AFRICANS...

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Category: Africa

There is a rather silly headline to an article in the Telegraph today.

> ## *Africans don't rate Bob Geldof, so why should we?*

The article goes on to bemoan the nature of celebrity aid culture, which is something that I have done on more than one occasion (here and here for example). However, whatever the merits or de-merits of the article itself, the headline is very strange.

What does it mean that "Africans don't rate Bob Gelfdof"?

What do British people think of the sainted sir Bob? Some see him as an amazing humanitarian, others feel that he is a publicity seeker and still others find it hard to forgive him for some of the songs that the Boomtown Rats recorded in the late seventies. People in Britain are a diverse group and they don't have one opinion about anything. Now, if we expand this to the whole of Europe: what do Europeans think of Bob Geldof? Do they rate him? Is the opinion of people in Moscow the same or different to the mixture of opinions in London? I don't know; no one does.

To say that Europeans 'rate Bob Geldof' is obviously nonsensical.

But as the picture shows, Europe is far smaller than Africa and has a much smaller population. To say that "Africans don't rate Bob Geldof" is ludicrous. No doubt some Africans don't think much of him, while many other Africans think he is a wonderful humanitarian. Without doing any formal surveys, I suspect that most Africans have no idea who he is.

So why am I using up perfectly good electrons writing about this? It is because I get fed up with people talking about Africa as if it were a small country where everyone thinks the same. Africa is a huge continent, incredibly diverse and full of people who have their own opinions and their own hopes and fears. You can't put Africans into a single category any more than you can Europeans or Americans.