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Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa. Lisa A. Lindsay and Stephan F. Miescher, eds. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003. 262 pp.

This book is the first collection of its kind to focus on the practices of masculinities especially in West Africa. Covering early colonial period through post-independence, the editors and contributors discuss how masculinities have been constructed and contested in sub-Saharan Africa. The book challenges stereotypes of African men as inferior and victims of colonialism. Contributors identify gender as central to the social and political transformation of Africa, and also investigate individuals who changed gender in certain circumstances.

The book is divided into four parts. The three contributors in the first part address the change of senior masculinity in colonial Africa. McKittrick opens with the practice of masculinities in the Ovambo societies during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Two forms of hegemonic masculinities coexisted: fatherhood and the elite group. European trade, Western education, and Christianity rendered rituals like initiation and rainmaking redundant, but the position of fathers as producers and definers of masculinity consistently remained unchanged. Achene's essay examines King Ahebi Ugbabe, the first woman to be crowned king in Enugu-Ezike. Ahebi's wealth, connections, and ability to speak English made her prominent among her people. She was saluted as the Leopard, and the songs composed to celebrate her coronation signified her transgender transformation, spirituality, and symbolic masculinity. Her actions challenged gender divisions that existed in Nsukka and demonstrated to what extent a woman can become a man. However, indigenous gerontocratic male authority forced her to transform into a woman by confiscating her masquerade spirit. Mann concludes this part with a discussion on military veterans in Mali during the late 1950s, when urban Muslim communities witnessed conflicts over traditions and rituals of prayer. Religious affiliation was one way people attained masculine status. Old soldiers who came back from war had to demonstrate their adaptation into the community through religious knowledge. To assert their masculinity, they wore army uniforms and conversed in French. A few fortunate ones were sponsored to make the hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca), which added prestige.

The second part addresses the remaking of men in Colonial Africa. Miescher's essay focuses on Presbyterian teachers in Colonial Ghana. Using the life histories of five teachers, he examines how the missionary project evolved from the 1920s to the 1950s. Three masculinity types were recognized: adult masculinity, senior masculinity, and the status of a "big man". The teachers practiced multiple masculinities as teachers, catechists, and preachers; as husbands and fathers within their marriage; and as elders in their hometowns. Shear discusses the politics of black police employment in early 20th century South Africa. Native police received very little education; their uniform was shorts; they were inadequately trained; had limited promotion prospects, their revolvers were replaced by sticks, and they were not permitted to produce written

reports. The white administration feared operating through local police. Copper uses illustrations from the French and British to discuss the cultural construction of the proper worker during the post-war years. Using the French program of family allowances established in 1956, this chapter explores the case of official coding of gender roles in the reproduction of a working class. Colonial administrations attempted constructing a future society in gendered terms. Lindsay explores the relationship between wage labor, money, and gender among railway workers in southwestern Nigeria from the late 1930s to the mid 1960s. Three types of adult masculinities connected to sex and age were identified: adult masculinity, senior-or elder masculinity, and the "big man". The ability for men to be breadwinners was important to their masculine identity. Seniority status was attained by educating their children, assisting lineage members, investing in community projects and building a house. Wealth, followers, and political power gave "big men" their hyper-masculine status. The history of Enugu Government Colliery is the backdrop for Brown's chapter on colonial racism and notions of masculinity among the Igbos in the Nigerian coal industry from 1930 to 1945. Colonial employers treated their workers as boys because racial discrimination was the principle upon which white European supervisors performed their duties. The natives validated their masculinity by becoming members of a titled society, contributing to community projects, and supporting members of one's lineage.

Gendered nationalisms is the focus of Part Three. It opens with White's examination of masculinity in the Mau Mau movement for independence in Kenya. While missionaries attempted to recreate African men into a more disciplined and domestic fashion, African men had their own vision about what it means to be a man. The Mau Mau rebellion was one way men negotiated their preferred definition of masculinity. The chapter argues that Mau Mau politics was not about land and freedom alone but issues of masculinity, marriage, child care, and the allocation of domestic chores. Obeng examines the cultural and historical constructions of masculinity in 20th century Asante. Oral narratives among the Ashante suggest that forms of masculinity have always been essentialized and structured along biological divide. Yaa Asantewaa showed that senior masculinity was not restricted to biological males. Her actions were located in religion, economic power, royal lineage, and warfare by which she claimed for herself senior masculinity with its political and military connotations. The young men of the National Liberation Movement on the other hand failed to attain senior masculinity because they did not have royal and religious legitimacy. The connection between seniority, sex, and gender are not fixed; they may be reconfigured in special circumstances and over time.

The final section dealing with masculinity and modernity begins with Hodgson's discussion on what it means to be a Maasai man. The chapter explores the historical articulation of modernity with shifting production of Maasai masculinities. She focuses on the dominant masculinity represented by pastoralism and cultural authenticity which was recognized and reinforced by both colonial and postcolonial policies; Ormeek was a derogatory term used to describe men who got baptized, received Western education, and worked for the colonial government. Masculine positions shifted with education, institutionalized religion, political structure and language of the nation-state. The knowledge of the Ormeek became exalted while the ignorance of traditional pastoralists discredited. The examination of masculinity in Ado-Odo in Southwestern Nigeria completes the series of essays. Drawing on interviews, oral histories and participant-observation in everyday life in Ado-Odo, Cornwall explores the negotiation of masculinities among the Ado-Odo. Using snapshots from everyday lives of men she analyzes the emergence and performance of different ideal masculinities. Simply being a man came with

privileges and specific rights but with time, the position shifted when masculinity was equated to the ability to fulfill financial obligations to one's family.

Overall, the book gives insight into the performance of masculinities in Africa during colonial and postcolonial times. The coexistence of different forms of dominant masculinities suggests that Connell's idea of hegemonic masculinity does not take into consideration historical and cultural situations. The presentation of specific historical events makes the book an excellent contribution to gender studies in Africa. The book avoids the common error of generalization by dealing with specific African societies. One aspect conspicuously missing is homosexuality in Africa. This omission aside, the book is very informative and covers a broad range of masculinity issues in Africa.

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