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إفريقيا وتحديات القرن الواحد والعشرين**

**Western Representations of Africa: The Impact of Labels  
in Global Interventionism**

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## **Abstract**

This paper explores the process of identity creation in International Relations by looking, specifically, at the implications of Western representations of 'failed states' in Africa. Talk of 'failed states' became pervasive after the Cold War not only amongst strategic planners and international relations scholars, but also in the literature on development aid. The concept brought together two epistemic and policy communities that were never too far apart - development and security. Representations of 'failure' have been consistently linked with aid ineffectiveness, on the one hand, and global instability, on the other, producing a common frame through which certain African countries are evaluated and intervention is shaped. How does the label of 'failure' attached to particular African states impact on their interaction with the West? Using the case study of Guinea-Bissau, this paper looks at how these representations are produced and sustained, arguing that engaging with the Western discursive production of Africa is a necessary stepping stone for the renegotiation of the continent's overall international standing.

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