history' tends to be misunderstood as learning from European history), is of little use and rather damaging.

Four chapters, embedded in a substantial introduction and conclusion, are able to summarise Jerven's game-changing *oeuvre* so far in an easy reading manner, which is also understood by those not familiar with the economic jargon. At times slightly redundant or repetitive in its eagerness to hammer home his valid points of criticism, he manages to use good examples to point at the weaknesses of the hegemonic state of the art, all too often marred by flawed models and evidence. By doing so, Jerven manages to competently give voice to concerns many others share. Alex de Waal posted on the 'African Arguments' web site (24 June 2015) a euphoric review, concluding that this book "is a charter for liberating African economic policymaking from the tyranny of econometricians".

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Williams, Christian A, *National Liberation in Postcolonial Southern Africa. A Historical Ethnography of SWAPO's Exile Camps.* New York: Cambridge University Press 2015, 2015, xviii & 259 pp.

This fascinating study presents insights into the realities of the camps under the administration and control of SWAPO of Namibia since the mid 1960s until Independence in 1989/90, at locations in Tanzania (Kongwa), Zambia (the Old Farm, Oshatotwa and Nyango) and Angola (Cassinga and Lubango). It builds on a long engagement of the author with these sites of struggle, survival, and — unfortunately and sadly so — violent deaths (both through barbaric attacks by South Africa as in the case of the Cassinga massacre, but also by atrocities committed by SWAPO 'securocrats' and willful executors against rank and file members). Field research undertaken included visits to some of these sites (and sharing hitherto