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The last two decades of the nineteenth hundreds witnessed a pleasing upsurge in African scholarship, particularly in the humanities and social sciences. This upsurge signaled a significant shift in African studies that saw African scholars take leading discursive roles. It also shifted the nature and direction of African studies as African and Africanist scholars expanded the discursive scope through interactions across disciplines. This development was enabled by a critical dialectic whose moments are at times fair, congenial and complementary, but at other times also not quite so fair, congenial or complementary. As often occurs in academic endeavors, there have been both good and bad products, as well as good and bad criticisms. James E. Lassiter's essay, "African Culture and Personality: Bad Social Science, Effective Social Activism, or a Call to Reinvent Ethnology?", is an example of very bad criticism of some aspects of recent African scholarship.

Lassiter argues that the pollution of the social sciences in African studies is occurring mainly as a result of the freelance attitude and practice by African scholars, especially when influential scholars venture into and use concepts from disciplinary fields they have only little or no knowledge of. The result, he argues, is devastating to the integrity and growth of a tradition of scientific and respectable African social studies. He picks out a handful of works by scholars from the East and South Africa for a demonstration of the extent of this devastation. In particular, he names Kihumbu Thairu and Joseph Nyasani, two Kenyan scholars, a medical doctor and philosopher respectively, who, in his view, have ventured into discussions of what they claim to be African cultural traits (for example what they claim to be the African psyche or African personality) with total neglect of and aberration from the noble rules and methods of ethnographic studies set in place by Western cultural and social anthropologists. The result of this regulatory and methodological aberration is that "such inquiry [becomes] no more than unscientific stereotyping, usually with malevolent intent and effect."(Lassiter, p.2).

Let me surprise my readers by saying that there are points I tend to agree with Lassiter on. But such points are few and far apart compared to those I severely differ with him on. I will explain as I go along. I agree that the claims made by Thairu and Nyasani are harmfully general. Yet they are part of a much wider tradition of literature which Lassiter, perhaps only conveniently, chooses to leave out of his discussion. Although he points out correctly that part of this kind of literature is liberatory and anti-colonial, Lassiter fails to connect it to the ethnophilosophical movement in the United States which is descended partly from the ethnophilosophical and Afrocentric movement in the United States which is descended partly from ethnophilosophy and Janheinz Jahn's cultural pan-Africanism on one hand, and partly from the Pan-Africanist movement in the strict political sense, on the other. Taken together, the

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mistake of the African or African-American scholars in the heart of this discourse on cultural Pan-Africanism does not lie in the fact that they discuss African culture. One hopes here that Lassiter is not suggesting that these scholars lack the legitimacy to talk of who they think, imagine, or believe they are, or what their beliefs and practices are or should be. Their weakness, in my view, lies in attributing differences of beliefs among peoples to biology rather than to experience. This biologization of culture appears at the core of Afrocentrism as practiced in the United States today, but its recent roots, as I mentioned above, are in the premises - both stated and implied by arguments - of ethnophilosophy. My position, which Lassiter cites in support of his critique of Nyasani, was taken against this collectivist and fossilizing genetic assumption about the nature of the minds of Africans which represents it as impervious to the dialects of experience. One is therefore able to detect a dangerous contradiction in Nyasani's thesis, and this brings me to another point against Lassiter: that he chooses particularly weak and clearly problematic publications by Africans which contextualize and amplify discussions on these issues; he also discusses his selections widely out of context. For example, failure to read Nyasani's text at least partly in relation to the rest of the history of African professional philosophy over the past seven decades makes it easy for Lassiter to accuse Nyasani of obfuscating the disciplinary boundaries between the social sciences and the humanities. To say the least, Lassiter's failure to take note of recent advances in anthropological discourse, and his failure to take advantage of readily available recent publications in African philosophy are utterly inexcusable, despite his attempt to hide behind a wide but unused list of reference texts. Mudimbe, Wiredu, Gyekye, and Appiah, to mention just a few, have all recently published excellent scholarly philosophical works which top lists of cogitative discussions of significant conceptual implications of changes African societies continue to undergo.

Lassiter accuses African scholars of failing to define their new (mis)uses of well established scientific terms. But his (p.3) swipe at Ali Mazrui does not indicate that his own critical understanding and practice is better. His highlight of the phrase "The new East African mind" in a passage quoted from Mazrui and Mazrui (1995:134) suggests that he is questioning the use of the term "mind" in the passage, but one sees no difficulty at all in the context of the entire passage. He also questions the use of the term "African Personality" from another passage of the same work. The said passage, it appears to me, refers to the historical evolution and affinity between the movements which the terms stand for. For Lassiter to suggest that Mazrui and Mazrui have in the passage misused a purely psychological term (personality) clearly indicates his ignorance of the historical genealogy of that term and others listed with it. Lassiter's objection indicates his serious misreading of both the intent and the context of the text. But even worse, it appears that Lassiter takes Mazrui's and Nyasani's respective uses of the term "mind" to be synonymous. If so, this is an indication of a gravely careless reading by someone wishing to present himself in such a critical manner.

Reference Style: The following is the suggested format for referencing this article:

Masolo, D. A. 1999. African Culture and Personality: A Comment on James E. Lassiter 3(2): 2. [online] URL: <http://web.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v3/v3i3a2.htm>

# Language in Development Research in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Africa

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## INTRODUCTION

Africa's development in the next millennium must be research driven. Only socio-cultural and economic investigation can provide the vital data necessary to arrive at sound, well-informed policies governing development for all facets of society. Given that most of Africa remains rural and illiterate, the issue of which language is to be a medium of research is especially crucial. Verbal communication is often the only option that trained researchers have to obtain information and attain their research goals. Indeed, this is the only method through which scientists and administrators may seek to influence social or collective behaviour and direct it toward development objectives. This paper contends, therefore, that development research in Africa has failed to make substantial improvements in the quality of life for the majority, mainly because development theory and practice have failed to exploit local languages as media for research and development work. Although, as a result of colonialism, European languages are part and parcel of Africa's heritage, these languages remain foreign for the majority of ordinary people, for whom development is intended.

Language is never simply a neutral instrument to convey meaning, but rather a culturally subjective system reflecting peoples' worldview. Language symbolizes the common beliefs and psychological make-up of the community from which it springs<sup>1</sup>. For Africa, the use of language in social research and policy must consider the mobilization of human resources for development. No meaningful change can occur without the full participation of the masses. The importance of speaking to people in their own languages cannot be over-stressed.

## DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH AS A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

The major purpose of development research is to provide fundamental and long-term solutions to social problems. Research of this nature provides a venue for the discussion of major issues in socio-economic and political-cultural development. Social science research should ideally aim at discovering and understanding such problems. Social development remains a complex phenomenon that brings into play a multiplicity of factors. These variables are often quite fluid in nature. However, research becomes a complete waste of resources if the findings do not reflect the true feelings of the target population. Unless that happens, results and recommendations contribute little to a collective understanding of the problems or the policies envisaged. Such failure in Africa has been attributed to (a) the lack of communication between researchers and potential beneficiaries of research; and (b) little public awareness of the various findings and programmes. Overall dissemination of research findings continues to

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be very poor<sup>2</sup>. The nature and level of the discourse involved is frequently cast in complex, exclusive jargon understood only by a tiny minority of technical and academic elites. The absence of free-flowing communication between investigators and beneficiaries accounts for the bottle-to-mouth model of development research in Africa. As a result, social research over the years has become an essentially academic exercise.

#### CHANGE IN HUMAN BEHAVIOUR AS A PREREQUISITE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

As a result of IMF/World Bank assistance, the 1980s and 1990s saw the adoption of economic liberalization in Africa. Before entering an era of liberalisation and market-driven economies, the population must make a psychological leap from traditionalism into the 21st century. Only then can a society meaningfully address areas of immediate concern such as the eradication of poverty, ignorance, disease and hunger. The process of development entails not simply accelerated economic growth but also changes in traditional structures, values and practices<sup>5</sup>.

Thus, for markets to work, the crucial issue becomes how to negotiate desired social and behavioural changes. What role does the development researcher play in facilitating this process? As many scholars have stressed, unplanned or uncontrolled change in the name of modern "development" often results in social behaviours that counter the intended spirit of development. But social science research in Africa has tended to neglect the cultural and language issues of local communities. This "top-down" planning approach denies popular input and participation in the determination of economic and social policy<sup>6</sup>.

The manner of conducting policy without local development research also contributes to the isolation and alienation of the masses from the process of development. Exclusive and highly academic forums such as scholarly journals, dissertations/theses and technical ministry reports reach only a small group of intellectual elites, effectively cutting off the majority. Research results must flow through more informal and accessible channels of communication such as extension education, grass-roots conferences, workshops, exhibitions and demonstrative teaching. Such channels should be utilized when generating knowledge for broad social consumption. If information and data are to help achieve the desired development goals, they must be presented to the people in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner. Therefore, the use of local languages/dialects that draw their idioms from an accepted cultural landscape is essential.

#### THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH IN AFRICA

The problem of understanding and effectively communicating with people in a second language represents a problem most social science researchers recognize but fail to address. In all stages of research (from problem identification to the reporting of findings) the researcher must continually bear in mind the linguistic and communication complexity at hand. Special attention should be paid to the choice of language and level of discourse because language as a system of communicative symbols only receives meaning from culture and society<sup>7</sup>.

Social science researchers can use language to study the attitudes of various African societies toward change. Through language the researcher may gain insight into aspects of

cultural tolerance, accommodation of divergent views and the mechanisms of coping with change. Language and culture play a vital part in shaping individual and collective behaviour and values. A researcher armed only with a casual level of local language competence will end up with only a partial understanding of the social phenomenon or problem under scrutiny. If a researcher cannot understand the meaning and application of various oral forms (e.g. idioms, proverbs, popular sayings, tongue-twisters, riddles, myths, legends, songs and poetry) in a given community, he or she may not fully understand the politics, economic activities, social organization and cultural values of that locality. The principal claim is not that only researchers fully fluent in local languages may engage in research. Rather, the point is to stress the crucial role of understanding local language and culture as tools of deepening research understanding that would be the case if a researcher did not use them.

Although multilingual, Africa possesses regional languages that have long enabled different far-flung communities to communicate and do business. These languages spread widely, gradually becoming culturally widespread and sometimes politically neutral. This historical process has resulted in their acceptability across and beyond the boundaries of modern states. Examples of these common languages are Hausa, Wolof, Kiswahili, Arabic, Amharic and Berber. To a lesser extent, one may also add Zulu, Shona, Lingala, Ndebele, Xhosa, Tswana and several others.

In East and Central Africa, Kiswahili is the lingua franca, having a long written tradition that has been used as a medium of education at different times in history. Since it is estimated that only 20% of people in this region speak or understand English (and even fewer know French), the potential of Kiswahili as a tool for social communication and development cannot be over-emphasized. Given the high level of lexical borrowing between Kiswahili and the languages of this region, as well as the large body of literature available in the language, social research cannot afford to ignore or overlook Kiswahili.

Having mentioned the role local languages may play in research, we may pay our attention to the national versus local cultural issues. The importance of "local" as opposed to "national" loyalties in matters of development should never escape the serious social science researcher. With the possible exception of material acquisition and embracing new values through formal education or Christianity, most Africans still owe their ethnic origins considerable loyalty and obedience. In effect, many Africans still cling to what they consider values and attitudes while practising a modicum of "modern" life. In other cases it has been demonstrated that local "traditions" are invented from new and old experiences. Social science researchers must acknowledge this in order to avoid offending research subjects and to better understand the responses they encounter. Some of these values and practices a researcher faces have a direct bearing on the community's attitude toward modern development. To an uninitiated scholar, such values and practices may only appear as remnants of a distant past, but the communities concerned often find it necessary to incorporate them in development. Rather than simply dismissing them, the researcher needs to investigate the social basis of their origins and persistence. There is no better place to start such an investigation than with the various forms of creative language such as the oral genres.



## LANGUAGE AND OBJECTIVITY IN DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

One of the major concerns of social science research has been to understand human life and society as objectively as possible. However, since the data derives (directly or indirectly) from individuals with unique personal qualities, recent thinking on social science methodology has refuted the claim that such inquiry can ever be purely objective<sup>8</sup>. These individual qualities colour data whether the inquiry is experimental, survey or evaluative in nature. Individual differences become clear in the language of responses to various questions and in observable preferences for certain words, phrases, sentence structures and idioms. Two levels of thought based on language may be at play here. Individualised language habits or "idiolects" form part of the social personality and affect the worldviews expressed to the researcher. The social science researcher should differentiate these two epistemological types as they occur in the research discourse by analyzing meanings on both the linguistic and cultural levels. This ability directly affects the validity and reliability of the final results as the researcher attempts to distinguish opinion from fact. The effort to refine the process of communication and language use in social science is imperative to understanding the sources of authenticity in any society. In each community there are institutions and personalities regarded as the custodians of indigenous values or ways of life. These people wield untold authority within their community, often influencing language use and social thought. So by studying the expressive behaviour patterns of a subject community, social scientists gain an understanding of the meanings attached to various symbols and how these can reflect power relations. The objectivity and verifiability obtained by the social researcher in that manner is vital in formulating development policies.

## CONCLUSION

The keystone of social science research is observation. However, it is impossible to interpret such observations without the careful employment of language as a medium of communication. Utmost attention must be paid to the meaning and application of language to guard against producing distorted accounts. The language used deserves as much attention as description of the phenomena under study. Only then can observation in research reduce the chance of unnecessary errors. There are many sources for error in social research. For instance, a keen researcher may discover cases of either over-generalization or selective observation by a respondent. Although the problem can be addressed by attempts to refine such results, a more profitable alternative would be paying closer attention to patterns of the language used to respond to the researcher. Language analysis helps unearth errors emanating from misinterpretation of data, misinformation, or the mystification of cause-and-effect. These aspects are central to the success of social science research and cannot be taken lightly.

This essay has discussed the importance of language, culture and communication in social research intended to promote development. Research is a social enterprise that makes use of linguistic and cultural tools. Meaning-formation or conceptualization is a culture-bound process. The objectivity, validity and reliability of findings depend upon the researcher's ability to operate effectively within the confines of culture and language. A close relationship exists

between habits of language use and thought processes as well as between socio-cultural mechanisms and the nature of human language. Therefore, problems in social research cannot be resolved solely through the use of non-African languages that currently dominate the literature on African development. Local languages and/or dialects must also be at the core of research and development discourse. The end results for African development might be better than what we have now.

## Notes

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Reference Style: The following is the suggested format for referencing this article:

Kinge'i K. 1999. *Language Development Research in 21st Century Africa* 3<sup>3</sup>: 3. [online] URL: <http://web.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v3/v3i3a3.htm>



# The Challenges Facing Nigeria's Foreign Policy in the Next Millennium

EBENEZER OKPOKPO

## INTRODUCTION

Since Nigeria became independent in 1960 its foreign policy, like that of most other countries, has witnessed successes and failures. The current debate on President Obasanjo's list of Ambassadorial nominees sent to the Senate for approval provides Nigerian citizens with an opportunity to contribute to the debate on who should be nominated and why. I will leave relating to the "who and why" to observers more concerned with the internal political situation. My contribution will go beyond the internal debate concerning the disrespect of the "federal character" and the purported bias in these nominations. I will focus on the content and objectives of Nigerian foreign policy in the new millenium.

In his article on Obasanjo's foreign policy, Reubin Abati, gives an interesting and complete overview of Nigeria's foreign policy since its independence<sup>1</sup>. He rightly points out that Nigeria has been extraordinarily naive by restricting its foreign policy to Africa as its cornerstone. It was a laudable goal before the 1990s, but its evolution is needed for Nigeria to meet the needs of today's diplomacy as we move into the next millennium. Africa as the centerpiece of Nigeria's foreign policy no longer suffices; a broader perspective is necessary. Although Nigeria hasn't got the means and might to have a global foreign policy, it should endeavour to take more into consideration current trends in international relations and diplomacy such as globalization, human rights, and democracy.

In my opinion, successive military dictatorships in Nigeria have used the Africa cornerstone slogan to lure compliant like-minded African regimes to support their unpopular regimes. This was the price Nigeria had to pay for the support of dictatorial African states. Now, we are a democracy and we have to speak out and stand tall within the international community. We no longer have to beg for support from other military dictatorships for limited gains within African diplomatic circles. Africa alone should no longer be the one and only reason for the existence of a foreign policy in Nigeria. None of the important international diplomatic actors, such as the USA, France and Great Britain, build their foreign policy on only one pillar. Nigeria shouldn't be an exception if it wants to play a role in current high level diplomatic circles.

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## DOMESTIC DETERMINANTS OF FOREIGN POLICY

Internal political events usually have a lot of impact on foreign policy. Nigeria is no exception as the following discussion will demonstrate. Nigeria should henceforth cultivate the idea, recognise and accept that military *coup d'états* are not solutions to internal political problems. If such were the case, governments in industrialised countries would have been toppled very often because of political crises. The solution is a culture of political dialogue and debate between opponents and Nigerians are up to that task. Encouraging political dialogue as the principal mechanism for the resolution of crisis situations would show the international community that Nigerians are a mature people worthy of a respectable place within the community of nations.

When Rueben Abati mentioned that the Babangida regime gave a lethal blow to Nigeria's image abroad and its foreign policy in particular, he gave as examples the financial waste but omitted human rights abuses and the cancellation of the June 12 election at a time when every country, in particular the G7 and most OECD countries had made democracy, good governance, and human rights essential determining elements in international politics and in their relations with developing countries. It is worth noting that since the famous *La Baule* speech by President Mitterrand of France in 1983, democracy became a determining factor in relations between France and developing countries, in particular, African countries. This applied to other western states also.

Worse still, after its cancellation, no official inside Babangida's government was capable of giving cogent reasons for the annulment of the June 12 elections and accusations concerning human rights violations. The international community, therefore, rightly believed our top military officers were up to something. The aftermath was nothing to write home about. That was the beginning of Nigeria's misunderstanding with the international community – notably the USA, Canada, the Commonwealth countries, and the European Union.

The issue of June 12 had not been resolved when General Sani Abacha pushed the transition president Chief Ernest Shonekan out and took his seat without any agenda on how to improve relations between Nigeria and the international community, outside its traditional African brother countries. That *coup d'état* worsened the international image of Nigeria. No creditworthy transition programme was published; instead General Abacha embarked upon a self-aggrandising effort that led Nigeria to the brink of war because of the most flagrant human rights abuses any military regime had ever committed in the country since independence.

Nigeria became a pariah state with whom none except compliant African countries talked to. It was at this time that experienced diplomatic advice would have saved Nigeria. None was given a chance; instead a select delegation of incredible, though famous Nigerians, was sent abroad to explain the unexplainable to the international community. One such delegations led by Chief Odumegwu Ojukwu visited Europe, but its failure was obvious.

## HUMAN RIGHTS AND FOREIGN POLICY

Under General Abacha, foreign policy was crudely mishandled. Records show that Nigeria was like a country without a foreign minister and a foreign policy during that period. No one

person should be blamed for the absence of a foreign policy but someone should explain why there seemed to be no useful policy advice to General Abacha during the time<sup>2</sup>. The questions to be answered include those relating to the aimless intentional tug-of-war declared by the regime against the international community.

Explanations should be given as to why that regime was incapable of foreseeing the devastating effects of the hanging of the "Ogoni nine", including Ken Saro Wiwa, and lastly, why there was no government official capable of making the regime to shift the horrible decision to hang the Ogoni activists until the end of the Commonwealth summit. That regime unjustly imprisoned many people, including the incumbent President Olusegun Obasanjo, and hung Ken Saro Wiwa when all Commonwealth Heads of State and Government were meeting in Australia. These were all terrible acts and diplomatic blunders because they underrated the importance of internal policy including democratic reforms and the place of human rights in international relations and diplomacy.

When we hear some Nigerian's cry wolf today concerning the ambassadorial nominations by President Obasanjo, they should be asked why many ambassadorial positions remained vacant and no diplomats were posted out during Abacha's tenure of office<sup>3</sup>. Nigeria's diplomacy was grounded during the Babangida-Abacha era. This explains why the current government recalled all ambassadors and designated new ones. In Foreign Minister Lamido's words, it is in recognition of the important roles played by heads of missions that they recalled them to dismantle the "old order"<sup>4</sup>. Also, how would Nigeria have explained the confirmation by a democratically elected government of ambassadors who were apologetic to the military?

The annulment of the June 12 presidential elections and the hanging of the "Ogoni nine" were two lethal blows that those regimes gave to Nigeria's image abroad. Nigeria's bad image has not been repaired and those who contributed toward this should be humble in their utterances against the choices made by a democratically elected government.

## NIGERIA'S SHATTERED PUBLIC IMAGE

Despite immense efforts by diplomats and other officials in the Babangida and Abacha years to explain Nigeria's stance to countries outside Africa, their efforts were fruitless because Nigeria maintained an obsolete definition of national sovereignty. They argued that human rights and related issues were Nigerain internal affairs about which outsiders had no say. Yet, gone are the days when any ruler could sit down within the boundaries of his country and treat citizens as he liked without reaction from the international community. In spite of the existing double standards in the field, NATO intervention in Kosovo, former Yugoslavia, is an example. Henceforth, democracy and human rights, which in the recent past were considered in law and international relations as purely internal affairs, are becoming important determinants in foreign policy.

Though the recent crisis in East Timor (Indonesia) gave no pride for the international community, and in particular, the United Nations, the international community has tried various humanitarian and sometimes military rescue operations where there were human rights abuses. In Africa, Rwanda, during the ethnic crisis, was a case in hand. Nigerian policy and decision-makers should henceforth recognise that democracy and human rights are subjects of

international concern and they should therefore inculcate these elements into the decision-making process.

Regarding image building, it was astonishing to observe how Nigerian diplomats and information ministry officials were incapable of formulating a message destined for international consumption to counter the international press campaign against Nigeria. The incapacity of Nigerian officials at the time to explain these decisions to the international public led to the deteriorated image of Nigeria abroad. The effects are very deep-rooted and years will be required to correct the image.

President Obasanjo and Foreign Minister Sule Lamido's task is to bring Nigeria out of this dead end by consolidating democracy at home, respecting fundamental human rights and encouraging liberal economic reforms, good governance and transparency with a view to boosting international economic cooperation with G7 countries as well as the dynamic Asian economies<sup>5</sup>. The task ahead is hectic and the choice of competent officials actors is therefore essential.

## FOREIGN POLICY ACTORS

The policy actors in this immense task are both internal and external to the foreign ministry. Although it is primarily a foreign ministry affair, it should be mentioned that internal actors such as the president, the foreign minister, ambassadors and embassies abroad, the press and the business community are all active players in the foreign policy formulation process. The role and place of our embassies should be redefined. A dynamic and performance-oriented foreign policy leaves no room for amateurism like in the past. Our ambassadors and embassies should sit up and live up to national expectations. Nigeria's foreign policy has to produce results for the country and its citizens. The training programme for our diplomats should be reviewed to give them the necessary knowledge to practise the art and science of diplomacy because they are at the frontline of our foreign policy.

Our vital national interests have to be redefined. Does Africa still represent the cornerstone of our foreign policy when we have more respect from other countries than we get from African nations despite our whole-hearted commitment to them? If yes, what are the benefits we get from the choice? If the response is no, then we should reorient our foreign policy towards more profitable ventures like economic, scientific, cultural and technical cooperation with more advanced countries including Asia.

The economic development and well-being of Nigeria should henceforth be the mainstay of our foreign policy. We should revive and reinforce what was termed economic diplomacy by General Ike Nwachukwu. For instance, why would we continue to sit aloof and see Cameroun lay claim on Nigeria's territory? In the name of African unity and good neighbourhood, Nigeria has sacrificed a lot and continues to sacrifice for our continent. That is praiseworthy but most southern African countries have forgotten the sacrifices made by Nigeria to bring them out of their woes. Sierra Leoneans and Liberians have forgotten the loss of lives by Nigerian soldiers in their efforts to defend unity and peace in these countries. Though Africa should not be forgotten, Nigeria's interests should come first in all our foreign policy analysis and decisions. Retired General Danjuma wasn't saying anything different when he said "Right now, we are

becoming the United States of ECOWAS at very great cost to us. We think this is unaffordable to us now"<sup>6</sup>. He further stated that Nigeria's needs are enormous.

Regarding important sensitive internal policy issues that would have effect on our foreign policy, a decision-making forum comprising Presidential Advisers, top-level officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Internal Affairs, Justice, Economy and Finance, inter alia, should meet to discuss and access them with a view of defining a coherent policy. Officials from the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies and the National Institute for Advanced Legal Studies should be invited to give expert opinion on such issues in order to avoid the diplomatic blunders of our officials during the Ken Saro Wiwa crisis.

Nigeria should therefore precisely define in policy terms what its cultural policy is and what it aims to achieve outside the country. What does cultural cooperation with foreign countries imply? Does it simply mean encouraging foreign artists to organise tours in Nigeria or foreign countries to establish flourishing cultural and language centres in Lagos, Abuja and elsewhere in the country? Where in the world does Nigeria have a cultural centre worthy of its title? In the field of defence, what is our defence policy? Does it simply mean protecting the external and internal territorial integrity of the Nigeria? Protecting the integrity of the country against who? In short, who are our enemies and who are our friends? What type of relations should we have with all our French-speaking neighbouring countries considering that all of them have over thirty years old defence and military pacts with France, one of the world's leading military and industrial powers?

On Nigeria and its citizens abroad, what does the country intend to do to make them contribute in their own way to the economic, cultural, scientific and technological development of the country? In certain African countries, citizens residing abroad vote and take active part in political activities. What would Nigeria do to encourage its democracy to evolve toward such an objective? Nigerians living abroad should be encouraged to have closer relations with the motherland. Nigeria's foreign policy should include all these actors for a more global approach to policy issues than in the past.

Democratically elected regimes have a wider scope and more leeway in policy decisions than regimes resulting from military *coups d'états* because they are legitimate. In Nigeria's case, we have voluntarily or unconsciously restricted most vital foreign policy decisions or diplomatic initiatives to the African continent since we do not seem capable of going beyond Africa. We should no longer be satisfied with our fictional "giant of Africa" image and watch other African diplomatic "giants" like South Africa and Egypt work hard to get a name and maintain their place within the international arena.

## FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES

The scope of Nigeria's foreign policy should no longer be limited to continental affairs. Its should be focused world-wide and geared toward the promotion of our cultural heritage, and scientific, economic and technical cooperation with viable partners. Its goal should aim at enhancing our national development, and military arrangements with NATO countries in order to give peace a permanent character in our societal needs and our sub-region. Finally, Nigerian



foreign policy should aim at creating benefits for the betterment of the people. It should no longer focus on Africa without clearly defined policy objectives.

Such a policy shift would mean a very careful choice of external actors. Although I would not advocate dropping Africa, Nigeria needs to make a careful choice of our closest allies based not on the wealth or technological advancement of the partner but on Nigeria's vital national interests in the cultural, economic, political, scientific and technical areas as well as in the military field. A commission comprising diplomats, top-level military officers, university professors and politicians should be set-up to review our foreign policy objectives and to redefine our vital national interests. Its mandate should be short and precise. These interests should be made the fundamental guidelines of all our foreign policy objectives in Africa, the European Union, America - both North and South, Asia and the Pacific. Nigeria's foreign policy objectives should henceforth focus on the benefits of such policy for its people. President Obasanjo's task would be to make the ordinary Nigerian feel the positive effects of the government on his or her life.

At another level, Nigeria's foreign policy should encompass a clear opinion and strategy on major international issues such as the reform of the United Nations, bilateral relations between Nigeria and members of the European Union outside the ACP-EU framework, discussions with the dynamic Asian economies on how best to boost their investment in Nigeria, how to make G7 governments encourage more foreign capital flows to the vital areas of our economy through a liberal foreign investment policy. Lastly, as a representative of Africa at large, Nigeria should campaign strongly to get admitted as a permanent member of the Security Council. These achievements would make the ordinary Nigerian realise the usefulness of the country's foreign policy in real, not abstract terms.

## Notes

1. The Guardian, 29/8/99, (See <http://www.nguardiannews.com/editorial/en/59501.htm>).
2. On comments relating to the attitude of Nigeria's authorities, see Bolaji Ogunseye – &laquo; In defence of career diplomats; The Guardian. 6th September 1999.
3. P.M. News, Lagos, 25th August 1999, (See <http://www.africanews.org/west/nigeria/stories>).
4. See THISDAY, The Sunday Newspaper, August 8, 1999, p. 10, I will surprise my critics – Lamido.
5. See Pierre Poret, "Liberalising capital flows : Lessons from Asia," The OECD Observer, October/November 1998, pp. 39-40.
6. See Vanguard – August 18, 1999.

Reference Style: The following is the suggested format for referencing this article:

Okpokpo, E. 1999. The Challenges facing Nigeria's Foreign Policy in the Next Millenium 3(2): 4. [online] URL: <http://web.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v3/v3i3a16.htm>

## BOOK REVIEWS

**The Anthropology of Anger: Civil Society and Democracy in Africa. Celestin Monga. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998. pp. 218, paper \$19.95.**

Celestin Monga's *The Anthropology of Anger* articulates an alternative to the study of democratization in Africa. He finds the paradigmatic approaches to African politics inadequate and often demeaning to Africans. Since, according to Monga, Western academics and governments alike do not take Africa seriously, he intends to elevate the discourse on Africa in order to repair the damage done by cavalier and ethnocentric studies of Africa. He proposes to accomplish this task through "a political anthropology of anger," which incorporates what he variously calls the "grassroots perspective," "everyday-life approach," and "everyday-language approach". The anthropology of anger -- a putatively intellectual response to situations that produce anger -- is intended to supplement a more conventional approach to understanding politics as involving "political markets."

One fails to see what is fresh and original about such an approach. The concept of political markets, like that of laissez-faire capitalism, is based on a view of society as consisting of egoistic individuals pursuing purely selfish interests. Although there is no lack of egoism among Africans, the concept of political markets scarcely fits societies still characterized by mutual aid, still under the sway of tradition (by Monga's own admission), and whose solidary relations remain largely intact (p. 153). It therefore seems odd that Monga, who blames some of Africa's most intractable problems on the reluctance of Africans to modernize and enter history (Chapter 3), would promote the concept of political markets as part of a methodology for understanding African politics.

*The Anthropology of Anger* also suffers from a glaring lack of complete and systematic argumentation, and some of Monga's critical terms are poorly defined. At various points, it seems as if he is finally going to demonstrate how his "everyday-life" approach works, but he falters, moving on to once more merely argue the merits of the approach (p. 110). Similarly, he continually refers to the concept of "indiscipline" without explicating it, let alone demonstrating its practical relevance. He defines civil society to mean society as a whole. Moreover, we are not sure whether democracy is merely a system of government that disperses power and maximizes governmental accountability, or "a quest for greater public welfare" (p. 70). Equally, we are not sure whether he believes Africa is modern when he declares "... those in charge of what passed for cultural politics in Africa missed the arrival of modernity" or questions whether outmoded ways are hampering modernization (p. 90). Monga does not explicate "modernity" and "modernization" in ways that would strengthen his argument.

This work also relies too heavily on secondary sources. The only evidence of primary research consists of a small number of interviews with musicians. The connection between the

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v3/v3i3reviews.pdf>

aims of the book and the views of the artistshowever, is nebulous. The few examples of interpretations of everyday language also have no discernible connection to the author's proposed aim. He discusses the plight of youth in Africa and their supposed proclivity to violence. Yet apart from general statements about youth joblessness, he offers no concrete instances of the plight of youth in even one country to enable us to properly assess his claim. Throughout the book one notices Monga's overwhelming tendency to generalize about Africa. We have the inexcusable statement, "In an Africa where cable stations like CNN are watched in every home..." (p. 28). We also come across the claim, "... only a tiny minority of Africans can read the language they speak fluently" (p. 74), a claim Southern Africans in particular will find hard to accept.

Monga's book is engaging for its brilliant prose. It fails, however, to provide a satisfactory alternative to understanding political development in Africa. Monga dulls discourse by treating arguments outside his philosophical frame as motivated by a posture of cultural superiority. Carol Lancaster, for instance, is supposedly contemptuous of African voters because she does not think they behave like citizens in modern democracies. Instead, she argues that African democracy is bound to be different from Western democracy (p. 36). Rather than the Western intellectuals whom he cites as culprits of African denigration, it is seemingly Monga who disparages African society in a most regrettable manner. Taking a stance outside the narrative of the multitudes and ensconcing himself among "those who do not feel any allegiance to the habits and customs of their ancestors," Monga calls African peoples "social misfits" and "marginalized players in the construction of history" (p. 90). Although a central theme of the book seems to be the liberation of Africans (defined as the ending of the dictatorship of the group and the promotion of individualism), Monga displays an unusually intense interest in canvassing foreign intervention in African affairs.

Monga's version of dialectical materialism has much to do with his misdirection. This approach declares that the dialectic outcomes must come to pass, regardless of what the people actually think. The concept of progress, a process that he identifies with thorough-going modernization, governs Monga's enterprise as a dialectician. His method leads to apoplectic generalizations of African political scenes as consisting of villains (the rulers) and victims (the people).

Monga's anger is directed mostly at what he perceives as African injustice, and at outsiders who refuse to acknowledge that Africa's peoples are capable of embracing modernity. Although we may understand and even share Monga's anger at the injustice perpetrated by some of Africa's rulers, we should insist that anger is a poor substitute for proper research and argumentation.

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**Ethnic Conflicts in Africa. Okwudiba Nnoli, ed. Nottingham: CODESRIA. Distributed by African Books Collective, 1998. pp. 417. paper: \$30.00**

Images of Albanians and Serbs ravaged by ethnic conflicts have been blasted all over the western news media, but the fratricide occurring on the African continent draws little attention. This is due to, inter alia, what has seemingly become a universal belief: ethnic conflicts in Africa are an everyday occurrence. Undergirding this belief is the idea that Africans are enraged beings who murder one another ebulliently and are, therefore, undeserving of extensive media coverage. *Ethnic Conflicts in Africa* debunks this mythology through the documentation of multidimensional origins and contingent resolutions of ethnic conflicts in some African countries.

In the first chapter, the editor provides an overview and analysis of the book that seeks to provide answers to the following questions. Why is ethnic identity conducive to severe conflict? If and why ethnic conflict in Africa is more severe than in Europe and North America? What are the goals of ethnic conflicts? What are the causes, dynamics, and consequences of ethnic conflict? Who benefits from ethnic conflicts; and why? Responding to the aforesaid questions in ten to thirty pages seems like a nearly insurmountable task. The authors, however, manage to address these questions and how they apply to Nigeria, Burundi, Rwanda, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Morocco, Mauritania, Senegal, Kenya, Tanzania, Zaire, Zimbabwe and Benin. Each author adheres to the structure of tracing the origins of ethnic conflicts from the pre-colonial, colonial to post-independence eras. This provides a reader with a sense of the beginnings of ethnic antagonism, the impact of colonialism on inter-ethnic relations, and how independent nations have handled such conflicts.

As to why ethnic conflict is more severe in Africa than other parts of the world, the authors provide various explanations, including the fact that colonial incursions exploited and compounded inter-ethnic inimicable relations. For example, in countries like Nigeria, Burundi, Rwanda, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mauritania, Kenya, Tanzania, Zaire, and Zimbabwe, colonial powers utilized the segmentation of ethnic groups to their advantage. The divide-and-rule policies of colonial administrators assured the docility of different ethnic groups and thus shielded them from the menace of insurrection. In other words, it was feasible to divide ethnic groups and pit them against each other so that they could focus their energies on fighting one another rather than overthrowing colonial governments. This was also the strategy utilized by the apartheid regime in South Africa. In the case of Burundi and Rwanda, the authors posit that the promulgation of the hamitic mythology has been the source for recent pogroms in the two countries. However, as Mustapha informs us, the totality of the colonial experience is not reducible to just segmentation. For colonialism contained within it many cross-cutting contradictions, even at the level of identity formation and inter-ethnic relations" (p. 38).

As author after author points out, the corrosive, hierarchical, and divisive nature of capitalism is also responsible for the severity of ethnic conflict in Africa. As people perceive other groups to be more economically secure, they often turn to ethnicity as an anchor, particularly if those who are economically better off belong to a different ethnic group. This is not mere jealousy, but a need for every person to be economically secure, exacerbated by the inability or refusal of those who possess wealth to equally distribute resources. Whether it is the

peasants in rural Nigeria, the impoverished "indigenous" people of Liberia, or blacks in Mauritania, they are all pushed into conflict by socio-economic needs.

As to the beneficiaries of such conflicts, the authors concur that prior to independence, the colonialists were the most obvious. In post-colonial Africa as well such conflict does not benefit anyone but elites and those in power. For example, in Liberia, the members of the ruling group and other elites benefitted from the antagonistic relations of African-Liberians and Americo-Liberians. Osaghae's analysis is worth quoting: "Underneath conflicts which are apparently ethnic are personal (and class) ambitions which are desperate, opportunistic and violence prone. This is an indictment of the elite Americo-Liberians and African-Liberians whose rapaciousness is responsible for the deterioration of relations among ethnic groups" (p. 156). In Benin, the Batombous had access to positions from which other groups were barred. Hence, those at the center of the society benefit at the expense of the marginalized, as is the case in many western countries.

The authors in this book argue that ethnic conflicts in Africa are rooted in various socio-economic and political factors rather than Africans' exigency to engage in blood letting. Ethnic groups are often compelled to fratricide by legitimate issues. The authors, however, point out that this documentation of the causes does not make ethnic conflict inevitable and thus ineradicable. As Sithole states, "The problems of social engineering are more like algebra and calculus than simple arithmetic. It is not a matter of taking an equal number from each ethnic group [into leadership positions]. It is who amongst the ethnics are added that achieves the balance. Are they to be perceived to be representative leaders by the particular community? What positions are they given relative to others" (p. 377)?

This book is well researched and written. It will be invaluable to beginning and advanced scholars of political science and history. Students of policy development will also find this book quite useful. I highly recommend it. My main criticism is the editor's postulation that ethnic divisions were not always a source of conflict and were even a conduit for solidarity during colonial rule in Africa. However, with the exception of Zimbabwe, the authors maintain that ethnic divisions were never a positive factor during colonial times. This discrepancy between the editor's introduction and the rest of the book is rather unsettling. Aside from this, the book is a great contribution to our understanding of ethnic conflicts in Africa, providing important lessons for the new democracy of South Africa about the need for socio-economic stability for all people, as well as recognizing the danger of the oppressor within all of us.

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**Labor and Democracy in Namibia, 1971-1996. Gretchen Bauer. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1998. pp. 229 . Cloth: \$34.95; Paper: \$17.95.**

The literature on democratic transitions occurring in many African countries has recently moved from comprehensive studies of the transition process (i.e., elections, national

conferences, constitutions, etc.) to detailed case studies of democratic survival. A secondary focus has been on the role civil society can play in the democratization process, particularly in democratic consolidation. *Labor and Democracy in Namibia, 1971-1996*, both analytical and documentary in style, provides a critical case study for this growing body of literature by examining the involvement of labor movements in the struggle for democracy in Namibia.

Bauer draws on materials not widely available before independence in 1990 and on interviews with political leaders, community activists, trade unionists, and employers. She has two aims. The first is to provide a current description as well as trace the historical origins and development of unions, the central labor movement, and industrial relations in Namibia. Within this frame of reference, the author examines various influences on the labor movement, relations between unions and employees, attitudes of employees and employers toward unionism, the role of the state, and the political and industrial strategies of the unions. In particular, the author examines the industrial strike of 1970-1971, which was to ultimately shape industrial relations in Namibia.

The second aim of the book is to describe how the labor movement in Namibia can generate strong, autonomous, organizations which then play a major role in building and safeguarding democracy in Namibia. However, in the first years of independence, labor appears to be in a weakened and precarious position, thus diminishing the prospects for the successful consolidation of democracy in Namibia. The reasons for this weakness lie in the skewed nature of the economy and the legacy of labor policies produced by oppressive colonial and apartheid regimes. This weakness is also attributed to the close affiliation of the major trade union federation in Namibia, the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW), with the nationalist political party South West Africa Peoples Organization (SWAPO).

Not everyone will agree with Bauer's arguments and conclusions, particularly members of the central labor movement. The book suggests that they decided to subordinate the unions to the nationalist struggle and postpone development efforts until after independence. A more detailed analysis of how this issue affected consolidation efforts would help clarify a potentially controversial conclusion. Although democracy and democratic consolidation features in the title, the book includes little discussion on democratic consolidation at the conceptual level. For example, what factors assist or impede democratic transition? Near the beginning of this book, Bauer asserts that Namibia has brighter prospects for the consolidation of democracy than any other country in Africa. There is no reasoned account to this optimism. In specific terms, what will it take to consolidate Namibia's nascent democracy? Perhaps, with these and related issues more fully addressed, Bauer's conclusions on the role of labor in Namibia would appear less controversial.

This work should be manifestly situated within the labor relations literature, and latently situated within the democratic discourse. Except for the last chapter and a brief highlight in the introductory chapter, the book is a complete documentary analysis of labor, employer, SWAPO, and state relations in the colonial period and early years of independence. Very little attention is given to the political vanguard role that labor unions often play in the democratization process. Rather, this book shows how labor unions in Namibia have used their relative power (through strikes and violence) to play a traditional role (to improve the terms and conditions of employment). The author points to this as part of the overall strategy for national liberation.

This book is very well written and organized, but its greatest strength lies in demonstrating the value of interviews and the participant observation method for social research. This is especially true for Africa, where most scholars on democracy churn out quantitatively informed books. The findings of these studies are, in many cases, at variance with the reality on the ground. The interviews employed by Bauer provide for a more balanced account and analysis. Students (graduate and undergraduate), teachers, labor leaders, and general interest readers seeking a clear discussion on the role of labor movements in Africa will find this work useful and beneficial.

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**When Hens Begin to Crow: Gender and Parliamentary Politics in Uganda. Sylvia Tamale. Boulder: Westview Press, 1999. pp. 272. Cloth: \$ 65.00.**

The intriguing title of Sylvia Tamale's study, *When Hens Begin To Crow*, sets the pace for this rich and fascinating study of gender and politics in Uganda. "*Wali owulide ensera ekokolima?*" ["Have you ever heard a hen crow?"] as Tamale explains, was shouted at a woman candidate during the 1996 Ugandan general elections. "Female chickens do not normally crow. At least popular mythology claims that they cannot. Hence, in many African cultures, a crowing hen is considered an omen of bad tidings that must be expiated through the immediate slaughter of the offending bird...The message was clear: Women have no business standing for political office" (p. 1).

In spite of a historical tradition of political marginalization, women across Africa are increasingly taking their place in the public arena of politics. Whereas in western society, affirmative action for women is more commonly found in education and employment, in Africa positive acts to end historical and systemic discrimination against women have focused largely on constitutional provisions and legislative actions to ensure representation by women in national and/or local political bodies<sup>1</sup>. Uganda provides excellent material for a case study on the (re-) emergence of African women's political voice. Uganda has had some notable successes: designated parliamentary seats for women from each of the districts<sup>2</sup> (1995 Constitution); a national machinery for gender (1988)<sup>3</sup>, and a National Gender Policy (1997); one-third women members in Local Council executives (Local Governments Act, 1997); and the first woman vice-president in Africa, Dr. Speciosa Wandire Kazibwe.

The significant contribution of women in the National Resistance Movement (NRM) bush war, the formation and activism of women's NGOs following the 1985 Nairobi UN Conference on Women, and the coalition of women, youth, and disabled delegates during the 1994 Constituent Assembly ensured that the affirmative action policies of the NRM of President Yoweri Museveni (1986) continued under the new constitution. Tamale's study focuses on the beneficiaries of affirmative action, documenting both the successes of and challenges to women parliamentarians in Uganda.

Culture remains the largest obstacle to equitable treatment of women, whether they are politicians or rural agriculturalists. As Tamale states, "... policies such as affirmative action provide the space for women's entry into politics and a potential for change. But the contradictions of implementing such policies under existing patriarchal structures ... [means that]... hens may begin crowing but they will continue to lay and hatch from eggs (the old patriarchal order)" (p. 26). Female parliamentarians are subjected to sexual harassment from their colleagues, ridicule in parliamentary debates and the media, the burden of double and triple duty, and the reminder that for most of them their presence in parliament is tokenism.

Although elected as women members of parliament (MP), once in the House they are admonished that they do not represent women *per se*, but must represent both men and women. Yet they are only heard (and largely ignored) when they debate women's issues. A case in point is the recent passing of the Land Act (1998). MP Miria Matembe lobbied for and succeeded in passing an amendment to include provision for co-ownership by women of the matrimonial residence (a major accomplishment, as women customarily do not own or have rights to land). The Land Act was promulgated, but the amendment was omitted! Likewise, patriarchal opposition to the reform of the Domestic Relations Bill (largely in relation to polygamy) has stalled the passage of that bill through Parliament. In spite of the successes of women in Uganda, tradition dies hard.

Whether the presence of women in politics in Uganda is at the pleasure of the NRM or sustainable in the long run is still open to debate. It is interesting to note that Winnie Byanyima (a participant in the bush war and MP in an open seat), although expelled from the Movement Secretariat for openly criticising the Movement on the issue of corruption, is still one of the most widely respected politicians in Uganda. Some have even suggested that she run for president in 2002.

Tamale uses qualitative methods: intensive interviews of 40 female and 15 male legislators<sup>4</sup>; observation of parliamentary debates, committee meetings, and workshops specifically organized for women parliamentarians; interviews with leaders of prominent women's NGOs and grassroots rural women; and a constituency visit alongside Byanyima. Tamale has also extensively mined documentary sources such as Hansard (colonial and post-colonial), Constituent Assembly proceedings, media reports and a wide range of secondary literature. Tamale scrutinizes her material in an analysis that is grounded in the "dialectical relationship between gender, class, ethnicity, religion, imperialism and neocolonialism [that] is especially pertinent for an analysis of gender relations in the African context" (p. 3). Both for newcomers and those who are gender specialists, her introduction and the interweaving in subsequent chapters of the themes developed provide a comprehensive overview in accessible language of gender issues, as well as thoughtful insights and new directions for political analysis on Africa and elsewhere. Those interested in African politics, women's movements, gender relations, or socio-political history will find that Tamale's work provides a wealth of information and analysis.

## Notes

1. Affirmative action constitutions or legislation in countries such as Uganda, Ghana, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Sudan, Egypt, Algeria, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia,



Mauritius, Namibia, Rwanda, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe have resulted in some instances of a greater percentage of women representatives than in many "first world" countries.

2. Thirty-nine in 1995, increased to 46 with district reorganization. Women, of course, can and have been elected to Parliament in openly contested seats. There are also mandatory seats for Youth and Disabled under the Constitution.
3. The National Resistance Council established the Ministry of Women in Development in 1988. This became the Ministry of Women in Development, Youth and Culture in 1995 and is currently the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.
4. Interviewees were selected to ensure balance "through geographical region, political inclination, socioeconomic background, age, religion and political experience" (p. 206).

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**Aid to Africa: So Much to Do, So Little Done. Carol Lancaster. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999. pp. 272. Cloth: \$ 55.00, Paper: \$22.00.**

In a time when Overseas Development Aid (ODA) is under threat throughout the industrialized west, Carol Lancaster's *Aid to Africa* contributes a measure of reason and empiricism to a debate that is otherwise driven by competing commercial, ideological and political interests. With this book, Lancaster, a former deputy administrator of USAID, addresses "why, with so much aid, has there been so little development in sub-Saharan Africa?" Her effort includes both an explanation for past failures and suggestions meant to improve future performance. Using a wealth of economic indicators, her response begins by comparing the achievements of six donor countries (the US, Britain, France, Japan, Sweden, and Italy) and two multilaterals (the World Bank and the European Union) whose contributions together account for 60 percent of the "concessional" aid to sub-Saharan Africa.

Lancaster's generally negative assessment should not surprise even the undergraduate development studies audience for which this text is best suited. But the focus on aid agencies' political/institutional characteristics provides an unusual perspective with real payoffs for those not attuned to aid debates or organization theory/analysis as applied to development assistance. Through her country case studies, Lancaster concludes that it is not the general misallocation of aid, nor the ineptitude of African leaders and bureaucracies that bear primary responsibility for continued failures. Rather, political and bureaucratic interests combine with ineffective organizational structures and institutionalized dysfunctions to prevent donors from effectively evaluating, improving and coordinating their development initiatives. It is neither the level of aid nor the recipients that are to blame, but the way aid is delivered.

The author's assertion-that it is primarily the entrenched "bureaupathologies" of donors that lead to failure-can be taken to two logical conclusions. The first is Lancaster's: since the donors are at fault, western lobbyists can do something to ameliorate deplorable levels of waste

and corruption, and, in the process help eliminate poverty, illiteracy, and injustice. This is a refreshing position that self-consciously distances Lancaster from the fevered deconstructionist/hypercritical pitch adopted by many current students of development. This departure also affords her the freedom to put forth a set of concrete recommendations: that aid agencies be given more autonomy from political pressures (as in the British model); that they be encouraged to coordinate to avoid working at cross-purposes; and that standardized measures for gauging success be developed and employed. All of this, Lancaster argues, will allow better evaluation of past efforts so that future campaigns will be more effective. While her case studies are well (albeit unevenly) substantiated, in making such recommendations Lancaster breaks from the logic of her analysis. Although she has definitely contributed to an understanding of the problems associated with ODA to Africa, her attempt to procure a solution is itself problematic.

Considering her second conclusion brings the pitfalls of Lancaster's analysis into relief. This position holds that because the environment (politicians, other government and non-governmental actors, and agency staff) is responsible for aid agencies' pathologies, there is little latitude for improvement. As Lancaster's own analysis suggests, donor agencies are embedded within an intrinsically political system encompassing deep-seated forces unlikely to be dislodged by something as un compelling as "aid to Africa". The hard-liners of this camp, many already wishing to cut ODA, will publicly conclude that aid must cease and desist all together. On the other hand, those content merely to reduce and reform the system will seize quickly on Lancaster's suggestion that aid be dedicated entirely to "effective" programs. However, the demand for "effectiveness" will likely direct funds only to those areas in which progress is easily quantified. Not only will this eliminate support for many "softer" social programs, but the poorest of the poor—the ostensible targets of ODA—are likely to be excluded all together. Rather than fruitless spending on the deeply impoverished, experience suggests that those on the upper margins of poverty will be offered just enough so that a given initiative might be considered a success. One can take an example from within the text itself. Lancaster suggests that US aid to South African civic groups during the 1980s and early 1990s counts as a rare American success. While such assistance may indeed have helped expand the diversity and impact of these organizations, arguing that it is responsible for an already burgeoning civil society is something of a fancy, as shown by Robert Price in his 1991 book, *The Apartheid State in Crisis*. Even with this plethora of groups, post-apartheid South Africa must still provide social services to its impoverished, many of whom remain unrepresented by these civic organizations.

It is unfortunate that Lancaster detracts from her valuable and generally insightful organizational analysis with a set of untenable and potentially delusional recommendations. The review of the terminology and major themes of development discourse provides a welcome entrance into the theory of economic and political development. Her comparative analysis, influenced by work in economics, political science and public management, introduces an analytical dimension many development economists and consultants would be wise to heed. Perhaps the greatest irony of this book is that while suggesting that politics and organizational pathologies are the problem, Lancaster then ignores these realities in proffering her solutions.

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**Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace - Or War. Mary Anderson. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999. pp. 147. Cloth: \$35.00; Paper: \$16.95.**

In *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace-or War*, Mary Anderson invokes the time-honored words from the Hippocratic oath that calls upon medical doctors to put the interests of their patients first. The book's primary goal is to "challenge aid agency staff members to take responsibility for the way their assistance affects conflicts" (p.161). Anderson encourages aid staff to applaud themselves where aid has affected a conflict situation positively. The challenge is to step back and look more closely at the conflict situation that they are operating in and seek lessons from past actions by other aid agencies to try and decrease the negative impact of aid. She is quick to point out that she is often accused of a "rosy optimism" (p.vii), but accepts this verdict because, even in the most atrocious war conditions, she has borne witness to the greatness of the human spirit. The book's target audience includes aid agency staff and the wider international development community.

The book is an easy read, divided into three sections. The first section covers war in general and the impact of external aid viewed through the lens of relative resource transfers, as well as the implicit ethical messages that often come with aid. It also offers an analytical framework for mapping a particular conflict setting in which one is administering aid. The framework walks the participant through a series of questions that seek to identify the "connectors" or "local capacities for peace" that bring cohesion in a society as well as "tension" or "dividers" that have the capacity to push a society into conflict or keep a society in conflict. The second section covers five case studies in Tajikistan, Lebanon, Burundi, India and Somalia. Here, she seeks to bring out the positive actions by aid agency staff in catalyzing peace initiatives, as well as actions by the communities in which conflict was rife, that showed a capacity to seek an end to the conflict. The third section is a short summary of the main lessons learned from the theoretical framework presented in the first section and case studies.

Anderson satisfies the continued need among NGO staff to step back and look at the impact of the aid they are administering. NGOs have been under attack for over a decade concerning the negative impact of aid policies and implementation plans. Most of these diatribes have been scathing. Anderson attempts to center the debate by pointing to examples of the positive effects of aid while analyzing the negative aspects in those very same cases. This is a difficult endeavor. The first section attempts to categorize the reasons why wars are fought and what shapes responses among communities to pursue or not to pursue war. As with all categorization, the beauty of it is in the eyes of the beholder.

Although the text in the first section makes a good effort to describe how one would carry out an analysis of an intensely complex emergency, the analytical tool seems too simplistic and bare. Furthermore, the case studies omit four important prolonged conflicts that would have shed more light on any lessons learned: the former Yugoslavia, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,

the war in Northern Ireland, and the Sudan conflict. For the five cases presented, however, she provides a solid background summary of the political economy of the conflicts. This is achieved without turning this section into a dense history text. Each of these case studies represents a different phase of a complex emergency. How the model determines the specific phase of a conflict was not immediately clear.

The final section could have presented the lessons learned in a much more comprehensive manner. One needs to come away with a clear summary of how aid can "do no harm"-when an adequate analysis of the conflict is carried out in a dynamic fashion, when "local capacities for peace" are identified and nurtured throughout the various phases of conflict, when "tensions" and "dividers" are identified and diffused as best one can as aid is distributed. Instead, this section seems hastily put together, leaving the reader to summarize any lessons learned from the text.

Two important caveats to the conclusion section need further analysis and study. The book is unable to show how micro-level support for local peace capacities can be linked to the macro-level efforts or hindrances often occurring simultaneously. All NGOs grapple with this in their programming, advocacy and outreach efforts. None has found a suitable answer to how to do this best, but in this Information Age, the answer might be around the corner in the recipient communities as they increasingly access information and an education. The second caveat concerns the role of "outsiders" who comprise the majority of NGO staff. Anderson fails to mention a changing trend, as NGOs are increasingly staffed by "insiders" who struggle to maintain objectivity and provide an appropriate lens to the conflict setting, ensuring that programming achieves its overall aim to "do no harm."

Anderson's book reads well. It is not geared for a heavily academic audience. The bibliographic essay is sparse, but gives enough leads for a more rigorous examination of peacebuilding. NGO staff members are encouraged to put some of their scarce time for learning aside to read this book, provide the fodder for future learning and advocacy, and ensure that aid does indeed support peace, not war.

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**Land, Ecology, and Resistance in Kenya, 1880-1952. Fiona D.A. Mackenzie. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1998. pp. 286, paper \$26.00.**

On 14 April 1948, the "Revolt of the Women" occurred in Muranga District of Kenya's Central Province. Twenty-five hundred women marched upon the District headquarters with "Amazonian war cries" to protest against the use of coerced labor for state soil conservation measures. Although wider peasant unrest occurred in Muranga between 1947-1948, this event was significant due to the gender and class issues raised. As such, it provides the backdrop for Fiona Mackenzie's work, *Land, Ecology and Resistance in Kenya, 1880-1952*. Mackenzie examines the dialectic of ecological improvement within the reserves in Kenya and the subsequent social

impact upon African communities. Her specific purpose is to examine the antagonisms of class and gender which arose as aspects of this discourse of ecological improvement.

In the 1930s and 1940s, environmental degradation became a major preoccupation of the colonial state in Kenya. As one result, soil conservation campaigns broadened in scope. These campaigns became part of the overall intensification of an administrative presence in the reserves. For Mackenzie, these campaigns also served as a subterfuge for an underlying discourse of control. The rhetoric of ecological improvement served as a veil for settler apprehension concerning land tenure. Settler concerns for the spread of diseases and soil degradation associated with African farming methods disguised fears for their holdings in the White Highlands. Consequently, environmentalism became a weapon to legitimize settler land tenure (associated with right farming practices and correct land use) and reinforce state support for settler agriculture. The campaigns of the 1930s and 1940s also recast the political crisis over land as a technological problem that privileged Western agricultural practices while portraying indigenous agricultural practices as unscientific (p. 9). Since much knowledge about agriculture in Africa was the purview of women, such privileging of Western knowledge entailed the silencing of female voices.

The campaigns of ecological "betterment" reduced the status of women as the main cultivators of the land and keepers of agricultural knowledge. These programs were implemented in an atmosphere of increasing land scarcity within Central Province. As a result, the British attempted to define customary land law more clearly, with an eye toward formulating policy. These attempts resulted in a fluid and dynamic system becoming rigid and static. The net effect was a system of customary law that weakened the position of women and the poor against that of the rich peasants or "Big Men" (p.17).

Mackenzie's work is divided into seven chapters and uses extensive archival sources, mainly Colonial Office records, in addition to European travelers' accounts and oral evidence. The first three chapters examine the role of women in pre-colonial Muranga as the primary agricultural cultivators and how this role changed when the British began to redefine customary law. Pre-colonial rights to land were dynamic and complex, leaving space for the negotiation of women's rights to land. The reassessment of the customary land laws served to effectively suppress women's rights to land. Although women previously could technically not own land, their rights to land were secured through recognition of their value as cultivators (p. 24).

Mackenzie states there were latent tensions within this customary land system. The fluidity of customary land law masked tensions that would later surface more acutely. These underlying tensions between the Mbari (subclan) and the individual or between women and men would become much more problematic as land became scarce under colonialism. British attempts to define customary land law exacerbated the tensions underlying the customary land system. For example, since the Mbari controlled rights of allocation of land, heightened social differentiation and increasing land sales threatened the solidarity of the sub-clan. Mackenzie points out that in Kiambu, this had been the case. Due to the impact of long distance trade on the southern part of Kikuyuland during the nineteenth century, the solidarity of the Mbari had given way to increasing individualization by the time of British conquest. In Muranga, on the other hand, Mbari power over land allocation remained strong due to the lesser impact of long distance trade.

These attempts took place through an assortment of commissions and inquiries. Mackenzie's analysis examines The Committee on Native Land Tenure in Kikuyu Province in 1929 and the Kenya Land Commission of 1932-1934. As evidenced in Kiambu and Muranga, these commissions encountered class and gender issues reflecting contradictory views of customary land law. In Kiambu, where the process of individualization had been more acute, witnesses reconstructed a version of customary land law which reinforced the idea of individual land sales. This served to protect the rights of accumulators who were amassing land and wealth. In contrast, many Muranga witnesses reconstructed a version of customary land law which stressed the power of the Mbari over land allocation. In both Muranga and Kiambu, the evidence laid before the commissions did not diverge regarding women's rights to land: it uniformly stressed rights of allocation over rights of use. Since women derived many of their rights to land through their power over usufruct, the stress upon allocation rights over use rights weakened women's negotiating power (p. 90).

The second half of the book discusses the impact ecological improvement campaigns upon the resource base and women's agricultural knowledge. According to Mackenzie, concern over environmental degradation belied an ulterior motive. By the end of the 1930s, European settlers feared the African success with maize production. The colonial administration was becoming alarmed at the rapid growth of African accumulators (p. 142). The solution was to blame it on the Africans. The problem of land degradation became a problem of African farming methods. As a result, the ecological improvement campaigns articulated methods involving Western knowledge or techniques. State programs relied upon engineering as opposed to biological/agronomical methods in controlling soil degradation. To combat soil erosion, the state recommended time and space consuming methods such as terracing. However, the use of terracing often proved problematic. Since terraces pulled much land out of cultivation, many African farmers preferred biological methods, such as contour hedges and mixed farming to control land degradation.

The suppression of indigenous knowledge also occurred in the effort to increase agricultural productivity within the reserves. To stimulate maize production, the Department of Agriculture began a massive seeding campaign, which involved dispersing seeds bred for high yield, marketability, and varietal uniformity. The environmental effect of these campaigns of "betterment" in the reserves was twofold. Ecologically, the seeding campaign resulted in a high yield maize crop but one which lacked genetic diversity and resistance to pests, disease and drought. The promotion of maize also resulted in the decline of millet production, a more nutritious and drought-resistant crop. The state also advocated the use of monocropping methods, as opposed to the indigenous inter-cropping methods. The emphasis on maize production demanded a heavy reliance upon imported agricultural knowledge, undercutting women's authority since they were the main purveyors of indigenous agricultural knowledge. As Mackenzie states "...the negotiation of gender relations of production was linked to the politics of knowledge production (p. 202).

The discourse of ecological improvement in Kenya had already been covered by scholars such as David Throup. But Mackenzie uniquely adds to the scholarship on this subject by projecting women's voices. Mackenzie attempts to write history "from below" by discussing the role of women in the discourse of environmentalism. She does not bring gender into the picture so much as cast light upon a dark recess which has been ignored by previous scholarship on the

subject. However, on this point I also find fault with Mackenzie's analysis. In her re-enactment of pre-colonial customary land law, Mackenzie relies almost singlehandedly upon Jean Fisher's *Anatomy of Kikuyu Domesticity and Husbandry* (1954) to reconstruct the role of use rights in giving women more power of negotiation against the patriarchal structure. Moreover, most of her oral evidence comes from female informants without any counter point from male informants. The danger here is the problem of creating herstory, whatever it may be. However, this work is needed and students of Kenya's history will find it a worthy contribution.

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**The Moral Economy of the State: Conservation, Community Development and State Making in Zimbabwe.** William A Munro. Athens: Ohio University Center for International Studies Publications, 1998. pp. 461. Paper: \$26.00.

*The Moral Economy of the State* examines the political economy of state-formation and nation-building in colonial and post-independence Zimbabwe. The book chronicles the historical process by which Zimbabweans developed an intense desire for social, political, economic, and cultural transformation. The book also examines the colonial state's attempts at state-formation and the transformation of Zimbabwe from post-independence visions to a modern industrial society.

Munro begins his treatise with a firm and thorough survey of the Zimbabwean socioeconomic and cultural literature. His study presents processes rather than structures to explain the genesis and entrenchment of constraints on contemporary state-formation. In so doing, he explores the processes shaping institutional and organizational change in rural Zimbabwe amidst growing demands made by the state. This exposes the contradictions often found in state-countryside relations in Zimbabwe. The state has encouraged rural communities to take on responsibilities which it cannot manage or will not undertake.

The author initially "sets out to resolve the tension between structure and process in state-society relations by focusing on state practice--i.e., the actions of state agents but also the political and ideological logics that drive their actions and make them intelligible" (p. 3). He then traces the political effects of contradictions in development processes, examining institutions as a powerful force in the reproduction of colonial discourse about land distribution and use in rural Zimbabwe. Debates between differing factions of white settlers about the postwar expansion of land reforms and appropriations reflected the colonial state's spiraling crisis of social control (p. 140). The government embarked on a new hegemonic project, one based on a thorough reassessment of state structures and their relationship to society (p. 141). The author also lays out the historical paradox of state authority. Here, Munro canvasses a number of specific state-formation and nation-building campaigns intended to legitimize the state by forging connections between pre-and post-independence Zimbabwe.

Munro examines the powerful legacy of state intervention in peasant patterns of land tenure and use, as all facets of land management became issues of potential state-peasant

contention (p. 233). He outlines the government's interest in land control and its articulation in technocratic terms. The author describes the ambiguities of rural land control in terms of the resettlement program, the "squatter problem," and the fluidity of rural politics. He analyzes the state's social institutions of common resource management as a route to rural empowerment.

Finally, Munro shows how institutions designed to widen the realm of local political interaction often failed to create a close link between technical interests, management, and governance. This analysis also offers considerable insight as to why state intervention continued to be a fragile initiative (p. 257). Community development was a state-directed attempt to combine market participation with self-reliance and limited proletarianization. It remained a precarious co-optive strategy, partly because of technocratic state traditions and interministerial insecurities reminiscent of the colonial era, but also as a result of the enduring adversarial quality of state-peasant relations (p. 223).

The book concludes that any study of state-formation in Zimbabwe must not casually dispense with the heterogeneity of Zimbabwean culture. State-formation and nation-building are beyond the capacity of any one institution, as has been evidenced by the historical failure of state intervention. State-formation in Zimbabwe has more than a little to do with a failure to develop communities. Munro's book manages to relate the conditions of early state intervention with the prospects of contemporary Zimbabwe and also those of other African states struggling with the process of state-formation. Perhaps the conclusion to be drawn from this book is that state power does not work by culturally dominating passive subordinate groups (mainly rural women and youth). Rather, that it works by forcibly organizing and dividing the elements of participatory democracy during state-formation.

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**The Pillage of Sustainability in Eritrea, 1600s -1990s: Rural Communities and the Creeping Shadows of Hegemony. Niaz Murtaza. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998. pp. 224. cloth: \$59.95.**

In the relatively tranquil space opened up between Eritrea's liberation in 1991 and the igniting of war with Ethiopia in 1998, scholarly research on a range of issues has made a modest start. Niaz Murtaza's book is one product of this early period of research and, as such, exhibits both the promise as well as the limitations of pioneer work into a region that for too long remained off limits to scholars. The central argument of this study is that the recurrent threats of famine and environmental degradation afflicting the area are rooted in the long-term consequences of actions by hegemonic forces on traditional production systems. Such systems represented rational responses to the constraints of local environments. If not always highly productive, they allowed for the sustainability of rural communities.

Following a conventional periodization, Murtaza suggests that before Italian colonization in 1889, intermittent ethnic conflicts or attacks by various regional armies might have caused



large-scale destruction of life and property, but there was little interference in the production process per se. Italian colonization (1889 -1942), in the form of a modern and centralized power structure, represented a radical departure. Utilizing a greater technological capacity to extract resources, Italian power realigned the colonial economy to meet its own consumption patterns. This fundamentally altered the relationship of rural communities to both state and market. While pre-colonial forces exacted tribute or siphoned-off surplus from rural output, the colonial state engaged in directly expropriating the resources of traditional communities. Heightened regional immigration, intensified deforestation, and a more intrusive state (controlled by a social stratum not dependent on the output of traditional communities) significantly transformed local production systems. The subsequent Ethiopian period (1952-91) was characterized by a mixture of both the traditional and the new means of expropriation. The crisis of local systems precipitated by Italian colonial policies was further compounded by the Ethiopian state in its imperial war against the national liberation movements.

Murtaza conducted primary research in villages both in the highlands and lowlands. Using analytical variables such as empowerment, viability, adaptability, and vulnerability, he suggests that rural communities suffered a gradual erosion of their asset base (expressed as the quantity and quality of agricultural and grazing land, forests, and animal herds). A number of crucial organizational principles and community institutions were likewise undermined, including the "reciprocal relationship between the highlands and lowlands, the synergy between agriculture and animal herding, and the diversification provided by large animal herds." The scale of such changes indicated something more than a cyclical crisis. By the 1980s, many rural communities succumbed to a trend of diminishing resources caused by these long term disruptions.

Liberation in 1991 brought an end to the violence, but the damage done under Italian and Ethiopian rule left permanent scars. Animal herds were depleted, while soil erosion and deforestation left a denuded landscape. The government faces a shortage of resources. Aid from international donors is either inadequate or comes attached to recommendations that are potentially unfavorable to rural communities. Accordingly, Murtaza maintains that traditional production systems must be strengthened, with rural communities assigned a leadership role. By taking the indigenous capacities and perspectives of rural communities as the building blocks for designing programs, locally appropriate and cost-effective strategies can be devised to deal with these problems.

Only a few cursory remarks will be made for this wide-ranging book. For one thing, the concept of 'traditional' communities that Murtaza deploys as a baseline for his study is misleading, particularly for a region that was a component part of the vast Red Sea-Indian Ocean trading network for over two millennia. Consequently, there is a tendency to view these traditional communities as monolithic and thereby devoid of antagonistic social conflicts that have negatively impacted on their self-reproductive capacities. A relevant example in this regard is the struggle by the Tigre agro-pastoralists against the pastoral aristocracy. An analysis of this conflict, which came to a head in the 1940s, could have revealed the way in which local struggles are decisively influenced by regional and extra-regional actors. An unmediated and polarized view of viable indigenous communities fending off outside forces leaves many questions unanswered. Arguably, it is the ongoing dynamics of local communities, the possibilities for change, the manner in which local structures can be animated and empowered,

and the ways in which they are articulated with national or global hegemonic forces that constitute the most interesting and challenging fields of research.

Nonetheless, this is a clearly organized and valuable study that provides a good starting point for further inquiry. Murtaza's striving to identify the nexus between the policies of hegemonic actors and the downward trajectory of indigenous social systems is revealing. His contention that famine and poverty are consequences of policy rather than a dictate of nature is salutary. The numerous graphs and statistical tables are instructive. Moreover, the book comes at an opportune time, serving as a clarion call not only against the horrifying war currently unfolding in the region, but also the long-term threat it poses to the viability of rural communities.

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**Quest for the Jade Sea: Colonial Competition around an East African Lake. Pascal James Imperato. Boulder: Westview Press, 1998. pp. 332. Cloth: \$35.00.**

The exploration of the Lake Rudolf (Turkana) area receives little attention in studies of colonialism. The wars between Ethiopia and Italy, Britain and the Mahdi State, and the competition between Britain, France and Belgium over Equatorial Sudan are usually cited as the determining factors of the colonial scramble of the region. Nevertheless, at the end of the nineteenth century Lake Rudolf was the subject of many expeditions which "reflected misguided colonial judgments about its economic and strategic importance and its presumed relationship to the Nile" (p. 2). In his chronological overview of this frenetic activity, Pascal Imperato draws a sharp distinction between expeditions that originated from geographical concerns (identifying the course of rivers, especially the Nile) and those with explicit political goals (claiming territory). He believes the first expeditions were oriented to science and sport, although their original impetus might have been political (e.g. the interest of Crown Prince Rudolf in the Teleki expedition, 1886-88). Only from 1896, in the enterprises of Bottego, Marchand, Bonchamps and Macdonald, does Imperato detect clear political aims. The subsequent 1899-1900 British expedition of Harrison and Whitehouse was the first to claim territory and draw borders. The book ends with a brief sketch of the actual demarcation expeditions and the more recent history of the region.

Imperato is far more confident when discussing the personal, logistic and geographical aspects of the expeditions than their political backgrounds. In the introduction he expresses his admiration for these "bold, resourceful, and unorthodox" adventurers (p. 6). His book is a straightforward and accessible account of these "glorious ventures." Although Imperato, is a doctor specializing in African tropical diseases, he acts here as an amateur historian at his best. He has researched a plethora of archives, sometimes in obscure places, and interviewed descendants of the explorers, which enables him to reveal many colourful details about such enterprising or eccentric men as Teleki, von Höhnel, Donaldson Smith, Bulatovich, Leontiev,

etc. His open perspective also saves him from ideological or theoretical blindness. He thus understands colonial competition as a complex, interrelated history. Enterprising men and indigenous powers played an important role next to colonial powers and underlying socio-economic forces. He gives due attention to the hesitant, sometimes indifferent position of the British government and the expansionist policies of Menelik as determining the political relevance of later expeditions to the Lake Rudolf region.

Imperato's approach, however, begs for a more systematic, critical analysis of political contexts and consequences of colonialist exploration. It is unsettling that the author wraps up his story at the moment of actual demarcation between Ethiopia and British East Africa. Imperato seems aware of more profound and long-term aspects (e.g., the changes in the demography and ecology of the area caused by the expeditions) but refrains from elaborating upon them. His introduction takes issue with recent, postmodern studies of nineteenth-century travel accounts that seek to uncover Eurocentric, imperialistic attitudes and appropriation of local knowledges. He warns against anachronistic judgments and concludes positively that these studies have allowed us to understand better the cultural and social references of the travellers. But in this book, there is very little trace of even this weakened version of a critical approach to colonialist exploration. The travel accounts are taken at face value, so that stories of "treacherous local traders," "deserting porters," and "hostile tribes" are uncritically rehearsed.

Imperato is more critical of the extensive and enthusiastic shooting of game, particularly of the expeditions led by Neumann (1895) and Cavendish (1897). Cavendish is also reproached for his harsh treatment of the Boran and Turkana, but this critique only stems from other accounts of that expedition. Imperato does not expand beyond his archives by incorporating indigenous oral histories of the region or by approaching the travel accounts in a discourse-analytic way. As for the one 'indigenous' side in this book, it is useful that Imperato does discuss Ethiopian expansionist politics and he treats Ethiopia as a major player alongside Britain and France. But the discussion is also somewhat rhetorically attenuating for colonialism in general. There is a blatant imbalance between the recurrent emphasis on the atrocities committed by the Ethiopian expeditions and the largely uncritical reliance on the Western travel accounts. One would at least expect a contextualization of Ethiopian politics as a reaction to European invasion, just as Britain reacted to the Ethiopian expeditions.

In sum, I consider Imperato's book to be a well-researched overview of nineteenth-century geographical exploration in that little-studied region around Lake Turkana, rather than a critical analysis of the political context of those expeditions. Its clear style and rich details will appeal to a wide audience.

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**War on the Savannah: The Military Collapse of the Sokoto Caliphate under the Invasion of the British Empire, 1897-1903.** Risto Marjomaa. Helsinki: The Finnish Academy of Science and Letters, 1998. pp. 305.

Scholars have long pondered the ease and suddenness with which the European conquest of Africa occurred during the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Marjomaa's book, *War on the Savannah*, is an attempt to grapple with this broader problem through a focus on the British conquest of the Sokoto caliphate. Forged under the combusive crucible of religion and militarism, the Sokoto caliphate was the most extensive and politically formidable empire in Africa on the eve of European conquest. Marjomaa's book is not so much concerned with the reasons why but rather with the method of British conquest. The study restricts itself to the traditional field of strategy and tactics exemplified in specific military engagements or battles.

The study is divided into five sections. The first two sections examine the strategies, tactics and tools of warfare employed by all the parties involved. The third focuses on nine crucial battles in the struggle for the control of the Caliphate. The final two sections attempt to articulate the motivations that drove rulers and soldiers to the horrors of warfare. Confronted simultaneously by at least three European imperial powers, separated by great distances and divided by internal squabbles, the emirates could not muster enough resources to confront the European menace. Instead they adopted an evasive policy, sometimes resorting to mass emigration (*hijira*) and hoping that the British would eventually depart. In the ensuing encounter with British tactics of pitched battles and artillery bombardment, the caliphate strategy of attrition and static defense failed dismally.

The author notes that the fundamental differences in military traditions between Caliphate and British forces should provide fertile ground for comparative studies in weapon systems, strategies, and in the motivations of the combatants. This emphasis on societal contrasts, predicated on a postulated dichotomy between the forces, breaks down on the final point: the nationalities and composition of the combatants. Europeans did not fight on the side of Sokoto, while Africans constituted the bulk of the British regular army (not its officer cadres).

In explaining why the Caliphate was unable to successfully repel British military conquest and domination, the author maintains that the strongest British asset "was their indisputable superiority in firepower" (p. 89). As for the Caliphate, Marjomaa argues repeatedly that their chief undoing was an inability "to adapt to changing circumstances" (p. 217). While some of these points must be conceded, they cannot be pushed too far. The case of Burmi shows that the Caliphate was not as closed to innovation as the author seems to infer. After recovering from the shock of their initial defeat, it took the Burmi defenders only a matter of weeks "to envisage the same tactics, trench warfare, as European military theorists were adopting to escape the effects of the firepower of modern weapons" (p. 218). With this adaptation in tactics, they inflicted a major defeat on the British forces.

That other emirates were unable to follow the path of Burmi, was not due to "their intransigence" nor to their "anachronistic" "inflexible" and "highly hierarchical military organization" (p. 218). Rather, the Caliphate, surrounded by the three imperial powers, did not have time, space or access to the modern weapons needed for a decisive response to the British military assault. As the Burmi experience shows, the encounter with European heavy firepower was not always as overwhelming as scholars have assumed. One of the lessons of modern

history (from Vietnam to Somalia) is that the possession of superior killing power does not always guarantee victory: sometimes other non-military factors are equally important.

Finally, Marjomaa spends much time analyzing the aims and strategies of the British but writes very little on those of the Caliphate authorities. He explains the motivations and tenacity of the British officers through references to the "noble" ideology of the civilizing mission. Yet he precludes the possibility of any ideological vision beyond self-preservation and material interest in explaining the "intransigence" and "stubborn" resistance of the Caliphate. Even the possible influence of a jihadist vision on this important Islamic state is examined in roughly two pages (pp. 261-263) and dismissed summarily as insignificant. The author's disclaimer, that his study is based on "source material heavily dominated by British view," should not extenuate this imbalance (p. 7).

These criticisms notwithstanding, Marjomaa should be commended for producing a well-researched history of the clash of aims and arms that resulted in the demise of the most formidable Islamic empire in Africa. While one may not always agree with some of his conclusions, one cannot but be impressed with the lucidity of his account, as well as his penetrating and incisive analysis of the nature, the muddle and the dynamism of British imperialism. This important study should be in the library of every individual and institution with an interest in military tactics or strategies, as well as the clash of civilizations and cultures perceptively portrayed in this book.

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