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# Table of Contents

## Articles

*Commodifying Water in Coastal Tanzania: Natural Resource Management and Social Relations, 1926-1937*
Chau Johnson Kelly (1-25)

*Water Vendors in Niamey: Considering the Economic and Symbolic Nature of Water*
Scott M. Youngstedt, Sara Beth Keough, and Cheiffou Idrissa (27-45)

*University-Based Music Training and Current South African Musical Praxis: Notes and Tones*
Madimabe Geoff Mapaya (47-66)

## Review Essays

*Patrice Lumumba: The Evolution of an Évolué*
Christopher R. Cook (67-69)

*The Nexus between Global Health and Public Health in Africa*
Clement Masakure (71-76)

“What Have Cassettes to do with Christianity? Instagram with Islam?”
Ken Chitwood (77-83)

## Book Reviews

Review by Kenneth W. Meyer (85-86)

Review by Ndubuisi C. Ezeluomba (86-87)

Review by Yusuf Abdullahi Yusuf (88-89)

Review by Anja Oed (89-90)

Review by Phoebe Donnelly (90-92)
Review by Grant J. Rich and Joan Black (92-93)

Review by John Olushola Magbadelo (93-95)

Review by Ajala Olufisayo (95-96)

Review by Douglas E. Kaze (97-98)

Review by Chelsi Dimm (98-99)

Review by Shannon Morreira (100-101)

Review by Rosemary Ifeanyi Okah (101-102)

Review by Rebecca Wolff (103-104)

Review by Mesrob Vartavarian (104-105)

Review by Vanessa van den Boogaard (105-107)

Review by Omar Ahmed and Grant J. Rich (107-109)

Review by Ted Horwood (109-110)


Review by Kenneth W. Meyer (128-130)

Review by Olubukola S. Adesina (130-131)

Review by Harry Verhoeven (131-133)

Review by Farid Pazhoohi (133-134)

Review by D. Dmitri Hurlbut (134-136)

Review by Oscar Gakuo Mwangi (136-137)

Review by Sylvestre Mekem Douanla (137-138)

Review by Syprien Christian Zogo (139-140)

Review by Corey W. Holmes (140-141)

Review by Corey W. Holmes (142-143)

Review by Emeka Smart Oruh (143-144)

Commodifying Water in Coastal Tanzania: Natural Resource Management and Social Relations, 1926-1937

CHAU JOHNSON KELLY

Abstract: Based on a close read of colonial archives from Dar es Salaam, this article examines how the commodification and regulation of water led to friction between residents and colonial officials in Mikindani, Tanzania shortly after Britain’s acquisition of the territory. Questions of failed development and technology transfer are juxtaposed against African desires for new relationships with material goods to examine how regulatory projects falter for lack of environmental knowledge, investment, and social awareness. Starting with a basic analysis of coastal practices surrounding water, the article delves into the colonial administrative debates over water delivery systems, fee schedules, and surveys as means to show how colonial assumptions created obstacles for African consumers who wanted to benefit from this modern package of goods.

Introduction

“We Makonde prefer to have food in plenty and go far for our water rather than to sit near the water and starve.”

Fresh water in coastal Tanzania was long regarded as a communally held resource, shared by all and exclusive to none. Cultural adaptations to extreme fluctuations in fresh water led the Makonde people, who comprised the largest population at Mikindani, to develop social and cultural practices that kept villages safe from flooding. In the coastal township of Mikindani this practice led residents to rely upon natural springs and wells far from the town’s center, away from the coastline, along the base of the escarpment. In 1931, Mikindani was a small trading port and British administrative outpost with approximately 2000 African inhabitants and 280 “Asiatics,” which included South Asians and “Arabs,” who were most likely Swahili traders. According to colonial officials, the town’s “Arabs” [Swahili] were of “two distinct classes . . . holders of large properties who are wealthy and those who are little better off than the natives.” The African population while less clearly stratified, was far from uniform, comprised of various waves of migration and settlement into the region. The most entrenched identified as Maraba, which helped differentiate between Muslim Makonde and their unconverted kin. As a country town that once owed allegiance to the Sultan of Kilwa, Mikindani formulated a space where identity was self-constructed and prone to shifts as residents came to understand their relationship with others “based on their own town, putative origins, status or descent group.” Mikindani was a more complex community than its demographics suggest, largely because British colonial officials used broad racial categories that failed to note the social and cultural

Chau Johnsen Kelly is currently an Assistant Professor of History, University of North Florida, with a research focus on the on colonial development programs, urbanization, and the commodification of resources in Tanzania.

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diversity. The African inhabitants expressed an expansive “array of possible ‘ethnic’ characteristics” that proved elusive to define by outsiders’ methods. Coastal patricians constructed their identity through layers of settlement and religion that had little to do with the nomenclature assigned them by administrators.6

This paper examines how the residents at Mikindani navigated the fraught process of commodification and regulation of water, a most vital resource. Colonial officials wanted to establish a fee-based water system, but they did so with minimal investment in the water-delivery infrastructure. I argue that Africans proved willing consumers of newly packaged material goods, but defective or ill-suited equipment, irregular water distribution, and unreasonable fee schedules led to tensions between officials and members of the Mikindani population. While other studies by Mattias Tagseth, Heather Hoag and May-Britt Öhman, and Matthew Bender examine late and postcolonial water regulation projects on the slopes of Mt. Kilimajaro and the Rufiji River basin, this study provides an early picture of the complexities in state efforts to regulate and commodify a limited natural resource in an urban setting.7 The small administrative station looked like a promising site for an experimental shift from open wells to secured waterlines, which implied improved health for townspeople and, in principle, added convenience. As African complaints about unreasonable fees increased, officials endeavored to criminalize Africans who could not pay. By 1937, open wells disappeared behind fences, replaced by piped water that forced Africans to buy a resource that heretofore was free to everyone.

Cultural differences as well as the inequalities and violence of the colonial state contributed to the conflicts over water access and water levies. The various communities understood their obligations to the scheme in different ways. South Asian merchants and Swahili traders expected fee remissions when they were not using the water supply. The over-burdened African population were not only unwilling, but were unable to pay fees for a service that was inconsistent and peculiar in its demands for monetary exchange when open wells were accessible. Colonial officials focused on the bottom line and argued against further material improvements, such as a new pump for the well.

Mikindani was a remote district office in an impoverished region, with limited potential for economic growth given its shallow harbor. From a purely economic perspective, replacement costs for the pump outweighed the potential gains from improved water flow and delivery. Failed development in this case revealed that several factors coincided to create an insurmountable situation, primarily the colonial state lacked sufficient motivation to develop a reliable and sanitary water supply. The second problem was the administration assumed the income generated from the levies would subsidize the investment, but local opposition against the unreasonable water levies diminished revenues. Mikindani’s residents had yet to fully subscribe to a dependent relationship with the state, largely because the state was unable to provide the much-promised advantages of modernization that it declared was meant to win over its subject populations. Despite the first Colonial Development Act of 1929, which provided up to £1 million annually for development work, no applications were made to that effect for piped water at Mikindani.8 Weak infrastructure and lack of sufficient investment were critical factors in the colonial state’s inability to create dependency.
Historicizing Commodification in East Africa

In 1925, British colonial administrators wanted to establish a closed water system to protect its officials and, by proxy, bring sanitary conditions to towns and villages plagued by diseases. In a remote outpost like Mikindani, Britain sought to compensate for what water lacked in “intrinsic value” by altering its status from a survival tool to a “commercial instrument.” Political ethnographer J. Gus Liebenow elaborates that “the innovating institution must be perceived as beneficial by the individuals whose lives are directly affected,” more so than the views of the “agents of innovation.” Contrary to Juhani Koponen’s more romantic view that pre-colonial communities rarely struggled over water, newer scholarship from Nancy Jacobs, Matthew Bender, and others indicates that rivers, lakes, and furrows were guarded and regulated through cultural practices. As Meredith McKittrick has shown, security and insecurity are...
related to social pressures, violence, and seasonal fluctuations of resources in a “fickle environment.”

Writing about Australia’s experience with limited water, Richard Epstein turned to John Locke’s Second Treatise of Civil Government, which addresses the role of government regulation, to remind the reader that water’s flowing and mobile nature prevented any one person or group from wresting complete control away from the wider community. State control over water opened up new avenues for regulating a resource as a means to cultivate power and control over subject populations. During the early twentieth-century, what Donald Worster referred to as the “faceless and impersonal” power of the state had yet to be achieved in Tanzania. Later attempts by the postcolonial government aimed to promote state authority by delivering a modern good in an economically important region on the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro, as Bender and Tagseth show when furrows turned into pipelines of water. Although the water was free of fees, communities resented the dislocation of resource management into government bureaucrats rather than community oversight. The importance of communal rights to a scarce resource imbued with a number of complex values, of which the colonial administration took little if no account, complicates the shift toward fees and regulation under colonial rule.

The significance of this transformation of water from a communal resource and divine medium of life to commodity was tremendous for a generation of Africans who recalled water’s magical properties during Maji Maji (1904-07) and in other rebellions in central Africa. Southeastern Tanzania, as Felicitas Becker shows, was scarred by German military exactions during Maji Maji and further disrupted by fighting between European powers that followed in the Great War. In a region beset by upheaval for the first two decades of the twentieth-century, communities also proved resilient despite their poverty in a colonial system that emphasized cash crops and accumulation.

Limited by poor agricultural yields and low interest in cash crops, villagers did express interest in material good, though not to the scale of Comorans and Zanzibaris in Jeremy Prestholdt’s book that showcased how “African consumer desires” shaped global trade with Africa. Phyllis M. Martin, Justin Willis, and others demonstrate how Africans embraced the shift from once local products to “global” or mass-produced goods. As James Howard Smith indicates, the discourse around development requires a “new direction,” which moves away from universalizing claims toward “Africans’ actions on the ground as they work to transform the present... [through] a prism for reimagining order” in a place bounded by contradictions. Smith’s work foregrounds the importance of detailed case studies to understand the specific course that development initiatives (as actions fraught with contradictions) took in specific ethnographic and historical locales. It is within this context that we must study how a generation of townspeople, caught in the transition from water as an openly accessible communal property to water as a restricted commodity, confronted and attempted to negotiate these changes created by the colonial administration.
Map of Mikindani, cir. 1931 (original German map from 1914), showing Mr. Mitchell’s proposed changes and location of the pump house at the Mkundi well site, just west of the Boma. The Mchuchu well was located northwest of Jangwani Gemeinde, as shown on the above map. Source: TNA/20408: Mikindani Water Supply: Map of Proposed Improvements.

Coastal Water, Pump, and Schemes for Improvement

During October 1916, Mikindani became a British military outpost and after the war, Tanganyika became the largest of Britain’s Mandate Territories granted by the League of Nations. The British Mandate came into effect in 1922 and granted Britain full legislative and administrative rights, with the caveat that its officials were to “promote ‘the material and moral well-being and the social progress of [the] inhabitants’ by banning slavery, forced labor…the arms and liquor trades, and abuse of African land rights.” So long as the foregoing guidelines were followed, the territory could be readily incorporated into pre-existing administrative practices, and there was “no provision for enforcement against a recalcitrant mandatory.”

Administrative officials carried out preliminary surveys of townships, estates, and social customs, but there is no evidence that the League of Nations provided any direct oversight to the colonial administration of Tanganyika during the interwar years. While a city like Dar es Salaam was likely to attract the occasional dignitary from Europe or the Americas, Mikindani...
offered little in visual or cultural pleasures for visiting elites. It was a duty station with few amenities and staffed with a minimal complement of officials.

German officials had initiated a rudimentary system of water standpipes in Mikindani before the Great War, with some local investment by South Asian merchants, but the transition from wells and free use of water to a system based on monetary exchange was incomplete. In addition to cleanliness, the British colonial administration expected household water usage to yield revenues if presented to township residents as a purportedly modern “package” of goods. Officials argued that fees for water were necessary because “special facilities for obtaining a good water supply as compared with public wells, and the expense incurred by Government, recurrent and non-recurrent would seem to justify an extra charge.”24 Water provided a logical first step in developing a dependent relationship cheaply by creating tangible changes, but officials quickly learned that their fiscal and regulatory objectives were delimited by the water supply itself and at odds with cultural standards among Mikindani’s urban population. Although residents in the township responded to the promise of piped water in sophisticated and varied ways, the requisite exchange of money for water was poorly planned.

Coastal settlements emerged where the water was either surface accessible, from rivers, springs, and waterholes, or where open wells were easily constructed.25 Mikindani’s relationship with water was rooted in scarcity.Situated on the shore of a small Indian Ocean bay, Mikindani had multiple mangrove swamps where the high tides mixed with the rain runoff and springs from the plateau to form brackish pools. The swampy ground around these inlets defined the town and gave it an irregular shape as small houses and businesses were clustered on the higher ground, beyond the reach of the tidal swamps.26 One German source noted that “water is bad” in Mikindani, which suggests the supply was limited and possibly unhealthy.27 While the Germans disparaged the water quality, Mikindani’s African and South Asian residents found the town location suitable for their economic interests. As a “country town” in the Swahili trade system, its inhabitants exchanged goods from the interior for materials from India, Arabia, and other East African ports. The water at Mikindani came from a few small springs, which percolated to the surface along the lower ridges of the Makonde plateau (see above map of Mikindani; the springs of note are at Haikata and Mkundi). Houses were clustered near the shoreline, with farmland between the village and the escarpment, where the springs emerged. Residents developed efficient strategies to secure their domestic and agricultural needs for water. Though fresh water was scarce, there was little to suggest that townspeople suffered from want of water. These were sound cultural adaptations to environmental conditions in a landscape with seasonal floods and shallow soils. Settled living conditions at the coast were slow to change this relationship because village women spent long hours walking to springs near Mikindani to collect water for household use.28

An initial colonial survey of buildings in 1926 gives some sense of the township, which had 630 houses. Seventy houses were built of stone, owned by South Asians and Swahili; the remaining 560 houses were African-owned, built of mud and wattle with thatched (makuti) roofs.29 British officials argued that it was “necessary to install eight additional standpipes, including that which supplies the Native Hospital,” which conveys a need for a reliable and secure water source for medical gains.30 The administrative building (the Boma) location high on a hill above the town provided the German, and later British, Administration with what
Michel Foucault argued was a “panoptic” view of the township and a strategic location to manage and secure the water storage facility. Furthermore, the enclosure of the water system promised to discipline the townspeople through distribution channels that turned water from a right into a commodity. German authorities installed the water reservoir behind the Boma, 125 feet above sea level. From this tank they plumbed two administrative buildings and ran one mile of pipe through the township with three spigots to dispense water. The Boma had priority with direct access to the water reservoir due to its prominence as the district headquarters and the residence of the District Officer (DO), which required such amenities. The other building with direct access to plumbed water appeared to be the Assistant DO’s residence, which was situated at the base of “Boma” hill. The pump house and pump were located at the Mchuchu spring 1.5 miles from the Boma, on swampy ground near a tidal creek (following Lindi Str. west of Jangwani), which increased the rate of corrosion in the pipes as the brackish water flowed over exposed portions of the tubing that led to the water reservoir.

The state’s efforts to commodify water came in fits and starts. Local poverty and environmental limitations when coupled with the state’s economic constraints and technological problems meant that the expectations of the colonial administration exceeded carrying capacity. The spring that supplied the township reservoir had a high mineral content, but officials claimed the quality and quantity were adequate for local needs. Officials estimated the water flow from the well could reach nearly 500 gallons per hour during the dry season. At 125 feet above sea level, the water reservoir worked on a gravity feed through the pipes and spigots of the township. The water, however, had to be pumped up the escarpment from a small spring one and one half miles away. To supply the town, officials installed a steam pump, built by Tangyes Limited foundry in Birmingham, England. The “Special’s” most significant market was its use in England for public works operations related to gas, water, and sewage schemes. This particular model was long associated with the progressive era “campaign for public health and safety,” which translated readily into its use as a water pump in a colonial setting, such as Mikindani. Its historical and conceptual affiliation with cleanliness crusades in England helped to explain its broader significance in the colonies.

The Tangyes “Special” pump that arrived in 1925 at Mikindani was an older type steam pump that used wood fuel to generate the steam that ran its motors. Unlike newer models that were closed systems and ran off a variety of different fuel sources, the older “Special” ran off wood combustion and required routine maintenance. The pump did not require specially machined parts to render repairs because the Tangyes’ works had developed standard replacement stock for each model that was produced. The Tangyes’ advertisements claimed the “Special” was so simple to operate that, “the attention of an active lad” was sufficient to sustain operations. After one year in operation, the DO despaired its regular malfunctions on the grounds that, “the engine at this station requires thorough overhauling…[it] has lately developed a knock in the pump which if not attended to at an early date my possibly cause serious damage. The native in charge is not sufficiently competent to attend to a matter of this nature and I have no engineering knowledge,” to overhaul the Tangyes steam pump, with its stove, boiler, engine, and pump mechanism. Reflecting the entrenched bias against African workers colonial officials concluded that the African pump man, employed to run the machine, was incapable of tending to the pump’s routine maintenance, despite the manufacturers’ claims.
that it was simple to repair. Without regular care, the European engineer, who was dispatched from Dar es Salaam to check the pump during one of its frequent stoppage periods, expressed concern that the boiler for the steam engine had never been inspected and showed significant wear to the point that the “boiler is in far from safe condition.”43 The Tangyes steam pump’s mechanical failures were a blow to colonial expectations about the role that technology should play in justifying the colonial apparatus. They also reflected colonial officials’ lack of understanding of people’s social practices, cultural logics, and environmental conditions in southern Tanzania.44

While the standpipes were idealized as a secure water supply, the persistent mechanical failures at the pump and pipes that filled with sediment prevented government from gaining complete control over the water supply for much of the 1930s. Officials also overestimated the spring’s capacity with the existing technology, during the dry season the water “supply [was] sufficient only to allow the Township to draw water for 2 hours in the morning and 2 in the evening.” Meanwhile, wet season supply was limited by operational costs.45 By 1931, the Tangyes’ steam pump operated an average of less than one hour per day, contrary to the expected assessed value of four hours per day. The pump failed to meet the relatively minimal demands of local water use, to which the Senior Assistant Public Works Department engineer declared the pump “both unsafe and not capable of dealing with the work required of it. I also consider it a waste of time and money to repair it.”46 In response to the pump’s regular failures, officials noted that villagers increasingly relied on a locally built well, the Mkundi well, for a variety of purposes. The sanitary inspector was alarmed to find that the well was more than a popular location for drawing water. Many townspeople undertook their laundry and utensil washing at this site. To remedy the situation, the sanitation inspector wanted notices placed at the well to discourage household chores in the vicinity and additional construction ordered to provide a safe platform to draw water and to reinforce the well wall to prevent further decay.47 The Mkundi well provided townspeople with an alternative water source that was reliable and came at no expense. The hardship associated with the Mkundi site was its distance from dwellings, which explained the frequency of domestic activities on the grounds surrounding the well. Women found it easier to carry their chores to the well rather than transport the water back to their compounds. Performing chores around the well provided some degree of sociability for the women as well.

Despite the pipes, most residents continued to collect their water from wells located around the township. One hundred and seven households from Mirumba continued to rely upon a small natural spring with good quality water since they were too far removed from “a stand[pipe] to derive any benefit from the supply.”48 British administrators concluded that more spigots were required to encourage townspeople to use the piped water because the distance from standpipe to house required many householders to transport the water up to 300 yards.49 Women chose the ground wells over the spigots because they were more plentiful and given the Makonde views on water, distance was not a decisive factor. The ground wells varied in water quality and some were later found to be unsafe for potable water but acceptable for laundry and basic washing purposes. Overall, there were ten open-wells located throughout the township that provided water to whomever chose to use them. The medical staff, who tested the waters, found three wells met chloride and nitrite levels considered safe for human consumption.50 Four
wells were attached to or associated with structures in the central township, one was attached to the house of a prominent Muslim, Mr. Abdulla Remtulla. Two additional wells were part of buildings owned by South Asian religious groups, the Ismaili Mosque and the Hindu Lodge. A fourth well was located in the Hospital Compound. The association of multiple wells with South Asian religious organizations and homes established South Asians as important actors in the township’s development in the recent pre-colonial past. Moreover, associated religious practices relied upon physical and ritual cleanliness, through daily ablutions before entry into the mosque or temple.

The four wells in the central township proved to have high levels of chlorides and nitrites. High nitrite levels in these wells indicate they were located in or near areas where human and animal waste accumulated or were washed into the wells by seasonal rains. Contaminated wells were potential sources for serious cholera epidemics, a problem that was documented by European travelers to have struck the Swahili coast at least four times since 1821. Cholera’s historical presence in coastal Tanzania turned Mikindani into a prime location for reform and limited investment in infrastructure to protect colonial officials. Other health problems include various cancers in adults, but most commonly low oxygenation of hemoglobin (often called Blue Baby Syndrome), which can be lethal in children.

Villagers at Mikindani had formulated some mechanisms to respond to cases of contamination by abandonment or limited use of tainted wells. However, there was no indication that villagers attempted to alter behavior to prevent contaminants from seeping into wells. There are no documents that describe the organization of pit latrines within the township or other possible sources for nitrite contamination in the wells (cattle were not common because this was a known tsetse zone). Two possible explanations for avoidance of some wells can be extracted here. One was, villagers developed a tacit understanding about water quality because without clear epidemiological formulae, Mikindani townspeople reported that they avoided these contaminated wells. The second explanation was that inhabitants told district officials what they thought they wanted to hear. Townspeople claimed to draw their cooking and drinking water from the wells that had tested safe for chlorides and nitrites, despite the lack of advice from public health personnel.

Most residents used either the Haikata or Mkundi wells, outside the village. Although the wells were less convenient than the standpipes, no one suffered outright from lack of water. Old wells provided ready and consistent water for households to use, and their reliability ensured that people had water for drinking, cooking, and washing. The state failed to comprehend how its scheme complicated rather than eased life for those who attempted to patronize piped water. Cleanliness and security were costly in direct expenses for pipes and fees, but increasingly expensive in lost labor for households who found that the water was not available when they attempted to use the standpipes. Piped water promised convenience, but when people attempted to use water and there was none, the water scheme was costly for what people paid in lost time and energy. Women who attempted to use non-working spigots were forced to walk the added distance to the open wells as secondary choices. As delivery failures increased, the interest in using the piped water surely declined as villagers sought more assured water sources that relied less on technology.
Several wealthy South Asian and Swahili households requested direct access to water with promises to pay higher rates. The desire for plumbed compounds and shops exposed the social and cultural layers of a village like Mikindani to challenge the argument that technology transfer failed to find a market in a remote and culturally entrenched part of the empire. Mikindani’s residents were keenly interested in the material improvements that British technological knowhow had placed within their grasp. Wealthy householders expressed intense desires to invest in pipes despite the elevated water levies they faced. Stone house owners wanted the immediate benefits of water plumbed directly into their compounds, to reduce their daily labor in water collection and meal preparation while also improving their general welfare. Along with stone houses, plumbing provided another outward signifier of wealth for Mikindani’s distinguished families. Familiarity with plumbing further suggests that those who were willing to pay for such a privilege had acquired some level of status and wealth through either their travels, trade activities, or other associations with the outside world. Moreover, the organized appeal from the Indian Association suggests that South Asians were important conduits of new ideas, goods, and hygiene along the coast.  

**Mitchell’s Survey and Plan for Improvements**

The public works review and survey carried out in 1931 provided important information regarding who used the water from the Tangyes pump and who was most inconvenienced by its failures. Although only four Europeans were stationed at Mikindani, their water use per capita was between ten and thirty times higher than their respective South Asian and African subjects. Europeans used approximately seventy-five gallons per person, per day, while South Asians and Africans used eight and two gallons respectively for the same period. Apparent disparities in water use volume were from differences in bathing and cleaning habits. Europeans were not using seventy-five gallons directly; these amounts were used for personal hygiene and to maintain their residences. They required more water per capita because their houses were larger, and surfaces were hard and needed to be kept clean for the sake of improved health and appearances. The Public Works Department projected water use on the assumption that while the populations of all three groups would grow in ten years’ time, the amount of water used per capita was factored to be the same.

The colonial state worked under the notion that the easy access to water would not lead to increased use and potential waste of this commodity. Such naïveté ran contrary to most state planning for water use and consumption. An assured water supply generally led to increased settlement and security, which extended to greater water usage and demand as hygiene programs led persons to bathe, launder, and clean their surroundings with greater frequency. By creating a more sedentary population, with permanent houses, the colonial state was unwittingly intensifying future demand for water; as population density increased, water needs would too.

The pump’s consistently poor performance during 1930/31 appeared to trigger the colonial state’s greater interest in the quality of alternative well sites in Mikindani township. The 1931 water survey report uncovered the unfortunate reality that the only population truly troubled by the pump problems and malfunctions was the colonial administration. Officials made several pleas to Dar es Salaam for new pump-works to replace the decrepit wood-burning
steam pump with a more efficient paraffin engine. The steam pump worked intermittently, and when it was operable the amount of water drawn was virtually ineffectual. After four days of operation from 29 November to 2 December, 1930, “there was not sufficient water to supply the Boma with its full requirements.” The DO was most concerned about the lack of water to the Boma. He made no comments about how the pump failure had affected the local townspeople. His omission of the African and South Asian response to the pump failure revealed that lack of piped water was less detrimental to the townspeople. Moreover, his impatience for a new pump reinforces the assertion that these improvements were not meant to develop local infrastructure but to protect the health and welfare of officials. The slow response from Dar es Salaam, possibly owing to the limited communication, required the District Office to continue its reliance upon the old pump.

Unfettered by colonial and local economies of scarcity, Mr. Mitchell, an assistant engineer from Dar es Salaam, proposed a new scheme to improve water quality and quantity at Mkindani. He recommended two important changes, beginning with a new pump motor to improve the supply of water from the pump at the Mchuchu well to the storage tank behind the Boma. Second, he encouraged the state to develop a supplementary pump station at the Mkundi well. As noted earlier, the Mkundi well was popular with the community, which relied upon this free and accessible water source. From Mitchell’s perspective, its proximity to the storage tank made it an appealing site for a secondary pump to supply water to the central tank (as demarcated on the map of Mkindani). The water percolated up through the soil at the Mkundi site; there was so much water that it formed a boggy area. Mkundi was clearly one of the percolation points for moisture that had slowly seeped through the plateau. Mitchell noted that “the flow of ground water is from the hillside towards the valley and the water table reaches the surface about 100 feet from the hillside forming a boggy area considerably soiled by decaying vegetable matter and subject to animal and human pollution,” which contradicted the report by the Native Hospital that declared this well free of contaminants, issued ten days earlier. His scheme was to “intercept” the flow of groundwater around the perceived contamination site and direct it into an infiltration gallery to clear the water of any pollutants before it was pumped into the storage tank. Several contradictions emerged within a relatively short period, between Mitchell’s claims that Mkundi was prone to pollutants, his plan to use this well to provision the reservoir, and the evidence provided by the Native Hospital’s test that declared the water free of contaminants.

Mitchell claimed to observe direct evidence of human and animal pollution around the Mkundi site. He focused on human activities around the well because the well was so popular with townspeople. Despite his declaration that visual inspection revealed contamination at Mkundi, he did collect water to send to the government’s analytical chemist who found that other than a high mineral content, the water had minimal pollutants, which was “not serious, ...most probably of vegetable origin.” Mitchell’s anxieties about contamination led him to argue for changes that excluded free-use of the well. He asserted that:

[the best measures to secure a steady and hygienic water supply required] the construction of the infiltration gallery and the exclusion of surface pollution this may confidently be expected to be reduced to negligible proportions. The land to a distance of fifty feet from the infiltration galley should be acquired and fenced.

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http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v16/v16i2a1.pdf
in and pumping carried out for several days before the water is introduced into the distribution system. With these precautions, it is considered that this water will be satisfactory.65

Mitchell’s scheme created a state-owned monopoly over the potable water supply at Mkindani, all of this under the guise that the townspeople were contaminating and overusing their most assured, free water source. Ostensibly, Mitchell expected that Mkundi’s volume and proximity to the water storage tank would prolong the useful life of the new pump and would ensure an increased flow of water to guarantee better sanitation and convenience for Mkindani’s townspeople. The scheme provided direct improvements through reliable water for human consumption and a consistent supply to the township. He also planned for added protection from fire since the relocated second pump was expected to make an additional 12,000 gallons of water available for fire abatement. Mitchell planned to use the pump at Mchuchu as a secondary or backup pump.66 The critical, but unspoken, factor in tapping the Mkundi water supply was that it placed this reliable water catchment area under the direct control of the colonial state. Africans and South Asians were poised to lose free access to an important source of clean water that allowed households to opt out of the state’s water levies in Mkindani. Under Mitchell’s plan, except for the well at the Haikata spring, which was at considerable distance from the central township, the state controlled all the safe water sources. Given the Makonde tolerance for living far from water, this scheme was likely to encourage still greater concentrations of people around the Haikata spring.

The Colonial Office and Governor in Dar es Salaam delayed action on Mitchell’s recommendations because the Great Depression forestalled investment in Mkindani. Mitchell’s agenda, however, did not vanish in the intervening years. The colonial state appeared to bide its time until it had the economic means to reform the water supply, to create a closed system built around an institutionalized relationship with water forming the connection. Mitchell’s scheme anticipated villagers’ desire for piped water and their eventual resignation to the fee schedule. Townspeople with limited economic means had few choices but to elude payment by using other water sources in the area. These acts were likely to create the very pollution and degradation around the existing springs that Mitchell sought to avoid at Mkundi. The colonial state sought to press Mkindani’s residents to comply with water levies by erecting an enclosure around the well’s infiltration gallery with the objective to prevent potential circumvention of state control over the Mkundi site. Similar to the enclosure process in England, persons who attempted to collect water from this site would be clearly guilty of theft. Without alternative sources for water, Africans and South Asians would be forced into an extractive revenue system that required direct payment for water and few had recourse to claim otherwise.

The mechanical problems associated with the water supply for Mkindani were twofold: one was the degree of encrustation on the main pipe that exited the pump. A second, and far more pressing problem was the Tangyes steam pump itself. Its daily operations costs were high since it required the services of a pumpman, two firemen, and woodcutters to maintain, stoke and provide wood fuel for the burner that ran the engine.67 Four men were required to keep the pump going, feeding it approximately two cubic meters of wood daily. Besides wages for the laborers, the fuel was expensive, at Shs. 1800/- in estimated annual costs.68 District Officers reduced the wages for the working men because it was the only budgetary item where cuts
were possible. The pumpman’s wages were reduced from the 1926 original allocation of Shs. 50/- per month to Shs. 40/- month; all other expenses remained constant.49

In keeping with the notion that empire was self-sustaining, Africans were expected to pay for access to the pipes through a municipal tax on a uniform basis of 2 percent of the corresponding House Tax rate across all residents in the township. The trouble, however, was by 1926, “No municipal tax has yet been charged in Mikindani.”70 DO A.E. Donne recommended a tiered municipal water levy, wherein African households were expected to pay a water levy of Shs. 2/- while Swahili and South Asians paid Shs. 10/- to yield anticipated revenues of Shs. 1960/- per annum.71 Despite the estimated revenue, the regular operating costs exceeded the projected income by Shs. 600/- annually. Mikindani’s water program started off operating at a deficit. One year later, the new DO, Hickson-Mahony suggested the levy for Africans be reduced to a strictly nominal rate of Shs. 1/- per year, to cut the default rate.72 He recommended the nominal rate as an entry into the monetary exchange and a foundation to expand residents’ participation in the water program, not as a quick recovery for the state.

Hickson-Mahoney argued that cultivating goodwill with the subject population was far more valuable than extracting payment for a new commodity. Subjects with limited experience paying for services, such as water, were more likely to be incorporated through a small remittance scheme in contrast to one that was economically expedient but untenable.73 In contrast PC, C.H. Grierson believed the standpipes, their organization and their operation “appeared well conceived and efficiently carried out,” and he argued that the pipes gave a “great advantage to all inhabitants.” Grierson could not grasp how onerous the fee schedule was for the community. What he noted in plans and schematics differed from how residents experienced their daily interactions with inconsistent water output and food shortages in the area. Grierson expected that water rates similar to those in Moshi, in the north, were fair.74 He failed to note that Moshi and Mikindani were two extremes in the material poles of Tanzania; the former was heavily missionized and had a thriving cash crop economy while the latter was predominantly Muslim with limited promise for lucrative small producer cash crops.

Mikindani’s Intermediaries: Resistance, Compliance, and Interventions

While administrators debated fee schedules at length, the question of sustaining the water infrastructure and extracting payment from consumers was not well planned. Theft appeared to present serious problems in sustaining the water infrastructure in Mikindani. Equipment degradation was poorly managed without the added concerns of thievery, but the pressure gauge for the Tangyes pump appeared to have been stolen. This led to its failure and required the loan of another gauge from the Mikindani Sisal Estates. Some acts of theft (such as the pressure gauge) were associated with loss of machinery and parts for the pump, which had direct consequences on multiple fronts. Lost or damaged pump mechanisms increased equipment maintenance expenses.75 A lost pressure gauge was a significant forfeiture; its absence increased the likelihood of additional mechanical failure or boiler malfunction. Who the thieves were and where the part went were never resolved. While attributed to theft, the pressure gauge was a relatively delicate instrument; its absence may also be attributed to damage, misplacement, or neglect, not necessarily an act of malfeasance.
Other forms of theft were costly but less well defined because of cultural differences in understanding social and material expectations between African and British parties. The most common theft, from the administrative perspective, was from residents who were believed to use the standpipes without rendering payment. Colonial officials expected all sectors of the community who used the water to pay a fee for the privilege. Except for the government offices in Mikindani, the only other consistent payers were the proprietors of the Mikindani Sisal Estates and those “non-native” households who were expected to pay Shs. 3/- per month, starting with 1 December, 1931. The water tax, however, created a double burden on those who traveled. South Asian traders were caught in this bind.

As the most influential and wealthy patricians in coastal society, the South Asian population was far from passive in dealing with the colonial state and made the most coordinated challenge to the fee schedule. South Asian residents argued against paying for water while they were away from the township. Why pay for water one was not able to use, then turn around and pay for water somewhere else? Under German rule, they had “expressed the hope that they would not be required to pay anything.” Many argued that they had already invested 3200 rupees (or over £213) in the water reservoir and the pipeline laid during the German period, and they petitioned that South Asians “should not now [1927] be required to pay interest on further capital expenditure.” The administration countered that “it was only fair that Government should seek to “to recoup itself to some extent for the expenditure incurred in the work and that in all probability payment would be required to cover the cost of maintenance and interest on capital expenditure.” After the colonial state refused free or low-cost access to the standpipes, the Indian Association mounted a request to buy from government, “conduit pipes and taps in order to have water laid on to their houses, and that they are willing to pay an enhanced water rate to meet the increased consumption of water.” Water, the pipes, and what they symbolized in ease, rights, and sophistication held tremendous appeal, not only for South Asians but also for wealthier Africans and Swahili who were able to pay an elevated water levy. Outward markers of urbanity, from whitewashed stone houses to piped water were important signifiers of patrician status, wealth, and security within coastal society.

After making further investments, by 1932 the Mikindani Indian Association protested against their water levy at Shs. 3/- per month, stating that it was too high “in the present state of depressed trade and asked for a reduction.” The Indian Association understood that the state was in a weakened economic and extractive position because the steam pump worked intermittently. South Asians demanded a reduced levy to Shs. 2/- for “such periods as the water supply plant is effectively working.” The case for inconvenience prevented the colonial state from recovering fees during non-working periods since the pump was not operating efficiently.

The water problems at Mikindani plagued every community that attempted to use the piped supply. The state’s requests for advance payment on water rents received strong objections from all parties, while others defaulted on promises to pay. Most Africans were absent or complained about their state of poverty when officials demanded payment or questioned why they were unable to pay their annual water levy. Everyone in town had ready access to the water taps, there were no controls in place to prevent non-payers from using the spigots, if there was water. Colonial officials found it increasingly difficult to account for all
Commodifying Water in Coastal Tanzania, 1926-1937 | 15

consumers. To further complicate matters, residents within the township boundaries paid one
levy and persons who lived outside of the township’s limits were expected to pay their water
fees at a rate of three cents per debe or four imperial gallons (the amount that fills a standard
petrol tin).84 Without a guardian to watch over the spigots, many non-residents were tapping
into the standpipes, such as “dhow-masters calling and watering without payment.”85
Confusion abounded for the residents of villages outside the township boundaries since the
lines of demarcation were recently altered, yet again. Open taps created a conceptual quandary
regarding what constituted theft and who had rights to the water. The Administration expected
Africans to comply with demands for payment and regarded their lack of monetary exchange
for water as theft.

As indicated in the South Asian protests against their rate, the fee schedule did not account
for the frequency of pump failure and stoppage, which proved to willing or potential
consumers that this technology was unreliable and therefore worthless. Colonial officials
demanded payment for water, yet their ability to deliver the promised package of goods failed
because the state hedged at investing in the requisite resources to ensure consistent supply.
Frequent pump failures during 1930-1931 forced townspeople and the administration to rely on
older water sources, such as the Mkundi well. Mr. Mitchell’s suggestion to tap Mkundi might
ensure consistent water, but the pump had to work properly for this to come to fruition.
Without a reliable pump, the standpipes had water on a reduced schedule of less than one hour
daily, which led the DO to believe, “there [was] a growing feeling of exasperation at the charge
for water, the supply of which is inadequate and irregular, and I anticipate if we press for
payment that a most unpleasant situation will arise, and that we shall be met with flat
refusal.”86

The water situation in Mikindani created resentment on all sides and fostered a culture of
mistrust. Oddly, water use records were absent but fee remission records were quite extensive.
From this scant evidence, Africans and South Asians owed 90 percent of fees, but the only
consistent payers were the administrative offices, which paid fees between £15 and £20
annually.87 Grierson expressed annoyance about the perceived loss of revenue from Africans
using water they had not purchased. Grierson convinced the treasury to nullify the unpaid
water levies from 1929/30 and 1930/31, which cost the state Shs.4,356 in lost revenue, and agreed
to stop collecting the 1931/32 water fees.88 The accusation of theft was easily reversed toward
the colonial state, since it failed to deliver the water to most consumers who received “no return
at all for their money.”89 Unable to punish one community without affecting another, Grierson
concluded that shutting down the water system was infeasible because the Boma, the hospital,
and police required a secure water source; to do otherwise was to plunge officials into
unsanitary conditions.90 Only a few months after nullifying the water arrears, Grierson
lamented government efforts to deliver water via pump and standpipes on the grounds that,
“South Asians will refuse to pay. Natives will be unable to pay.”91 Mikindani’s water supply
failed to return any revenues because the town’s 2284 residents never had access to the
projected 10,000 gallons per day.92

Public works officials overestimated the carrying capacity for the pump and pipes. The
rated capacity for the pump was approximately 1270 gallons per hour, but actual yield for one
day’s operation was considerably lower at 4000 gallons (since it ran for only four hours) and
cost between 7/- and 9/- in fuel each day. The cost was high for the amount of water generated; the pump was worn and encrusted with mineral sediment. The network of pipes use two different size wrought iron pipes (2” and 2.5”), which were in various states of decay from exposure, large segments had corroded. Engineers were unable to efficiently clean and inspect the condition of the water pipes because the current system was completely sealed, built without adequate provisions for sluices and pressure valves, which further restricted water flow. Backpressure, encrustation, and air pockets plagued every stage of the water line, from the holding reservoir to the distribution system.

The colonial government had invested £630 in solid infrastructural improvements between 1925-27 when the Tangyes pump was originally installed and the additional pipe laid. Annual operating costs had increased by one-third, from £150 per year to £200, “without any allowance being made for capital charges” government attempted to continue managing the water supply on the cheap. DOs were held responsible for excessive costs because they were the last line between the government and Mikindani’s society. Treasury officials claimed funds to be “quite sufficient and it is not clear that sufficient control of the operation of the plant and of the expenditure is being exercised.”

Multiple officials in Dar es Salaam echoed the sentiment that facilities in Mikindani were “extravagant and inefficient,” which placed DOs on the defensive. DOs struggled to maintain good records and ledgers, but made frequent mathematical errors in their calculated receipts. A critical hazard in the mathematics game was the on-going need to pay for resources, wages, and other expenses from a variety of vote books (budgets) for different categories.

Market Str. In Mikindani, showing colonial era structures and more recent houses. (Photo by author, 2008).
Watery Conclusions: Concessions, Change, and Conflict

Administrative efforts to create a hygienic town with piped water for its officials, and by extension, the villagers, failed to yield any tangible benefits to those who wanted to participate in the system. Moreover, the pricing scheme aimed to pass on the costs to the inhabitants. The attempt to recoup the investment in pump and pipe proved that Mikindani’s water rates were markedly higher than those for other townships, including Dar es Salaam. The situation was untenable when compounded with the administration’s reluctance to install meters and to post standpipe “boys.” The most economically expedient solution was to alter the water scheme and provide more appropriate measuring devices based on usage rather than ethnic and class identity. These changes attempted to address some of the legitimate concerns raised by the townspeople.98

The Treasurer, in 1937, proposed a metered rate of Shs. 3/- per 1000 gallons, one cent per debe, and flat rates for European-run areas such as the hospital, Boma, and police lines. Again, the colonial state was hoping to eventually generate some revenues to offset, at least in part, the initial water scheme investment from 1927. The DO estimated that residents’ used approximately 600 debes per day, at a rate of one cent per debe; he anticipated annual receipts from African and South Asian residents to approach £108, with a further £42 from official and government offices and a small amount of £2 from dhow operators.99 Those who used the piped water agreed to pay for each unit they actually used, eliminating the flat rate that charged too much (given also the uneven water supply). Although slow to come about, the new water fee structure promised to limit discontent and tensions between the subject populations and the administration.

These new rates cut the water levy to one-third of their previous rate. Further changes were instituted with small investments in meters and payroll for standpipe attendants. An additional £45 of state budget was required to buy and install the meters, with remaining funds used to build small shelters for the attendants. Of the eleven standpipes that were installed at the beginning of the 1930s, only five were available in 1937 for public access. Three standpipe attendants, at a projected cost of £27 per year (Shs. 15/- per month in wages for each man), were needed to staff five locations, which were operational on a rotating basis to allow the attendants to be present and to establish regular hours of operation.100 The government anticipated that the new water rate, less the £100 initial cost and standpipe attendant payroll of £27, promised an annual profit of £25. Although the treasury noted that perhaps their estimated profit was somewhat inflated, the treasurer did believe that the standardization “greatly outweigh[ed] any such possible reduction in revenue.”101 After a decade of false starts and considerable struggle, the state had managed to bring Mikindani’s water situation “into line with that of other township water supplies” across the territory.102

The colonial state’s goal, to instill an understanding that Mikindani’s residents enjoyed the convenience of pumped water, was both capricious and exploitative. The water development scheme became a disciplinary mechanism to control a subject population and force them into a monetized economy, rather than an honest effort to improve public health and water security. Mitchell’s efforts to enclose the Mkundi well were never realized, despite his appeals and efforts to plan a better delivery system. Unlike the case on Mt. Kilimanjaro, where post-colonial poverty limited full-implementation of a rural irrigation system, the developmentalist colonial
state of the 1930s was unwilling to take the opportunities available through the Colonial Development Act of 1929 to improve a small town. Determined to make colonial rational cost-effective goals work, the 1937 water ordinance required all users to sign or affix their mark on an agreement with the Public Works Department, whether the water was directly plumbed to their compounds or measured out per *debe* at the standpipe. While these developments were certainly promising in providing clear guidelines and expectations, the water situation in Mikindani was far from resolved.

When E.A. Leakey became the DO of Mikindani in 1938, he found that over eighty water arrears remained on the district books. Leakey requested to have these arrears eradicated in order to start the system afresh. His enquiries into the water situation revealed that, “the very poor were unable to pay any taxes at all—These persons ordinarily drew water from the springs and wells in the Township.” Leakey’s dispatch showed that several houses changed hands, others were torn down, and six deaths created arrears that remained uncollected. His missive was the first complete accounting of who was not able to remit payments toward the water levy. Leakey’s list was exhaustive; he named each householder, their debt, and the reason for their amnesty. Some residents continued to collect water from non-plumbed sites (wells) because they were unable to afford the *debe* system. These residents argued that since they had not used the piped water they “should have been exempt[ed] from payment of water rate[s]” because they had no benefit from the plumbed water sources. Leakey advocated on their behalf to rescind a debt for a service these villagers never received.

Contrary to frequent assumptions about failed development, the problem was not primarily a result of local resistance or recalcitrance to technological changes and/or potential improvements in people’s quality of life. The failures at Mikindani originated mostly within the colonial state, not with the residents who were interested in having access to clean and regular water supplies. The little clean water that was produced was provided only to a limited number of residents, further reinforcing economic and social divisions. Whereas in 1926 two structures had direct access to water, there were fourteen “private extensions...and water [was] laid on to all the Government buildings” by 1939. The number of public standpipes, with attendants, however, had shrunk back to the 1926 standard of three. The motivation to secure the water supply fell away as officials and resources moved to a new administrative center.

Mikindani’s water supply failed to make any further improvements after 1939 because of the Second World War and subsequent post-war development focused on other areas. Mikindani’s regional marginality and lack of basic infrastructure continued well into the postcolonial era. Householders in Mikindani, like many in the south, complained of their marginalization and the state’s lack of investment in the region. While the dependent relationship between citizens and state has been established, the sense of discontent about their resource rights and place in the nation is significant. The Mchuchu well still serves the townspeople as their primary source of water, and though I observed homes with standpipes within their compounds, many rely upon the standpipes dispersed through the town for their daily needs.
Notes

2 The colonial sources refer to the Swahili traders and dhow operators as “Arabs.”
4 The Makonde origin myth situates them in an area south of the Ruvuma River, but they
   migrated into southern Tanzania in four different waves. Linguistically similar communities
   are the Matambwe, Machinga, Mawia, and Maconde (who remained south of the Ruvuma).
   Alpers 1975, p. 190; Liebenow 1971, bp. 21, 23, 97.
6 Becker 2008, p. 34.
7 Tagseth 2006; Bender 2008; Bender 2011; Hoag and Öhman 2008.
8 Colonial Development Act, 1929, p. 3.
9 Worster 1985, p. 52.
10 Liebenow 1971, p. 5.
   204
12 McKittrick 2002, p. 3.
13 John Locke theorized that water created a “negative community… [where] all may
14 Worster 1985, p. 52.
16 Select Maji Maji sources: Iliffe and Gwassa 1967; Gwassa 1976; Iliffe 1979, p. 168-98; Monson
   2000, pp. 347-72; and Becker 2004, p. 1-22. Important rebellions in Zimbabwe also employed
   spirit mediumship and water: Lan 1985; Ranger 1999.
18 Prestholdt 2008, p. 4.
19 Martin 1995; and Willis 2002; Bryceson 2002; and Burton 2005.
21 The War Diaries document daily events at the outpost, established the movement of
   merchant vessels, and give insight into the tensions between British and Portuguese soldiers.
22 Iliffe 1979, 247.
23 More recent assessments of the League of Nations gives little indication that it paid much
   attention to regulating the Mandates, see: Pedersen 2007.Selected Secretariat Files: TNA-
   AB1299: Native Customs and Laws; AB1240: Provincial Administration; AB1284: Township
   Surveys.
24 TNA/14/2: Water Mikindani: 4 August, 1926.
25 Beinart and Hughes 2007, p. 133.
26 The swampland ground also provided excellent habitats for mosquito larvae. TNA/14/2:
27 His Majesty’s Government, the Admiralty and War Office, 1916, p. 186.
29 TNA/14/2: Statement of Expenditure Incurred, 1925-30 June, 1926; and “Water Rates,” 27 January, 1927. By January, 1927 there were 717 house owners in the town, 660 were African-owned.
30 TNA/14/2: Letter, 22 July, 1926.
31 While this tower provided the illusion of power, the regulatory nature of a closed water system, if fully realized, does reflect an effort to control and discipline the community. Bentham 2011, pp. 51-54; and Foucault 1979, p. 195.
33 TNA/20408: Mikindani Water Supply: 31 October, 1931, p. 2; and TNA/14/2: “Water Rates” January 1927.
34 District Officers were called District Commissioners for a time during the 1920s. In the interest of consistency, DO or District Officer will be used throughout this paper.
35 TNA/14/2: Letter, 9 April, 1928.
36 TNA/14/2: “Mikindani Water Supply” 29 March, 1929; TNA/20408: Mikindani Water Supply, 31 October, 1931.
37 TNA/20408: Mikindani Water Supply, 31 October, 1931.
38 Waterhouse 1957, p. 31.
39 The “Special” was first marketed in 1867. Ibid.
40 Ibid., p. 32.
41 Ibid. and TNA/14/2: 9 April, 1928.
42 TNA/14/2: Letter, 9 April, 1928.
43 TNA/14/2: Letter, 2 October, 1930.
44 Whether the pumpman engaged in sabotage or the pump failed due to age, corrosion, and sedimentation was not evident. For discussion of silent challenges to colonial power see: Comaroff and Comaroff 1987, pp. 191-209, and Scott 2009.
47 Officials believed Africans were poor custodians of natural resources, which reflected what Garret Hardin argued in “The Tragedy of the Commons” that individuals will seek self improvement at the expense of the wider population. TNA/14/2: Letter, 21 October, 1931; Hardin, 1968, 1243-48; and Machan 2001.
50 TNA/14/2: Letter, 21 October, 1931.
51 According to Sandra Hempel, cholera outbreaks tended to last for years because the vibrio cholerae bacillus was easily harbored in ground water and swampy areas; Hempel 2007, p. 2; Koponen 1988, pp. 153, 159-61; and Koch 2005, pp. 180-82.
http://www.epa.gov/teach/chem_summ/Nitrates_summary.pdf

54 TNA/14/2: Letter, 21 October, 1931. We have little evidence to shed light on how frequently villagers used the lower quality wells in Mikindani.

55 TNA/14/2: Letter, 12 February, 1932.


57 TNA/20408: Mikindani Water Supply, 31 October, 1931.

58 TNA/20408: Mikindani Water Supply, 31 October, 1931.


60 Although most of the other relevant studies about water usage focus on rural communities and irrigation, ready access to water inevitably led to increases in demand. Jacobs 1996, p. 250.

61 TNA/14/2: Letter, 21 October, 1931; and TNA/20408: Mikindani Water Supply, 31 October, 1931.

62 TNA/14/2: Letter, n.d. (likely after 2 December, 1930).

63 TNA/20408: Mikindani Water Supply, 31 October, 1931; and TNA/14/2: Letter, 21 October, 1931.

64 TNA/20408: Mikindani Water Supply, 31 October, 1931.

65 TNA/20408: Mikindani Water Supply, 31 October, 1931.

66 TNA/20408: Mikindani Water Supply, 31 October, 1931. Little mention was made about the frequency of fire in the township. Fire hydrants were idealized improvements that reflected British tastes, not local desires or needs.

67 TNA/14/2: Letter, 17 November, 1926.

68 TNA/14/2: Water Supply, Mikindani, n.d. (1926/27?).

69 TNA/14/2: Letter, 17 November, 1926.

70 TNA/14/2: Letter, 4 August, 1926.

71 TNA/14/2: Letter, 22 July, 1926.


74 TNA/14/2: Letter, 4 August, 1926.

75 TNA/14/2: Letter, n.d. (likely after 2 December, 1930).

76 TNA/14/2: Letter, 19 November, 1931.

77 Becker 2008, p. 5.

78 TNA/14/2: Letter, 26 August, 1926.


80 TNA/14/2: Letter, 26 August, 1926.

81 TNA/14/2: Letter, 25 October, 1926.

82 TNA/20408: Extract of letter, 12 February, 1932.

83 TNA/20408: Township Ordinance, April, 1932.

84 Debe is a Kiswahili term that is applied with consistency to these containers because they were adopted as convenient and portable means to collect and store water.

85 TNA/20408: Letter, 26 June, 1937. Attempts to prevent dhow operators from free-use of the
standpipe at the customs warehouse started as early as 1927, when the serving DO suggested that the customs watchman collect the levy. TNA/14/2: “Water Rates,” 27 January, 1927. An unnamed European, who lived outside the township, was also using this tap for his water needs.


87 TNA/20408: Mikindani Water Supply, 31 October, 1931.


89 TNA/14/2: “Water Supply, Mikindani,” 4 November, 1930

90 TNA/20408: Letter, 12 February, 1932.

91 TNA/14/2: “Water Supply, Mikindani,” 12 February, 1932; and TNA/20408: Letter, 8 April, 1932.

92 TNA/20408: Letter, 8 April, 1932; and Mikindani Water Supply, 31 October, 1931.

93 TNA/20408: Mikindani Water Supply, 31 October, 1931.

94 TNA/20408: Mikindani Water Supply, 31 October, 1931.

95 TNA/14/2: Letter, 28 November, 1934.

96 TNA/20408: Mikindani Water Supply, 31 October, 1931.

97 There are several instances where money from other funds were used to pay wages for the pumpman and other workers, which were presumed to fall under the “water vote”: TNA/14/2: Letter, 23 October, 1926; Letter, 17 November, 1926; and “Mikindani Water Supply,” 13 December, 1934.

98 The term standpipe “boys” was used throughout the documents but clarity about the term’s racist and patronizing nature must be provided. These were not children who were expected to operate the standpipes and collect revenue, standpipe “boys” were adult African men.

99 TNA/20408: Letter, 26 June, 1937.

100 Based upon the figures given, when the £27 is divided over the course of the year and between three men, their wages work out to be approximately 75p each month. Using this factor then Shs 2/- is approximately 10p annually for water. TNA/20408: Letter, 26 June, 1937.

101 TNA/20408: Letter, 26 June, 1937.

102 TNA/20408: Marginalia, 13 July, 1937.

103 Bender 2008, 2013; and Tagseth 2006.


105 TNA/14/2: “Water Rate (Obsolete) Arrears,” 26 April, 1938.

106 TNA/14/2: “List of Debtors and Period of which they were in Arrears,” 2 July, 1938.

107 TNA/14/2: “Water Rate (Obsolete) Arrears,” 26 April, 1938; and Letter, 5 July, 1938.

108 TNA/14/2: Letter, 5 July, 1938.
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Water Vendors in Niamey: Considering the Economic and Symbolic Nature of Water

SCOTT M. YOUNGSTEDT, SARA BETH KEOUGH, AND CHEIFFOU IDRISSA

Abstract: This article considers the impact of commodification, urbanization, and technology on water systems and cultural relations in the urban context of Niamey, Niger. We focus on the lives and work of water vendors (called ga’ruwa in Hausa) working in the informal economy. Fieldwork in 2013 and 2014 sought answers to two related questions. First, why are ga’ruwa jobs in Niamey dominated by immigrant men? And, second, why do Nigerien men in Niamey avoid this job, even in light of high unemployment? We argue that ga’ruwa offer a conduit for understanding key cultural symbols, values, and social relationships that lead to answers to these questions, but that we also must understand symbols, values, and social relationships to understand the ga’ruwa themselves.

Introduction

In Niger, water is a matter of life and death, and a key multivalent symbol. In this paper, we offer a holistic examination of water in Niamey—the capital of Niger—considering the economic importance and symbolic meanings of water and their interrelations. In most of Niger, particularly in rural Niger where 75 percent of the population lives, water is regarded as part of the commons, open to all who use their labor to draw it from community wells. Other wells in Niger are privately owned, while pastoral nomadic Fulani and Tuareg recognize wells as owned by particular lineages. Only 39 percent of Nigeriens living in rural areas have access to chemically treated potable water, and water-borne diseases are a leading cause of death in Niger, particularly of infants and young children.¹ In urban Niger, particularly in Niamey, water has been commodified and integrated into the global capitalist economy, which has led to

Scott M. Youngstedt, Professor of Anthropology, Saginaw Valley State University and President of the West African Research Association, has conducted ethnographic research in Niger for 27 years. He is the author of Surviving with Dignity: Hausa Communities of Niamey, Niger (2013) and numerous journal articles.

Sara Beth Keough, Associate Professor of Geography, Saginaw Valley State University, is an urban social geographer researching urban planning in resource-dependent communities and the associations between water and culture, especially those involving material culture, within urban contexts. She is the recipient of the American Geographical Society’s McColl Fellowship and is editor of the journal Material Culture.

Cheiffou Idrissa holds a Master’s in sociology with honors in 2003 from the Université Abdou Moumouni in Niamey and has conducted socio-anthropological research on local development and vulnerable populations for a number of NGOs and research centers in Niamey. Idrissa currently works with the “Promotion, Protection et Réalisations des Droits des Personnes Handicapées” program of the Fédération Nigérienne des Personnes Handicapées.

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other important social transformations. Virtually all residents in Niamey enjoy access to treated, potable, and piped water. Indeed, often they cite this as a key marker of Niamey’s modernity.

While a small minority of Niamey residents enjoys running water piped directly inside their homes or courtyards, most residents of Niamey rely on daily deliveries of water made by ambulatory vendors. These vendors—called ga’ruwa in Hausa (literally “there is water”), and the most commonly used term in Niamey—purchase water at street-side standpipes where they fill ten to fourteen twenty-liter plastic containers of water and deliver it for a higher price to regular customers using metal pushcarts with bicycle wheels specifically designed for this purpose by local blacksmiths.2

Almost all ga’ruwa in Niamey are immigrant Tuareg and Fulani men from Mali—especially the Gao and Timbuktu regions, and to a lesser extent from the far western regions of Niger near the Mali border—who, although they are not officially organized, support each other with union-like solidarity. Our paper seeks answers to two related questions. First, why are ga’ruwa jobs in Niamey dominated by immigrant Tuareg and Fulani men from Mali? Second, why do Nigerien men in Niamey, particularly from the traditionally sedentary Hausa, Zarma, and Songhay, avoid this job, despite most Nigerien residents of Niamey being underemployed or unemployed? Water delivery is not a great job and requires physically strenuous work, but it is a steady job that offers an above average income. We argue that to understand why Nigerien men and women reject this job requires the interpretation of water as a key cultural symbol, as well as an understanding of ethnic and gender relations.

Our approach builds on core themes in the literature on water and extends recent influential studies on water delivery systems to offer an innovative, holistic perspective on water in Niamey. The bulk of the literature on water focuses on a few key themes of crucial global significance, particularly public health problems associated with lack of access to clean water, strategies to expand access to potable water, water crises, and water wars.3 This article takes account of these issues, but they are not its central concern. Rather, this article uses water and its commodification as a cultural symbol and mechanism for interpreting social relations in the urban context of Niamey. Focusing on the lives and work of water vendors allows us to develop a holistic understanding of the material, symbolic, and cultural elements of water in Niamey in particular and Niger in general. That is, we explore a dialectical relationship. We argue, on the one hand, that ga’ruwa offer a conduit for understanding key cultural symbols, values, and social relationships, and the other hand, that we must understand symbols, values, and social relationships in order to understand the ga’ruwa. The ga’ruwa are ideally positioned to explore this dialectical relationship because they do not just operate within an established infrastructure. As this paper shows, they are infrastructure.4 In his key paper, ”People as Infrastructure,” Abdoumaliq Simone explains that in Africa ”state administrations and civil institutions have lacked the political and economic power to assign the diversity of activities taking place within the city (buying, selling, residing, etc.) to bounded spaces of deployment, codes of articulation, or the purview of designated actors.”5 These conditions influence how people live, negotiate, and collaborate within the urban context.6 It is within this context of the absence of state oversight and the inability of residents within African cities to improve their livelihoods that the ga’ruwa exist.
To that end, after a brief historical overview of Niamey’s urban water regime, there are two main sections of this article. The first is an ethnographic exploration of the ga’ruwa in Niamey as a conduit for understanding cultural symbols. The second is an exploration of the symbolic nature of water, particularly as it relates to gender and ethnicity, which is a key to further understanding of water delivery systems. Underlying both sections is the impact of commodification, urbanization, and technology on water systems and cultural relations.

The connections between water and culture have received minor attention by scholars. The most comprehensive consideration of this connection is found in the recent interdisciplinary work The Social Life of Water, edited by John R. Wagner. Here, social scientists explore ways by which the triad of commodification, urbanization, and technology impact access to and the quality of water, as well as the lives of people involved. In addition, we have explored the connections between water and material culture in previously published works. A few studies consider water vendors in other African contexts, namely in Ghana, Kenya, Sudan, and Tanzania. These studies provide a foundation for our work because they provide a basis for comparison with our case study in Niamey. Finally, and specific to Niamey, Hungerford and Bontianti et al. show how the factors that guide water policies in Niger (location of the piped water network, land tenure status, age of neighborhood) do not provide an accurate picture of water access, and do not account for the service provided by urban water vendors.

Research Methods

This paper draws from informal research conducted over the past few years in both urban and rural Niger, as well as one month of formal ethnographic research in five inner city neighborhoods in Niamey in December 2013 and January 2014. Our primary research methods included (1) structured interviews with ga’ruwa, ga’ruwa customers, and water officials; (2) shadowing ga’ruwa on their daily delivery rounds; and (3) focused observations at public standpipes. More specifically, we began with long interviews with eight ga’ruwa while we shadowed them on their daily deliveries over several days. We observed the conditions of their work, and their interactions with each other, standpipe managers, and customers. During this time, we also conducted long interviews with six ga’ruwa customers. These interviews inspired more focused interviews with twenty ga’ruwa and their customers on the role of Malians as the primary ga’ruwa in Niamey, the Islamic prohibitions regarding water, and the solidarity of the ga’ruwa. In addition, we completed six interviews with water officials, including three standpipe managers, two Société d’Exploitation des Eau du Niger (SEEN) agents, and one with the head of the tax collection agency in Niamey’s City Hall. Finally, we observed many standpipes in five poor neighborhoods in the city, concentrating on their conditions and the social interactions that take place there.

In addition, we spent dozens of hours in 2013-2014 participating in streetside hira (“conversation”) groups discussing a wide range of topics, including the ga’ruwa. Hausa men are the primary participants in these conversations groups, but they also include a minority of Zarma and Songhay men. Our fieldwork revealed that conditions and working relationships instituted by the ga’ruwa stand in contrast to those reported in other African cities, mostly in East Africa. By focusing on water vendors, this article helps provide a more complete story of urban water access, as well as a contribution to broader connections between water and culture.
A Brief History of Water Access in Niamey

France made Niamey the provisional capital of the Territoire Militaire du Niger in 1905, and then the capital of the Colony of Niger in 1926, in part because of its location on the Niger River, the only year-round surface freshwater source in the region, and its proximity to the nearest French-controlled seaport, Conotou (in Benin). At this time, Niamey was little more than a group of small fishing villages. The French instituted the first urban water regime in the city in the early 1920s. Municipal water services appeared in the 1930s, in a clearly inequitable and racist manner, purposefully restricting water access to colonial neighborhoods. It was not until after 1940 that the urban water regime expanded services to the rest of the city through a series of public water taps, or standpipes.

One factor driving the expansion of Niamey’s piped water network was the growth of the city’s population. In 1955, Niamey’s population was estimated at just over 24,000. By 1975, the city’s population had grown to over 198,000. Between 1988 and 2010 Niamey’s population tripled from 400,000 to 1.3 million and its geographic footprint expanded five-fold. France continued to influence urban planning and water governance, even after Niger gained its independence in 1960. Thirty years of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), which required the government to relinquish control of state-owned enterprises (including water governance), further eroded Nigerien authority over the water regime. Vivendi Water (now Veolia Water) purchased a 51 percent share of the water utility in Niamey in 2001. Veolia Water—a multinational corporation headquartered in France—is the world’s largest supplier of water services. According to Bontiani et al., this SAP also:

- required that four new institutions be created to govern Niamey’s (and other urban centers) water: la Société du patrimoine des Eaux du Niger (SPEN), la Société d’Exploitation des Eaux du Niger (SEEN), le Projet sectoriel eau (PSE), and l’Authorité de regulation multisectorielle (ARM). In this new configuration, the state’s role in urban water was not direct provisioning or planning. Rather the new role for the state was in guiding national water discourse, proposing and implementing legislation, and defining the political goals behind water pricing . . . The private sector, SEEN, was assigned the role of direct provisioning and interacting with the population.

Today, the state and the private sector compete for profits, distribution, and regulation of urban water policy in Niamey, a city with now over 1.6 million people. Thus, Niaméens have had to pay for water since formal distribution structures were established. However, the commodification of water is a complex issue in this predominantly Muslim country. The sacredness of water is expressed through Islamic prohibitions of its sale: “the specific hadith related to this states, ‘Allah’s Messenger forbade the sale of excess water.’” In the modern capitalist world of Niamey, however, water has been commodified and is sold by (particularly) men. The selling and delivering of water has become acceptable—a basic social service. However, participants in the study consistently indicated that Muslims should never have to pay for water at a standpipe or elsewhere to perform their ablutions before their prayers. Furthermore, over time, drought, climate change, and increasing rates of rural to urban
migration have encouraged the emergence of informal paths to water access, such as mobile water vendors, alongside these formal structures of water distribution.

**Water Vendors in Niamey: Exploring the Role of the Ga’ruwa**

Water delivery is an essential element of daily life in Niamey, especially considering that only a minority of households and compounds has direct access to running water, and thus, the ga’ruwa are an important link in the story of water access.

**The Emergence of Water Vendors in Niamey**

Hungerford estimates that water vendors first emerged on the urban landscape in Niamey in the 1950s, and both their methods of water delivery and importance within the water network have continued to evolve. Residents of Niamey that we interviewed confirmed this. According to one Tuareg from Mali who has lived in Niamey since the 1960s:

> The ga’ruwa history dates back to my knowledge since the Diori era [Hamani Diori served as the first President of the independent Republic of Niger, from 1960 to 1974]. Actually, during that era, pumps were rare in the city of Niamey… At that time, the ga’ruwa carried the water on their heads while saying, ‘ga garwar ruwa guda’ ['look at me carrying one kerosene can full of water']. It’s beyond that, it’s gone; this activity experienced a big advancement. Today the ga’ruwa have carts and plastic containers.

A social anthropologist in Niamey more specifically describes the material changes of ga’ruwa water delivery:

> In the past, ga’ruwa sold water using oil drums called “tukku” in Hausa (white metal containers for product preservation such as petroleum). Two oil drums fastened to a pole, together is called “talla” in Hausa. Today the oil drums are disappearing and being replaced by 20 and 25 liter cooking oil containers.

The transition from tukku to plastic cooking oil containers occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s, in part due to health concerns stemming from the re-use of containers used to store and transport petroleum. Today some Niaméens express concerns about plastic leeching into the water—both from the transportation containers used by ga’ruwa and the large plastic containers for home storage.

As highlighted earlier, almost all ga’ruwa in Niamey are immigrant Tuareg and Fulani men from Mali—especially the Gao and Timbuktu regions, and to a lesser extent from the far western regions of Niger near the Mali border. Tuareg and Fulani water carriers have come to Niamey due a range of motivations and have been there for wide ranging lengths of time. They are typically men who have either lost their herds or are trying to rebuild their diminished herds by earning cash and have been in Niamey for five to fifteen years. A few have been water carriers in Niamey for thirty years or more. Finally, some are refugees from the recent conflicts in Mali and have only been in Niamey for a couple of years.
Being and Becoming a Ga’ruwa

The length of time needed for Tuareg and Fulani men to establish themselves as independent ga’ruwa varies from a few months to a few years depending on individuals’ prior connections and resources. They must integrate themselves in networks of ga’ruwa who are already established in this occupation, and work in informal apprenticeships. They typically begin by filling in for other ga’ruwa who leave for visits to their hometowns. Before they set out on their own, they must have their own pushcarts and water containers. New pushcarts cost 50,000 francs (CFA) each ($100 USD), and used ones sell for 35,000 each ($70 USD). The water containers cost 750–1000 CFA each ($1.50-$2.00 USD). The pushcarts and containers are made by local blacksmiths and sold primarily at the Katako Market, Niamey’s main construction materials market. Those who cannot afford to purchase the tools of the trade can rent them in order to get started. Most ga’ruwa learn basic Hausa and/or Zarma, the most commonly spoken languages in Niamey, to accelerate the apprenticeship process. Finally, vendors must purchase annual licenses of 4,500 CFA ($9 USD) from the city to operate. From there, the job requires maintaining and developing clientele, and hard work.

Ga’ruwa in Niamey typically work from sunrise to sunset seven days a week. They operate in almost every neighborhood in Niamey. Only in a few pockets within wealthy neighborhoods are they rare or non-existent. At sunrise (or earlier during the hot season, when water does not always regularly flow through the piped system), ga’ruwa bring their carts to the single standpipe from which they work and fill the ten to fourteen twenty-liter containers of water on their wheeled carts. Ga’ruwa always use the same standpipe to fill their containers for two primary reasons. First, customers are charged for delivery based on the distance the ga’ruwa has to travel from the standpipe to the customer’s home. Using the same standpipe to obtain water means that the cost to the consumer is consistent. Second, there is an informal agreement between ga’ruwa that each one will use the same standpipe every day so as not to infringe upon the territory or customers of other ga’ruwa. Ga’ruwa are not assigned to particular standpipes, but become affiliated with certain standpipes through the integration and apprenticeship process mentioned earlier. Using multiple standpipes to fill water containers would be a violation of this unwritten agreement.

Challenges in Water Delivery

Delivering water is physically strenuous. Ga’ruwa push their metal carts with full water containers on mostly unpaved, uneven neighborhood streets. Upon reaching a customer, the ga’ruwa carries the containers of water, two at a time, into the customer’s home or compound and empties the water in larger storage containers (plastic barrels or clay pots) indicated by the customer. The ga’ruwa typically must return to the standpipe to refill their containers after delivering water to three to five customers. One ga’ruwa described the physical impact of the job, “At nightfall, my entire body hurts especially my chest and hips. There are some places where there is too much sand, stones, and inclines, where we must push [the carts] with a lot of energy.”27 According to another ga’ruwa, “Today, if you find me another job, for example security, I will give up this work that I’ve done since the time of Ali Chaibou [1987]. You see that makes me old. At that time, there were no carts with containers, only le tagala (two buckets attached to a pole and carried on the shoulders).”28 Ga’ruwa also suffer with painful cracked
feet due to standing in pools of water around standpipes. Almost all ga’ruwa wear closed-toe, fully plastic shoes of the same brand made in China to combat this problem. As one ga’ruwa explained, “It is to protect us against the water. These shoes do not weigh much, they aren’t too heavy to wear, they adapt to all places and all circumstances, and they are like sports shoes. If we bend over to push the cart in the sand, they do not break. Their price varies from 1,100 to 1,250 CFA francs.”

If business is good, then the ga’ruwa take occasional breaks, usually in a shaded area close to their standpipe. In the hot season, these breaks last longer due to fatigue and if little or no water is flowing through the standpipe. Understanding the water needs of their customers, the ga’ruwa try to deliver water around the same time of day every day (morning, mid-day, afternoon). The regular delivery schedule ensures a consistent customer base.

Ga’ruwa face other challenges in their work, particularly due to dangerous situations on the street and stubborn customers. One 35-year old Nigerien ga’ruwa from the Kandaji-Tillabery region (near Mali), described these challenges:

If you look in our carts, there is a staff hung on the side, that is for approaching certain situations (dog attacks, or bandits, or someone refusing to pay us). The second problem that we have is the refusal of certain people to pay us at the end of a predetermined consumption period. They tell us to go complain everywhere we want. When it comes to us, we leave them with their conscience, as even Islam spoke of the value of water in the life of an individual. We are not like the SEEN, who, when you do not pay your bill at the end of the month, cut you off. These are problems that we regularly encounter in our work that will push us one day to establish a union to defend our interests.

Although none of the ga’ruwa that we interviewed mentioned the difficulty of doing their jobs during Ramadan, we sense that this is a particularly challenging time for them, especially when Ramadan falls during the hot season. Their customers consume almost as much water daily during Ramadan as they do daily during the rest of the year, because from sunset to sunrise they cook, drink lots of water, and bathe. Ga’ruwa must continue their daily water deliveries. They must push heavy carts full of water and lift heavy containers full of water all day, but they cannot drink any of it.

Ga’ruwa straddle the formal and informal economies of Niamey. As mentioned earlier, to work as ga’ruwa in Niamey, they must acquire annual licenses from the city at a cost of 4,500 CFA ($9 USD). This amount represents a 1,000 CFA ($2 USD) increase between 2013 and 2014, a condition that frustrated many ga’ruwa in our study. Other than paying the annual fee, no other official requirements for ga’ruwa exist. The ga’ruwa do not pay taxes or report income to the city. Thus, after paying the annual fee, they shift to an economic activity (water delivery) that falls into the informal economy, although they still use formal structures—the piped water network—to perform this task.

Ga’ruwa and Public Standpipes

In Niamey, neighborhood men manage standpipes. These men are of various ethnic groups, including Hausa, Zarma, and Songhay, but they are disproportionately Tuareg and Fulani. In many neighborhoods, this job rotates among a few people. Standpipe managers have three
primary responsibilities. First, they collect money from ga’ruwa for the water they take from the standpipes to fill their containers. These managers also collect money from individuals who live close enough to the standpipe to transport water themselves. The managers, in turn, pay the city (and by extension, Veolia) for the water use. Second, they must maintain the cleanliness of the pipes and the areas around them, otherwise they face fines imposed by city hall that regularly sends inspectors out to check on the condition of standpipes. Third, standpipe managers mediate and resolve disputes between their customers. Customers are expected to respect rules of decorum. Ga’ruwa are the primary customers and they should park their carts by order of arrival and patiently take turns. However, when a customer arrives with a single bucket, the ga’ruwa should allow him to fill it if the ga’ruwa is at the beginning of his loading. Ga’ruwa who have already filled two or more containers expect to complete filling all ten or twelve containers before relinquishing the hose to a person with only one container.

During our fieldwork, we witnessed several disputes precipitated by ga’ruwa’s reluctance to surrender water hoses to non-ga’ruwa. In one typical scenario, a customer with a single bucket politely attempted to jump to the front of the queue. An angry ga’ruwa shouted, “Didn’t you see me here! You must hold on, I am not obligated to give you the hose, be respectful of people.” The local resident aggressively answered, “What is this? Help me! Why do I have to wait for you to fill all of your containers when I only have one container?” As the situation appeared to be escalating to a potential fist fight, the manager intervened to restore peace, “Hey you two, that is not how it is done. You must respect people, things can be negotiated, do not use force. Ga’ruwa, forgive him, have patience.” The ga’ruwa accepted this mediation and handed over the hose.

Ga’ruwa pay the standpipe managers 15 CFA ($0.03 USD) per twenty-liter container of water filled, and the ga’ruwa collect 25-50 CFA ($0.05-$0.10 USD) for each twenty-liter container of water delivered, depending on the distance between the customer and the standpipe. Ga’ruwa also make spontaneous sales of water on the street, for example, to commercial truck drivers about to embark on long trips. Thus, a ga’ruwa who pushes a cart that carries ten containers earns a profit of 100-350 CFA ($0.20-$0.70 USD) per cartload, after paying the standpipe manager for the water. Drawing from our observations while shadowing ga’ruwa on their daily rounds, refilling containers takes about ten minutes when water is regularly running to public standpipes, delivery trips last about forty-five minutes each, and ga’ruwa make about twelve delivery trips daily. Hence, ga’ruwa earn 1,200-4,200 CFA ($2.40-$8.40 USD) daily. Although this income is small, it is above average and fairly consistent, as most households require daily water delivery. According to one ga’ruwa, “It has been three years that I have been working as a ga’ruwa in Niamey. Thank God. I have found fulfillment here, in fact I got married here. I am buying some fertilizer to send to the village to put in my garden. I sometimes send money to my parents who are in the village. Anyway, I make a living here.”

Ga’ruwa and Water Bureaucracies

Ga’ruwa encounter many circumstances that can lead to loss of income. For example, they earn no income on days they do not work for whatever reason and on days in the hot season when water may slow to a trickle or cease flowing altogether to public standpipes, especially those most distant from water towers. In addition, in recent years SEEN has offered promotional...
discounted rates to install pipes in homes and on the first month’s water bill, leading many to switch to piped water. For example, Issoufou, a former ga’ruwa customer explained, “About a month ago we stopped using the services of ga’ruwa. In fact the homeowner recently installed a pump.” Several of the ga’ruwa that we interviewed complained about a drastic drop in customers. As one ga’ruwa put it, “Now we don’t have many customers, many people have access to their own pumps at home.” However, we think that this downturn in business is localized. We do not think that SEEN can switch enough households to piped water to offset Niamey’s continuing growth. Niamey is projected to remain one of the world’s fastest growing cities with annual growth rates projected at 5 percent for the next fifteen years. Much of Niamey’s population growth is occurring in peri-urban areas that are not yet connected to the piped network. These conditions will continue to provide ample opportunities for ga’ruwa to find work. Furthermore, Niamey’s ever-growing low-income populations cannot do without the services of the ga’ruwa.

**Ga’ruwa and Gendered Spaces**

The job of delivering water also places the ga’ruwa in a grey area in terms of gender relations. In Niamey (and in Niger in general) interactions between men and women are governed by cultural and religious assumptions. During the day, male family members are typically absent from households and compounds in Niamey, usually because they are working, trying to find work, visiting friends and family, or in school. In this situation, it is highly unusual for male non-family members to be allowed into households or compounds. However, the ga’ruwa are an exception. Not only do ga’ruwa enter compounds, they carry water into typically female spaces, such as the cooking or washing areas, to empty the water containers into larger storage containers in customers’ homes. Assumptions about water perhaps explain this acceptance. Among sedentary agriculturalists in rural Niger, obtaining water and transporting it to households is a job that is considered women’s work. Although men in Niamey deliver water, it is perhaps the activity, rather than their gender, which makes their presence in the home acceptable, even when male family members are absent. After all, water is the essential element in cooking, bathing, washing, and for drinking.

**Ga’ruwa in the Cultural Landscape**

Water delivery is so essential in Niamey, and such an important element of daily life, that cultural landscapes have been created by the process of water delivery and can be found in almost all neighborhoods in Niamey. For example, it is often clusters of ga’ruwa carts with yellow containers that identify locations of public standpipes (especially for outsiders like us), rather than the standpipes themselves that tend to visibly blend into the surrounding landscape, particularly those located along busy streets. The ga’ruwa are part of the economic landscape in Niamey. They travel between busy intersections where public standpipes are often located, and small, quiet, neighborhood streets. The metal carts and yellow containers common to all ga’ruwa specifically identify them to passersby as water deliverers. However, ga’ruwa try to personalize this common image by adding decorations to their metal carts, such as flags of their country or region of origin, or colored ribbons. Not only does this personalization mark contrasts between ga’ruwa and the public image with which they are
associated, it also serves a practical purpose, as it distinguishes one metal cart from another, an essential characteristic around busy public standpipes.

**Solidarity among Ga’ruwa**

While operating as individuals in the urban economic activity of water delivery, ga’ruwa also operate under a union-like form of solidarity, a condition that sets them apart from water vendors in East Africa where vendors compete with each other for customers and water sources. Understanding the solidarity among and between Tuareg and Fulani ga’ruwa requires some historical perspective on their relations. In the pastoral zones of Niger and Mali, Tuareg and Fulani lineages have their own inherited wells. They use each other’s wells only with permission, which is rare, because it involves moving large numbers of animals through potential pasturage. However, they have learned to cooperate and share state-sponsored boreholes, some of which have been in place since the early colonial period a century ago. Tuareg and Fulani do share some cultural affinity, particularly through their identities as herders and nomads. Today several prominent musical performance groups such as Etran Finatawa in Niger include both Tuareg and Fulani together.

The union-like solidarity among and between Tuareg and Fulani ga’ruwa in Niamey is crucial to their success. They often work together or at least agree not to infringe on each other’s pre-established territories and clientele. They fill in for fellow ga’ruwa when they cannot work due to illness or other reasons. They share information, allowing them, for example, to collectively boycott households that consistently ask for credit but do not make good on it. The city grants all ga’ruwa license requests, as the fee provides income for the city, so theoretically there is no limit to the number of ga’ruwa that operate annually in Niamey. Thus, the informal solidarity between ga’ruwa helps to maintain order and ensure customers’ needs are met. Water delivery is not a free-for-all in Niamey.

The solidarity between ga’ruwa is a reality recognized by everyone—ga’ruwa and their customers. For example, a ga’ruwa at a tap stand explained:

That is true, we do stick together, if you have a problem with one of our comrades, we will not serve you, because we tell ourselves that we can have the same problems with you as well. This solidarity is explained by the fact that we do the same work. If I sell water to one of my comrade’s clients while he is away, without his authorization, it is hypocrisy, betrayal. When a ga’ruwa sells water to another’s client right in front of him and the latter ga’ruwa doesn’t react immediately, be sure that they will settle it once they go back to their base to rest.

Similarly, Assoumane, a tea vendor in who relies on ga’ruwa for his water supply, observed:

They have solidarity. If you have your ga’ruwa who brings you water every day, and if there is a day where he isn’t there and you ask another to bring you water, he will never do it, he will tell you to wait until your ga’ruwa comes back. No matter how much you shout, he will not look at you, even if he has extra water in the containers, he prefers to return to the tap stand to refill his cart. Personally, my ga’ruwa brings me water in the morning, but sometimes I need water at other times; at those times, I must negotiate with their elder in order for them to serve
me in the evening if I need it. He does this service for me because he has been with us for a long time, it’s at my house that he eats breakfast; he is from our ethnic group. The last time that my ga’ruwa wanted to return to the country, he came to introduce me to his replacement.36

According to Abdoul Malik, another ga’ruwa customer nearby:

Yes, that is a reality. In fact, one day when Mamou, the owner of the tap stand that you see in front of us, had a problem with a ga’ruwa, all of his ga’ruwa clients boycotted his tap stand to join the neighboring tap stand. They truly do stick together. This would be explained by the fact that in general, they come from the same family or the same locality.37

Moussa Mahamadou, another customer, explained:

They do stick together. One must avoid piling up outstanding debts with a ga’ruwa, as soon as he informs his friends, they as well will avoid you. I remember well the time when one was subscribed to a ga’ruwa: if he traveled, he would be replaced by someone. Before leaving, he would consult his clients and offer them the position. It’s absolutely normal that they stick together since they practice the same profession. It’s like trade unions for workers.38

Despite the comradery in the context of work, however, Tuareg and Fulani ga’ruwa tend to socialize in ethnically segregated groups after hours. Most ga’ruwa are either single or do not have their wives with them in Niamey. As a result, they cook and eat together, and often live together. As Abdoul Malik, a customer, observed:

The concrete example is that of the local group of ga’ruwa that are composed of ten or so elderly people and young people. They contribute enough between them to pay for the essentials. This does not prevent those who have some money to pay for meat or other things to accentuate the courses. The young ones prepare the dishes in turns; as for the old ones, they are exempted from cooking. Between them, they tease each other a lot, provoke each other, and fight; each time that I observe them, they make me understand that it is between them, that they are parents, and notably, cousins.39

In other words, the roles assigned in non-work situations are a result of ethnic and familial relations, rather than their role as ga’ruwa. Yet, it is shared experience of delivering water in particular cultural contexts that results in a comradery that crosses ethnic lines.

Water as a Key Cultural Symbol

On the exterior wall of a middle school in Niamey Bas, a downtown neighborhood, students have painted an eight-meter high mural depicting people enjoying clean drinking water and watering their garden. The image is accompanied by a caption, “l’Eau est vie” (“Water is life”). This is more than a simple truism. Water is of vital importance in the survival, cosmologies, religions, and gender relations among Nigerien peoples. Across Niger, water is a symbol of hospitality. It is always the first thing that hosts offer to guests. We argue that in order to understand the culture of ga’ruwa and their role in the urban water regime of Niamey, we need to understand the symbolic value of water and the social relationships that revolve around it,
particularly gender relations. Furthermore, exploring the relationships between ga’ruwa, water, and ideas about gender helps us answer our original questions about why these water vendors are male immigrants.

In Niger, the procurement and delivery of water is a gendered activity that is gendered in particular ways among different ethnic groups. Among the sedentary agriculturalist Hausa, Zarma, and Songhay who live in rural areas, village women gather and deliver water as mothers and wives—one or two twenty-liter containers at a time, either carried atop their heads, or on either ends of poles balanced over their shoulders. This is regarded as “women’s work” and women are not paid for this service. Furthermore, women are expected to serve water to men, never the reverse. Although this is difficult and time-consuming labor, they have carved out one of few public women’s spaces at village wells. Pausing at wells offers one of the few moments in women’s busy days to gather solely in the company of women to share news, tell stories, and laugh.

In contrast, among urban Hausa, Zarma, and Songhay in Niamey, only men gather and deliver water, and they do so for pay (women also serve water to men in the city). Urban men in Niamey claim that it is a good thing that urban women are “relieved of this difficult chore,” but we note that this gain comes with the loss of an important women’s space and potential, paying jobs. Furthermore, while women do not gather and deliver water, they are responsible for cooking, washing, cleaning, and bathing children, all of which involve water. Women are also responsible for storing water for short-term use, either in traditional Nigerien-made clay pots or in cheap plastic containers imported from China. Thus, in the urban context of Niamey, women are responsible for using water (and, as customers, for securing its presence in the household), but they are removed from the delivery process.

Among the traditionally nomadic Fulani and Tuareg, the procurement and delivery of water is also gendered, but in different and less dichotomous ways than among sedentary peoples. Among the Fulani, men and women are far less segregated than their sedentary neighbors. Men typically draw water for livestock, especially cattle, whereas women gather water for household use. However, Fulani women help in getting water for animals where there are not enough men to do it. They may specialize in distributing it to goats, sheep, and calves, depending on the situation. Women also herd, especially young girls, if there are no males to do so.

Since independence, the nomadic pastoral way of life among the Fulani has become increasing precarious as many have lost their herds and have had no choice but to take up farming or urban labor. As noted by Kristín Loftsdóttir in her long-term study of WoDaaBe (a Fulani sub-group in Niger), important scholars of the Fulani such as Dupire have, for more than fifty years, documented “an element of shame associated with being engaged in occupations other than herding one’s own animals.” The passage of time has brought the realization that diversified economies drawing on rural and urban, nomadic and sedentary ways of making a living are necessary, and hence the shame of doing work outside of the pastoral economy has diminished. Loftsdóttir “did not find WoDaaBe migrant workers being generally ashamed of their work in the city. Some individuals I interacted with were on the contrary relatively proud of their work in the city, emphasizing their importance for providing a security net for those in the bush.” Loftsdóttir goes on to explain that, “Shame seems thus today to be more connected
to failure of earning income from one’s activities in the city rather than working as a migrant laborer [per se]. Some occupations, such as tea selling, rope making, and water carrying are [generally] associated with failure, and thus shameful.45 In contrast, making and selling handicrafts and art is generally more lucrative than other typical jobs Fulani get in the city, and it is not considered shameful. The Fulani ga’ruwa that we interviewed in Niamey did not express shame or embarrassment in doing this work, though several told us that they would much prefer to be herding cattle in the bush. There are several possible explanations for this. For example, they may have felt too proud to share this feeling with strangers, or we may simply encountered men who were earning enough money to send some home regularly.

Among the Tuareg, the situation is even more complicated, in part because they are largely matrilineal, as there are regional, rural-urban, nomadic-sedentary, and class-related differences.46 In rural Air in Niger, in semi-nomadic and sedentary villages, both sexes draw water from wells; usually, men nowadays get it from wells and a few motor pumps to irrigate their oasis gardens, and young boys tend to draw it from wells to water livestock herds. Women draw water from wells for household use. If possible, adults prefer to have their adolescent children do these arduous tasks, and if they can afford it, some families hire men to draw it. In rural northern Mali in the Adragh and Kidal region, in semi-nomadic villages most Tuareg women of non-servile descent, who avoid most physical labor, disdain this task, and hire Bella men of servile descent to do this, and now pay them for this service. In Saharan multi-ethnic towns such as Agadez and Kidal, the situation is again different. Tuareg families there tend to hire others to do this work if they can afford it. In Agadez, Niger, almost all ga’ruwa are Hausa men. Many are refugees or labor migrants from western Niger villages that have been suffered from droughts, locust invasions, and unemployment. In Kidal, Mali, Tuareg families, as in Agadez tend to hire others to fetch water for their households there. As in Agadez, most Tuareg in Kidal try to avoid this task and many hire other non-Tuareg Malians to do it, as well as other domestic tasks, often Dogon men to fetch water and Dogon women to help cook. In sum, there are class and ethnic differences that complicate the gender distinctions, but in urban settings in Tuareg regions, non-Tuareg men and a few Buzu or Bella tend to draw water for households who can afford to hire them.

Conclusions
Having established the dialectical symbolic nature of the ga’ruwa and water, we now return to our key original question and its corollary: Why are ga’ruwa jobs in Niamey dominated by immigrant Tuareg and Fulani men from Mali? Why do Nigerien men in Niamey, particularly from the traditionally sedentary Hausa, Zarma, and Songhay, avoid this job? The answers are intertwined.

Nigerien men avoid this work in Niamey due to dignity preservation and shame avoidance. Nigerien men (of settled agricultural groups) consider water delivery to be inferior "women’s work” and that women should serve men water. Furthermore, Nigerien men feel embarrassed to perform menial, physical labor in public (under the gaze of family, friends, co-ethnics). Finally, some are aware of Islamic prohibitions on selling water and perhaps avoid it for this reason. Reflecting views we heard repeatedly, a Hausa standpipe caretaker in the Koubia neighborhood observed:
The young Nigeriens, in particular the city dwellers, do not want to do the work of a ga’ruwa because they are big-headed, they do not want to suffer as well; they are ashamed. But looking to make money by your own means is better than stealing or begging. If you see some Nigeriens doing the work of a ga’ruwa in Niamey, assure yourself that they come from the countryside.47

Several of the participants in our study indicated Nigerien men of traditionally sedentary farming groups are willing to do this job abroad, for example as labor migrants in Nigeria and Ghana. Conversely, we learned that Tuareg and Fulani decline ga’ruwa work in traditional Tuareg and Fulani settlements.

Tuareg and Fulani of Mali accept this job because they have very few other options in Niamey (in Niamey, they also dominate the night watchmen ranks). Fulani and Tuareg water carriers are recognized as refugees from a bad situation that everybody knows about, and thus have a kind of “identity amnesty.”48 That is, the general community of Niamey does not judge Tuareg and Fulani ga’ruwa as doing something inappropriate because it is understood that they do this work as a result of hardship. They are strangers in a way that the Hausa and Zarma are not, in Niamey and other towns.49 They, like Hausa or Zarma migrants in Ghana and elsewhere in West Africa, are far from home. People also know that these are nomads are generally very proud and would not do these things if it were not absolutely necessary.50

Recent developments in the nature of water access and delivery in Niamey are ironic in two ways. First, a century ago, nomadic Tuareg and Fulani dominated sedentary Hausa, Zarma, and Songhay. Now they have to do what the latter look down upon as inferior “women’s work.” While living a sedentary lifestyle that they consider inferior to nomadism, Tuareg and Fulani men are key players in the most critical form of mobile water access in the city. Second, many Tuareg and Fulani have lost herds due to lack of water (and other factors, including state policy) but now must work with water.

Thus, we can clearly see the importance of the interplay of capitalism, urbanization, and technology emphasized by Wagner in Niamey’s water regime.51 The ga’ruwa play an essential role in urban water access, operating under a global neoliberal capitalist system using contemporary technology. At the same time, the process of accessing water in Niamey is steeped in cultural traditions and symbolic value that vary by gender, class, and ethnic group. The commodification of water in Niamey is leading to expanding inequality, as access to water differs by socio-economic class and consumption styles have become markers of status. At the same time, the commodification of water has created jobs—ga’ruwa, standpipe managers, water executives—and a specific material culture (metal pushcarts, plastic water containers). In contrast, capitalism as it operates in Niamey excludes women from jobs in water management and delivery. Furthermore, plastic water containers made in China are gradually replacing the clay pots made by Zarma women in the nearby village of Boubon for household storage of water.

Household water access in Niamey is the end point in the neo-liberal supply chain of Niamey’s water economy. A minority of Niaméens articulated objections to Niamey’s water regime, particularly on two grounds. First, some argue that the current system is a form of predatory global capitalism that has commodified the commons, extracting profits from an over-exploited country, and denying clean water access to the destitute and people residing in...
Niamey’s peripheral neighborhoods, many of which lack public standpipes. Second, others, particularly Muslim scholars, argue that the Qur’an forbids the sale of water. In contrast, a majority of Niaméens approved of Niamey’s water regime, and appreciate the work performed by the ga’ruwa. Most are very pleased to have affordable access to treated water. Issoufou, a trader in the Koubia neighborhood, explained, “They [ga’ruwa] really help us because they spare our women from the chore of getting water.”

When we specifically asked people about their opinions regarding Islamic prohibitions on selling water, most claimed that this was news to them. For example, one man argued, “For me, it is the first time that I have heard this. It is business. If it is haram [“illicit” or “sinful”] then people would not be selling water in Mecca.”

Most men regard the sale and delivery of water as a key social service. Thus, the commodification of water within a global, capitalist system during a time of drought and desertification in a Muslim city has created new symbolic meanings for those involved in its consumption and delivery.

Notes

1 USAID 2010: 3,1.
2 Ga’ruwa is a complicated word. It literally means “there is water,” although it does not appear in Hausa dictionaries. Ruwa can mean water, but it can also mean juice, semen, usury, and business among other meanings that are context-dependent.
4 Simone 2004.
5 Ibid., p. 409.
6 Ibid., p. 410.
7 Wagner 2013.
8 Keough and Youngstedt 2014.
10 Hungerford 2012; Bontianti et al. 2014.
11 In twenty-eight years of participant observation in hira groups in Niamey, Scott Youngstedt has never met a Hausa, Zarma, or Songhay ga’ruwa in Niamey.
12 Niamey was first established as the provisional capital in 1905, but lost that position in 1911 to Zinder, further east. In 1926, the French re-established Niamey as the provisional capital for the reasons stated (Youngstedt 2013).
13 Youngstedt 2013.
14 Hungerford 2012.
16 Youngstedt 2013, p. 42
20 Hungerford 2012.
21 Personal communication, Niamey, 2014.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
24 Hungerford 2012. These large, plastic storage containers, imported from China, are replacing traditional clay posts made by Zarma women of the village of Boubon, which is situated about 25 kilometers outside of the city.
26 In 2014, $1 USD was approximately 500 CFA.
27 Personal communication, Niamey, 2014.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
32 Demographia 2015.
34 Wilson-Fall in press.
35 Personal communication, Niamey, 2014.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 For another discussion on water and gender relations, see our forthcoming publication on the sachet water economy in Niamey, also referred to as "pure water."
42 Personal communication (e-mail) with Wendy Wilson-Fall 2014. Wilson-Fall is a leading scholar of the Fulani of Niger.
46 Rasmussen 2009.
47 Personal communication, Niamey, 2014.
48 Personal communication (e-mail) with Wendy Wilson-Fall 2014.
50 Ibid.
51 Wagner 2013.
52 Personal communication, Niamey, 2014.
53 Ibid.
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http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v16/v16i2a2.pdf
University-Based Music Training and Current South African Musical Praxis: Notes and Tones

MADIMABE GEOFF MAPAYA

Abstract: Music pedagogy places a premium on written notation, sometimes to the detriment of orality. This, in the main, explains the disjuncture between South African university-based music education and music praxis obtaining within black communities. It is for this reason that most African students coming from an oral tradition background struggle to adjust quickly enough to make a success of their university study periods. Those who eventually succeed often are “over-educated,” thus ending up estranged from their musical communities; or “mis- or over-educated” for most of the local music industry career requirements. This paper aims to appraise the pros and cons of university-based music training in relation to South African musical praxis. It does so through engaging various contemporary qualitative research methodologies largely predicated on the grounded theory framework. Data was collected through interviews with individual black African musicians. The sampling procedure was purposive in that it sought to capture abstractions and explications from predetermined sets of musicians; university-educated on the one hand, and the “self-taughts” on the other. After inductive analysis of data, the study clarifies what seems to shape music skill acquisition in South Africa; scant regard for local music industries and community settings; and the impact of the sudden availability of a multiplicity of alternative sources information and avenues to acquire music knowledge and skills.

Introduction

Whereas written notation is at the heart of formal university-based music education, most Africans, and indeed many other societies acquire music-making skills aurally, orally; and through participation in the many rituals and socialisation processes commonly considered “informal.” The transition from the so-called “traditional” or “informal” to the supposed “formal” music training paradigms, especially at university level, has, for most black South Africans, been a relatively new experience, fraught with challenges.

In the South African context, fully functional music qualification programs were and are still offered in historically whites-only universities (HWOU’s). In the late 1980s, when these universities were forced to open their doors to all races, a few otherwise talented African students, but with little or less than adequate preparation from the erstwhile Bantu education system, gained access to university education. In doing so, however, many abandoned or suppressed their culturally acquired Africa-sensed ways of music learning in order to venture into the fashionable literary approaches wherein music is, according to scholars such as Cook, reduced to scores or written notations. This situation arguably represents one major cultural discontinuity for these students. Despite their admirable ability to learn through what Primos likens to “osmosis,” many unknowingly suppress these natural aural-oral sensibilities as they understandably strive to “fit in” with or conform to

Madimabe Geoff Mapaya is Associate Professor of Music, University of Venda specializing in indigenous African music, especially its implication for African musicology and music education. He is the author of Music of Bahana/Nawa and a recording and performing musician with several albums to his name.

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what they, like most, are made to believe is the defining feature of university-based music education and training.\textsuperscript{3}

It is widely known that the tradition of music education, including the accompanying repertoire, is gravely foreign.\textsuperscript{4} It is unashamedly western and out-rightly colonial and imperialist in that it, necessarily, privileges and perpetuates the canonisation of music traditions and aspirations of the northern worlds. As Akrofi and Flouf posit, “no African country south of the Sahara can boast of a music education system which is uniquely African and which fulfils its national aspirations.”\textsuperscript{5} Put succinctly, university-based music curriculum designs are never intended for an African or the African environment. African ways of acquiring and circulating music-making knowledge and skills for that matter hardly feature in or inform university curricula. This explains why students interested in the study of African music are not a perfect fit in these programs; rendering universities as the last places one should resort to when intending to study African music.

To pursue music studies at any South African university, for instance, the prerequisite grades are still derived from western classical and/or, lately, jazz musics. Only recently can students, once accepted into the system, elect to specialize in African music—a development that mainly appears to be a politically correct than a genuine recognition of the status of African music systems. Since the entry into these programs is via western music, a student, assuming he or she is African, wishing to study African music at a South African university has to, first, musically and culturally excommunicate him or herself from the music of birth; almost suspending the self until completion of the study course. This way, accumulated musical heritages are violently supplanted.

For young black South Africans to be accepted into a university music program is hard. This is due to the neglect of music education at the school level by authorities. Nevertheless, some bridging interventions, with various degree of success, have been devised. In most cases, non-governmental arts schools and some historically black only universities, out of necessity, become the de facto bridging or feeder organisations to universities running the so-called established music training programs. For some time now, universities such as the University of Venda found themselves, and not by intent or design, as mere feeders institutions to the HWOUs, which, post-1994, have been racing to meet the student racial demographic imperatives of the new South African dispensation. By playing along, such universities unknowingly became accomplices in the act of the cultural onslaught visited on the African music genius. As soon as mostly poorly exposed African students developed some facility in reading and writing music, or acquire junior degrees, they progress to the so-called elite universities.\textsuperscript{6} In some instances, talented African students are literally poached, only to be systematically de-Africanized.

Ideally, the interest as represented by the increasing numbers of African students enrolling to study music at South African universities should validate the incorporation of African music systems into mainstream music programs. After all, these universities remain African institutions and should in the main champion African art, methodologies, and epistemologies. Little progress has arguably been made towards this ideal. South African universities could still do more to meaningfully fashion articulation with African music-making praxis. The thesis of this paper, therefore, is: university-based music training is misaligned with current South African musical praxis. Specifically, privileging the written notation over the aural-oral approach to music education and training disadvantages the African student.
Methodology

To further unravel the above-mentioned thesis, the study enlists a mixture of contemporary qualitative research methodologies associated with the sociology of music and music education. Primarily, it adopts a personal, self-narrative or self-reflective research paradigm commonly referred to as autoethnography, which draws from personal experiences of musicians, mine included, as both “freshers” and later “seniors” at various South African non-governmental organisations (NGOs) of the late 1970s and 80s; and universities in a transforming society.7

The population of the study comprised sixteen musicians; eight with university music qualifications and eight without.8 The majority of those with music qualifications are now mainly involved at various levels in the education sector. Despite the hostility towards the informed and educated musicians by captains of the industry, a few still persevere as recording and performing artists or in related entrepreneurial fields. Even fewer work for the South African government departments as technocrats. Generally, this group mostly holds similar experiences and understanding of the dynamics of being educated in South Africa. They are also articulate in expressing their views and opinions.9

The other group comprised musicians who, although articulate, either loathe the idea of university education or simply did not have the opportunity to study even if they had wanted to. What is noteworthy is that a significant number of musicians in the self-trained group have some association with church music apprenticeship; with a few others being part of professional or secular bands. Likewise, musicians in this category largely hold more or less similar opinions but collectively seem ill exposed to music education issues. They, therefore, choose not to comment on experiences they do not have but rather on their personal experiences. For this reason, only those with telling comments are mentioned (with permission) in this essay.

In sum, the study yielding this paper represents, to some extent, a cross-section of views on the subject under investigation. The central research question is: why do an alarming number of African students find it difficult to acquire heightened musical knowledge and skills; and to graduate from South African universities? What then is the value of university-based education in an African context? On the other side, why do some African musicians loathe the idea of studying music at universities? From those who went to university, subsequent questions sought to harvest personal reflections and respective experiences with the purpose of establishing whether the education and training received play any significant part in their present occupations.

Considering the Evolution of Music-Making Skills Acquisition

Although music making is omnipresent in all societies, the acquisition of musical knowledge and skills today occurs in at least four identifiable fashions. In the West, including the United States, music education is part of the schooling culture.10 Western classical music—a pure cultural product of the west—is almost entirely taught in classroom situations and thus highly institutionalized. In South Africa and other countries on the African continent, even private lessons are adjudicated by institutions such as the United Kingdom-based Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) in order for students to obtain “formal” graded certification.11

For the greater part of the last century, “formal” jazz education, which first thrived in conservatories modelled on the template of the Hoch in Frankfurt, Germany, has also found
a place in institutions such as universities. The first such development occurred at the University of North Texas, which started offering a BMus jazz degree in 1947.\textsuperscript{12} Whereas western classical music training is strictly classroom-based and institutionalised, jazz education continues to straddle what may be regarded as the “formal” and the “informal” pedagogical approaches in that some education still occurs outside the so-called formal institutions wherein concepts such as “bandstand learning,” and “self-taught” musicians continue to enjoy some currency.\textsuperscript{13}

Suffice to say, western classical music and jazz have historically been the only two established music genres informing music curricula in South Africa. Indigenous African music (IAM), a late comer in this regard, represents a different tradition in that acquisition of musical skills is, as it is the case in most communities, a by-product of other putatively primary activities or rituals; meaning that acquisition of musical knowledge and skills is societally prevalent and usually ritual bound.\textsuperscript{14}

Whilst there is a degree of commonality in how the western classical music and jazz styles have been treated in education and generally in academe, IAM is in a precarious position in that it has largely been more of an ethnomusicologist’s and/or anthropologist’s object of study than a self-contained discipline aimed at imparting performative skills to musicians who upon graduation, would ply their musical trade in an African socio-economic environment.\textsuperscript{15} Arguably, music education specialists do not know yet what to do with and about IAM, hence the failure in the last quarter of a century to properly include it in curricula.\textsuperscript{16} The lack of “buy-in” from credible African musicologists and a lack of genuine engagement with cultural practitioners means no meaningful progress in the inclusion of African music education systems can be expected.

Of the two genres taught in institutions of higher learning in South Africa, it would seem jazz is more preferable, accessible and to some extent usable for most African students because its “…harmony at its structural and aesthetic level is based predominantly on African matrices,” even though the way it is taught in the classroom seems to fall short of representing its own “soul.”\textsuperscript{17} About this predicament, Gatien laments: “the traditional ways of transmitting this music have been changed, compromised, or subverted to formal methods of instruction that fit more comfortably in the formal habitat, or are more efficient (perhaps even more effective, at least in achieving certain results) in the context of classroom or group settings.”\textsuperscript{18}

Springing from this truism, it is, therefore, not surprising that a significant number of musicians who went the classroom route to acquire jazz education express the need to undergo a lengthy processes of what Selaelo Selota and Madimabe Mapaya respectively term the “de-education” and the “detoxing” process in order to break free from imposed rules and, thereby readying themselves musically to access IAM practices and Africa-specific nuances.\textsuperscript{19} This quest is not an African peculiarity. Rolf Jardemark, one of the most prolific Swedish jazz guitarists, once remarked that he was, at the time of the interview, in the process of ridding himself of the limitations that come with immersion in music theory; adding that he preferred to deal with music only at a spiritual as opposed to technical and intellectual levels.\textsuperscript{20} He cites Wes Montgomery, a pioneering master jazz guitarist with no “formal training” as his principal role model. He is convinced that the manner in which Montgomery acquired his skills is a revelation to him and to all who aspire to reach Montgomery’s level of artistry.

Granted, transference of music-making skills is not the sole competency of “formal” institution or universities. All cultures and nations have sustained their age-old music
traditions through cross-generational skills transfer processes. With the exception of the western classical music tradition, most alternatives to these traditions are yet to be recognised for their pedagogical worth. Jazz is perhaps the latest music genre from which universities were humble enough to learn and to incorporate into educational methodologies. Also, due to its confinement to the “new world,” side by side with the western classical music, jazz had no choice but to trade off some of its traits in order for it to evolve into an art form it is today; and to subsequently gain acceptance within mainstream educational systems. \(^{21}\) Suffice to say; other precolonial ways are still ignored and literally excluded in the formulation of the so-called mainstream music education paradigms even though ignoring what works is not sustainable.

In the twenty-first century, technology, with its defining feature being a break away from established norms, has become omnipresent even in music education. Its power lies in enabling those itching to access all kinds of knowledge and skills. Acquisition of musical knowledge and skill, therefore, become less dependent on institutions. Lessons can now be accessed freely on the internet, and through platforms such as YouTube, Skype, and other forms of social media. These unrelenting technological advancements significantly render the advocacy for a university-based approach to music training almost obsolete.

The downside of this development, though, is that virtual instruments (VSTIs), often endowed with the highest order of musical proficiency, are rapidly rendering the very musician obsolete. With the help of technology, the amateur is capable of producing a high-end artistic product often at a fraction of the cost of traditional music production. \(^{22}\) One does not need any musical skills to produce expert sound from a virtual instrument. In some instances, record producers prefer these VSTIs to real musicians because of the cost-effectiveness, the ability to simulate big costly studio environments, and the availability and ease of operation they afford. The whole notion of music making has thus taken a different direction in which manipulation of “gadgets” seems to supersede the ability to read and write music, let alone play a musical instrument. Even for those who still prefer to learn the traditional way, different applications such as transcription software are in abundance. \(^{23}\) Lifting licks off records, as it were, is easier due to the capability of advanced transcription software that easily loops and slows down sections of any piece of music with little deterioration of the sound quality.

From the vinyl, through the compact disc, and into the solid-state digital devices such as the universal serial buses technological eras, transference of artistic skill from a master musician to a student has become easier, cheaper, and much more convenient. Today, any dedicated aspirant musician can download and use a computer application to slow down videos of their favourite musicians for study purposes. This includes exploring even peculiar ineffable nuances and individualised physical movements of the masters. The need for face-to-face instrumental tuition has thus become significantly diminished. The upload facility has enabled most aspirant musicians to rewind, loop, and woodshed musical etudes, which were traditionally only available in print or locked in some inaccessible university or community library. These technological advancements continue to redefine the very meaning of music and the notion of being a musician.

With the above advancements in mind, it is appropriate to state the areas that are beyond contention. Firstly, music scholars are agreed that “music is a social construct” and as such often reflects the tradition from which it originates. \(^{24}\) Secondly, the fact that music pedagogy is to date founded on what many consider the elitist traditions of the West with
an unfounded superiority complex is no secret.²⁵ Thirdly, the assertion that “familiarity with musical notation and the powers of analysis that follow are vital for an ‘understanding’ of music,” is proven otherwise.²⁶ Only ignorant musicologists still subscribe to this view. That “the aural experience is the central core of musicianship” is a fact we are, today, fortunate to appreciate.²⁷

Regarding the Local Music Industries and Community Settings

In order for university training to continue being or become relevant, curriculum planners should be cognizant of trends and contexts, that have a bearing on the career prospects of music graduates. When entering the recording industry and/or the live music sector, for instance, graduates need to be aware of several issues working against their potential successes.

Multinational record companies dominate most of the world’s recording industry. These companies have their origins and headquarters in the developed countries such as the United Kingdom or the United States. Whilst contributing to local economies in terms of providing employment opportunities and paying taxes, the fact that their raison d’ètre is mainly to promote and serve as conduits for products from countries of origin should not be ignored.²⁸ A South African peculiarity is that these multinational record companies recruit local, usually black African, lawyers to deal with the vulnerable African musicians. In this environment, a talented music graduate with some knowledge of the inner workings of the music industry is less than desirable for he or she would demand what is commonly due to him or her.

Furthermore, musicians, whether or not they are graduates, do not enjoy free rein. First, through their Artist and Repertoire (A&Rs) agents, record companies dictate to musicians insofar as the music that, based on some questionable market research, is believed to be most viable in terms of sales. This often means promoting the kind of music that is devoid of academic or artistic value; thus undermining artistic freedom and the initial idea of acquiring music education in the first place. Often musically illiterate producers are imposed on schooled musicians, a practice that often leads to sour working relations. Second, musical directions are dictated by compilers of music working for radio stations on the one hand, and the type of audiences patronizing shows on the other.²⁹ A cursory appraisal of audiences attending open-air concerts, commonly referred to as festivals in the South African parlance, reveals that these events are more of social gatherings than music appreciation-oriented encounters. The splendour of female audiences, the braaivleis (South African version of the American barbeque), and the drinking clubs are the attracting factors in the eye of the sponsors. As a result, the so-called jazz festivals in South Africa have degenerated into Afro-pop concerts, thus rendering studied musics such as jazz irrelevant.

The same pattern can be witnessed with the so-called jazz clubs or jazz appreciating societies.³⁰ Like the open-air concerts, they have become social clubs. The interesting factor, though, is that the jazz tag is maintained, more as a marker of social class than a music genre. In some instances, smooth jazz and/or Afro-pop, both considered diluted versions of jazz by the jazz connoisseurs, have been the most viable music choices before the advent of gospel music popularity after 2005 and are associated with the urban black South African population of the 25-45 age group today.³¹ Understandably, commercially driven musicians compose music focusing partially on servicing these “markets” as a way of sustaining their careers and egos.
Sometimes satisfying all the forces becomes a challenging balancing act, especially for a thinking and gifted musician. Selaelo Selota, for instance, observes that songs written in Zulu are the most played, with a distant second being instrumental compositions. But when it comes to live performances, the audiences call for Northern Sotho songs such as *Mamodiegi* and *Terrr Phaal*—a case of radio airplay motives not being congruent with audience expectations? In sum, music graduates entering the South African music industry find themselves having to fight for their artistic voice, let alone independence.

Lastly, South Africa, like most stable countries in the developing world, is experiencing massive urbanization. The result of this phenomenon is the establishment of urban culture, which in essence, is a conglomeration of many cultures. Studies show that every culture, including the resultant one born of cultural intercourse, develops its own transmission modes, the most common of which are its lingua franca and music. Urban music is, therefore, music germinating out of urban socio-economic dynamics. In other words, urban music could be regarded as a soundtrack to urban culture. It takes a keen eye and a sharp ear to discern such musical dictates—attributes that often do not necessarily form part of the arsenal of schooled musicians.

**Arguments for University Based Music Education**

The advantages of acquiring music knowledge and skills through a university or some “formal institution” abound. Firstly, the fact that any qualification structure is typically designed to expose the student to an array of skills and a spectrum of experiences qualifying as high-level professionalism is invaluable. The making of such an educated musician presupposes the ability to go through music history classes, for instance, call for different musicological reflections, immersion and application in, say, instrumental study, acoustics, music theory, form and composition or aural training—areas of knowledge branching into sub-disciplines of musicology. This is the sort of training that university-based education guarantees. Additionally, ethnomusicology brings other dimensions closely associated with disciplines such as anthropology and sociology; hence the anthropology or the sociology of music nomenclatures.

Conducting a library or desktop research activity for a history assignment, off to a computer laboratory for acoustics, taking instrument tuition, practising in solitude, and then taking part in ensemble performances or conducting fieldwork is what a typical music student at both undergraduate and postgraduate is likely to experience. In these kinds of environments, accountability, self-responsibility, and time management, amongst other skills, are critical. The ability to cope with such a pressured situation on a daily basis means the student is en route to mastering the invaluable expertise that shapes their professional acumen.

Secondly, like most systematised professional phenomena or science, programs leading to the same kind of (music) qualification seem to be somewhat similar the world over. A Bachelor of Music (jazz program) at the University of Cape Town, for instance, is almost identical to that offered by the University of North Texas. In addition, experiences from other institutions such as the Berklee College of Music can be expected because of the influence of the principal designers in the design stages. In this case, the influence Professors Mike Campbell, an alumnus of the University of North Texas, and Professor Andrew Lilly of the Berklee College of Music are apparent. Most importantly, such an approach to curriculum design, apart from it being a constellation of universally recognised music
education practices, ensures or effectively achieves the so-called international standards. As such, ploughing through a study program at any of the sites guarantees acquisition of a more or less the same kind of knowledge and skills sets. All students of jazz, for instance, would have in their student periods, learned how to perform and improvise through the changes of Joseph Kosmas’ Autumn Leaves or some such “standard” repertoire. This speaks to what Neil refers to as “the standardizing effects of institutionalization” in many jazz university programs throughout North America. This phenomenon, of course, extends to other parts of the world where jazz and indeed all other forms of music are studied. All students of western classical music, especially students of composition, would have somewhere in their formative years, encountered the Johann Sebastian Bach’s chorale compositional techniques. The argument here is that music education is standardized, and as such guarantees universal knowledge and skills sets across the globe.

Thirdly, music education policies and curriculum rely heavily on research, most of which resides within universities. Making sense of this exclusive information requires educated facilitators. South Africa has been frustrated by a shortage of suitably qualified teachers. Those skilled enough used to be white and thus serving a limited number of well-resourced schools and mainly teaching from a particular cultural view, find themselves compelled to accommodate many other learners from other population groups with different worldviews, social challenges, and cultural backgrounds is stressful.

It is common sense that government officials or curriculum planners can neither conduct classes nor discharge the much-needed education and training to the masses of South African learners. Universities must respond to such a demand by producing more suitably qualified educators to fulfil the task. To make sense and actualize such curricula, inculcating the culture of lifelong learning in pursuance of music excellence means developing and upscaling music literacies to levels comparable to those of other nations. Acquiring a university music degree presupposes a move towards the attainment of such an ideal.

The ability to read and write music is not only useful for music traditionally associated with western cultures. Many scholars including the likes of Kofi Agawu, Emily Agag, Jean Kidula, and Meki Nzewi, born and raised in African environments, are only able to “represent” African music, as it were, because of their university-begotten literary skills. This form of education, notwithstanding the African ritual and socialisation processes they may have undergone, enables African scholars to contextualise or discern earlier theories, arguments, and ideations about African music.

What has been highlighted here is just the tip of the iceberg. For these and other reasons, the benefits of university-based education are plentiful and can hardly be taken lightly.

Arguments Against University-Based Music Education

Having briefly discussed the value of university-based education, it is appropriate also to acknowledge various compelling arguments against such an approach. Arguably, it is natural to expect a somewhat negative sentiment against academic music education to come from those who achieved success and proficiency through alternative means. Despite the fact that some hold music qualifications from universities, it is interesting to note that they share the same sentiments with those without.
The first of such criticisms could be summed up as the conveyor belt syndrome associated with university-based training whereby acquired music skills manifest, to some degree, in a particular determinable manner from one musician to the next. Even though the “individual voice” eventually emerges at the end for some, the sound or style of such musicians often bears characteristics that are sometimes too similar to ignore as though they were factory manufactured.

On the other hand, it may be argued that the self-taught exhibits a greater level of uniqueness in terms of voice and technique (or lack of it). For this reason, merit exists in Paledi Malatji’s assertion that if he were to start looking at music in terms of “flat 9s and sharp 5s” as is common parlance in the jazz theory language, he would lose the rough edge that makes his a typically *khelobedu*-sensed music. For him university education would make him sound like any other so-called schooled musician, and this is not what he wants. In fact, all musicians with heightened awareness of the national, regional, or ethnic musical subtleties strive to encapsulate nuances in order to establish a unique “music voice.” As for Sello Galane, self-study, especially the bandstand training he received, did not only liberate him but also opened opportunities but also paved a way for him as a composer and performer to develop his relatively successful “free kihu” concept.

Pastor Khathutshedho Muthaphuli, an all-around musician and the talented bassist Danny Mamphogoro are two self-taught musicians who grew up in the church environment and have absorbed what they call the “gospel sound.” Talented as the two are, they both flatly declined opportunities to study music at a university. Mamphogoro asks: “If I can transcribe a song, make a sense of how it was put together, and then successfully perform it at a level I currently do, I might as well study something else.” Indeed, he had since graduated with a degree in international relations. But what is interesting is that he had also stopped playing in church groups citing the fact that he has outgrown the ordinary standard of most church musicians. Perhaps as a somewhat paradox to his earlier point, he prefers to mix with university-educated musicians, who according to him often have something fresh for him to learn. Citing his friend Morokolo Mokgetle, a piano lecturer at a local university, Mamphogoro reiterates the fact that they both are tired of reproducing chords and progressions common in today’s church music. If they were to continue playing in such an environment, church or otherwise, they would want the liberty to break away from the norm and the license to venture into experimental music-making terrains. The two musicians, one formally trained, and the other self-taught, but talented and highly intellectual about music, seem in accord. They yearn for uniqueness and space for self-expression. This bears testimony to the fact that acquisition of music skills is not the sole preserve of university training.

From these and other inferences, it is within reason to conclude that university-educated musicians, like those trained in church environments, are to an extent parodic and stereotypical; for they each essentially approach music from a predetermined common point of view. The insinuation is that such musicians are relatively less spontaneous, and are likely to “wince at the sour notes, botched chord changes and off-key vocals.” Furthermore having an instrumental tutor, instructor, or conductor as is common in mediated learning or music-making environments invariably instils this sense of (self)-censorship; often to the detriment of musical experimentation.

Whereas the “wrongness” associated with the self-taught might be motivation enough for innovation or exploration of unconventional music territories, the schooled musician is
trained to aim often for a purified, theoretically rationalised, or an almost calculated approach to music performance. In the final analysis, most schooled musicians tend to sound more or less the same. As a group, one can often tell them apart from the self-taught musicians just by the way they sound and how they approach music. There are, of course, exceptions to this observation.

The second type of criticism comes from researchers such as Christopher Small, who warn of the intrinsic and systematic demusicalization effects of university-based music training. In these situations, many aspirant musicians, especially those with little or no prior experience in instrument playing or performance, freeze when put under high-pressure situations such as performing in front of a live audience or during tests and practical examinations. When told by instructors that their way of handling the instrument, embouchure, posture, or their way of articulating certain musical styles is incorrect or inappropriate, most crumble and never recover. This kind of nervousness leads seasoned self-taught musicians to doubt the efficacy of the classroom training approach.

Closely related to the above point is the fact that the pressured environment, whether imagined or real in the HWOUs, is viewed by most African students as one of the non-musical factors impeding artistic development and growth. After all, such institutions are, according to Grada Kilomba, hostile and unkind to students coming from non-western cultural backgrounds. For this and other reasons, it makes sense when most university-trained African musicians, regardless of their alma mater universities, continue to credit their socialisation processes by linking their most creative spells to periods spent at NGOs. Despite the privilege of studying at universities, most African musicians choose rather to be associated with the legacy of the NGOs whose hallmark had always been laced with African solidarity in the face of the general hardships typical in the apartheid era, and the attendant quest for free political and social expression. The connectedness of musical creativity, spirituality, and the struggle for civil liberties is well documented.

Despite the apparent quintessence of western classical, later jazz, and much more recently rock pedagogies in universities across the globe, it would seem that given the reasons just mentioned, amongst others, the effect of canonical pedagogies on the raw talent of some students ranges from minimal to detrimental. This gives credence to “demusicalization” theories, which in the context of the socio-political realities of South Africa, rings true; especially for most African music graduates.

Challenges of Privileging Notation Over Aural-Oral Traditions

The tendency of universities to always relate or equate sound to notational patterns is a defining feature of formal university-based music education. Whilst such an approach may have served the western classical music pedagogy well, it could be problematic for students who come from the aural-oral tradition where music, or at least some aspect thereof, defies conventional notation. Some musical impulses, especially the aural-oral reflexes, are not amenable to literacy; and musical competency is primarily performative as opposed to literary. The rise of computer-aided programs is an expression of a need for music education to consider the aural-oral training on equal terms with the erstwhile writing and reading approach.

Currently aural training is only a subsidiary subject in formal music study. But its tendency to gravitate towards notation may be disadvantageous to many African students. In its current state, aural training taught in formal spaces still emphasises the need for
notation or the score. This emphasis on the visualisation of sound as notes on paper usurps the more practical need to develop functional aural-oral facilities. Whereas students are encouraged to “hear” through the inner ear, the insistence on relating sound to notational patterns through the imaginary eye, that is, visualization could sometimes be defeatist if the balance is not right. For a novice coming from a predominantly oral tradition, this is likely to be misconstrued as meaning that the ability to read supersedes the importance of the aural-oral competency, thus missing the point of a balanced musical development. The worse case scenario for musicianship is the tacit propaganda that insinuates that music hardly exists outside of notation; and that the score is quintessential to the music it seeks to represent.54

The academic urge to subject music to staff notation presents a challenge in that it forces it away from its performative nature. This disconnect, subtle as it may seem, accounts for the disparate attitudes towards notation-based aural training classes between students from the literary background on the one hand, and those from the aural-oral tradition on the other. For most African students eager to perform music as they aurally and intellectually perceive it, this type of aural training may seem a hindrance or burdensome if the music is first to be encountered as notated scores before it can make aural-oral sense.

Worse still, the general practice of allocating only ten minutes to the aspect of aural training in a typical forty-five-minute instrumental lesson and the insistence on sight-reading on top of that, clearly sends a wrong message; especially when even some instrument tutors doubt the importance of aural training, which is immediately not transferable to obvious practical benefit.55 Despite being compulsory in formal music training, notation-based aural training classes are considered a distraction by those who find little value in sight-reading. In South Africa, for instance, too few African musicians end up in orchestras, big bands, studio session work, or any such situations where sight-reading skills are essential. The majority, if they eventually graduate, end up leading their own bands or playing in groups where they integrate with musicians the majority of whom function purely on the aural-oral traditional musical perception basis.

Given its endurance and wider application, it could be argued that the aural-oral approach that has long been established could still be a reliable pedagogical point of departure for it still is the most efficient way of transferring musical skills in many communities. Such an approach would not immediately need notation to thrive. The Brotherhood of Breath under the leadership of Chris McGregor, for instance, like many occasional South African big bands led by schooled musicians such as Victor Ntoni, is a classic example of an ensemble comprising a high calibre of musicians who do not necessarily read from the score but rely on their aural-oral skills. If fact, according to Joe Malinga, reliance on the score including the acquisition of music skills through the so-called formal school, has, in some quarters, been looked down upon and despised.56

A more recent example of heavy investment in a skill that is least needed relates to Selaelo Selota, one of the few university-educated musicians in South Africa.57 Much as Selota has become comfortable within the music literary tradition cultivated by university education, he maintains that most often his work is reliant on the aural-oral facility he has practiced and perfected over time. How he introduces the new (music) material to his band, communicates musical ideas during rehearsals, including the presentation of actual stage performances, is mainly via the aural-oral transmission mode.

Additionally, Magalane Phoshoko, a Black Conscious Movement-steeped pianist and music teacher based in Gauteng Province, relates instances where he gets inspired in the still
of the night. By virtue of his formal musical training, he would sometimes notate the musical ideas on a manuscript paper even though he still prefers to record such ideas on a recording device. More often than not, he argues, he is frustrated the following morning by the notation system, which often fails to recapture the mood that accompanied the inspiration the night before. As he puts it, “the music would have left me” regardless of the retention of a somewhat accurate notation. A much more retentive strategy for him is first to play the musical idea on the piano, thereby engaging the motor memory, hearing, and then committing such a moment to some recording device. This way, he contends, the idea would have been played, sounded and therefore “heard” by both the inner and the external ears.\(^58\)

Notation and, mainly, the motor memory resulting from having played the musical ideas on the instrument, could function as triggers to the already sonically indexed ideas in his sound memory. And these kinds of examples or experiences are common in the jazz and popular music traditions.

One may think that because of its close association with western classical music, South African choral music is entrenched in the literary tradition. Contrary to this belief, the tradition has grown into its own kind of a musical genre that almost exclusively employs the solfege system. This system resonates with the oral tradition in that, unlike staff notation, it largely thrives on the manifestation of a sonic picture in the mind as opposed to the visualisation of musical patterns on paper. In other words, choristers do not envision notes on paper but rather “hear” the sound in their heads. Lesley Nkuna, one of the revered composers of choral music, like most African musicians, would speak of a composition coming in the form of a dream. In the dream, a tune is often heard somewhere in the conscious mind, which is later transcribed into a poem, capturing the mood as much as possible and then later transcribes onto paper using the solfege system.\(^59\) A composition is, for most African choral composers, never a manipulation of musical elements at a cognitive level, but one that grows from affective domains such as dreams and inspiration. Arguably, no one can teach anybody how to access such a resource; it is intensely personal. Notably, in this explanation, the representation of musical sound as patterns on paper comes last, and most choristers cannot notate music themselves, but they still can sing from solfege well enough to be functional in a choral format.

Hanyane Khosa, a music lecturer and choral conductor, is all too familiar with the frustrations of choral composers such as Ndwamato George Mugovhani as well as his own uncle the late Dr. S.J. Khosa.\(^60\) He observes that both composers continually decried the fact that their compositions never come close to the initial conception despite enormous effort to accurately notate the musical experience. Personal impulses and nuances can hardly be transcribed to notation on paper, and choral music is always at the mercy of, or coloured by, amongst other things, the abilities of choristers, including the conductors’ musicality. In these and similar circumstances, it is understandable that the feeling or the musical essence of the notes is often elusive to many a chorister. This sense of inadequacy attests to the deficiency of music notation when it comes to representing musical ideas and inspirations.

**Conclusion**

This article set out to appraise university-based music training and to probe its amenability with the South African musical praxis. It pursued its purpose through interviews with musicians, the university-educated and the self-taught, including the consultation of written scholarly sources. The merits of the aural-oral nature of the music making on the one hand
and university-based notation systems on the other have been discussed. But the bias in favor of the notation or written form of literacy by universities only privileges a few and flies in the face of established performative musical practices of many. The ease of access brought about by technological advancement is a tide against which none can swim. The advent of outlets such as YouTube and Skype are challenging the wisdom of steadfastly insisting on notation-based music pedagogy. Perhaps a new music pedagogy, which is ready to harness all approaches, could still find relevance in the aural-oral, technology driven, and notation traditions. The coming of age of study orientations interested in genres such as blues, rock, and jazz, along with the awakening to the age-old successes of the so-called non-European music traditions, opens access to the study of music. Notably, in almost all these traditions, music essentially remains an aural-oral phenomenon. As with language intention in any given culture, musical ideas are transmitted efficiently using the oral tradition, and ideally with the intention of carrying messages in the literal sense or otherwise. Conclusively, the aural-oral tradition phenomenon, apart from being commonplace, is by far the most preferred mode of the music-making enterprise.

Notes

1 Mapaya 2014.
2 Cook 2005.
4 Oehrle 1991; Carver 2002; Fredericks 2008.
5 Akrofi and Flofu 2007, p. 144.
6 Masolo 2013.
7 For autoethnography, see Ellis and Bochner 2000; Anderson 2006; and Chang 2008.
8 Data was collected through direct and unstructured interviews stemming from the central research question. All respondents wished to be quoted by name since they keenly own up to their opinions.
9 A mixture of political anger on the one hand, and a sense of conquest over the adversarial state of higher education are still detectable in their animated narratives.
10 EACEA 2009.
11 Credit must be given to the University of South Africa for claiming a stake in this space of adjudicating graded music examinations.
12 Prouty 2005.
13 For “Bandstand learning” see Barron 2007, and for “self-taught musicians see Dobbins 1988. Thamagana Mojapelo (2008) distinguishes between South African musicians who hone their skills through session work and those who, to the same ends, enrol for music education and training at tertiary level to acquire music knowledge and skills.
14 Mapaya 2011.
15 Nketa 1986.
16 Thorsen 2002.
18 Gatien 2009, p. 95.
19 Mapaya 2002 and 2010; and Selota interview 2009.
20 Jardemark interview 1997.
21 Gayle 1975; Malinga interview 2015.
23 Piszczalski 1977.
24 Reinecke 2007; McCarthy 2000; Peretz 2006.
28 Master Sechele, a retired record company executive opines that multinational record companies are in fact economic tentacles aiming to penetrate and create markets for countries of origin. In South Africa, these companies are structured in such a way that they have international as well as the local divisions or departments. Often the local divisions or departments are not adequately resourced to promote national talent, nor are they equipped to play a meaningful and developmental role and to grow that which needs nurturing.
29 Pyper 2011.
30 Mapaya, Malinga, and Thobejane 2014.
31 Smooth jazz, “a controversial term, denoting a form of music that many jazz lovers do not consider a form of jazz,” but “a musical genre characterized by bland instrumental watered-down jazz.”
32 Selota interview 2009.
33 Vlahov and Galea 2002.
34 Coplan, 1982 and 1985; and Ballantine 1993.
35 Herndon and McLeod 1990.
36 Byrd 2009.
37 Klickstein 2009.
38 Neil 2014, p. 4.
41 Malatjji interview 2009.
42 Galane interview 2009. Bandstand music training is essentially dichotomous to classroom education even though one can expect a tinge of the other in each. The bandstand-training concept refers to a tried and tested jazz pedagogy where a novice “informally” learns directly from a mentor through trial and era. Greg Carroll (cites Chinen 2007) remarks; “I can recall back in the early “60s when it was sort of taboo for jazz to be presented in the classroom.”
43 Muthaphuli interview 2015; Mamphogoro interview 2015.
44 Mamphogoro interview 2015.
45 Escott and Hawkins 2011.
46 Small 1999.
47 Wöllner et al. 2003.
48 Kilomba 2008.
49 Koloane 1999; Thorsén 2002.
For Western music pedagogy see Jorgensen 2014; for jazz see Whyton 2006; and for rock see Reimer 1996.


Reitan 2009.

Cook 2005.

Reitan 2009.

Malinga interview 2014.

Selota interview 2014.

Phoshoko interview 2014.

Nkuna interview 2015.

Khosa interview 2015.

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REVIEW ESSAY

Patrice Lumumba: The Evolution of an Évolué

CHRISTOPHER R. COOK


Patrice Lumumba remains an inspirational figure to Congolese and peoples across the developing world for his powerful articulation of economic and political self-determination. But who was the real Lumumba? There are competing myths: for the left he was a messianic messenger of Pan-Africanism; for the right he was angry, unstable and a Communist. He did not leave behind an extensive body of writings to sift through, ponder or analyze. The official canon of his work is short and includes such items as his June 30, 1960 Independence Day speech and the last letter to his wife shortly before his execution. The Patrice Lumumba, the one celebrated in Raoul Peck’s film Lumumba, la mort d’un prophète does not start to find his own voice until his attendance at the December 1958 First All Africans Peoples’ Conference which leaves him only twenty-five months on the world stage before his death at the age of thirty-five. While there have been other biographies and works on his life, much of it is now out of print or not available in English, Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja’s Patrice Lumumba and Leo Zeilig’s Lumumba: Africa’s Lost Leader have attempted to fill in this biographical vacuum with sympathetic, accessible, and highly readable introductory texts.

The contribution these two books make to the literature of Patrice Lumumba, and the Congo is ironically not concentrating on Lumumba’s iconic Cold War death but instead placing his life and words into the proper cultural, economic, and historical context of Congolese history. You may think Lumumba was born to make his “Independence Day” speech before the Belgian King. But Zeilig and Nzongola-Ntalaja effectively show that Lumumba evolved from a man who once believed in the Belgian civilizing mission (and his place in it) to the person celebrated today.

To understand his evolution one must realize that Lumumba was part of a larger cohort called the évolute. They were the upper strata of the middle class; the highest-level indigenous Congolese could attain in the Belgian colony. Patrice Lumumba wanted to be an évolute, and he climbed his way from obscurity to a job at the Kisangani Post Office

Christopher R. Cook is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. Some of his recent work examines American press coverage of African conflicts in Angola and the Congo. His current project explores press coverage of Ken Saro-Wiwa’s environmental activism and trial.

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through his own “irrepressible dynamism” and sheer force of will (Zeilig, p. 93). His rise to the top of Congolese society was nothing short of “phenomenal” considering he had no formal education (Nzongola-Ntalaja, p. 39). He became an active member of that city’s social and political life. At one point he was President or leader of seven different evolue voluntary associations. His earliest political activities and writings were in defense of this class and implicitly pro-Belgian. But his rapid rise through the ranks of Kisangani society invoked jealousies from his peers and mid-level white bureaucrats.

In 1955 Lumumba was caught embezzling from the Post Office to support his western lifestyle, which even on a meager salary was expected of him as an evolue (Zeilig, p. 52; and Nzongola-Ntalaja, p. 54). For both authors this is the watershed moment in Lumumba’s life. To be sure he was not alone in stealing—many others did the same. As Nzongola-Ntalaja states, the usual punishment for such an offense was repayment of debt and a slap on the wrist. The difference here was the jealousy and resentment his strong personality created. Lumumba was sent to prison and while the King eventually pardoned him it left an important mark on his life that is often glossed over by other biographers (for example it is completely missing from Peck’s film).

It was his time in prison that he started making the intellectual transition. It was here he fully realized that Belgian assimilation was a sham. Zeilig argues that after prison Lumumba set about trying to square the contradictions of wanting to be an evolue with the racism of the Belgian state (p. 59). It was in Pan-Africanism and Congolese nationalism that he found his answers. What separates Lumumba from many of his contemporaries was the fact that he had invented himself. He was neither from Kisangani nor Kinshasa. So he had no ethnic ties like Joseph Kasa-Vubu with ABAKO; or to a regional power base that Moises Tshombe could enjoy in Katanga. His sophisticated articulation of independence built on dignity and true political and economic freedom was a powerful message. As Nzongola-Ntalaja writes: “his aim being to see all strata and ethnic groups of the Congo united to end colonial economic exploitation, political repression, and cultural oppression” (p. 71). It was an inclusive message of hope. Yet ironically, this strength was also his undoing. When he was deposed as Prime Minister he had no real base of power to protect him.

Zeilig and Nzongola-Ntalaja stress that for all his intelligence and energy Lumumba and his fellow Congolese did not think through the consequences of immediate independence. It became apparent at the 1960 Round Table negotiations that the Congolese soon to be elite, “had no clear understanding of the economic aspects of the transfer of power, which had a lot to do with the limits of national sovereignty…” (Nzongola-Ntalaja, p. 82) The Belgians gave them the independence they so desperately wanted knowing they already had entrenched their economic dominance across the country for years to come.

But it is here I want to point out that both texts focus on the role of the Congolese evolue to the decolonization process. Sadly for Lumumba, he misjudged the ferocity of his compatriots to maintaining their own status of privilege. Just as it was almost expected that colonial clerks could put their hands in the till many of the evolue were unwilling partners to a truly democratic Congo. Jean Paul Satre notes that Lumumba
“appointed without the least suspicion the most active elements of his class... men whose common interest predisposed them to betray him” (Zeilig, p. 142). According to son Francoise Lumumba “[his father] discovered in the course of 1960 that not all Congolese had the same interpretation of independence, our ‘brothers’ were fighting for something completely different” (Zeilig, p. 148). Nzongola-Ntalaja damningly states that members of the new ruling elite were “more concerned with enjoying the material benefits that colonialism denied them” (p. 89). Zeilig concurs with this assessment—the evolue struggle was insuring their “integration into the privileged world” (p. 43).

Patrice Lumumba wanted true national liberation and participatory democracy. The Congolese elite, jealous and fearful of what that meant, conspired with the western political and economic classes to have him removed. Contrary to American thinking he was never a Marxist. But Lumumba’s rhetoric of freedom was too dangerous a message for the west and its Congolese allies to remain unchallenged (Nzongola-Ntalaja, p. 137). As for his January 1960 assassination, there is no question about the role of foreign intervention. New evidence only paints a fuller picture in the role the Belgians, the Eisenhower Administration, and the Hammarskjold-led United Nations played in his removal from office and brutal death. The western elites would work with (and discard if needed) any grouping of Congolese evolue needed to accomplish their goals of getting rid of Lumumba, whether it was Kasa-Vubu, Moises Tshombe, the Binza group, or eventually and tragically Joseph Mobutu.

Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja and Leo Zeilig show that the real Lumumba was a complex man who loved his nation, who was passionate, articulate, and intelligent but at times naïve. He was not perfect. Unlike many of his peers, however, he evolved to see a wider struggle of freedom beyond the narrow material interests of his class. I would highly recommend both these texts for students in African or Congolese politics. They would make great courses additions. While they are similar there are subtle and important differences as well. For example, Zeilig spends more time on Lumumba’s formative years and his wives and children. His book also comes with explanatory text boxes in the margins concerning Congolese history and other African leaders. If there is a drawback to the Zeilig text I would suggest he actually expand these textboxes and add other pedagogical tools to truly make it a student textbook. As for Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, he has written extensively and authoritatively on the Congo. He has few peers on the subject. This work is partly a labor of love. He notes at the end that he hopes this book will be a “modest contribution” to Lumumba’s legacy (p. 140). I would argue both books are such contributions. They challenge us not to dwell on his death but breathe life into his words, because the questions Patrice Lumumba raised about self-determination then are still relevant for all of us today.
REVIEW ESSAY

The Nexus between Global Health and Public Health in Africa

CLEMENT MASAKURE


Introduction

Scholarship that historicizes the connections between global health and public health in Africa has been far apart in African medical history. Three recent titles that focus on global health in Africa, public health in Africa, and the history of blood transfusion are an attempt to fill that gap. The titles contain a set of diverse and empirically rich case studies that examine various aspects of global health and public health in Africa from the colonial period to the post-colonial era. They also bring into conversation African medical anthropology as well as historical and biomedical sciences in analyzing the globalization of health and healing in Africa. Although there is no single definition of global health, Tamara Giles-Vernick and James L. Webb note that broadly, the term refers to health initiatives launched within Africa by actors based outside of the continent. These health initiatives have roots in the colonial period and came to their modern forms in the post-Second World War era (p. 3). The various public health programs were made possible by the participation of local actors. The titles, therefore, wrestle with the important issues in which public health in Africa, including blood transfusions, are affected and influenced by global forces and agencies as well as local factors that originate within African settings.

Historicizing Global Health in Africa

Global Health in Africa: Historical Perspectives, edited by Tamara Giles-Vernick and James L. Webb, consists of an array of essays aimed at promoting historical and an anthropological research that incorporates social sciences and biomedical approaches in analyzing the state of global health in Africa. Giles-Vernick and Webb underscore the need to bridge the divide between social sciences and biomedical approaches in order to improve the public health delivery system in Africa (p. 2). Divided into three parts, the first examines international

Clement Masakure is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow, International Studies Group, Centre for Africa Studies, University of the Free State. His research interests revolve around health and healing in southern Africa, with a particular emphasis on histories of healthcare workers and hospitals in Zimbabwe.

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interventions in public health in Africa. The case studies range from early efforts at eradicating smallpox, historical analysis on malaria control, the historical contexts of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and the often neglected problem of malnutrition. Using the case of the West African smallpox eradication campaign in the pre-Second World War era, William Schneider notes that early efforts at eliminating smallpox were a “partial success” (p. 26), mainly due to the absence of international coordination on disease eradication. Schneider is keen to demonstrate that even though this was the case, such early efforts formed the bedrock for future public health interventions. While Schneider places emphasis on smallpox, Webb focuses on malaria. He demonstrates that the history of malaria eradication gives public health experts lessons for today’s malaria control, in particular how the failure to sustain the control of malaria can lead to an epidemic of malaria. The chapter by Guillaume Lachenal puts under scrutiny the genealogy of therapeutic approach called “Treatment as Prevention” (TasP) and its relation to the current efforts at reducing HIV transmissions (p. 70). The essay contextualizes the present fight against HIV in a historical perspective. The often neglected issue of childhood nutrition is examined by Jennifer Tappan. Tappan’s work underscores the consequences of narrow biomedical understanding of nutrition that did not take into consideration Africans’ reception and interpretation of the intervention (p. 13). The essay points to the significance of having a wider social and cultural analysis of how people receive public health interventions.

The second part of the book puts under the microscope the historical dimensions and the unexamined assumptions of the present disease control programs. Tamara Giles-Vernick and Stephanie Rupp examine the historical cross species transmission between people in Equatorial Africa and apes. By historicizing local narratives on transmission, Giles-Vernick and Rupp produce a complex history of humans’ interactions with the environment for centuries and the fluidity of relations between humans and apes in Africa (p. 118). On the other hand, Anne Marie Moulin historicizes the broader significance of Iatrogenesis and Hepatitis C transmission in Egypt. She emphasizes how government intervention nurtured a mistrust of state public health system (p. 114). Myron Echenberg grapples with the question of how cholera remains a major public health threat even though effective treatments exist (p. 160). For Echenberg political and social choices are at the root of the measures to curtail the spread of cholera.

The third part, argues that a historical understanding of the past is significant in efforts at reducing disease transmission. The position of male circumcision and HIV is examined by Michel Garenne and others. As a response to the HIV epidemic, international and local agencies organized against HIV transmission through inter alia, encouraging medical male circumcision (p. 185). The authors conclude that male circumcision does not protect against transmission (p. 193). Sheryl McCurdy and Haruka Maruyama put at the center of discussion the history and characteristic of heroin use in Sub-Saharan Africa. They also discuss the various responses to heroin use, including the foreign led interventions, which emphasize the top-down approach to drug control (p. 212). The authors demonstrate the significance of appreciating the historical, as well as the social, political, and economic contexts of drug use in an attempt to develop effective responses to the emerging problem in public health (p. 212). Besides calling for the integration of social sciences and biomedical perspectives in global health analysis, the volume demonstrates that there is a need to understand how Africans conceptualize disease etiologies, therapeutic systems as well as social-political and economic factors that affect African access to
medical care. By historicizing past efforts in the field of global health, the study is significant in enabling a fuller understanding of the nature of contemporary challenges facing public health in Africa.

The Nature of Public Health in Africa

Ruth J. Prince and Rebecca Marsland’s edited volume, *The Making and Unmaking of Public Health in Africa*, examines the nature of public health in Africa. Taking historical and anthropological approaches, the volume concludes that the provision of public health has been an uneven phenomenon. The patchy and fragmented public health has also been affected by humanitarian interventions from international players, in the process focusing on specific targeted services rather than emphasizing on holistic and comprehensive care (p. 8). In doing so, the authors examine the various regimes of care, the contradictions, the negotiations and at times the competing actors in the provision of care.

The question revolving around whose interest public health serve is examined in the first section of the volume. Murray Last’s chapter explores the vicissitudes of public health provision in northern Nigeria. Last locates politics as the root cause of problems bedeviling public health in northern Nigeria and argues that such problems will be solved once there is political will (p. 55). On the other hand, Rebecca Marsland examines the intersections between indigenous public health and what Tanzanian authorities perceive as dangers of indigenous customs to public health in Tanzania. In the section’s last chapter, Noemi Tousignant examines the role of private pharmacists in Senegalese public health. Pharmacists emphasized their role as guarantors of quality medicine. They also lobbied the government to have a greater role in the pharmaceutical industry.

The second part of the book focus on the care economy. It examines on whose terms caring takes place and with what consequences for those who dedicate part of their time to take care of the infirm. Lotte Meinert uses the concept of “homework” as an entry point for analyzing the nature of work assigned to relatives and families by health authorities. This homework includes patients and relatives performing tasks such as “taking (and giving) medications, monitoring bodily signs and changing everyday bodily habits of eating and drinking as well as altering social and sexual relations” (p. 119). While the issue of homework is not a novel phenomenon in Africa, Meinert persuasively argues that with the development of this regime of care, which is closely linked to HIV/AIDS, homes and families became central in public health initiatives. Hannah Brown expands the ideas revolving around the connections between the home and public health by analyzing home based care in Kenya. Although certain aspects of home based care have historical roots, some practices of the present day care are informed by the international responses to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Hence, public health interventions have to be examined “in the light of past and present associations if one has to make sense of the hopes, aspirations and motivations of those who become involved in them” (p. 141). Nelson Mulemi’s chapter analyzes the struggles with cancer treatment in the light of limited resources, high costs of treatment and low awareness of the disease.

In the last section of the book, Susan Reynolds Whyte explores the significance of social and economic differentiation in affecting the causes, prevention, and treatment of diseases such as hypertension and diabetes. Central to her work are the disparities in international intervention.
between problems such as cancer and global intervention in HIV/AIDS. Ruth J. Prince’s chapter examines the connections between global health intervention with resources, expertise, and also knowledge circulations in Kisumu, Kenya, which is facing a crumbling public health infrastructure. P. Wenzel Geissler’s final chapter, “The Archipelago of Public Health,” is a commentary on the landscape of medical research in twenty-first century Africa. On the whole, the volume provides a nuanced analysis of the current nature of public health in Africa. The book compels us to probe what public health is and who is involved in public health initiatives as well as appreciating how it fits within the emerging field of global health in Africa.

Blood Transfusion in Sub-Saharan Africa within a Global Health Context

William Schneider’s *The History of Blood Transfusion in Sub-Saharan Africa* shifts the angle of analysis by examining the history of blood transfusion in sub-Saharan Africa. His main objective is to understand the degree to which blood transfusion procedures played a role in the spread of HIV. He does this through examining when, where, and how blood transfusion was introduced in African settings and with what implications for public health in Africa (p. 4). In addition, the book explores how Africans, in their different capacities as administrators of blood transfusion, blood donors, and recipients, adapted to this new medical treatment (p. 4).

The history of blood transfusion followed a similar trajectory as with other aspects of biomedicine in Africa before the Second World War. As much as the conditions for transfusion were conducive in Africa, it was largely limited due to the shortage of medical personnel and apparatus to conduct the procedure (p. 15). The post Second World War era saw further entrenchment in the use of blood transfusion in sub-Saharan Africa. The advent of independence for many African countries did not halt the global transfer of resources and knowledge from the global north to Africa. In the early years of independence, assistance from former colonial masters and other global actors continued to grow. Hence, there was a continuous expansion of the practice of transfusion (p. 65). However, this expansion began to stutter in the 1970s, in part due to global economic problems. In addition, the expansion was also affected by the political catastrophes in a number of African countries in the 1970s (p. 87). Further changes were also experienced due to the modernization blood transfusion services (p. 87). The process is closely connected to massive involvement of global actors such as the League of Red Cross Societies’ and the World Health Organization’s assistance to African countries. While the two did not provide the funding, they nevertheless coordinated the processes of transfusion. Thus, there was a shift from relying on hospitals as major centers of transfusion to centralized and at times regional transfusion centers (pp. 91-104).

The study of blood transfusion is incomplete without examining the actors, especially those who donated blood and the recipients. In Africa, the supply of blood managed to meet needs, and this was in direct contrast to expectations, especially in the global north, of Africans’ regard of the transfusion procedure. Schneider is keen to demonstrate that while there might have been myths and superstitions surrounding the use of blood in Africa, like elsewhere, the transfusion was successful to the extent that the major problems that were encountered centered on the overuse of transfusion (p. 106). For those Africans who donated blood, they were not dissimilar from other donors in other parts of the world. However, differences between Africa and the global north were informed in part by diseases and the nature of the economy (p. 132). Even so,
the flexibility of transfusion in Africa enabled Africans to adapt and organize the transfusion to meet their health care needs.

The biggest question is the relationship between blood transfusion and HIV/AIDS. There is no doubt that those who practiced transfusion were aware of the risks that were involved in the process of transfusion, especially the spread of diseases. It was the HIV/AIDS epidemic, however, that had unintended consequences, as transfusion failed to detect the emergence of HIV (p. 167). Still, it was not all doom and gloom. Schneider demonstrates that medical personnel took advance of the infrastructure in place and outside help to control the spread of diseases through transfusion.

The history of blood transfusion is part of global health history. In Africa, blood transfusion was introduced as part of the early colonial public health projects. Its success depended to a greater extent on the cooperation of locals. Furthermore, the infrastructure that initially supported it had roots in the colonial medical infrastructures. As part of global health, the changes that took place within hospitals and employment of personnel responsible in charge of transfusions also reflected global trends within the medical world. The changes were to be more pronounced in the post Second World War era. Amongst these included scientific advances and funding. The emergence of the global epidemic of HIV also had an effect on transfusion. The history of transfusion, as any other part of global health, shows the changing interests of intervening global institutions, scientific breakthroughs in biomedicine, and the fluctuations in the international political and economic order.

Conclusion

The volumes examine the connections between public health and global health in Africa. They show how health problems in Africa have been conceptualized at local and global levels, with transnational organizations at the center of disease eradication in Africa. A central theme weaving together these volumes is how the movement of resources, expertise, and medicine are part of the international efforts at improving health in Africa. In addition, the volumes exposed the weaknesses of specific disease intervention approaches and the tendency by international organizations to target specific health indicators. Such vertical disease programs, as Prince’s introduction notes, fail to consider the views of local participants, hence in some cases the failure of such programs to achieve desired results (p. 33). Furthermore, as Schneider argues, specific target programs usually receive more resources than could have been used for the basic public health sector (p. 178). Such vertical targeted projects frequently draw resources away from other arenas of public health initiatives that could save more lives in the long run.

Another theme weaving these disparate yet interrelated works is the need to be attentive to the social, political, and economic contexts. Last’s examination of public health in Northern Nigeria, Echernberg’s analysis of the continued problem of cholera, and Giles-Vernick and Rupp’s chapter on global health in the equatorial Africa are some of the examples of scholarly works that remind Africanist scholars, policy makers, and health officials to appreciate local context when implementing programs. The failure to be attentive to the local context has in part led to partial success in public health initiatives in Africa.

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http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v16/v16i2a5.pdf
Methodologically, all volumes place value on the need for an interdisciplinary approach to examining the challenges in various public health initiatives in Africa. Giles-Vernick and Webb in the introduction to their volume sum it very well. According to them, there is a need to incorporate social sciences and biomedical perspectives “in order to translate global health initiatives to local needs, capacities, and constraints and to better anticipate the social consequences of these interventions” (p. 15).

A complaint that can be leveled against the three titles is their failure to include in their analysis the position of indigenous healers and indigenous medicine within global health. Diverse as they are, indigenous healers continue to have a great influence on public health initiatives. Faith based healers in southern Africa provide a good example. At times, faith based healers have been critical of public health initiatives such as immunizations, and this has had adverse consequences on efforts at eradicating diseases. Furthermore, an examination of indigenous medicine and global health might also open ways of exploring the transfer of knowledge from the global south to the north. Indeed, a major silence of these books is that they look at global health as being from the north without making an integration of how the global south could also have contributed to global health.

Although it is impossible to cover every part of the continent, case studies from the southern part of the continent are conspicuous by their absence. While Schneider has cases of blood transfusion in colonial Zimbabwe, overall the volumes seem to skirt discussing southern African cases. Southern Africa, especially former settler societies, would also introduce racial dimensions to the provision of public health. For example, an examination of public health and global health in apartheid South Africa would reveal a complex way in which certain racial groups were disadvantaged in accessing health. This led to an unequal distribution of resources and the legacies are still evident today. Irrespective of these minor criticisms, the volumes remind readers that scholars must pay attention to historical antecedents that played a significant part in shaping the nature of the current public health programs in Africa. Taken together, these books constitute a considerable body of knowledge on the nexus between public health and global health in Africa.
REVIEW ESSAY

"What Have Cassettes to do with Christianity? Instagram with Islam?"

KEN CHITWOOD


Introduction

Perusing the Facebook group “United in Islam in South Africa” one finds a variety of posts that might catch one’s attention. From agriculturally informed exhortations, to charity, to the posting of events in Tshwane/Pretoria, to quotes of Ibn Taymiyyah and other sources the posts on the page are wide in range, source, and influence—some yielding likes and comments, others sitting silent on the page. One particularly popular post called for du’a (non-obligatory prayer) to be made for rain in the Gauteng province including Johannesburg. On several days a woman began by saying “Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem” (“in the name of Allah, most Gracious, most Merciful”) expressing shukr (thanks) and calling for rakaats (units of prayer) in grateful response. The other most popular post on the page shows Syrian refugees seeking asylum in Europe. Here, on Facebook, in the digital borderlands, the global and local are meeting as South African Muslims interact with Muslims from across the globe and share media, meditations, and methods of piety online with “likes” and “comments” the affirmations in place of vocal takbirs (informal expressions of faith with the acclamation, “Allahu akbar” or “God is great”). The petitions and posts on the page are predicated by both global concerns and local conditions. As such, this short vignette and case can serve well as a piquing entrée into the digital and electronic media world, which is part of a large religious, social, economic, and political patchwork across Africa.

As intimated by the case above Africa’s religious media scene is rapidly evolving and constantly engaging. The book New Media and Religious Transformations in Africa seeks to cast a critical eye on this area of study and “focus on the diverse religious transformations being generated by the explosion of media technologies—both old and new—across Africa” (p. 5). It is the contention of this review that this text is a helpful primer on the historical and contemporary ways that media—old and new, print and digital—have shaped, are shaped by, and continue to shape religion in Africa. While there are attendant weaknesses with the sheer breadth of the collection and areas for further research, this text serves well as an introductory

Ken Chitwood is a PhD student and religion news analyst and commentator researching Islam in the Americas at the University of Florida with its Center for Global Islamic Studies. He has written articles, reviews, chapters, and essays for both academic and popular publications. www.kenchitwood.com

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anthology of current research in the field and across a wide geographic, socio-cultural, and religious array focusing on key themes and transformations that help make sense of its varied contributions.

**Main Thesis and Outline**

One of the overarching messages of this work is that political liberalization led to the deregulation of media fields and thus religious leaders, activists, and netroots were able to appropriate radio, television, newspapers, magazines, computer mediated technologies (CMCs), and mobile phone networks for their own purposes. These purposes ranged from gaining public recognition in a contested religious marketplace, advocating and promoting inter-religious dialogue, and strengthening and expanding their constituencies. It must be said, at the same time, that media have also been utilized to ostracize the religious “other” and curtail the effect of other communities, which in different places and different ways led to tension, conflict, and explicit violence. This multidisciplinary volume engaging scholars from media studies, religion, anthropology, history, and others illustrates how media are never neutral vehicles of expression and analyzes the mutual imbrications of media and religion during times of rapid technological and social change in various places throughout Africa.

Principally, the multiple entries explore the transformation of religion that is predicated by the thickened field of media production and reception throughout Africa. There are eight transformations highlighted by these contributions: (1) changes of religion, processes of conversion and reconversion; (2) change in religion and its attendant values, behaviors, practices, styles, attitudes, expressive modes, voices, and authority; (3) the creation of more space for multiple religious actors’ engagement; (4) the rise of new religious publics; (5) the creation of new religious spaces by entrepreneurs; (6) the creation of new religious debates; (7) change in the configurations between different religious groups, new and mainstream; (8) changes in state and/or popular recognition of religious groups (pp. 5-7). All of these transformations are charted through old and new media and various religious groups, but with particular focus on Christians, Muslims, and indigenous religion and how various religions, governments, individuals, and institutions are navigating and “balancing freedom of expression and freedom of religion and belief” (p. 2)

The book is divided into three parts. Part one primarily deals with “old” media such as Islamic radio in coastal Kenya (chap. 1), the Islamic printing market in Mali (chap. 2), media and Muslim movements in Nigeria (chap. 3), and the creation of Muslim community radio stations in two provinces of South Africa (chap. 4). Interestingly, editors Rosalind I. J. Hackett and Benjamin F. Soares posit that old media in Africa are more associated with Muslims than Christians, sideling Christian missionary print and radio as part of a colonial construct and therefore not “African” as such. This seems a significant slight of media that are of serious import for not only Christians in Africa, but Muslims and indigenous practitioners as well. While I understand the desire to deal with “African” media missionary endeavors and media production, even from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, should still be considered as a core aspect of the African religious media context.

* http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v16/v16i2a6.pdf
Part two focuses on the appropriation of “new” media in African religious contexts and by religious actors. The contributors take up everything from popular film and the visuality of miracles in West Africa (chap. 5) to Arab satellite channels as new players in the North African media world (chap. 9) to the expansion of Pentecostalism via web presence throughout sub-Saharan Africa (chap. 8). All the while, this second part starts to move the reader to consider not only entertainment and community engagement but also the potential strain this puts on religiously diverse regions, countries, and states. Part three picks up on this narrative and explicates how media are engaged in processes of inter-religious exchange, tension, and competition in “African mediascapes” (p. 10). Here, “African traditional religion” (chap. 11) and “Zulu sangoma religion” (chap. 15) stand out next to discussions of hybrid Gospel music in Nigeria (chap. 12) and the digital landscapes of Muslim apologetics and da’wah in Ethiopia (chap. 14). Throughout, the influence of foreign and outside media actors is evident, while concomitantly the engagement of African media beyond its own borders is hinted at as well, and even explicitly examined in the final chapter. This brings us full circle back to the introduction where we saw how Facebook became a place of global exchange betwixt and between South African Muslims, the global umma, and other interlocutors present on the page.

Analysis

Rather than dealing with the vast array of concerns, contexts, and cases in this collection I will instead focus my analysis on this theme of the global and local in dialectic tension and co-creative connection. First, I will take up the theme of continuity and rupture both in terms of media and processes of global exchange. Second, I will discuss the importance of focusing on specific localities and their respective contexts to more fully understand the role of media in a global age. Third, I will highlight how it is paramount, especially when dealing with marginalized fields such as religion in Africa, to move beyond parochial analyses and consider the global impact of such studies. Finally, I will close by making comparative notes between the research in this work and comparing that to new avenues in research of digital media in Africa and elsewhere.

While Bruno Latour argued that “we have never been modern” it might be worth stipulating that, “we have always been global,” at least in some sense. Furthermore, it is important to point out that the production, and reception, of media has always been an important part of religion and its development. These themes of continuity and rupture are present in multiple entries, specifically in the first part of the book. Discussing media and religious movements such as the modernist reformers the Yan Izala and their leader Abubakar Gumi in Nigeria, Brian Larkin makes the point that we must appreciate individual movements not as part of some “homogenous blocs,” but rather as “heteroglossic assemblages” made up of local and global discourses, historical dynamics and contemporary responses and adaptations (p. 67). Whether the movements were from the turn of the twentieth century, mid-century manifestations, or organizations that arose as a new millennium dawned, all have drawn on global media discourses and deployed local media strategies to communicate and expand. Likewise, Larkin makes this same point in regards to Sufism and the internal diversity of particular orders, old and new, global and local. He writes that “the language of rupture fails to
capture this internal complexity” (p. 77). Thus, both religious media and movements in Africa must be appreciated from a longue-durée perspective and in the dynamic nexus of exchange of exchange, both globally and locally and in the midst of multiple discourses within and without.

The importance of focusing on local dynamics is reiterated by Muhammed Haron who analyzes Muslim community radio stations in Cape Town and Johannesburg. To understand these radio stations’ shared characteristics, even as he delineates their differences, Haron situates both in the post-apartheid world of deregulation, freedom of religion and communication, and the value placed on former marginalized voices in the new democratic social order (p. 94). The stations’ features and strategies could not be understood without awareness of this post-apartheid state of affairs. Furthermore, Johannes Merz strengthens the case for a local conceptualization of religious media and their affect in Africa by arguing that the success of the visualization of video technology and popular film in West Africa is predicated upon notions of explicitly African culture and experience (pp. 99ff.). Both of these contributors make clear that this is not solely the story of foreign media invading African space and taking on meaning according to global consultations, but the situatedness and success of religious media is predicated upon, and even rooted in, the local dynamics in which it emerges or is introduced.

Analyses of religious media in Africa, however, cannot be limited to their impact on religion, culture, and politics in Africa alone. Engaged in the global exchange of ideas, finances, and materials African media also has worldwide reach and consequence. Indeed, African religious media are part and parcel of the dialectics of exchange between the local and the global in multiple religious manifestations and systems including Christianity, Islam, and indigenous religion. Whether it is the interchange between Arab businessmen and satellite television owners and religious elites and traditional players in North Africa (chap. 9) or the dominion theology that inspires Pentecostal ministries to take up residence online in order to spread the Gospel message throughout the globe (chap. 7) or even clever strategies of a chameleon-like sangoma in South Africa to fuse his Zulu neo-shamanism with global conversations of the paranormal via the internet, DVDs, and television religious media in Africa is not limited in its transformative power to the geographic boundaries of the continent. Instead, religious media are acting as a connective expanse, or “third space,” where African religious modalities are transcreative contact with other global movements, actors, institutions, and ideas. As Samson A. Bezabeh wrote concerning Ethiopian Muslims in this collection, “[I]living in the twenty-first century, where existence is not limited by state boundaries but also affected by events in digital landscapes” (p. 281) it becomes increasingly salient to seek to understand religion through media new and/or old, global and/or local, digital and/or physically mediated (cf. pp. 187, 194ff, 272-75).

In comparing this work to other literature on the same, or at least similar, topics, a few more relevant points of critique come to mind. First, as Rosalind Hackett has written elsewhere, paying attention to auditory media moves interpretation of media away from Western aesthetics of textual and visual biases. This volume introduces music, radio sounds, and other soundscapes into the mix of media studies in sub-Saharan Africa and invites other researchers
to explore the possibilities of such auditory fields (beyond simply music) as rich spaces for research in religion.

Furthermore, as did Dorothea Schulz’s ethnography *Muslims and New Media in West Africa* this volume paid due attention to the interaction of new media with gender, economics, and religious practice and authority. This line of inquiry helps researches in the field of religion and media move beyond the tendency to look at congregations and institutions and instead to pay attention to broader religious experiences as they are embedded in the life practices, sense experiences, and everyday embodied interactions of religious personages.

Indeed, the sort of analysis and awareness offered in this text invites researchers to conceive of “religion as a practice of mediation” and to see, along with Birgit Meyer, “how access to new media gives rise to new practices of media and how these practices stem from and impinge on changing power relations, between followers and leaders, as well as between politics and religion.” This even intimates as to how, as Ebrahim Moosa wrote, technology is already embedded in contemporary religious thought and practice and that media and technology are not antithetical to religious sensibilities and subjectivities. However, even with this acknowledgement the authors were careful to still delineate that there are still contours of power, issues of control, and contestation of authenticity and authority to consider when researching the intersection and interplay of religion with, against, and even “as” new media in a global age.

If there were any weak points to this study it is the lack of investigation of how digital religious media are shaping, and being shaped by, digital media. As Heidi A. Campbell wrote, “rather than being an alternative social space for a few, digital technology becomes an important platform extending and altering religious practice for many.” While, as the authors of this volume concede, access to digital religious practices may be limited in sub-Saharan Africa, they are extant and expanding. Investigating and exploring how ritual, identity, community, authority, authenticity, and even religion itself are transformed by, and transforming, digital culture in hybridized and fluid forms would not only help researchers track religious change, but also assist in theapperception of religious past and present as well — perhaps in new ways hitherto not thought of or unforeseen. This could also provide an ample proving ground for the practical considerations of “digital ethnography” and other hybrid methodologies, which are often required or prove more fruitful in exploring the “third spaces” where religion and digital culture meet.

**Conclusion**

Even with the omission of the digital technology dimension, this collection of essays concerning new media and religious transformation in Africa is both wide and deep in its appreciation of the central roles that media and religion play in the contemporary world. Readers would do well to pay attention to the individual contributions as they seek to perceive the many ways religious media are shaping global and local politics, socio-culture, economics, and spirituality. Furthermore, as discussed above, this text also serves as a more than sufficient springboard for one’s further research along the same lines, whether that be in Africa or somewhere else around the globe.
One particular area that is available for further research and is not significantly examined in this text is how media allow and advance opportunities for the transcending of religious boundaries and spaces. For example, when an individual can watch whatever preacher or teacher they want from anywhere in the world (Pentecostal preachers, Saudi sheikhs) and taxis can act as mobile churches blaring Gospel music and Pentecostal preaching individuals cannot avoid religious media in many senses, whereas in the past individuals had to go in search of media for their own purposes. As with the case of the hybrid musical styles of Senwele Jesu (pp. 227-44) modern religious media have moved from the library to the city streets, from the masjid to the cafe. Everyone can sit, stand, talk, and be part of a marketplace of competing religious media, which can lead to religious change, code-switching, and potentially conflict. Indeed, this impact even bleeds beyond the boundaries of African nations as now “radio and television broadcasts” are widely available leading to the distribution of media “to much wider viewing and listening communities in Africa and in the diaspora” (p. 3). While it is important to note the continuity of presence, and significance, of religious media in Africa it is also poignant to point out the prolific nature and proliferation of religious media in diverse African religious public spheres made up of competing global and local, Christian, Muslim, and indigenous sound, video, print, and technoscapes. This is just one example of the multiple avenues of research that emerge from this timely work and evidence of how rich a field of study the realm of religious media in Africa can be and already, in many ways, is.

Notes

2 Hackett 2011.
3 Schulz 2012.
5 Moosa 2016.
6 Campbell 2013, p. 1.

References


BOOK REVIEWS


A reviewer commended the medieval scholar Steven Runciman for giving obscure emperors and generals “their mansions in history.” Mohamed Gamal Abdelmonem has done the same for Cairo’s old neighborhoods or hawari (singular: harah). His work consists of three sections: sociological and anthropological definitions of “home,” a history and description of the remaining old neighborhoods of Cairo from the pivotal invasion of Napoleon (1798) to the present, and finally thoughts on what direction contemporary architects might effectively take in preserving the city’s several old districts and cautiously building anew in them.

Laymen often find themselves adrift when trying to navigate the books of architects, puzzled by examinations of engineering aspects of building homes and public buildings, while at the same time marveling at the designs of some of the creative minds of our age. In the first section of Abdelmonem’s work, however, we have the rare spectacle of an architect uneasily attempting to the marshes of sociological and anthropological theories of home, not all of which coexist peacefully together. While the author no doubt believes these theories provide a necessary theoretical foundation for what follows, I suggest most readers merely scan this section of the book and proceed to the history of the hawari and Abdelmonem’s description of his fieldwork, which form the heart of the narrative.

When the Arabs arrived in already-ancient Egypt in 641 CE, preferring “the sea of the desert” to the Mediterranean, they made an entirely new start with capitals in al-Fustat (in the environs of modern Cairo) and later Cairo (founded 969 CE), turning away from the Alexandria of the Ptolomies, Cleopatra, and the Eastern Roman Empire. What did they do with this new beginning? Modern Cairo has sprawled to encompass the pre-Arab Roman citadel of Babylon (no relation to the city in Iraq) and even the pyramids at Giza, but Abdelmonem wishes to steer clear of all these prior Egyptians and concentrate on the extant old neighborhoods east of the Nile. He describes hawari characterized by high population density, a strong sense of community extending across centuries, architectural forms which have evolved (from large mansions to multi-family units, from forms accommodating the seclusion of women to a world where the woman has emerged from the home) but not been obliterated, and socio-spatial practice stressing the use of local public spaces as part of “home,” where wedding receptions, funeral gatherings, and daily social interaction take place. Despite government neglect and disparagement in the 19th and 20th centuries, these neighborhoods have endured, indeed experienced renewed growth, and many of their residents refuse to live anywhere else. On many lanes a de facto time-share arrangement has even come into being in which first-floor offices and workshops dominate during the day and local residents reclaim the public spaces during the late afternoon and evening. The government opening up of some formerly dead-end alleys has improved access to the old districts, while failing to dent community solidarity. Government support and renovation of historic mansions has permitted a daily inflow of tourists who are nevertheless studiously ignored by residents, except for those running

http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/pdfs/v16i2a7.pdf
souvenir shops. It would have been interesting to compare the hawari of Cairo with similarly antique neighborhoods in Alexandria, Egypt’s second city, but that tome must await the efforts of an Alexandrian architect with a similar devotion to his city (there is only one mention of Alexandria in Abdelmonem’s entire book).

In the final section of his book Abdelmonem asks why modern architects fail in Cairo and what directions they should take in nurturing and maintaining the hawari, which have shown such resilience and durability, even weathering changes in class composition, influxes of migrant workers from rural areas, and international planning and government guidance of dubious value. He argues convincingly that contemporary architects must eschew the imperative to display virtuosity and individual prowess in favor of a community-based approach which improves sanitation and services (a challenge for all of Cairo, not merely its old districts), renovates historic structures which are still in use, maintains the provision of public space which is also a part of the neighborhood concept of home, and provides new small to medium-scale residential housing consistent with traditional forms. In the hawari, the architecture of home is the architecture of a community. Not least among the contributions of this book is its focus on architecture which reflects and emerges from everyday urban life and evolving social values, as opposed to a narrative focusing on residences of the elite or massive public structures.

Kenneth W. Meyer, Western Washington University


Faced with the methodological gridlock embedded in the discipline of art history, African scholars and their Africanist counterparts have continuously struggled in their effort to analyze aspects of the material and visual cultures of Africa. The problem is compounded by the often prescriptive Eurocentric models that thrive in formal analysis. It is obvious, however, that such methodological constraints have failed to check the essence of the work/s created within many cultures in Africa. Thus, Abiodun bring to bear these methodological issues. With a robust research career that spans over four decades, Rowland Abiodun has consistently advocated for the inclusion of the language of the people when their art is being studied. He lucidly articulates that idea, using the Yoruba aesthetic thought and language embedded in the oriki (praise or citation poetry) as valid exemplars.

Taken as his goal, he venture to explore new holistic perspectives for the critical interpretation of African art as exemplified by the interpretations of the visual and verbal arts among the Yoruba people of West Africa. He contends that such an approach will facilitate his enumeration of the cultural meanings and themes that have been overlooked and even forgotten in African art studies. Throughout the nine chapters of his book he clearly enunciates this idea, and supports it with actual examples of art works.

The first chapter explores the Yoruba concept and principle of “individuality and otherness” in ori (this consists of both ori-inu and ori-ode, physical/spiritual attributes of the head). Abiodun goes on in the second chapter to discuss the wide range of visual and verbal oriki (construed as art forms) that are central to or connected with ase (the primordial life force
that inheres in all objects of consciousness, authority and power). The third chapter relies on much of the oriki of Osun to understanding the art forms that help in defining and illuminating the character of the Orisa (Osun is one of the most powerful and influential Yoruba Orisas). He uses verses from ifa to carry out an in-depth formal and contextual analysis of an agere-ifá (the container for keeping the ikin, the sixteen sacred divination palm nuts, with the horse motif) in the fourth chapter. For the fifth chapter, Abiodun examines Yoruba dress as a form of oriki, articulating how clothes define the status of the wearers. The gamut of Yoruba dress speaks volumes of the wearers, especially their religious and social statuses. The meaning and place of photography in Yoruba culture, especially as it relates to the oriki and asa of ako (the second burial effigies in Owo) form discussion of the sixth chapter. Chapter seven reviews the state of knowledge of selected terra cotta and bronzes from the ancient Yoruba city of Ile Ife, and offer new insights through the use of oriki. The eighth chapter addresses some major aesthetic concepts in Yoruba art and thought, using oriki, while the ninth chapter explores the Yoruba definition of style through time, using the work of selected artists such as “Olowe of Ise.” Abiodun compares the work of Olowe with other artists, such as the “master of the Fowler” agere-ifá (from a later period), through the use of the verbal and visual oriki. He vacillates between these artists and show how their works relates to Yoruba art and thought. He maintain that “oriki is immediately important as an efficient means of capturing moments or nuggets of history that provide an indispensable body of research material for reconstructing artistic values” (p. 307), which is a necessary art historical methodology.

Throughout the book, especially with regards to the interpretation of the visual and verbal arts, Abiodun adopts the Yoruba oriki as a tool that offer the best analysis of the art forms and their uses within the religious and social contexts of the society. According to him, “any serious attempt to conduct art historical research in a traditionally oral society like the Yoruba must take their rich tradition of oriki into consideration” (p. 23). Imbibing such characteristics, it is the hope that a better and more nuanced understanding of the art work will be facilitated; anything short of this would continuously, albeit erroneously give an inconclusive or incomplete understanding of the work under interrogation. And the central argument posited by Abiodun is that it is impossible to appreciate or even articulate the complexities and depth of the Yoruba artistic imagination, stylistic conventions and critical discourse without recourse to that vast body of visual and verbal text embedded within the oriki. It should be stressed that Abiodun implies that it would be immensely beneficial to the cause of sound African art research and scholarship if the proper indigenous names were employed in the identification of the art works instead of the current practice of putting them in parenthesis or omitting them altogether.

Throughout the book, the significance of the oriki in the Yoruba imagination has been shown to permeate religious and social aspects of Yoruba society. Despite the fear that the book might be difficult to access by a wide range of researcher, scholars, and students because of the heavy use of Yoruba words, the inclusion of a companion website with audio clips of Yoruba language go a long way to help the reader grasp the integral connection between art and language in Yoruba culture. Therefore, the book will be invaluable to scholars and students of Yoruba culture, language and visual art.

Ndubuisi C. Ezeluomba, University of Florida

Chanfi Ahmed’s *West African Ulama and Salafism in Mecca and Medina: Jawab al-Ifriqi* presents a critical approach into the study of what could be termed as the encroachment of Wahabbism in present West Africa in general and Nigeria, Mali, and Mauritania in particular. The colonial invasion of Mauritania, Mali, Senegal, Niger, and Nigeria led to the migration of some prominent scholars to Mecca and Medina, which they considered as safer places to practice their religion in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Some of these Ulamas had earlier had some informal contacts with the teachings and doctrines of Muhammad bn Abdulwahab, whom the Sa’ud family adopted as an official spiritual guide. Chanfi therefore, gives detailed information on the first set of migrants to Mecca and Medina, their interpretation of Hijra, and Jihad, and a description of the routes they followed in the cause of the migration and the factors that led to it.

In chapter two, the author attempts to present some of the forerunners of the influential African teachers at the Mosque of the Prophet in Madina, citing prominent amongst them Fullani Shaykh, Alfa Hashim al-Futi (of Mali extraction to be precise), and Shaykh Muhammad Abdullahi b. Mahmud al-Madani. Their wealth of Islamic knowledge has indeed boosted Islamic scholarship both at home and abroad, and a good number of their students helped in spreading the Salafiyya da’awah in the West African sub-region.

Consequently, after the official establishment of the Al-Sa’ud dynasty in 1925-26, education was given the top most priority, which led to the establishment of public schools, universities, and colleges by the royalty, in addition to quite a large number of private schools (*madaris ahliyya*). Chapter three, therefore, examines the contributions of the first set of teachers in these public schools such as Shaykh Abdurrahman al-Ifriqi and Shaykh Hammad al-Ansari of African extraction. Shaykh Abdulrahman al-Ifriqi, for instance, was sent to Yanbu, a settlement near Medina, to propagate Wahabism among the Bedouin tribes.

After the successful establishment of public schools and the subsequent graduation of its students, special centers for learning were established in Mecca and Medina with a view to producing competent students who could handle the task of Islamic propagation properly. Chapter four discusses the role played by two prominent West African scholars, Shaykh Abdurrahman al-Ifriqi and Shaykh Hammad al-Ansari, both of whom taught at *Dar al-Hadith* and *Ma’had al-Riyad al-Ilmi*.

Chapter five centers on the role played by two prominent sons of West Africa, teachers of the third generation, who served as administrators and teachers at the first Islamic University in Saudi Arabia. The key personalities discussed in this chapter are Shaykh ‘Umar Fallata (of northern Nigerian extraction from Gombe State) and Shaykh Ab-Wuld Ukhtur (Muhammad al-Amin al-Jakanil-Shanqiti).

The two aforementioned scholars have indeed played a great role in the establishment of and teaching in *Dar al-Hadith* and *Ma’had al-Riyad al-Ilmi*. They also exhibited a high level of maturity in teaching at the Islamic University of Medina. Chapter six discusses the history and evolution of this university with a view to studying its unique role in the training of missionaries who spread across the West African sub-region in propagating the teachings of Wahabiyya-Salafiyya especially outside Saudi Arabia.
Chapter seven addresses the issue of *tarjama* (biography or biographical notice) and *tarjama dhatiyya* (autobiography) in the Islamic tradition. Shaykh ‘Umar Fallata wrote a biography of his teacher in the person of Shaykh AbdulRahman al-Ifriqi, while Shaykh Atiyya Salim wrote on Shaykh Muhammad al-Amin al-Shanqiti. One important observation made by Chanfi in this chapter is that biographies and autobiographies were seen by some contemporary Islamic scholars as an “invention of the western cultural tradition associated with the discovery of the individual and individualism in the West” (p. 11). Citing the works of the duo al-Fallati and Salim clearly indicate the impact of the scholar’s life on his students that fascinates him to write on him. Shaykh ‘Umar Fallati writes “the biographies of important personalities are a school for future generations” (p. 11). Chanfi also opined that the best translation of *tarjama* is “biographical note”. Even though the *tarjama* “might be an inaccurate and imperfect reflection of person’s life, it is nevertheless a key to explain his activities and accomplishments to coming generations” (p. 12).

Yusuf Abdullahi Yusuf, *University of Jos*


Unlike other genres of African orature the riddle has not attracted much in-depth research. Even in the context of Yorùbá culture, which has inspired groundbreaking, book-length studies on several individual genres of the oral tradition—on *ijálá* (hunters’ poetry), *oríkì* (praise poetry), *òwe* (proverbs), and Ifá divination poetry, to name just a few—the riddle has been somewhat neglected, even though it has been discussed in overviews such as Olátúnjí’s *Features of Yoruba Oral Poetry* (1984) as well as in a number of individual articles. The first full-length study of riddles in any African society, *Orature and Yorùbá Riddles* thus represents a most welcome and important contribution to research on African oral literatures. Unlike earlier discussions of the Yorùbá riddle, which concentrate on formal features, Akínyemí, drawing on a wealth of examples, specifically addresses the content of riddles, their various performative contexts, social functions, and relevance up to the present time. The book bespeaks the author’s vast linguistic and cultural knowledge, which enables him to provide a comprehensive overview of Yorùbá riddling.

The introduction situates the book with respect to previous research on orature, especially in Africa, but also “as part of an urgent need to document and make accessible endangered global verbal arts before they disappear without record” (p. 5). Chapter 1 discusses definitions of the riddle and their applicability to Yorùbá riddles, which are classified into three main categories: the so-called simple riddle, the dilemma tale-riddle, and the song riddle. The author addresses the place of riddles in Yorùbá society and provides a review of previous literature on the Yorùbá riddle. In a comparatively short section, which is flawed by incomplete referencing, semiotics is introduced as the theoretical frame for the analysis of the different types of riddles in the following chapters. Chapter 2 focuses on *àló àpamò*, which the author translates as “regular riddles.” Moving beyond structural aspects, the author deals with the aesthetic expression of the Yorùbá worldview in such riddles as well as with their social function, discussing a great number of specific riddles on a vast range of topics. Chapter 3 examines the
form and function of so-called tale-riddles, which may be rendered entirely in either poetry or prose but also in a combination of both. The author distinguishes between two types of tale-riddles in Yorùbá, those based on the Ifá corpus, which are used to affirm the status quo; and those not based on Ifá, which problematize the status quo and comprise àlọ́ ijàpá, the well-known tortoise trickster tales. Chapter 4 deals with the form and function of àrọ̀, song riddles, which comprise sequences of question/answer pairs and are performed by groups, either antiphonally or, less commonly, synchronously. Chapter 5 addresses the contemporary use of riddles in terms of both the creation of new riddles and the employment of riddles in written literature and other media such as newspapers, radio, TV, and the Internet. Chapter 6 reiterates the role of riddling and other oral genres in the enculturation and socialization of the young.

Examples of riddles and riddling include quite a number of full versions of texts, sometimes in the context of oral performances as a whole. While this is expedient in illustrating the scope of riddling in Yorùbá culture as well as the interconnectedness of riddles with other oral genres, some of the examples are, in proportion to the analysis, rather too lengthy. Some of the examples are presented both in the original Yorùbá version and in English translation, which is extremely useful. It might have been preferable to present a smaller number of examples in order to be able to include all original Yorùbá versions, if not in the main text, then in the endnotes. The author’s extremely careful representation of the Yorùbá examples, including his competent attention to correct tone-marking, is highly laudable and represents one of the strengths of the book.

Though generally relevant, the theoretical framework proposed in chapter 1 is not coherently related to the analysis of riddles in the following chapters. While some parts of the discussion might have been more clearly focused and the argument is slightly repetitive with regard to its insistence on issues such as the role of orature with regard to education, the book nevertheless provides a fascinating and comprehensive discussion of the culture of riddling in Yorùbá society as well as valuable insights into a vast range of aspects of Yorùbá culture from an unusual perspective.

Anja Oed, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany


This book is a collection of transcribed audio book entries by Evelyn Amony, a Ugandan woman who was abducted as a teenager and eventually forced to marry Joseph Kony, the leader of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). The book provides factual details about the inner workings of the LRA, but reads like a gripping novel. The story is not only about when Amony is in the LRA; rather, it describes her life as a young girl in school and concludes by giving the reader a view into the difficulties of daily civilian life during and after the war in Uganda.

Amony explains that she is not sharing her story for academics or Western audiences, but instead for Ugandans, specifically for her family, so they may understand what life was like for her when she was with the LRA. However, this book is one of the most detailed published accounts of life inside an armed group, describing initiation rituals, rules for members of the group, and even the language LRA members shared. Amony writes as if speaking to a friend,
directing the reader to imagine being in her situation. The book is a feminist analysis that highlights the importance of examining the experiences of women during war to get a more accurate understanding of the conflict.

One of the key themes of the book is that the war in Uganda, like most wars, has been complex and messy. Despite the terrible acts of violence that occurred during the war, the people who took part in it are human. In the book's introduction, a scholar of the Ugandan war and the LRA, Erin Baines, writes that Amony's stories, "beg readers to suspend judgment for a time." Atrocities were committed on all sides of this war, and while it would be easy for Amony to blame the LRA for her pain, she claims that her troubles did not start with them. The book forces readers to recognize the limitations in the dominant narratives about the war in Uganda and the LRA.

The majority of Amony's stories involve pain, both physical and emotional, yet interspersed throughout her pain are small acts of kindness from others. These mixed experiences highlight the complexity of how people live and act during war. This dynamic of pain and kindness is especially dominant in Amony's descriptions of the notorious Joseph Kony. During one of her most challenging periods traveling through the bush, she says the only person who was kind to her was Kony. However, soon after, Kony forced her to be his wife, despite the fact that she was only fourteen years old (and other members of the LRA objected). Evelyn became pregnant after her first night of sexual relations with Kony. As a newborn her child became ill, and Kony refused to help her bring their child to the hospital. Kony's disregard for their child, and the fact that he tells Evelyn he does not love her, is a painful blow to her, reminding the reader of the mixed and very human feelings she has towards Kony. Kony brings in the senior LRA elders to mediate their disagreement about taking their child to the hospital, and to Kony's surprise they side with Evelyn. In contrast to this experience, there are other times when Kony saves Evelyn's life or forces others to treat her better. In one of her final meetings with Kony, Evelyn acknowledges the fact that Kony took care of her for longer than her own parents.

In Amony's story, the reader watches her grow up in the LRA. One prominent topic in her narratives is the experience of motherhood. She views motherhood from two angles: her experience as a young woman forced into the role, and also as a young woman who longs for her own mother. Throughout her time in the bush, Evelyn remembers her mother at home as her protector and so, within the LRA, she names a different protector, her gun, after her mother. During the course of the book Evelyn must deal with both two painful losses: the loss of her own child and the loss of her mother.

Amony's life after she leaves the LRA and returns to her village continues to be difficult, and she is demonized in the news and in daily life for having been Kony's wife. Despite leaving combat, Amony's life at home remains part of her war experience. Amony still is able to end the book with a hopeful tone speaking about her work providing counseling for women who shared her experiences and had children in the LRA.

This book is unique when compared with other books about conflict and armed groups because it is an open first-hand account of life during war and living with an armed group, that does not try to present a specific theory, but instead lets the author's experience lead the reader to her own conclusions. I am Evelyn Amony provides in-depth knowledge about the LRA,
highlights the importance of examining women’s experiences during conflict, and illustrates the complexities of human behavior during war.

Phoebe Donnelly, Tufts University


Bonacci examines the journey of groups of Rastafari to Ethiopia as “returnees,” an ongoing process for approximately fifty years. The terms heirs and pioneers of the title refer to a central point of Bonacci’s analysis: that is, “two identificatory terms used by Jamaicans living in Shashemene, Ethiopia are simultaneous and concurrent” and “[they] reflect the tensions and contradictions of black identity and the diaspora experience.” The latter term helps to describe the aspect of the experience relating to how one prepares the ways for those coming later, while the first term describes the point of view of one notable community member, Noel Dyer (p. 9).

Bonacci combines interviews with an analysis of music and lyrics, religious texts, legal documents and maps, and histories and other scholarship from various academic disciplines, especially history, anthropology, and religious studies. Archives consulted were mostly in English, Amharic, and Oromo, with a few in French and Italian.

In section one Bonacci focuses on the ideological and social roots of the return to Ethiopia, describing various approaches and beliefs regarding the back to Africa movement, covering analysis of the Bible (especially the books of Exodus and Psalms), and of various political and religious organizations. Among the topics discussed are Black Nationalism, Pan-Africanism, and various spaces and itineraries of return, including lesser frequently discussed locations (e.g., Haiti). Considerable space is devoted to Marcus Garvey and the UNIA, offering fresh insights into his life and work by contextualizing his efforts with significant events. Bonacci respects religion, yet is not shy in describing information that may be controversial or even counter to some belief systems or that may challenge interpretations and reputations of even revered figures—for instance, Garvey’s critique of Haile Selassie I and critiques of Garvey by some of his U.S. contemporaries (e.g., W. E. B. Du Bois). A chapter detailing the sources and nuances of Ethiopianism helpfully brings together diverse sources explaining how and why Ethiopia came to represent the many powerful qualities it signifies today for Rastafari and persons of African descent with attention to the USA, the Caribbean, and southern Africa. Bonacci explores how various histories were written/situated, describes the international Ethiopian Church and the foundation of Zion Cities, and probes challenging issues including relationships with the Ethiopian state and race/color in the Ethiopian context. She also details preparatory steps to the return to Shashemene, including the impact of the Italo-Ethiopian war on solidifying solidarity between Africans and the Afro-descended (e.g., the African American pilot John Robinson), the foundation of the Ethiopian World Federation (EWF), and the role of Haile Selassie I, including his 1961 visit to Jamaica and the Caribbean, and the mid-twentieth land grant of Shashemene.

Part two of Bonacci’s book focuses on the Rastafari movement and the return to Ethiopia, describing the various senses of the term return, including thinkers who emphasized a spiritual/religious/philosophical/metaphorical interpretation of return. Bonacci spends one
chapter specifically focusing on Jamaica and the sociohistorical conditions that led to the development of the Rastafari noting, as appropriate, various social/class/color distinctions, and early semi-official, semi-governmental missions to Africa to explore various emigration possibilities. She also profiles the role of non-Jamaican returnees, especially those from Trinidad, Barbados, the USA, and the UK.

In the final part of her book, Bonacci focuses on exploring who are “true” Ethiopians in Shashemene, detailing realities in Shashemene, in Ethiopia, and in Africa. For instance, the author explores how identity has changed and developed over the decades, and how the children of returnees view themselves in comparison to how their parents viewed themselves. Furthermore, Bonacci looks at how non-Rastafari locals view the Rastafari, and more generally how Ethiopians and Africans view the Shashemene returnees. She demonstrates the issues are complex ones; and language, religion, history, economics, land, and politics are among the factors that play roles in this complexity.

In sum, Bonacci’s book represents a significant contribution which brings together many strands across multiple historiographies, and across time and space. One could argue that there could be more emphasis on the contexts of independence, especially those of Ghana (1957) and Jamaica (1962), and on how economic and political conditions of the 1970s Jamaica impacted emigration. Although Rastafari in Jamaica are minute in numbers, the group has inspired significant attention, reflecting the power of the ideas, including the music (e.g., reggae), people (e.g., Howell and Marley), food and lifestyle (ital/livity), and spirituality. Bonacci’s book offers readers a wealth of information to enable a better understanding of the enduring power of the return to Ethiopia and of the Rastafari.


Joan Black, *Ultimate Purpose*, Ontario, Canada


Nigeria’s history is a complex subject which has often been exploited by some pedantic scholars and writers of different ilk and perspectives. The complexity of historical documentation of the country’s political and socio-economic development has its roots in the diversity of sources of information that could be accessed by prospective historians or historiographers as well as the contrarieties in values and beliefs that they seek to project in their narratives. Thus, no historical rendition is value-neutral. Even the best of history has a measure or a modicum of values which are the underpinnings of any of such documentary accounts.

Richard Bourne’s book is a detailed and sequential reportage of the historical development of Nigeria spanning a century since its evolution as a political entity beginning with periods preceding its amalgamation by the colonial administration in 1914 and up to 2015 when an opposition party successfully dislodged the ruling political party through an electoral contest for the first time in the country’s history. The book currently stands as the most extensive documentation on Nigeria covering a century of its existence, thereby being more informative in outlook than other publications on the country. By giving an up-to-date account on Nigeria’s development across different historical epochs, the book luridly presents the pre-colonial,
colonial, and post-colonial challenges of development, which together have helped in shaping the constitutional and political realities of the country. While the author did not claim to understand Nigeria because of its many ethnicities and perspectives coupled with its contested past and statistics, he is of the belief that his book would “elucidate, as fairly and readable as possible, a story that began with a colonial merger and bring it up to date.”

The book is broadly divided into five sections with the first four sections having nineteen chapters while the fifth section is titled “Reflections.” The author’s “Afterword” contains concluding remarks. Section 1 (chapters one to six) analyzes the issues and events surrounding the 1914 amalgamation of the protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria with the Lagos colony, the abolition of the independent Egba Kingdom, the gallant role of Nigerian soldiers in the First World War, the struggles of Governor Lugard with opponents, the effects of the Second World War on the global economy and the growth of assertive nationalism in Nigeria as the country was progressively acquiring a new importance in the strategic global scheme of Britain in the war years.

Section 2 (chapters seven to eleven) highlights the series of political processes that were thrown up by certain key and impactful events from 1939-1964 as they affected Nigeria’s domestic and international politics. This section elaborates on the strategic importance of Nigeria in the war years, the consequent political change that was complicated by the emergent divisive regionalism and subsequently, the establishment of regional governments which were both precursors of political independence in 1960 as well as the post-independence crises that followed thereafter. Section 3 (chapters twelve to fifteen) is a narration of the political crises from 1964 to 1989 in post-independent Nigeria including military coups, civil war, the failure and fall of the second republic, and the inception of a new military era in the country. Section 4 (chapters sixteen to nineteen) covers political events from 1989 to 2014, which include the botched attempt at democratization under Babangida’s military administration, the disastrous Abacha years, the return of democracy and Obasanjo, the ascension of Yar’Adua, Jonathan, and threats in the Niger Delta coupled with the terrorist onslaught in the northeast of the country. Section 5, in which the author provides some reflections on such themes as “politics as business,” “Ethnicity and religion,” “Oil, inequity and poverty,” and “One Nigeria” shows that he has some understanding of the concrete and objective existential realities of the longsuffering citizens of Nigeria. The “Afterword” is a closing account of the new stage of civility in Nigeria’s politics evident in the post-election conduct of President Jonathan who, having lost in his bid to remain in office for another term, did not allow his defeat at the presidential polls in March 2015 to precipitate any violent reaction by his supporters.

This book obviously has its strong points. It could actually be considered a balanced account of Nigeria’s political-cum-economic history even though it has its weak points too. Its exposé on the hypocrisy of the colonial system and its pretensions to civilizing the colonized people would present the author as an objective and courageous scholar. It was pointed out that the British rebuilt a prison in Lagos colony in 1885 with 16,000 Pounds at a time when the colony was spending only 700 Pounds on education (p. 6) The resentment the colonial authorities bore towards the educated southern Nigerians especially of the Yoruba and Igbo ethnicities was clearly depicted by the author as a prominent trend in the policies of all the colonial administrations of Frederick Lugard(1914-1919), Hugh Clifford(1919-1925) and Donald
Cameron (1931-1935) until Bernard Bourdillon (1935-1943) came on board from with a friendlier disposition to the educated professionals than his predecessors (pp. 27-41) His narrative on the country’s recent history up to the 2015 presidential election is impressively analytical as it is a reportorial of factual data, thereby acquitting the author of any prejudice (pp. 156-239).

Although this book would appear to be largely objective in its analyses and almost value-neutral, the claim that “without the British there would never have been a ‘Nigeria’” (p. 4) is absolutely repugnant. The statement in question is too loose and open to all forms of misconception which might not be the intention of the author. The description of Nigeria’s centenary history as “turbulent” as conveyed by the book’s title, aside from being a product of the author’s perspective, which influenced his narrative and tilted his analytical prism towards historical facts that fit his theory, could be considered as a value-laden assessment to some extent. The meaning of the acronym NEPA is National Electric Power Authority not Nigerian Electricity Power Agency (p. xxi).

Regardless of the few critical comments, this book is a well-researched, factual and systematically arranged historical treatise on Nigeria’s political and socio-economic development covering a century of its existence. The language of its presentation is lucid and devoid of academic obscurantism that often robs scholarship of its substance. Richard Bourne has written an up-to-date and authoritative history of Nigeria from the standpoint of all the turbulent events that shaped the country’s political and socio-economic development, which every Nigerian and African scholar as well as those with interest in the political and economic histories of developing societies across countries of the world, would find very informative and useful as a source material.

John Olushola Magbadelo, Centre for African & Asian Studies, Abuja, Nigeria


Nic Cheeseman’s democracy in Africa paints a complete picture of Africa’s democratic travails, challenges, and failure, situating such within its fragmented political trajectories. The book is divided into an introduction and six chapters, with each chapter producing narrow beams of light which culminates in a total illumination of Africa’s democratic travails and the way forward.

The introduction explains Africa’s attempt at the democratization process and the success stories that have emerged from her democratization narrative, namely Botswana and Mauritius. The introduction discussed the struggle between democratization and autocratization, implying that this struggle lies clearly within the costs of repression and reform. Africa’s first attempt at democracy in the post-colonial period, suffered a major setback with the outbreak of the civil wars in the DRC and Nigeria. The Cold War also undermined international support for democratization, as both the United States and the Soviet Union proved willing to sacrifice democracy on the altar of their own national security. The introduction of the one-party state, championed by Tanzania’s Nyerere, whose view of multi-party politics was not only politically dangerous, but unnecessary and “un-African” (p. 40) and military rule were the grim outcomes Africa’s first democratic experiment. The practice of military rule and politics without
politicians as was practiced in Nigeria during the era of military rule came with its own barrage of problems, as it closed up the political space and created a huge gap between the rulers and the ruled.

Chapter 2 introduces the reader to the cultures of resistance in Uganda, the influence of the patronage system in Nigeria, and the politics of reciprocity in Kenya, which simultaneously drew on established practices and established them (p. 64). However, this politics of reciprocity was destructive at best. Entered into this equation is the politics of fear, which flew on the wings of sorcery and witchcraft employed by political leaders and subjects alike to attack real and perceived enemies. Caught in the struggle for the campaign of democracy were civil society groups, particularly the church and the trade unions that constantly battled between compromise, mediation and outright rejection of the state of affairs at the time. This was also not lost on Islam, as the Sufi brotherhood in Senegal and President Leopold Senghor developed socio-economic and political alliances to legitimize their activities.

Chapters 3 and 4 were concerned about the struggle for democracy, the end of the Cold War, and economic decline that triggered African democratization and engaged various patterns of democratic transitions that were embarked upon by African states. It also concerned the era of externally managed transitions which engaged international actors in efforts to reform African democracy and led to an active role in democracy promotion. With the reintroduction of elections, as espoused in Chapter 5, incumbents capitalized on the advantage of the incumbency to negotiate their continued hold on power and sometimes deploying the full range of the presidential arsenal available to them. The usage of this weapon, which oftentimes led to political exclusion, was inadvertently countered by the resilience or cooptation of the opposition, depending on the political beat, which dictated the dance of the opposition. The politics of fear, the politics of belonging and the use of violence by militia and street gangs are part of the broader strategies employed by political leaders to maintain power. Chapter six and the conclusions focused on the consolidation of democratic dividends and the design of robust and democratic architecture that will be resistant to ethno-regional and patrimonial fissures and will constructively manage heterogeneity and guarantee stability in the African political space.

The book is logically structured. It made use of appropriate methodological precincts to support its purpose. In addition, the author demonstrated profound familiarity with past and contemporary events in African history. However, there were factual and chronological errors in the book, such as when the author erroneously made a mistake regarding the title and year of Chinua Achebe’s masterpiece novel, Things Fall Apart (p. 69). Also, there was an inaccurate naming of the premier of Nigeria’s northern region; Samuel Akintola was described as the premier of the Northern region (p. 45), rather than Ahmadu Bello. Likewise, there were subtle grammatical errors (pp. 121, 135), which could have been corrected by more careful editing. These errors, however, do not take the shine away from the book. It is a worthy read that treats contemporary African issues with exactness, precision, and clarity.

Ajala Olufisayo, University of Ilorin

Syl Cheney-Coker’s novel Sacred River narrates the story of a postcolonial West African nation fictionalized as Kissi. The novel fits easily into the post-independence disillusionment novel canon along with Achebe’s A Man of the People, Armah’s The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born, and wa Thong’o’s Wizard of the Crow. Weaving multiple sub-plots with a plethora of distinct characters who have to come to terms with the various implications of a degenerating nation, the novel is structured in a way that the reader vacillates between different temporalities, cosmologies and aesthetics.

The novel covers two phases of Kissi’s government with the history of the resettlement of freed slaves in the background. The first phase is that of the democratically elected president, Tankor Satani, whose government extends to seventeen years of dictatorship, prebendalism, embezzlement, and other forms of corruption. Tankor Satani is obsessed with the idea of his own immortality inspired by recurrent visions of Haiti’s old King Henri Christophe. Seeking to fulfill this vision, Tankor Satani ignores the fact of the democratic root of his government and turns himself into an emperor, using state revenue to enrich himself. For instance, he erects the Xanadu, an edifice symbolic of his supposed immortality and power, with resources from the national treasury. Tankor Satani, however, ends tragically, as it seems he is either abandoned or misdirected by the apparition of Christophe, the embodiment of his ambition and greed. After his demise, the new military government, led by General Dan Doggo, raises the people’s hope at the beginning, but ends up a recycled version of the earlier regime’s corruption and abuse of power. Dan Doggo’s nonchalance has failed to prevent the nation from plunging into a devastating period of insurgency and war, a consummation of the accumulated years of misgovernance. The war turns the country into a field of blood, in which killing, looting, sexual violence, recruitment of child soldiers, and economic benefit to rebel leaders and foreign business concerns and governments cripple the country even more. A new government comes into power by the end of war.

In the weave of this national narrative is the sub-plot of the love story of Theodore Iskander, a philosophy professor, and Habiba Mouskuda, a former prostitute. Though not officially married, their love binds them together as a happy and productive couple. Their story provides an alternative allegorical narrative that could have been the national story, one of progress in the midst of regression and degeneration, of courageous love by which wide differences are reconciled—class, education, personal history, culture, race, and religion.

Cheney-Coker’s style of writing is quite experimental. There is an effortless blend of realism and fantasy, making the novel pass easily for magical realism against the author’s aversion to the term in connection with African writing (p. vii). The novel’s foregrounding of apparitions, sorcery, dreams and visions, mythological and folkloric elements, and superstitious symbolisms along with historical data, socio-political commentary, and realism of the everyday has produced a novel that leads the reader across multiple paradigms. The novelist’s vast knowledge of world history, literature, music, African and classical mythologies, philosophy, geography, and the environment, color the novel through allusions that place the text in a postcolonial conversation with other texts. Readers, for instance, encounter titles like “The Unbearable Loneliness of Being Chief Justice,” “The River Between,” “Madmen and Specialists,” “A Man of the People,” “The Beasts of No Nation,” and “The Children of
Sisyphus” among others, which evoke such intertextualities. Tankor Satani’s symbolic Xanadu is another example of such allusions. Hybridizatons also feature prominently in the novel such as in the syncretization of religion, miscegenation, cultural fusions, and linguistic code-switching. Cheney-Coker’s experiment sees him playing with time by the way in which the narrative easily moves between the present, the past and the future. He also applies his poetic prowess to the use of language in the novel. One comes across romantic expressions like “watching the waning sun disappear into the embrace of a September evening” (p. 1).

A challenge to the reader, however, especially if nation is ignored as the central character, would be the large number of characters and the author’s constant detour to such characters’ backstories, even minor characters, thus creating a sense of rupture in the flow of narration. The novel’s omniscient narrative approach, which allows for easy switch in narrative perspectives, also works subtly against the smoothness of narration by permitting excessive authorial comments and conscious explanations to non-African readers. On a whole, however, Cheney-Coker succeeds in retelling the complex story of African societies struggling to survive as modern nation-states cursed with the history of colonialism, ethnic suspicions, self-centered and incompetent leadership, neo-colonialism, and global capitalism that work against the development of Africa as compressed symbolically by the war.

Douglas E. Kaze, Rhodes University


Atuolu Omalu: Some Unanswered Questions in African Philosophy is a contemporary compilation of African philosophy that builds more layers onto the framework of African philosophy that has been previously set. Jonathan Chimakonam, the editor, specializes in the fields of metaphysics and existentialism. The contributors to the book are mostly professors of philosophy on the African continent. Many also specialize in metaphysics, while some specialize in ethics and epistemology. Because of the areas of specialization of the contributors, this book is a technical and well-researched volume that includes fourteen chapters on various aspects of African philosophy. There are chapters dedicated to the main fields of ethics, history of philosophy, metaphysics, epistemology, and logic. There are also chapters on philosophical problems where African philosophers are taking the lead, which include: culture of philosophy, cultural imperialism, tradition and democracy, decolonization, and the future of African philosophy. Together, the chapters paint a holistic and useful view of African philosophy. The only addition that could be made is for philosophy in art, aesthetics and images relation to meaning. A more detailed look into some of the chapters will highlight the authors’ rigor, and show that this book is accessible for the novice in philosophy, as well as providing new insight for the experienced philosopher.

In the first chapter, “Dating and Periodization Questions in African Philosophy,” Chimakonam articulates a timeline and the relevant frames of thought during each period. This is an interesting piece because it is on the history of African philosophy. This is field where little is written about from 1960 forward, so it is a much-anticipated article and it lives up to expectations. He posits an early period of African philosophy where authors who were
excavating African philosophy from “the raw materials of African culture” (p. 13). This was tied to debates about the value and rationality of Africans in combating the ideas of Lucien Levy-Bruhl who described Africans as pre-logical. The middle period of African philosophy deconstructs theories of culture as philosophy in the early period. During the middle period African Sage philosophy became popular, whereby authors cited those in society who were given authority on knowledge. This appeal to authority, according to Chimakonam, is more universal than using the culture as philosophy because culture can have relative elements within in. And the later period of African philosophy relies on the idea of Batholomew Abanduka that the correct place of philosophy is within the synthesis of the individual and universal, and it shows the connection between them. The synthesis, or more detailed look into the fields of philosophy is now warranted and needed, and it is the methodology that this volume uses by focusing now on the sub-fields within philosophy.

Epistemology and logic are given considerable weight in the volume, with Chimakonam and Uduma laying out arguments on opposing sides of the debate. Uduma argues that there are no cultural specific logics because the existence of logic presupposes the existence of culture, or there would not be the possibility of culture without logic because logic is necessary for language and therefore for culture as well. This justifies a logic that is universal and not area specific as he says Chimakonam and others argue for. Chimakonam argues for the universal and relative nature of African philosophy and logic. He states:

To exclude African philosophy from the universal idea of philosophy is to kill it. On another hand, to embrace totally the universal characteristics of philosophy having abandoned and neglected the development and use of tool of logic in African tradition which seems to be the agitations of the Universalists will kill African Philosophy (p. 103).

He says it is not possible for there to be African philosophy at all if there is not some relativity within the field. This is only one example of the many themes within their robust debate. They also write about the connection of culture to philosophy more directly, and write about ethics and ontologies.

By incorporating many sub-fields within philosophy overall the authors and editor are successful in compiling a complete book on contemporary written African philosophy. It can be a technical read at times, but the volume’s contributors lay out the previous debates fully in their chapters, and each has a nuanced take on how to organize the previous debates. This book implies the emergence of more books on these topics, and hopefully to be included in the future of the field is the incorporation of more sub-genres. The authors leave you excited by their methodology, and wanting for continued studies along this path.

Chelsi Dimm, University of California Los Angeles

The authors of this collection are engaged in what is, at heart, a serious ethical project: examining the effects of “powerful knowledge” on what we know and how we come to know it. In other words, all challenge the reader to examine how it is that some forms of knowledge come to be legitimized, and what might be lost or gained in that process, and for whom.

The idea that knowledge is politically contingent is, of course, not new. What is refreshing about Morrell and Cooper’s volume, however, is firstly the very wide range of disciplinary backgrounds brought to bear on the issue by contributors who are all based on the African continent. Secondly, the volume makes a deliberate attempt to avoid the binaries that debates over so-called “universal” versus “indigenous” knowledge have tended to create. This tendency to operate in binaries, as Lesley Green notes in her excellent chapter, has meant that “The debate inevitably breaks down. The arguments back and forth tend to trade accusations and counter-accusations in a moral argument in which the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ — as conventionally associated with ‘the West’ and ‘the rest’ — are transposed.” (p. 39). The editors do not fall into this trap; instead, they rebut both Euro- and Afro-centric approaches to knowledge, and call for a recognition of the fact that, structurally, these two seemingly opposed positions are very similar in that both seek to judge and value knowledge by a monolithic standard. Morrell and Cooper thus call for recognition of the multiplicity, and for the possibility of “Africa-centred knowledges” (p. 3), in the plural rather than Afro-centric knowledge in the singular. By this, they mean knowledges that are “entangled, contextual, and contingent” (p. 3), that do not seek to reify binaries but instead recognize that different knowledges might better fit different situations, and that once knowledge becomes entangled in African realities it has the potential to be Africa-centered, regardless of where it originated. In other words, they call for a rejection of binaries and the recognition of multiplicity and relatedness.

Structurally, the book is divided into two sections. The first half provides the theoretical and conceptual scaffolding for the volume, in that the pieces explore epistemological struggles, and the second half is more context-driven, in that the contributors apply the tools and concepts to varied spaces. It is worth noting, however, that, despite this, both halves of the volume entangle theory and practice. It seems likely that this is a deliberate response to the tendency within social science globally to consider Africa to be a space from which data is extracted and to which externally generated theory is applied, rather than a space that develops its own theoretical positions. This volume successfully overturns that assumption.

In the first half of the book, following an introduction by Morrell and Cooper that makes the case for multiplicity and relatedness in African-centred epistemologies, Lansana Keita provides a historical overview of the ways in which a particular way of knowing, based largely in the technological, became considered to be a universal truth such that Africa was considered lacking. In the following chapter, Lesley Green dismantles the indigenous knowledge debate and points to the post-humanities as a space where contemporary scholarship could try to move beyond its conventional divides, including the divide between the scientific and the humanistic. Signe Arnfred then considers the ways in which development discourse is gendered, and the ways in which this in turn drives policy. Bill Ashcroft explores notions of temporality at play in
African fiction; Brenda Cooper considers forms of classification; and Mbugua wa Mungai examines the politics of popular culture and music.

In the second half, this focus on the epistemological underpinnings of varied contexts is applied to the question, “research for what?” In other words, what to what purposes is research put, and by whom? Paterson et al. consider the effects of the dominance of the statistical model in fisheries research and examine alternatives; Rivett et al. interrogate the discipline of information technology; and Smit et al. consider urban planning. Akosua Adomako Ampofo and Michael Okyerefo explore charismatic churches, Linda Cooper and Lucia Thesen examine the induction of postgraduate students into research genres, and Leadus Madzima considers personhood in a Shona context.

The book thus contains a huge diversity of subject matter, which is drawn together by a common interrogation of dominant ways of knowing and a quest for holding open alternatives. Whilst the authors are not necessarily always in agreement with one another, this reflects the book’s commitment to multiplicity. It is a book to be recommended to any reader interested in moving beyond the tired binaries of “western” versus “indigenous” knowledge.

Shannon Morreira, University of Cape Town


This book examines women’s involvement in land issues in Tanzania. It begins with the identification of the shamba, a small parcel of land where legal battles took place. With case studies, the author highlights the regions that land pressure is prevalent, namely Arusha, Kagera, Kilimanjaro, Lindi, and Mbeya. Notable stakeholders in the issues of land dispossession and commodification are the government, investors, villagers, and individuals. However, in most cases, the villagers and individuals are left at the receiving end while government and investors have the upper hand.

In chapter two, the author situates women’s claims to land in Tanzania’s statutory framework by explaining that land issues are inseparable from those of marriage and inheritance especially when gender comes into play. It shows how women are crucial stakeholders in family stability. No doubt, Tanzania has successfully enacted land related laws that protect the interest of women, namely the Law of Marriage Act of 1971, the land Acts of 1999, and the Land Disputes Court Act of 2002, which were inspired by socio-political change and crises in the legal system as well as the apparent marketization of land. A remarkable achievement was the formation of the Gender Land Task Force (GLTF) by women’s civil society groups in 1997, which sought to void sale of land by a spouse without the other’s consent among others (p. 51). The foregoing affirms the assertion by Razavi (2007) that customary rights determine land accessibility in sub-Saharan Africa so much so that land is a vehicle for women’s inclusion to prevent dispossession. The National Land Forum also advocates for women’s participation in land matters. Also, the Land (Amendment) Act of 2004 emphasizes the need to investigate the existence of a spouse to protect a spouse’s position against mortgaging without consent (p. 55).
Chapter three presents cases of Arusha women who witnessed ejection by a male relative. The first case study concerns dispute between a widow and her brother in-law who sold land without her consent. Before Furaha filed a suit at the ward tribunal, he had already beaten her over the land, thereby portraying violence against women who challenge gender inequality in land acquisition. After proceedings and a site visit by the tribunal, it ruled in favor of the widow, Furaha. In another case, Elizabeth filed a suit challenging her husband’s son who took her land and prayed the court to request the husband to apportion her part of the land based on the role she played as wife and mother of the children. The author reveals that parties with vested interests usually become more hostile when women adopt a litigation strategy, with the aim of intimidating the litigants through violence. By implication, the land courts are helpless in preventing harassment as they lack jurisdiction to issue non-molestation orders. The book reveals that corruption is a problem in the judicial system where court files are declared missing and only to be found after bribes are paid (p. 97). This puts the credibility of the judiciary in doubt. It also reveals that corruption is not peculiar to Nigeria as presented by some scholars.

Chapter four identifies specifically the processes of justice delivery by land courts hinged on legal principles of natural justice. The fact that ward tribunal members say prayers before starting each day’s work shows that they believe in the omnipotence of God. But an issue not extensively discussed by the author is that the spiritual dimension to land dispute resolution affirms the saying that “spiritual” governs the physical world and that is why people engage in spiritism to influence court decisions. Notably, evidence is gathered in three ways, namely witness testimony, documentary evidence, and a site visit (p. 110). Interestingly, parties are usually given the right to provide oral evidence, call witnesses, and also cross-examine, thereby facilitating the delivery of justice after a hearing. The issues presented here are admissible in law and conflict resolution generally.

Arguably, a gender-mainstreaming approach is the only way to make land court processes people-centered. From the case studies, courts have been able to uphold matrimonial efforts of land ownership by ruling in favor of wives whose husbands undermined their consent before selling, while the society expects high professionalism from lawyers and judges in justice delivery by ensuring equal rights for women. In conclusion, the book addresses the existing legal provisions, deficiencies and achievements of gender equity in land allocation. The author has demonstrates the relevance of land courts to management of shamba disputes in Tanzania. The book is highly valuable to scholars in conflict studies, law, international studies, diplomacy, development studies and anthropology.

Reference:


Rosemary Ifeanyi Okah, University of Ibadan

The catalogue *El Hadji Sy: Painting, Performance, Politics* accompanies the Senegalese artist El Hadji Sy’s exhibition at the Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt, Germany, curated by Clémentine Deliss, Yvette Mutumba, Philippe Pirotte, and Sy himself. Written in English and German, the catalogue examines Sy’s multiple roles as artist, curator, and cultural activist. The inclusion of Sy as a curator points not only to an intervention performed by the artist within the show, in which he placed objects from the museum’s collection in dialogue with his own work, but to a broader methodological approach. The artist’s voice is foregrounded through two interviews, and the authors draw from extensive conversations with Sy in their essays.

Deliss’ introduction foregrounds Sy’s history with the museum: in the mid-1980s, the Weltkulturen Museum commissioned Sy and German linguist Friedrich Axt to purchase contemporary Senegalese art for its collection, an endeavor that led to the trilingual *Anthology of Contemporary Senegalese Art* in 1989. Sy, in Senegal, and Axt, in Germany, worked in close partnership. They amassed a significant archive and collection of Sy’s works in Germany, which Sy lent to the museum after Axt’s death in 2010. This loan, Deliss acknowledges, prompted the retrospective.

El Hadji Sy (b. 1954, Dakar) was educated at the national art school École des Beaux-Arts in Dakar, but soon rebelled against poet-president Léopold Senghor’s state-sanctioned art based on Négritude. Sy began painting with his feet in the 1970s, and joined the enigmatic performance collective Laboratoire AGIT’ART. He also ran Tenq, a project space in the Dakar artists’ colony Village des Arts in the early 1980s, which ended abruptly when the government demolished the settlement. He has curated multiple exhibitions, and continues to organize workshops and participate in various collectives in addition to his painting practice. In Sy’s interview with Julia Grosse in the catalogue, he touches upon these aspects of his artistic activities.

Following these introductory texts, Pirotte situates Sy’s paintings within his various modes of artistic practice. Deliss, who has worked closely with Sy before, centers her second essay on her personal experiences with Sy and Laboratoire AGIT’ART in Senegal and England, and her involvement in Sy’s 1996 revival of Tenq. Hans Belting’s interview with the artist focuses on Sy’s ambivalent relationship with Senghor and the Senegalese art establishment.

Mutumba’s and Mamadou Diouf’s essays ground Sy’s practice in sociopolitical and cultural contexts. Mutumba positions Sy and Axt’s curatorial collaboration within 1980s German and Senegalese cultural politics. Diouf argues for the placement of Sy’s work in relation to the cultural policies of Senghor’s successor Abdou Diouf since the president retracted government funding to the arts sector, which led to both increased artistic freedom and heightened government antagonism.

Manon Schwich contributes the final essay and a chronological biography, which points to weaknesses in the catalogue’s scholarship. For example, the biography suggests that Sy has an ongoing collage practice, which the essays never mention. Additionally, the catalogue illustrates a plethora of art objects, but the essays and interviews circle around the same subjects and works. The text is punctuated by long sections of images, including paintings, performances, photographs of Sy at work, images from workshops organized by the artist, reprinted...
manifestos, and Senegalese newspaper reviews. This selection gives the reader a visual understanding of the many aspects of Sy’s practice, and provides an excellent visual archive of Sy’s artistic activities in Africa and Europe. However, the reader is given almost no information about what was actually on view in the exhibition.

Although each author focuses on different elements of Sy’s practice, underlying themes can be easily discerned: the idea of movement in his work; the collaborative and social nature of his curatorial and artistic activities; his experimental approach to media; and his ambivalence towards Senghor’s cultural legacy. The predominant subject, however, is Sy’s history with the Weltkulturen Museum, and Sy and Axt’s collaborations. Through the continuous presence of Europe, the catalogue insists on the internationalism of Sy’s work, and its underlying two-way gaze allows the institution to reflect on its history and role as a European ethnographic museum that also collects and exhibits contemporary African art. Yet, Sy’s relationship with the museum and Axt are overemphasized at the expense of Sy’s collaborations on the continent. For example, Sy’s part in Huit Facettes, an artists’ collective that conducted workshops in a rural village, is inadequately examined. While there are some gaps in the scholarship, the essays, images, and documents in El Hadji Sy: Painting, Performance, Politics present a compelling view of Sy’s work and artistic activities.

Rebecca Wolff, University of California, Los Angeles


Elizabeth Eldredge’s Kingdoms and Chieftains of Southeastern Africa is a valuable addition to an extensive corpus of writings examining indigenous state formation across the southern Bantu world. Its central premise lies in the assertion that minor chiefdoms incorporated into expanding kingdoms maintained distinct identities. While the upheavals of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries resulted in the imposition of overarching loyalties to more powerful states, minor chiefdoms retained social practices that delineated discursive distinctions from hegemonic narratives.

Eldredge begins her study with two chapters outlining the historical merits of oral tradition. This methodological excursus is largely a recapitulation of points made in her previous monograph, The Creation of the Zulu Kingdom, 1815-1828: War, Shaka, and the Consolidation of Power (Cambridge, 2014). In both works, she argues that transcribed oral traditions remain an essential source for any discussion of indigenous political organization. While adding nothing new, it provides a useful summary of arguments made by Africanists for the historical validity of oral sources over the course of several decades. She then proceeds with an analysis of Portuguese shipwreck survivor accounts to demonstrate the existence of complex indigenous polities throughout the southeastern coast from as far back as the sixteenth century. Further interactions between Europeans and indigenes around Delagoa Bay are examined before the book enters very familiar territory by charting the various migrations and political reconfigurations that gripped southeastern Africa during the Mfecane. Ecological stresses coupled with long periods of drought eventually triggered a protracted struggle for resources that fundamentally recast southern Africa’s ethno-political landscape. However, Eldredge
contends that the crushing violence deployed by warrior kings like Shaka produced political submission rather than cultural homogenization. This is borne out by the discrepancies Eldredge has painstakingly traced out in compiled oral traditions. Here, she firmly disagrees with Carolyn Hamilton’s contention that Shaka successfully altered the genealogies of minor polities in order to construct a culturally uniform Zulu nation. Oral traditions did not just fuse separate fragments into uniform political communities. They were also deployed to maintain deeper diverse histories. Rulers of major kingdoms relied primarily on their own kin groups to lead their armies and administer their realms. Subordinate chiefdoms were often left intact so long as they displayed loyalty to their suzerain. The autonomy of minor lineages remained contingent on the ability of their leaders to broker deals with more powerful entities. European colonial establishments were of marginal concern to these webs of interaction, and white populations did not play a major role in southern Bantu affairs before 1830.

This monograph might be read as something of a companion piece to Eldredge’s previous work on southern Bantu politics. Her chapters charting Zulu expansion and Sotho consolidation provide much additional detail, but little new insight. Yet, her analysis of a hitherto neglected form of survival during an era of armed conflict makes an interesting contribution nonetheless. Eldredge contends that social dislocation did not necessarily lead to the dissolution sub-national entities. Minor lineages deployed a combination of inherited practices, rituals, and ceremonies that held their respective units together. Those who could not flee to found rival political amalgamations of their own submitted to the superior force of more successful adversaries while maintaining traditions that sustained separate cultural identities. Initial displays of conformity were the result of compulsion rather than national cohesion. Reconciliation to larger political formations centered on kingdoms and ruling dynasties would not come until much later.

Mesrob Vartavarian, University of Southern California


In recent years, there has been a growing push to give cash directly to the poor. James Ferguson’s Give a Man a Fish: Reflections on the New Politics of Distribution is situated within this broader movement towards what he calls “Welfare 2.0”: social assistance programs based on the “appealingly simple device of directly providing poor people with . . . cash payments” (p. 119). Ferguson provides a significant contribution to a growing area of social theory and practice, ably summarizing the conceptual bases of this movement, reviewing recent empirical evidence, and describing broader possibilities of new forms and mechanisms of distribution.

Ferguson’s central contribution is in describing how these “new” distribution schemes may shift popular ideas about the obligations and rights of states and citizens and open up “a new form of progressive political practice” (p. 189). The non-contributory transfers that Ferguson discusses—unconditional cash transfers and basic income grants—are particularly significant in that they decouple social benefits from labor and various forms of conditionality (p. 12). In so doing, they move beyond “the old European ‘social’ state model, with its imagined ‘world of breadwinners and their dependents,’ ” a world which cannot “be meaningfully mapped onto

http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/pdfs/v16i2a7.pdf
social settings more often characterized by mass structural unemployment, ‘informal’ livelihoods, and highly fluid domestic groups” (pp. 18-19). This shift has profound implications for how we conceive of the state’s role, transforming ideas of state obligations from managing labor supply, discouraging dependency, and encouraging certain forms of gendered family composition, to simply distributing what is a “rightful share” of citizens. This change in tone, from “welfare” and moralism to “rights” has profound implications for the dignity it bestows upon individuals and for relations between state and society. In highlighting the significance of this movement, Ferguson eschews neither state nor market, addressing head-on the dualism that plagues thinking about distributive politics. He brings to the discussion a voice of compassioned reason, seeing these transfers as market mechanisms to address underlying structural inequalities that neither the invisible hand nor “traditional” (European) welfare systems can achieve with the same efficiency or respect for the recipient.

While these “new kinds of distributive politics” are certainly “simultaneously exciting and deserving of critical scrutiny” (p. 14), however, Ferguson’s reflections do not go far enough in scrutinizing the practical and conceptual limitations of the new politics of distribution. This is especially true with regard to the institutional and fiscal requirements of such programs, issues of fairness related to the exclusionary nature of citizenship, and the fundamentally political and contentious nature of distribution. First, by focusing on two middle-income countries (South Africa and Namibia), Ferguson fails to fully address the institutional and fiscal capacity constraints to introducing direct transfer programs in most of the developing world. These programs minimally require state and institutional capacity and a progressive tax base in order to be effective and sustainable. While Ferguson acknowledges this, he does not sufficiently address these capacity constraints, though retains a desire to extend discussion of the possibilities of new mechanisms of distribution “in southern Africa and beyond” (p. xii). In moving back and forth from the particular to the general, his “series of ‘reflections’” (p. xiv), while informative of the shifts occurring in two countries in southern Africa, serve to highlight the need for further reflection in more difficult political, institutional, and fiscal contexts. This is necessary in order to make broad statements about the exciting possibilities of new distributive mechanisms.

Second, Ferguson insufficiently addresses the conceptual and practical issues of fairness relating to non-universal programs, as well as “universal” programs that are predicated on the intrinsically exclusionary concept of citizenship. New challenges arise with respect to defining membership in a community and the “legitimate” recipients of cash transfers. If transfers represent “a proper share of things to be distributed to those who ought to have them” (p. 49), the question remains as to who “ought” to have the shares of a society. Ferguson is not able to come any closer to an answer to “the key unanswered question” of “how—how a wealth of which all ought to have at least some share can in fact be meaningfully shared” (pp. 188-89). Noting these exclusionary elements “that bedevil all welfare states” (p. 18), Ferguson simply conceives of distributive justice “within a global frame,” as part of “an emerging norm of global citizenship” (p. 59). However, this does not lend itself to “the global political space that we all inhabit today” (p. 59), while Ferguson himself notes that “simply expanding the nation-state ideal of citizenship to ‘the global level’ is not, in the absence of a world state, a real solution” (p. 216). Thus subdued, he does not engage in a serious discussion of the limitations and challenges
of extending norms of citizenship, leaving his vision to be a narrowly conceptual one.

Finally, Ferguson insufficiently addresses the inequalities and political and social conflicts that can arise with non-universal programs of distribution. Distribution is, above all, political. Direct cash transfers allow a state to “provide highly visible and very effective support . . . to its electoral base . . . even in the absence of jobs” (pp. 9-10). While a useful political tool, there is a risk that such tools are open to manipulation rather than representing a new vision of citizenship or rights. In discussing the potential for political or social conflict, Ferguson paints a rather rosy picture without considering potential challenges and conflicts in this regard. By focusing on the unique context of southern Africa, where programs are apparently “not a particularly contentious or embattled feature of the political landscape” (p. 9), the discussion of social and political conflicts that accompany systems of distribution is stunted.

Acknowledging these limitations, Ferguson’s reflections are hedged in the language of caveat: he suggests that he is not intending to respond to the challenges of “the new politics of distribution” or to fully address the practical limitations of implementation of the related mechanisms. While *Give a Man a Fish* is an important contribution to the broader discussion of the politics of distribution, a full reckoning of this topic should reasonably be expected to address the limitations and the risks of such politics, as well as the possibilities. Ultimately, Ferguson cannot be faulted for staying true to his word, quoting Lewis Henry Morgan, that “although the subject has been inadequately treated, its importance at least has been shown” (p. 216).

Vanessa van den Boogaard, *University of Toronto*


In *Improvised Adolescence*, Sandra Grady, a University of Pennsylvania folklore PhD, examines the lives of teenagers from Southern Somalia who, after time in East African refugee camps, now adapt to city life in the U.S. Midwest. Grady draws from her own fieldwork as well as scholarship from anthropology (e.g., Janice Boddy, Mary Douglas, David Lancy), ethnohistory (Lee Cassanelli), history of religions (Mircea Eliade), sociology (e.g., Pierre Bourdieu, Erving Goffman), folklore (Alan Dundes), and occasionally, psychology/psychiatry (e.g., Erik Erikson, G. Stanley Hall). The result is an engagingly written, thoughtful text on cultural immersion, the refugee experience, identity, and youth. Her book would make excellent reading for professionals in refugee resettlement agencies, and in courses on lifespan development, adolescence, the anthropology of childhood/youth, multicultural education, family, media, and gender studies, and related disciplines.

Grady begins with a thought-provoking story about a day-long field trip to a local skating rink by the teenage migrant and refugee students at the Welcome Center, an institutional school setting devoted to assisting these English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) students. Her thick, rich descriptions of the students’ encounter with the ice (*baraf*), coupled with excellent photographs, offer an excellent introduction to the types of issues experienced by these refugees. For instance, she describes how the girls worked to preserve cultural traditions in dress that were acceptable to their communities and families, while adapting, altering, and, to use the word of the book’s
title, improvising, new identities, by adding elements in clothing popular among their non-refugee U.S.-born age peers. In one example, Grady describes how one girl tripped three times over her black underskirt before consenting to fasten it above her ankles, in the process revealing the bottom of the jeans she also wore.

The book then provides description of the Somali Bantu, also offering a regional history, including discussion of political events in Somalia that led to the Horn of Africa Diaspora. In Somalia, the Somali Bantu typically are agriculturalists living in Southern Somalia between the Juba and Shebelle rivers. Historically, these diverse groups had moved from the coast to more inland areas of Somalia. Under the Italian colonial system, many Somali Bantu were forced to work on Italian plantations, though over time, the Bantu resisted, ultimately possessing land and becoming farm owners. These descriptions of the group are bound to be controversial, given the topics, though Grady is aware of the various political views/interpretations offered over the years. On the whole, given the space available, the author provides a reasonable, measured account, suitable especially for readers whose interests in the book are primarily in identity and youth, but whose experiences with Somali/Somali Bantu culture may be negligible. Among the scholars discussed are Kenneth Menkhaus, Lee Cassanelli, and Catherine Besteman. Grady emphasizes that the Somali Bantu are in large part a socially constructed amalgam of various previously existing groups from Somalia and its environs. As part of the UN resettlement programs, the term was used to help create methods to serve these minorities/factions. Grady offers an overview of some of the issues with the term, including possible advantages, such as better serving a group that includes speakers primarily of two different languages, af-Maay and Kizigua, but one wishes she also had discussed some of the potential drawbacks in greater detail; for instance, what are the risks of using the term Somali Bantu and distinguishing this group(s) from other Somalis? Do such terms promote replication of the problematic social conditions in Somalia that led to civil war in the first place? Do the current generation of teenage refugees in the U.S. Midwest create identities that divide rather than unite all Horn of Africa refugees?

Grady’s fieldwork involved sixteen months of ethnographic research (p. 19), beginning in 2007-2008, initially at the English-language learner center. She followed students during the school year and summer, attended classes with them regularly, and observed in the lunchrooms, playground, and administrative offices. Additionally, she became a regular visitor to the nearby public housing project, where many students lived. She conducted many interviews with the students’ parents, relying mostly on her Swahili and English, with help from teenage interpreters.

The book’s chapters provide various lenses into the ways these teenage refugees construct/adapt identities that reflect/create their selves both as Somali Bantu and as 21st century Midwestern U.S. teenagers. One chapter examines the community context, a village within a U.S. city. Grady describes ethnic shopping malls and restaurants, as well as interior decorating techniques that reflect hybrid identity through material culture including cultural products, both U.S. and African-made. Another chapter discusses traditional approaches to becoming an adult, with special attention to rites of passage. Here Grady cites well-known work by Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner, but she also cites medical literature and even Freud in her discussions of what she politically terms FGC (Female Genital Cutting). Chapter 3 discusses
media’s role, particularly in gender socialization. Grady offers wonderful descriptions of group viewings of a Nigerian Nollywood film and World Wrestling Entertainment, discussing how these media influence new identities for these recent U.S. arrivals. Another chapter focuses on education, noting the direct instruction techniques of most U.S. schools, coupled with demands for certain test scores, often lead to culture clash, frustration, and unfilled dreams. Chapter 6 examines wedding rituals, offering a fascinating case study of how communities and youth combine old and new to create successful, positive adult identities in a Midwest U.S. context. In sum, Grady has emphasized three aspects of identity (group cultural identity, gender, and status within the life cycle), and her work has led to the important finding that education completion and marriage are two important emerging paths to financial independence and adulthood. Building on work by psychologists James Coté and Anton Allahar, the author argues that when adults’ identity is ambiguous, adolescents require especially dogged determination to discover and achieve their goals. To conclude, Grady’s worthwhile book should find an audience above and beyond those solely focused on the Horn of Africa and its Diaspora.

Omar Ahmed, Tempe, Arizona
Grant J. Rich, American Psychological Association, Juneau, Alaska


Offering a broad canvas of the historical state of development in Tanzania, author Maia Green tracks the external and ultimately national interventions that have attempted to respond to the volatility and social consequences of economic development. Her central argument is that “development in Tanzania is a modality through which state, culture and society are organized” (p. 13). And she suggests that the trajectory of interventions initiated at the beginning of the 20th century have resulted in a distinct contrast between “forced development from above” and individual enterprise-driven growth still reliant on material support. As a social anthropologist, Green’s engagement with development and social reform in Tanzania spans over two decades. And her practical field work, study, and consultancies have informed her pursuit to explore the effects of international development on Tanzania, not specifically for their efficiency or design, but rather the impact it has had on society.

Chapter one defines a development state as that which generally has a weak track record of economic and social development, and is materially and ideologically sustained through development relations. This results in dependency on large aid transfers offered by powerful donor organizations which ultimately have a very broad influence on the national institutions. Chapter one also places Tanzania in situ, historically and in relation to external control. Initially under the supervision of the League of Nations, but under the direct authority of German East Africa and later Britain, Tanganyika gained independence by December 1961. But the policies of the colonial powers remained in effect, policies such as agricultural modernization, development of co-operatives and community development. These concepts transitioned nicely into the socialist agenda led by the first President, Joseph Nyerere. A vertical strategy of development would come to symbolize the national development structure in Tanzania.
Policies designed by and resources accessed from the national government would be enforced by local governments and implemented by local communities. Green ends chapter one by pointing out that from the period of colonialism to Cold War socialism to the modern day neoliberal political and economic workplace, it is the “local as the agent and object of development endeavors” that remains central.

The book then sets out to expand on the implications of a village as a unit of development action and responsibility. For local communities to authentically engage they must see the personal value but also sense they are part of the decision-making and wider political and market structures. And for NGOs or local civic societies to organize, they need funds and a strategy. Frequently, these factors are largely controlled by the international development industry, a structure that “is perpetually being reformulated.” Green’s description of the increase and capacity of local community groups to effectively motivate change at the village level is a helpful assessment of the impact of the vertical development strategy.

Development, as a process of economic and social advancement, may have its roots in the verticality of historical structures, but it is also finding new iterations. Green ends the book with two chapters that describe a modernization of development in the form of cultural entrepreneurship and a pursuit to become members of a middle class. To counterbalance the threat that witchcraft has on modernization, Green points out the emergence of an industry of anti-witchcraft practitioners. What once existed in ambiguous spaces and largely practiced by itinerant individuals has now evolved into a widely open and publicized sector of community life. Rebranded and offering other traditional services, these purifiers of witches are now offering widely used entrepreneurial services. The second example of socio-economic transformation has been stimulated by the national agenda. Through the availability of credit institutions and the proliferation of savings and credit cooperatives, there is a momentum towards individuals attaining middle-class status and the nation achieving middle income status by 2025. Individual and national ambitions are practically redefining development as they pursue capitalist structures. Twenty five years after the end of socialist policies, Tanzania stands at the threshold of a “new development incarnation.”

This book is very helpful in understanding the multifaceted subject of developmental aid in a country that was once seen as one of the poorest in the world. Although it alludes to the project development trajectory from implementation to impact, it is really trying to get to the impact of the impact; how does a culture, even a country, respond to interventions (intentional or otherwise) that attempt to reduce poverty. At times the density of the language can be a distraction. But the reader will always sense an authoritative voice, and an informed and experienced viewpoint.

Ted Horwood, The Salvation Army


Recent large-scale land acquisitions are traceable to the colonial era. They continued under the guise of state driven agricultural development in the independence period, structural adjustment programs from the mid-1980s, and through the emergence of political and business
elites made possible with the financialization of capital in the 1990s. Recently, the large scale commercialization of agriculture was used by governments, investors, and donors alike as a convincing argument to solve myriad developmental challenges thrown up with the configuration of global food, finance and energy crises that peaked in 2007/8.

This anthology provides up to date political economy perspectives of large-scale cases of land acquisitions in eight African countries (Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, and South Africa). It analyses what the land related interests of a range of powerful state and non-state actors actually mean for people on the receiving end. The themes of the chapters include the role of the state, the implications for long term agrarian transformation, rural livelihoods, food security, social differentiation, and land-related struggles. The dominant message is of a variety of context specific positive and negative outcomes and a debunking of leading conceptualizations. Thus, such deals are not only externally driven; they are not particularly pro-poor; they do not result especially in a burgeoning rural proletariat; they do not translate easily to narratives of “investors” winning and “local people” losing, and they are generally not only the result of negotiations between global investors and unscrupulous domestic politicians. On the contrary, large scale land deals comprise complex webs of global, private, local, and state level actors and institutions whose uneven trajectories can only be understood through in-depth context specific, multi scalar analysis.

However, despite the heterogeneity of processes evident across the countries, a number of central features do stand out: A drive towards privatization, the commodification of natural resources, and processes of social differentiation. Overall, the book makes for compelling but not altogether comforting reading. Many African land deals have faltered, and just 1.7 percent of large-scale leased land in Africa was actually under production in 2013 (pp. 10-15).

A clear finding is that although small holders comprise a heterogeneous group, they generally face more serious challenges. Many come to comprise “hybrid classes of labour,” that are enmeshed and institutionally shackled to the bottom of global trading processes and commodity value chains. Although the dearth of baseline studies makes it difficult to evaluate socio-economic outcomes it is still apparent that positive projections are rarely realized. Thus, the outlooks for most small holders are, to varying degrees, combinations of uncertainty, insecurity, loss of access to resources, and hardship. Meanwhile, contrasting logics between large-scale capitalist monoculture production systems and small-holder organization means that there is little synergy or transfer of technology and knowledge. On the positive side however, there is some evidence that such deals can spark nearby urban growth as demands for consumption, infrastructure, employment, and services increase.

The role of the state in land deals is expectedly far from uniform. State behavior is shaped by broader domestic governance structures (for example whether decentralized, federal, emerging liberal democratic, or relatively authoritarian). Further, outcomes depend on levels of accountability that also vary greatly from country to country, as does the extent of negotiability, congruity, and consistency between communities and different state institutions responsible for various aspects of land deals (titling, formalization, levels of participation and consultation, questions of compensation etc.).
Community reactions to large-scale foreign control over land are also context dependent. They range from support, over protest, to criminal acts against investor property. Reactions are subsequently shaped by the process of acquisitions, the scope of opportunities, how change is experienced, the extent of alternatives, and resources available. Here, Kenya exemplifies an extreme case where loss of land became ethnicized by the political elite who pitted smallholders against pastoralists in the national election campaign resulting in violent clashes and loss of life.

The editors’ strong introduction contextualizes and theorizes very well the detailed country studies and provides valuable broader generalizations that complement the individual, empirically rich case studies. This volume shows clearly that such deals are not only not solving, but often exasperating numerous and serious developmental challenges that African countries already face. This gives cause for concern related both to the many relevant themes the book takes up but also pertaining to many others outside its immediate orbit. This includes the impact such deals are having on democratization processes and how they will influence the future directions of African politics. The findings of this volume should send alarm bells ringing on desks across the world of anyone remotely interested in these crucial topics.

Paul Stacey, University of Copenhagen


Theorizing about democratic practice has continued to excite political theorists across the ages and space since the evolution of the modern state system. The difficulty of replicating in modern state setting the model of direct representation of the small Greek city state in which democratic theory cum practice had its origins has continued to necessitate the enunciation of democratic theories that would suit the requirements of modern democratic societies. Needless to say that there is no unanimity of opinion among political theorists on how democracy should be practiced in modern democratic societies, a situation that explains why there are different variants of democratic system of government across the world. It remains a settled fact that every country in the world is a veritable laboratory for the discovery of democratic principles and workshop for the construction of democratic machinery.

This book by Lawrence Hamilton is another bold attempt at presenting a theory of political representation that he believes would contribute to democratic practice in South Africa through the empowerment of the classes and groups, which the political representatives supposedly represent. According to the author, the objective of the book was to provide an answer to the question on whether South Africans had become free twenty years after apartheid. The dialectics on freedom and liberty are deeply explicated through a critical examination of the nature and character of political representation which the South African post-apartheid system has thrown-up in the last twenty years. Making liberal use of South African history, politics, and economics, the author presents what would appear to be an answer to the practical question regarding freedom not only in South Africa now but also in other places and times.

In the introductory pages, the author highlights the essence of the book by situating the theoretical import of the concept of representation and its linkage with freedom in the South African context within the broader scholarly renditions of ancient and modern political
theorists, and thereafter presents panoply of related arguments of each of the book’s chapters. Chapter one, “Freedom from Politics,” is an expository portrayal of the concept of freedom as a widely misunderstood one, which the author deeply critiqued as “negative freedom” because it sees freedom as being attainable outside politics. The second chapter, “Freedom Through Politics,” argues that the contestations and conflicts of interest among different classes and groups in political societies are requisite safeguards for freedom. The treatise on power, domination, and human needs and the intricacies of representative democracy which the third chapter presents, clearly reveals the complex nature of politics in which the locus of power to determine the needs of the citizens could reside in either the political representatives or in some exogamous entities that informally control the political representatives. Chapter four presents “Real Modern Freedom” as one that entails the possession of power to overcome obstacles, determine who governs, resist the disciplining power of the state, and establish meaningful control over political representatives. The linkage between freedom and representation and the theoretical import of same in explicating the current socio-economic and political challenges of South Africa are the concerns of chapter five. Chapter six is an inquisition on whether or not political representatives’ performance should be judged or questioned against the backdrop of the country’s macroeconomic performance and policies. The concluding pages elaborated on the salient arguments of the book and identified four main institutional arrangements that could keep states of domination to a minimum as: district assemblies, a revitalized conciliar system, updated tribune of the plebs, and constitutional revision and safeguards.

The central argument of the author is that power ensures positive political representation that guarantees citizens’ freedom. Empowerment according to him implies the ability of citizens to change unwanted power relations perceived to be responsible for their subjection to a state of domination (p. 107). But, our author did not show how such empowerment could be attained by supposedly disempowered persons or group of persons who desire to change the power relations that incapacitate and dominate them. As causal variable for instigating change in power relations, “empowerment” connotes a form of bestowal of virtues of power, which in real life situation is a paradox that the wielders of power would do things that undermine the subsisting power relations to the advantage of the subjugated class or group of citizens. It is in this sense that the author’s recommended four institutional arrangements for putting political representatives in check should be held suspect. If anything, these so-called institutional arrangements would lead to the creation of new centers of power and new structures of domination which might further alienate the larger percentage of citizens. The excessive premium placed on the structure of representation by our author led him to conclude that additional institutions should be put in place to upgrade the quality of representation (pp. 201-05). But, it is the institutionalization of the culture of representation that ought to be emphasized in political theorizing.

Overall, the book is intellectually stimulating, and its arguments are lucid and persuasively convincing. The author deploys historical analysis of relevant literature systematically to evolve a theory of political representation through empirical observation of the socio-economic and political realities of South Africa. The book is a worthy piece that should be read by scholars in the fields of political science, political theory, and public administration and other related disciplines.

The return of graduates from Saudi Arabia brought the establishment of a strong Wahhabi awareness in many Sub-Saharan countries in Africa where there is an already established Sufi followership leading to many intra-religious conflicts. Abdulai Iddrisu captured the scene in northern Ghana where tension usually emerged between the followers of the Wahhabi (Salafy) strict Sunni Islam and the Sufi, often resulting in conflicts. Wahhabism, founded in Saudi Arabia in the eighteenth century, could be traced to Muhammad Ibn Abdul-Wahhab advocating for a return to the Qur’an and Sunna by emphasizing the Tawhid (absolute monotheism) to straighten the Islamic creed rather than *fiqh* (jurisprudence) (p. 5). The emergence of the Wahhabi movement in Ghana dates to the 1940s, and it became popular in the 1960s through the effort of Al-Hajj Yusuf Soalihu Afa Ajoura (1890-2004).

The spread of the Sufi orders (*tariqa*) in Africa began with the Qadiriyya *tariqa* when Shaykh Sidi Muhammad al-Kunta became its spiritual guide in the fifteenth century. The eighteenth century witnessed an increase of the Qadiriyya *tariqa* in West Africa through the effort of the Kunta family. The Tijaniyya *tariqa* emerged in the nineteenth century through the effort of Shaykh Ahmad al-Tijani (d. 1835). Two prominent shaykhs contributed to the spread of Tijaniyya in West Africa: the Senegalese Shaykh Al-Hajj Umar (d. 1784) and Shaykh Ibrahim Abdullahi Niasse (d. 1975). Shaykh Al-Hajj Umar introduced the Tijaniyya *tariqa* into Hausaland, and through the Hausa diaspora it spread into Ghana and other places, mostly by traders (p. 36). By the end of the nineteenth century, Tijaniyya had become popular in Salaga Ghana, a prominent trading center. The war in 1892 dispersed many Muslim traders and scholars in Salaga. According to Jack Goody and Ivor Wilks (1968), it was also the major cause for the spread of Islam especially Tijaniyya across Ghana (p. 40).

Shaykh Al-Hajj Umar ibn Abi Bakri al-Salghawi (1854-1934) played a significant role in the spread of Tijaniyya across Ghana. Many Islamic scholars today refer to him as a teacher or motivator. There have been two earlier attempts at reform in northern Ghana. The first was that of al-Hajj Umar Abi Bakri al-Salghawi. According to al-Salghawi, Islamic scholars in Salaga “cheated and cared only for the unbelievers, glorifying the heathen elements of society,” therefore consider them hypocrites (p. 46). The second attempt for Islamic reform in northern Ghana was made by two personalities, Alhaji Bakri of Salaga and Mahdi Musa. Bakri’s initial intention was to follow Prophet Muhammad’s example and establish a Muslim state in Gonja. He started the struggle but left for Mecca, and on coming back found that the British had already occupied Ghana. He retired and engaged with teaching the Qur’an in Salaga. Mahdi Musa was a Fulani from northern Nigeria with links to the Sudanese Mahdi tradition. He began a call to Muslims for a return to the Qur’an and Sunna in 1904, but there was no evidence connecting him with Wahhabism (p. 51).

This was the kind of world in which Afa Ajoura, the scholar at the center of this work, grew up and traveled widely in the areas of Alhaji Bakri’s and Mahdi Musa’s influence. Ajoura learned about the debates and discourse of al-Hajj Umar having studied briefly under him. Ajoura also noticed how itinerant mallams moved with their family, books and pupils who...
learn the Qur’an from them. Ajoura concluded that in order to reform the Muslims in Ghana, Islamic educational reform was paramount. The period 1935–1950s witnessed widespread Qur’anic schools in northern Ghana such as Anbariyya, Nuriyya, Nahda, Nurul Islam, Huduuiyya, Hidayya, etc, which is the reason most Muslims in Salaga speak Arabic (p. 80).

Iddrisu traced the emergence of the Munchere community in northern Ghana under the leadership of Afa Ajoura whose main aim was to fight un-Islamic practices among the Muslims under mostly his students and those returnee Wahhabi ulama who prefer to be called Salaf meaning “those who adhere to the teachings of the first three generations of Muslims and who profess God’s unity” (p. 97). This Munchere community is referred to as Munkirun by the Tijaniyya followers, meaning rejecters or those who cannot overlook wrong. Afa Ajoura and his community fight against Islamic mysticism and preach the Tawhid, i.e. absolute monotheism. The main target of attack is the Tijaniyya who according to Ajoura had introduced innovations in the practice of Islam; therefore, the need to change it by reintroducing “true Islamic teachings” from the perspectives of the Qur’an and Sunna. Ajoura not only built a mosque to promote his teachings but also masterminded the takeover of many mosques as avenues of preaching as the Izala had done years back in Nigeria.

The followers of Tijaniyya known as Nawun-Nyeriba (“those who can see God”) viewed the activities of Afa Ajoura and his followers as a threat to their own beliefs, which was the reason for the many years of intra-religious tension. The two visits of Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse (Khalifa of Shaykh Ahmad Tijani) in 1951 and 1953 intensified the practice of Tijaniyya in Ghana. Tijani followers believe that the Shaykh reduced the path to Allah through his assumption of the position of Qutb al-Ghawth (Savior of the Age), a divine election to lead humankind through mystic power as was emphasized by Ahmad Tijani himself (p. 107). By this position, Niasse claimed to be an intermediary between man and God. The cardinal teaching of Ibrahim Niasse includes the Ru’ya, the claim that Shaykh Ahmad Tijani saw Prophet Muhammad in broad daylight. Second is the Hadrat indicating that during the performance of Wurđi especially the seventh recitation of the Jawhārat al-Kamal, the Holy Prophet, the Four Guided Caliphs, and Shaykh Tijani are present (p. 110). The practices of wurd and wazifa form part of the debate that attracted the young and elderly, and both male and female, married and unmarried. People walk on the streets while counting rosaries and reciting salat al-Fatih or other prayers either glorifying God and praising the Prophet or great personalities of the Tijaniyya. To some extent, these activities determine Muslimness in Ghana (p. 117). The Munchere on the other hand condemned this demonstration of religious piety and label it blasphemy and bid’a, thus considering the Qur’an and Sunna as the only foundations of Islam that deserves attention from Muslims. Iddrisu stressed that these arguments were discussed everywhere in mosques, funeral, preaching sessions, Friday sermons, wedding walima, etc leading to clashes in 1966, 1967, and in 1968.

Iddrisu is of the opinion that Afa Ajoura adopted a new approach in his struggle against the Tijaniyya by emphasizing Islamic education through the establishment of the Anbariyya Islamic Institute that draws pupils and students from different backgrounds. Anbariyya took the lead and even provided the Islamic University of Medina with many students (p. 131). The school was first financed by the local community and later by Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries. Therefore, by the 1970s the Tijaniyya seems to have lost its struggle against Afa
Ajoura in Ghana. The author was able to connect the spread of Islamic education in line with the Saudi Wahhabi doctrine fueled by the return of graduates from the Islamic University of Medina and the influx of Islamic books that promote the Salafy ideology into Ghana and the decline of Tijaniyya in Ghana (p. 208).

Dauda Abubakar, University of Jos


Published as part of Ohio University Press’ New African Histories Series, *Conjugal Rights: Marriage, Sexuality, and Urban Life in Colonial Libreville, Gabon* by Rachel Jean-Baptiste, Associate Professor at the University of California-Davis, traces conjugal rights in Libreville from 1849 to the end of colonialism in 1960. The book’s title, *Conjugal* is a bit misleading. Jean-Baptiste’s book is not restricted to the history of conjugal rights and pre-marital and extramarital sexual relationships in colonial Gabon. The book also deals with additional aspects of social history including meanings of gender, the process of urbanization, and the development of French colonial social and legal policies. Indeed, one of the book’s most important findings is that colonial Libreville was not gendered male but that rather women had opportunities to assert economic, and to a lesser extent political, power.

Jean Baptiste found the arrival of Europeans greatly impacted the marriage patterns and sexual lives of Gabon’s indigenous population in numerous ways. Most Frenchmen living in the colony took a “native wife,” typically having children and living together as a family. The majority of African women entering into such interracial relationships were either ethnically Mpongwe or bi-racial, making it difficult for Mpongwe or bi-racial men to find wives. The French colonial government also regulated African sexuality as a component of urban planning and the building of their colonial state. In doing so the French discouraged polygamy, regulated bridewealth payments (including the creation of a loan fund to assist young men in accumulating enough assets for bridewealth payments), and indirectly created a sexual economy of prostitution.

One of the impressive aspects of this work is the limited historiography on colonial Gabon for the author to draw upon. As such, Jean-Baptiste had to be creative in melding together archival research in Gabon, France, Senegal, Italy, and the United States with nearly sixty oral history interviews conducted in Gabon. The combined use of both oral history and court records allowed the author to relay to her readers dozens of fascinating stories which effectively illustrated the points being argued.

Two minor criticisms: I question the author’s categorization of the Gabonese colonial capital of Libreville as “urban” given that its population during these years was less than 8,000 and the author uses phrases such as “thin population density” (p. 55) and “low population density” (p. 59) to describe the city. For this reason I am skeptical of the applicability of findings from Libreville to much larger African cities such as Cape Town, Johannesburg, Dakar, Lagos, or Mombasa as well as the author’s apparent desire to place this scholarship into the genre of studies of African urban history. Secondly, the introduction of *Conjugal Rights* is a dry
“dissertation-esque” historiographical overview, which I fear may lose the attention of potential readers. This would be a shame because the rest of the book is colorfully written and engaging. Conjugal Rights will be of interest to scholars of gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, colonialism, and potentially urban development. I highly recommend the course adoption of this book in undergraduate African history courses (just skip assigning the introduction!).

Phil Muehlenbeck, George Washington University


Few topics have received more attention from historians than World War II. Despite the vastness of this body of literature, the economic, political, and military contributions of Africans to the war effort on both sides remains unappreciated, misunderstood, and unknown. This is mostly a problem of sources. Not only did few African soldiers leave behind memoirs, and limited opportunities exist for historians to conduct oral histories given the average life expectancy of African veterans, but also few memorials to African soldiers were built and colonial documents disguised the African contribution to the war in vague statistics. Over the last two decades, however, research by Gregory Mann, Nancy Lawler, and Olly Owen among others has begun to shed light on the role of Africans in the World War II.

This monograph is an exhaustively researched and meticulously documented addition to this growing corpus of revisionary scholarship. Eric T. Jennings, professor of history, University of Toronto, explores the contribution of French Equatorial Africa (FEA) and Cameroon to the Gaullist cause between 1940 and 1943. During these years, Jennings argues, the Gaullist movement drew its military and institutional strength from Central Africa. Cameroon and FEA provided Charles de Gaulle with the legitimacy, territories, and human and material resources needed to transform Free France from an exiled movement into a fully functioning government.

Jennings divides his monograph into three parts that measure how Africans contributed to the cause of Free France, as well as the different ways in which Free France mattered to Africans. Part one explains why FEA and Cameroon rallied behind Free France in 1940, Free French Africa’s growing pains, and the external and internal threats the Gaullists encountered. Jennings suggests these two colonies joined the Gaullist movement primarily because of their geographical proximity to British Africa and economic concerns about their exports. Part two investigates the experience of FEA and Cameroonian soldiers and the racism they encountered. Jennings shows how African troops became effective agents of Gaullist imperialism, despite glaring equipment shortages, vulnerable home-front defenses, lack of adequate desert transportation, and blatant discrimination. Part three analyzes how wartime mobilization of resources, especially of rubber and gold, and the ensuing economic transformations brought about by Allied demand for these raw materials from Central Africa affected the lives of Africans in Cameroon and FEA. While rubber played an important role in the Allied war strategy and gold mining ensured Free France’s financial autonomy, resource extraction and other forms of labor, like road construction, negatively impacted the lives of Africans who were regularly subjected to forced labor, harsh working conditions, carding, and censorship. An epilogue traces the collective memory of Free France’s African heritage. Whether it was
remembered as the heyday of colonialism by French settlers in Douala or a disappointment by African soldiers who did not receive the awards or compensation they felt they deserved. Jennings demonstrates that the collective memory of Free French Africa was highly flexible.

Written by a historian for other historians, Jennings lays almost no contextual ground for newcomers to the topic. Neophytes will lament the absence of chapter that explores both the European context as well as France’s colonial history in Cameroon and FEA prior to 1940. From a scholarly perspective, Jennings’ monograph could have been improved if he had employed a comparative framework that explored how the experiences of Africans living under Free France in Central Africa compared to and differed from those Africans living under Vichy rule in West Africa. Furthermore, while Jennings successfully examines the experiences of Africans in Cameroon and FEA, he could have paid more attention to how Central Africans felt about Free France on an emotional or ideological level.

Drawing upon archival research conducted in Cameroon, Congo, Senegal, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States, Jennings successfully recovers the African perspective and re-centers the history of Free France in Central Africa. Hopefully other historians of World War II will follow suit.

Dana Bronson, Simmons College


In his incisive book Africa: Why Economists Get It Wrong, Morten Jerven provides a critical analysis of the economic development literature on Africa. Jerven writes it for the non-specialist to promote critical engagement with economics. His provocative, yet persuasive, thesis is that the literature on Africa’s chronic growth failure is misguided as it often uses ahistorical methods and relies on poor data, among other problems.

In Chapter 1, Jerven argues much of the development literature has misunderstood the nature of African economic growth. Regression-oriented attempts to explain Africa’s lower growth tended to use the low average growth from around the 1980s, failing to consider and explain the much higher growth in the 1960s, early 1970s, and late 1990s. Thus, he argues, the search to explain the “Africa dummy” variable is misguided. He also critiques a variety of explanations for the continent’s slow growth, including “dependency on aid,” “deficient public services,” “bad policies,” and “bad governance” (pp. 33-39).

Chapter 2 looks at economists’ attempts to use history to explain current variations in income between African countries. Jerven argues that, given weaknesses in datasets in terms of reliability, accuracy, and volatility in income figures, there may be “very little variation in estimates of GDP per capita today that actually needs explaining” (p. 56). He then proceeds to critique three prominent historical explanations: (1) initial conditions, such as geography and technology, (2) ethnicity in the form of ethnic fractionalization, and (3) the link between settlers and institutions. Overall, he suggests greater nuance and humility are needed in economists’ endeavors to address the role of history.

Jerven discusses per capita income increases in Africa before, during, and after the colonial period in Chapter 3. He argues that understanding growth as recurring and episodic is more useful for policy than assuming consistently low growth. Once states are evaluated on this
standard, he suggests it is better for policy “to think of African states as relatively fragile and particularly vulnerable to economic downturns and temporary fluctuations,” rather than as “inept, inefficient, and incapable” (pp. 93-94). The chapter’s discussion is wide-ranging, from the impact of slavery to the resource curse, from African countries’ prospects for growth to the interplay of political conditions and economic growth.

Chapter 4 retreads much of the ground from Jerven’s 2013 book, Poor Numbers: How We Are Misled by African Development Statistics and What to do About It. In this chapter, Jerven critiques the tendency to accept development statistics uncritically, noting “there is a large gap between economic realities on the African continent and the statistics that purport to describe them” (p. 103). He discusses a variety of flaws with statistics about Africa, such as old benchmark years that warp GDP figures and dubious attempts to uncover continent-wide poverty trends when, for many countries, data points are few or even non-existent (115).

Much like Poor Numbers, Jerven’s Africa is incredibly concise by design; the body of the text is only 132 pages. This is most likely due to the dearth of anecdotes/narratives. Indeed, he critiques economists who leave critical caveats out of their popular works and employ unconvincing statistical methods only to “then make use of anecdotes to persuade readers to believe the fragile evidence that is presented” (10). This book certainly does not employ this approach.

Despite the conciseness, Jerven helpfully explains most of the basic statistical and economic concepts necessary for understanding his argument. He is able to quickly, yet lucidly, explain such concepts as dummy variables and instrumental variables in order to make the book accessible for non-specialists. This instructive and introductory tone falters, however, at times. For example, in Chapter 3, Jerven does not explain concepts like rational choice, factor endowments, and rent-seeking.

Despite being aimed at non-specialists, Jerven’s Africa incorporates effective review of the literature. He engages a wide range of topics and authors trenchantly. In one especially pointed reference, he describes the empirical section of a working paper as “just pretense” with “no relation to the real world” (p. 117). Paul Collier’s works in particular are critiqued repeatedly throughout the book. Nevertheless, Jerven does note in the book’s introduction, “Many economists do good work on Africa, uncovering new evidence and posing interesting research questions” (p. 9).

A risk of a book such as this one suggesting so many flaws and weaknesses in the literature and aimed at non-economists is that it may lead readers past fair criticism to skepticism. Some may be left wondering what, if anything, we can know with any reasonable certainty about Africa’s economic growth and prospects for development.

Brad Crofford, Independent Scholar


Dating back to 1977, Johnson published the first version of How Long Will South Africa Survive?, a book known then for its central theme which described ANC’s armed struggle as a feeble affair and predicted that the apartheid regime was more likely to be toppled by economic and
moral pressure from its western trading partners. In 1977 this was greeted by jeers from the left, but Johnson turned out to be spot on: the ANC’s guerrilla campaign fizzled, while sanctions and disinvestment campaigns drove Pretoria into a position that it seemed almost relieved to surrender once it became clear that the ANC’s Soviet backers were collapsing. And then in 2015 one gets *How Long Part Two*, a text with the same title and raising related questions. Johnson opens with a vignette involving Mandla Gcaba, a nephew of Jacob Zuma and according to Johnson one of the state president’s key backers. Gcaba is a boss in the taxi business, a man whose foot soldiers defend their turf with heavy weapons. He is also linked to a police constable named S’bu Mpisane who vanished just before testifying in a murder trial that threatened to put the president’s nephew in jail. When the heat died down, S’bu came back to life, married into Zuma’s “Tammany machine” and began to move up in the world. Today, still a policeman, he owns a mansion worth 94 times his annual salary and, according to Johnson, bought his wife a Rolls Royce for Christmas.

There are many similar stories in today’s South Africa, and they provide Johnson with one of his central themes. The rule of law is threatened, he says. Police are bent. A stench of corruption hangs over government, and those in a position to check the rot are often themselves contaminated by scandal. By now the whole world knows about President Zuma’s sprawling rural residence, built at taxpayers’ expense by contractors whose charges seem to exceed the explicable by a factor of ten. There are many similar stories in that regard too.

According to Johnson, Zuma’s extended family has benefited hugely from the patriarch’s accession to power, acquiring a financial empire. His tribe, the Zulu, has done rather well too. On the next rung, one finds a network of what Johnson calls “warlords and patronage lords” running the provinces. Below them is a new class of businessmen and government mandarins who work in tandem diverting state resources to personal accounts. Johnson sees this as “predatory” elite that feeds by redistribution “away” from others. Ten years ago, books with such views were greeted by an ominous silence in South Africa but made their way onto local bestseller lists without any review attention. It seems even the elites are reconciled to the fact that Johnson is right again: South Africa is in crisis.

As befits a man steeped in the Oxonian PPE tradition, Johnson views the world primarily through an economic prism, and what he sees in South Africa is darkness descending. South Africa’s manufacturing and mining industries are shrinking, strangled by declining productivity, soaring wages, and laws that terrify potential investors, inter alia by requiring whites to hand large chunks of their businesses to black empowerment partners. The only sector still growing is the public one, where civil servants earn staggering salaries and often do little in return. Sceptics in this regard should read Johnson’s reportage on South Africa’s schools, which are funded at the highest rate in the developing world and produce (at least in mathematics) the second worst results on the planet.

How long will this last? In Johnson’s view, the end could come tomorrow or perhaps a few years hence. All that is clear is that South Africa’s spending on social grants, civil service salaries, and rampant baksheesh is unsustainable, and the day of reckoning is imminent. The consequences are likely to be abysmal. As Johnson sees it, that issue is already settled: twenty years of “suicidal” policies and “almost complete fecklessness” in their application show that
the ANC is “hopelessly ill-equipped” for the task of running a modern industrial economy. All that can save us now, he concludes, is the ANC’s unlikely ouster in an upcoming election.

Thus one can conclude that Johnson’s latest book addresses corruption that now riddle the country’s body politic. As a result, it is increasingly up to the country’s politicians, economic and business leaders and other stake holders to explain how they, if they were in charge, would arrest the country’s decay and reverse the senescence process.

Utsav Kumar Singh, University of Delhi


Liisa Malkki’s new book on the intersections between the domestic realm, humanitarianism, and the imagined bonds amongst humanitarian workers comes at a most appropriate time. The optimism of the 1990s in the redeeming power of humanitarian work at the end of the Cold War has clearly faded in North America and Europe. The author sets out to examine the forms of imagination that sustain one particular national community of humanitarian aid workers and supporters, in this case, Finland. She pokes holes in generic discussions of Western humanitarianism by noting the importance of the local and national origins of aid workers and supporters. Instead of assuming that Westerners simply dehumanize recipients of aid as merely passive objects to be saved by humanitarian action, she argues that Finns who volunteer to make toys and serve as volunteers abroad view themselves as in need of purpose and care.

For example, Chapter 1 analyzes the motives of Finns to work abroad as Red Cross volunteers. Eschewing any formal religious reasons, Malkki’s informants instead juxtapose the banal and overly ordered society of their homeland with the field. Foreign service allows these Finns to make stronger emotional bonds, more open social interactions, and a new sense of personal freedom. North American specialists in African studies may feel a sense of self-recognition in reading this chapter, just as they might in reviewing how Malkki considers the difficulty of how humanitarian workers try to manage their emotions faced with the brutal choices imposed by humanitarian catastrophes. Besides suffering, encountering violence also leads to learning and “experientially, it produces points of imaginative communion” (p. 71). This frank recognition of the costs of being a “guilty bystander” (to quote the theologian Thomas Merton)—in which any ethical choice by researchers and aid workers in contact with violence come with their own costs of pain and guilt—should be required reading for graduate students preparing for fieldwork.

Another impressive feat in *The Need to Help* comes with the recognition of the imaginative work of aid supporters that provides community even as it erases specificity and the political and social contexts of violence. Chapter 3 takes a genealogical approach to the ubiquity of children in representations of humanitarian action. Children served to represent innocence, suffering, and peace in a generic way that highlighted the ideals of antiracist humanitarianism. Obviously, the actual experiences of children are too often lost. Rather than simply stop there and deride the inadequacies of these representations, Malkki then chooses in Chapters 4 and 5 to turn attention to the meanings and value of one particular configuration of suffering childhood. The Finnish Red Cross promoted the creation of Aid Bunny stuffed animals that
were to be sent to poor children. In a comparison with Kongolesek *nkisi* power objects, Malkki argues that these toys convey a sense of healing, personhood, and love. Making these objects also helps constitute an imagined community of care between Red Cross workers and volunteers, particularly valuable to elderly Finns who feel isolated. Knitting is a therapeutic practice that ties individuals with a world of need.

The final chapter sums up the book by exploring neutrality, sacrifice, and humanitarianism in a Finnish context. The Red Cross’ commitment to neutrality and a universal notion of aiding humans in need, Malkki notes, forces aid workers to turn to wrestle with the moral complications that result. Universal ideals both come from and create particular understandings and identities. There is a great deal to be said for this approach towards individual aid projects and causes. If one takes the defunct Invisible Children organization, for example, Malkki’s example offers an opportunity to go from merely mocking the group for its simplistic propaganda and its self-interested founders to exploring why and how its briefly famous crusade against Joseph Kony attracted a wide range of young followers. This book would be a valuable text in undergraduate and graduate courses on development and humanitarianism. Malkki’s skilled ability to link together so many different intellectual inspirations makes this book very useful to examine as a model for theoretical conceptualization and for her methodology. Readers expecting a straightforward approach to humanitarianism in African contexts may be somewhat disappointed. Though Malkki draws a great deal from interviews with Finnish volunteers who had worked in Rwanda in 1993 and 1994, this study focuses on humanitarian communities rather than specific sites of intervention. All in all, this is a very valuable and innovative work.

Jeremy Rich, Marywood University


The aim of James C. McCann’s latest book “is to tell an engaging story of human disease ecology that resets our understanding of this deadly disease in human, narrative terms” (p. 2). It seeks also to prove that malaria is complex, local, and resistant to “biomedicine’s efforts to find solutions in one-dimensional panacea” (p. 1). While it mostly achieves this latter goal—partly by representing “biomedicine” as a kind of straw man—the overall results are mixed.

The book’s introduction posits that the centuries-old relationship between human attempts to defeat malaria and mosquitoes’ resilience in the face of these efforts can be understood as a dance or chess game; these metaphors are carried throughout the book to little effect. Subsequently, chapter 1 asserts that Ethiopia’s highland populations have historically believed “malaria belonged to the ‘other’” (p. 22)—chiefly the peoples inhabiting the tropical lowlands. This is an interesting observation, although its implications are not readily apparent. The following chapter “tells two stories about malaria that merged in Ethiopia and Italy in the years 1935-1941: intermingled tales of war, ecologies, and human struggles against a common disease” (p. 33). This too is an intriguing topic, yet like many chapters in this book it elects to “tell a story” rather than advance an argument; thus its relationship to the other parts of the work is unclear. The aim of Chapter 3 is to “focus on stories of malaria in one ecological

http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/pdfs/v16i2a7.pdf
landscape and tease out malaria’s dance over time” (p. 55). Although vague in ambition, it contains an interesting exploration of the relationship between elevation and malaria epidemiology, as well as a valuable account of how an important new species of mosquito was discovered in Ethiopia in 1964. Chapter 4 offers a narrative of how efforts in the mid-twentieth century to eradicate malaria through DDT spraying were derailed by political upheaval and lack of resources; its brief analysis of how the socialist regime’s plan to resettle peasants in lowlands affected malaria transmission is of particular note.

The book is at its most fascinating in chapter 5, “Malaria Modern,” when McCann describes the results of a five-year study in which he, with a team of geographers and entomologists, analyzed the relationship between maize cultivation and rates of malaria infection in Burie district. Results from this study suggest the intensification of maize production in Ethiopia since the 1980s may have contributed to malaria’s continued prevalence, due to maize pollen being a nutritious food for mosquito larvae. These findings support McCann’s contention that the struggle against malaria is fraught with complexity—not least because the study was funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, which in recent years has been both fighting malaria and promoting maize cultivation in Ethiopia.

While The Historical Ecology of Malaria in Ethiopia provides valuable insight into the ways human interactions with Ethiopia’s landscape have affected the epidemiology of malaria and vice versa, the book’s aims are excessively broad, leading to problems of weak argument and disjointed organization. In most chapters it is difficult to discern what argument is being made at all or how it might support other sections of the book; this task is made more arduous by the lack of introductory and concluding sections in all chapters but the fifth. The text is an eclectic chronicle of how Westerners and Ethiopians have imagined malaria over centuries, how eradication efforts failed in the 20th century, how maize impacted the disease’s ecology, and even how mosquitoes might narrate their own history of malaria: “There are many types of us: We dance, dodge, and dart in different ways” (p. 139). Although these subjects are of interest in their own right, the book struggles to use each chapter to advance a central point. Where McCann does stake out a position—in claiming for example that “all malaria is local” (p. 151)—this is done mainly through repeated assertion rather than accumulation of evidence, taking the form of declarative sentences tacked to unrelated paragraphs: “After all, to local folks, symptoms were the measure rather than microbiology. And all malaria is local” (p. 37). Some of the evidence marshalled in the text in fact contradicts such assertions. For example, the association between maize pollen and mosquito prevalence discussed in Chapter 5 points not to a unique local phenomenon but to general properties of plant and pathogen that are likely to be true outside of Ethiopia.

The Historical Ecology of Malaria in Ethiopia offers a wealth of information on malaria in Ethiopia, ranging from a comparison of Ethiopian and European ideas of disease etiology to an analysis of the principal types of mosquitoes transmitting the parasite and an account of their preferred habitats. It is admirable for its exploration of historical Ethiopian narratives of disease side by side with modern biomedical analyses of vector and parasite. Although its meandering structure and blurry argumentation render it unsuitable for non-specialists, it will be of interest to Africanists focused both on the history of public health and the intellectual history of disease.

In January 2015, Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) commander Dominic Ongwen was arrested, or surrendered, to Séléka rebels in the Central African Republic, far away from his native Uganda. He was then handed over to U.S. and Ugandan forces on the ground. The US had offered a five million dollar reward for Ongwen’s arrest, and Séléka, infamous for its own human rights abuses, claimed the bounty. Ongwen was also indicted by the International Criminal Court, and the US, which is not a States Party to the Rome Statute of this Court, still facilitated Ongwen’s swift transfer to The Hague where the Court is located—alas, the pragmatics of dirty war and international justice.

The prosecution and defense teams then spent one year preparing for the court hearings, and when the confirmation of charges hearing started in January 2016, the hearing could be followed online. The evidence collected by the prosecution in close cooperation with the Ugandan police, military, and security institutions and presented to the pre-trial chamber is massive and indeed convincing, yet no one with insight into the war in northern Uganda would refute Ongwen’s violent role in the war. But is he guilty? Ongwen’s defense team demands that the charges are dismissed. “Ongwen did not possess the requisite capacity to commit any offence. He was just an instrument and the instrumentality by which he was viewed by his captors cannot be visited on him to face the liabilities,” his lawyer argued, citing the fact that Ongwen was abducted and forced into fighting as a child. “This is a proper case for court not to confirm the charges against Ongwen” (quoted by the *Monitor*, a Ugandan daily, January 26, 2016). Parallel to the hearings in The Hague, Yoweri Museveni, the Ugandan president since 1986 and in 2016 reelected in yet another round of fraudulent elections, declared that Uganda should “pull out of the court,” since the International Criminal Court, he claimed, “is not serious” (*Monitor*, February 13, 2016).

Those who know the history of the Court’s involvement on the African continent will remember that it was the same Museveni who requested the Court as its first case to investigate the LRA leadership, something that legal scholar Sarah Nouwen sheds new light to in *Complementarity in the Line of Fire*, her in-depth scrutiny that also analyses the Court’s Darfur indictments. Indeed, by now much has been said about the LRA, the war in northern Uganda, and international justice interventions there. The same goes for Darfur. Yet, as Nouwen’s book illustrates, it is essential to ground any discussion on these justice interventions in solid scholarship, and it is important to outline the historical and sociopolitical realities under which such interventions unfold. Only then can we really interpret and understand the seemingly contradictory developments and statements such as those referred to above. Here Nouwen’s work is essential. Over some five hundred pages and with a mammoth note apparatus, *Complementarity in the Line of Fire* will be a standard reference work on the International Criminal Court: massive in content and objective in analysis. At the same time, with the vast violence of Boko Haram and the Islamic State group these days, the atrocities committed in northern Ugandan and Darfur seem to be falling into global and historical oblivion. Yet this...
must not happen. Nouwen is able to explain many of the impending legal questions in the Uganda and Darfur cases, and her grounded analysis defuses a number of scholarly debates on the International Criminal Court’s intervention in Africa. Especially interesting is the in-depth analysis of the Court’s complementarity principle in relation to Uganda’s changing justice system, and the discussion on the Court’s gravity threshold for cases to be admitted (the “criterion for admissibility”) and how this plays out in practice.

As Nouwen shows in great detail, the prosecution’s view on complementarity as well as on the gravity threshold reveals how initial ignorance of the Court in several instances encouraged a kind of institutional fundamentalism, even partial impunity, at the cost of a better understanding of how the world is realized in northern Uganda as well as in Darfur, in just and unjust ways. Not least is Nouwen’s careful and historically grounded critique important now that we are invited to follow the case against Ongwen over the Internet. Most former Lord’s Resistance Army commanders have been granted blanket amnesty, yet one, Thomas Kwoyelo, is under trial in Ugandan courts. In assessing also Kwoyelo’s case in Uganda, parallel to Ongwen’s in The Hague, Nouwen shows that accountability is something much more profound than only bringing the culprits to the dock and making court proceedings public over the Internet. Anyone interested in how international justice and injustice unfold on the African continent must read Nouwen’s book.

Sverker Finnström, Uppsala University


This book traces the emergence of postcolonial modernism in Nigeria during the independent years (1950s-1960s) linked to the wider context of decolonization in twentieth century Africa, to its demise in the years of crisis marked by Nigeria’s civil war (1967-70). Okeke-Agulu presents the key characteristics of postcolonial modernism as an “international mid-twentieth century phenomenon” (p. 2). The author begins by identifying the correlation between visual art and nationalism in order to argue the necessity to analyze political ideology and modernism together in the context of all decolonizing nations. He describes the socio-political landscape of Nigeria as one linked to a wider process of decolonization which began soon after the end of World War II when artists, intellectuals, and writers across Africa and the African diaspora began to renegotiate and reimagine the relationship between colonizer-colonized influenced by the cultural and political movements of pan-Africanism, negritude, and nationalism.

The author uses a visual vocabulary of cultural decolonization, which he aptly describes as articulating both subjectivity and a crisis in post-independent nationalism identifying four main discursive themes in the process. These are defined as postmodern modernisms: the self-awareness and role artists had in developing new art forms that captured the feelings of change in the independent years; artists negotiating and rearticulating their relationship with “tradition”, colonial history, and the past on their own terms; and the development of innovative formal styles; and artists critically engaging in the analysis of the postcolonial condition following the political crisis in the late 1960s.
The book begins with the intellectual origins of modernism in Nigeria that developed out of an ideological conflict with imperial Europe in order to highlight the shifts in the visual arts influenced by anticolonial nationalism and pan-Africanism. Chapter 2 presents a comparative analysis of the legacies of two pivotal figures in Nigerian modern art: the pioneer modernist painter Aina Onabolu and the British art teacher Kenneth C. Murray and their respective anticolonial and coloniser worldviews of art education. Chapter 3 focuses on fine art education at the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology (1954-1961) and the discussions that emerged around the role of art in the decolonization and nationalization process. Okeke-Agulu presents an analysis of the radicalized art that emerged from the Art Society in Zaria and the development of “natural synthesis,” placing it firmly within postcolonial discourse as an appropriation of European modernist practices and local artistic traditions but, most importantly, influenced by the cultural and literary movements of negritude and pan-Africanism, together with the political ideologies ofocolonization.

Chapter 4 explores the important role workshops had in facilitating international exchanges among artists, writers, and intellectuals, taking the magazine Black Orpheus and the Mbari Artists and Writers Club in Ibadan to illustrate how these platforms facilitated social networks engaged in local, national, and international politics linked to the cultural and literary movements of negritude and pan-Africanism which were fundamental to the development of postcolonial literary and artistic modernism in Africa and the African diaspora. Chapter 5 gives an in-depth study on the diverse responses to “natural synthesis” that developed new forms and techniques drawing from local and international styles and techniques. Chika Okeke-Agulu therefore emphasizes that the role of indigenous art forms in the theory of natural synthesis “is not so much in its potential to authorize “nationalist” art as in its enabling an unprecedented, diverse, and ambitious art that defined the landscape of Nigeria’s postcolonial modernism” (p. 18).

Chapter 6 turns to the art world that emerged in Lagos after 1963 and the emergence of new artistic and intellectual platforms in Lagos providing fresh analysis into the debates around the future direction of post-independence art in Nigeria and the differences that emerged between the different generations of artists. Okeke-Agulu’s final chapter skillfully weaves the feelings of disillusionment that marks the period of political crisis and civil war into the political, artistic, and cultural landscape, describing how cultural nationalism gave way to increased regionalism. Here the author critically examines the work of Uche Okeke and Damas Nwoko and their subjective articulations during the crisis years to illustrate the change in the artists’ relationship to the nation-state and the emergence of postcolonial sensibilities that are essentially transnational.

This book offers readers a complex study into the development of Nigerian modernism within a wider political, cultural, and artistic context of decolonization. Chika Okeke-Agulu successfully achieves a delicate balancing act, keeping the individual artists and their work at the center of this critical enquiry while also analyzing how they were connected to a wider art world context. In addition the author addresses the colonial legacies that represent contemporary African art today as a “new current” in the art market, severing its ties with African modernisms of the twentieth century and reducing African modernisms to a simplified
product of colonialism. This book confidently re-draws African art history firmly within a postcolonial discourse.

Helena Cantone, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London


Has Salafism penetrated Ethiopia, when and how? Are political Islam and or extremism gaining a foothold? These are questions that are currently forcing scholars, policy makers, and politicians of Ethiopia and the Horn into fierce debate. Østebø’s book is published at an opportune moment, at a time when empirical analysis and data are much needed in order to make sense of the presence and impact of Salafism, not just in Bale but in the country as a whole. The book is also of immense historical relevance. Consulting various written and non-written sources and ploughing much new data about the subject matter, the author brings to light a wealth of data and analysis which is clearly and concisely articulated. This book is not just about the history of Islam in Bale; the treatise goes a long way in shedding light on the history of the Oromo of Bale. The book is a welcome addition to the literature on Ethiopian Islam and one that may, hopefully, enrich political analysis and policy making.

Østebø promises to deliver three things in this book. He undertakes to provide empirical data on the induction, growth, and entrenchment of Salafism in Bale. He undertakes to show how Salafism, as an ideology and phenomenon, is localized whilst at the same time it delocalizes the local. He also, rather modestly, undertakes to show the role of agency of the local in religious change. While not necessarily rejecting the importance of structural determinants, he sets out to challenge structuralism by presenting evidence of the creative capacity of the African local actor. Østebø delivers on all three promises and does so quite proficiently. The entire book is packed with a wealth of data and is clearly and concisely articulated and analyzed. The book, without doubt, is a well-researched study of the evolution of an Islamic movement/sect in Bale. The author is also to be applauded for deciding to study the belief system of an otherwise marginalized region of Ethiopia.

The book is divided into ten chapters that flow smoothly from one to the next. The first chapter briefly introduces the reader to the geography and demographics of the Bale region in addition to briefly introducing the major themes of the book including Salafism, Ethiopian history, and religious change. The second chapter discusses theories that pertain to religious change and defines important terms of art. The third chapter takes a historic approach to the dual penetration (i.e., before and after Oromo expansion) of Islam to Bale and the wider south-eastern Ethiopia from the time of its assumed introduction until the Amhara conquest of the southeast. The fourth chapter describes the religious universe of the inhabitants of Bale in the timeframe roughly overlapping with that of the previous chapter. Chapters five to seven describe the conditions that created the perfect storm for Salafism to take root in Bale. These chapters describe the initial introduction of Salafism by local agents who were exposed and immersed in it following their post-Hajj stay in the Hejaz, the resistance it faced by the local population and leadership, and the loss of sway of local leadership structures during the Derg regime. The eighth chapter describes the entrenchment and ascendancy of Salafism after the
EPRDF transition and the fragmentation that followed. The ninth and tenth chapters contain the author’s ruminations on the topic and data amassed for the purposes of writing the book.

While the book presents a rich set of data based on extensive fieldwork regarding its specific locale, one thing that becomes clear in this study is that a lot is left to be desired when it comes to the study of Islam in the rest of contemporary Ethiopia. In chapter nine the author leaves Bale and Salafism for a brief discourses on Islam in Ethiopia in general (pp. 277-81, 295-97). In this chapter the author is seen inching towards the broader Ethiopian context and possibly hinting at a demand for further studies in other parts of Ethiopia including in the capital Addis Ababa. Putting aside the issue of generalizability of Østebø’s observations about Bale, the author raises questions and issues that make it clear that information regarding other parts of the country is wanting.

Østebø, it seems, did not set out to write a book on the place of Islam, or that of political Islam, in contemporary Ethiopian politics. However, he may have found himself making a very significant contribution to one of the newest political disputes in the country. Østebø’s findings call into question the Ethiopian government’s allegation that it is faced with imminent violence from Salafi radicals in the Arsi-Bale region; a claim which preceded the imposition of emergency-like measures throughout the country. Contrary to the government’s calls for panic, Østebø finds that the Salafi leaders and constituencies of Bale see religion as something beyond politics, something personal and spiritual. If “contemporary Ethiopian Islam has remained disengaged from politics and not moved in the so-called radical direction” (p. 179), the government’s justifications for imposing substantial restrictions and controls over the practice, expression, organization, and teaching of religion become highly questionable.

Abadir M. Ibrahim, St. Thomas University


The events in Tunisia of January 2011 launched the “Arab Spring.” During the past year many pundits have been heard to remark that that country is the only post-Arab Spring state that is emerging in good order and making progress on the democratic front. This is less surprising than one might think. North Americans are generally not familiar with Tunisia, but, leaving aside for a moment the cultural giant of Egypt, from ancient times its history has to a large extent been the history of North Africa. Why should today be different? From the establishment of the maritime state of Carthage through the area’s incarnation as the prosperous Roman province Ifriqiya, to its incarnation as powerful city-state in the 1500s, and extending to its late 20th century status as an exponent of progressive social policies, Tunisia has frequently dominated North Africa or been the trendsetter for the area.

Kenneth Perkins has a long-standing interest in the country, has lived in the Maghreb, Arab North Africa, and produced earlier works on Tunisia. This new edition of his history brings the story up to post-2011 revolution times and examines how Tunisia’s intelligentsia and leaders have dealt with currents, frequently in the ascendant, drawing the country towards Europe and
the opposing currents moving her towards the Arab world, the Middle East, and traditional (usually Islamic) values. The ambiguities of the colonial period left the country with a French and Arabic bilingual educational system, but the Tunisian intelligentsia turned this into a strength that reaps advantages even today. The fact is that even in the 19th century and unmistakably during the inter-war period (1920s–30s) Tunisian intellectuals enthusiastically adapted western artistic, theatrical and literary forms (see for example Ali Du’aji, Sleepless Nights, 1991) to develop Tunisian and North African themes. On the political front the same elite and their allies articulated an action program demanding independence, advocating the emancipation of women, and envisioning economic development. Habib Bourguiba (president, 1956–1987), seeing himself as another modernizing Attaturk, was only the most visible standard-bearer in that movement. A high degree of national consensus was possible since Tunisia is overwhelmingly Sunni, without communal divides, and Islamic institutions were for the most part quiescent, or their spokesmen were drawn into the political mainstream.

Perkins recounts that in the post-independence decades some shifts in the leading Neo-Destur party’s orientation did nevertheless take place. For example, at its party convention in 1964 the party transformed itself into the Socialist Destur Party. This had less to do with hard economic study than with looking over the shoulder at the tidal wave of the popularity of Egyptian President Nasser’s pan-Arab movement. Tunisians probably felt they could go along or be swept along. The party strategists no doubt hoped to create an ideological fire-break. It was also true that the withdrawal of French civil servants and investment left gaps that somehow had to be filled, hence the perceived need for an expanded government sector. However, when in 1971 the results of the first five-year plan were disappointing (and Nasser had safely passed away), Bourguiba and confreres quietly moved away from socialist rhetoric and planning. The Arab League had already been joined in the 1950s, and that was deemed a sufficient profession of Arabness. A kind of balance between the West and Middle East was sought, except in the economic sector, where by the mid-90s 70 percent of the country’s imports came from Europe and 80 percent of her exports were bound there. And no matter what strategy was followed some problems, such as high youth unemployment and lack of development in the nation’s interior and south, persisted.

Perkins devotes a whole chapter to an appraisal of Bourguiba. Although under him unions were tolerated, for long periods national income increased, and women emerged from the shadows (Tunisia even has female police, something one does not often see in the Arab world), development was uneven and unions were frequently bludgeoned. After independence the political framework remained petrified in a system of one-party and one-leader rule, first with Bourguiba and later the rather bland Ben Ali. That Bourguiba failed to embrace true political pluralism and to identify a successor (in 1987 Prime Minister Ben Ali and justifying physicians had to boot him out of office) merely puts him squarely in the middle of the pack of post-colonial Arab leaders. Generally his accomplishments appear to outweigh his failings.

Those who would argue that as long as there is a continuing rise in the standard of living a modest level of nepotism and corruption need not threaten the longevity of any regime (frequently heard for example with regards to China) should contemplate Perkins’ review of Tunisia during the late Ben Ali era, when crony capitalism, corruption, and inefficiency, exacerbated by the world recession, finally obscured the achievements of the post-
independence period and provided the tipping point for the January 2011 revolution. Though difficulties followed, the October 2015 awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet, which included human rights activists as well as labor, trade and legal representatives, acknowledged that this small country continues to provide inspiration for North Africa and indeed the entire Middle East.

Kenneth W. Meyer., Western Washington University


Kristin Peterson’s book is a powerful description of the Nigerian pharmaceutical markets. Its six chapters illustrate the ways daily market life (labor, price, credit, and other social practices) is linked to transnational financial capital as well as policy changes in North America and Nigeria that are mutually constitutive, as well as localized, in significant Lagos markets. Based on extensive archival search, observations, as well as extensive interviews conducted over a period of four summers in Nigeria, the author ethnographically situates Nigeria as a geographically centralized place from which one can see how the rest of the pharmaceutical and other related worlds have come into being. The book focuses on the speculative practices found in the pharmaceutical market to emphasize the ways actors negotiate structural constraints and market conditions. The author examines how volatile markets and speculative practices created new transcontinental drug circuits that are now integral to the drug industry and the lives of Nigerians.

Using Idumota (a neighborhood on Lagos Island described as the main market for pharmaceutical distribution in West Africa) as the focus of her research, the author situates the Nigerian drug market and its practices in the context of speculative capital, manufacturing offshoring, and drug marketing. She examines several historical convergences that took place within Nigeria that made it possible for the control over national drug distribution to switch from Nigerian pharmacists and North American and European multinational drug companies to Igbo traders and generic drug manufacturers located mostly in China and India. She describes vividly how people who work in markets anticipate market volatility often fueled by currency fluctuations, changing labor costs, or changing demands within corporations or among consumers and then take risks by speculating on how the market will play out. She further interrogates how multinational corporations engage in merging and acquiring other companies; offshoring much of their businesses to India and China to save on costs; pursued drug development that will lead to blockbuster profits and skip making other needed drugs such as those for neglected tropical diseases; and like in Nigeria, how they dump assets, drug products, and entire markets not serving them well.

Peterson argues that the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) forced on Nigeria by the IMF in 1986 during the regime of General Ibrahim Babangida impacted negatively on the Nigerian pharmaceutical industry, describing how investment turnover could not be met mostly due to currency devaluation and the public’s increasing inability to purchase drugs. The high cost of imported raw materials and currency devaluation, combined with rising prices meant that consumers had less money to spend and drug companies could not sell their stocks,
leading to continued retrenchment of their workers. Consequently, global brand-name drug companies such as Pfizer, Roche, Upjohn, and Ciba, among many others who came to Nigeria as early as the 1940s and 50s and did exceptionally well, had to pack up their businesses and leave the country due to the effect of SAP and other factors such as poor electricity supply and high cost of production. Hence, as brand names disappeared from the Nigerian drug markets, Nigerians had to build a new drug market and new livelihoods. The pharmaceutical market had to be reconfigured to meet the needs of a newly impoverished consumer base as well as companies who now had to consider what the consumers would be able to afford. This gave rise to the introduction of generic drugs from around the world into Nigeria through new unofficial markets like Idumota. Peterson notes that over the years, these markets have rapidly expanded, creating disputes over drug regulation as well as over who is entitled to control the drug distribution system. Another consequence was the increase in fake drugs and substandard drugs (ones that have too little or too many active ingredients as a result of shortfalls in the Nigerian or other manufacturing processes), which are threats to human health. On entering Nigeria and other West African countries, fake drugs are quickly dispersed into the market and sold by pharmaceutical traders, roadside hawkers, travelling salesmen on buses and patent medicine sellers in rural areas. She describes the uphill tasks of regulatory bodies in the war against these drugs.

Apart from a misinformation on page 192, where the author noted that college graduates are expected to serve two years in the National Youth Service Corps instead of one year, and a few typographical errors (for example on pp. 27, 37, 42), overall, the book is, indeed, a captivating, beautifully written description of the dynamics of Nigeria’s drug industry.

Olubukola S. Adesina, University of Ibadan


Few states in Africa can claim to have bewitched as many visitors, whether veteran chroniclers or first-time observers, than Ethiopia. Countless numbers of Ethiopians and scholars alike have long argued that the country, with its dazzling mix of ethnicities and religions and its idiosyncratic history of conquest, independence, and myth is a politico-cultural order sui generis: Ethiopia as an essentially incomparable state, nation or even civilization. A new volume, edited by East Africa grandee Gérard Prunier and anthropologist-cum-historian Eloi Ficquet, seeks to explore how under the aegis of Meles Zenawi, paramount leader of Ethiopia and the ruling Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) between 1991 and 2012, the country “has been progressively -though reluctantly- normalized” (p. 2). To do so, they solicited sixteen chapters that aim to chart continuity and change in what is often referred to as Africa’s oldest polity—from Ethiopia’s imperialist past, the longue durée of Muslim-Christian relations, and urban development to Rastafarianism and the shift from revolutionary Marxism to state developmentalism. The end result leaves the reader sometimes impressed, but all too often not wholly satisfied.

Understanding Contemporary Ethiopia attempts to identify the structural forces and critical junctures that have marked the country’s recent history and turned it into Africa’s fastest
growing economy of the last decade. Written without theoretical verbosity and with an eye to accessibility for non-specialists, the editors’ objective was to produce a convenient handbook for policy-makers and students of Ethiopia. Some chapters do this brilliantly: Shiferaw Bekele’s contribution on state-building in the 19th century, Christopher Clapham’s summary of the significance of Emperor Haile Selassie, and Sarah Vaughan’s analysis of Ethiopian federalism provide excellent overviews of the extant literature, topped off with a persuasive new synthesis of the evidence. René Lefort’s chapter similarly presents an outstanding dissection of the Ethiopian economy between 1991 and 2014. He lifts the veil on the narrative of Ethiopia’s economic miracle to argue that the EPRDF has indeed paid unprecedented attention to the impoverished rural areas (where circa 80 percent of Ethiopians still work) but that the sustainability and effectiveness of its anti-poverty policies are very much in question (cf. the food crisis triggered by El Niño affecting fifteen million Ethiopians at the time of writing of this review). Bekele, Clapham, Vaughan, and Lefort, as well as the piece by Ancel and Ficquet on the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, manage not only to substantially inform the layman but also to generate new questions and insights for the more experienced Ethiopia watcher.

That high level of academic rigor and communicative clarity is unfortunately not maintained throughout. This is not just the inevitable consequence of an edited volume that seeks to bring both old hands and leading young researchers together, but also of editorial choices. Three main problems plague Understanding Contemporary Ethiopia. The first is that of occasionally sloppy editing. For instance, both chapters by Medhane Tadesse, an otherwise highly perceptive analyst, include whole sentences and sections that are redundant, either because the author himself has already made his (important) points, or because other contributions to Understanding Contemporary Ethiopia cover them extensively, and from a similar angle. In other parts of the book, the punctuation is off with commas and colons inexplicably disappearing. A second problem pertains to the tone of the chapters focused on Ethiopia’s political modernity. While the EPRDF certainly deserves credit for how its cadres and foot soldiers have pulled the Ethiopian state away from its 1991 tethering on the abyss of total disintegration, Prunier and Ficquet are too uncritical of the regime’s track-record when it comes to human rights inside Ethiopia and external operations in the Horn. The chapter on the 2005 and 2010 elections is an outright defence of the government’s authoritarian course; Tadesse’s framing of Ethiopia’s regional influence is an unabashed editorial for ruthless Ethiopian realpolitik that should have been balanced by, for example, a more sceptical assessment of Addis’s devastating policies in Somalia; and Prunier’s own musings on the Eritrean question fail to accurately present the view from Asmara and thus fall short of an even-handed appraisal of the tragic “war of brothers.”

The third and final problem is that numerous pivotal issues are left out of Understanding Contemporary Ethiopia. No volume can cover everything, but what are we to make of the total absence of gender in this book? The assumption that the seismic transformations in religion, politics, and economics have impacted men and women alike suggests a blindness to some of the most consequential actors and dynamics in Ethiopia’s ten thousand villages. Furthermore, the EPRDF’s foreign relations have to make do with one single chapter; China and the global war on terror barely feature in the book, despite their crucial importance to the external legitimacy of the party and its internal choices. And environmental change, forced migration,
and public health—all historically and contemporarily vital to understanding the lived realities of Ethiopians and their neighbors—are nowhere to be found either. For a volume aspiring to be a “global study of Ethiopia” these are rather inexplicable choices.

Harry Verhoeven, School of Foreign Service in Qatar; Georgetown University


Veiling is one of the controversial phenomena of this century. Although it seems that veiling is condemned as a sign of women’s subordination in western countries, it is an important symbol of social and political identity for Muslim women. *Veiling in Africa*, edited by Professor Elisha P. Renne, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor and explores what veiling means to African Muslim women. The first chapter, by Laura Fair, explores the trend and cause of veiling habits change in Zanzibar over the course of more than a century. Zanzibar is a semi-autonomous part of Tanzania and the case that is used to show the impetus for veiling change. It is suggested that the fervor for being fashionable has resulted in the recent preference for a restricted hijab by women, such as the practice of niqab (a kind of veiling that covers face). Then, there is a discussion on the respectability of veiling as the association of veiling with status, property, and propriety has been widespread in pre-colonial Muslim Africa. In addition, women who disguise their identity wearing hijab enjoy more freedom to engage in activities they do not want others to see them do. "Listening to Zanzibari women, it becomes clear that wearing the veil is intended to elicit not pity, rather esteem and admiration" (p. 31).

Susan Rasmussen’s chapter deals with the veiling of Tuareg nomads inhabiting the Sahara and how these men and women regard sexual relations through flirting, courtship conversations, dating, etc. The author explains how shamefulness, restraint, respect and reserve act as social morals avoiding violence and dangers. The chapter then discusses cultural and religious reserve, modesty, and conduct, which is a way of veiling without veils between different ages and social strata, using different examples from people of this region.

In the next chapter, Renne’s comparative approach reviews the practice of veiling and hijab, Islamic reform and women’s educational movements in south western Nigeria and northern Nigeria in the past two centuries and considers how these movements changed the veiling practices in these two regions. Chapter four, by Leslie Rabine, explores the process of changing clothing style in Senegal during last decades. The history of Senegalese fashion trend is reviewed and using interview data, it is discussed whether veiling is religious obligation or personal choice. Using various examples, the chapter argues that due to the range of different attitudes toward the veil it is not possible to generalize whether veiling is fashion or what religion forces.

In the fifth chapter Adeline Masquelier argues what the hijab means to Nigerians and what roles it plays for them. Specifically it is discussed how veiling is embodied and yields a social skin and the basis for naturalizing moral rules. The hijab affects bodiliness and alters women’s sense of self and space and creates “a pious interiority that is integral to their moral selfhood” (p. 114). Therefore, a practice of no hijab would result in an intense feeling of vulnerability upon being exposed to the world. Moreover, practice of hijab has not undermined women’s chicness.
and resulted in the new possibilities being fashionable through enjoying some control over the color and style of their coverings.

In the sixth chapter, José van Santen explores the change in women’s veiling practice during their life course is explored. The chapter focuses on the influence of pilgrimage to Mecca, the hajj, on the veiling of Cameroonian women, as many women dress differently after the hajj. It is argued that veiling differently is an assertion of her presence in Mecca and that she is no longer the same person.

Hauwas Mahdi’s chapter seven argues how hijab is controlled by the state and how politics and codes of veiling are intertwined in Nigeria. Although the cause for veiling seems to have multiple reasons in Nigeria, such as being descent, being like others, avoiding evil men attentions, etc. it is argued that the hijab “represents an underlying power game seen in the workplace and in political decision making” (p. 166). The eighth chapter, by Peri Leemm, deals with the recently adoption of veil among Oromo refugees living in Eastleigh, Kenya. The veiling which is a powerful symbol of disguise allows these women to go to nightclubs and other non-Muslim spaces undetected, to appear in public like rich Somali women, to escape prosecution, dress fashionably and to provide protection from Ethiopian agents. Amal Fadlalla’s ninth chapter examines the vulnerability of unveiled women in the Sudan.

Overall, Veiling in Africa represents a valuable perspective on a less investigated topic that could be very interesting and novel for Western audiences. And, finally, it should be mentioned that in addition to the general readers, this volume could be of interest of anthropologists, psychologists, and sociologists as well as students of these fields who are interested in both African studies and Islamic cultural practices.

Farid Pazhoohi, Independent Researcher, Iran


Benedetta Rossi, lecturer in African studies at University of Birmingham, has made an impressive contribution to the growing body of the literature focused on the history of development and non-governmental organizations in Africa (e.g., books and articles by Erica Bornstein, Frederick Cooper, Julie Hearn, and Gregory Mann among others). In this monograph, originally submitted as her dissertation at the London School of Economics in 2002, Rossi explores the relationship between the politics and ecology of Ader, a region of southern Niger, and the persistence of slavery and unfree labor from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the turn of the twenty-first century. By placing an analysis of modern development plans within the political and social history of Ader over the last two hundred years, she underlines the continuous influence of place, specifically the desert, on human relations in the Nigerien Sahel. Rossi, however, is no environmental determinist, as her monograph is filled with countless examples of Nigeriens overcoming the limitations placed on them by the desert.

At the heart of this book is a discussion about the central role that mobility has played in defining social relations in Ader since the nineteenth century. In precolonial times, the political authority of the two main Tuareg confederations of Ader—the northern Iwellemmeden Kel
Denneg and the southern Kel Gress—was predicated upon their ability to exert control over limited resources scattered over the desert by making them available to allies and subjects and limiting the access of enemies to them, a form of government Rossi calls “kinetocracy” (p. 11). The less mobile Nigeriens were, the more vulnerable they were to slavery and raids, so relatively immobile groups, such as the Hausa, would offer dependency to the Tuareg in exchange for protection and resources.

While the arrival of the French in Niger somewhat upset these precolonial political structures and social arrangements, the importance of mobility in the desert in the first half of the twentieth century persisted. Nigeriens migrated to avoid taxation, forced labor recruitment, and military conscription by the colonial state, to earn wages as migrant laborers in British Nigeria, and to shed their old identities as slaves. Despite this widespread shift from slavery to labor migration in Ader, many of the traditional social hierarchies remained because the impersonal colonial state did not guarantee the security and welfare of its dependents, and not all Nigeriens could migrate, highlighting the limited power of the French state and the incompatibility of its governing logic with the unruly desert landscape.

Following the rise of development initiatives in the 1940s, many Nigeriens (mainly men) continued to migrate seasonally to neighboring countries for work because it was their best option. Those who remained behind were mostly immobile poor women who only participated in development projects aimed at fighting desertification, like the Kieta Project in the 1980s, because they lived in villages on unproductive land, their husbands were long-distance labor migrants, and they desired access to food rations. Although these programs provided women with protection from hunger and dependence, many maintained good relations with former masters in case things should ever change. Like many Nigerien bureaucrats, these women did not participate in development because they wanted to contribute to rebuilding their nation or advance aid goals—it was in their own self-interest. Nonetheless, developmentalist discourses made it possible for political authorities to mobilize local labor after slavery and forced labor were no longer socially acceptable.

Rossi critiques development policies that have largely ignored this complicated historical reality, preferring to reduce the inhabitants of Ader to generic human beings waiting for intervention. She suggests that the most sensible aid objective would be to facilitate and properly regulate labor migration, but the developmentalist discourse of desertification focuses on the land and what it is capable of supporting rather than the function of mobility in southern Nigeriens’ lives. Also, like many other Africanists (e.g. Laura Hammond at the School of Oriental and African Studies), Rossi emphasizes the important role that remittances from abroad play in African society today.

Although Rossi’s book is well-organized, clearly written, and easily digested, this monograph could have benefitted from some minor editorial changes. Rossi’s liberal use of block quotations, including one quotation that spans four pages (pp. 155-58), can be a bit dizzying at times. With all of the foreign words and aid organizations zooming around its pages, however, this reader appreciated the inclusion of a glossary and a list of acronyms and abbreviations at the beginning of the book. The short note on the terminology of slavery and the name Ader was also a nice addition.
From Slavery to Aid successfully blends archival research with ethnographic fieldwork, making it an exceptional specimen of historical anthropology. By taking into consideration the experience of Tuareg nobility, emancipated slaves, colonial authorities, and project coordinators and volunteers in Ader, Rossi shows that the persistence of dependence in the Nigerien Sahel is a historically conditioned reality. Overcoming this situation requires coming to terms with this fact.

D. Dmitri Hurlbut, Boston University


This book attempts to demonstrate the importance of geographical perspectives in the analyses of emerging powers and to revitalize realist approaches in political geography. The author begins by pointing out that the geographical criterion as it is included in the definition of regional power highlights that geopolitics research is grounded in a misinterpretation of geography and regioness. In order to advance a geographical perspective on regional powers, the author indicates the importance of understanding how manmade and natural geographical factors existing in geographical space influence the economic and political relations of regional powers. The author indicates that in the contemporary period constructivism predominates in Political Geography but, however, argues that material structures in geographical space cannot be examined from a constructivist perspective; hence the need for a materialist perspective based on scientific realism: classical geopolitics, specifically realist geopolitics. The dimensions of classical geopolitics are spatial, functional, and longitudinal, thereby making it a suitable approach for explaining long-term patterns in international relations. The author acknowledges that not everything can be explained by geography, but geographical factors can be appropriate intervening variables explain many social phenomena that occur.

The choice of realist geopolitics is highly topical given that several contemporary approaches and theories of geopolitics lack clearly defined spheres of influence and disregard of geographical factors. The author formulates three hypotheses based on the relationship between geographical factors and policy options of regional powers. The geographical factors include location and geography, manmade material structures, and the sphere of influence of regional powers. The author tests these hypotheses in the context of South Africa as a regional power, justifying the use of the Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and Process Tracing methods of research.

The author examines the strengths and weaknesses of several approaches and theories that can be successfully used as frameworks to analyze geopolitics. The author’s choice of realist geopolitics is successfully operationalized and applied empirically to analyze the problem of the geopolitics of regional power in Southern Africa using manmade and natural geographical factors. By doing so successfully, the book demonstrates evidence of original work and significantly contributes to the knowledge and insight into the subject of the regional powers and geopolitics in developing regions.

The author is very familiar with the academic literature on political geography particularly geopolitics at the theoretical level and at the empirical (case study) level. This is evident in as far
as the literature cited is concerned in chapters one and two that focus on conceptual, theoretical, and methodological issues, and chapters three to six that focus, empirically, on case studies in southern Africa. The topics covered in the case study include issues of transport, socioeconomic aspects, regional cooperation, politics, and security. The author makes use of intensive and extensive literature throughout the book to support the main arguments raised on the importance of understanding how spatial manmade and natural geographical factors influence regional powers relations. This is an outstanding feature of the book.

The choice of QCA is highly relevant especially when it comes to comparing cases. The adoption of the QCA and Process Tracing methods as analytical tools adds to the originality of the study. On the basis of the methodology the author analyses the data and presents a coherent argument. This is an important finding in that it indicates that these analytical models can be universally applied irrespective of the unique social, economic, and political circumstances facing developing countries.

The book’s conclusion contains summaries of the findings based on location and physical geography, transport and socioeconomic aspects, the economic and political reality of South African-African relations, and on key projects of regional integration. The findings indicate the importance of geographical factors in analyzing and explaining realist geopolitics and subsequently the value of realist geopolitics in the analysis of regional powers and integration. The conclusion offers recommendations by way of topics for further research especially the relevance of physio-geographical factors in the analysis of realist geopolitics. Though the book places too much emphasis on the relevance of manmade and natural geographical factors in the analyses of realist geopolitics, given the author’s geographical background, it is a highly valuable book for scholars and students of international relations and political science who are interested in the subject of geopolitics.

Oscar Gakuo Mwangi, National University of Lesotho


More than ever before, recent terrorist attacks in Paris have brought worldwide attention to violence and the citizenship debate. What are the dynamics that are likely to lead a citizen to violence? How can social frustration and religion express themselves when one does not have the floor to articulate one’s opinion? Uncanny Citizenship provides a key to understanding the genesis of these issues in France in the sense that the author builds his framework on literary, philosophical, sociological, political, and historical theories in order to shed light on these questions.

One major contribution of this book is that Tchumkan enters the academic discourse by providing an overview of literature produced by Africans in western societies. He makes a sharp distinction between the literature of immigration, which is written by diasporic authors, and that of the banlieues, which is written by first or second generation of immigrants in France. Its second contribution is the author’s hypothesis: “The segregation in contemporary France gives rise to the formation of a community very similar to what Italian philosopher Giorgio Agambem has called a ‘coming community’ (1990). By ‘coming community,’ Agambem means a
community with literally no condition of belonging, a community that can be neither classified nor definable, much less anticipated” (p. 2) Such a hypothesis leads the author to open a new frame of reference toward the banlieues in the sense that critics like Dominic Thomas have been analyzing these texts more or less in correlation to the African continent, rather than as a production of a coming community, which will have to define its identity. Its third contribution comes from its consistency in unrevealing various contradictions of the French Empire as they appeared during the colonial era in different French’s colonies. Reappearing in the form of neocolonialism, these patterns are reproduced currently in the French banlieues. The use of a segregate space, the indigenous myth, and the assimilation policy are turned to the rhetoric of integration.

The first chapter, “Criminal Identities,” analyses the complexity of the relationship existing between criminality and identity construction as it appeared novels like El Hadj (2008) using the concept of “banlieue parade” in order to demonstrate the difference between the colonial parade, which was designed to submitting individuals as an organized spectacle but became an act of resistance. Furthermore, according to Tchumkam the parade as it manifests itself in the banlieues becomes an important paradigm of transgression because in novels characters engaging in the parade reinvent their identities, through crime, delinquency, and violence. However, Tchumkam notices that youths of banlieues resort to this criminal identities as a cry for help, as they are an invisible minority that French authorities and society as a whole have been turning a blind eye to and making them invisible so to speak.

The second chapter, “Recasting Juvenile Delinquency,” deconstructs the political French discourse of the then French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, especially his use of the term “scum” and other such terms to depict banlieues residents as delinquents. Tchumkam examines a set of novels about juvenile delinquency in French banlieues. He discovers that delinquency comes from a social fabric that conditions the youth of the projects to certain behavior. Marginalized, silent, and invisible, violence appears to be the last resort for them to attack the French authorities’ attention.

The third chapter, “The Islamic Threat,” focuses on many novels of the banlieues like Citées a commaitre (2006) and La guerre des banlieues n’aura pas lieu (2010) among others. Through them Tchumkam reveals different representations that French society holds about Muslims. For example, the French authorities are of the opinion that Islam is a mismatch with French citizenship. Consequently, Muslims are perceived as a serious national threat. The last chapter, “The Feminist Metaphor,” challenges traditional views and biases of the French media that women were not involved at all in French banlieues struggles. Novels like Dans l’enfer des tournantes (2005) or Zone cinglée (2009) help the author to elaborate on gender issues and to show that women have been and still are committed to social change in the French projects.

As stated earlier, and in regard to current socio-political events (Paris attacks, refugees crisis, etc.), this book is an excellent entrée to the debate about violence, citizenship, identity, and representations of Muslims in France. Indeed, its various contributions improve the academic discourse and open new venues for French banlieues literature as well. I highly recommend Uncanny Citizenship to readers and scholars of different horizons.

Sylvestre Mekem Douanla, Louisiana State University

*Nation of Outlaws* recounts the history of practice and discourse of Cameroonian nationalism, spearheaded by the Union des populations du Cameroon (UPC), as it unfolded in intersecting local, territorial and global political arenas in 1950s and 1960s. Meredith Terretta approaches Cameroonian nationalism in a multidimensional perspective, suggesting that it is the most effective way for explaining why the UPC attracted the largest number of members and sympathizers of any political party in French Cameroon, becoming the most popular nationalist movement in the territory.

Three geographical focal points anchor this three-tiered history of Cameroonian nationalism: Baham, a strong chieftaincy situated in the densely populated, mostly rural Bamileke Region; Nkongsamba, the capital of the Mungo Region, French Cameroon’s fertile plantation zone; and Accra, Ghana, where Kwame Nkrumah’s government that came into power at independence in 1957 founded the Bureau of African Affairs to support and assist anti-colonial liberation movements in territories still under European rule. Nationalist activity radiated outward from these three points, creating regional epicenters with overlapping peripheries.

The book is structured in three parts of two chapters each, and progresses chronologically against the backdrop of these interconnected locations. Part one historicizes the political of Grassfielders before European rule, and evaluates the formation of a “Bamileke identity” in the Mungo Region under the French administration during the interwar period. Part two shows how the UPC, which formed as a political party in 1948, evolved into a nationalist movement, and examines the ways in which local and territorial politics became articulated in the Mungo and Bamileke Regions. Part three considers the importance of the UPC’s international influences and transregional support by focusing on the strategies that upécistes employed after the movement’s proscription. The book concludes with a discussion of the residual political and social effects of the postcolonial state’s heavy-handed repression of the nationalist movement and its punishment of upécistes and their suspected sympathizers.

This book is built on the rich revisionist histories of African nationalisms that have emphasized culturally specific political practices without exploring the ways in which local politics of decolonization became articulated with international political trends. The case of the UPC shows the ways in which African nationalists and anti-colonialists actively sought to link their local liberation struggles with larger global trends and to appropriate, on their own terms, international connections and discourses as alternatives to their continued interdependency with metropolitan centers. To escape the constraints of European rule, Cameroonian nationalists grounded their political ideology in particular locales within the territory, recycling and, in many cases, rediscovering elements of local political culture that they tailored to their contemporary objectives—indpendence from European rule, the reunification of the French and British Cameroons, and the establishment of a sovereign nation-state. They also traveled, imaginatively and literally, beyond territorial boundaries, attributing symbolic and political importance to the United Nations, Pan-Africanism, Afro-Asian solidarity, other anticolonial struggles, antinuclear pacifism, and the burgeoning notion of universal human rights. In so
doing, Cameroonian nationalists sought to supersede the metropole-colony paradigm that seemingly underwrote political processes in late-colonial Africa.

In following the paths of Cameroonian nationalists where they actually lead, Meredith Terretta’s study does a number of things that no previously published histories of Cameroon’s decolonization have done. Rather than focus exclusively on French, UN, and Cameroonian documents, it draws on a breadth of sources from the UN, France, Great Britain, Ghana, and both provincial and national archives in Cameroon, as well as oral material collected throughout Cameroon and in Ghana. This history includes previously unknown actors—traditional chiefs, local politicians, ordinary farmers and workers, and women—in the story of Cameroonian nationalism. The inclusion of subaltern actors is crucial since, by 1957, most of the nationalist party leaders had been deported, and in 1958, the movement’s fountainhead, Secretary-General Ruben Um Nyobé (1913-1958), was gunned down by a French military patrol in the forest of the Sanaga-Maritime. And yet, in the absence of central coordination and leadership, the movement only spread, intensified, and increasingly drew on sources of local inspiration. This work is the first published scholarly study of Cameroonian nationalism to examine the nationalist vision that persisted, albeit fragmented and factionalized, for nearly a decade after Cameroon’s official achievement of independence.

Finally, the paths of exiled nationalists, as this book shows to some extent, were varied and far-flung. The influence of these exiles on the post independence phase of UPC nationalism—or on political processes in the states that hosted them, including Ghana, Guinea, and Algeria—has yet to be analyzed in depth. Meredith Terretta’s work calls for a number of avenues left to explore in the study of UPC nationalism.

Syprien Christian Zogo, Laval University


South Africa is a country which has yet to realize its potential in becoming a global player in the world’s economy. It has vast resources including minerals, mines, a good judicial system, and a sound tourism sector. But it also has astonishing unemployment, particularly in the black youth sector, gender, and xenophobic issues, and an increasingly internal conflict with its unions (unions were an integral part of liberating the black majority during the apartheid regime). The book consists of ten individually authored chapters by some of the most respected academicians in South Africa. The overarching theme of the book focuses on the issues plaguing the country twenty years after the first democratically held election won by Nelson Mandela in 1994. Some of the new problems that have sprung up for South Africa’s “born free” generation are the broken public education system and the fascination with entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship can stimulate economies and provide needed jobs, but it is not a substitute for finding employment.

Deborah Posel explains why the young, disenfranchised, rural black populace connects with Julius Malema, an uneducated rebel ousted from the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party, and from Limpopo Province. Malema was formerly President of the ANC Youth League and is currently the leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters. Malema’s wealth and
power are two tools he uses to attract the youth. Kirk Helliker and Peter Vale argue that Marxism needs a different viewpoint from the liberation struggle but the humanism is still valid in the post-apartheid state.

Jakes Gerwel argues the country is pushing its best young minds to become entrepreneurs or work in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM). Gerwel claims that teachers have been affronted and are ill equipped to handle South Africa’s social problems such as corruption and unemployment. Raphael de Kadt and Charles Simkins discuss South Africa’s systemic rent problem and detail the issues of corruption and unemployment. Mondli Hlatshwayo explains how the Marikana massacre was a case of privatization and capitalism being enforced over humanitarian and civil rights.

Gerhard Maré discusses how race continues to dominate South Africa’s landscape, while Neville Alexander critiques the lack of quality education for all South Africans. Richard Pithouse conveys the political significance of “the Local” in Chapter 7, affirming South Africa’s ruling party often prioritize campaigns around transnational issues through English a transnational language instead of aiding their true constituency, the 98 percent of the impoverished population who live in rural areas, with limited technology, and whose language and culture are local. For example, Parliament conducts official business in English although there are eleven official languages. Subconsciously, citizens whose first language is not English do not feel a part of the political process. Cheryl Walker addresses gender equality and traditions in the new South Africa and how women were guaranteed influential status in local and national environments. She briefly addresses how the African National Congress has representation at the national level but local girls do not have equal access to education. It seems that the African patriarchal system is deeply rooted and South Africa is no different particularly in rural settings. The fact that South Africa has a systemic problem with sexual assault and traditional cultures being negated is a clear indicator this chapter was needed. For South Africa to achieve optimal proficiency, gender equality and traditionalism must coincide to attack the government’s despotism.

In the final chapter Sandra Klopper offers a look into South Africa’s arts and cultural scene and the role it plays in the political arena. Many artists such as Die Antwoord to LGBT photographer Zanele Muholi are continuously shunned by the ANC government because they use art as a platform to express their feelings about the “new” South Africa. I think socio-political freedom can result from artistic expression, but will the ANC allow freedom of speech and the space to create through all platforms.

Overall, this book critically analyzed many of South Africa’s post-apartheid issues and hopefully will start serious conversations between the aforementioned stakeholders. This book is addressed to those who have a grasp on the issues confronting South Africa and may not attract the novice. Although land distribution was briefly mentioned, preferred an entire chapter on the subject would have been preferable, for outside education and unemployment it is South Africa’s biggest issue and needs to be redressed. Generally, the literature addressed many socio-political concerns in post-apartheid South Africa and will relate to those who study it with sincerity, address its past with honesty, and explore its future with promise.

Corey W. Holmes, Howard University

*Intellectual Traditions in South Africa* is a collection of thirteen chapters based on three themes: inherited ideas and the transition of institutions, the resistance of domination through the lens of African and Asian alternatives, and religious philosophy and liberation.

The first section discusses liberalism and race in South Africa and whether Marxism is still a good fit in South Africa. This section left the reader pondering whether the African National Congress (ANC) is continuing the work of the National Party, and does positivism influence an apartheid past with a multicultural present state? Pieter Duvenage discusses renowned Afrikaner historian Hermann Giliomee’s belief that Marxism and liberalism create divided societies. He further asserts that the ANC-led government has always been a national movement, and only considers non-racialism when consolidating power. He also believes Marxism creates materiality and individualistic thinking, which is a misguided notion according to the ANC’s mantra of “Amandla Abantu” (Power to the People). Andrew Nash’s chapter on the “Double Lives of South African Marxism” provides another example of Marxism being lost on the majority of South African’s citizens. This reviewer thinks that Mandela’s ANC government was focused on stabilizing capitalism and being acclimated to the global economy, which served as a deterrent of majority inclusion. Some believe Marxism creates individualistic thinking and revision is needed.

The second section considers whether state nationalism is disguised as African nationalism in South Africa; the origins of Pan-Africanism; Steve Biko’s Black Conscious Movement and how it has shaped today’s youth; Gandhism’s effect on South Africa’s culture; and the contributions women have made in South Africa’s patriarchal state. Mabogo More’s illumination of Steve Biko’s Black Consciousness Movement displayed its philosophical origins. It did not, however, show how it was influenced by South Africa’s Anton Lembede, Negritude writer and philosopher Aimé Césaire, or the Trinidadian-American Black Power Movement leader Kwame Toure. If this chapter had dealt with such intellectual origins it would have been more relevant.

Helen Moffet’s chapter “Feminism and the South African Polity” affirms that South Africa’s constitution is an extraordinary document that has not reached its full, liberating capacity because of an ingrained patriarchal narrative that consumes the society. Moffet claims that women who occupy elite positions in government obscure women who are marginalized based on sexual orientation. She maintains that the ANC government’s gender equality policy is an illusion. This illusion is often depicted in “rural hearings”, ANC politics, and patriarchal households. Former ANC Member of Parliament Pregs Govender affirms in her memoir *Love and Courage: A Story of Insubordination* that a female ANC colleague scolded her for choosing the marginalized over the party. This clearly demonstrates the ANC’s mindset as an elite patriarchal organization.

The last section of the book is centered on four religious themes in South Africa: Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, and Islam. As a Christian who lived in South Africa for a brief period, it was fascinating to read Anthony Egan’s “Christianity as an Intellectual Tradition in South Africa.” The chapter showed how the Dutch Reformed family of churches held a stronghold over South Africa from the earliest Dutch settlers until the 1990s. Afrikaners saw
Christianity as giving strength to subdue the majority race, while black South Africans viewed the Christian God as a liberator.

The editors and contributors of this publication reignited the conversation on intellectual ideas in South Africa. This is a book best suited for graduate level scholars and professionals who are serious about critiquing paradigms and social structures in South Africa. Missing from the collection are contributions about Anton Lembede, and hopefully his intellectual prowess will be documented in future publications. Overall, the book reflected South Africa’s intellectual fervor which is a refreshing respite from foreign policy themes.

Corey W. Holmes, Howard University


Development expert Rica Viljoen is a master strategist in organizational transformation, culture optimization, and leadership development as well as the founder and owner of Mandala Consulting Ltd, South Africa, with twenty years of experience as a proficient consultant in organizational and cultural change. She has held (amongst others) the position of a top executive in Absa Bank and is currently a senior research fellow at the University of Johannesburg where she heads the Department of People Management at the Da Vinci Institute for Innovation Management. Viljoen is thus well qualified to bring novelty and insight into the worldview of sustainable individual and organizational transformation, via leaderships of inclusivity, representivity, innovation, cultural awareness, and diversity of thought, utilizing psychologist Clare W. Graves’s Spiral Dynamics “for understanding the nature and character of change” (p. 75).

Given her perception of organizational phenomenon, usually captured from a Western context in which interventions are often incongruous with diverse local environments, Viljoen seamlessly interweaves memories, stories, theories, perspectives, empirical investigations (from multiple voices across multiple disciples and geographical locations), and personal craft to open a vista of inclusivity and why “multicultural organizations should aim at understanding national cultural dynamics and at gaining insight into differences in the worldviews of people in the organization” (p. 117). Chapter 1, “Finding My Roots,” introduces the book via Viljoen’s personal story, including the conceptualization of inclusivity and the positioning of the story-telling strategies that are central to this book. This includes finding the author’s voice and developing her roots, via life experimentation with the Grounding, Emerging, Navigating, and Effecting (GENE) Model framework of Ronnie Lessem and Alexander Schieffer (p. 2) at Mandala Consulting Ltd, which helped advanced her cultural awareness, the rainbow colors analysis of Africa, and the integral inclusivity logic.

Following the introductory chapter, the book has five parts. Part I, “Theoretical Grounding,” contains chapter 2 (which conceptualized integral inclusivity, organizational gestalt, and individual presence) and chapter 3 (which captured the contours, processes, prerequisite, measurement, and the story-telling mechanisms of constructing and optimizing inclusivity, to amplify organizational transformation). Chapter 4, 5 and 6 form Part II, “Emerging Human Niches.” In chapter 4, Viljoen conceptualized and applied human niches to
organizational theory, while incorporating the spinal dynamic theory of diverse human thinking along with Loraine Laubscher in chapter 5. Chapter 6 essentially expanded insight into “the thinking of different countries” as well as addressed African dilemma (p. 120), by involving practical applications of human niches at individual, organizational, and national level. In Part III, “Navigating Diversity Thought,” chapter 7 decodes the complexity and potentialities of diversity, which necessitate building blocks, to create individual presence, voice and consciousness. Chapter 8 deals with unlocking of human energy via transformational leadership to drive congruity and performance at individual, group, organizational, and national levels.

In Part IV, “Navigating Through Transformation,” chapters 9 and 10 present Ghana’s cultural dynamics and the mechanics of inclusivity via the narratives of the “cantata” intervention, which harmonizes cultural ideologies that are incongruous with organizational strategy. Relatively, the purple color analysis finds expression in the case studies of the Damang and Tarkwa, mining companies, which adumbrate the imperatives of inclusivity strategy. Similarly, chapters 11 and 12 explore the logic of inclusive strategy, the blue color analysis and the Absa financial broker’s case study, to narrate successful organizational transformation. Part V, “Effecting Integral Leadership,” consists of chapters 12 and 13. The former employed the concept of inclusivity to interrogate the implication of human niches, cultural dynamics, and leadership engagement styles on organizational psyche via the case study of five sovereign nations (Australia, South Africa, Peru, China, and the Philippines). The latter deployed the insights gained from the organizational inclusivity concept to “apply at the national level too” (p. 299) in order to achieve a sustainable and large-scale transformation across South Africa.

While Inclusive Organizational Transformation: An African perspective on Human Niches and Diversity of Thought may not yet appear a path-breaking text on worldviews of individuals and organizational transformation and sustainability, it does present a multi-vocal and diverse approach to expanding individual and organizational integral transformation via inclusivity, diversity, and exploration of the spiral dynamics of human niches, which will be appreciated by scholars and managers at different levels of organizational development.

Emeka Smart Oruh, Brunel University


Margarethe von Eckenbrecher, née Hopfer, was very much a woman of her time. Born in provincial Prussia in 1875, in the early years of the Kaiserreich, her family was conservative, monarchist, and economically secure. She was educated at a boarding school for “women of nobility,” where the curriculum included philosophy, mathematics, science, English, and French. Having become fluent in English during three years of living and studying in England, on her return to Germany Margaratehe attended lectures in philosophy and theology at Humboldt University. Her reminiscences do not stress religious faith but convey a recognizably
late nineteenth-century spirituality. With a strong grasp of what she called the “History of Woman,” centuries of subjection and suppression, she was nonetheless an enterprising housewife and mother, an equal partner to her husband. Margaret and her cousin, Themistokles von Eckenbrecher II, were married in early 1902, after a long friendship and one broken engagement. He had already spent time in South-West Africa, and within six weeks of their wedding the couple sailed from Hamburg to settle in what had been since 1884 a German Imperial Protectorate.

Book I of Margarethe’s memoir, first published separately in 1907, gives a gripping account of the family’s setting-up and development of their farm at Okombahe. It was a demanding undertaking. The German occupation had not taken complete hold of the territory, the indigenous people were resistant, the natural conditions harsh, and the von Eckenbrechers were often lonely and far from the most basic services. They had achieved a great deal when the Herero rebellion and War of 1904 sent the family back to Germany. Book II continues the story. After ten difficult years in Germany, which included divorce, Margarethe returned with her two sons to South-West Africa, where in Windhoek she resumed her career as a teacher. Although her narrative suggests how powerfully she embraced life, these were difficult years. World War I and the South African mandate and occupation made life hard for the German colonists. Margarethe’s younger son Hans-Henning (Büdi) died in 1927 of typhus at the age of 22. Nonetheless Margarethe continued as a resourceful home-maker and active citizen, pursuing her teaching career for more than thirty years, until she retired from the Realschule at the age of 73. She died in Cape Town, where her elder son had settled, in 1955.

Margarethe seems to have been sustained by a complex of sometimes paradoxical qualities: a deep love for her husband and her children, a strong conviction of the cultural and ethnic superiority of her own people combined with a genuine humanitarian sympathy for and readiness to serve her African neighbors and employees. She was acknowledged by others as an exemplary colonial German and was convinced of the positive achievements of her nation’s imperial enterprise. Her “Germanity” involved a patriotic, if individualist, loyalty that carried her over from Frederick the Great to Paul von Hindenburg and the Führer (Adolf Hitler), whose pictures, among others “richly decorated” the walls of her standard V classroom. She was apprehensive of “Africa for the Africans,” claiming that, according to “old natives . . . life was better under German rule.” She had, nonetheless, a sharp eye and ear for the ironies of the colonial encounter: she hears her “black nanny” singing her child to sleep with tunes learned “from our own soldiers,” and on trek she is ready to acknowledge the local knowledge of the indigènes.

This serviceable and clear “first full-length English translation” achieves a genuine sense of an individual voice. The “Reader’s Introduction” helpfully contextualizes the story in the colonial history of the time. Footnotes on some of Margarethe’s frequent references to and quotations from writers and artists would have been welcome. Goethe is her “good friend” but Margarethe refers also to Wilhelm Busch, Böcklin, Horace, Bodenstedt, and others. The von Eckenbrechers arrived in South-West Africa during the Anglo-Boer War, when their sympathies seem to have been with the British, but many of their neighbors and fellows were “Boers,” and Afrikaans (or Cape Dutch) seems to have been something of a lingua franca, as it had been in parts of Southern Africa for about a century. The editors and translators are not alive to this, so
that they often simply transliterate what Margarthe heard rather than giving the Afrikaans words, many of which are today part of South African (or Southern African) English.

Tony Voss, University of Kwazulu-Natal


Zsiga, Boyer, and Kramer’s edited volume, Languages in Africa: Multilingualism, Language Policy, and Education, considers multilingualism in the African context, described by the editors as one in which “languages are layered, or nested, in concentric circles” (p. 1) of home, national, and international language. Although the editors acknowledge that the volume sets out to explore the interaction of multilingualism with education and language policy, this focus is not addressed to a great extent in some chapters. However, all fourteen essays ask broader questions about “how language policies and language attitudes affect and are affected by the facts of living in a world of multi-layered languages” (p. 2).

Bokamba’s chapter provides an operational (re-)definition of multilingualism—“the existence of three or more languages as media of daily (oral) communication for a given society or speaker” (p. 40)—and notes that multilingualism is often erroneously considered as synonymous with bilingualism. The chapter provides a theoretical framework for the volume and a background for the case studies, and would have been better served as the first chapter. A few typos do not detract from its importance.

Several contributors provide evidence that initial literacy, and learning in general, is best achieved via native language instruction, and advocate for policy development, implementation, or change towards the inclusion of minority languages in education, increased government support for minority language documentation or revitalization, and development of curriculum resources for literacy. Arkorful’s chapter on the factors that enable learners in Ghana’s Complementary Education Program, unlike those in the formal school system, to construct knowledge provides valuable insight into the conditions necessary for real learning in African rural communities. Trudell and Adger’s chapter is instructive as to the importance of linguistics for successful literacy acquisition. It advocates for linguistics-based reading research tailored for African-language contexts and shaped by African linguistic realities. Kiramba’s critical review of research on classroom discourse in Kenyan multilingual classrooms highlights the constraints on children’s education and the negative effects on teachers brought about by the use of an unfamiliar language of instruction. Walter expands upon the nature and consequences of teacher effects in education. His conclusion that teacher deficiency in the language of instruction results in weak mastery of subject content and subsequently in poor student performance provides a strong argument for change in education policy.

There is also a discussion on how language and education policies have marginalized minority languages and accelerated their decline. Boyer and Zsiga describe the case of the Sebirwa language and propose the inclusion of minority languages in education to preserve such languages and enhance national unity. They also note the importance of oral tradition for teaching language for revitalization, a theme taken up in Njwe’s chapter, which offers a
simplistic documentation of proverbs from endangered Cameroonian languages but proposes the inclusion of the genre in education programs.

Both Seid and Shah focus on language shift as an outcome of language policies. They present two perspectives whose contrast enriches our understanding of the phenomenon. In Seid’s study young people “feel only a loose or insignificant attachment to their ethnic identity” (p. 109), while Shah records that a strong ethnic identity can be maintained through identification with cultural symbols.

The effect of language and education policies and practices on language attitudes is a major focus of the volume. Muaka’s chapter on billboard advertising provides an excellent analysis of how language choice and practice in advertising reflect official language policies, general language attitudes, and sociopolitical realities. Beyogle’s chapter reiterates the widely documented fact that educational policies constitute the major factor in the formation and maintenance of attitudes that devalue African languages. It makes the important contribution that any changes in language policy should take such attitudes into consideration. The devaluing of African languages is discussed in relation to film in Pandey’s chapter, an in-depth examination of the strategies employed in award-winning twenty-first century films to “invisibilize” and “pathologize” African languages and portray African multilingualism as valueless. African multilingualism is, however, shown to result in creativity. Odebunmi’s chapter, an important contribution to African hip-hop scholarship, examines the “glocalization” of hip-hop’s “transgressive linguistic practice” (p. 133) via linguistic strategies that draw from the resources afforded by multilingualism. Similarly Muaka’s chapter on Kenyan political discourse describes the stylistic strategies used by Kenyan politicians to appeal to audiences from different ethnic groups.

The volume offers a major contribution to multilingualism scholarship and opens up unexplored dimensions of the phenomenon. It provides fresh insight into the sociolinguistics of multilingualism by bringing together a wide range of case studies, especially those on languages whose critical status has not been reported before. Its coverage is enhanced by contributions from scholars that work both within and outside Africa. It will interest a wide range of readers, including African linguists, language educators, policy makers, and graduate students interested in multilingualism research.

Ihuọma I. Akinrẹmi, University of Jos

http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/pdfs/v16i2a7.pdf