



'Much better than earlier': dam-building in Uganda and understanding development through the past

Joanna Nayler

To cite this article: Joanna Nayler (2021) 'Much better than earlier': dam-building in Uganda and understanding development through the past, *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 15:3, 400-420, DOI: [10.1080/17531055.2021.1950751](https://doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2021.1950751)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2021.1950751>



© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 11 Jul 2021.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 1620



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Citing articles: 2 View citing articles [↗](#)

‘Much better than earlier’: dam-building in Uganda and understanding development through the past

Joanna Nayler

African Studies Centre, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

ABSTRACT

This article illustrates that development discourses are historically constructed and contingent, demonstrating the value of adopting a discursive and historical approach to development projects. It juxtaposes recent and late-colonial Ugandan dam-building, using Owen Falls and Bujagali dams respectively, to bring the past and present into conversation. Focusing on history as the representation of past events shows how actors’ articulation of development tropes is intimately linked with historical associations and claims, and how actors use recent history to advance contemporary aims while discussing development. For example, critiques of contemporary situations are strengthened through unfavourable comparison with a romanticised past, and development planners justify their actions by presenting development projects as different from previous interventions. This historical lens identifies findings that an approach focused on the present might miss, including the ways the late-colonial government emphasised the small-scale nature of its projects and positive remembrances of Owen Falls in contemporary Uganda (in spite of the project not achieving its objectives); large-scale development projects should therefore not only be analysed from the perspective of their ostensible failure. This approach also illustrates how ideas of development are articulated differently in different historical contexts, including more individualised and divergent applications in the contemporary period.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 9 September 2018
Accepted 27 May 2021

KEYWORDS

Dams; development;
Uganda; Africa; history; high
modernism

On 18 April 2013, speaking at the Kololo ceremonial grounds in Kampala, President Yoweri Museveni officially launched Uganda’s new National Development Plan, Vision 2040.¹ The 137-page document explicitly links itself to Uganda’s historical development, noting that it ‘consolidates the previous efforts, lessons learnt and analysis of our past development strategies and future prospects’.² The Plan simultaneously looks confidently towards the future, outlining aspirations to ‘change the country from a predominantly low income to competitive upper middle-income country within 30 years’.³ Vision 2040 therefore reflects a common characteristic of development discourse, drawing together the past, present and future in comparison, and illustrating how development

CONTACT Joanna Nayler  joanna.nayler@gmail.com  African Studies Centre, University of Oxford, Oxford, OX2 6NB, UK

© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

is bound up with ideas of historical comparison. This article uses the historically constructed nature of development as its starting point in order to examine how actors use historical representations to make claims about development, bringing the past and present into dialogue through the under-utilised case study of dam-building in Uganda. In doing so, it asks: how do actors use representations of the past when talking about development? And what can focusing on these representations of the past reveal about development ideas, desires and critiques?

Vision 2040 is part of a broader recent movement in Uganda towards large-scale and state-initiated development projects, a trend which many African countries are also experiencing. This resurgence shares striking similarities with the peak of high modernist development in the 1940s-1960s, such as a highly optimistic belief in the transformative power of grand, state-led projects and faith in the ability of technology to overcome poverty (as well as key differences, including tropes of sustainable development and support from new funders such as China or India). Large hydro-power dams are paradigmatic of this type of state-led development and have accordingly witnessed a resurgence in popularity in recent years.⁴ Whilst often overlooked compared to countries building dam mega-projects (such as Sudan or Ethiopia), Uganda's engagement with dam-building is a key example of this resurgence: both the colonial government of Uganda of the 1940s and the current National Resistance Movement (NRM)-led government have invested in the developmental promise of dams. This similarity provides a useful starting point to bring the past and present of dam-building into dialogue.

Uganda's engagement with large-scale dam-building began with the 150-megawatt (MW) Owen Falls dam, completed in 1954 (now renamed Nalubaale). No further dam-building occurred in Uganda until the 1990s, when the construction of the 200MW Kiira dam extended the original Owen Falls site. In the last decade dam-building has accelerated, playing a central role in Uganda's current development Vision.⁵ The 250MW Bujagali hydro-power plant, previously abandoned following corruption scandals and criticism from environmentalists, was revived in the late 2000s and completed in 2012. Isimba (183MW), located around 40 km away from Bujagali, was launched in 2019, and Karuma (600MW) dam in northwestern Uganda is nearing completion at the time of writing. Plans are also being drawn to construct a further large dam at Ayago (880MW) in Murchison Falls National Park. Examining large hydro-power dams such as these provides a way to explore many issues relating to development: dams are inherently linked with ideas of modernisation, industrialisation, the environment, and the state's role in development.⁶

This article's key proposition is that ideas of development are historically constructed, and therefore a focus on how actors use historical representations to articulate development ideas and desires reveals insights that an account focused on the present might miss. This analysis is facilitated by the understudied approach of bringing dam-building and associated ideas of development in two periods into conversation, using the Owen Falls and Bujagali dams as respective case studies for past and more recent dam-building in Uganda. Bujagali is the focus of contemporary dam-building for this research due to its proximity to the Owen Falls site, the availability of information on its impact and its intersection with a range of issues, including resettlement, tourism, sustainability and financing. This article draws on archival research and 21 interviews conducted in Uganda in 2017 with respondents connected to contemporary dam-building or related

policy areas. Respondents accordingly tended to be from an 'elite', with many invested in the government's dam-building agenda. Therefore, rather than being representative of the community in Jinja or broader Ugandan society, the purpose of interviews was to enable a discussion of past and present and provide insight into the views of those with a connection to, or ability to shape, development policy.

This approach leads to new substantive findings, detailed in the empirical part of this article which is divided into two sections. The first examines Owen Falls, followed by Bujagali, to explore meanings of development in Uganda during the colonial and contemporary period respectively. This furthers knowledge of understandings of dam-building and development in Uganda, particularly amongst development policy makers, and adds to literature examining how development discourses are used differently in different contexts and may change (or stay the same) over time.⁷ Whilst this section does highlight how late-colonial and contemporary development planners in Uganda have used similar discourses of high-modernist, Rowstian development, associated with electricity and industrialisation, it moves beyond simply identifying similarities and differences between past and present. Instead, its key contribution is its illustration of how historical references and comparisons are a critical part of speaking and making claims about development, and its analysis of what these historical references reveal about development ideas. Development planners commonly present their version of development as different from that of the past and openly state that they have learned from the mistakes of previous generations of development planners. This kind of discourse was present as early as the 1940s during the planning of Owen Falls; archival records show development planners emphasised that they had learned from previous mistakes and were not solely reliant on large-scale projects. In the contemporary period, government and dam-building officials distanced themselves from previous development mistakes and constructed the claimed success of Bujagali in comparison to Uganda's recent history. Such claims were undermined by critics of the Bujagali dam, though no participant criticised the overall notion of development.

The second section brings the past and present of development more directly into conversation, focusing on how interviewees remember and construct Owen Falls and past development more generally. This approach focuses on history as a representation of past events which is entirely created in the present and subject to continual reinvention, rather than examining how occurrences in the past affect the present, or on *why* continuities happen. This methodology reveals how Owen Falls is viewed overwhelmingly positively by contemporary Ugandan respondents, despite not fulfilling its aims. Examining the specific form of these positive constructions highlights associations between development and industrialisation, and an increasing importance placed on development empowering individuals in the contemporary period. Perhaps most saliently, this approach shows how representations of the past, through unfavourable comparison with the present, can strengthen and nuance contemporary critiques. This research also compares how respondents present past and contemporary development, contrasting a more consensual view of past development with a more heterogenous and often individualistic belief of contemporary development. At a more theoretical level, these findings highlight the contingent rather than universal nature of development (particularly how ideas of development vary by historical contexts) and the continued power of development discourses; even critics of Bujagali dam did not criticise the overall idea of development.

Dams and development in historical review

This article initially discusses the broad ways development has been understood and debated to contextualise how these ideas took root in Uganda and served as long-standing points of policy and discussion amongst officials and between colonial officials and African subjects. This contextualisation emphasises how definitions of development are often premised on historical change and comparison, as well as the contested and contingent nature of development which has enabled it to form the basis of various claims. Development can be a discourse, a goal, a process of change, or a set of intentional practices and actions. Cowen and Shenton differentiate between development as an underlying process of change ('immanent' development) and as an intentional intervention ('imminent' development), clarifying interests about externally-imposed processes of change (rather than, for example, capitalist accumulation).⁸ It should also be noted that separate forms of development do not function in silo; van Beusekom and Hodgson have highlighted how development practices and discourses are intertwined.⁹ Following this approach, this article predominantly studies development as a discourse, though also examines how dam projects were implemented, which can mediate and shape development discourse.

Owen Falls was planned and built during the 1940s and 1950s, a time when the notion of development had risen to prominence as the central organising concept underpinning the relationship between Europe and colonial Africa.¹⁰ Practices of development varied between and within colonial administrations and were a culmination of previous interventions. Historians of Africa have shown how European powers increasingly focused on development in their approach to the colonies in the 1920s and 1930s, with ideas of 'development' as an external imposition reaching back to at least the civilizing mission of the nineteenth century.¹¹ From the early twentieth century, the colonial government in Uganda perceived cash crops and agricultural production, particularly cotton, coffee and tobacco, as integral to the country's development.¹² By the time of Owen Falls' construction, similarly to the British colonial administration's approach in other colonies, the scope of development interventions in Uganda had further expanded to include social welfare provisions and the metropole was increasingly funding development interventions. The colonial government additionally focused on industrialisation, such as textile mills and paper manufacturing, planned to be powered by Owen Falls.¹³

Whilst unbalanced power relationships, racist assumptions and coercive ruling tactics such as forced labour were often integral to colonial development, the concept of development was not solely used by colonial administrators. In showing the longer pasts of development, historians have highlighted how development is not made up of 'hegemonic discourses imposed without check from above' and emphasised the interaction and negotiation between planners and citizens.¹⁴ Hunter and Cooper also illustrate how the universalistic yet pliable concept of development gave colonised African citizens in the late-colonial period the potential to co-opt development discourse, enabling them to appeal to the political leaderships of their countries.¹⁵ Such examples demonstrate the importance of looking beyond the failure of development plans and highlight the need to examine how 'languages of development were deployed' by a range of actors.¹⁶ Cooper also emphasises how development discourses and projects 'provided people in the colonies with a basis for making claims,' including for nationalisms and better standards of living.¹⁷

Post-development (or post-modern / post-structuralist) scholars, a school of thought emerging in the 1990s, also adopted a focus on the discourses of development, but through a different approach. They located development in a series of controlling discourses and practices, arguing these inevitably fail, and at their most radical construct development as a 'nightmare'.¹⁸ Critics of these approaches, such as Corbridge, Kiely or Argawal, have observed that post-development scholars tend to overstate development as a homogenous, failed and external imposition, and understate how citizens targeted by projects may articulate desires for modernity or development.¹⁹ Corbridge in particular usefully notes that whilst approaches adopted by post-developmentalists do vary, they also share assumptions leading to unhelpful binaries and often lack evidence for their claims that development leads to degradation.²⁰ Nonetheless, post-developmentalists' examination of development discourses and distribution of power is helpful. Crush, in particular, usefully explores development as a discourse which has a 'powerful habit of using history,' emphasising how plans often contain a 'formulaic bow to the previous plan period', and state that this time 'it'll go much better.'²¹ As well as these explicit references to the past, development discourses also implicitly relate to historical ideas through close associations with ideas of change over time (both positive and negative), illustrated in development's often 'prospective, forward-looking' nature.²² This link between development and temporal changes is noted by a broader range of scholars, such as Cooper and Packard, who state that development's power lies 'in its rejection of the past and its aspirations for the future.'²³ As this article will show, notions of development do not necessarily demand a steady improvement towards progress, but can also include a call to return to a romanticised past. Numerous scholars have therefore shown both the contingent nature of development and the intrinsic link between development discourses and historical representations and comparisons. However, there is still a lack of detailed examination of the forms that such historical representations assume, and what they may reveal about meanings of development and contemporary aspirations. This study will begin to address this.

Mid-century dam-building and its contemporary resurgence

From the 1940s to the 1960s, dams held a strong appeal for development planners and African leaders alike, who stressed their potential for modernisation (associated with industrialisation and electrification) and used them to promote nationalist visions.²⁴ However, dam-building faced increasing criticism internationally, beginning in the 1970s and increasing throughout the 1980s and 1990s.²⁵ This culminated with the landmark World Commission on Dams report (2000), stating that 'in too many cases an unacceptable and often unnecessary price has been paid,' and leading international financial institutions such as the World Bank to severely decrease their financing of large-scale dam projects.²⁶ Despite such criticisms, dam-building has experienced a revival in recent years, with an increased adoption of the language (if not always the practices) of sustainability.²⁷ From 2006 to 2012 the World Bank increased its funding for dams tenfold.²⁸ New social science studies have engaged with this revival of large-scale dam-building worldwide (and other large-scale, state-led development projects), often referencing High Modernism, a term closely associated with Scott's *Seeing Like a State*.²⁹ Scott makes a similar argument to post-developmentalists referenced above,

though rather than homogenising all development, he addresses a particular ideology of development – which he terms High Modernism – to describe ambitious, top-down post-war development projects which inevitably fail. Critically engaging with ideas of High Modernism, Dye highlights the ‘morphing but persistent’ modernist logics in the planning and construction of the Rwandan Nyabarongo dam (2014), as well as exploring both the ‘socio-economic opportunities’ and ‘destruction’ caused by the dam.³⁰ Similarly, Abbink and Verhoeven respectively explore why dams continue to be built after the criticism they have faced internationally and posit dam-building as a projection of state authority in several African countries, most notably Ethiopia.³¹ Whilst these studies often reference or analyse longer dam-building histories to provide context, a point of comparison or theoretical frameworks for contemporary dams, this study will use history in a different way by examining how actors use ideas of the past to speak about dams and development.

A growing, but mostly separate, group of historians have explored Africa’s large dam projects in the late colonial and early independence periods, often deconstructing how various actors have experienced or perceived dams in the past.³² One notable example is Miescher’s historical case study of Ghana’s Akosombo dam which explores how technocratic, modernist, planning interacted with, and could be contradicted by, the imaginations and constructions of modernity amongst the residents of Akosombo Township.³³ In a similarly discursive account, Tischler uses the Kariba dam to explore the intersection of nation-building, decolonisation and modernisation, investigating how historical actors conceptualised modernisation and development.³⁴ This present study also adopts a discursive approach, focusing on conceptions of the dams and development, though differs by simultaneously examining the past and present of dam-building. Most similar to this methodology is perhaps McGregor’s account of Kariba dam, which situates the project within longer histories of the Zambezi river, and is particularly illuminating in analysing how different episodes of the river’s history are later retold and reconstituted to make claims about Kariba dam and the surrounding landscape.³⁵ This present article also investigates dams and claim-making, though with a stronger focus on how actors use ideas of history and represent the past to speak, and make claims about, development. Miescher and Tsikata also explore the historical linkages between Akosombo (1965) and Bui (2013) dams in Ghana, usefully exploring the particularities of modernisation and development discourses related to the two dams.³⁶ Whilst Miescher and Tsikata ‘compare [the dams]’ place in Ghana’s development aspirations,³⁷ focusing on their similarities and differences, this study instead focuses on how actors present histories to speak about dams and development in Uganda, and what this reveals about understandings of development.

Methodology

The article draws on two bodies of information. The first is British Colonial Office and Foreign Office archival documents of the late 1940s and early 1950s from the United Kingdom National Archives. These documents related to the planning and construction process of Owen Falls and contemporaneous development planning, and are used to examine the claims the British administration made about Owen Falls and associated development planning and discourses. The second comprised 21 interviews conducted

in Uganda in March – April 2017. These formed the core of the empirical research and were complemented by written materials relating to Uganda's contemporary dam projects and national vision of development. Due to this study's focus on the interplay of past and present, the interviews were designed following an oral history approach which provided space for respondents to speak about the present, as well as their conceptions of the past. The aim of interviews was not to glean a historical truth about state-led development in the past, or to uncover a previously obscured, subaltern past. Rather, the purpose was to approach the interviews as an expression of the past's meaning in the present, focusing on how actors present the past and what this may reveal about the present, and drawing on the theory that oral history reveals more about the *meaning* actors give to events than about the events themselves.³⁸

Interviews took place in Kampala, Uganda's political and administrative capital, and Jinja district, the location of both Bujagali and Owen Falls. Interviewees were initially identified through making contact with organisations with clear connections to Ugandan dam-building (such as environmental NGOs or government departments), who then identified further respondents to be contacted. All respondents were selected due to their connection with contemporary dam-building or experience in a related policy area and included government officials in a range of departments (such as the Electrical Regulatory Authority or the National Planning Authority), senior employers at dam organisations, members of Civil Society Organisations, energy or hydro-power researchers, workers reliant on the tourism industry around Bujagali and local politicians in Bujagali. Interviews were conducted in semi-formal settings, such as offices and sometimes in public areas such as cafes. All interviewees but one were Ugandan. The interviewees were a range of ages; all were adults, though none were old enough to remember Owen Falls when it was built. The oldest had conscious memories of the early years of Ugandan independence in the 1960s and the youngest had only experienced Uganda under Museveni (since 1986).

The methodology focused on respondents considered to be the main 'voices' in this space, asking respondents to recommend further interviewees, and conducting interviews in English. The background of interviewees was consequently relatively narrow. The majority were 'elite'; middle class, male (only two interviewees were female), well-educated and of at least middle-level manager positions. Interviews therefore cannot be seen as representative of the community in Jinja or broader Ugandan society, especially considering the number (21) of interviews conducted. Rather, the interviews generally (though not completely) speak to an elite, typically male, Ugandan discourse (s). Whilst it must be acknowledged this does not substantially take into account the perspectives of the less powerful, and therefore focuses on those who may be most likely to benefit from dams or afford the electricity they provide, it does provide insight into development discourse amongst those able to influence (or who are connected to) the course of development policy. A greater number of interviews would have enabled this research to speak with more precision about how different kinds of societal groups articulated development discourses. However, the interviews were historical in nature, rather than sociographical, with the primary aim to enable a discussion of past and present that neither the archive nor contemporary documents alone could provide. Interviews enabled actors to compare Owen Falls and Bujagali in relation to notions of development, articulate their own understandings of development within different historical contexts,

and exemplified the uses of a historical approach to illuminate changes and variations within meta-narratives, such as development.

Unsurprisingly, each actor presented a narrative shaped by their own personal experiences and aims. Due to the amount of time since construction, no interviewees were directly impacted by Owen Falls. The ways this may have shaped responses is discussed in more detail in the empirical section below, which suggests that highly positive remembrances of Owen Falls might indicate an idea of development focused on present-day impacts ('the people then didn't mind what happened'), and can also present a powerful critique of contemporary development through unfavourable comparison with the past. Similarly, many respondents were invested in the current government and dam-building and consequently may have been more likely to express positive views of government-led dam-building. One respondent expressed hope that being interviewed would amplify their opinions to make his voice heard at a policy level, raising questions over how they may have chosen to frame their views during our interactions. These subjectivities reveal 'a great deal of the speaker's relationship to their history' and are a key part of history in general.³⁹ Approaching the subject of development as a (historically informed) claim-making construct can be useful here, focusing on what responses reveal concerning development ideals, assumptions and presentations. Following Luise White, rather than focus on delineating 'the truth', it is more helpful to see the intricate ways people use broader 'social facts' (in this case, constructions of development) to speak about the past.⁴⁰

Past and present dam-building in Uganda

Owen Falls and the history of dam-building

In January 1948 the colonial government established the Uganda Electricity Board (UEB) to take government control over electrical operations and construct a hydro-power scheme to greatly increase electricity generation.⁴¹ The following year the UEB began planning to construct a hydro-power dam at Owen Falls, 4 km downstream from Lake Victoria. This ambitious project, completed in 1954, hugely expanded Uganda's electricity supply capacity from 1MW to 150 MW, yet failed to achieve its aim of bringing rapid industrialisation to the protectorate. Whilst ostensibly for the benefit of the Ugandan people, the British-led colonial administration in Uganda directed the scheme and were in detailed correspondence with the British government in London concerning the scheme.⁴² Despite this turn to large-scale and state-led development, the colonial government distanced itself from the idea that development involved only the construction of grand, top-down projects. The 1948 development plan argued it was 'primarily Uganda's own development plan, and not something superimposed from above'.⁴³ Notably, the colonial government also stressed how the 'idea that development consists in the main of large projects' is 'fundamentally wrong'.⁴⁴ This late colonial stress on inclusivity and the small-scale nature of projects is striking, particularly given literature's tendency to emphasise the large-scale nature of late-colonial development.⁴⁵

Development planners also claimed to be learning from past mistakes; Uganda's 1946 Development Plan noted that 'there are tragic lessons to be learned from other parts of the world which have passed through [Uganda's current] stage of development,' though

also simultaneously asserted a universalistic view that all countries go through similar 'stages' of development.⁴⁶ Similarly, one unnamed official, seemingly based in Whitehall and connected to the British Colonial Office, cautioned against repeating past development mistakes in the construction of Owen Falls and making sweeping yet unsubstantiated claims. Using the recent example of the failed Tanganyika Groundnut Scheme, they wrote: 'it is surely injudicious to forecast cost to consumers five years hence, in a scheme hedged about with at least three uncertainties ... there seems to be a danger of making rash promises (à la groundnuts) which will one day come home to roost'.⁴⁷ The groundnut scheme, which placed vast yet misguided faith in the ability of science to rapidly mechanise and transform groundnut production in Tanganyika, has become emblematic of many criticisms since directed at late-colonial development schemes.⁴⁸ Optimism that large-scale schemes would succeed and transform society therefore did not go uncontested. Indeed, as early as the 1940s, some development planners aimed to justify development initiatives by emphasising the need to localise projects and to learn from historical mistakes.

Despite such concerns, the colonial government planned to generate more electricity than Uganda required, asserting that industries would rapidly grow once cheap power was abundant. Administrators argued this electricity would turn Jinja into an industrial centre and significantly raise living standards.⁴⁹ Regarding Owen Falls' impact on its nearby surroundings and residents, displacement or resettlement do not appear to be mentioned by the relatively sparse secondary literature, nor did I find discussion of this in archival documents.⁵⁰ A study of Owen Falls by researcher Gail Wilson, based on fieldwork she conducted in 1960–61, does state that 'flooding at Owen Falls was not serious,' though also noted the affected area included the embankment of the main Kampala to Mombasa railway line and the Nile bridge (the road was replaced by a new highway and the railway realigned).⁵¹ A social survey of Jinja conducted in 1950–51 also stated there were 'land clearances' during this time, to support broader 'industrial changes' and 'urban development'.⁵² This included the resettlement outside of Jinja of some 800 persons who were removed from township land in 1949, though this is not presented as connected to Owen Falls. It is difficult to find more precise information (especially as respondents, as will be detailed below, did not describe any negative impacts of Owen Falls), though it is apparent that large-scale resettlement, as occurred with the building of the Kariba dam, did not occur.⁵³ The lack of clarity over any resettlement in colonial archival documents may reflect that it was not a particular concern for the colonial administration.

During the construction of Owen Falls, 2,000 African workers were employed during the day, and 500–600 at night, many of whom also brought their dependents.⁵⁴ This sudden increase in population had clear effects on Jinja town, including the building of offices and flats.⁵⁵ However, the dam's labour force rapidly fell after construction to around 600 by the end of 1955 and Jinja was left with 'empty buildings and decaying streets'.⁵⁶ Whilst the electricity network in Uganda rapidly expanded throughout the 1950s, the expected transformational boom in electricity consumption did not occur.⁵⁷ The prohibitive expense impeded the number of consumers paying for electricity and in Jinja the increased electricity supply provided by the dam led only to the construction of one textile mill and a copper smelter, both small by international standards.⁵⁸ The lack of industrial demand was so severe that the UEB resorted to selling between one third

and one half of the electricity generated to Kenya.⁵⁹ Whilst some modest electrical expansion therefore did occur, the expected economic and social transformation did not materialise.⁶⁰

Contemporary dam-building and development in Uganda

In 1999, 55 years after the completion of Owen Falls, the Ugandan government contracted AES Nile Power (AESP) to build and operate a new hydro-power plant at Bujagali, around 10 km away from Owen Falls. However, the project collapsed in the early 2000s due to ongoing corruption investigations, financing issues and campaigns against the project, and AESP withdrew. The project was revived in 2005 with a new contractor (Bujagali Energy Limited, BEL) under a public-private partnership. BEL agreed to construct and operate the dam, selling all electricity to the government owned Uganda Electricity Transmission Company Limited (UETCL), and will transfer ownership to the Ugandan government after 30 years. Completed in 2012, the dam did increase Uganda's electricity generation capacity, reducing the country's reliance on diesel generators, though has been heavily criticised for high costs of electricity, negative impacts on tourism and the environment, and inadequate compensation to residents near the dam site.⁶¹

In interviews, contemporary government officials and policy-makers largely framed Bujagali as a project which has 'had a greatly positive impact on the economy and the energy sectors,' closely associated with development, electricity and industrialisation.⁶² A couple of respondents were more reticent, noting that 'the tariffs are a little on the high side,' or even that small dams are 'better'.⁶³ Whilst these highlight the nuances in government responses, both respondents still viewed electricity as a pre-requisite for development and as a critical part of national development plans. Moreover, the majority of officials and national development planning documents, such as Vision 2040, did share a strongly optimistic discourse. As if explaining a simple and irrefutable process, one government official who had worked at the Uganda Electricity Generation Company Limited (UEGCL) for ten years stated: 'When you have more power you have more industries and more jobs, and the standard of living improves, and people will be happy'.⁶⁴ This reproduced the linear understanding of development and associations with electricity and industrialisation displayed in the planning of Owen Falls, with similar Rostowian notions of economic development as a universal process that occurs in discrete 'stages'.⁶⁵

There were discursive differences between late-colonial and contemporary ideas of development, with a particular recent emphasis on environmental sustainability and tourism, as well as power generation.⁶⁶ This echoes Dye's observance of persistent but morphing logics of modernisation theory in dam-building.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, several similarities between official discourses referring to Owen Falls and Bujagali are striking, illustrating the longer history of many ideas concerning development and dams in Uganda. Gore references this continuity when he describes a 'dominant energy narrative' which emerged in Uganda in the twentieth century, the cornerstone of which was the link between electricity, economic development and modernisation and which continues to this day, albeit in a contested manner.⁶⁸ This could reflect a path dependence of discourses, which has received less focus than the more

materialistic forms of path dependency, such as those involving established interest groups and sunk costs.⁶⁹ Whilst the reason these discourses persist may warrant further study, this was not the main focus of this research. Instead, interviews used these similarities as a starting point to discuss how ideas of development change or stay the same over time, reflect on how historical references are used in development discourse and to examine what this reveals about contemporary development understandings and aspirations.

Supporters of Bujagali often constructed this 'success' in comparison to Uganda's recent history; Bujagali dam was consistently framed and justified in reference to Uganda's electricity deficit in the early 2000s, which one senior official at Bujagali Energy Limited (BEL) described as a period when 'development just could not take place'.⁷⁰ Similarly, one official at the Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA) claimed that the projects associated with Bujagali dam led to the construction of 'houses [which] were built much better than earlier'.⁷¹ More broadly, development planners also consistently claimed that community participation occurred in a meaningful and thorough manner, with the government finding 'out what the people in the local community want'.⁷² The BEL senior official emphasised how the company's communication with communities was a 'benchmark for Uganda', portrayed in contrast with the early 2000s resettlement during the 'failed' first attempt at constructing the Bujagali dam.⁷³ Around 8,700 people (1,228 households) were resettled or lost assets during the original project, and a 2008 World Bank evaluation noted ongoing, unresolved resettlement and compensation issues from the original project.⁷⁴ BEL agreed to resolve all outstanding resettlement and compensation issues and implemented community development and social action plans including building schools, supplying piped water and providing training courses.

However, such claims of inclusive development were disputed by representatives of communities living near Bujagali, as well as from advocacy groups and literature. One 2015 study found continued dissatisfaction with the resettlement and consultation processes.⁷⁵ During interviews, one manager at an environmental charity stated that 'communities were intimidated, silenced and they faced a lot of suppression,' and that the environment and tourism had been negatively affected.⁷⁶ Respondents resident near the Bujagali site also criticised the government for not recognising the importance of tourism and for being unresponsive to complaints (some government officials did acknowledge the negative impact on tourism, though framed this as the benefits 'outstrip what we lost').⁷⁷ One anti-Bujagali dam campaigner, resident in the Jinja area, stated that the dam had brought no development and had 'taken [the area of] Bujagali back to where it was before'.⁷⁸ However, criticisms in the Bujagali area were not unanimous. One man who owned a fishing business in Jinja explained: 'We get jobs and the development of the Jinja area, we appreciate it from the government,'⁷⁹ possibly reflecting how, in areas near where dam-building occurs, dams create opportunities for some, but have heavy costs for others.⁸⁰ However, not one respondent rejected the idea of development, nor even dam-building in general. Academics following a post-developmental approach that constructs development as a 'nightmare',⁸¹ or who only approach it from the perspective of a homogenous, authoritarian state may overlook the discursive meaning held by the idea of development, even amongst those who have been negatively affected by development projects.

Bringing the past and present of development into conversation

Memories of Owen Falls and development in contemporary Uganda

The failed aims of Owen Falls detailed above, including failure to achieve large-scale industrial transformation and spiralling building costs, were almost entirely absent from the extremely positive remembrances of Owen Falls and late-colonial development amongst interviewees. Respondents near unanimously positively represented the late colonial past as a time of development, associated with infrastructure building, stability and progress. One man resident in the Bujagali area and active in the local political scene for the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) party, succinctly summarised these positive views when recalling the effects of Owen Falls; 'People got jobs, infrastructure became perfect, schools came up, even tourism ... when the dam was built, everything shot up'.⁸² Such remembrances highlight how examining projects from the perspective of their ostensible failure can overlook the positive connotations and associations with ideas of modernisation and development they may still hold.⁸³ As Owen Falls was completed approximately 60 years before this study, it was not possible to contact individuals directly impacted by the Owen Falls scheme. No respondents directly witnessed any negative consequences, which may help explain the positive way Owen Falls is remembered and possibly illustrating how it is easier to be less critical of projects which do not directly affect the individual speaking.

These uncritical, even romantic remembrances of Owen Falls and its perceived impact should not be dismissed as meaningless nostalgia. Nostalgia is both a means of critically framing the present and gives voice to certain social and political desires.⁸⁴ Therefore, the specific form of nostalgia and how respondents use historical evidence to help articulate their understandings of, and claims for, present development helps to illustrate current understandings of development. Owen Falls' success was often viewed through the lens of industrialisation. For example, the ERA official commented: '[Owen Falls] made Jinja an industrial town ... you had any kind of industries ... it became highly developed'.⁸⁵ Whilst this is at odds with the evidence above that the project did not achieve industrialisation as intended, such narratives emphasise a widespread belief that industrialisation is necessary for development, indeed that the two are regarded as inseparable. Positive remembrances of Owen Falls were also consistent across critics and proponents of Bujagali. In fact, many respondents who criticised contemporary dam-building did not apply the same criteria to Owen Falls. The manager at an environmental advocacy charity who held a negative view of Bujagali softened his outlook when asked whether Owen Falls had an impact on the local community, commenting that 'the people then did not really mind what happened'.⁸⁶ One energy advisor and consultant similarly noted that 'Uganda used to have a small population ... the past was much easier'.⁸⁷ Nostalgia therefore often manifested in the belief that development used to be 'easy' and identified contemporary barriers to development that were not encountered in the past. Respondents articulated the belief that, because Uganda's population was lower, climate change or environmental degradation were not 'issues,' which could imply a present-day focused and perhaps individualistic notion that is more critical of development which affects one's immediate surroundings.

Owen Falls was completed in the late phase of British colonial rule, a regime which was undoubtedly authoritarian, extractive and underpinned by racist principles.⁸⁸

Uganda's development plans of the late 1940s were designed and implemented by the British colonial administration, who dictated the parameters, aims and methods of development. Romanticised views of this era which do not address these colonial power relations may therefore seem surprising. However, nostalgia for the way things 'used to be' is a commonly noted phenomenon in post-colonial Africa, and – as will be addressed below – should be viewed as a way to express desires and critique the present.⁸⁹ Such nostalgia should also be contextualised within broader power relations. As has already been noted, the majority of respondents were relatively 'elite' and therefore had the potential to benefit more from the dams. Further, whilst underpinned by an overall framework of repression and control to benefit the British colonial administration, the late-colonial period was not one of simple binaries of power between colonisers and citizens. Colonial Uganda was a system of extreme geographical inequality, with the Kingdom of Buganda (including Uganda's current capital, Kampala, where the majority of respondents were based) experiencing a comparatively privileged and powerful status.⁹⁰ More broadly, southern and central Uganda (including Eastern Province, location of Jinja District and Bujagali and Owen Falls dams, as well as Buganda), were the main zones of cash crop production and received more investment than northern Uganda, which was perceived by the British as economically unviable.⁹¹ This alone does not fully explain positive remembrances of late-colonial development: power relations and experiences were certainly not solely based on the colonial encounter and also varied sharply within these geographical areas, and respondents did not directly experience the late-colonial period. However, it is helpful to be mindful of this geographical context and its relation to historical centres of power when analysing these positive remembrances, especially as Reid has noted that views of the British colonial state in contemporary Uganda contrast depending on 'mood and experience and location.'⁹²

Moreover, overwhelmingly positive views of the past should primarily be viewed as a powerful way of critiquing the present and articulating current desires, supported by, and expressed through historical claims. Many actors portrayed the late-colonial and early post-colonial period as a time of general prosperity, often articulated through moralising concepts which praised Ugandans in the generic past for being hardworking and more nationalistic. One official at the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development (MEMD) commented that 'back in the day people were honest and willing to serve the nation towards development. Now Ugandans are more self-driven'.⁹³ This articulation of national moral decline and nostalgia for nationalism and collectivism invoked images of successful development, often enacted decisively by the late-colonial or post-colonial state, as a way to strengthen or explain their criticisms of current development implementation and articulate aspirations for the future. Another official at UETCL commented that 'Uganda got its independence in '62. You look at the education then, you look at the energy sector, services, they were up to scratch ... now, over time we have lost some of that capacity'.⁹⁴ It is helpful to view these comparative criticisms in a context of increasing constraint on freedom of civil society, the media and general political discussion in Uganda (one female press officer at an environmental advocacy NGO noted that space for CSOs and general resistance was shrinking⁹⁵) and therefore may be an indirect way of critiquing Uganda's current development plans and political direction.

Comparing representations of contemporary and past development

In contrast with respondents' emphasis on collective, national level development when discussing historical development, respondents were more likely to emphasise the importance of development benefitting or empowering individuals when referring to the contemporary development period. One man resident near Bujagali, whose café had shut down after the drop in tourists caused by the dam, explicitly stated that he did not care about the development of Uganda as a country: 'I couldn't care less about Uganda ... development should first of all develop me, if they develop me then I know it's good'.⁹⁶ This response is likely linked to the negative effects of the dam he had experienced, unsurprisingly leading to feelings of disconnection from national level development. However, such ideas of individualised development in the contemporary period were not limited to respondents who had experienced or witnessed negative impacts of Bujagali; the official at MEMD stated 'I take development to be from a perspective of individuals,' whilst a professor at Makerere university noted 'I can watch sport ... be in touch with the foreign world. That is development.'⁹⁷ Such responses emphasising individual consumerism rather than collective or national benefit echo Tsikata's and Miescher's study in Ghana that found individualised notions of development were more commonly articulated in relation to more recent dam-building.⁹⁸

When discussing development in the contemporary period, respondents also utilised more divergent definitions. This related to both the impact of Bujagali, and definitions of development more generally. One respondent emphasised the importance of political freedoms to development: 'Kagame [president of Rwanda] is too rigid. I don't think that's development. Freedom of speech is key,'⁹⁹ whereas another stated the opposite: 'I think [Rwanda has] a benevolent dictator. It's needed at some point of development.'¹⁰⁰ Others acknowledged the political utility of the idea of development for governments. One researcher at Makerere commented: 'When a president wants to stay long in government they have to kind of incentivise the people by doing some actual development projects'.¹⁰¹ Indeed, in the 2020–21 Ugandan national election campaign, incumbent Museveni highlighted the infrastructure his government has commissioned, including hydropower dams, in his campaigns. These divergent viewpoints contrast with the more unified perceptions of Owen Falls and its association with progression and industrialisation illustrated earlier in this article.

Conclusion

This article has shown how ideas of development are historically constructed and contingent. In doing so it has illustrated the value of adopting a discursive and historical approach to development projects, focusing on history as the representation of past events, and used as a tool to illuminate, nuance or strengthen present comments and desires. Such representations of history happen in varied ways and include development planners claiming to learn from previous mistakes and justifying their visions or implementation of development projects as different from what has come before, the critique of contemporary development projects through unfavourable comparison with the past, and calls for a return to a romanticised, idealised moment in history. This research has shown how focusing on such historical claims and constructions reveals insights that non-historically focused accounts may miss, and has facilitated this through juxtaposing two case studies of late colonial and recent dam-building in Uganda.

This approach has created several substantive findings which deepen understandings of dam-building in the under-researched Ugandan context and illuminate broader ideas of state-led development. 1940s British colonial development planners sought to emphasise that development projects should not be only large-scale and imposed from above, and voices from within the colonial administration also argued that the government should learn from previous perceived development mistakes and adopt a less blindly optimistic approach. Whilst late-colonial development has been characterised as a top-down and large-scale imposition, development planners at the time sought to distance themselves from this interpretation. Nevertheless, Owen Falls was still planned to be transformational. Whilst electricity networks and generation capacity did increase, the dam did not cause the expected industrial expansion or economic transformation. Present-day development planners and state officials presented Bujagali overwhelmingly positively, including claiming the project was implemented in an inclusive manner. There were therefore clear similarities in optimistic, linear ideas of development articulated by both late-colonial and contemporary development planners (as well as an increased modern focus on sustainability and tourism). Contemporary development planners justified the dam through reference to Uganda's recent history, contrasting it unfavourably with the earlier implementation of Bujagali. Whilst these claims of inclusivity and widespread positive impacts were disputed by critics of the dam, not one respondent rejected the idea of development, nor even dam-building in general.

Through examining contemporary memories and ideas of historical development, this article showed how respondents associate Owen Falls with positive, transformational modernisation and development. Contemporary critiques of dam-building were softened when applied to the past ('the people then did not really mind what happened'), and past development was often presented as easy, implying increasingly individualised notions of development. These positive characterisations of the past must be viewed critically, possibly reflecting the respondents' connections with geographic centres of power. Moreover, these positive remembrances were a way for respondents to critique the present through unfavourable comparison with the past; history is a useful tool to make claims upon the present and articulate desires for the future. Respondents' views of development discourses changed when applied to different historical contexts. Definitions of development applied to the past tended to be more unified and romanticised, emphasising the state-led nature of development and that barriers were easily overcome. Definitions of development applied to the present, on the other hand, characterised development as more heterogeneous and individualistic.

The conclusions of this research have clear relevance to broader theoretical debates concerning development, state-led development and dam-building. Critics of Bujagali did not critique the overall idea of development, and Owen Falls remains a meaningful project amongst contemporary respondents, even though it did not achieve its aims. Therefore, only critiquing development as a top-down endeavour or approaching it from the perspective of ostensible failure can overlook the power that ideas of development continue to have. This article has illustrated that the concept of development is neither fixed nor universal, with a particular focus on how actors define and construct development variedly according to different historical contexts. The use of historical representations, which draw on ever-changing rather than fixed ideas of history, can be a powerful claim-making tool. Therefore, a methodology which focuses on these historical

representations can create findings that may otherwise be overlooked and could be usefully applied to analyse how actors construct, contest and relate to other metanarratives, such as broader ideas of modernity or nationalisms. Whilst the usefulness of a historical approach, or the use of historical comparison, is by no means unique to development, it has particular importance in a field so predicated on ideas of progress, improvement and being better than 'yesterday'.

Notes

1. When this article refers to "dams," it specifically means large dams, defined as dams with a height greater than 15m, in accordance with the International Commission on Large Dams definition. Owen Falls dam was renamed as Nalubaale in 2001. This article will use 'Owen Falls' to refer to the dam pre-1994, and "Nalubaale" to refer to the dam post-2001.
2. Republic of Uganda, *Vision 2040*, 3.
3. *Ibid.*, 4
4. Verhoeven, "African Dam Building," 562.
5. Republic of Uganda, *Vision 2040*, 64.
6. Dye, "The Return of," 304–5.
7. For changing uses of development discourses specifically relating to dams, see Miescher and Tsikata, "Hydro-power." Also refer to Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert*; Cooper, "Writing the History."
8. Cowen and Shenton, "The Invention of Development," 28.
9. van Beusekom and Hodgson, "Lessons Learned?" 29.
10. Hodge and Hödl, "Introduction," 2.
11. See Cooper, "Writing the History"; Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert*; van Beusekom, *Negotiating Development*.
12. Reid, *History of Modern Uganda*, 224–5.
13. *Ibid.* 230.
14. Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert*, 3; Van Beusekom, *Negotiating Development*.
15. Hunter, "A History of *Maendeleo*"; Cooper and Packard, "Introduction."
16. Hunter, "A History of *Maendeleo*," 90.
17. Cooper, "Writing the History," 11–14.
18. Escobar, *Encountering Development*, 4. See also Crush, *Power of Development*; Rist, *The History of Development* or Sachs, *The Development Dictionary*.
19. Corbridge, "Beneath the Pavement," 136–140; Kiely, "The Last Refuge"; Agrawal, "Post-structuralist Approaches to Development."
20. Corbridge, "Beneath the Pavement," 136–140.
21. Crush, "Introduction: Imaging Development," 9.
22. *Ibid.*
23. Cooper and Packard, "Introduction," 30.
24. Such as Akosombo dam in Ghana, see Miescher and Tsikata, "Hydro-power," 16.
25. Verhoeven, "African Dam Building," 564. For examples of critical dam literature see Colson's foundational text *The Social Consequences* and more recently McCully, *Silenced Rivers* or Scudder, *The Future*.
26. World Commission on Dams, *Dams and Development*, xxvii; Moore, Dore and Gyawihili, "The World Commission," 9.
27. Lavers and Dye, "Theorising the Political Economy," 8.
28. Verhoeven, "African Dam Building," 566.
29. Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 4–7. For an example of recent literature engaging with this, see Mosley and Watson, "Frontier Transformations," 457.
30. Dye, "The Return of."
31. Abbink, "Dam Controversies," 125–6; Verhoeven, "African Dam Building," 563.

32. Most notably Isaacman and Isaacman, *Dams, Displacement*. See also Hoag and Öhman, "Turning Water into Power."
33. Miescher, "Building the City," 390.
34. Tischler, *Light and Power*.
35. McGregor, *Crossing the Zambezi*, 16.
36. Miescher and Tsikata, "Hydro-power," 16.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Portelli, *The Death of Luigi*, 50; Thomson, "Unreliable Memories," 25.
39. Portelli, *The Death of Luigi*, 50.
40. White, "True Stories," 295–6.
41. Progress in Uganda 1948, 1948, CO 536/218/3, 7–8, National Archives, United Kingdom (NAUK).
42. Extensive correspondence between the colonial administration-owned Ugandan Electricity Board and the Colonial Office in London concerning Owen Falls is available in the NAUK. For example, see CO 852/1101/6 relating to construction of Owen Falls.
43. Reviews and Revision of Development and Welfare Schemes, A Development Plan for Uganda by E.B. Worthington, December 1946, CO 536/218/3, 5, NAUK
44. Despatch by H.S. Potter [Deputy to the Governor], 30/03/1949, CO 536/218/3, 2, NAUK
45. Low and Lonsdale, "Introduction," 12–4, particularly their use of the term 'second colonial occupation.' Also see post-development literature outlined in note 18.
46. Development Plan for Uganda, 7.
47. Letter to Mr. Davies, 14/06/1948, CO/875/49/4 NAUK.
48. Rizzo, "What Was Left," 210.
49. Central Office of Information Minutes of a Meeting to Discuss Publicity for the Owen Falls Scheme, 21/03/1951 London CO/875/49/4, NAUK.
50. See Gore, *Electricity in Africa*, 38–44; Wilson, *Owen Falls*.
51. Wilson, *Owen Falls*, 5.
52. Sofer and Sofer, *Jinja Transformed*, 8, 58.
53. Colson, *The Social Consequences*.
54. Central Office of Information Minutes, 4, NAUK.
55. Sofer and Sofer, *Jinja Transformed*, 37.
56. Wilson, *Owen Falls*, 7.
57. Gore, *Electricity in Africa*, 44–8.
58. Wilson, *Owen Falls*, 7; Elkan and Wilson, "The Impact," 391.
59. Elkan and Wilson, "The Impact," 390.
60. Wilson, *Owen Falls*, 102.
61. Gore, *Electricity in Africa*, 145.
62. Interview with MEMD official, Kampala, March 2017.
63. Interview with UETCL official, Kampala, March 2017; Interview with National Planning Authority senior official, Kampala, April 2017.
64. Interview with UEGCL official, Kampala, March 2017.
65. Republic of Uganda, *Vision 2040*, 73; Rostow, *Stages of Economic Growth*, 4–16.
66. Interview with National Planning Authority senior official.
67. Dye, "The Return of," 320.
68. Gore, *Electricity in Africa*, 60.
69. Pierson, "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence."
70. Interview with BEL official, Jinja District (date retracted for anonymity).
71. Interview with ERA official, Kampala, April 2017.
72. Interview with UEGCL official.
73. Interview with BEL official.
74. African Development Bank, "Compliance Review Report," 7–17.
75. Mayrhofer and Mersmann, "Displaced, Evicted or Resettled," 70.
76. Interview with a male official at an environmental advocacy NGO, Kampala, March 2017.
77. Interview with ERA official.

78. Interview with anti-Bujagali campaigner, Jinja District, April 2017.
79. Interview with fishing business owner Jinja district, April 2017.
80. Lavers and Dye, "Theorising the Political Economy," 13.
81. Escobar, *Encountering Development*, 4.
82. Interview with UPC Politician, Jinja District, April 2017.
83. Tischler, *Light and Power*, 8.
84. Bissell, "Engaging Colonial Nostalgia," 217–8.
85. Interview with ERA official.
86. Interview with a male official at an environmental advocacy NGO.
87. Interview with consultant and government energy advisor, Kampala, March 2017.
88. Jørgensen, *Uganda a Modern History*, 51–2; Reid, *History of Modern Uganda*, 287.
89. Bissell, "Engaging Colonial Nostalgia," particularly 215, 225–6, and 239.
90. Reid, *History of Modern Uganda*, 287.
91. *Ibid.*, 225, 229.
92. *Ibid.*, 288.
93. Interview with MEMD official.
94. Interview with UETCL official.
95. Interview with female official at an environmental advocacy NGO, Kampala, March 2017.
96. Interview with ex-café owner, Jinja District, April 2017.
97. Interview with MEMD official; Interview with Makerere University professor, Kampala, March 2017.
98. Miescher and Tsikata, "Hydro-power," 39.
99. Interview with UPC Politician.
100. Interview with BEL official.
101. Interview with female energy development researcher.

Acknowledgements

This article is based on a dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of an MSc in African Studies at the University of Oxford. I am extremely grateful to everyone who helped me during my fieldwork in Uganda, and am especially grateful to my respondents who shared their time, knowledge and experience in being interviewed. Professor Miles Larmer gave invaluable feedback and support throughout the process of my research and writing. I am grateful to everyone who provided feedback: Jennifer Nayler, Oliver Rake and the anonymous reviewers. I must also thank Dr Cherry Leonardi, whose teaching shaped the early thinking behind this research.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This research was supported by a grant from the Patrick Duncan Dissertation Bursary for Sustainable Development in Africa and a travel grant from the African Studies Centre at the University of Oxford.

Bibliography

- Abbink, Jon. "Dam Controversies: Contested Governance and Development Discourse on the Ethiopian Omo River Dam." *Social Anthropology* 20, no. 2 (2012): 125–44. doi:[10.1111/j.1469-8676.2012.00196.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8676.2012.00196.x).

- African Development Bank. 2008. "Compliance Review Report on the Bujali Hydropower and Interconnection Projects." <https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Compliance-Review/30740990-EN-BUJAGALI-FINAL-REPORT-17-06-08.PDF> 17.
- Agrawal, Arun. "Poststructuralist Approaches to Development: Some Critical Reflections." *Peace & Change* 21, no. 4 (1996): 464–77. doi:10.1111/j.1468-0130.1996.tb00283.x.
- van Beusekom, Monica. *Negotiating Development: African Farmers and Colonial Experts at the Office Du Niger, 1920–1960*. Portsmouth N.H.: Heinemann, 2002.
- van Beusekom, Monica M., and Dorothy L. Hodgson. "Lessons Learned? Development Experiences in the Late Colonial Period." *The Journal of African History* 41, no. 1 (2000): 29–33. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/183508>.
- Bissell, William Cunningham. "Engaging Colonial Nostalgia." *Cultural Anthropology* 20, no. 2 (2005): 215–48. doi:10.1525/can.2005.20.2.215.
- Colson, Elizabeth. *The Social Consequences of Resettlement: The Impact of the Kariba Resettlement Upon the Gwembe Tonga*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1971.
- Cooper, Frederick. "Writing the History of Development." *Journal of Modern European History* 8, no. 1 (2010): 5–23. doi:10.17104/1611-8944_2010_1_5.
- Cooper, Frederick, and Randall Packard. "Introduction." In *International Development and the Social Sciences*, edited by Frederick Cooper, and Randall Packard, 1–41. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- Corbridge, Stuart. "Beneath the Pavement Only Soil: The Poverty of Post-development." *The Journal of Development Studies* 34, no. 6 (1998): 138–48. doi:10.1080/00220389808422549.
- Cowen, Michael, and Robert Shenton. "The Invention of Development." In *Power of Development*, edited by Jonathan Crush, 27–43. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Crush, Jonathan. "Introduction: Imagining Development." In *Power of Development*, edited by Jonathan Crush, 1–23. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Dye, Barnaby. "The Return of 'High Modernism'? Exploring the Changing Development Paradigm Through a Rwandan Case Study of Dam Construction." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 10, no. 2 (2016): 303–24. doi:10.1080/17531055.2016.1181411.
- Elkan, W., and Gail Wilson. "The Impact of the Owen Falls Hydro-electric Project on the Economy of Uganda." *The Journal of Development Studies* 3, no. 4 (1967): 387–404. doi:10.1080/00220386708421235.
- Escobar, Arturo. *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- Gore, Christopher D. *Electricity in Africa: The Politics of Transformation in Uganda*. Suffolk: James Currey, 2017.
- Hoag, Heather J., and May Britt Öhman. "Turning Water Into Power. Debates Over the Development of Tanzania's Rufiji River Basin, 1945–1985." *Technology and Culture* 49, no. 3 (2008): 624–51. doi:10.1353/tech.0.0061.
- Hodge, Joseph M. *The Triumph of the Expert: Agrarian Doctrines of Development and the Legacies of British Colonialism*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007.
- Hodge, Joseph M., and Gerald Hödl. "Introduction." In *Developing Africa: Concepts and Practices in Twentieth-Century Colonialism*, edited by Joseph M. Hodge, Gerald Hödl, and Martina Kopf, 1–34. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014.
- Hunter, Emma. "A History of Maendeleo: The Concept of 'Development' in Tanganyika's Late Colonial Public Sphere." In *Developing Africa: Concepts and Practices in Twentieth-Century Colonialism*, edited by Joseph M. Hodge, Gerald Hödl, and Martina Kopf, 87–107. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014.
- Isaacman, Allen F., and Barbara S. Isaacman. *Dams, Displacement and the Delusion of Development: Cahora Bassa and its Legacies in Mozambique 1965–2007*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012.
- Jørgensen, Jan Jelmert. *Uganda A Modern History*. London: Croom Helm, 1981.
- Kiely, Ray. "The Last Refuge of the Noble Savage? A Critical Assessment of Post-development Theory." *The European Journal of Development Research* 11, no. 1 (1999): 30–55. doi:10.1080/09578819908426726.

- Lavers, Tom, and Barnaby Dye. 'Theorising the Political Economy of Dams: Towards a Research Agenda.' FutureDAMS Working Paper 001. Manchester: The University of Manchester, 2019.
- Low, D. A., and John Lonsdale. "Introduction: Towards the New Order, 1945–1963." In *History of East Africa, Volume 3*, edited by D. A. Low, and Alison Smith, 1–63. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976.
- Mayrhofer, Monika, and Florian Mersmann. "Displaced, Evicted or Resettled by Climate Change Measures: Neglecting the Rights of Affected Communities in the Case of the Bujagali Hydropower Plant." *Kurswechsel* 3 (2016): 65–74.
- McCully, Patrick. *Silenced Rivers: The Ecology and Politics of Large Dams*. London: Zed Books, 2001.
- McGregor, JoAnn. *Crossing the Zambezi: The Politics of Landscape on a Central African Frontier*. Rochester, N.Y.: James Currey, 2009.
- Miescher, Stephan F. "'Building the City of the Future: Visions and Experiences of Modernity in Ghana's Akosombo Township.'" *The Journal of African History* 53, no. 3 (2012): 367–90. doi:10.1017/S0021853712000679.
- Miescher, Stephan F., and Dzodzi Tsikata. "Hydro-power and the Promise of Modernity and Development in Ghana: Comparing the Akosombo and Bui Dam Projects." *Ghana Studies* 12 (2009): 15–53. doi:10.1353/ghs.2009.0002.
- Moore, Deborah, John Dore, and Dipak Gyawihili. "The World Commission on Dams + 10: Revisiting the Large Dam Controversy." *Water Alternatives* 3, no. 2 (2010): 3–13. <https://dlc.dlib.indiana.edu/dlc/bitstream/handle/10535/7036/3-2-2.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.
- Mosley, J., and Elizabeth E. Watson. "Frontier Transformations: Development Visions, Spaces and Processes in Northern Kenya and Southern Ethiopia." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 10, no. 3 (2016): 452–75. doi:10.1080/17531055.2016.1266199.
- Pierson, Paul. "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics." *American Political Science Review* 94, no. 2 (2000): 251–67.
- Portelli, Alessandro. *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991.
- Reid, Richard J. *A History of Modern Uganda*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Republic of Uganda. *Uganda Vision 2040*. NPA: Kampala, 2013.
- Rist, Gilbert. *The History of Development from Western Origins to Global Faith*. London: Zed Books, 2014.
- Rizzo, Matteo. "What Was Left of the Groundnut Scheme? Development Disaster and Labour Market in Southern Tanganyika 1946–1952." *Journal of Agrarian Change* 6, no. 2 (2006): 205–38. doi:10.1111/j.1471-0366.2006.00120.x.
- Rostow, W. W. *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Sachs, Wolfgang, ed. *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge and Power*. London: Zed Books, 1992.
- Scott, James C. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Scudder, Thayer. *The Future of Large Dams: Dealing with the Social, Environmental and Political Costs*. London: Earthscan, 2005.
- Sofer, Cyril, and Rhona Sofer. *Jinja Transformed: A Social Survey of a Multi-Racial Township*. Nairobi: East African Studies, 1955.
- Thomson, Alistair. "Unreliable Memories? The Use and Abuse of Oral History." In *Historical Controversies and Historians*, edited by William Lamont, 23–34. London: UCL Press, 1998.
- Tischler, Julia. *Light and Power for a Multiracial Nation: The Kariba Dam Scheme in the Central African Federation*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Verhoeven, Harry. "African Dam Building as Extraversion: The Case of Sudan's Dam Programme, Nubian Resistance and the Saudi-Iranian Proxy War in the Yemen." *African Affairs* 115, no. 460 (2016): 562–73. doi:10.1093/afraf/adw036.
- White, Luise. "True Stories: Narrative, Event, History and Blood in the Lake Victoria Basin." In *African Words, African Voices: Critical Practices in Oral History*, edited by Luise White,

Stephan F. Miescher, and David William Cohen, 281–304. Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 2002.

Wilson, Gail. *Owen Falls: Electricity in a Developing Country*. Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967.

World Commission on Dams. *Dams and Development: A New Framework for Decision Making*. London: Earthscan Publications, 2000.