Book Reviews

problems in dry-land agriculture. Other writers, no doubt, will have different views on this question. For this reviewer, Ojo's comments on Liberia's attempts to influence US policy through Israel seem off the mark. Such points of disagreement, however, cannot detract from the overall value of Ojo's contribution to the African affairs literature.

[These views and opinions are Research Service or the Library]

African Studies Review
Vol. 33, No. 1, April 1990


This is the first of a four-part series focusing on the North-South policies of the so-called Western "middle powers," or those "small or medium-sized Western industrialized nations with a marked international orientation" (p.9). The idea for the project emerged in 1983 from the Development Studies Programme of the University of Toronto, Canada, and was further developed by a workshop held in Paris for 20 scholars (from eight countries) by the Development Centre of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OCED). This first volume is a comparative analysis of the determinants which have influenced continuity and change in the foreign aid policies of five Western middle powers as analyzed by scholars who have been significantly involved in the foreign aid processes of these countries: Real P. Lavergne (Canada); Knud Erik Svendsen (Denmark); Charles Cooper and Joan Verloren van Themaat (Netherlands); Olav Stokke (Norway); and Bo Karre and Bengt Svensson (Sweden). These case studies are complemented by an introduction and conclusion written by Stokke which establish the framework of the study and the identifiable trends which resulted from the cross-national analysis.

The framework which served as the point of departure for the study was "Humane internationalism," or "an acceptance of the principle that citizens of the industrial nations have moral obligations towards peoples and events beyond their borders; it implies a sensitivity to cosmopolitan values, such as the obligation to refrain from the use of force in the pursuit of international interests and the respect for human rights"
African Studies Review

(p.10). An important assumption of this framework is that, unlike the "realist internationalism" of the superpowers which emphasizes strategic and political self-interest above more altruistic goals, the middle Western powers, due to their open, relatively smaller, and thus more vulnerable economies, have a greater commitment to the internationalist norm of Third World development as exhibited by their more enlightened foreign aid policies. In this regard, the authors argue that the predominant socio-political values of the five societies in question—most notably the importance attached to the role of the welfare state—become internationalized and thus serve as the primary determinants of their humane foreign aid policies. Intervening variables within the international arena which constrain this humane internationalist approach include the world recession of the 1970-80s and the global ideological reorientation toward more conservative economic policies led by the Reagan and Thatcher administrations.

Examples of the differences in aid policies of the middle powers (as compared to other Western and communist industrialized countries) include their greater willingness to strive for the United Nations aid target of 0.7 percent of GNP, to funnel resources through multilateral development agencies, and to offer more lenient financial terms. Yet, the study also recognizes (although tends to downplay) important differences which tend to separate the case studies. For example, Canada’s net disbursements of official development assistance in 1986 as a percentage of GNP (0.48), although much higher than that of the US (0.23) or the average of those countries forming the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD (0.35), is significantly lower than that posted by Denmark (0.89) and Sweden (0.85), as well as the aid frontrunners of the group, Norway (1.20) and the Netherlands (1.01).

The detailed case studies are the greatest strength of the book (emphasizing the post-1975 period until 1986) compiled by contributors who have been significantly involved in the management of their countries’ aid policies. Each case study offers an illuminating analysis of the domestic politics of the aid process, including the evolving impact of public opinion, interest groups, oscillations between political parties, non-governmental organizations, and the strengths and weaknesses of national foreign aid bureaucracies. As Svendsen correctly notes, “Aid is politics” (p. 92).

Especially illuminating for the humane internationalist theme is the growing tendency of all five countries to commercialize the aid process, most noted by the greater emphasis placed on tying economic aid to the procurement of materials in the donor country. In the case of Canada, for example, Lavergne notes that Canadian bilateral aid continues to be approximately 80 percent tied—"a high level of tying by international standards" (p. 64). In the case of the Netherlands, Cooper and van
Themaat argue that 60-70 percent of aid was tied during the 1970s (p. 150). Even Norway and Sweden, historically tying the least amounts of aid out of the five, have succumbed to domestic pressures to derive greater economic benefits from international aid programs. The problem this poses is that detractors can denounce the so-called humane internationalist "altruism" of the middle powers as little more than a derivation of realist internationalism in which states seek self-interested economic goals.

Of greater importance are the negative effects that the tying of aid has on Third World societies and their attempts at development. As Lavergne notes, the tying of aid can result in development projects that serve the donor as opposed to the recipient countries: tying "influences the design of projects by favoring Canadian inputs over those which could be obtained locally or abroad. Such designs then to be less than optimal in terms of cost-effectiveness and impose high maintenance costs of various kinds on the recipient country. The import bias of project designs further serves to reinforce the dependence of recipient countries on import technology" (p. 65).

Humane internationalism, therefore, could be as negative in terms of consequences as the more realist variant supposedly pursued by the superpowers and other industrialized countries. Herein lies the greatest unanswered question in the book: even if one accepts the proposition that foreign aid policies of the middle powers are unique due to the primary impact of their domestic welfare systems, does this, when compared to the foreign aid policies of other countries, in the end foster qualitatively or quantitatively higher levels of development? Hopefully this question will be addressed in another volume of the project or in a future extension of the same project.

Peter J. Schraeder
Northwestern University
Evanston, Illinois

ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY


How do you make money in a poor country? Answer: you turn a wealth of social relations into hard cash. This, in a nutshell, is the argument made in this fascinating analysis of modes of access to the world of business in post-independence (post-1960) Burkina Faso. Its