

The Evolution of European Union Development Cooperation Policy Towards Sub-Saharan Africa: Achievements and Challenges¹

Avrupa Birliği'nin Sahra-altı Afrika'ya Yönelik Kalkınma İşbirliği Politikasının Gelişimi: Başarılar ve Zorluklar

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ÖZ

Bu makale, Avrupa Birliği'nin (AB) 2000'li yıllarda Sahra-altı Afrika'ya yönelik kalkınma yardımı politikasının gelişimini bu politikanın başarıları ve zorlukları açısından incelemektedir. Dünya siyasetinde önde gelen bir donör olarak AB Avrupa Bütünleşme sürecinin erken dönemlerinden bu yana Afrika ülkelerine kalkınma ve insani yardım sağlamaktadır. Kalkınma yardımlarına yanısıra, AB Afrika ülkelerinin başlıca ticari ortaklarından biridir. Son 20 yılda, AB'nin kalkınma işbirliği politikası önemli değişimler yaşamıştır. Siyasi anlamda, siyasi koşulluluk güçlenirken, kalkınma yardımlarında sivil toplumun rolüne vurgu yapılmıştır. Ekonomik anlamda ise karşılıklı ticari imtiyazlar, karşılıklı olmayan ticari imtiyazlara dönüştürülmüştür. Yardımların yönetiminde ise, performansa dayalı yardım tahsisleri getirilmiştir. Bu değişikliklerle AB kalkınma politikasının kendine özgü özelliklerini kaldırmış ve kalkınma işbirliği politikasında küresel eğilimleri takip etmiştir.

ANAHTAR KELİMELELER

Avrupa Birliği, AB Kalkınma İşbirliği Politikası, Kalkınma Yardımı, Sahra-altı Afrika, Cotonou Ortaklık Anlaşması

ABSTRACT

This article examines the evolution of the European Union's (EU) development aid policy towards sub-Saharan Africa since the 2000s by looking at its main achievements and challenges. As a leading donor of world politics, the EU provides development and humanitarian aid to African countries since the early period of European integration. In addition to aid provision, the EU is one of main trading partner of African countries. Over the past two decades, the Union development cooperation policy has undergone significant changes. Politically, it strengthened political conditionalities and expanded the role of civil society in development policy. Economically, it shifted from reciprocal trade preferences to non-reciprocal trade preferences. It introduced performance-based aid allocations in aid management. With these changes, the Union removed the peculiar characteristics of EU development cooperation policy and followed global trends in its development cooperation policy.

KEYWORDS

European Union, EU Development Cooperation Policy, Development Aid, sub-Saharan Africa, Cotonou Partnership Agreement

¹ Bu çalışma Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Uluslararası İlişkiler Anabilim Dalında 2014 yılında kabul edilmiş olan ve Doç.Dr.Sevilay Kahraman'ın danışmanlığında yazılan "Explaining Change in EU Development Policy Towards Sub-Saharan Africa in the 2000s: The Perspectives of System, Process and Power" başlıklı doktora tezinden türetilmiştir.

Makale Gönderim Tarihi: 12/09/2017

Kabul Tarihi: 09/11/2017

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INTRODUCTION

Development aid refers to the transfer of loans or grants from donor country or multilateral development agency to recipient countries for the purposes of economic growth and prosperity. Foreign aid, a related term, can be accepted as Official Development Aid (ODA) if the grants to aid recipients are provided by the official aid agency with the aim of promotion of economic development and if the loans involve grant element of at least 25 per cent. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)'s definition of ODA refers to the transfer of concessional resources from one institution or government to recipient country; yet, export credits or trade financing are not accepted as ODA. Similarly, funding for cultural exchanges, loans and credits, any kind of military aid such as the supply of military equipment and services, support for anti-terrorism or intelligence activities or loans given for military purposes are not eligible for ODA definition (OECD-DAC, 2008).

Donors provide development aid with various motives such as expression of solidarity, the projection of moral values, the necessity of power politics or the pursuit of national interests (Whitfield, 2009:28). According to Carol Lancaster, donor countries can deliver development aid for diplomatic reasons and management of political relations. Besides, development aid can be given for the pursuit of commercial interests like the expansion of markets and securing access to raw materials. Aid for humanitarian purposes is the least controversial form of aid and used in natural or man-made crises for the alleviation of human suffering. Compared to other motives, aid for cultural purposes such as funding educational activities and opening language courses is rarely employed (Lancaster, 2007:15).

In comparison with other multilateral institutions such as the World Bank or United Nations, the EU has a distinctive role in development policy. In addition to delivering development aid directly, the EU coordinates bilateral development policies of 28 member states as a multilateral agency. The EU has its own aid budget and aid bureaucracy. In addition to its donor role, the EU takes an active role in global development politics and promotes the cooperation of member states on development issues. By this way, the Union aims to reduce poverty and contribute economic prosperity at the global level.

The EU development cooperation policy has experienced a significant transformation period over the last two decades. The Cotonou Partnership Agreement in 2000 and its reviews changed the purposes, content and instruments of the Union development cooperation policy. This paper examines the evolution of the EU's development cooperation policy in the 2000s with special on its achievements and challenges in three sections. Firstly, it investigates the relationship between European colonialism and development policy and explains the origins of development policy. Secondly, it provides a historical overview of the EU development policy from the early days of European integration to 2000s. Thirdly, it focuses on the Cotonou Partnership Agreement and assesses its repercussions for the EU- Sub-Saharan Africa relations.

1. THE ORIGINS OF THE EU DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION POLICY

Europe's engagement with Africa goes back to the colonial occupation of Africa during the late 19th century. King Leopold of Belgium started the European race for colonisation of Africa called as "scramble for Africa". European powers dominated and colonized different parts of Africa and established their own colonial rule. Britain colonized Africa from Ghana to South Africa until the 1914. British colonialism was based on indirect rule by which local rulers acted as representatives of British Empire. France occupied Western Coast of Africa including Senegal, Mali, and Ivory Coast and pursued assimilationist colonial rule by the enforcement of direct rule. France's colonial rule imposed French culture, language and education through "mission civilisatrice". Portugal preferred to exploitation of resources in Angola and Mozambique under its colonial rule. Belgium focused on privatisation of extracted raw materials under its colonial rule in Rwanda and Burundi. The diversity of colonial patterns caused to the different patterns of decolonisation process. Consequently, diverse forms of statehood emerged in Africa such as African-socialists or pro-Western regimes from 1960s to 1980s. Nevertheless, most of newly independent African states turned to be undemocratic, single party or military regimes over time (Meyer, 2012: 168).

Decolonization process did not alter the peripheral position of African countries in political and economic terms. Sub-Saharan African countries are still conceived at the periphery or margins of international politics (Engel and Olsen, 2005: 4). It has been one of the poorest and least developed regions of the world owing to political and economic problems inherited from colonialism. European dominance, occupation and exploitation colonialism left negative repercussions on the continent (Olivier, 2011: 53). The majority of Sub-Saharan African countries do not have an efficient and cohesive state structure. Consequently, sub-Saharan Africa as a region hosts the largest number of fragile states that are divided by ethnic conflicts or inefficient governments (Engel and Olsen, 2005: 8).

With the start of European integration, the EU started to provide development aid to the former colonies of EU in Africa. Hence, Union's development policy took its roots from Europe's colonial past. Sub-Saharan African countries are considered together with a number of island countries in the Caribbean and the Pacific and named as the African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACP) in the EU terminology. These countries are grouped together owing to their colonial relations and common peripheral position in global system. EU started to provide development aid to the former colonies of its member states and regulated this aid relationship by means of successive treaties.

2. THE EVOLUTION OF EU'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION POLICY UNTIL THE 2000s

The EU Development Policy is the one of the oldest policies of the Union's external relations going back to the late 1950s. The EU provides development aid since the start of European integration process with the Rome Treaty in 1957. It started as an association relationship with 18 former colonies of founding members of European Economic Community (EEC) and expanded gradually over time. During the early period, Union's development policy towards Sub-Saharan African countries was shaped by member states' former colonial relations. In the early years of European integration, development cooperation policy was driven by the priorities of member states. Former colonial members of the EEC such as France and Belgium sought to keep their relations with their former colonies to meet their need for the supply of raw materials and goods for their markets and the expansion of former colonies' markets to European firms (Carbone, 2011: 326).

At first, Yaoundé Convention was signed in 1963 between the EEC and 18 newly independent states of West Africa and formed the basis of relations between the EEC and sub-Saharan Africa. Yaoundé II was signed in 1969 with the inclusion of other African states. Again, France became a main bridge between the EEC and developing countries of Africa owing to its strong economic, historical and strategic links with Africa. Other member states such as the Netherlands and Germany accepted the idea of association and economic costs due to the *Eurafrica*, which implied responsibility of colonies in economic and social development of Africa and thus building an equitable relationship between Europe and Africa (Claeys, 2004: 119-120). The European Development Fund (EDF) was established with the Rome Treaty to support former colonies of EEC member states. The EDF was outside the Community budget and financed by voluntary contributions of member states.

Oil Crisis led to the adoption of global perspective by the EU during the 1970s. Before oil crisis, regional Euro-African perspective on development was observed, yet, distinction between global and regional perspective was blurred after oil crisis (Robb, 2004:43). In this context, membership of Britain, Ireland and Denmark to the EC in 1973 became important step towards "globalised aid approach" at the EU level (Reisen, 2007:39) In addition to associated countries, the non-associated countries were included in the scope of development policy. The EU moved from a regional Euro-African approach to a global perspective and built new relationships with developing world on the basis of solidarity (Reisen, 2007:43).

Aftermath of the first enlargement of the EU in 1973, the first Lomé Convention was signed in 1975 as a successor of Yaoundé Conventions for a five-year period. The geographic scope of Lomé included almost all of the independent sub-Saharan African states and ex-colonies of Britain and France in the Caribbean and the Pacific. However, Lomé partner countries did not involve all ex-colonies of member states or the poorest countries of the South. Lomé Convention covered some of ACP countries which had access to rich resources and raw materials such as lead, copper, zinc and uranium. Another criteria for the selection of countries is the prevention of expansion of communism in Africa (Holden, 2009: 126). While Yaoundé Convention provided reciprocal trade privileges for a small number of former colonies and associated states and reflected a regional approach in development policy, Lomé Convention granted non-reciprocal trade preferences to almost all goods and thus recognized as the most advanced example of North-South relations (Carbone, 2007: 32). Furthermore, Lomé represented a historical transition from colonialism to mutual cooperation and equality on the basis of a contractual and negotiated arrangement (Carbone, 2008: 326-327). The supporters of Lomé Convention viewed it as a new step towards a new international economic order and a model for North-South Relations. Lomé Convention introduced a non-reciprocal trade regime, contractual foreign aid without any interference to political affairs of the recipients and provision of compensatory schemes for fluctuations in prices of agricultural and mineral exports. On the other hand, critical observers like Galtung and Ravenhill argued that Lomé Convention was a new kind of colonialism since it provided access for raw materials and a huge market for multinational investment (Carbone, 2008: 328).

Even though EU development policy was established to protect post-colonial relations of its member states, the Union built its own unique model of development over time. Lomé Conventions between the EU and the ACP countries became a genuine example of North-South partnership in the 1970s. In the Cold War period,

the ACP countries became the main beneficiaries of EU development policy. The relationship between the Community and the ACP was based on trade preferences, aid and institutionalized dialogue. Yet, the pyramid of privileges altered substantially with the end of the Cold War. The EU's relations with other countries were reconsidered on the basis of geographical proximity. The regions that were more close to the Union gained importance during the post-Cold war period (Smith, 2004:60) With emergence of a new group of states in Central and Eastern Europe, priorities of the EU changed dramatically and aid funds were shifted from the ACP countries to the Eastern Europe (Arts and Dickson, 2004:8).

Towards the end of 1990s, Lomé system came to an end. Despite 25 years of trade preferences and aid, Lomé did not achieve its principal objectives such as export diversification and economic growth. Furthermore, the accession of Sweden, Finland and Austria in 1995 affected the direction of EU development cooperation policy. These countries supported global orientation of EU development policy and prioritization of poverty reduction, rather than provision of aid to countries with historical colonial links. Maastricht and Amsterdam made reference to integration of developing countries to world economy, especially the most disadvantaged ones (Bishop, Heron and Payne, 2013: 90). The post-Cold War period induced the EU to prioritise its relations with the neighbours and provided opportunity for a stronger global role (Smith, 2004: 63). Member states supported the EU's growing global role and its engagement with different parts of the world. They regarded the EU level more suitable for pursuing their economic and security interests and dealing with third countries (Smith, 2004: 64).

In sum, the EU-ACP relations constituted the most visible and institutionalised dimension of the EU's relations with the developing world. The EU built its own development policy on the basis of its internal dynamics. Initially, the EU put emphasis on continuation of post-colonial relations. In the 1970s, the EU put forward its alternative approach of development policy and became benevolent donor towards the ACP countries. In the 1990s, the EU gave priority to Central and Eastern European Countries and focused democratisation and liberalisation of these countries (Brown, 2004: 17-18).

3. THE COTONOU AGREEMENT AND EU'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION POLICY IN THE 2000s

In the 2000s, development aid was the main instrument of EU's relations with the sub-Saharan African countries. The EU provided more than half of the total amount of ODA given to Africa and became one of top donors of Africa alongside the US and the World Bank (European Commission, 2013). However, The Union has a fragmented approach to Africa on the basis of the division of Africa into two macro-regions: North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. While the EU's relations with North African countries are managed by the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument, the EU's relationship with the sub-Saharan African countries is managed by the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (Olivier, 2011: 57).

The Cotonou Partnership Agreement, which was signed between 15 members of the EU and 77 ACP countries, constituted the main framework of the EU's development policy towards 48 sub-Saharan African countries. As a successor of the Lomé Conventions lasting 25 years, the Cotonou Partnership Agreement signed in 2000 after 18-month negotiations. It was a departure from the EU's past relations with the sub-Saharan African countries. Cotonou brought an institutionalized and hierarchical cooperation on the basis of bilateral economic relations and development assistance. The influence of global aid trends was seen explicitly in the Cotonou Agreement (Farrell, 2011: 246).

Besides, the Cotonou Agreement brought radical changes to the most of the distinctive features of EU's development cooperation policy towards the sub-Saharan African countries. The Agreement stipulated a new partnership framework in both political and economic aspects of the development cooperation policy in order to overhaul the EU's development policy towards the sub-Saharan Africa (Laporte, 2007: 19). Article 1 of the Agreement defined its objectives of broadly such as the promotion of economic, social and cultural development of the ACP states and contribution to peace and security. Besides, poverty reduction, sustainable development and gradual integration of the ACP countries into the world economy are stated as the main pillars of partnership. The linkage between poverty reduction and sustainable development was underlined in many articles. In addition to reduction of poverty and sustainable development of the ACP countries, the Agreement sought to facilitate the integration of ACP group to global economy. Article 2 put forward the equality of partnership, local ownership, mutual dialogue and the fulfilment of obligations and differentiation of ACP countries and regions as fundamental principles of ACP-EU relations. Unlike Lomé Convention's uniformity approach, differentiation principle paved the way for the division of ACP countries into sub-groups and different regions and thus building of different policies on the basis of national characteristics (Holland, 2004: 118).

In contrast to Lomé Conventions which concentrated mainly on economic cooperation, the Cotonou Partnership Agreement was structured around a strong political orientation. It stated core values of the EU such as respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law as “essential elements” of partnership, whose violation may lead to the suspension of the partnership. Thus, the rule of law was added as essential elements of the Agreement. Additionally, good governance was accepted as a new legal category of “fundamental” elements of partnership. Hence, the Cotonou Agreement envisaged a stronger political conditionality in the areas of democracy, human rights and the rule of law and good governance.

The Agreement's extension of political conditionality in spite of opposition of ACP states and the suspension of cooperation against serious breach of principles indicated the EU's close alignment with the international development paradigm (Brown, 2004: 35). The EU's extension of political conditionalities gave rise to the politicisation of EU's relations with developing world and weakened the post-colonial relations (Smith, 2004: 61). The performance criterion and the conditionality of good governance led to dissatisfaction among ACP countries since these provisions brought uncertainty and hampered the principles of ownership and joint management of aid (Laporte, 2007: 29).

Furthermore, the Cotonou Agreement provided the establishment of consultation mechanisms that can lead to the suspension of aid or implementation of sanctions in cases of serious breaches of the essential or fundamental elements of the agreement with Article 96 and Article 97 (Vanheukelom, Mackie and Bossuyt, 2006: 47). The suspension of development aid started with the 1990s in an informal way. The decision to freeze aid to Equatorial Guinea was taken by the Commission with the mandate of the Council in 1992. Afterwards, the suspension of cooperation with Nigeria in 1995 was made by means of a Common Foreign and Security Policy Common Position.

In 2003, the EU partially suspended development aid given to Central African Republic owing to a coup d'état and economic corruption. Togo is another country that has been faced with Article 96 suspension several times as a consequence of a succession of interruptions in the democratic process. Similarly, development aid given to Ivory Coast and Fiji was partially suspended due to the military coups. As seen, the Article 96 was invoked mainly in the cases of the interruption of democratic processes and human rights violations. Nevertheless, the violation of human rights or democratic principles was not sole reason for the suspension of development aid. The suspension of development aid was mainly driven by military coup d'états. Furthermore, the EU's sanctions towards developing countries were far from being consistent. The former colonial powers such as France and Britain have tendency to protect their former colonies from aid cut-offs. Hence, the EU did not invoke Article 96 in every case of the violation of human rights and democracy in the 2000s (Vanheukelom, Mackie and Bossuyt, 2006: 47).

In addition to the incorporation of enforcement mechanism and suspension clause, the Cotonou Agreement has a separate section (Part I Title II) devoted to the political aspect of the relationship. The Agreement broadened the principles of cooperation between the EU and the sub-Saharan African countries. Before the Agreement, the principles of state-to state relations such as equality and sovereignty were main principles of cooperation. The Cotonou Agreement expanded these principles from state-to-state to state-to-civil society and private sector organisations by adding other principles such as participation of civil society, political dialogue, differentiation and regionalisation (Barbarinde and Faber, 2004: 36-37). For the first time, the essential roles of non-state actors were fully recognised and this cooperation was expanded to include civil society, local actors and private sector. With the involvement into non-state actors, the EU aspired to construct participatory approach to development (Laporte, 2007: 21).

On the other side, economic aspects of the EU's aid relationship with sub-Saharan Africa are centred on non-reciprocal trade concessions. The Union granted sub-Saharan African countries non-reciprocal preferential access for many goods except for some agricultural products until 2000s. The non-reciprocal preferences given under the Lomé Conventions weakened the EU's negotiating position at the World Trade Organization (WTO). Furthermore, the EU had to pay large amounts of concessions in other areas for obtaining these preferences. Yet, these non-reciprocal preferences no longer produced the expected outcomes and prompted the EU to reconsider most of its trade privileges in the 1990s (Barbarinde and Faber, 2004: 31). The failure of Lomé arrangements in terms of growth figures and development indicators and contextual developments led to debates on relevance of non-reciprocal trade concessions. Furthermore, the Directorate General of Trade of European Commission became main supporter of multilateral trade regime and the EU moved to trade liberalisation (Elgstrom, 2010: 139).

The influence of the WTO on the Cotonou agreement was apparently seen in the Article 34.4 of the Agreement which stated that “economic and trade cooperation shall be implemented in full conformity with

WTO provisions” (Elgström and Pilegaard, 2008: 370). In this respect, the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) became a new trade arrangement that changed the economic aspects of relations between the EU and sub-Saharan African countries. The EPAs were offered as substitute for the replacement of non-reciprocal preferences. They regulate the opening up of sub-Saharan African countries’ markets to EU products and exporters over a period of up to 12 years. While Lomé Conventions did not differentiate sub-Saharan African countries in terms of economic level, Cotonou Agreement envisaged the differentiation of countries and emphasized on the least developed countries at the apex of the EU’s ‘pyramid of preferences’ (Elgström and Pilegaard, 2008: 369).

From the EU’s point of view, EPAs are “trade-induced” development instrument that facilitate the trade between the EU and the ACP regions in export and imports of goods and services. Hence, trade liberalisation, opening up of the ACP markets would lead to transfer of technology and reduction of costs of inputs and thus make them more efficient and competitive in global trade. Furthermore, EPAs would end marginalization of ACP countries and facilitate their integration to world economy. By liberalizing their markets, the ACP countries will attract more investments and move out of poverty (Sicurelli, 2010: 84).

The EU endorsed EPAs as development instrument with the purpose of poverty reduction in line with Article 1 of the Cotonou Agreement. Thus, EU made linkage between trade liberalization and poverty reduction. Although development and economic growth are interrelated with each other, they are not in a causal relationship as stated by the EU discourse (Sheahan et.al, 2010: 360). In this regard, EPAs are outcome of the Union’s adjustment of its development policy to global trade, rather than any real commitment to sustainable development and poverty alleviation. The EU’s non-reciprocal trade preferences continued until 2008 with a waiver. Afterwards, the EU offered EPAs to replace non-reciprocal trade concessions to comply with the rules of WTO. The EPA negotiations were scheduled to coincide with the end of WTO waiver regarding to continue Lomé preferences (Flint, 2008: 145). However, the liberalisation of ACP economies has not been backed sufficiently by development assistance projects. The EU overlooked development demands of African counterparts and constrained EU market access for African products, thus leaving African economies in a disadvantaged position (Sicurelli, 2010: 182).

In brief, the dissatisfaction with the outcome of successive Lomé Conventions gave rise to overhaul the EU’s development policy towards sub-Saharan African countries in the 2000s. Cotonou Partnership Agreement changed the EU’s development policy towards sub-Saharan African countries substantially. Poverty reduction was declared as a main objective of EU development policy. Cotonou Agreement extended political conditionality for the provision of development aid. In this sense, the promotion of EU’s values and norms became one of the objectives of the EU development policy. Furthermore, the EU put emphasis on trade liberalisation and integration of sub-Saharan African countries to world economy. Hence, the EU abolished non-reciprocal trade preferences given to the ACP countries and ended trade privileges. The Union offered EPAs to replace former trade concessions. Consequently, the peculiar features of EU’s development cooperation policy such as non-reciprocal trade relations, unconditional aid, need-based aid allocation changed with the Cotonou Agreement.

CONCLUSION

In the early years of EU development policy, the protection of post-colonial relations was a major motivating factor for the EU development policy towards sub-Saharan African countries. The EU development policy was mainly shaped by former colonial powers, especially France. Hence, EU development policy had a regional orientation towards francophone countries in West Africa. The first enlargement of the EU and accession of Britain, Ireland and Denmark changed geographical orientation of EU development policy. Most of decolonised countries of Africa were included in the development policy. Lomé Convention became a hallmark in the evolution of EU development policy. Influenced by New International Economic Order of 1970s, Lomé Convention offered a distinctive development policy model on the basis of equality and partnership. The successive Lomé Conventions between the EC and the ACP countries became a model of North-South relations. Yet, the end of Cold War and subsequently globalisation process altered the EU development policy. The leverage of history-based or geopolitical factors started to decline during this period. Furthermore, the EU development policy was increasingly affected by liberalism and democratisation waves of 1990s. The EU’s policy priorities shifted from the ACP countries to newly independent Central and Eastern European Countries.

Cotonou Partnership Agreement significantly changed the EU’s development policy towards sub-Saharan Africa in the 2000s. It changed main objectives of the EU development policy. In addition to overarching aim of poverty reduction, political objectives of promotion of rule of law, democracy, good governance and human

rights were added to the content of EU development policy. Unlike successive Lomé Conventions that had political neutrality towards sub-Saharan African countries until the 1990s, the promotion of EU's values and norms became one of the objectives of the EU development policy. In line with democracy promotion, the EU encouraged participatory model of development in sub-Saharan African countries and emphasized the role of civil society in economic and social development of Africa.

Furthermore, the EU put emphasis on trade liberalisation and integration of sub-Saharan African countries to world economy. Hence, the EU abolished non-reciprocal trade preferences given to the ACP countries and ended trade privileges. The Union offered regional EPAs to replace former trade concessions. The EU followed trade liberalisation approach of the WTO. Sub-Saharan countries were no longer seen as a privileged group of countries in EU development policy. Consequently, the EU removed peculiar characteristics of its development cooperation policy and followed global trends in the 2000s.

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