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THE PROBLEM OF BAD GOVERNANCE AS A DETERMINANT OF STATE DYSFUNCTIONALITY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

ABSTRACT Bad governance can very quickly ruin the economic situation of the whole country. However, in the conditions of the Western world, even though they can cause a lot of damage, more or less developed administrative apparatus is able to minimize the effects of bad decisions, and the society has a chance to rebuff the rulers in the next elections. In so-called dysfunctional states bad governance can damage an already weak country's economy. Most researchers dealing with the issue of the state in Sub-Saharan Africa believe that, once the decolonisation was over, the power in the region was mostly taken by people whose leadership must be evaluated negatively, represented by such dictators as Jean-Bédél Bokassa, Mobutu Sese Seko or Idi Amin. The paper is trying to explain the interconnection between bad governance experienced by Sub-Saharan African countries and state dysfunctionality phenomenon from which they suffer. The author formulated the analysis and assessment of bad governance presented in this article on the basis of his own field studies carried out in African countries and research of specialist literature related to African and political studies.

Keywords: state dysfunctionality, bad governance, Sub-Saharan Africa

The Allegory of Good and Bad Government is a series of frescoes painted by Ambrogio Lorenzetti in 1338-1339 on the walls of the Council Room in the Siena City Hall. One of the walls shows the city blossoming under 'good government', while the other depicts 'bad government' of a tyrant identified with the devil. The government represents cruelty, corruption, dispute, greed and war. The goat lying at the foot of the 'tyranny' symbolises sumptuousness amongst poverty and decay. Even though painted 600 years ago in a different political context (communal ideology), given its universal message the image evokes reflections on and associations with governments in a number of poor countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. When facing the fresco, which shows the tyrant seated on a gilded throne, one will irresistibly associate the scene with photos of the coronation of Jean-Bédel Bokassa, dictator of the Central African Republic, who spent a third of the state budget on the ceremony. The sumptuousness, associated with the caprice of one man, contrasted in a grotesque way with the poverty of the country he ruled. The enthronement, which was held on 4 December 1977, was modelled on the coronation of Napoleon Bonaparte as the Emperor of the French. The crown and sceptre alone, which were made in the Arthus-Bertrand shop in Paris, cost 5 million dollars. In addition, there were: the apparel of the imperial couple and their retinue, gilded chairs shaped as giant eagles spanning 10 metres, coaches replicating the Buckingham Palace, 60 brand-new Mercedes cars, 64 thousand bottles of wine, including 24 thousand bottles of top-vintage Chateau-Lafitte and Mouton-Rotschild champagne, and sumptuous meals for 3500 guests from 43 countries.¹ The world stood by, the world mocked, but did nothing to revile the farce in one of the poorest countries of the world. In the reality of the Cold War, Bokassa had powerful protectors, including the French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. Therefore it came as no surprise that the ceremony was attended by the French minister responsible for the African policy, Robert Galley, who gave the dictator an authentic sabre dating back to Napoleonic times as a gift from the French president. Mindful of its own interests in the Central African Republic, France tolerated the excesses of Bokassa and his family. Trusting in support from Paris, Bokassa felt confident, self-righteous and imprudent enough to flaunt his wealth, which as time passed, became highly grotesque, contrasting greatly with the country's status as one of the poorest in the world. However, have the dictators of other poor Sub-Saharan Africa countries acted differently? Are such practices long gone? Although the Cold War ended 27 years ago, unfortunately the answer is no.

Bad government is not only associated with autocratic leaders, but also ruling groups. The consequences of the rule of a group may be equally disastrous as that of dictators, which is exemplified by Rwanda during the Interim Government of Hutu extremists, who came into power after the assassination of President Juvénal Habyarimana in April 1994. What needs to be explained here is the term "dysfunctionality" as used in this article, or rather its extreme form, which tends to be referred to in literature as 'state failure'. The author has decided to depart from the term 'failed state' and

¹ B. Titley, *Dark Age. The Political Odyssey of Emperor Bokassa*, Quebec City 2002, pp. 90-91.

replace it with the term 'dysfunctional state'.² The first reason is that 'failure' is an evaluative notion. What is more, if a state fails, it implies that it used to function well. In fact, most countries considered as 'failed states' have been affected to a greater or lesser extent by dysfunctionality from the very beginning, i.e. since they were established, and have never attained well-functioning statehood. Furthermore, the term 'dysfunctionality' more adequately reflects the diversity of failed states. Naturally, one may consider the fact that there are no ideal countries and each of them suffers from some kind of dysfunctionality. However, in this article the criteria are defined in such a way as to focus on the countries characterised by high dysfunctionality levels. Dysfunctionality may differ: ranging from complete decay of the structures of the state, which is submerged in chaos and armed conflict, as in Somalia, to authoritarian government or large-scale corruption. The above distinction is to help in determining to what degree leaders are responsible for the dysfunctionality of states.

Most researchers dealing with the issue of the state in Sub-Saharan Africa believe that, once the decolonisation was over, the power in the region was mostly taken by people whose leadership must be evaluated negatively. Robert Rotberg characterises the leaders as all sorts of autocrats, frauds, looters and ignoramuses, represented by such dictators as Jean-Bédél Bokassa, Mobutu Sese Seko and Idi Amin.³ All of them ruled countries located at the bottom of world poverty ratings. All of them tended to bask in luxury, ruled their countries ineptly and persecuted their own people, often indulging in crime. All three of the above most recognisable Sub-Saharan Africa dictators became a grotesque symbol of African rule and were overthrown by military coup or as a result of war. Bokassa was overthrown by a coup-d'état carried out with the help of French special forces, Amin was ousted after a lost war with Tanzania, which he started himself, and Mobutu as a result of civil war sparked by his foreign policy, after he expressed support for the government responsible for the genocide of Tutsi in Rwanda. Following the downfall of the rulers, their countries plunged into the chaos of civil wars, with the legacy of their rule felt in the countries until the present day.

When analysing the history of African countries after they regained independence, it is worth asking whether only individuals are to blame. Perhaps also the conditions existing in the post-colonial era enabled the wrong people to come into power, with disastrous consequences for their countries for decades to come. The determinants of governance in Sub-Saharan Africa in the early period of the countries' statehood include: the leader's political authority, the backing of competent state officials (or rather its absence) and economic situation of the country. Based on the above determinants, countries can be divided into those that were dysfunctional from the start and those that, after regaining independence in the 1960s, were successfully building an efficient country. The former group includes: the Central American Republic and

² The problems are discussed in a collective volume: R. Kłosowicz (ed.), *Państwa dysfunkcyjne i ich destabilizujący wpływ na stosunki międzynarodowe*, Kraków 2013.

³ R.I. Rotberg, "The Roots of Africa's Leadership Deficit", *Compass. Journal of Leadership*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2003), p. 28.

the Democratic Republic of Congo. The latter group comprises countries which, considering the conditions prevailing in Sub-Saharan Africa, were quite successful at the beginning of their independence, benefiting from relatively good infrastructure and administration left behind by the colonisers. The group includes Kenya and Ghana, as well as Zimbabwe after its white minority rule collapsed in 1980 (Rhodesia). Zimbabwe is a textbook example of how bad government may ruin a country over a short period of time. However, most dysfunctional states have always been dysfunctional. They are countries where bad government means not only bad president and ministers, but also the entire machinery of the state, with corrupted and inefficient lower-rank officials unprepared to play their roles, as well as lack of society thinking in state terms (which is not surprising as far as tribal and clan communities are concerned).⁴ Changing citizens' attitude is a major problem in those countries and even 'a good cabinet' will not be able to overcome it without years of educating society. There are a number of examples of idealist reformers who failed because there was not enough staff or social awareness. There is a need to distinguish here between bad government resulting from bad will and that resulting from erroneous assumptions made on the basis of good intentions. As the old saying goes, "the road to hell is paved with good intentions". Yet intentions are irrelevant for making a sound judgement. As history shows, leaders acting on noble impulses can ruin a country, too. Usually, they fail because they have no support of educated staff and adopt an erroneous strategy not reflecting local realities. This was the case with Kwame Nkrumah's rule in Ghana, which had been one of the most economically successful African countries before regaining independence in 1957. Nearly eight years later, the country found itself on the verge of bankruptcy.⁵ Ghana is a classic case of a situation when a leader with good intentions decides to reform the country on his/her own in an authoritarian way, with no adequate base and against other people's advice, often contrary to the will of society, bringing the country into ruin, which often results in a political coup and loss of power or internal conflict.

It must also be remembered that when evaluating 'bad' and 'good government' we tend to apply our own criteria, relying on various materials published by charity organisations and state-of-the-country reports. Governments may be perceived differently depending on the prevailing political system (during the Cold War, African leadership was seen differently by the West and differently by the Communist countries or the Third World). The Communist Derg dictatorship in Ethiopia was perceived differently in the West than in the Eastern Bloc. The differences in the way some leaders are perceived are still bipolar. The Rwandan President is considered by the US to be a distinguished leader, who is rebuilding his country after the 1994 genocide,⁶ while

⁴ In the two decades of Zimbabwe's independence (1980-2000), the number of officials in the country tripled.

⁵ M. Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of the Continent Since Independence*, London–New York–Sydney–Toronto–New Delhi 2011, pp. 186-187.

⁶ S. Kinzer, *Thousand Hills. Rwanda's Rebirth and the Man Who Dreamed It*, Hoboken 2008.

Belgium and France see him as a ruthless dictator.⁷ Also George B.N. Ayittey, in his article entitled *The Worst of the Worst*, published in *Foreign Policy* in 2010, ranks Kagame among the 20 worst dictators still in power in 2010.⁸

Apart from external perception, there is also internal perception by the population of the country concerned, which may differ depending on the ethnic group, rural v. urban residence and race.⁹

An example of different internal and external perception is Haile Selassie, the emperor of Ethiopia. The leader enjoyed respect and esteem among a number of prominent statesmen of the era. He was remembered by the world as an African leader fighting the aggression of Italian fascists (memorable address to the League of Nations), and later as a host and one of the main architects of the Organisation of African Unity. The Rastafarians of Jamaica still worship him as God. His early rule was marked by a series of reforms and modernisation of the country. However, with time, not only did the ageing leader fail to continue the reforms, but his rule caused backwardness of his country, with his ceremonial court absorbing huge sums from the state budget. Towards the end of his rule, the emperor was not aware of the actual situation in the country. Consequently, the government was unable to deal with the drought and starvation in northern provinces of 1973-1974, which reverberated in the world and contributed to the downfall of the Ethiopian empire.¹⁰

The officers in charge of the coup carried out by the Derg (Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces, Police, and Territorial Army), who propagated slogans of a single Ethiopian nation, ousting feudal lords and making a leap forward in civilisation by introducing a Socialist system, and who were convinced of the legitimacy of their cause, started their rule by destroying the old order with genuine revolutionary enthusiasm. At the time, Mengistu Haile Mariam became a hero of the Communist propaganda in countries from behind the Iron Curtain, just like Fidel Castro and Ernesto Che Guevara. The end result of the Derg rule, with Mengistu as its leader, was catastrophic for Ethiopia.¹¹

When prime minister Meles Zenawi, who had ruled Ethiopia for 21 years, died in 2012, the world press started to evaluate his leadership. Western leaders held Meles in esteem, praising him for stabilising the Horn of Africa politically and for internal economic reforms, as a result of which Ethiopia received huge financial aid from the West. The politician did not enjoy a correspondingly high reputation among independent observers and his people. In an interview for *Foreign Policy*, George B.N. Ayittey, president

⁷ J. Bar, *Po ludobójstwie. Państwo i społeczeństwo w Rwandzie 1994-2012*, Kraków 2013, p. 22.

⁸ G.B.N. Ayittey, "The Worst of the Worst. Bad Dude Dictators and General Coconut Heads", *Foreign Policy*, no. 180, July–August 2010.

⁹ A vast majority of the white population in South Africa is critical of the African National Congress government.

¹⁰ It is estimated that around 300 thousand people starved to death in the years 1973-1974. The scale of the famine was the greatest in the Wollo province.

¹¹ Researchers estimate that the DERG rule in 1974-1987 resulted in the death of approx. 2 million Ethiopians, who died a result of persecution, starvation and war.

of the Free Africa Foundation, put Meles Zenawi on the abovementioned list of the most notorious dictators wielding power after 2010. “Worse than the former Marxist dictator [Mengistu] he ousted nearly two decades ago, Zenawi has clamped down on the opposition, stifled all dissent, and rigged elections. Like a true Marxist revolutionary, Zenawi has stashed millions in foreign banks and acquired mansions in Maryland and London in his wife’s name, according to the opposition – even as his barbaric regime collects a whopping \$1 billion in foreign aid each years.”¹² Indeed, under Meles Zenawi’s rule Ethiopia was among the most restrictive countries towards the media. It had one of the highest proportions of journalists in exile or in prison for political reasons. Furthermore, the government displaced forcefully and illegally populations from the areas that it designated for large-scale investments, e.g. construction of dams. This happened to the farming and pastoralist population of the upper stretch of the Omo River, which were forced to leave their homes with no public consultation and compensation.¹³

Also the population of a single country may perceive leaders differently, based on their own experience in the respective region, village, clan or tribe. When I was in the Central African Republic, I was surprised to hear Bokassa being praised in the south of the country. My interlocutors would stress that his rule was that of order and safety, people had work and a tarmac road to the capital city; “everything was fine until those from the North came”.¹⁴

Most researchers dealing with Sub-Saharan Africa agree that the ‘ground’ for bad governance was, as if, laid by the post-colonial independence. It would be a truism to state that the countries were not ready for it. The abrupt and unexpected ‘change of guard’, as a result of which colonial officials were replaced by local ones, unprepared to rule, was only part of the problem. With time, after the initial chaos, the countries might have developed their own elites. When the indigenous population started to come into power in the individual countries, they took over the colonial state unchanged, since the new officials, uninterested in any changes likely to diminish their power and incomes inherited from their white predecessors, considered what they took over to be a kind of property, and – given the family and clan relationships – the posts and related profits started to be owned directly by their clan or tribe. Thus, posts and the state were ‘appropriated’ by individual clans or tribes. This was the first sin, which immediately caused the strife for power in Africa to acquire a fierce character.¹⁵ In his book *Inside Africa*, published in the mid-1950s, John Gunther notes that Nigerian ministers received exceptionally high remuneration – for African conditions – amounting to 2500 pounds sterling annually, which was more than British MPs earned at the time.¹⁶

¹² G.B.N. Ayittey, “The Worst of the Worst...”

¹³ “South Omo. Pastoralists Forced from Their Land”, *Human Rights Watch*, at <<http://www.hrw.org/features/south-omo-pastoralists-forced-their-land>>, 23 December 2012.

¹⁴ Interviews with residents of Bagandou, Central African Republic (2010).

¹⁵ R. Dowden, *Africa. Alerted States, Ordinary Miracles*, London 2008, pp. 51-60; P. Collier, *Wars, Guns and Votes. Democracy in Dangerous Places*, London 2009, pp. 47-73.

¹⁶ J. Gunther, *Afryka od wewnątrz* [Inside Africa], Warszawa 1958, p. 908.

Although after the initial period of independence, many newly-created countries attempted to establish democracy, often relying on models taken from colonial metropolises, the experiments soon failed. Unsuccessful African democracies were replaced by authoritarian rule, mainly military dictatorship, often by coup. Such a form of government relied on military force and violence, remaining inefficient economically and socially. The model thrived, among other things, thanks to the bipolar division of the world. Having their protectors in the West or the East many dictators clung to power, plunging their countries into crises.¹⁷

The elites do not differ much from the communities they represent. They think similarly realising that if they do not cater for their own tribe or clan, they will lose the latter's support, with little chances of gaining support from other tribes. As a consequence, in many African countries the leaders do not identify themselves with all citizens, but only with their own clans and tribes. The latter provide absolute support to 'their' leaders, be they progressive statesmen or bloody dictators, fearing that should a leader from another ethnic group come into power they will lose access to the resources, which are already scarce. As a result, their kin will lose their posts in the administration and army, which – considering the African model of supporting the family – will deprive their clan or tribe of a privileged position in the country.

This is exemplified by the Central African Republic (over 80 ethnic groups), where the president's ethnic background or his/her coming from a given part of the country translates into access to public administration and army positions.¹⁸

When General André Kolingba came into power by coup in 1981, his only key in choosing state and military officials was ethnic and tribal affiliation. André Kolingba was of the Jakoma tribe, living in the southern part of the country, with the population not exceeding 5% of the Central African Republic. During his term, Jakoma people filled all key posts in the state administration and the army. Also recruitment for the armed forces was based on tribal affiliations. This had serious consequences later, when – after the only democratic elections in the country so far, forced by the USA and France in 1993 – Kolingba was ousted by Ange-Félix Patassé, who represented a northern tribe. Not only did Patassé, who had the joint support of the Gbaya, Kara and Kaba tribes, start dismissing state officials appointed by Kolingba, but also initiated purges among army officers. He established a well-paid presidential guard (*Unité de sécurité présidentielle* – USP) and police force, which mainly recruited members of northern tribes. Further dismissals in the army and forcing officers to resign by not paying them led to a number of rebellions against the new president in 1996-1997. Not trusting his own soldiers, Patassé asked for external help. He was aided by Muammar Gaddafi, who sent well-equipped and trained Libyan troops to reinforce the presidential guard. In response, Kolingba attempted a coup using the discontented soldiers, mainly from the south of the country.

¹⁷ K. Trzciniński, *Demokratyzacja w Afryce Subsaharyjskiej. Perspektywa zachodnioafrykańskiej myśli politycznej*, Warszawa 2013, p. 8.

¹⁸ "Background Notes: Central African Republic", *U.S. Department of State*, Bureau of African Affairs, 18 January 2010, at <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/4007.htm>>, 7 January 2012.

After suppressing the rebellion, Patassé decided to crush the Jakoma tribe, which led to the exodus of approximately 20 thousand people and persecution of civilians.

In Liberia, a deep ethnic divide developed during Samuel Doe's presidency. Previously, Liberia was ruled by an elite of freed African American slaves who had come here in the 1920s. The newcomers, who represented a higher level of civilisation, created a state in which they monopolised the key functions. Despite clear discrimination of indigenous Liberians in terms of access to power, the country saw no ethnic clashes because American Liberians strove to bridge the gap between the tribes they ruled. Yet, there was a clear division into *the Honourables*, who consisted of American Liberians, and indigenous population. With the onset of the economic crisis in the late 1970s, slogans started to be heard to abolish the rule of 'strangers' and grant equal rights to all citizens. The regime of the descendants of American settlers was abolished in April 1980 as a result of a military coup carried out by Sergeant Samuel Doe. The dictator, who came into power in the name of equal rights for indigenous population, decided to rely mainly on his own ethnic group – the Krahn people, who then represented not more than 4% of Liberia's population, as well as on the rich Mandingo tribe, who were mostly traders. Doe was mainly afraid of the involvement of the Gio and Mano tribes, whom he considered to be the main threat to his rule. He gradually removed representatives of the latter ethnic groups from state offices and the army, replacing them with his own tribespeople. The favouring of a small people sparked fierce criticism from the Gio and Mano majority, considering that the farming Krahn people made a low contribution to the state budget, whereas the Gios and Manos contributed most of the revenue. Dismissed Gio and Mano officers and soldiers formed guerrillas under the command of General Thomas Quiwonkpa, who was a Gio. The rebels attempted to overthrow the regime in Monrovia in November 1985. The coup failed, with dramatic consequences. Samuel Doe responded almost immediately with ethnic cleansing in the Nimba region, where in a few days two thousand Gio and Mano people died at the hands of the government army. Soon, repression spread to other provinces, and in the dictator's home county, Grand Gedeh, the Krahn supported actively the governmental army in fighting other tribes. When Samuel Doe was overthrown, his successor, Charles Taylor, a Mano, started to use ethnic cleansing, immediately after the creation of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia. Relying on the community of Gio and Mano emigrants, who had suffered the most during Doe's rule, Taylor unleashed an atrocious civil war, deepening the ethnic divide. Exploiting the fact that in the 1980s Mandingo specialised in granting land-pledged loans to farmers, Taylor's propaganda claimed that the practice is unfair, and promised those who join him and fight the 'Krahn and Mandingo rule' to be released from the liabilities. This gave Taylor broad public support. Using stereotypes and populist slogans in an apt way, he provoked general hatred, turning the war for power and resources into an ethnic conflict, which soon spread to neighbouring countries.¹⁹

A good example of how bad governance may ruin a country and dramatically exacerbate the situation of its residents is Robert Mugabe's rule in Zimbabwe. Before Mugabe

¹⁹ K. Trzeciński, *Wojny w Liberii i Sierra Leone (1989–2002)*, Warszawa 2002, pp. 39–54.

came into power, Rhodesia had been referred to as the granary of Europe. In 1980, the country was the first exporter of white corn and third exporter of tobacco in the world, the largest African exporter of cotton and beef, the leading exporter of peanuts, soya beans, wheat, tea, coffee, sugar cane, and had 5 million cattle. Apart from that, Rhodesia was the largest global producer of chromium and sixth largest miner of gold. However, from the very start of Mugabe's leadership, the country was badly governed. The president focused on securing power for himself and destroying political competitors, rather than on the economy. As a result, the country was helpless when faced with a disastrous drought that hit Zimbabwe in 1991–92, destroying 70% of the crops. However, the true disaster came in 2000, before the parliamentary elections. Threatened by the opposition and striving to dodge responsibility for the fast economic decay caused by his erroneous policy, Mugabe announced that he will expropriate white farmers in order to do justice to history and give land to Africans. By the year 2000, 70% of the best land in the country was held by around six thousand white farmers, descendants of the British and Boer settlers, who had ruled Rhodesia until 1980. The authorities tolerated their wealth, as the white population stayed away from politics and their farms formed the core of the country's economy and the main source of its foreign currency proceeds. In the early 1980s, the six thousand modern and well-managed farms of white farmers accounted for 90% of Zimbabwe's total agricultural production, while traditional African farming and agricultural cooperatives (800 thousand farms) represented merely 10%. The ruling party, Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-FP), sent youth militants and veterans of the guerrilla liberation war of the 1970s to attack white farms and terrorise the opposition. Although those actions consolidated Mugabe's and ZANU-FP power, they added impetus to the spiral of hatred against white settlers and gave wide masses of people hope of taking over the land. Thanks to populist slogans and vote rigging, Mugabe's supporters won the parliamentary elections in 2000, while Mugabe himself won the presidential election of 2002.

The actions which gave him the presidency ruined the country. Nowadays, there are merely 300 white farmers in Zimbabwe, while the rest have been expropriated and forced to leave the country. The farms, apportioned among the landless poor and often given away to loyal members of the ruling party, their cousins and friends, started to fall into ruin. Unable to manage large farm holdings, small-scale farmers subdivided their land into subsistence farms. Meanwhile, party officials turned their newly-acquired farms into private safaris or re-sold them. As a consequence, in two years the country found itself on the verge of bankruptcy, with no currency reserves. This plunged Zimbabwe into the greatest economic crisis in history. Since 2000, agricultural production has fallen by half, with a quarter of the country's population of thirteen millions left dependent on international humanitarian aid. A quarter of the population has left the country to work abroad – mainly in Great Britain and in neighbouring countries – South Africa and Botswana. When the crisis peaked, the country ran short of gasoline, electricity and imported goods. With unemployment of 90%, inflation figures started to skyrocket as from 1998. From November 2008, the prices in Zimbabwe were doubling every 31 hours. Finally, on 31 January 2009 the Ministry of Finance announced

that the Zimbabwean dollar had been denominated and ceased to be the sole legal tender. Zimbabweans were allowed to use other currencies, such as the American dollar, euro, pound sterling, South African rand and Botswana pula²⁰. According to a report of the World Health Organisation issued in 2008, 5.5 million of the country's citizens, 1/3 of the population, were under threat of starvation. When Zimbabweans were struck by the greatest epidemic of cholera in 15 years, Mugabe refused to recognise its real magnitude, claiming that it was UK propaganda. The underestimating of the problem caused a large-scale and uncontrollable outbreak of the epidemic. A seasonal flood added to the tragedy. The country, which had boasted one of the best healthcare systems at the time of Rhodesia, by the end of 2009, recorded 80 thousand cases of cholera, 5 thousand of which were fatal²¹.

The huge gap between the wealth of ruling elites and poverty of citizens is also attributable to corruption, which is an inherent element of bad governance in Sub-Saharan countries and a serious barrier to development. Estimated to reach 148 billion, it devours 25% of the GDP on average²². The scale of corruption is even greater and more severe for citizens in weaker and crisis-ridden countries. Its commonness and acceptance by the state's authorities make citizens helpless, as they are unable to appeal against or contest officials' decisions. State officials, soldiers guarding road checkpoints, where you have to wait several hours to pass, but will be let through faster for a bribe, customs officers charging their own undocumented duty fees, police officers stopping a car for no reason and charging fines with no receipt – all of them bribe their superiors to keep their positions, following which the superiors bribe their own superiors, and so on until the very top of the official ladder. Citizens cannot expect protection, while public interest is irrelevant and held in no esteem, either by citizens or representatives of the state. The corruptive activity organised by political leaders, e.g. issuing mining concessions, export or import authorisations for a bribe, etc. affects mainly the state economy. Corruption also takes the form of trading in posts, either for one-off payments or regular payment of money to superiors.

In Zambia, corruption has been linked from the very start to the sector of raw-materials, which – combined with the neopatrimonial political system based on clientelism, established in the country after it regained independence – has caused the corruption to acquire a systemic nature. Corruption surged during the transformation period of 1991–2001, when the privatisation law did not prevent politicians from acquiring privatised companies. Frederick Chiluba (1991-2002), who held the presidential office at the time, was charged, along with other high-rank officials, with embezzling 40 million dollars.²³

²⁰ Currently, Zimbabwe uses the US dollar as its legal tender.

²¹ A. Norman, *Mugabe, Teacher, Revolutionary, Tyrant*, Stroud 2008, pp. 117-122; J. Chochołowski, "Zimbabwe-w cieniu Mugabego", *psz.pl*, 10 August 2010, at <<http://www.psz.pl/Zimbabwe-w-cieniu-Mugabego>>, 24 June 2014.

²² "The Cost of Corruption in Africa", *BBC News*, 17 February 2006, at <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4723572.stm>>, 8 September 2012; "Governance and Security", *ISSUE BRIEF*, at <<http://one.org/c/us/issuebrief/94/>>, 8 September 2012.

²³ K. Czernichowski, D. Kopiński, A. Polus, *Kłątwa surowcowa w Afryce? Przypadek Zambii i Botswany*, Warszawa 2012, pp. 108-109; D. Smith, "Former Zambian president faces jail in unprecedented

In the Central African Republic, corruption is mainly linked to the issuance of licences for extraction of minerals, mainly diamonds, or for logging. Diamond-related corruption is shown very well in *The Ambassador*,²⁴ a controversial documentary made by Mads Brügger. The Polish missionary Robert Wiczorek characterises corruption in the Central African Republic as follows: “Once again, laws governing diamond mining and trade were reformed, because it was found that half of the stones are smuggled out of the country. An audit of the Ministry of Labour showed that 10% – i.e. approximately two thousand – of the jobs of officials in the country were fictional (...).”²⁵

Unfortunately, also development aid to dysfunctional African states may support bad governance, as donors, often unwittingly, play an important role in the process, supporting bad and inefficient government. This was the case with the corruption scandal in South Sudan. After gaining independence in 2011, the government in Juba benefited from huge international aid. The international community invested great amounts of money, willing to ensure that the newly-established state is founded on high *good governance* standards. Meanwhile, in a letter of 3 May 2012 addressed to 75 prominent political figures of South Sudan, the president of the country, Salva Kiir, declared that the budget is short of 4 billion dollars, most likely embezzled by former and current high-rank officials. To make the recovery of the sums more likely, the president offered amnesty to those who will return them.²⁶

The construction of the Chad-Cameroon pipeline is an example of activities where money allocated by the international community for development is used by the government to keep power. In July 2000, the European Investment Bank (EIB) granted a loan of EUR 144 million to build the pipeline. The decision was made one month after the World Bank confirmed its financial support for the same project amounting to USD 300 million. The pipeline was to be an ambitious undertaking towards promoting political and economic reforms. The reforms were to improve good governance and enable one of the most corrupted and dysfunctional governments in the world to manage money efficiently and combat poverty. EIB argued that the project will ensure benefits which will be allocated to reducing poverty and contribute to the region’s economic growth and create conditions for long-term political stability. The proceeds were to be invested both in the north and south of the country, relieving the political tension between the regions, which have been in a conflict for the last 30 years. Meanwhile, the situation of the Chadian society has not improved. What is more, there is evidence that it has deteriorated (which is confirmed by World Bank statements and official reports). According to the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the World Bank, 70% of the proceeds on the sale of oil was to be allocated for infrastructure projects

corruption trial”, *The Guardian*, 13 August 2009, at <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/aug/13/zambia-frederick-chiluba-corruption-trial>>, 19 April 2011.

²⁴ *The Ambassador*, directed by M. Brügger, Denmark 2011, distribution: Against Gravity.

²⁵ R. Wiczorek, *Pęknięte serce Afryki*, Kraków 2008, pp. 250–251.

²⁶ H. Holland, “South Sudan officials have stolen \$4 billion: president”, *Reuters*, 4 June 2012, at <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/06/04/us-southsudan-corruption-idUSBRE8530Q120120604>>, 20 September 2012.

and a stability fund. Meanwhile the Chadian authorities have used most of the money for other goals, mainly military ones, to consolidate the dictatorial rule of Idriss Déby, who, having his own funds from oil extraction, is no longer dependent on international aid to such an extent as previously. Thus the project has not made life easier for the people, but instead strengthened the dictatorial government and increased pressure on the local population to leave their homes and make way for the pipeline.²⁷

Bad governance may spoil a country's economy in a very short period of time. However, in the Western world, even though governments may do a lot of damage, their administrative mechanisms – developed to a greater or smaller extent – may mitigate the results of erroneous decisions, while the society may send politicians empty-handed during the next election. When it comes to dysfunctional countries, bad governance may also lead to humanitarian crises, such as starvation or displacement, and unleash an internal or external war causing suffering of the country's own people. Bad governance is rightly perceived as a source of miseries befalling the state and people, such as poverty, internal conflicts, exile, corruption and humanitarian crises. To a growing extent, the key donors of development aid, both private and institutional ones, as well as international financial institutions make their aid conditional on the implementation by the beneficiary of recommended reforms and ensuring that such efforts will lead to building good governance. An example may be the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), established in the USA in November 2002, which was entrusted 5 billion US dollars' worth of aid funds meant for poor countries whose governments are classified as pursuing 'good policies'.²⁸ In May 2004, MCC announced a list of 16 countries meeting the good policies criteria, and signed the first Compact with Madagascar exactly a year later.²⁹

When studying the problem of governance in Sub-Saharan Africa, one should refrain from applying the Western clichés, as good or bad governance in the region cannot only be measured by the number of journalists expelled from the country concerned. One should also take into account such factors as whether the country has been recording year-by-year economic growth, whether or not its society is plagued by war, starvation, epidemics, and whether the government builds schools, hospitals and roads.

The terms 'good governance', 'bad governance', 'poor governance', 'poor policies' have been increasingly used in the context of actions aimed towards repairing dysfunctional states. In a serious debate, the dispute focuses on the problem of bad governance in countries characterised by extreme poverty. There is a serious disagreement in this respect between two distinguished advisors of the World Bank – Jeffrey Sachs and William Easterly. Sachs claims that poor governance and corruption are a consequence of poverty, whereby countries affected by these phenomena are trapped in a vicious circle

²⁷ D. Kopiński, "Bank Światowy jako katalizator rozwoju państw naftowych. Przypadek ropociągu Czad-Kamerun", in D. Kopiński, A. Polus (eds.), *Zgubne transakcje. Surowce mineralne a rozwój państw afrykańskich*, Warszawa 2010, pp. 105-119.

²⁸ *Millennium Challenge Corporation*, at <<http://www.mcc.gov/>>, 9 February 2014.

²⁹ *Madagascar Compact*, at <<http://www.mcc.gov/pages/countries/program/madagascar-compact>>, 9 February 2014.

of poverty.³⁰ Easterly expresses the opposite view, claiming that bad governance and corruption are the cause and not the result of poverty.³¹

In recent years, willingness to counteract bad leadership has been also observed among African politicians, which is exemplified by the huge popularity of the LEAD Africa Fellowship Program for English-speaking countries of Western Africa, organised by the Foundation for Environmental Development and Education in Lagos, Nigeria.³²

Undoubtedly, defining bad and good governance may make it easier for the national community to act towards promoting the former and limiting or eliminating the latter.³³

The author formulated the analysis and assessment of bad governance presented in this article on the basis of his own field studies carried out in African countries (Central African Republic, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Somalia, Western Sahara, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Botswana) in 2010-2014 and research of specialist literature related to African and political studies. During the field studies, the author used mainly qualitative methods (covert and overt observations, numerous in-depth interviews) and ethnographic methods. The studies were delivered in the framework of the research project *Failed states and their destabilising impact on international relations on a regional and global scale*.³⁴

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³⁰ J. Sachs, *The End of Poverty. Economic Possibilities for Our Time*, London 2005.

³¹ W. Easterly, *The White Man's Burden*, Oxford 2007, pp. 37-39.

³² *Leadership for Environment and Development*, at <<http://www.lead-awa.org/home>>, 7 February 2014.

³³ In addition to the issuance of documents by leading international organisations addressing development issues, also think tanks have been set up, like Good Governance Africa, established in Johannesburg in 2012, at <<http://gga.org/>>, 7 February 2014.

³⁴ Research project co-financed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education implemented in 2010-2014 (project number: 3233/B/H03/2010/39).

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