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Appropriation of Islam in a Gambian Village: Life and Times of Shaykh Mass Kah, 1827–1936

BALA S. K. SAHO

Abstract: This paper explores the role played by an Islamic cleric, Shaykh Mass Kah, in the dissemination of Islamic teaching and its practice in the Senegambia. It analyzes the role religious leaders played in the Senegambia after the demise of Islamic kingdoms that militant Islamic leaders attempted to build during the second half of the nineteenth century. Examining the life history of Mass Kah within this time period shows how religious leaders like him remained central in the everyday lives of local communities, their followers, and those who sought their blessings. Given the pivotal role of Islam in the Senegambia during the militant revolutions between Muslims and non-Muslims or nominal Muslims (those who practice the religion in name only) of the nineteenth century, the clerics emerged as new leaders in positions of social and political authority. Islam offered the people a social, cultural, and political opportunity to replace their autocratic overlords. By foregrounding the meaningfulness of the change that was brought by the peaceful transition to Islam during the colonial period, the paper examines how the “new” faith was widely internalized by the peasantry, who were impressed with the numerous demonstrations of miracles by Muslim clerics.

Introduction

One day, a student of Shaykh Mass Kah who had goiter, came to the cleric to seek permission to go to Dakar for treatment.¹ The Shaykh looked closely at the swollen neck. He then murmured words under his breath, blew air onto his hands, and smeared the goiter with his hands. “Let us sleep till morning, and then you can go by God’s grace.” When the student woke up in the morning, the swollen neck was reduced to a tiny pimple, producing pus, which healed in a few days. The Shaykh’s followers regarded such as a “miracle,” which Qadi Omar Saho composed into a song:

*“Amoon na been taalibeem bu ko ñewaloon
Di ko tawat si benna giir,
Bu ko sonnal.
Seringe bi moocal ko,*

*There was a student of his who came to him,
to complain of goiter,
That troubled him.
The Shaykh smeared the swollen area with words of
Allah,*

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<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v12/v12i4a1.pdf>

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*Mu weer sa saasa.
Sering bi musta deñi,
'Yukisi naasa.'"*

*The goiter healed immediately.
The Shaykh never faltered.
Yukisu naasa'*

This story is an example of how clerics like Mass Kah reached out and dealt with populations on daily issues that mattered to the people. The story helps us to understand how through such miraculous exhibits clerics drew followers.

This paper explores the role played by the Islamic cleric, Shaykh Mass Kah, in the dissemination of Islamic teaching and its practice in the Senegambia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By attending to the everyday worries and needs of small communities, Shaykh Mass Kah was able to draw an extensive following. Using the history of Shaykh Mass Kah as an example, this paper analyzes the role religious leaders played in the Senegambia after the demise of Islamic kingdoms that militant Islamic leaders attempted to build during the second half of the nineteenth century. Given the pivotal role of Islam in the Senegambia during the militant revolutions between Muslims and non-Muslims or nominal Muslims of the nineteenth century, the clerics emerged as new leaders in positions of social and political authority. Islam offered the people a social, cultural, and political opportunity to replace their autocratic overlords.² As Martin Klein states, the victory of clerics against the autocratic rulers was not only military, but moral and political as clerics established schools in the region, and inculcated Muslim values as a replacement for the mores of the old order.³ For instance, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, militant Islam swept across the West African region through a series of revolutions (*jihads*) enforcing Muslim forms of worship and legal practices.⁴ This forceful dissemination of Islam in the Senegambian historiography is known as the Soninke-Marabout Wars (non-Muslims and Muslims), which were waged from 1850-1901.

Scholars also argue that the process of Islamization gained momentum once colonialism was established, and some people have suggested that European conquest helped spread Islam in meaningful ways, particularly by ending the violence between Africans. For example, Frances Leary contends that it was European colonialism that helped to lay the foundations for the spread of Islam in the Cassamance region of Senegal. For Leary, colonialism created stable conditions which permitted peaceful proselytization and interaction to occur and in some cases even encouraged the Muslims with formal official policies.⁵

By foregrounding the meaningfulness of the change that was brought by the peaceful transition from militancy during the colonial period, this paper explores how the "new faith" was in some ways widely internalized by the peasantry, who were impressed with the numerous demonstrations of "miracles" of Muslim clerics. These "miracles" were associated with special supernatural powers that clerics were believed to possess in continuity and in abundance.⁶

In fact, there is a need to rethink the historiography of Islam in West Africa, which tends to focus on jihads emphasizing militant Islamic reform. For instance, there has been substantial works on the nineteenth century Muslim revolutions in West Africa focusing on individuals such as Uthman Dan Fodio, Maba Diakhrou, and Al-Hajj Umar Tal.⁷ Admittedly, the literature on *Sufi* shaykhs who opted for the peaceful paths to Islam is growing, especially in recent

years.⁸ However, more work needs to be done on these individuals and generators of *baraka* (divine grace) who not only sought to adopt a peaceful path to practice Islam but also attempted to create a *Dar al-Islam* (abode of believers) within a *Dar al-Kufr* (abode of nonbelievers) they dealt with eminent social problems.⁹

The present-day popular view of Mass Kah as a saint is based on the belief that he would shower *baraka* on those who visited his grave at the village of Medina in Niumi.¹⁰ Commonly, these views are expressed in Wolof poems, some of which are reproduced above and below. Artistic (poetry) depictions of these deeds, considered miracles by his followers, offer the historian the possibility of providing a better understanding of how some members of the communities he visited were attracted to Islam. The ability of the saint to manipulate divine forces makes him a charismatic figure who attracts followers as people seek help from him for personal or community problems. The source of devotion to a cleric is the pursuit of *baraka* and the supernatural power attached to these blessings is a guarantor of redemption. The devotion to a cleric is also the source of amulets and charms.

Scholars have already treated the subject of saint veneration. Lamin Sanneh writes that the burial ground of the cleric, Karamoko Ba, and his relatives at Touba in Guinea became a center of pilgrimage where people made their various petitions at the site of Ba's grave. He notes that a saint must be prominent in divinely attested works to be distinguished sharply from acts of revolt or rebellion (*ma'siyah*) in the secular realm.¹¹ Similarly, Mass Kah was considered a saint who performed many miracles. In both Gambia and Senegal, every year hundreds if not thousands of people gather in Banjul or at his village in Medina for what is called *ziyara* (visit) to mark his death. The *ziyara* is also an occasion to remember the life and deeds of the Shaykh.¹²

It is important to state here that my interest in Mass Kah's story is not whether these "miracles" happened or not, or even whether he actually studied at great centers of Islamic learning his followers have attached him to. My aim is to show how these stories and miracles are memorialized and what they tell us about the past. Why do his followers take pleasure in recounting his miracles? For example, why do his followers say that the Shaykh studied at Pir in Senegal and why is that important?¹³ Are the stories of his followers an attempt to legitimate the Shaykh's traditions or is this a case of "invented tradition?"¹⁴ Why did the Shaykh remain a pacifist in a time of increasing militant Islamic revolutions? What does that tell us about his authority in the region? For instance, it is clear that though the stories about the Shaykh have not changed, the ways they are memorialized have changed over time. In recent years, memorialisation of the Shaykh's life has transformed from family and students gathering in the village to large scale *ziyaras* in urban areas. Perhaps, one reason for this is the increasing economic and social position of the Shaykh's grandchildren.¹⁵ The question is whether this public performance can be considered as a conscious effort by Kah's grandchildren and followers to legitimize the *Shaykh's* tradition.

Nonetheless, it is a daunting task to reconstruct such a story with very few written sources or archival materials. I attempt to situate Mass Kah and his life in the general context of religious reforms of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Senegambia by reviewing published materials. I base my narration on the complex insider stories, which are, stories of family members and the Shaykh's followers here woven together with the few available archival sources. The insider stories are contrasted with accounts by other carefully chosen

informants who are close to but not related to the Shaykh. This type of investigation is striking because it allows historians to see contending dynamics in life histories.

One should obviously utilize such insider stories carefully and critically. It is customary in Senegambia for followers, students, and siblings to speak well of their shaykh, teacher, and parent, as these figures are the source of *baraka*. Similarly, one should be wary of the struggle between siblings of a shaykh to control and monopolize the shaykh's "traditions" —each member of the family may claim authority of either the "authentic" knowledge of the shaykh or the correct version of his life story. For example, during my interviews, some family members rejected versions of the *Shaykh's* story told by other family members. Some even told me that if I want the story to be credible, I should not believe the versions of some particular family members. Likewise, others in the community not related to the Shaykh pointed to certain family members as credible sources. Examples such as these require a particular attention not only to the voices of informants but also how researchers interact with informants and what conclusions they draw from their stories.

The publication of Jan Vansina's *Oral Tradition as History* (1985) led scholars to examine critically oral traditions as sources of history. Much work has explored how oral historians extract knowledge about the past from oral narratives, what evidential material they have at hand, and by what procedures they combine these into purported representations of the past. C. A. Hamilton observes how "carefully unpacked and deconstructed, oral traditions can provide some evidence of 'voices from below.' Often this evidence can be found, not in the consistency of oral traditions, but in their very contradictions and 'fault lines.'"¹⁶ For example, there seem to be a number of pieces of missing information in the Shaykh's life, particularly regarding his wives.¹⁷ Why are there such silences and what does that tell us about family feuds? If Mass Kah had given advice or prayers to *jihadists*, what type of advice and what kinds of prayers were they?

Early Life, Education, and Teacher

In African mythology, heroism and cleverness have long been associated with children who learn to walk or speak late in their development.¹⁸ The life story of Mass Kah given by his followers and disciples emphasizes his mysterious childhood, while accounts of his deeds later in his life attest to his sainthood status. At the age of three, Shaykh Mass Kah could barely walk and his parents used to wonder if he ever would be able to do so. In many ways, his life therefore reflects the customary ways in which saints' lives were presented and remembered by inhabitants of the Senegambia region.

Seringe Mass Kah was born into a Fulbe family at Ngui Mbayen in the Wolof state of Kajoor of what is now Senegal circa 1827 and died in The Gambia in 1936 at Medina Seringe Mass, a village located in Niumi District, North Bank Division.¹⁹ His father was Ma Sohna Kah and his mother was Sohna Gaye Khan.²⁰ Seringe Mass established the village of Medina for learning the Quran, spreading the word of God, and agricultural work. A present-day visitor to the village of Medina Seringe Mass is quickly struck by the sight of a beautiful minaret, loud songs in praise of God from Quranic students, and the sight of large millet and groundnut fields.

As was customary at the time, Mass Kah went to Quranic School under the tutelage of his brothers, Seringe Samba and Seringe Morr Anta Sally, at a village called Pir. David Robinson

mentions that many key leaders of the Fulbe revolt movements studied in Islamic schools located at Pir.²¹ Mass Kah was a quick learner and as a young man studied the Quran and Islamic sciences at Pir, where he had opportunity to meet other clerics. The shaykh was also said to have studied in Mauritania.²² Though the exact time and location of this is not clear, Charles Stewart indicates that during the nineteenth century Mauritania was revered for its religious scholarship, and many in West Africa seeking Islamic knowledge would visit renowned scholars such as Sahikh Sidiyya (1775-1868) who had disciples from the Futa Jallon to Southern Morocco and from Futa Toro to Timbuctoo.²³ Mass Kah continued studying under different clerics. He read many books including: *Asmawee* (fiqh-religion, ways of prayers), *Laxdari* (religion and prayers), and *Hasamadine* (way of life) as well as aspects of the religion such as *Lawal* (religious affairs), *Usul* (jurisprudence), *Tawhid* (unity of God), and *Naxu* (grammar), after which he returned to Senegal.²⁴

By the time of his return to Senegal, the shaykh's peaceful approach to Islam began to attract a following. One can only speculate that his decision was influenced by the changing political and religious landscape in the Senegambia. O'Brien notes that the defeat of the last Wolof King, the Damel of Kayor, Lat Dior, at the battle of Dekkilé in 1886 at the hands of French conquerors, and the subsequent disintegration of the state of Kayor, served as a warning for all the clerics in the region that their culture was now under threat.²⁵

Mass Kah's attitude towards colonial expansion was said to be one of avoidance. He relocated himself whenever the French got closer to his area of domicile.²⁶ Though it is not clear why he made such decisions, a purported incident between Mass Kah and a certain French colonial commissioner is perhaps relevant.²⁷ Muhammad Lamin Bah narrates that the marabout's brother, Sheikh Kah, was arrested by the French commissioner and detained without charge along with several others. Despite appeals and negotiations to persuade the commissioner, the detainees were not released. At that time, Mass Kah was living at the Senegalese border custom post Karang. The commissioner sent a message to Mass Kah to report to the commissioner's office, but Mass Kah was unwilling to go. Instead, he sent his son, Seringe Mustapha Kah. On Seringe Mustapha's arrival at the post, he heard names being called from a list and Mass Kah's name was called at exactly 11:45 in the morning. Seringe Mustapha raised his hand and answered on behalf of the shaykh.

"Where is Mass Kah?", the commandant enquired.

"He did not come," Seringe Mustapha answered.

"He is the one I need here, not you," the commandant demanded.

"I said the shaykh cannot come," Seringe Mustapha replied.

"Why do you say he is not coming?" the commandant asked.

"I am the one whom he sent and I said he is not coming," Seringe Mustapha emphasized.

"Are you sure Mass Kah will not be here even if I ordered him to come?" the commandant reiterated through an interpreter.

"Tell him, he is just a mere representative and nothing more and nothing else. He is a *jefeendukay*, (a tool), and there is nothing he can do," Seringe Mustapha replied to the interpreter.²⁸

The commandant looked at his wristwatch. It was 12 noon. He ordered Seringe Mustapha to be thrown into a cell until 2 in the afternoon, at which time Seringe Mustapha would be seriously dealt with. Seringe Mustapha was put into custody. At about 1 pm, coincidentally, the telephone in the commandant's office rang. It was from Dakar. The office in Dakar had received an order from France for the immediate dismissal of the said commissioner. As soon as the telephone conversation ended, a vehicle arrived for the commissioner to leave his duty station. Everyone refused to help the commissioner load his luggage onto the vehicle. He had to carry the loads himself on his head. By 2 pm, when the hearing was to take place, the commissioner had no time for Seringe Mustapha, who with many others was released. On his return, Seringe Mustapha narrated everything that had happened to Mass Kah, who responded in a gentle manner: "Well the commissioner is the ruler, and when you cannot agree with the leader, you have to leave the land for him."²⁹

The story also provides a good illustration of the uncommon characteristics recognized in the saintly figures of the past among clerics, followers and ordinary people seeking *baraka*. This claimed account of Seringe Mustapha's encounter with French officials implies that Mass Kah's prayers (*dua*) were responsible for the French commissioner's dismissal, which then led to the release of all the detainees. In assessing sainthood and the cult of saints, Sanneh reckons that "such examples of saintly *baraka* achieving moral victory helped to establish their author firmly in the esteem and devotion of ordinary people and a certain premium began to be placed on acquiring the marks of saintly distinction."³⁰ In this case, Mass Kah seemed to have influenced the dismissal of a powerful French administrator, thereby establishing his reputation as a saint.

The Shaykh finally established his village of Kërr Medina Seringe Mass in The Gambia in the early 1890s.³¹ Here the scholar immediately established a *daara* (Quranic school) and continued to teach the tenets of Islam and the Quran as well as instilling work ethics into his students and followers. The school soon attracted students from within Gambia and Senegal. This school became so popular that it attracted the attention of the British colonial administrators. In the 1923-1932 report of North Bank Province concerning educational improvements, it is written that "There are a number of schools at which Arabic is being taught. The chief of these are: at Farafenni under Sherif Malainen a native of French Soudan; at Medina Seringe Mass: Under Mass Kah and his son, Momadu Kah, Jollofs (Wolof); at Sittannunku under Arafang Briama Dabo, a Mandingo; at Medina Cherno under Cherno Omar Jallo, a Toranko."³² The writer of the report was impressed with the level of Arabic education and continued, "Some of these teachers are highly educated men. I know one, a Mandingo now dead, who evolved a calendar whereby he could convert the days of the moon into days of the month, and even overcome the difficulty of the leap year."³³ In his study of Islamic schools in West Africa Muhammed Joof also notes the place of the school run by Shaykh Mass Kah as a center of learning and with many students.³⁴ Likewise, Donald Wright reckons that by the 1930s, Niumi (in The Gambia) was dotted by villages that were magnets for young men who wanted to learn to read Arabic and advance their knowledge of the Quran under the tutelage of noteworthy clerics.³⁵

The life of Mass Kah needs to be examined against the general background of the religious reforms of the nineteenth century, which should be seen through the acts of key reformers, most of whom, it is claimed, at one time or another had come into contact with Mass Kah. For

example, Mass Kah was said to have met with Amadou Bamba of Touba (1852-1927), founder of the Murid Brotherhood.³⁶ Informants narrated that Bamba visited Mass Kah in Banjul at Hagan Street, where the present “Murid Headquarter” in The Gambia is located. It was also reported that the Shaykh met Al-Hajj Umar Tall (1794-1864), one of the most travelled and influential clerics in West Africa.³⁷ Similarly, it is said that he had met Maba Diakhou Bah (1809-1867) and his son, Saer Matti, by blessing their jihads through prayers.³⁸ Although there are no written records to substantiate these claims, they seem to suggest that these encounters strengthen his credentials as a reputable religious figure. These religious figures have remained important icons in Senegambians’s popular memory. Relating Mass Kah to these individuals therefore appears to be a conscious effort to illuminate his piety.

In some ways, Mass Kah’s life can be compared to that of Bamba who evaded colonial encroachment through what Robinson calls “accommodation.” By making the same evolution as Bamba, Mass Kah’s preoccupation was to avoid conflict with the French and the British. In so doing, Mass Kah can be seen as someone reaching back to other distinguished Muslim tradition of Sufism and the peaceful spread of Islam. Also, Mass Kah’s actions can be seen in light of making the faith more prominent at a time of the evident failure of the militant approach, and in this he is similar to his contemporary Bamba.

The peaceful spread of Islam in West Africa was first associated with the life of Al-Hajj Salim Suwareh, a religious teacher who probably lived in the fifteenth century.³⁹ Mass Kah’s life as it appears in the legends and poems I present in this paper is a later example of the peaceful efflorescence of Islam during the colonial period. His model of the peaceful practice of Islam was similar to the peaceful Suwarian tradition of Islamic clerics in West Africa. Although this peaceful model was negated during the nineteenth century by jihadist leaders within the Suwarian tradition who adopted militant models from elsewhere in the Islamic world, with the onset of colonialism at the turn of the twentieth century, the Suwarian tradition gained a new life and led to an upsurge of Islamic affiliation.

Seringe Mass Kah’s teachings took place during the turbulent years of Islamization in parts of the Senegambia during the nineteenth century when Islam was also spread by the sword. Mass Kah, however, never took up the sword. By establishing schools and public preaching, Islamic scholars obtained followers and gained trust in the communities they visited, enriching the lives of believers and winning over new converts.

Mass Kah ascended through Sufi Islam as an adherent of the Qadiriyya and the Tijaniyya, two popular Islamic orders which gained currency among in the Senegambia during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as most local clerics embraced either one or the other.⁴⁰ This gave Mass Kah an opportunity to understand the Sunna, Quran and Islamic institutions.⁴¹ Sufi Islam, with its mystical and ascetic movement, is associated with the veneration for saints (*waliu*), who are credited with miracles and are believed to have the mystical gift of *baraka* (redeeming power and grace).⁴² The central core of the Sufi way is the *wird*, usually part of *dhikr*, the prayer ritual that is specific for the way and transmitted from teacher to student. The initiation is variously called *akhdh al-’ahd* (“the taking of the oath”), *akhdh al-wird* (“the taking of the litany”), and *akhdh al-tariq or al-tariqa*.⁴³ The Shaykh took to Sufi practices by combining fasting, seclusion, and travel as a way of spreading the word of God. Valerie Hoffman in her work on Sufism, notes, “The Sufi’s major preoccupation is with crushing his passions, fighting,

as the sufi say, against his own soul. A time-honoured method of taming the soul is to resist its desires through fasting and other forms of asceticism.”⁴⁴

Miracles, Social Work, and Healing

Today, there are numerous stories, tales, and poems about Mass Kah’s supernatural performances, recounted by Qadi Aliou Saho and many of the Shaykh’s followers. Qadi Aliou Saho’s father was a student of Mass Kah, and Saho was a student of Mass Kah’s son.⁴⁵ Such accounts from students and other followers form the core of praises that are performed at every religious gathering in honor of the Shaykh. In Islamic tradition, Sufi poets find inspiration in the poems of earlier periods. Julian Baldick mentions the influence of poetry on Sufism and how earlier mystics of Islam had made extensive use of Arabic poetry.⁴⁶ The poems and songs about Mass Kah are composed in Wolof, interspersed with words and sentences in Arabic. The inclusion of Arabic in the poems requires that the performers be literate in Arabic and belong to the Shaykh’s *daira*.⁴⁷ The performers who usually are all men interject their songs into the sermon. Though women belong to *dairas*, their role is to echo and chant the songs repeatedly. The use of Arabic also tells us something about the performers. James Searing, writing of Mouride poetry, points out that “popular preachers” who are from bard families perform most of the songs. “The bard performed an important social function, but had a low status in society ... and as masters of public speech, bards speak for other groups ... One result is that rhetorical, artful speech is a sign of low status. In public settings, aristocrats whispered to their bards and the bards spoke for them.”⁴⁸ Much can also be said of the relation between the highly educated clerics and some of their followers. At religious sermons, one finds that the highly regarded scholar speaks in a low tone, and his words are transmitted and amplified by someone else.⁴⁹

The purpose of this section is to show the significance and meaning of some of the miracles which are attributed to Mass Kah and why his followers attach much importance to these miracles.⁵⁰ This is not difficult to understand if we follow what Ali Karrar has said, that “The heart of every *tariqa* was its shaykh (senior cleric or head of a *tariqa*) who was believed to be divinely authorized to teach and guide people in their worldly life and in the hereafter.” Karrar further explained how “all the *tariqas* were agreed that an aspirant who desired a safe arrival at his goal (i.e. perfect knowledge of God) should put himself under the guidance of a shaykh.”⁵¹ Belief in the power of a senior cleric has far-reaching implications in strengthening the bond between the shaykh and his follower as the shaykh is believed to be divinely guided and incapable of sin.

These popular views of Mass Kah are echoed in beautifully composed poems sung by adherents during annual *ziyaras* in the cleric’s honor. Most of the stories are believed to be miracles, which confirm the cleric’s position as a *waliu* (saint).⁵² Many stories abound about the miraculous achievements of Muslim clerics. For instance, John Ralph Willis notes the return journey from Mecca of Al-Hajj Umar (1794 – 1864) by a ship bound for Cairo. “A storm confronts the ship and the agitation of the waves brings sleep to the new khalifa of Tijania order, but the sudden shouts of his eldest daughter rouse him from his slumber: ‘Rejoice, I have seen al-Tijani in the company of Muhammad al-Ghali: ‘make known to shaykh ‘Umar’, they commanded me, ‘nothing untoward shall befall him.’ The winds calm, the waves subside, the Divine Manifestation is made known.”⁵³ Similar stories radiate around the life of the Murid

founder and leader, the charismatic Muslim cleric Amadou Bamba. In 1895, the colonial French government sent him into exile in Gabon. Bamba's cult grew amid tales of his sea voyage, his prayer at sea, his fasting for a year, and his emergence from incarceration with lions.⁵⁴ Though these stories may remain subjects of debate, nonetheless, such miraculous exhibits are common anecdotes for the agitated minds of a shaykh's followers.

To a large extent, the life and deeds of Mass Kah recounted in these poems and songs are constantly reminding his followers of his sainthood. The Qadi narrates that while Mass Kah was at Medina he continued teaching the Quran and preaching Allah's words, and it was there that he exhibited many of his miracles. For example, Qadi Saho reports that there was a day when a fellow by the name of Sunkary Njie was arrested and put into custody by colonial authorities in Bathurst (now Banjul). The detainee's parents went to see Mass Kah for help. The cleric prayed for Sunkary and asked no payment for it. This is how humble and generous the cleric was, the narrator emphasized.

Qadi Saho continued: While Sunkary was asleep, he saw Shaykh Mass Kah in a vision telling him to leave the place and go. "*Bul naago, Sunkary, joggal nga dem*—don't sleep, get up and go" the marabout told him. Sunkary woke up and looked outside. He saw that all the guards were sleeping and the doors of the cells were open. He stood there and was afraid to leave the place, but the voice kept telling him to go. Sunkary gathered courage and left. He headed towards the Senegalese border. The voice followed him up to Kerr Salleh, near Ndunku Kebbeh on the North Bank highway, from Barra to Kerewan. "*Jen bi nga amee, saani ko falee, nga dem*" (throw away the load and go), the voice commanded. That was how Sunkary escaped. This story has been composed as a poem:

Sunkari Njie, beñu ko tejee ci Ngurga

*Yengmuna, yenguna, karama korga;
Ngurga sika koy jaapa,
Tej ko, dal koy ceene;
Sasko xalaal, tej ko,
"Kula ñi... ko anee;
Booko ye, jappa fas a nee ko".
Ag beñu jotee sosee yi,*

*Beñu teyee ko", Senge bee ne leen
Yewekuleen...te xam ne
'Insa a rabi, ne na jakk xam ne'*

Sunkari dey neleew, Senge bi naan ko,

*Sunkari yewul, dem sa yoon
Bul naagu.
Sunkari yewu, fekka garde yiy neleew,*

*When Sunkary Njie was detained by the
government,
he did all that he could,
The authorities put him into custody,
and chained him.
He was jailed.*

When he quarrelled with the Mandinka people.

*When he was jailed,
the marabout told them,
"Be aware and know that Allah is the greatest."*

*Sunkary was sleeping, the marabout told
him,*

*"Sunkary, don't fall asleep, get up and go.
Don't fall asleep."*

Sunkary woke up and found all the guards asleep.

<i>Jengba tas, neegba ubee ku...Waja raw,</i>	<i>Sunkary woke up and found all the guards asleep,</i>
<i>Kaadu Seringe bi ko gungee be Kerr Saleh,</i>	<i>The doors were open, and Sunkary escaped.</i>
<i>Mu naan ko, "jen bi nga yorr, deff ko falee".</i>	<i>The words of the marabout accompanied him up to Kerr Salleh, saying, "Throw away the chain."</i>
<i>Kerog la Seringe Mass Kah neleewloowoon peeyi-ba,</i>	<i>That day Mass Kah made the company of guards fall sleep, And they snored,</i>
<i>yepp xeral</i>	<i>until they were late for work</i>

This story attaches mystical power to the Shaykh in making the guards fall asleep and opening the doors to the room where Sunkary was located. Ordinarily, this would have been an impossible task and as such only the Shaykh's *baraka* could accomplish such an assignment.

In a similar story, Qadi Saho recounts that a trader by the name of Sulay Njie lived in Banjul, doing business for a certain man called Peterson. Unfortunately for Sulay, the business did not go well, and after a period of time the enterprise collapsed. The businessman, however, accused Sulay of mismanagement and began court proceedings against him. Sulay was persistently harassed by the authorities as he was arraigned before the magistrate, time and time again. In his desperation, Sulay went to see his friend Tamsir Demba Mbye, who was a student of Mass Kah. Sulay asked for Tamsir's help, and Tamsir said to him, "The only place we can go is to our usual place, to Medina, to see Mass Kah."

The two men crossed the sea to Barra, where they boarded a passenger vehicle to Buniadu and walked from there to Medina. They arrived late in the night while the whole village was asleep except Mass Kah:

"You have come so late, I hope it is peace?" Mass Kah asked.

"No, it is not," replied Tamsir.

"What is it that brought you so late and could not wait for the day"? Mass Kah asked them.

"Well, when a child is in trouble, he goes behind an elder. And you are our elder. That is why we are here, to seek protection," Tamsir replied.

"And you think I can do something about it?" asked Mass Kah.

Tamsir did not answer but instead explained reasons why they had come to see him. In their presence Mass Kah repeated the name of the businessman four times, as follows: "*Maa ngiy weeral ne Peterson; Nel Peterson,*" (I am making it clear that it is Peterson; say Peterson) the marabout said. The marabout then woke up his son, Momodou Mariam, to provide a room for Tamsir and Sulay for the rest of the night. Early in the morning, after the marabout had finished his morning prayer and *wird*, he called the two men and prayed for them, after which he allowed them to return to Banjul. But as soon as they left the village, Sulay anxiously asked Tamsir:

"Is this the way Seringe Mass Kah has left us? To go back to Banjul empty-handed? I may be in trouble if I reach Banjul. I cannot go. Seringe Mass has not given us any charm or holy water. Peterson will imprison me if I go." Sulay was perspiring.

"Let us go; as long as you believe in God, let us go. Just have faith." Tamsir encouraged him. When the two men reached Banjul, they received word that Peterson was

looking for Sulay Njie. Peterson said to Sulay: “Where have you been, Sulay? I am sorry if I scared or offended you. I just wanted to make sure that the business progresses well for both of us.

*“Ak waaaji ku ñemeetul dem Banjul,
 ŋa farr deelo ko Banjul;
 Daaxa seetane,
 Moy waaaji ku daan teeretal ku tudee,
 Ku tudee Petterson;
 Soy nobu dajee
 Moom la wa Banjul di waxtaane”.*

*“And the person who was afraid to go to Banjul,
 but you made him to return;
 You chased away evil spirits.
 That was the person who used to work for the
 person called...,
 He was Peterson;
 nowhere to hide.
 That is what the whole of Banjul is talking
 about.”*

This story informs not only about the Shaykh’s ability to alter circumstances in Sulay’s favor but as importantly it shows that the Shaykh does not associate anything with God such as making of amulets and charms, which other *marabouts* traditionally do in the Senegambia. In strict Islamic tradition, making of amulets and charms are considered *bida* – innovation or *shirk* – associating other powers with God.

In another story, the Qadi narrates that one day, the people of Medina were clearing land for cultivation towards the direction of Bakindiki village. The villagers cleared a wide path till they came to a big tree. They tried to fell the tree but they found the tree had grown again to its former size the following morning. They reported the matter to Seringe Mass Kah. The following morning, when the villagers returned to work, the tree had disappeared. The villagers were stunned and chanted about the incident:

*Amoon na garab bu ñu
 Toxaloon ci yooni Bakindiki la woon,
 Waa réew mi yepp la lootaloon,
 Seringe Kah jël ko mu sori.*

*There was a tree that was removed
 from the way to Bakidinki.
 It disturbed the whole village,
 Seringe Mass Kah removed it to a farther
 place.*

This is another story that illustrates the Shaykh’s ability to see and deal with what “ordinary eyes” cannot see. Presumably, the Shaykh was able to defeat the jinns of the tree and made the tree disappear. In this part of the world, it is commonly believed that most trees have owners—a jinn.⁵⁵ Moreover, Hoffman notes that “the ability of sufi shaykhs and saints to see things that ordinary people cannot see might be considered just a part of their ability to transcend spatial limitations.”⁵⁶

Furthermore, the Qadi recounts that a man by the name of Seringe Fafa recited *wird* given to him by someone else, but it unfortunately made him mad. He went around to people’s houses molesting and embarrassing them. His madness made him talk about people’s private parts, whether they were men or women. As soon as he met people, he would shout at them and name their private parts. His parents were so discomforted that they tried every possible means to cure him but to no avail. Seringe Fafa and his elder brother, Seringe Baboucar, who

was *alkali* (head of a village) of Njawara, finally decided to go and see Mass Kah. They took along a reasonable amount of silver and jewellery as payment for Seringe Mass. But the cleric refused to accept any payment. On their arrival at the marabout's waiting room, they found many people waiting to see the marabout. But to the surprise of the madman's brother, he was calm and quiet. The cleric told the madman's parents that it was God's Name he had wrongly touched and that "*rawan*" (spirits) got into him. The madman remained with the cleric so that he could be cured. One evening the cleric went with him to farm. Seringe Mass gathered wood and asked the man to lift it and carry it home. As he bent to lift the bundle, he sensed lightness in his body, as if something was leaving it. He bent over again and sensed easiness within himself. "I am feeling light," he told the cleric. "Run home quick, run to the mosque and pray." The cleric commanded him. That was how the man was cured from the evil spirits. The incident is recounted into a song:

*Amon na benna talibeem ci Njawara,
bo ko xamul,
Moo tudd Babou Njawara.
Defaay siikar, rawane dal ko songa;
Yaramam defaay tayal, keram donga.
Mu ñew tawati si lo lu.
Baay Mustapha Kah Moy seen seringé,
di seen seringé ...
Di sekuna Mass Kah.
Seringe bi ooko,
Xellu ko kanje,
Be mu ko beeci la mbiiram leer nanña.
Nee na be mu beeci,
Ma takk Seringe ba,
Pi sa la weer pelleñi, degg sañi sañi ba;

Kon ... matam ga xamal ma tamga,

Da nal nu xamal ... maaam ga.*

*There was his student,
If you don't know the student
He was Babou Njawara.
He used to do wurd and spirits attacked him,
He used to get tired,
and he became sick.
Father Mass Kah, you are their marabout,
Their marabout
You are marabout Mass Kah.
The marabout summoned him
and diagnosed his illness.
His condition became clear
when the marabout hit him.
The marabout hit him with words of God
Then I highly praised the marabout,
He instantly became well;
and I make it known that, I am praising the
Shaykh,
I am praising the marabout.*

This demonstrates again the esoteric knowledge of the Shaykh, which the informant chose to emphasize. For example, at the end of narrating this story, the informant looked up to me and said, "The simplest way to understand the complexity of *wurd* (prayers) about God's names is to list ten names of all the persons one knows and attempt to call them by one name. Almighty Allah has ninety-nine names, and to pray or call these names is a special form of prayer. Some clerics are more knowledgeable than others when it comes to secrets relating to God's names. It is believed that calling on God's names wrongly can lead to madness."⁵⁷ The informant also highlights the point that the Shaykh was not in the habit of accepting payments for his work.

Aliou Saho further informed me about his father, Shaykh Omar Saho, who was a devout student and follower of Seringe Mass Kah. For example:

When Seringe Mass had grown old in Medina, Sheik Omar lived in a village called Njai Njai. The cleric asked him to relocate to Medina so he could lead the prayers. Shaykh Omar agreed to the request. When Shaykh Omar was about to return to Njai Njai to collect his belongings and bring his family, Seringe Mass Kah gave him some money and asked him to pay all the debts he owed in the village. To Shaykh Omar Saho's surprise, this amount of money exactly equalled the money he owed to various people in the village. The following year, Shaykh Omar tried to pay him back but the cleric refused to accept it saying that the sum was owed not to him but to God. "*Man sama telka baat la, lu si jenn, dutul deelo* (My hands are like my words, whatever comes out of it does not return to it).⁵⁸

The closer one examines the trust disciples attach to their Shaykh, the more fascinating the stories that are told about the Shaykh's achievement. The Alkali of Jeshwang told me a story about his deceased mother, who was a student of Mass Kah.

My mother was a student of Mass Kah for a number of years. My mother was then living at Latrikunda. Her parents were the original settlers of that area and therefore owned much land in the vicinity. At the time of my grandparent's death, these lands were passed on to my mother. There came a time when a man living in the neighbourhood occupied her land and refused to give it up, saying that the land did not belong to my mother.

After a long and frustrating negotiation, the case ended up in court. This man's cousin was his witness. My mother decided to go and see Mass Kah, who gave her a *wird*.⁵⁹ The shaykh told my mother to leave everything in the hands of God, and justice would be delivered. The shaykh asked her to recite the *wird* always, especially when she entered the courthouse. On the first day of the hearing, the witness got sick and could not attend the court. The case was postponed. Two weeks later, my mother was in the court, but this time the man himself was sick and could not present himself in the courts. The case was adjourned. The third time that the case was to be heard, it was revealed that the witness had passed away. In addition, the judge who was an Englishman left the country. The case was adjourned again. After a long interval, the matter was finally heard by another judge and resolved in my mother's favor. The most interesting thing was that the man who wanted to take my mother's land passed away a few weeks after the court ruling. You know it is wrong to take what is not yours.⁶⁰

Towards the end of his life, Mass Kah's knowledge and wisdom became more profound and visible. He lived and died for what he believed: teaching the Quran, spreading of God's word, and doing his work.

Conclusion

In many ways Mass Kah's life is now being remembered through many of the songs and miracles related in the previous pages, including the belief of him as a saint who could shower

baraka in life or in death. However, one also needs to be cautious and treat “miracles” with suspicion, as Kenneth Woodward points out: “Because miracles always manifest power, and because that power can come from evil as well as divine sources, miracles alone are never to be trusted.”⁶¹

I have endeavored to relate the story of Mass Kah from the inside, based mainly on interviews with people related to him. Though such an approach may raise questions about subjectivity and objectivity, it provides insights into the dynamics of family history and an opportunity of getting insider views. It also provides a window of opportunity for historians to hear divergent views and enables them to comment on internal family dynamics.

Perhaps more interestingly, these types of family history can also produce what Marcia Hermansen describes as “role depiction, life- telling and the concept of person in religion” which tell of how the structure and details of a shaykh’s life serve to set an example to be embodied in the life-tellings and even life choices of subsequent followers of the shaykh or followers of that tradition which the leader founded.⁶² As it is difficult to validate many of these sources, I have raised questions and interrogated the narration by showing how oral history, despite its weaknesses, can provide sources from which historians can reconstruct the past.

Significantly, Shaykh Mass Kah’s life reveals that he was a cleric who played a key role in disseminating Islamic practice in the Senegambia. He did this through his teachings, by creating the “holy” village of Medina, and by blessing his followers. He had performed several “miracles” in the process of healing the sick and relieving people in difficulty. Moreover, like Bamba, he opted for a peaceful Islam. But unlike the Murid cleric, he rarely came into direct contact with either the French or British colonial authorities at different times in his life. The life and times of Shaykh Mass Kah reveals that scholars of Islam have a lot to gain in studying individual Sufi clerics who were seemingly not so well-known to the “outsiders,” namely the Europeans. As a result, there is not so much written on them. The Shaykh in particular did not leave behind a rich collection of *risalas* (messages, memoirs, or documents). All that is available about him is stored in the popular memory of his disciples who wrote songs and stories and also organized annual *ziyaras* to memorialize him.

Mass Kah’s life history as narrated to me is in many ways an account of interactions of social relationships between the community and the individual cleric. The stories set out the services the individual cleric provides and reciprocal gestures of the community. The encounter between local people and Islam created dynamics within which clerics emerged as the new social and political leaders. Islam offered the people an alternative to their autocratic overlords. The majority of the population adopted Islam by peaceful means, and the major transmitters of Islam and the greater Islamic culture were the Muslim scholars and clerics whose main concern was to preach Islam to villagers. In doing so, the clerics more than offered services that made them welcome among the people.

Notes

- 1 This article draws from the extensive research on the life and times of Mass Kah and the book I published on the Shaykh (Saho 2010) subsequent to its initial submission to the *African Studies Quarterly*. In this essay the word cleric has been used interchangeably with

marabout and *shaykh* (*Seringe* in Wolof; *Cerno* in Pulaar; *Moroo* in Mandinka). These words are used to mean a highly trained Islamic scholar with prestige, a community leader, one who leads prayers, who prays for people, and who enjoys the praise of the community. Mass Kah was then living in The Gambia.

- 2 By autocratic overlords I mean leaders who did not accept Islam, disrespected Islam, and or did not allow their subjects to profess Islam.
- 3 See Klein 1968.
- 4 For the rise of militant Islam, see Trimingham 1962, pp. 160-161. See also Robinson 2000; Abun-Nasr 1965, p. 106.
- 5 Leary 1970, p. 108.
- 6 For the subject of super natural powers, see Dilley 2004.
- 7 See Robinson's work on Al-Umar Tal, 1968; Hiskett 1973.
- 8 See Babou 2007.
- 9 Dilley 2004, p.13. Dilley notes that "a person possessed of baraka or 'divine grace' is in a position to bring about wondrous acts that fill people with amazement."
- 10 One is inclined to add that the cleric's baraka extends to his descendants. Many of them are highly educated and they occupy leading roles as imams or qadis in The Gambia.
- 11 Sanneh 1997, pp. 37-38.
- 12 The *ziyara* takes place every February in Banjul. The grand scale of the gathering is a recent phenomenon though his family members and followers continuously marked his death at the village –Medina. The *ziyara* is usually organized by followers belonging to a *daira*. Examples of works on *daira* include those of O'Brien 1971; and Villalion 1995. Also, in the last few decades, some scholars show interest in how saintly figures and religious events are memorialized. For example, see Babou, 2007, pp.197-223; Green 1991, pp. 127-35.
- 13 Pir is known as one of the Islamic centers in the region. For example, see Ka 2002.
- 14 Invented tradition is a subject thoroughly discussed in which people continually reinterpreted the lessons of the past in the context of the present. For example, see Spear 2003, pp. 3-27; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Chanock 1985.
- 15 For example, sixteen of the Shaykh's grandchildren are either qadis (Islamic judges) or imams (those who lead prayers at mosques) in The Gambia.
- 16 Hamilton 1987, p. 67.
- 17 Part of the problem of such silences is that traditionally Islam allows only four wives (legally recognized). However, some clerics tend to co-habit with multiple women aside from the four legally recognized wives. For example, slave women taken as concubines or some form of arrange marriage known as *tako* in Wolof. *Tako* is a type of marriage in which the woman does not live with the man. For instance, clerics who travel around would marry women in places they go who are however different from their four legally recognized wives. Similarly, in Mandinka this type of arrange marriage is known as *kundendoo*.
- 18 For instance, it was said of Sundiata Keita, the legendary king of the Manding Empire, that his mother was disillusioned by the thought of Sundiata being gripped with paralysis. Oral

- historians recount how he mysteriously walked from strength to strength to become a great hunter and king. See Suso 1998.
- 19 These dates make Mass Kah very old when he died. During my interview with Muhammad Lamin Bah he showed me a note-book written in Arabic text which contains the tarikh of Mass Kah. According to him, the document is inherited from his late elder brother, Seringe Mustapha. I have not established when the text was written and whether it is an original copy. In addition, Dr. Omar Jah Snr. (graduate of McGill) informed me that Mass Kah died two years before his own birth in 1938. However, like many Senegambians born in the nineteenth-century, exact dates are difficult to remember. In addition, there is no way of cross-referencing these dates.
 - 20 Though the name Sokhna refers to the wife of a shaykh or Muslim cleric, it has now become a common name among Senegambians. The use of the name here could indicate that both his father's and mother's family were already specialized in Islamic scholarship.
 - 21 Robinson, in Levtzion and Pouwels 2000, p.135.
 - 22 Interview with Muhammad Lamin Bah and Masohna Kah, February 2003.
 - 23 Stewart with Stewart 1973, p. 11.
 - 24 Though Mass Kah was said to have studied a great number of books, I have not been able to learn his exact curriculum.
 - 25 See Obrien 1971.
 - 26 Interview with Muhammad Lamin Bah, Serrekunda, The Gambia, February 2003.
 - 27 The interviewee could not establish the name of the French Commissioner nor the dates for this incident. Nonetheless, the story (whether accurate or not) serves to legitimize the Shaykh's power as this was regarded as one of his first known miracles.
 - 28 Interview with Alhagi Muhammad Lamin Bah, Serrekunda, The Gambia, February, 2003. Alhagi is the Gambian usage for Al-Haji, Al-Haji, etc.; the honorific term means that the individual has completed the pilgrimage to Mecca.
 - 29 Interview with Alhagi Muhammad Lamin Bah, serrekunda, The Gambia. Such narrations needs to be treated with skepticism as the story looks more like an "invented tradition" in which Mass Kah's supernatural power is being exalted. It could also be that the informant is aware of an actual incident relating to French colonial subjects. For example, the brutality of some French colonial representatives toward clerics was a concern even for the French colonial government. Robinson states, "In the 1880s, the ministry of colonies was critical of its representatives and had to recall one of its most forceful governors for excessive use of authority." See Robinson 1999, p. 201.
 - 30 Sanneh 1997, p. 78.
 - 31 Muhammad Lamin Bah and Masohna Kah noted that the Shaykh moved to Barthurst (Banjul-The Gambia) in the same year Sait Matti, a militant religious leader sought refuge in Bajul in 1887. The Shaykh spent a few years in Banjul and then went to establish Medina.
 - 32 This report shows yearly gaps and lack of precise information of who this Mandingo teacher was. However this information is necessary to show evidence that Mass Kah and many clerics had flourishing schools.

- 33 National Archives of The Gambia. National Records Service. File ARP32/33, p 37. Note the discrepancy in which the files are catalogued.
- 34 Joof 1996, pp. 113-14.
- 35 Wright 2004, p. 188.
- 36 Interview with Muhammad Lamin Bah., Serrekunda, the Gambia, February, 2003. In a separate interview with Dr. Jah Snr., in August 2009, he also informed me of this visit.
- 37 For more on Umar Tal's role in Islam see Robinson 1985. Also, for more on the claims that Mass Kah met all these individuals see my interviews with Muhammad Lamin Bah. Bah persistently claims that Mass Kah met Bamba, Maba, and Sait Matti at different times in his life. However, if his meeting with Umar had ever taken place, the Shaykh must have been very young and perhaps still a student, because by Robinson's reckoning, Al-Hajj Umar embarked on his Senegambian journey in 1846 when Mass Kah was twenty.
- 38 Interview with Alhagi Muhammed Lamin Bah, Serrekunda, The Gambia, February, 2003.
- 39 For the story of Al-Hajj Salim, see Sanneh 1976.
- 40 Mass Kah stood within the Tijaniyya tradition. However, his son, Seringe Alieu Kah died as a Nyassene. In fact, it is said that Alieu Kah's decision to become Nyassene (the Tijaniyya branch based in Kaolack founded by Abdoulai Niass, 1844-1922) led to the "breakaway" of the village of Medina. Alieu Kah's brother, Serigne Modou was noted to have been upset with Alieu Kah's decision and therefore decided to move out of Medina Seringe Mass to establish Medina Darou, few meters from Medina.
- 41 The Qadiriya came to prominence with the scholar Sidi al Mukhtar al-Kunti (1729-1811) and was brought to Senegal from Mauritania by Muhammad al-Fadil (d.1869) and Shaik Sidya al-Kabir (d.1868). The Wolof states of Kayor and Walo became adherents of the Qadiriya by the first half of the nineteenth century. The Tijaniya was founded by Ahmad Tijani (1737-1815) but became widespread in West Africa later in the nineteenth century. The spread of the Tijaniya has been associated with the warrior scholars of Tukulor origin such as Al-Hajj Umar Tall (1794-1864), Maba Diakhrou (1809-1867), and the Wolof cleric Al Hajj Malick Sy (1855-1922) of Tivouane (O'Brien, 1971; Ryan 2000).
- 42 See Ryan 2000, p. 208. Ryan has detailed the mystical theology of Tijaniyya Sufism based on three elements that flow from one another like water channeled from a higher to a lower level. The first is the veneration of Muhammad, not so much as the finite "seal of the prophets" (Quran 33: 40), but as *al-haqiqat al-muhammadiyah* (the essence of Muhammad), as the fountainhead from whom all created things derive. The second element centers on this veneration of Muhammad as specified for the whole of the Tijaniyya by the saintly influence of Ahmad al-Tijani who claimed for himself the title of *qutb al-aqtab* (the supreme pole of sainthood) or *khatm al-awliya* (the seal of saints), the overflowing source of all human closeness both to God and to Muhammad, not only for his own generation but for all generations before and after. The third element often (but not always) involves attachment to and reverence for a mystical propagandist (*muqaddam*) in the Tijaniyya who channels the spiritual benefits to be derived from Ahmad al-Tijani, the Prophet Muhammad and God to the individual member.

- 43 O'Brien (1971) says that a Sufi *tariqa* is organized by the descendants of a holy man, where the followers hope to attain paradise through the special holiness and redeeming power of their religious guides.
- 44 Hoffman 1995, p. 196.
- 45 All the songs I have collected are composed by Qadi Aliou Saho. In fact, Qadi Saho is named after Aliou Kah, Mass Kah's first son who in turn was the Qadi's teacher. The circumstances of my research on Mass Kah came from my interest in collecting and documenting oral histories of non Mandinka communities and individuals in The Gambia when I was the Director of research at the Oral History Division. Most of the data in the oral history collection is centralized on the Mandinka, a situation that I wanted to address by expanding the collection on non Mandinkas. During my interviews, I asked my informants to tell me as much as possible of what they know about Mass Kah and then I made follow up questions. I selected the informants based on informal contacts.
- 46 Baldick 1989, p. 67.
- 47 *Daira* is a religious school formed around a shaykh. Sometimes the *daira* can be in honor of a shaykh and hence is named after him. Here followers study the Quran, prayer rituals, and the deeds of the shaykh.
- 48 Searing 2002, p. 95.
- 49 Usually it is the bard who does this performance. However, it is not uncommon for non-bards to perform, especially qualified *talibes*/students or trusted followers.
- 50 For detailed information on miracles, see Schimmel 1985.
- 51 Salih 1992, pp. 125-26.
- 52 In Islamic "tradition," only prophets performed miracles (*mujizat*). Miracles perform by saints (*karamat*/charisma) or *manaqab*/heroic deeds. See Schimmel Annemarie, 2004.
- 53 Willis 1989, p. 87. Muhammad al-Ghali was the shaykh of Al-Hajj Umar in Mecca, who introduced him to the Tijaniyya order.
- 54 See O'Brien 1971.
- 55 For more on the association of trees with jinns, see Wright 1980. Trees features frequently as sites of *Jalang* (shrines) during the process of state formation in Niumi (where Medina is located).
- 56 Hoffman 1995, p. 206.
- 57 Interview with Alhagi Muhammad Lamin Bah, February, 2003
- 58 Interview with Qadi Aliou Saho, March, 2003.
- 59 This is a formula that is recited a number of times and or repeatedly.
- 60 Interview with Alkalo of Jeshwang, Oct, 2005.
- 61 Woodward 2000, p. 24.
- 62 For a detailed description of this concept, see Hermansen 1988, pp. 18, 163-82.

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The (Mal) Function of “it” in Ifeanyi Menkiti’s Normative Account of Person

BERNARD MATOLINO

Abstract: The prominent African philosopher Ifeanyi Menkiti is of the view that the African conception of personhood is decidedly communitarian. He argues, however, that although there are various ways of conceiving the communitarian concept of personhood, some of these ways are erroneous. He claims that his conception of personhood, which privileges epistemological growth, is the most accurate account of personhood in African thinking. In his view ontological progression is marked by a successful induction into society at various stages of the individual’s life. The main aim of this paper is to argue against Menkiti’s articulation of the concept of personhood through epistemological growth particularly through his use of the word “it” to denote different stages of epistemic stations. The paper seeks to show that his use of the word “it” is not helpful in his argument and that a conception of personhood that articulates itself in terms of epistemological advancement as espoused by Menkiti complicates the communitarian view of personhood.

Introduction

One of the most widely debated ideas in African thinking is that of the concept of person. Various thinkers have adopted irreconcilable differences in articulating this concept. This has led to the rise of different schools of thought that defend their particular view at the exclusion of others. Each school of thought claims to represent the authentic African view of person. However, within each school of thought there is no absolute agreement on what constitutes person. The Malawian philosopher Didier Kaphagawani (1998) has identified what he claims to be three distinct theses which seek to articulate the African view of persons. The three theses he has in mind are stated as follows: firstly there is the Belgian missionary Placide Tempels’ “force” thesis. Tempels extensively studied the people of present day Democratic Republic of Congo and came to the conclusion that their metaphysics and worldview was to be found in their notion of force. Kaphagawani takes this idea of force to also apply to the identity of persons; hence he identifies Tempels’ views on person as force thesis. Secondly, Kaphagawani identifies what he calls the “communalist” thesis. He admits that this thesis has its origins in Tempels’ work, but he chooses to identify it with the Kenyan thinker John Mbiti. The third thesis is one propounded by the Rwandese thinker Alexis Kagame. Kaphagawani identifies Kagame’s thesis as a “shadow” thesis. If, for argument’s sake, we were to accept that Kaphagawani’s characterisation is correct then it would be clear that African thinkers talk about the same concept in different ways. The difference that we have here is a conceptual difference. An advocate of the communalist thesis will not use the same categories of definition and will not use the same language as a proponent of the shadow thesis. This state of affairs will lead

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us either inquiring into whether one of these three theses is much closer to the truth than the other two, or whether they are all true, or whether none of them is true. Interesting as that inquiry promises to be, I will not undertake it here as it is not my present aim. My present aim is to inquire into a particular aspect that is raised by one of the proponents of the communitarian view. Ifeanyi Menkiti has become one of the most strident champions of the communalist version of personhood. His claim to fame is his bold statement that in African thinking, personhood is the sort of thing that one can be better at, worse at, or fail at. Further, he argues that personhood is not a static thing that is granted at birth but something that is attained as one gets along in society. In particular, one becomes more of a person through moral growth, which he sees as synonymous with ontological progression. Menkiti's account has attracted both support and criticism from some of the foremost thinkers on the continent. For example, Kwasi Wiredu (1996) agrees with Menkiti's characterisation while Kwame Gyekye (1997) rejects its radical statement.

My main aim in this paper is to argue against Menkiti's use of the word "it" as a moral concept to support his ontological claims about the nature of personhood. I argue that such usage of the word misrepresents the communitarian view of persons. I think it is important to address Menkiti's position because it has now come to represent what Gyekye calls "radical/extreme/unrestricted" communitarianism. Radical communitarianism, as defended by Menkiti, claims that it is the sole authentic view of African thinking on personhood; hence this project is conceived as a critique of one of the most important grounds for claiming that authenticity.

The Communitarian View

The essential position of the communitarian view is that personhood is the sort of thing that is realized in the quality of relationships that one has with fellow community members and the good communal standing that one commands. Further, personhood is not seen as an abstract or theoretical concept but as an activity that is socially sanctioned. Thus Dzobo argues: "The person who has achieved a creative personality and productive life and is able to maintain a productive relationship with others is said to 'have become a person.'"¹ Placide Tempels argues that the "living 'muntu' is in a relation of being to being with God, with his clan brethren, with his family and with his descendants. He is in a similar ontological relationship with his patrimony, his land, with all that it contains or produces, with all that grows or lives on it."² Effectively, these relationships are taken as an ontological constitution of personhood. In articulating the difference between an African and a Western conception of personhood, Menkiti notes that most Western views "abstract this or that feature of the lone individual and then proceed to make it the defining or essential characteristic which entities aspiring to the description "man" must have, the African view of man denies that persons can be defined by focusing on this or that physical or psychological characteristic of the lone individual. Rather man is defined by the environing community."³ Menkiti thinks that this makes the African conception of personhood dynamic compared to the more static Western notion. Godwin Sogolo argues that while it might be intellectually satisfying to formulate a theory or theories about human nature, a more significant account is one that manifests a communal account of human characteristics: "The point of significance here does not lie in some abstract understanding of what man is capable of becoming but on the actualisation of his potentials and capabilities. In discussing the African conception of man and society, the main objective is to provide a picture of man

and society held by African communities and to establish how human conduct, institutions and thought patterns are governed by this conception.”⁴ In the same vein, Richard C. Onwuanibe also thinks that the traditional African view of a person is more practical than theoretical. Hence he claims that this view “is based on the conviction that the metaphysical sphere is not abstractly divorced from concrete experience; for the physical and metaphysical are aspects of reality, and the transition from one to the other is natural.”⁵

The crucial point being made here is that this school of thought sees personhood in African thinking as something that ought to be understood in real terms as opposed to abstractions. Personhood is a communal concept that is not automatically obtained at birth or by virtue of possessing certain features. This leads Menkiti to argue that in as “far as African societies are concerned, personhood is something at which individuals could fail, at which they could be competent or ineffective, better or worse.”⁶ Menkiti sees personhood as something that is earned in the dynamic relationship between the individual and the community. John Mbiti characterises such a relationship in terms of the community being constitutive of the individual and sharing in her fate. “Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say: ‘I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am.’ This is a cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of man.”⁷ Thus the articulation of the concept of person is couched in communal terms and has reference to one’s experiences as a participant in communal affairs/relations. Kwame Anthony Appiah thinks that “a theory of the person is hard to isolate from the general views of a people about the world—social, natural and supernatural—in which they live.”⁸ Hence the African view of person seeks to give articulation to a worldview that takes communal experiences seriously.

Various communitarian thinkers have sought to articulate the concept of person from this view. However, there are different articulations and ways of arriving at the communitarian view of persons. Kwame Gyekye has proposed one such difference. He is of the view that there is a difference between what he terms radical communitarianism and moderate communitarianism. He argues that his version represents moderate communitarianism while Menkiti’s version represents radical communitarianism. To his mind, radical communitarianism’s chief failure is that it gives an erroneous account of the relationship between the individual and the community. It also fails to give adequate recognition to the individual’s creativeness and inventiveness, and it also fails to give individuals due regard for their human rights.⁹ My point here is to show that although there is widespread agreement to the fact that the concept of person in African thinking is communitarian; there is significant difference in the articulation of what that communitarian conception might be and the consequences attendant to such a concept.

Menkiti’s Communitarianism

Menkiti’s version of communitarianism is informed by Tempels and Mbiti’s views. For Menkiti, moral progression is the key element to understanding personhood. This comes as an individual progresses in society in terms of moral stature and discharge of duties.. Menkiti endorses Tempels’ view that there is a difference between a person of middling importance and a person with a great deal of force who has a role to play in society. For Menkiti the notion of muntu/person “includes an idea of excellence, of plenitude of force at maturation.”¹⁰ Relying on Tempels, he argues that individuals who lack these key

characteristics are described as “‘ke muntu po’ which translates as ‘this is not a man.’”¹¹ Menkiti argues that it is not enough to understand the individual as a biological organism with psychological traits. On the contrary in order to become a person an individual has to go “through a long process of social and ritual transformation until it attains the full complement of excellencies seen as truly definitive of man.”¹² During these rituals of incorporation the community prescribes the norms by which the individual should live. The more one fulfils all these rituals and the more one abides by communal dictates, the more one becomes a person. Thus Menkiti argues:

The various societies found in traditional Africa routinely accept this fact that personhood is the sort of thing which has to be attained, and is attained in direct proportion as one participates in communal life through the discharge of the various obligations defined by one’s stations. It is the carrying out of these obligations that transforms one from the it-status of early childhood, marked by an absence of moral function, into the person-status of later years, marked by a widened maturity of ethical sense—an ethical maturity without which personhood is conceived as eluding one.¹³

Menkiti claims that the notion of acquisition of personhood is supported by the English language, which allows a child to be referred to as “it” while that word is never used on adults. His argument is that “it” can be justifiably used in reference to children because they have no moral status whereas it cannot apply to adults because they have attained a certain moral standing. For him moral worth plays a crucial role in the attainment of the status of personhood. An individual who does not exhibit a certain socially sanctioned moral status is taken as having failed at personhood. This leads him to seek clarification between the usage of the terms “individual” and “individual person.”

Menkiti argues that the term “individual” merely refers to the different forms of agency in the world. Individual person on the other hand represents a movement from the raw appetite level to one that is marked by the dignity of the person. In order to get to the level that characterizes the dignity of the person, he says, something with more weight might be needed.¹⁴ That something with more weight is the ontological progression that transforms an individual from a mere biological organism to full personhood. Hence he states: “I think it would be best, regarding the African story, to conceive of the movement of the individual human child into personhood, and beyond, as essentially a journey from an *it* to an *it*.”¹⁵ This ontological progression takes place in time. Taking a cue from Mbiti, Menkiti argues that in traditional African societies time was essentially a movement from the present to the past.¹⁶ This meant that the more of a past one had, the more of a person one also was.

What is clear on this account is that excellencies are gathered as one grows old, and it takes time for these excellencies to be accumulated by any given individual. Furthermore, these excellencies are located in the life history of the individual; hence this reference to time in traditional African societies as backward looking. But most importantly, Menkiti claims that the gathering of qualities over time has ontological significance. He argues that there is an ontological difference between the young and the old. This difference is not merely a qualitative difference but one of identity: “The issue here is not gradation pure and simple, but gradation based on the emergence of special new qualities seen as constitutive of a level of being not only qualitatively superior to, but also ontologically different from the entity with which one first began.”¹⁷ For Menkiti, the fundamental issue is the emergence of moral or quasi-moral qualities that account for the shift in classification. These moral qualities

should be considered useful to the enrichment of the human community and must involve an internalisation of a rejection of those attitudes that are considered to be harmful to the entire community.

He cites an example whereby in society people find it difficult to talk about an eighteen year old moral giant but would have no trouble talking about an 18 year old mathematical giant. The reason behind this is that the 18 year old lacks the lived experience to be a moral giant. This means that in the journey of becoming a person the community plays a vital role as a prescriber of norms that actually steps in to transform a biological entity to personhood: “For married to the notion of person is the notion of moral arrival, a notion involving yardsticks and gradations, or, more simply involving an expectation that certain ways of being or behaving in the world may be so off the mark as to raise important questions regarding the person-status of their doers.”¹⁸ Thus this conception of personhood clearly involves a march from just being a biological human entity into a full person through internalising the approved moral injunctions. In order for an individual to count as a person one ought to demonstrate moral rectitude, and this is only attained with time as one lives and participates in the community through the discharge of her moral obligations.

The Role of “it” in the Transformation to Personhood

As mentioned above, Menkiti thinks that the transformation from mere biological and human status into personhood is clearly supported by the usage of “it” in the English language. While it is acceptable to refer to a child as an “it,” because of its lack of moral status, the same cannot be said of an adult who has attained a certain moral status. But Menkiti appears to think that this is more than a matter of language usage as it involves some significant ontological difference. Hence he suggests that the movement from childhood into full personhood and beyond is best regarded as a journey from an “it” to an “it.” “The so-called ‘ontological progression’ begins at birth with the child basically considered an “it” —essentially an individual without individuality, without personality, and without a name.”¹⁹ From there the child is made to go through rituals such as naming ceremonies which mark the beginning of incorporation into personhood via the community. These are later followed by ceremonies ushering the child into puberty and adulthood. In adulthood, the individual goes through ceremonies such as marriage and bearing of children. All these ceremonies are followed by the experience of advance in age, elderhood, and then, finally, ancestorhood.

Menkiti argues that personhood does not dissipate with death. On the contrary ancestors are taken as persons since they do not suffer going out of existence at the point of their physical death. “Only when the stage of the nameless dead is joined does the person once again become an “it,” going out of the world the same way the journey first began. Thus the movement is a movement from an *it* to an *it*.”²⁰

Menkiti further argues that this movement from an “it” to an “it” is a depersonalised reference that marks both the very beginning of existence and its very end. Again, he emphasises the depersonalised reference that is used to refer to the young child but can never be used to refer to an adult or teenager. For him, such language usage carries ontological significance. He seeks to clarify his claim by stating that: “Now regarding the *it* status of the nameless dead at the very end of the described journey, I believe that the *it* designation also carries the ease of natural use, and is the way it should be. The one contrast worth noting is that in the case of the nameless dead, there is not even the flexibility for the

use of a named or pronominal reference, as with the case of a young child. The nameless dead remain *its* and cannot be designated as something else.”²¹ He claims that there is no ontological progression beyond the world of the spirits. In conclusion he notes that: “The observation can therefore be correctly made that a metaphysically significant symmetry exists between the opening phase of an individual’s quest for personhood and the terminal phase of quest. Both are marked by an absence of incorporation – an absence underscored by the related absence of re-enacted names.”²²

Problem of “it” as a Normative Reference

The first problem with Menkiti’s argument is his attempt to ground the normative difference between babies and adults, in African thinking, through his alleged evidence of the usage of the English word “it” as an indicator of the ontological difference between babies and adults. The most curious thing about this supposed normative significance of “it” in African thinking is that the normative significance fails to find expression in any African language including Menkiti’s own Igbo. Interestingly he is able to find an Igbo proverb that seeks to show that there is an ontological difference between the young and the old. The normative function of “it” would have carried more weight had Menkiti shown that there is such a word in his language which does the normative work for showing the ontological difference between the young and the old. His attempt at using the word “it” from the English language in the way he does as evidence for his conclusion betrays either a selective use of the word or a serious misunderstanding of how the word operates in the English language.

In the English language the word “it” does not carry any moral or qualitative indication whenever it is used as a referential word. The Merriam-Webster online dictionary identifies the word “it” as a pronoun. It defines a pronoun as “any of a small set of words that are used as substitutes for nouns or noun phrases whose referents are named or understood in the context.”²³ The dictionary also gives five possible ways of using the word “it.” In cases where it is used to refer to people the word is used to make references that are not normative but comparable to words such as “he,” “she,” or “they.” In the English language the word “it” does not denote depersonalised existence as Menkiti argues. Neither does it connote as a matter of necessity, when used in reference to any instance of human existence, a certain moral or ontological standing. It is a word that can be used to refer to babies but its use in reference to babies does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that babies are not persons, and neither is its use evidence of that. In the case that the word “it” is used as a reference to a baby it is used as a substitute for the baby’s name (noun). A baby’s name, at least in the English language, in itself does not lend itself to evaluations of whether it carries any moral weight or not. It is quite unusual to try and impute to the substitute “it” moral significance where the original name commanded no such judgement.

The proper meaning of the word can be obtained by a full understanding of the different contexts in which it can be used. All the possible contexts of its usage do not offer any support to Menkiti’s argument. William P. Alston states the matter as follows: “Consider prepositions like ‘into,’ ‘at,’ and ‘by.’ There is no doubt that each has a meaning, in most cases a number of meanings. For example, one of the meanings of ‘at’ is *in the direction of*; however ‘at’ can hardly be said to refer, denote, or connote.”²⁴ The same applies to the word “it” when particularly used in the sense suggested by Menkiti. That the connotation suggested by Menkiti does not make sense becomes manifest when one considers how the word operates in the language when used to refer to babies. Menkiti

claims that it makes sense for someone to talk like this; "We rushed the baby to hospital. It was sick." Menkiti thinks that this not only makes grammatical sense, but the grammar also shows that there is some ontological significance in that expression. However, there is one simple thing that seems to have completely escaped Menkiti. What has escaped his attention is that grammatical rules do not necessarily equate with ontological claims. They are just rules of how certain words may be used in certain instances in order to abide with rules of grammar and make sense to the listener. The reason why "it" in the above sentence makes sense is to be found in the fact that "it" is placed in a supporting statement that does not stand alone. It furnishes further information on the first sentence. "It was sick" as a statement that stands on its own does not make much sense and definitely does not show any ontological significance. "It," therefore, has to be used in certain contexts in certain ways for it to make sense. Menkiti does not seem to be aware of that or at the very least ignores that. "It" on its own refers to nothing unless it has been preceded by an object that has a specific noun and "it" is introduced after the explicit naming of that object as a substituting reference. The next point to note is that the word "it" can be used in reference to any noun. It makes sense to utter the phrase "It is Menkiti," but this ought to be understood as a particular usage of the word "it" probably in response to the question "Who is it?" As a matter of essence the word "it" is not restricted only to refer to babies. It can be used to refer to grown men and women who have attained the ontological status that Menkiti denies babies.

I think it is important to note that Menkiti uses the word "it" to refer to the sick baby and the events that unfolded around the sick baby. "It" in this sense cannot be taken as synonymous with the experiences or status of the baby. It merely replaces the name of the baby as one of the few instances of substitution. One can say any one of the following two sentences without either compromising the ontological status of the baby or making grammatical nonsense: "We rushed the baby to hospital. She/he was sick"; "We rushed the baby to hospital. The baby was sick." In the same way "it" merely informs us of the particular person or object that is under discussion. This means that there has to be a discussion going on or at least there has to be certain things that have been said about a certain individual or object and the circumstances around that object or individual for "it" to make sense. "It" is not a word that can stand alone and make sense on its own. It has to be combined with a clearly stated noun and has to be used in reference to that noun or its circumstances for it to make sense. This sense is simple grammatical sense and has no further meaning besides mere grammatical substitution.

Secondly, Menkiti claims that "it" is used as an instance of pointing out a depersonalised existence. This depersonalised existence is mainly characterised by an absence of personhood. The word "it" applies to human subjects in two instances of their life. The first instance of depersonalised existence is when an individual is a baby or so young that she does not have any moral sense. The second stage is when one has joined the world of spirits, which is called collective immortality. For Menkiti members of these two groups can be referred to as "its" without cause for controversy. However, this position does not help matters much. Even if we were to accept that Menkiti's use of "it" carries any moral or ontological significance, still he would run into serious difficulties. The greatest problem facing Menkiti's account is that he does not distinguish between these two kinds of "its" - that is one at the beginning of the individual's life and one at the end of that individual's life. He just lumps them together as periods of depersonalised existence. However, on closer examination there is a huge difference between these "its" which have very unfavourable

implications for his use of “it” as a normative indicator. The baby whom Menkiti refers to as an “it” that lacks any moral standing, hence ontological status, has yet to live through all the requirements of attaining personhood. In other words we may refer to her as a potential person. However, a member of the spiritual world of collective immortality has gone through all the stages of personhood and has now attained a different status. Although both categories may be referred to as “its” they are in a radically different relationship to that word in as far as it is meant to carry any ontological weight. One who has moved away from an “it” into a full person and back to another “it” does not quite make a return to the “it” of babies. Babies and ancestors who belong to the world of collective immortality do not stand in the same relationship to the ontological weight of “it.” There is a qualitative difference between these two senses of “it,” and Menkiti’s account ought to acknowledge and clarify that difference and its significance to both instances of the depersonalised existence. I argue that these two instances of depersonalised existence do not have the same ontological significance and that the burden is on Menkiti to fully articulate the difference and the significance of that difference. If my point is valid then it cannot be the case that babies and ancestors can both be referred to as “its.”

Perhaps more troublesome is Menkiti’s own admission that physical death does not actually spell the end of life for the deceased individual. This point is supported by the concept of *seritilisisthunzi* which survives the physical death of the individual to become an ancestor provided the right rituals have been performed.²⁵ It means that the individual moves into another form or shape of existence, the spiritual realm. Mbiti (1970) says this movement is first characterised by the notion of the recently departed individual going to join what he characterises as the living dead and later the collective immortality or the nameless dead. The living dead are essentially still in the memories of the living. The living talk about the recently departed making reference to their personal names and they still remember them hence they are called the living dead. With the passage of time, however, according to Mbiti, these living dead join the realm of collective immortality. This essentially means that these departed are no longer referred to by name. On the contrary, they are remembered as spirits that partake in the completeness of African life. In Mbiti’s account it appears as if there is no radical difference between members of the living dead and those of collective immortality. The only difference is that those in collective immortality are no longer remembered by the living and referred to by name but as a collective.

Two philosophically significant issues arise here. Firstly, it appears as if there is no justification for calling those who belong to collective immortality as “its” who have a depersonalised existence merely because their names are not mentioned. It would be proper if they were to lose some or all of their ontological gains for them to become “its.” “It” is a reference that has been used by Menkiti to refer to a moral station that deprives anyone who is referred to as an “it” any moral status and consequently personhood. At the very least, Menkiti needs to marshal some evidence that shows that members of collective immortality have essentially gone through such a fundamental shift from being members of the living dead and that such a shift warrants that they be deprived of the person status and be reduced to “its” status. However, Menkiti cannot marshal such evidence for he is aware of the fact that the mere passage of time that lead future generations to forget the names of persons gone by is not sufficient to warrant the loss of any form of existence.

If Menkiti were to respond by arguing that the actual passage of time which leads to future generations forgetting about persons who previously constituted the living dead does in actual fact lead to the elevation of the collective immortality, he would be faced with yet

another difficulty. The difficulty is that going into the group of collective immortality is not in any way an elevation into a higher spiritual realm. This is because Menkiti is wont to referring to any form of depersonalised existence as an “it” and imputing to that reference non-existence of personhood. This particular reference to the departed as having no personhood status is a gross violation of the African understanding of the status of the departed. Menkiti denies the members of collective immortality any moral status yet African thinking would see such members as having a moral status as they have an interest in human affairs. The best that Menkiti can do is to suggest two senses of “it” or jettison his idea of depersonalised existence applying as “its” to collective immortality. Those who belong to collective immortality have a status that is radically different from that of children. “Its” cannot work in the same way to mean the same thing for children and those who belong to the collective immortality. Tempels’ hierarchy of forces stands in stark contrast to Menkiti’s explanation of the nature of the spirits that belong to the collective immortality. Tempels states that in the hierarchy of forces, God is the supreme force who created everything and gives power, force, and existence to all other creatures:

After him come the first fathers of men, founders of the different clans. These archipatriarchs were the first to whom God communicated his vital force, with the power of exercising their influence on all posterity. They constitute the most important chain binding men to God. They occupy so exalted a rank in Bantu thought that they are not regarded merely as ordinary dead. They are no longer named among the manes; and by the Baluba they are called *bavidye*, spiritualised beings, beings belonging to a higher hierarchy, participating to a certain degree in the divine force.²⁶

Tempels’ account not only contrasts Menkiti’s account but also makes much more sense than Menkiti’s. Tempels identifies the place of the long departed in the hierarchy of forces. Their places range from being the founders of clans who participate in God’s divine mission to the recently departed who live in the memories of the living. The long departed who participate in God’s plan play two crucial roles according to Tempels. Firstly, they have the power to influence all posterity, and secondly, they are the vital link between the living and God. Tempels calls them the *bavidye* as opposed to Menkiti’s rather obscure depersonalised “its.” In the hierarchy of forces the *bavidye* are by far much more important and influential than children. Actually on Tempels’ account it does not seem to be the case that the *bavidye* lead any kind of depersonalised existence in the sense that Menkiti suggests. If the term depersonalised could ever be applied to these spirits it could only mean that their names cannot be recalled. But crucially these spirits have not gone out of existence. They have not lost their status of personhood through an act of final annihilation. On the contrary they are seen to have an active and powerful influence on the living. They have not gone out with a final silence falling at the end as Menkiti suggests. What has happened is far much more complex, for the spirits have assumed a new spiritual existence that is also a continuation of the success of personhood. If one fails at personhood one is not likely to succeed at becoming an ancestor. As we saw above, the *isithunzi/serithi* of persons who conducted themselves unworthily is allowed to die or slowly disappear whereas those who behaved worthily and have entered the world of collective immortality will never go out of that existence.

It does not make much sense for Menkiti to talk of “its” at the end of a person’s life who has become an ancestor. For such talk to succeed it would need to be backed by a coherent

account of how spirits assume their existence in the spiritual realm and how they go out of existence in that realm. We know that the biological human being comes into existence through birth and goes out of physical existence at death. However, as Menkiti attests, for the human person, physical death does not spell the end of life:

Here, the person that the child became, at some stage in the described journey, does not abruptly go out of existence at the stage of physical death. The sense appears to be that the person, once arrived, can only depart slowly, yielding incrementally his or her achieved status. Only when the stage of the nameless dead is joined does the person once again become an "it," going out of the world the same way the journey first began. Thus the movement is a movement from an it to an it. The moral magic of personhood happens in between, and, after the magic it is silence at the end-point that we call the stage of the nameless dead. There is no heaven or hell, no final judgement warranting an ascension into the ranks, above, of the saved; nor descent into the ranks, below, of the damned.²⁷

There are a number of significant problems in Menkiti's argument. Firstly, his argument that personhood is lost incrementally has no basis in African thinking. Menkiti suggests that at the end when a spirit joins the nameless dead one has ceased to exist. He is careful not to emphasise a different existence. Thus, we can take it on his account that the person has completely gone out of existence. However, Mbiti's interpretation of what happens to the soul is more nuanced. Mbiti argues that the living dead who enters the world of collective immortality only loses its humanness as it assumes its spiritual existence. "It has 'lost' its personal name, as far as human beings are concerned, and with it goes also the human personality. It is now an 'it' and no longer a 'he' or 'she'; it is now one of myriads of spirits who have lost their humanness. This, for all practical purposes, is the final destiny of the human soul. Man is ontologically destined to lose his humanness but gain his full his spiritiness; and there is no general evolution or devolution beyond that point."²⁸ Mbiti's interpretation shows that there is no incremental loss of personhood into non-personhood as Menkiti suggests. What actually happens is that there is a shift in status; from humanness to a spiritual realm. There is no legitimate ground for reading this as marking an absolute end of the individual. In fact, Mbiti confesses that this matter is at the very least vague. "Collective immortality is man's cul-de-sac in the hereafter. Whether this immortality is relative or absolute I have no clear means of judging, and on this matter African concepts seem to be vague."²⁹ Mbiti claims that some of these spirits attach themselves to objects while others cause fear when they are encountered by the living while the rest are just swallowed up in the collective immortality where they are forgotten after a number of generations. Essentially this does not represent an end to the life of the spirit. Mbiti uses the word "it" to merely show that the individual has lost some key human characteristics such as gender or physical presence. But since the concept of person aims for a radical exposition that goes beyond physical traits it would seem plausible that such an entity still retains its personhood in a significant form. "It" does not symbolise the final end, as Menkiti would like us to believe, it simply points to a non-human existence which is different from a complete loss of personhood.

Secondly, Menkiti's characterisation of personhood as some moral magic is incoherent. Something that is magical is something that is preternatural, enchanting, and beyond explanation. A magic trick is meant to amuse and baffle. When a magician contorts reality

we are baffled and seek an explanation for that which we consider not possible. Magicians do not reveal their secrets in order to keep their audience both amused and interested. The process of attaining personhood on the communitarian account involves no magic at all. It is a processual experience which takes a long time culminating in an individual becoming morally responsible and showing moral excellence or a sense of moral propriety. This is attained through a long journey involving observance of ceremonies and rites of incorporation as well as serious moral instruction that comes with each stage of growth and development towards being a full person. Menkiti’s presentation of personhood as moral magic that happens between two stages of depersonalised existence does not help his case. This is because on his account, the attainment of personhood involves a lot of serious effort on the individual’s side. Individual have to observe all the rites of incorporation and make a deliberate effort at ensuring that that their lives reflect a moral worth that is socially sanctioned. There is nothing magical about all these processes, as they are known and are publically available to all members of society. Those who fail to live by them do not do so as a result of failure to muster any magical instruction but do so as a result of a lack of moral will to do the right thing or as a result of pure evil on their part. The phrase “moral magic of personhood” in itself and as an event that happens between two depersonalised forms of existence is devoid of meaning.

Thirdly, Menkiti claims that at the end there is no ascension into heaven or descent into hell. While that may be the case in African thinking, Menkiti’s account suffers the handicap that it fails to account for the happenings in the realm of collective immortality. His suggestion that this stage marks complete annihilation of the individual’s soul is open to doubt as Mbiti openly states that the “soul of a man is destined to become an ordinary spirit.”³⁰ Thus Menkiti’s account can be taken to task for failing to have any articulation on destiny, which is taken to be important in communitarianism since it joins everyone to the community and gives meaning to members of the community.³¹ Without such a theory individuals will not be able to make sense of their lives in the present, or decipher the purpose of such a life and what is to come after that life. In other words, Menkiti’s version of “it” at the end of personalised existence is a truncated account. He needs to outline clearly what the final destiny of the soul is. Without that clear articulation his account is inadequate and compares poorly with Mbiti’s or Tempels’ accounts.

Ontology or Epistemology

Menkiti seeks to provide a most accurate normative account of the nature of personhood in African thinking. In his view, personhood is attained when in the interval of that movement from an “it” to an “it,” an individual goes through ontological progression over time. This ontological progression is marked by the acquisition and exhibition of moral qualities by an individual. This makes the individual ontologically different from what she was prior to the acquisition of these characteristics as well as ontologically different from those who have not acquired or do not exhibit these qualities as of yet. Clearly, Menkiti goes for an acquisitive and gradual account of personhood.

His account involves two crucial aspects. The first has to do with the acquisition of knowledge, which I will call epistemological growth. But this epistemological growth is of a special kind, which involves the moral aspect of both the individual and social life. Combined together we may call this whole process epistemological moral growth. The reason why I choose to frame this growth in these terms is simply because morals are things

that are learnt from society and that apply differently to individuals. People learn of different moral expectations that they are burdened with at different stages of their lives. That process of learning the moral code of society and any successful internalisation of such a code is epistemological growth. Essentially that moral growth is epistemological growth of another form. A process of internalization, remembering and bringing to effect such a moral code in one's daily conduct is evidence of the success of epistemological development.

Effectively what this means is that adults who have successfully internalised the moral code of their society and are held as upright for forsaking the kind of conduct that is considered deleterious to the harmony of society or inter-personal relations are epistemologically different from babies. That epistemological difference shows itself in the way that the adults are able to animate what they have learnt and know in the moral arena. On the contrary, babies and small children are incapable of making any morally significant choices because they lack any epistemological acquisition to direct their conduct. They are still in the process of learning how they ought to conduct themselves in the social arena and in their interpersonal relations.

It is this difference that Menkiti uses to establish the criterion for personhood. He claims that personhood is the sort of thing one can be better at, ineffective at, or fail at. Being better, ineffective, or a failure at personhood is directly dependent and determined by how one exhibits the epistemological acquisition of morals through conduct whenever a call is made to exhibit moral qualities. Moral worth is indicative of epistemological success. Menkiti takes this to be constitutive of the ontological status of persons in African thinking. Those who do not yet possess the required epistemological moral traits, such as babies, are considered as non-persons. While those who fail in their adulthood to acquire the epistemological tools to inform and guide their moral actions are considered to be worse, ineffective, or to have completely failed at personhood.

There are two problems with this account of personhood. Firstly, it appears as if there is no justification for this gradation to be seen as ontological progression that bears on the status of personhood. Menkiti's claim that gradation, which connotes moral arrival, is symbiotic with the ontological status of personhood is overstated. The moral difference between the young and old is nothing more than a difference in epistemological status in certain matters, in this case moral matters. The epistemological arrival at the moral codes of conduct that are socially sanctioned is indicative of the success of the internalisation of such codes. The difference between the elderly members of society who have undertaken such a journey and the young who are yet to embark on such a journey is not as radical as Menkiti depicts. It is not an ontological difference but a difference in time which accounts for the different epistemological stations that the young and the old find themselves respectively in. Epistemological difference, no matter how vast, cannot be taken to represent ontological differences. As Didier Kaphagawani rightly notes "it is indeed the case that elders tended to have an epistemological monopoly over the young. But to concede this point is not to assert an ontological distinction between the elders and the young; rather, it is merely to point out an epistemological difference; the young are not ontologically less human than the elders."³² What the elders have is simply superior knowledge compared to the young. This knowledge may be vital to the survival of the community or essential in fostering cordial relations that promote the general well-being of the community. However, such knowledge in itself does not constitute an ontological difference between the very young and the old. It only shows that elders have become competent and knowledgeable about things that the young are still to be competent and knowledgeable about in future. Although the elders are given

epistemological superiority this does not mean that they are entitled to any ontological supremacy. Kaphagawani underscores the significance of the epistemological when he argues that: “Rather, like in every orderly distribution of roles in a system of production, this privilege is given to individuals who show and sustain the ability to perform the roles apportioned to them by the social system.”³³ Thus the difference between the old and the young is a difference of the performance of roles that have been assigned to different individuals depending on what stage they are at in their social lives. Elderly people who are ineffective, worse, or fail at showing any knowledge of the moral code or other similar knowledge or fail to live up to the moral requirements of their respective societies are not failing at personhood. They are simply being incompetent or failures at retaining a certain type of knowledge that is expected of their age by virtue of their lengthy social exposure and training. That failure has nothing to do with their ontological status

The reason for this, which is the second problem for Menkiti, lies in the fact that when we talk about ontological constituents of any given entity or entities we tend to talk in terms of key characteristics that are fixed and do not lend themselves to vicissitudes of change. This is particularly crucial when dealing with the concept of person. Using moral epistemological gains as Menkiti advocates lends itself to serious difficulties that would render the notion of personhood not only incomprehensible but extremely indeterminate. His notion of moral arrival, which is supposed to spell out a finality of what counts as a person, seems not to command such finality. Menkiti takes this moral arrival as something that is unchangeable and fixed. He thinks that once the individual has come to attain the right kind of moral competence or aptitude one will remain in that state for the remainder of one’s life. However, the idea of moral arrival does not represent anything fixed and unchangeable once that moral destination has been reached. Firstly, it is not clear at all what actual point of moral development represents that arrival. Menkiti simply fuses age and some moral attainment as key requisites for that arrival. However, the moral status of each individual of age differs from one person to the next. To say that two individuals are people of moral stature is not the same as claiming that they have the same stature. It does not even say what stature is desirable and what circumstances are most desirable to attain it. These two people could probably have a different view on issues of morality and different motivations for staying moral and have definitely different degrees of moral worth. One of these individuals might have arrived at that moral station by pure chance and luck while the other may have arrived at that station through trials and tribulations. If that is the case which one of these is a better person—or a person at all? Is the person who rides on luck a person? What does she become if such an ephemeral thing as luck runs out in an instant? It is undesirable that personhood is determined by such a flux criterion as moral arrival. While there may be cases where we think that determining personhood is difficult, Menkiti’s case does not even bring sophisticated questions about how that determination may be rendered difficult. The whole attainment of personhood is hidden behind unclear and very fluid concepts such as moral arrival.

Conclusion

In this article I have tried to show that Menkiti’s use of “it” in his normative account of personhood does not succeed. I argue that the word “it” does not carry any moral significance. I argue against Menkiti’s use of epistemological advancement as a measure of personhood. I hold that such a view does not bear on the crucial determinant of what can

ontologically count as a person. If my argument succeeds, Menkiti's version of communitarianism does no better than other versions he thought erroneous.

Notes

- 1 Dzobo 1992, p. 131.
- 2 Temples 1959, pp. 66-67.
- 3 Menkiti 1984, p. 171.
- 4 Sogolo 1993, p. 190.
- 5 Onwuanibe 1984, p. 184.
- 6 Menkiti 1984, p. 173.
- 7 Mbiti 1970, p. 141.
- 8 Appiah 2004, p. 26.
- 9 Gyekye 1997, pp. 59-62.
- 10 Menkiti 1984, p. 172.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid, p. 176.
- 14 Menkiti 2004, p. 325.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 For a comprehensive discussion of the concept of time see Mbiti 1970, pp. 19-36
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Menkiti 2004, p. 326.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Menkiti 2004, p. 327.
- 21 Ibid, p. 328.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pronoun>
- 24 Alston 1964, p. 17.
- 25 Boon 1996, p. 35. The concept of *seriti* (a seSotho word)/*isithunzi* (an isiZulu and isiXhosa word) literally implies shadow. Berglund 1989, p. 86, writes: "Doke and Vilakazi [in their Zulu-English Dictionary] say that *isithunzi* is, firstly, the shadow; secondly, moral weight, influence and prestige, while thirdly, it is the soul, personality." For a fuller discussion of the concept, see Berglund 1989, pp. 85-88.
- 26 Tempels 1959, pp. 41-42.
- 27 Menkiti 2004, p. 327.
- 28 Mbiti 1970, p. 213.
- 29 Ibid, p. 214.
- 30 Ibid, p. 216.
- 31 Gbadegesin 2004, pp. 60-61.
- 32 Kaphagawani 1998, p. 173.
- 33 Kaphagawani 2000, p. 74.

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Sierra Leone's 2007 Elections: Monumental and More of the Same

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Abstract: When the National Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone announced that Ernest Bai Koroma and his party, the All People's Congress, had been elected to replace the incumbent Sierra Leone People's Party government, Sierra Leone joined a growing number of African nations to have experienced a peaceful turnover of power from one popularly elected government to another. Though the electoral tallies were not without their critics, the overwhelming sentiment both within Sierra Leone and without was that the 2007 elections marked a positive turning point in the country's political history. Using newly released census data and election results, we analyze the 2007 elections to see just how paradigm-breaking these elections were. We find that the social cleavages, and most notably ethnic cleavages pitting the Mende versus the Temne, that marked preceding elections were evident in 2007. These most recent elections were not, however, as some SLPP supporters have claimed, more divisive in terms of ethnicity than elections past. What changed between 2002 and 2007 was not an increase in "tribal animosities" or a demographic shift but rather a change in who the heterogeneous and relatively cosmopolitan voters of Freetown felt should lead the country for the next five years.

A Landmark for Sierra Leonean Democracy

Over the course of September and October 2007, Sierra Leoneans cast ballots in landmark elections, ousting the incumbent Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) from power and returning to government the All People's Congress (APC). Only the second elections held since the end of the brutal 1991-2002 civil war, the presidential and parliamentary elections were closely monitored by Sierra Leoneans and the international community as a crucial determinant of the political climate in the country, signaling whether the country had indeed stabilized or if a return to conflict was imminent. The elections were historic for a number of reasons. Contrary to the 2002 elections that were largely managed by the international community, Sierra Leoneans played a significant role in the conduct, management and execution of these elections. A newly reconstituted National Electoral Commission (NEC), with significant funding, training, and institutional support from the international community, spearheaded the process. Despite some allegations of rigging,

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primarily emanating from within the incumbent party, local civil society groups, the NEC, and international and domestic observers all declared the elections largely free and fair.¹

Also noteworthy was the competitiveness of the elections. Post-transition elections in Africa have been marked by uncertainty given incumbent tendencies to change the rules to better suit themselves.² Additional incumbency advantages, including access to state coffers, early campaigning, and completion of major projects in the months immediately preceding the casting of ballots, make it difficult for opposition candidates to win power, and political turnovers are still a relatively rare occurrence in African elections.³ In Sierra Leone's 2007 elections, not only did such a change occur, but the party returned to power was one widely associated with the social, economic, and political decline of the country in the previous republic as well as the onset of civil war. Why did the SLPP, the party popularly touted as favorites to win the elections, end up losing not just the presidency but also a significant number of seats in the legislative elections to the opposition APC?

This paper examines the Sierra Leonean presidential and parliamentary elections, situating them within the broader literature on voting trends in African countries. We examine the importance of ethnicity on voter choice in Sierra Leone using as reference point the 2007 parliamentary and presidential elections with an eye for evaluating the extent to which these elections are indeed facile examples of ethnic politics in action, or whether other considerations have risen to the fore. We first present an overview of electoral trends in Sierra Leone, reviewing past elections before turning to a presentation of data on voting patterns during the 2007 elections, using ethnic and socio-economic variables to test the hypothesis that ethnicity conditions partisan preferences. In the final section, we attempt to explain the results with inductively generated hypotheses. While the 2007 elections do indeed illustrate the salience of ethnicity in voting choices as many argue is the case in Sierra Leone, it is not the only factor taken into consideration. The willingness to return to power an opposition party associated with much of the political and economic decline of Sierra Leone in the post-independence years is indicative that other factors are important and that some voters are either located outside of the dominant ethnic split in Sierra Leonean politics or, more likely we argue, willing to set aside old affiliations and call for change in light of salient considerations like party performance and service delivery. Ethnicity matters in Sierra Leonean politics, and politicians need to take ethnic claims seriously. But, ethnicity need not be the kindling that ignites a renewed round of fighting in the country.

The Role of Ethnicity in African Elections

The third wave of democratization sweeping the African continent in the early 1990s led to the installation of democratic regimes that used elections as the primary instrument of political change. Despite some disagreement among scholars about the exact role that elections play in the consolidation of democracy, there is a general consensus that elections are fundamental to the democratic process. Elections are a mechanism through which voter preferences can be aggregated and expressed. They can lead to leadership change with the selection of new individuals and groups to hold legislative and executive power. Much has been made in recent literature of the democratizing power, or lack thereof, of elections.⁴ While several scholars have argued that elections are not sufficient for democracy, the general consensus seems to be that they are at least not bad for democracy. Most recently, Lindberg has entered this debate arguing that repeated elections held over time result in increased democratic qualities, with greater levels of freedoms and civil liberties.⁵

Consequently, a central objective of international assistance to post-conflict states is the building of democracy. Within this project the ability to organize and implement free and fair elections is often a first step.⁶

Despite this generally positive perception of democratic institutions, scholars of African politics have a long history of being wary of elections. Ethnicity, they claim, figures prominently as an explanatory variable in the politics of Sub-Saharan Africa, and whether it is perceived as instrumental, constructivist, or primordial, ethnicity has a place in explanations of everything from economic underdevelopment to conflict and state collapse.⁷ With Africa's wave of mass democratizations, and many subsequent democratic stops and starts, ethnicity as a variable has been given a new life. Gone are some of the early primordial assumptions, but as instrumentally constructed as it may be, there is no dearth of election observers who believe that ethnicity still matters a great deal.⁸ This is true in Sierra Leone where ethno-regional factors are a popular hypothesis used to explain decisions of the electorate, spoils calculations, and alliances of elites.⁹ Support for the two main parties is thought to be divided along ethno-regional lines. Though less frequently, other causal factors have also been referenced; including ideology, age and status, and government performance.¹⁰

Sierra Leone presents an appropriate place in which to explore the salience of ethnicity on elections, especially given the circumstances of the 2007 elections. Largely deemed free and fair by international and local observers alike, the decisive defeat of SLPP despite incumbency advantages would appear to signal a change in the political climate in Sierra Leone. As the party that led the country during the final years of the war, and into the post-war transition period, SLPP was widely heralded as the party that brought peace to Sierra Leone, and their victory in 2002 appeared to cement this. How then does one explain SLPP losses at the parliamentary and presidential levels? Does this indicate a change in politics in Sierra Leone where issues are the decisive factor rather than ethno-regional affiliations as has been assumed in the past?

An Ethno-Political History of Sierra Leone

A variety of scholars have argued that ethnicity plays a salient role in politics in Sierra Leone, both as a source for political organization and a basis for support.¹¹ Some trace these rifts back to the colony-protectorate divide in existence from the early days of British presence in Sierra Leone, when the capital Freetown was established as a haven for freed slaves in the eighteenth century.¹² These Krio, as they came to be known, were considered British subjects subject to British law. With key positions in the civil service, they played an integral role in British rule of Sierra Leone, with (albeit limited) opportunities for political representation. On the other hand, Protectorate Africans were governed by indigenous institutions and subject to indirect, rather than direct rule. Thus, early ethno-political divisions pitted the Krio against other indigenous groups in Sierra Leone.

With the increasing integration of the Colony and the Protectorate toward the end of the nineteenth century, Krio influence with the British declined, giving rise to new divisions within those formerly of the Protectorate. Again, British influence could be detected: the early seeds of ethno-political divisions among Protectorate Africans was sown amidst a British-favored policy of segregated settlements for different groups in the Colony, selective education (with an emphasis on the southern regions and marginalization of the north), as well as infrastructural development that also favored the South.¹³ Utilizing divide and rule

tactics effectively, the British quelled nationalist sentiments. "Against the Krios, the government backed the peoples of the Protectorate, whose own divisions were carefully fostered and exacerbated," notes a prominent group of Sierra Leonean historians. "Every effort was made to preserve these invidious distinctions within the population of Sierra Leone and keep its peoples polarized in opposition to one another."¹⁴

Such divisions were momentarily set aside in the immediate period leading up to independence, with Protectorate Africans presenting a unified front against the Krio and legitimizing their claim of representative rule. By 1967 however, splits in the hinterland alliance began to appear and the Protectorate alliances against the Krio soon fell apart, giving way to today's more politically salient rift between the Mende and the Temne. The SLPP, while positioning itself as a party with integrationist aspirations, was soon seen to represent Southern/Mende interests, especially with the ascension into power of Albert Margai (who many believed actively promoted Mende hegemony) following the death of his half-brother Milton Margai.¹⁵ The relatively greater development of predominantly Mende regions in the Southern and Eastern provinces of the country, along with the Western area around the capital Freetown, as compared to the Northern Province (home to a majority of Temne as well as other groups including the Limba and Kuranko), only served to highlight this perception. Economic patronage in the Southern and Eastern provinces by the SLPP exacerbated the grievances of the North and other marginalized areas and groups, including the Krio and Kono.¹⁶ Such concerns were underscored by the ethnic composition of cabinet posts within the party. In 1962 and 1964, Temne held four and two cabinet posts respectively, compared to seven and six posts held by Mende in the same period.¹⁷

A change in leadership in 1967, when a new party, the All People's Congress (APC), attained power following what many at the time heralded as competitive elections did not put an end to ethnicity's salience. The APC initially seemed to hold some promise: it posited itself as an alternative to the SLPP and claimed to represent wider interests, counting among its leadership quite a number of Northern politicians who had defected from the SLPP. Additionally, their success in the 1967 elections despite intimidation and fraud seemed to point to general dissatisfaction with the SLPP's gross mismanagement of the country's economy and resources as well as Northern dissatisfaction at their perceived marginalization under the ruling party.

On attaining power in 1968, Siaka Stevens systematically harassed members of the opposition party, eventually imposing one-party-rule (through a questionable referendum). Starting with the 1968 by-elections, opposition members were harassed, imprisoned, and even killed, leading to an SLPP boycott of the 1977 elections and resulting in numerous extra-parliamentary manifestations of opposition by both civilians and army personnel. Although many SLPP members switched to the APC following the ban on multiparty politics, there still appeared to be some northern bias, with the number of northern representation increasing. For example, in 1973, under Steven's rule, Temne cabinet members numbered ten (41.4 percent) as compared to 14.3 percent in 1964. By contrast, Mende made up only 12.5 percent of the cabinet.¹⁸ Ethno-regional cleavages were also visible during the rule of Joseph Momoh, Steven's handpicked successor who came to power in 1985. In 1988, under Momoh, Temne made up 44.4 percent of cabinet membership compared to 18.5 percent Mende.¹⁹ Momoh also appointed Limba (his own ethnic group) to key cabinet posts as well as other prominent positions. While Kandeh argues that that state formation and class formation are the hidden factors that explain ethno politicization, he nevertheless acknowledges that class does have "affective primacy."²⁰

The question of the role of ethnicity in elections receded in importance in the early 1990s, as civil war ravaged the country. Faced with the winds of democratic change blowing from former communist states in Eastern Europe, domestic civil society pressure for political liberalization as well as international opposition to authoritarian regimes, Momoh had agreed to a multiparty referendum in 1991, dismantling the single party system in favor of a multi-party one.²¹ The civil war spilling over from Liberia into Sierra Leone, however, put plans for democratic renewal and multiparty elections on hold. A military coup in 1992 by junior officers frustrated with Momoh's inept handling of the war ushered in a military regime, the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC), which promised to end the war before handing over to a democratically elected regime. Their failure to deliver on this promise led to consultative conferences, Bintumani I (August 15 – 17, 1995) and Bintumani II (February 12, 1996), where local civil society groups demanded elections before peace. Civil society won out, and the 1996 elections took place within a framework of extreme insecurity. Although there were instances of voter intimidation by the Rebel United Front (RUF) and NPRC, both of whom saw benefits in continuing the war, overall the levels of inter-party violence that characterized previous elections were much lower, perhaps a reflection of the absence of an incumbent and the depersonalization of the contest given the use of the proportional representation (PR) system.²²

On the other hand, results of the 1996 elections and the 2002 elections that followed again seemed to indicate the return of ethnicity's salience. Though the 1996 elections gave Ahmed Tejan Kabbah a hotly contested second round victory and the 2002 elections gave him a runaway victory, the regional patterns that marked elections in the latter first republic demonstrated their endurance. Both elections showed clear ethno-regional patterns with parties performing better in the South and East doing less well in the North and vice versa. The SLPP, however, was also able to garner significant support in the Western area, where voting was more competitive than in all the other regions.²³

The outcome of the 2007 elections was a subject of hot debate in the period leading up to the elections. In the final analysis, the SLPP's post-civil war honeymoon was short-lived as the 2007 elections were closely contested, reminiscent of those held forty years earlier in 1967. In the first round of the presidential elections held on 11 August 2007, no candidate secured the 55 percent necessary to be declared the outright winner, necessitating a run-off that saw Ernest Bai Koroma, the APC contender, take 54.6 percent of the votes.

Some observers had predicted an early win for the SLPP, citing incumbency advantages outlined above. Others, however, pointed to the growing unpopularity and disappointment with the SLPP in light of their lack of progress on many fronts: poverty remained a central issue, with the country taking last place in the UN Human Development Reports in consecutive years; corruption remained high as the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) established in 2002 through an act of parliament failed to meaningfully address corruption at the highest levels; and the provision of public goods such as light and water remained poor. There was a widespread concern, both domestically and internationally, that although the Kabbah government had received significant amounts of international aid, due in large part to the country's post-conflict status, wide-scale corruption meant that little of this aid actually benefitted ordinary citizens. Still others drew attention to the Margai factor. Added to the historic rivalry of the two main parties, the SLPP and the APC, was the newcomer, the People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC). A former stalwart SLPP member, Charles Margai was the son of Albert Margai, Sierra Leone's second prime minister. He had

contended for the position of SLPP standard bearer but lost to Solomon Berewa. He soon broke with the party and in January 2006 officially registered his new PMDC.

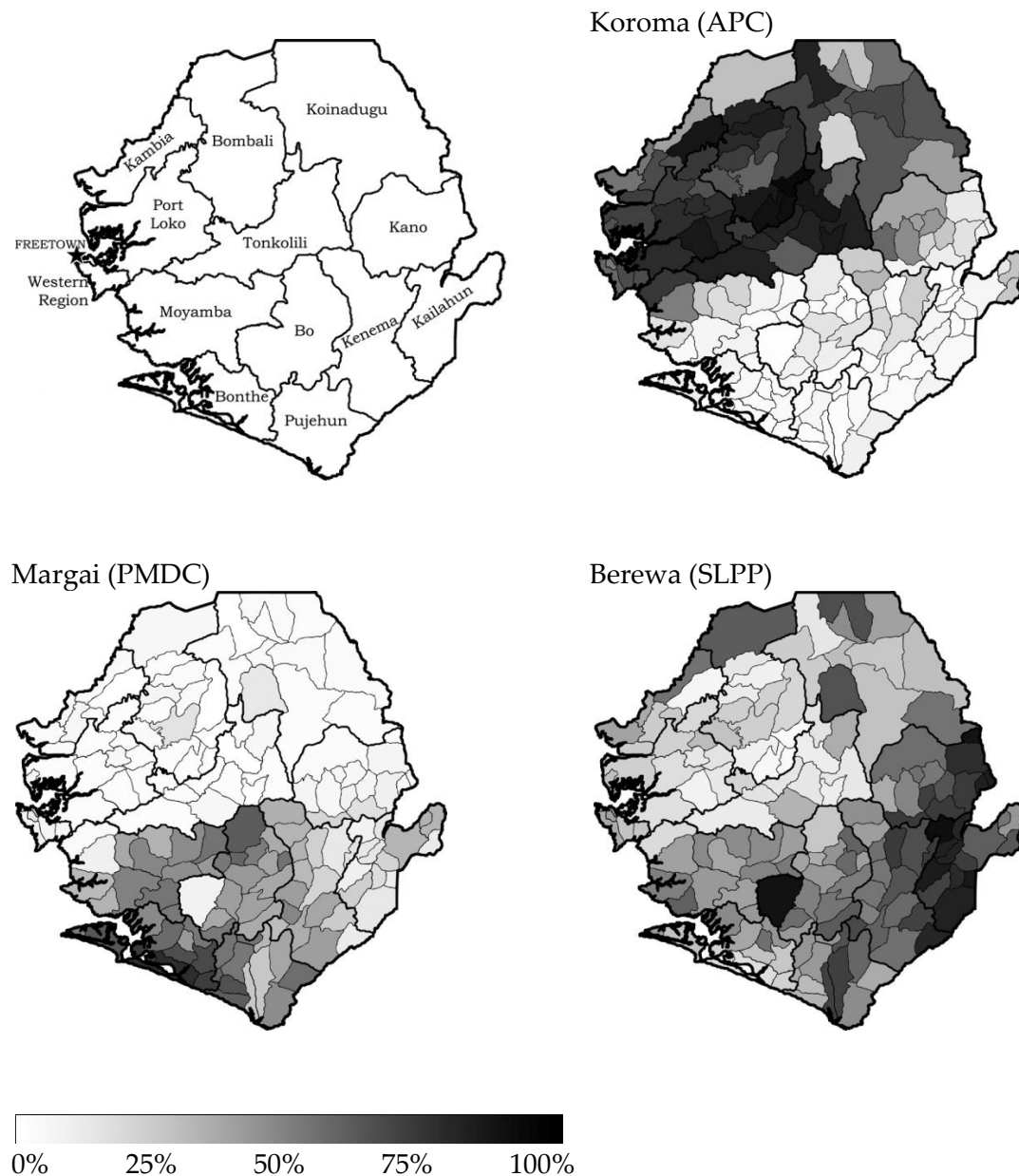
Political pundits predicted the launching of this new party would split Mende votes as Margai had significant support among SLPP supporters given his former stature within the party. He also campaigned on a platform of "positive change" urging Sierra Leoneans to vote without respect to region or ethnicity. Hailing from the South, Margai was able to command significant support from this area, especially from Bonthe and Bo. He also needed the support of Kono and Freetown, areas widely perceived as outside of the ethno-regional alliances, with the potential to cast the deciding vote for the elections.²⁴ Although Margai failed to secure the presidency, he nevertheless performed well for a new party presidential candidate, coming in third behind Ernest Bai Koroma, the APC presidential candidate and Solomon Berewa of the incumbent party. In a surprising move that alienated many party members, Margai endorsed Koroma in the runoff. By so doing, he lent credence to his motto of change and unification, bridging the ethno-regional divide that has long marked Sierra Leone politics.

Examining Ethno-Regional Patterns in the 2007 Elections with Available Data

In 2004, Sierra Leone's decennial population and housing census was collected. The embargo placed on the census findings was lifted in February 2006, and the results were published at the chiefdom-level (N=166).²⁵ In a show of unprecedented transparency, the NEC reported the first round of presidential election results at the polling station-level (N=6,157). Aggregation allows these polling stations to be collected into units identical to those reported in the census. These two occurrences provide a unique opportunity to test the relationships between parties and social groupings in Sierra Leone with some statistical control but without having to resort to a costly national survey.

Figure 1 (below) displays the NEC reported results for the first round of the presidential election for the three candidates who earned more than two percent of the vote: Ernest Bai Koroma of the APC, Charles Margai of the PMDC, and Solomon Berewa of the SLPP. Clear patterns come to the fore when the electoral data is presented in this format with darker areas indicating a candidate's popularity and lighter areas a lack thereof. The APC candidate dominated in the North, the PMDC candidate was most successful in the Southwest, and the SLPP cleaned up in the Southeast. Without the benefit of detailed electoral maps, observers from both the domestic and international press picked up on the arrangement of votes and sought to give the results meaning.²⁶

FIGURE 1: PERCENTAGE OF FIRST ROUND PRESIDENTIAL VOTES IN SIERRA LEONE'S 2007 ELECTION DISPLAYED BY CHIEFDOM

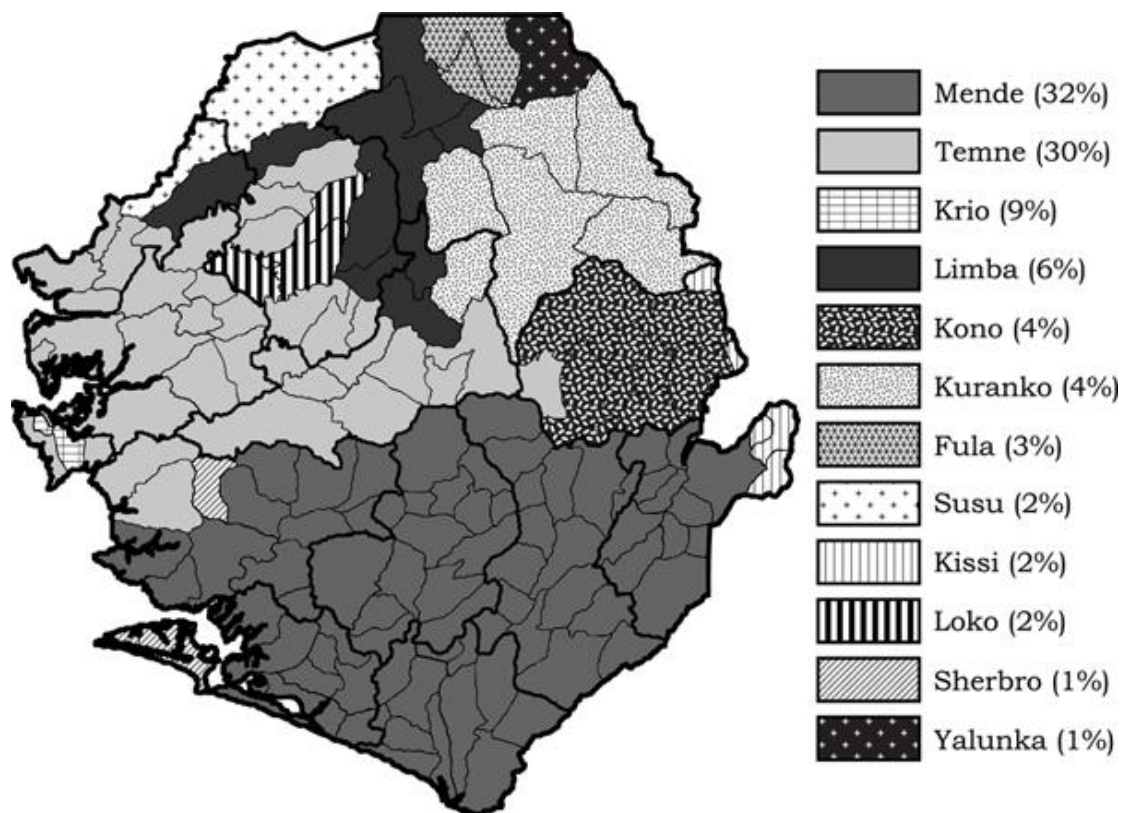


Note: Freetown's eight electoral wards are represented on the above maps as a single chiefdom. Also, the towns of Kenema, Koidu, Makeni, Bo, and Bonthe are represented as part of the chiefdoms in which they are contained. Election results are taken from NEC published reports.

Koroma captured Temne and Limba areas in the country's North, the common understanding of the first round's results goes, while Margai and Berewa split the South's Mende-speakers.²⁷ Comparing the electoral maps with a rough map of the country's ethnic groups (Figure 2 below), it is easy to see why this popular hypothesis that Sierra Leonean elections are largely contested along ethnic lines seems self-evident to so many casual

observers and scholars alike.²⁸ Though short order analysis of this sort is an excellent resource for hypothesis-generation, it runs a real risk of ignoring a potential spurious relationship that can be hidden by overlapping cleavages. While acknowledging the developing political animosities between Mende-speakers from the South and Temne-speakers from the North that led to the founding of the APC as an oppositional force to the SLPP, for example, Cartwright notes that the APC owes its genesis not only to a facile “tribal clash” but also to generational, status, and ideological conflicts that had simmered for some time within the ranks of the ruling SLPP.²⁹

FIGURE 2: ETHNIC MAP OF SIERRA LEONE



Note: Author created map depicting the ethno-linguistic group with the largest population in each chiefdom area according to the 2004 national census. Groups which were measured in the census but did not make up a plurality of a single chiefdom include Mandingo (2%), none (2%), Krim (0%), Vai (0%), English (0%), French (0%), Arabic (0%), and Others (0%).

With census data and election results available at the chiefdom-level, several of these potentially competing variables can be statistically controlled allowing us to test the veracity of the widely held assumptions about how ethnic variables work in Sierra Leonean politics not in isolation, but with alternative hypotheses taken into consideration. These tests attempt to more accurately predict Koroma, Margai, and Berewa’s electoral tallies from the first round of 2007’s presidential contest. Ethnicity proxies used as independent variables in these predictions are constructed using the percentage of the population of a given chiefdom who identify a particular language as their native tongue.³⁰ Independent variables touching

on socio-economic cleavages that could compete with ethnicity as a form of partisan binding available for testing include literacy and population density, as independent variables.³¹

TABLE 1: MULTIPLE REGRESSIONS USING VARIOUS SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND SECTIONAL INDICATORS AS PREDICTORS OF ELECTORAL SUCCESS

	APC	PMDC	SLPP
Constant	.466*** (.029)	-.001 (.026)	.473*** (.038)
Mende (%)	-.566*** (.028)	.406*** (.025)	.169*** (.036)
Temne (%)	.402*** (.033)	.006 (.030)	-.409*** (.043)
Literacy (%)	.098** (.048)	.032 (.043)	-.067 (.063)
	N = 166	N = 166	N = 166
	R ² = .911	R ² = .749	R ² = .655
	Adj. R ² = .909	Adj. R ² = .744	Adj. R ² = .650
	SEE = 26.38	SEE = 23.59	SEE = 34.32

Note: The dependent variable is Koroma (APC), Margai (PMDC), and Berewa's (SLPP) percentage of the vote in a given chiefdom for the first round of presidential balloting in Sierra Leone's 2007 election. Due to the huge variance in chieftaincy population totals, the reported regressions were weighted by the total population of a chieftaincy. Data is taken from NEC published reports. Results of the regressions are reported as Coefficient / (Standard Error). Significance designations are *p<0.1; **p<0.05; and ***p<0.01.

Table 1 (above) reports the results from one of these regression models for the APC, PMDC, and SLPP candidates respectively. A first cut analysis of these results suggests the ethnic hypotheses are confirmed. Based on these findings, one can say with a great deal of confidence that a chiefdom's percentage of Temne-speakers was significantly positively correlated with Koroma's success. These results are well within the widely held assumptions about APC's ethno-linguistic foundations.³² The relationship between a chiefdom's percentage of Mende-speakers and the SLPP is less pronounced, likely due in no small part to the presence of the PMDC, but no less clear. While it is impossible to know for certain because the NEC failed to release comprehensive polling station-level data for the second round, the APC hypothesis that the PMDC would cut into the traditional SLPP base of support in the Southeast seems plausible.³³ A chiefdom's percentage of Mende-speakers appears to be positively correlated with Margai's percentage of the vote largely because the party was rarely the first choice of voters in areas predominately populated by non-Mende-speakers. Berewa cast a far wider net than the PMDC candidate, and though he was undeniably unpopular in Temne and Limba-speaking areas, his Mende support was mitigated statistically by relatively strong showings in predominately Fula, Kuranko, Kono, and Susu-speaking areas.

Though literacy rates are controlled for in Table 1, other available socio-economic variables yield similar results. A region's status as urban and its percentage of Krio-speakers, generally regarded as Sierra Leone's most educated and affluent population because of their historical privileges and location almost exclusively in greater Freetown,

impact the depicted model insignificantly.³⁴ Since these three variables (literacy, urbanness, and Krio-speakers) are correlated, only one is included in the presented model. The relationship between the Mende/SLPP and Temne/APC is so robust that it stands up to a number of regression variations in addition to altering the socio-economic control. There is very little change in the significance or intensity of these relationships when the socio-economic controls are dropped, when the ethnic variables are used to predict partisan preferences in a bivariate regression, and when weights are removed so that each chieftaincy, regardless of size, is considered equally.

Conclusions: Putting the 2007 Elections into Historical Perspective

As constitutions were rewritten across Africa to accommodate the arrival of the “Third Wave” of democracy on the continent, several constitution-makers were of a similar mind with regard to ethnicity’s proper role in the electoral process.³⁵ In this vein, Sierra Leone’s 1991 Constitution expressly forbids parties from restricting their leadership to a single ethnic group; adopting a name, symbol, color, or motto with “particular significance or connotation to members of any particular tribal or ethnic group;” or advancing only the interests and welfare of a particular ethnic group (Article 35, Section 5). In societies as ethnically diverse as many of those found in Africa, prohibitions of this sort are intended to avoid the centrifugal tendencies predicted by scholars who view elections in competitive ethno-party conflicts as a recipe for violence.³⁶

Given these sentiments, it is not surprising at all that pundits and politicians alike saw the specter of “tribalism” written all over Sierra Leone’s 2007 elections. Those with a clear partisan preference most often blamed their opponents for unnecessarily dividing the populace by pandering to sectional identities. Those whose alliances are not as fixed saw the campaigns as potentially fanning the flames that could lead to a return to violence in a country still struggling to move past the decade-long conflict that cost tens of thousands of lives.³⁷ These concerns are far from novel. Observers of Sierra Leonean politics have a history of expressing distress over the politicization of ethnic conflicts and the potentially damaging effects of multi-party elections on national unity.³⁸

Comparing the electoral outcomes of bygone elections with those of 2007 gives us some idea of whether the contemporary fears of “tribal” politics are a response to something fundamentally new or just old wine in new bottles. Unfortunately for this endeavor, most election results at the polling station or chiefdom-level have been lost to history. Without this specificity, it is impossible to replicate the above analysis across the years. We were, however, able to find district-level results for seven national elections in addition to 2007’s first round of presidential balloting.³⁹ Given the small N (there are 14 districts in Sierra Leone as opposed to 166 chiefdoms), a series of regression analyses similar to Table 1 but across time is impossible. So to test the hypothesis that ethnic cleavages likely matter in Sierra Leonean politics and have mattered for some time as many have argued, we set about constructing an alternative measurement unburdened by the onerous requirements of multiple regression.

Our solution to this problem was to divide Sierra Leone’s districts into four mutually exclusive categories and compare these categories’ electoral results across elections (see Table 2 below). Three of these categories are based purely on ethnic composition with one category capturing districts where Mende-speakers are the largest group, another capturing districts where Temne-speakers are the largest group, and a third capturing districts where

the largest ethno-linguistic group is non-Mende and non-Temne. A fourth category is really a break away from the third category and has been labeled "Freetown."⁴⁰ The category "Freetown" is not without its ethnic component. The Western Area which we label "Freetown" contains the two most ethnically heterogeneous districts in Sierra Leone with Krio providing the area's modal ethno-linguistic category at 41 percent of the population, but Temne (29 percent), Mende (9 percent), and Limba-speakers (7 percent) each comprising significant population components. In addition to being more ethnically heterogeneous than the rest of Sierra Leone, "Freetown" is more educated. Nearly a third of the residents of Freetown and its immediate environs are currently attending school. In the remainder of the country, no district has a percentage exceeding Bo District's 26 percent and the mean percentage across districts is around 20 percent.

When parsed out in this manner, the historical election results yield interesting patterns. Taken as a group, the elections show that the SLPP has always done on average better than the APC in Mende-dominant districts and the arrangement is reversed in Temne-dominant districts. This consistent North/South, Temne/Mende, APC/SLPP patterning of elections is worth taking note of as potential support to the thesis that elections are an opportunity to express ethnic identities in the form of an ethnic census. Stopping the analysis here, however, would do an injustice to the more nuanced ethno-political relationships in Sierra Leone. The SLPP, for instance, did much better in Mende-speaking areas in elections they won as did the APC in Temne-speaking areas in their victorious elections suggesting that perhaps these blocs are more or less cohesive depending on some still ill-defined political zeitgeist.

Looking at the far east of the country to Kono and Koinadugu Districts and the far west to Freetown, a new arrangement appears. These non-Mende and non-Temne dominant areas of Sierra Leone do not appear to be locked into a permanent agreement with one party or another. Instead, they demonstrate a willingness to sway between parties from election to election. In relatively cosmopolitan Freetown this free-agent status is particularly important. For each of the elections on which we were able to collect district-level data, the modal category in Freetown is the winning party. With Mende-speakers and Temne-speakers each making up just under a third of the Sierra Leonean population, it appears from our analysis that it is amongst the remaining voters that electoral success lies. Making up just shy of a fifth of Sierra Leone's total population, Freetonians are a key component in this admixture

TABLE 2:
COMPARISON OF MEANS USING A DISTRICT'S PREDOMINANT ETHNIC GROUP
TO PREDICT PERCENTAGE OF THE VOTE

		SLLP				
		Mende	Temne	Freetown (WR	Other	Total
Legislative	1962	38%	28%	36%	34%	37%
	1967	53%	21%	25%	44%	40%
Presidential	1996	93%	23%	54%	47%	61%
	2 nd Round	95%	31%	54%	77%	69%
Legislative	2002	94%	30%	46%	74%	68%
Presidential	2007	52%	16%	31%	45%	38%
	1 st Round	77%	13%	30%	47%	49%
Legislative	2007	54%	18%	29%	47%	40%
N		6	4	1	2	13
		APC				
		Mende	Temne	Freetown (WR	Other	Total
Legislative	1962	3%	47%	34%	0%	18%
	1967	17%	77%	72%	54%	45%
Presidential	1996	*	*	*	*	*
	2 nd Round	2%	55%	30%	18%	23%
Legislative	2002	3%	55%	27%	18%	23%
Presidential	2007	9%	78%	61%	47%	40%
	1 st Round	23%	87%	69%	54%	51%
Legislative	2007	8%	72%	55%	45%	37%
N		6	4	1	2	13

Note: Districts with a Mende majority include Bo (79%), Bonthe (83%), Kailahun (70%), Kenema (77%), Moyamba (56%), and Pujehun (95%); Districts with a Temne plurality include Bombali (48%), Kambia (58%), Port Loko (86%), and Tonkolili (81%); Freetown (the combined Western Region urban and rural areas) has a Krio plurality (41%); and the remaining districts, Kono and Koinadugu respectively, have Kono (54%) and Kuranko-speaking (48%) pluralities.

The conclusion that non-Mende and non-Temne districts are the deciding factor in Sierra Leonean elections cannot be interpreted as a statement assigning essentialist ethnic understandings to Sierra Leone's Mende and Temne communities. To begin with, available data only lets us say something confidently about district and chiefdom units. Anecdotally, we can point to several cases of individual Mende-speakers supporting the APC and individual Temne-speakers supporting the SLPP. Within each district we cannot get at how

individuals or particular groups of voters behaved at the polling stations with the available data. At the district-level it bears mentioning that the data collected indicates a certain ebb and flow to Mende and Temne districts not dissimilar from that witnessed in the non-Mende and non-Temne districts. In elections won by the APC, Temne districts gave the party on average more than three-quarters of their vote. This figure is just over half for elections lost by the APC.⁴¹ Comparing the 1996 and 2002 elections, which were won by the SLPP, to the 2007 elections, which were lost by the SLPP, Mende districts go from a support level greater than 90 percent to one around 50 percent in the elections with a PMDC presence and just over 75 percent in the second round presidential election without a PMDC candidate. Though ethnicity matters, something else is at work.

More individual-level polling data that gets at individual reasons for voter preferences would help illuminate what this something is. Without this data, one can only surmise. For example, Kandeh has noted that failure to translate political positions into tangible benefits for constituencies could effectively undermine support among constituencies.⁴² While Kandeh has attributed this to the contracting ability of the state to provide patronage in the face of excessive exploitation by politicians, one could extend this observation to a general ineffectiveness of government that arises following a situation of conflict where government resources are stretched and performance capacity is generally limited. Given this situation, widespread discontent exists with state performance, possibly transcending ethnic considerations. Research carried out in 2006 in several communities of Kailahun district in the East, a traditionally SLPP stronghold, suggests that citizens disappointed with SLPP performance were amenable to altering their partisan status quo but that their ability to vote for another party was constrained by, among other factors, chiefs who wield significant influence.⁴³

This latter point is an important one given traditional authorities' proximity to the local populace and their control over the determination of citizenship and accompanying rights enable chiefs to wield considerable power within their communities.⁴⁴ As a result, political parties of all dispensations have curried favor with chiefs and become involved in local rivalries in the hope that traditional authorities will deliver the votes. As Fanthorpe notes, in rural areas ethnicity (however defined) remains a salient structure for marshaling political support, with chiefs serving as the most visible figurehead of respective communities.⁴⁵ This is to say that the anecdotal findings discussed above suggesting that discontent with government performance could perhaps transcend ethnic considerations was not without countervailing pressures

On the other hand, in ethnically heterogeneous regions such as the Western Area, where chiefs hold much less sway, dissatisfaction with current policies could point to a possible explanation for the APC's strong showing as the opposition party in 2007. Whereas the SLPP won two thirds of the seats in the Western Area in 2002, they lost all of them in the 2007 elections. Although some pundits point to the large numbers of Temne residing in Freetown and a historically-rooted alliance between the Krio and the Temne under the banner of the APC as reason for their positive showing in the Western Area, this cannot be the only reason given that prior elections reveal that the Western Area does not always vote APC. In a recent survey conducted by BBC World Service and Search for Common Ground, urban residents in Freetown reported high levels of knowledge and involvement in the electoral process. A total of 86 percent of respondents knew when the elections were taking place, and were more likely overall to name parties contesting the elections outside of the three main ones. In addition, along with Kailahun and Bombali, western urban residents were more likely to

distinguish policy differences between the parties, especially social policy. Urban-dwelling Freetonians also reported the lowest percentage of trust in local politicians.⁴⁶

Some maintain that the colonial legacy of bifurcated governance that saw Freetown administered independently from the interior continues today, with Freetown remaining somewhat autonomous from the rest of the country, a separation that is reflected in social and political attitudes less tolerant of ineffective government.⁴⁷ Thus, familiarity of and disappointment with SLPP policies could point to a possible reason for the transference of support from the SLPP to the APC in this region, especially since the APC campaign focused on the SLPP's economic mismanagement, general bad governance, and poor development record. For example, the International Crisis Group has argued that patronage and ethnicity seem to be less salient for the more politically informed urban areas for a number of reasons, including the rise in membership in voluntary associations that transcend ethnic affiliations.⁴⁸ Both Jalloh and Kandeh have argued that despite the clear evidence of the influence of ethnic identity on voter choice, the elections also reflected broad dissatisfaction with SLPP's poor economic performance and perceived levels of corruption.⁴⁹

While the apparent "northernization" of the cabinet under Ernest Bai Koroma has again brought cries of ethnicity to the fore, it remains to be seen whether electoral choices for the upcoming elections in 2012 will be reflective of ethnic blocs hardening or will widen the perception that certain swing voters are able to transcend ethnicity as the historical data appears to show. Politicians would be wise to note that although their ethnic bases can make them viable candidates, playing the ethnic card too strongly will likely alienate the very voters they need to transform from viable candidates into elected officials.

Notes

- 1 Öhman 2008.
- 2 Bratton 1998.
- 3 Lindberg 2003.
- 4 See for instance Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Carothers 2002; Schedler 2002.
- 5 Lindberg 2006, p. 140.
- 6 Carothers 1995.
- 7 For foundational works of this variety see Apter 1965; Coleman 1964; Hodgkin 1961; Morgenthau 1964; Wallerstein 1967; and Zolberg 1966.
- 8 Some recent works of this variety include Cheeseman 2007; Fridy 2007; McLaughlin 2007; Posner 2005; Miguel 2004; and Mozaffar 2003.
- 9 Kandeh 2004.
- 10 On ideology see Zolberg 1966, p. 35. On age and status see Cartwright 1970. On government performance see Kandeh 1992.
- 11 For a particularly comprehensive review of the interplay between ethnicity, class, and state formation, see Kandeh 1992.
- 12 In 1808, the Freetown-based settlement for freed slaves became a crown colony and as such was under the direct administration of the crown. British influence was extended to the hinterland in 1896 when it became a Protectorate, governed primarily through a system of indirect rule, with more political autonomy than the Colony.
- 13 Kilson 1966.
- 14 Last et al. 1987, p. 417.

- 15 Conteh-Morgan and Dixon-Fyle 1999.
- 16 Bebler 1973, p. 64.
- 17 Kandehe 1992, p. 91.
- 18 Kandehe 1992.
- 19 Kandehe 1992 p. 93.
- 20 Kandehe 1992 p. 98.
- 21 Reno 1995.
- 22 Riley 1996; Abdullah 1997.
- 23 Kandehe 2003.
- 24 Kabba 2005; Marrah 2007.
- 25 Chiefdoms are a geographic unit inherited by independent Sierra Leone from the British. Included in this 166 total for the purposes of this paper are the wards of Freetown as well as municipal areas of Bo Town, Kenema Town, Koidu Town, and Makeni Town. Though not referred to as chiefdoms, these urban wards serve an identical purpose as chiefdoms as census categories and parliamentary districts. For more on the origins and functions of "chiefdoms" see Fanthorpe 1998.
- 26 The popular sentiment is captured by Manson 2007.
- 27 The South's split along East/West lines is attributed largely to differing interpretations of the Special Court's treatment of Kamajor leader Hinga Norman. In Bo District, where Kamajor forces did most of their recruiting, it is possible that Norman's endorsement of the PMDC helped to loosen the SLPP's historical stranglehold on the region. Perhaps more importantly in explaining PMDC success in Moyamba, Bonthe, and Pujehun, however, is the Margai family name. Though once indelibly linked to the SLPP, when Charles Margai broke away from the party of his father and uncle he took with him many of the family connections emanating from their home chiefdom of Gbangbatoke. For more on the Hinga Norman factor see Thyness 2007. On Margai's political heritage see Cartwright 1978.
- 28 One cannot create an ethnic map without doing some violence to social realities on the ground. In Sierra Leone there are no completely ethnically heterogeneous chiefdoms. Additionally, if anyone doubts that ethnicity can just as easily be interpreted as a dependent variable and an independent variable they need look no further than the Krio of Freetown for a dramatic example of ethnic construction. Describing some of Freetown's eminent 'Krio' families, Kandehe notes that "[t]he Mende origin of the Bowen, Mason, Moore and Marke families, the Temne origin of the Gurney-Nicol family, the Limba origin of the Meheux and Leopold families and the Susu origin of the Sarif-Easmon family are well known and have been documented" (A.J.G. Wyse cited in Kandehe 1992, pp. 98-99).
- 29 Cartwright 1970, pp. 125-37.
- 30 Variables included in various models include Krio, Limba, Mende, and Temne. These four ethno-linguistic identities represent Sierra Leone's most prominent. No other ethno-linguistic identity claims at least 5 percent of the population. The national percentages of these, and several other ethno-linguistic identities, are detailed in the key for Figure 2.
- 31 Literacy is measured by the percentage of residents who report being literate in a given chiefdom. The average literacy rate in Sierra Leone is 39 percent with Freetown's

- Central Ward 2 being the most literate sample unit (78 percent) and Bonthe District's Sittia being the least (7 percent).
- 32 As ethnicity can be constructed multiple ways with individuals' complex set of social identities we ran preliminary regressions for Table 1 with religion (the other oft discussed sectional cleavage available in the census) included as a potential predictor of election results. In these multivariate regressions ethnicity remained the dominant factor while religion was an insignificant predictor.
- 33 "SLPP Gone!" 2006. *We Yone* newspaper 18 December.
- 34 Population density is represented by an Urban Dummy which assigns a one to Bo Town, Kenema Town, Koidu Town, Makeni Town, and Freetown's eight wards and a zero to all other chiefdoms. Just under a quarter of Sierra Leonean voters live in the designated urban areas.
- 35 Osaghae 1998.
- 36 Horowitz 1985, pp. 342-49.
- 37 The *Times* of London reported that approximately one in ten Sierra Leoneans were murdered, maimed, and/or raped during the civil war (Clayton 2007).
- 38 Simpson 1972.
- 39 Reported results for the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2007 are taken from Sierra Leone's NEC whose internet site (www.necsierraleone.org) is now defunct. Results from 1962 and 1967 are from Cartwright 1970; results from 1996 are from Interim National Electoral Commission. 1996. *Executive Summary of the Report of the Work of the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC): 1994-1996*. Freetown, Sierra Leone: INEC; and 2002 results are from Adam Carr's election database (<http://psephos.adam-carr.net/countries/s/sierraleone/>).
- 40 We use "Freetown" as opposed to simply Freetown here to distinguish the greater Freetown area from Freetown the city.
- 41 We should note here that similar to the Margai factor, the presence of competing parties with strong northern support like the United National People's Party (UNPP) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) helped split the northern vote in the 1996 elections.
- 42 Kandehe 1998.
- 43 M'Cormack-Hale 2008.
- 44 We should note that the authority of chiefs is not without contestation—a number of scholars have pointed to the abuse of power and the marginalization of the youth in traditional structures as an instrumental contributory cause of the decade-long civil war. See for example, Jackson 2005; Richards 2003; and Fanthorpe 2001.
- 45 Fanthorpe 2001.
- 46 Nineteen percent of respondents said they had a high level of trust in local politicians; and 13 percent said the same of national leaders, the second lowest level. The lowest percentage 11 percent was recorded in Kailahun district (BBC World Service 2007).
- 47 Jackson 2005.
- 48 International Crisis Group 2008.
- 49 Jalloh 2008; Kandehe 2008.

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Towards Concert in Africa: Seeking Progress and Power through Cohesion and Unity

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Abstract: Economic development, power distribution, and security consolidation can be promoted collectively by states. Collective actions are predicated on acquiring strength through unity. A number of formal and informal institutional arrangements exist to advance broad and narrow goals. One of these is concert. The classical notion of concert is related to the balance of power that existed in Europe from the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. A more contemporary notion of concert goes beyond power balancing, as it seeks to address economic, environmental, legal, military, political, trade, and socio-cultural issues. The African continent is not seeking an ideal form of multi-polar balance of power but rather is aiming to join forces to tackle the most pressing concerns of its societies: conflict, dictatorship, hunger, illiteracy, integration, poverty, public health, resource extraction, and water scarcity. The heterogeneous landscape of influence and power within the African Union creates two sets of states: core and peripheral. The most dominant states in the core advance progressive policy initiatives that uphold their national interests, while the remaining periphery follows as they stand to benefit from the spillover effects generated. Concert provides an effective platform for African states to assess, agree, and adopt coordinated positions on matters of common interests that can have national, regional, and international impacts. This essay argues that cohesive agreements on adjustments, designs, and implementations of tactics, plans, and strategies are strengthened by multilateral communication of opinions, proposals, and views under concert.

Introduction

Africa is becoming steadily more central to America, Asia, and Europe, as well as to the rest of the world. The African continent is now playing an increasingly significant role in supplying energy (coal, gas, and oil), preventing the spread of religious radicalism and terrorism, hosting an impressive wave of democratization, inserting its commodity products more successfully in the world economy, and halting the devastation of HIV/AIDS. The most visible indication of Africa's growing importance in global affairs is reflected in the intensifying competition for resources. This competition is among China, Europe, Russia, the United States, and other emerging powers.¹ They aim to secure unimpeded access to African natural resources and influence in a region that is beaming with latent potential.

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<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v12/v12i4a4.pdf>

Today, Africa's environment is more competitive. The presence of new and more assertive players is indicating a rapid escalation in economic engagements. The quest for Africa's energy and other natural resources is driving some of the most salient features of energy and foreign policies of emerging market economies.² These new realities are challenging classical paradigms of economic development and the resulting policy designs. Africa stands to benefit from this sudden attention by investing capital inflows in its future. Development experts note that one prerequisite to Africa's successful leap into the world economy is the improvement of its agricultural and commercial infrastructure. This includes irrigation, rural electrification, telecommunications, and most important of all, roads. Primary and secondary roads are needed to interconnect rural, suburban, and urban areas.³

As Africa becomes an important destination for great-power aid and investments, the continent warrants a number of adjustments to cope with these accretive bids. While it is urgent to pay attention to states in desperate need of help, a more comprehensive, organized approach seems the most beneficial and cost-effective. What this means is that economic development, power distribution, and security consolidation can be promoted collectively by states. These collective actions are predicated on acquiring more strength through unity.

There is indeed an urgent need to explore in detail the contemporary conditions under which states try to gain economic, continental, political, and social security through collaborative efforts. But collaborations between nation-states often carry power-wielding implications. Small and poor states fear that big and rich states will take advantage of them. In fact, according to Barnett and Duvall, two core dimensions—the kinds of social relation through which power works and the specificity of the social relation through which power's effects are produced—generate a fourfold taxonomy of power: compulsory, institutional, productive, and structural.⁴ All these power categories seem to be at play in African affairs.

The search for power is the force that moves countries from rhetoric to action, that is, from strategies to tangible activities. When power is aggregated it can be used as a tool to bargain productively in the international arena. In the G7 and G20 summits, power wielded individually (by the US) or collectively (by the EU member states) sets the agenda on core and peripheral issues that are addressed as priority.⁵ For instance, for decades after the Second World War issues of human rights, women's rights, and children's rights never made it on the UN agenda and thus were never discussed or even deemed worthy of any sort of governance notions. Social forces in rich countries facilitated their inclusion. Agendas enable some actors to further their interests and ideals, to exercise control over others, and to limit the abilities of actors to engage in effective collective actions.

World leaders must now pause and reflect on how Africa has become a region of growing vital importance to various national interests. As competition turns aggressive and bitter among great-powers vying for control of Africa's wealth, the international community will see African issues more prominently displayed in agendas under global governance. Sadly, while it is true that Africa for long has been the object of humanitarian concerns, hunger stories, or a charity cause, it is counterproductive to assume that Africa is simply a basket of problems. Because Africa is the continent with the most space to catch up with other countries of the world, it emerges as the most ideal place to obtain impressive gains in economic, social, and technological spheres. The special relationships between European states and some of their former colonies with respect to international trade regime provisions will soon come under scrutiny. The nature of these relationships are intimately related to economic and political domains, whose function is anchored in granting rights and privileges to European citizens and firms. Interestingly, the most fervent globalization

advocates are looking into the institutional reforms needed at home and abroad to render further market openings for all countries a politically acceptable and sustainable alternative.

In this essay I present a forward-looking evaluation of Africa's challenges and opportunities as it inserts itself into the world economy. This, of course, will require the continent to come together as a whole so that it can be more effective and productive in its dealings with classical hegemonic powers and vibrant emerging market economies. Because lack of openness to markets is no longer a binding constraint for the global economy, it is in my opinion the lack of "policy space" that is the real obstacle for fuller world economic integration. There is no doubt that where legitimate economic and social ends are concerned, both poor and rich countries find themselves at odds with contemporary views of what is good and what is not. Africa, if it acts in concert, that is, under a coherent and coordinated approach, can boost its privileged position and comparative advantages to achieve order, peace, prosperity, security, and wellbeing for its people.

First, this essay briefly examines the origins and uses of concert. Second, it presents new approaches to concert in Africa, based on contemporary notions of collaboration. Third, it looks at the African Union, its strengths, and its weaknesses, followed by a delineation of the most salient challenges and opportunities for Africa. Lastly, reflections offer summary findings, some thoughts on the way forward, and the alternatives to bring about change.

Concert: Origins and Uses

A number of formal and informal institutional arrangements exist to advance broad and narrow goals. One of these is concert. The classical notion of concert is related to the balance of power that existed in Europe from the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. Concerts, a type of institutional construct or formulation, rely on looser and more informal regulation of balancing forces among states. These arrangements, whether formal or informal, constitute a form of collective security.⁶ Robert Jervis notes that concert systems have occurred three times in modern history: from 1815 to 1854, from 1919 to 1920, and from 1945 to 1946. To be sure, the last two concert instances were brief, and it has been argued that they did not become truly functional.⁷ Granted, there are different conceptualizations of concert systems, some extending for shorter or longer periods according to the defining features considered by authors in their writings.

To be sure, there is an overarching feature that guides concert-type arrangements: a most basic compatibility among nation-states in a concert system is foremost among the conditions necessary for the effective and successful operation of coherent collective actions; a compatibility that is a function of the underlying interests and intentions of nation-states. It is important to underscore that concerts are hinged on the advancement of specific goals and objectives to secure strategic interests. In the past, given the multiplicity of states in the European hinterland and the recurrence of territorial contestations, concerts gained validity as tools to suppress state self-aggrandizement, advance religious beliefs (Christianity generally or more specifically Protestantism), secure entitlements on conquered lands, promote ideologies and peace, consolidate power, diversify sources of inputs, and divide territory equitably.

To this end, Charles and Clifford Kupchan, commenting on John J. Mearsheimer's critique of collective security, note that concerts are grounded on notions of "competitive, self-help balancing," while they function in a "regulated, norm-governed environment" that is based on the logic of "all against one, not each for his own." In this sense, any institutional

arrangement that is guided by the principles of regulated balancing and all against one can be categorized into the family of collective security.⁸ After 1950, as economic forces started to shape political outcomes, it became evident that the international institutions that resulted from the heavily-consulted accords hammered after the Second World War were established as mechanisms to correct the mistakes of the past but not to account for the challenges and opportunities of the future. For instance, the League Covenant and the United Nations Charter do not entail automatic and binding commitments to respond to aggression with force. So, in a way, they resemble “concerts” more than collective security organizations.

Richard Rosecrance claims that under the prevailing anarchical state in which the world exists, there are merely three methods to regulate the international system or to prevent it from lapsing into chaos: (1) rule by a central coalition, (2) nuclear deterrence, and (3) the traditional balance of power. Over the last two centuries, these systems have been employed at different times to manage a growing system of states. While it is true that the classic notion of balance of power played a predominant role during most of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, it did not manage to fully bring under control the aggressive policies of great powers; it merely restrained conflicts.⁹ For the most part, Western commentators have argued that concerts are “particularly well suited to orchestrating pre-aggression deterrence and the early formation of a preponderant blocking coalition” in the international system, but they also provide a readily usable platform to coordinate collective action.¹⁰ It is quite clear from the literature that emerged during and after the Cold War that much of the discourse surrounding concerts and collective security organizations rested on the threats of nuclear wars in a bipolar world.

It would be a mistake to limit the functions of concert to threat mitigation and war dissuasion. In the 1880s, European statesmen and military leaders utilized concert to advance far more utilitarian deeds. As the wave of colonization by Europe’s great powers peaked, allocations and distributions of conquered lands became a topic of heated, internecine debate. Hans Morgenthau (1973) noted, for example, that Africa was “the object of numerous treaties delimiting spheres of influence for the major colonial powers.”¹¹ He also observed that because there was so much empty space there was always the possibility of compromise without compromising vital colonial interests.¹² Europeans managed to divide Africa by acting in concert. Fourteen European states met at the Berlin conference of 1884-1885 to start a process that was to reduce almost all of Africa to colonial status. By 1914, through a complex process of give and take, Africa had been divided arbitrarily among the European states into fifty distinct territories.¹³

This process of territorial division without the representation of affected stakeholders created an environment of doubt and mistrust in bilateral deals, as Africans were perceived as junior actors by their so-called senior and more powerful colonizers. As Uzoigwe (1988) rightly notes, for the first time in history “a concert of one continent gathered together to plan how to share out another continent without the knowledge of the latter’s leaders.”¹⁴ But a much deeper goal had been planned and was being pursued. Wesserling (1988) adds that “politically speaking, the role of the Berlin Conference was not to do the partitioning itself, but to draw the attention of the world to this process and legitimize it.”¹⁵ In doing so, violent conquests and colonization, resource extraction, slavery, exploitative trade, and territorial division were channeled tactfully into mainstream affairs as natural outgrowths of acquiring power in world affairs and that responsible statesmanship was to be seen as an option, not as an obligation. In fact, in view of a practice that was “organically connected with the

balance of power," countries as different as Ethiopia and Persia were effectively and peacefully partitioned by the European great powers.¹⁶

All in all, the objective context-specific circumstances of the time (from 1815 to 1914) gave rise to the utilitarian and expedient outcomes of "concert designs." Then, as now, the priorities of states were different and their goals shaped the policies and instruments to attain maximum results. What the classical notion of concert tells us is that it was employed as a tool to regulate the increasingly balancing forces among powerful states that were vying for control of a vast world they saw as naive, open, rich, unconquered, and up for grabs.

New Approaches to Concert in Africa

A more contemporary notion of concert goes beyond power balancing, as it seeks to address economic, environmental, legal, military, political, trade, and socio-cultural issues. The argument presented in this essay is that the African continent is not seeking an ideal form of multi-polar balance of power but instead is aiming to join forces to tackle the most pressing concerns of its societies: conflict, dictatorship, hunger, illiteracy, integration, poverty, public health, resource extraction, and water scarcity, among others. It is widely recognized throughout the world that poor and stagnant Africa is largely dependent on primary commodity exports that, in combination with manacled traps such as excessive dependence on economic assistance, limited access to credit and capital markets, extreme environmental degradation, widespread corruption, poor governance, capital flight, poor education systems, disadvantageous disease ecology, lack of public health care, wars, and poor primary and secondary infrastructures keep African states stuck at the bottom of the development spectrum. But, to be clear, not all African nations are lagging behind. Rich countries argue that an increasingly impoverished African block of about seven hundred million people will be increasingly difficult for affluent yet sensitive societies to tolerate.¹⁷

For Africa to rise out of poverty and stagnation it must work very hard at economic, legal, and political integration. Dani Rodrik (2007) noted that "in the absence of legal and political integration" that is similar in many ways to the ones achieved by the US and currently being constructed by the EU, "transaction costs condemn the global economy to a patchwork of national economies."¹⁸ In terms of Africa, these poorly integrated national economies turn out to be fragile, weak, and unable to compete successfully in regional and international markets because they are missing fundamental drivers and underpinnings. The low incomes and slow growth that the African continent continues to experience is understood by many locals as more poverty and hopelessness. If this situation proceeds unchecked, it is to be expected that the poorest African countries will form an assemblage of discontent, misery, and hunger. The longer the problems of Africa are left unaddressed, the worse they will become. Admittedly, Africans are well-known for their enterprising resilience, and one could say that they have grown accustomed to conflict, isolation, and poverty, but this is no good reason to dismiss the opportunities at hand to lay a better path.¹⁹

By taking advantage of the privileged position Africa has right now as the preferred destination for international investors (i.e. foreign gas, oil, and mineral companies) and foreign countries (i.e. China, India, Russia, and others), as well as the increased attention it is getting from the international community as it gets its voice heard on the global stage (i.e. seeking aid in mid-2011 to combat a severe drought causing famine in the Horn of Africa), it can collectively achieve order, peace, prosperity, security, and wellbeing. These collective actions need to be initiated by actors with enough influence and power. In this regard, the

heterogeneous landscape of influence and power within the African continent creates two sets of states: core and peripheral. The most dominant states in the core advance progressive policy initiatives that uphold their national interests, while the remaining periphery follows as they stand to benefit from the spillover effects generated.

How does this interstate dynamic work out? If preponderant African powers adopt a benevolent, comprehensive strategy and create a sort of negotiated regional order based on legitimate influence and management, the remaining lesser states will follow the leaders rather than balance against them. Moreover, the most dominant states in the core need to fully acknowledge that successful growth strategies are based on making the best of what they have, not on wishing they had what they lack. African leaders must be made aware that the jurisdictional discontinuities implicit in tightfisted sovereignties impose high transaction costs on sub-regional, regional, and international commerce and trade that remain in place long after conventional barriers in the form of import duties are removed. I thereby argue that new approaches to concert in Africa provides an effective platform for African states to assess, agree, and adopt coordinated positions on matters of common interests that can have local, national, regional, and international impacts. To achieve this end, international organizations have a very important role to play. They are able to use their expert, moral, delegated, and rational-legal authority as a resource to compel states and non-state actors to modulate their behaviors.²⁰ With foreign assistance and coherent advice, American, Asian, and European senior government officials could start meeting with top African politicians to start marshalling changes in aid and trade policy, transparency, military interventions, good governance, rapid integration, and international coordination.

International coordination is a key factor to get right from the very start of the process given that international institutions, formal and informal, are often understood to be at the heart of global governance. Relations of cooperation and coordination, practices of international law, and the processes of collective action that they entail are effected in and through established and recognized institutions. The involvement of international and continental institutions in the coordinative processes of development and growth ensure that it is one characterized by a certain (variable) degree of fairness and justice. This is especially the case where there are substantial economic resources at stake that create powerful incentives for despotic control. This search for distributive equitability of benefits seems to predominate when states and institutions interact within a framework of checks and balances. This is desirable so that no single actor, or elite group, profits at the expense of others. Edward Carr argues that rare is the institution that is completely dominated by one actor. Instead, it is much more likely that institutions have some independence from specific resource-laden actors.²¹

In the presence of more than fifty states, the African continent is presented with the monumental task of individual coordination with countries and collective coordination with international institutions and foreign countries. At a continental level, Africa's best shot at devising sustainable and workable solutions through interstate intercourse is to tactically leverage the naturally-occurring distribution between core and peripheral states through strategic alliances or partnerships. Richard Little (2007) argued that states are seen to be participating in a "game" where the goal is to maintain equilibrium with an even distribution of power between two competing sets of alliances.²² In fact, even Hans Morgenthau reduces interstate balance of power to a tip-toed game of alliances and partnerships.²³ In this regard, Jeremy Black (1990) also argued that alliances were the most common way that rulers sought to achieve their economic, political, and social goals.²⁴

In the end, the heads of African states either individually or collectively will have to identify the set of conditions that create the policy space for countries or groups of countries to handle the most pressing problems that afflict their societies. For instance, some of the less poverty-stricken states may find themselves in creative struggles of fine-tuning economic restructuring and diversification to make the best of globalization forces, whereas others may spend the majority of time dealing with water scarcity, resource extractions, or domestic rebellions. The most disadvantaged countries (e.g. Chad, Congo, Somalia, etc.) may in fact require binding, long-term assistance commitments by international and continental bodies to progressively deal with hunger, poverty, health, illiteracy, dictatorships, and conflicts.

The African Union: Strengths and Weaknesses

Established on 9 July 2002, the African Union (AU) consists of fifty-three sovereign African nation-states, with a view, among others, to accelerating the process of integration in the continent to enable it to play its rightful role in the global economy while addressing multifaceted social, economic, and political problems.²⁵ The AU is headquartered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital. It is currently headed by Jean Ping, former foreign minister of Gabon.²⁶ Every year the AU holds a summit. In this gathering the leaders of African countries set out an "African Agenda" for the year ahead. Much of the recent work has been geared toward two aims. The first is to integrate Africa into the world economy. The second is to strengthen its voice on the global stage. The discourse among African states focuses on conflict resolution, disease eradication, economic integration, and democratization.

Unlike its much-criticized predecessor, the Organization of African Unity (OAU)—which generally turned a blind eye to dictatorship, genocide, and tyranny—the AU is a more assertive, accountable, confident, and rigorous body. In its public statements it says it is determined to promote democracy, integration, transformation, transparency, and openness. Overall, the AU's main mission as a member-based body is to attain three essential ends: economic growth, power consolidation, and peaceful security. These ends coincide with economic, political, and social spheres.

In the economic sphere, the AU is seeking to achieve progress towards creating customs unions, regional development action plans, and in persuading businesspeople to assist in the design of coherent policies. The AU, through its merits, has won a stronger voice at meetings of the G20. Also, it has established more disciplined rapprochement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations (UN), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO), so that these bodies take Africa's concerns and issues much more seriously.²⁷ In terms of attracting attention and interest of foreign countries and international investors it is worth noting that in 2009, the AU, as a sum of its member states, had a gross domestic product (GDP) at purchasing power parity (PPP) of US\$2.2 trillion, up from US\$1.5 trillion in 2003. These figures demonstrate that the potential for development, growth, and progress in Africa is tremendous, and bidders know this.

In relation to power consolidation, the AU has exerted significant political pressures to overturn coups in Mauritania and Togo. Additionally, it played a decisive role in suspending Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, and Niger for undemocratic behavior. The AU is also "trying" to set a regional and international precedent for responsible statesmanship. For some time now it has been attempting legally to prosecute Hissène Habré, a former Chadian dictator, for mass murder. The AU is working closely with the International Court of Justice.

With regard to peace and security, the AU oversees 16,000 troops that are partitioned into two major tasks. The first 8,000 are fighting the opposition Islamic Courts Union forces in Somalia. And the other 8,000 are serving in a joint AU-UN force in Sudan's western region of Darfur. In the past, AU forces have militarily intervened to impose order in Burundi and reverse a coup in the Comoro Islands. These actions have added clout to the AU as a responsible body that delivers on its promises. This is a good start, but much more needs to be done.

All the above looks and sounds good. However, for all the accomplishments it has so far attained, the AU still presents a number of glaring inconsistencies. For instance, its planned parliament, banks, and judiciary hardly exist, an oversight mechanism designed to improve governance among African states has lost interest and momentum, and in some instances it takes lukewarm approaches rather than bold actions to resolve issues. To add insult to injury, the AU's formally submitted demand for US\$70 billion in cash compensation from high-income Western countries for the ravages of climate change has yet to materialize. These loose ends continue to attract criticism in relation to poor governance. In other quarters there are rising concerns that the more affluent African states may sequester the AU to advance their (or others) specific interests at the expense of the more disadvantaged, conflict-afflicted countries. Those examining concrete institutions have shown how evolving rules and decision-making procedures can shape outcomes in ways that favor some groups over others. These effects can operate over time and at a distance, and often in ways that were not intended or anticipated by the architects of the institutions.²⁸

For instance, and on an admittedly broader outlook, John Boli and George Thomas argue that there are regional and world authority structures, with sets of fundamental principles that constitute who are the actors of regional and world politics. These authority structures determine their identities, their expressive purposes, and their differential capacities. As a consequence, they posit that the institutionalization of regional and world authority structures that are organized around rational-legal values increasingly privileges the voices of international organizations.²⁹ If agreed, the strength of concert in Africa as a regional authority could counterweigh this structural arrangement of world authority. So, which weakness is at the heart of AU problems? Simply put, the biggest problem of the AU is a common one for the majority of poverty-laden regions: money. The AU budget for 2011 is US\$260 million. This is minuscule compared to the US\$1.8 billion the UN spends just on its contribution to the Darfur peacekeeping mission.³⁰ In fact, about 40 percent of the total AU budget is paid by African countries, with the remaining 60 percent contributed by the People's Republic of China, the European Union, and the United States of America.

Challenges and Opportunities in Africa

As with any other continent, Africa is vulnerable to challenges and welcoming to opportunities. Yet, unlike any other continent, because of its position in the far back of the development spectrum, it is especially susceptible to market shocks. For instance, in 2008, the continent experienced three major global shocks: a financial meltdown and the resulting worldwide recession, a surge in world oil prices, and a steep increase in food prices. Faced with this scenario, Africa was expected to have serious difficulties coping. However, timely foreign assistance and the combination of coherent domestic policies enabled most countries to withstand these shocks and to return slowly to a path of self-sustaining growth.³¹ As Africa copes with its own socioeconomic and political problems it is also having to

acknowledge that the global challenges of climatic change, energy and food insecurity, weapons proliferation, hegemonic contestation, deepening regionalism, international terrorism, religious radicalism, and novel transboundary diseases can and do have direct and indirect effects on the operationalization of its short, medium, and long-term plans.

Before proceeding any further, it is critical to examine one factor that emerges as the most challenging one in the African continent: war. Africa has been one of the most violent parts of the world since 1989.³² In part, as with the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia, and the Rwandan invasion of Congo, there has been an interstate nature for these conflicts, but also much of it was within states. Oftentimes, combatants were not states but ethnic groups.³³ In relation to ethnic groups, Charles Onyango-Obbo (2010) claims that tribalism is good for democracy because it ensures that no single group can take over the entire political decision-making process. He finds that it is a kind of “naturally occurring mechanism of checks and balances on excessive power.” The problem, however, is that tribalism can make for violent elections as members of ethnic groups fight one another ahead of voting, leaving people either dead or injured, just as it occurred in Guinea’s 2010 presidential election.³⁴

The multiple influences of ethnic groups on wars or the importance of tribalism in democratization falls outside the scope of this essay. What really does matter about armed conflicts is that they are disruptive to numerous societies and states. The totality of war in Africa is underlined by the large-scale use of child soldiers, for example by insurrectionary movements in Sudan and Uganda or by warlords in Liberia. The ripple effects of wars are not only profound but also long-term, usually cutting across numerous aspects of social and institutional realms, from education to public health, and also from growth to development.

Through this prism, scholars and experts have tried to identify which are the most significant drivers of armed conflict in Africa in the hope that these drivers could be more pointedly addressed by statesmen. One of the most important findings is that resource rents promote wars.³⁵ Key funding of guerrilla operations and rebellious uprisings are frequently supplied by the sale of precious raw materials that have high value in international markets (e.g. diamonds). In the 1990s, the Angolan civil war was largely supported on the government side by the sale of oil and mining rights. The sale of diamonds was also important in the armed conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone in West Africa in the 2000s.³⁶

Aside from wars, there is also poverty and hunger. But for the West, right next to deleterious wars come terrorist threats. For instance, on August 7, 1998, two massive bombs exploded outside of the US embassies in Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania, and Nairobi, Kenya, killing 224 people.³⁷ More recently, on July 2010 in Kampala, Uganda, several suicide bombings were carried out around crowds watching the World Cup. These attacks, usually directed against Americans and Europeans, have promoted Africa’s image as a cradle for terror and chaos. In response, both the Bush and Obama administrations designated the greater Horn of Africa and selected countries in sub-Saharan Africa as front-line spots in US global war against terrorism. Similarly, much effort and resources have been allocated to dismantling al-Qaeda infrastructures and its budding recruiting programs.

To some degree, poverty and lack of labor opportunities facilitate radicalization of youths, or, less dramatically, their departure to the population hubs where opportunities are more abundant (e.g. Central Americans to the US or Africans to the EU). For instance, Jeremy Black (2008) noted that the sight of Africans in dingy boats in the open sea being intercepted by the Spanish or French Navy in an attempt to keep them away from accessing the EU economy invites attention to the varied relationships between globalization, attractive living standards, and movement of illegal immigrant workers.³⁸ These waves of

illegal immigrants prompt special interest groups (i.e. some churches and conservative civil society organizations) to put heavier political pressures on their representatives and legislatures to protect citizenries from what these groups perceive as “imminent threats.”

A lack of good governance is an overarching issue arising from Côte d’Ivoire, Egypt, Libya, Togo, Tunisia, and Zimbabwe signaling a major problem throughout the African continent. But this is a broad issue that warrants deeper examination. The particular situations in these countries show a very specific type of governance problem: the inability and unwillingness to accommodate adequately the opinions and voices of their citizenries. At its core, the tenets of good governance include accountability, an effective judicial system and participatory oversight, respect of electoral processes, transparency, and upholding the rule of law. In terms of governance, there are two main challenges for African leaders individually and for the AU collectively. The first is to find ways to address the reluctance of statesmen to give up their posts after free and fair elections have taken place. The second is to conceive proactive ideas or policy instruments for improving governance monitors for Africa as it moves forward in a process of instilling responsible statesmanship.³⁹

On behalf of the continent, the AU must find pressure points and ways to deal with autocratic leaders and dictatorial regimes. As the world has witnessed in the first quarter of 2011, national, regional, and international pressures are mounting for countries like Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya (until Gaddafi’s overthrow and violent death in October 2011), Uganda, and Zimbabwe where longstanding leaders were or are refusing to retire from office. It is exactly for this reason that imposing limits on presidential terms and increasing accountability throughout the region is instrumental in fostering better governance, and also to highlight to the world Africa’s inner capacity to solve its problems. A positive and uplifting signal was sent to the world by the AU when a delegation arrived in rebel stronghold of Benghazi (Libya) after talks with the Libyan leader in Tripoli. The AU delegation presented a road map which called for an end to hostilities, diligent conveying of humanitarian aid, and dialogue between the Libyan parties. The AU was trying to lift its profile as peace broker and ultimate mediator, but its radical decision of not giving support to the Libyan rebel administration left international observers doubtful of the AU’s role. Its ambivalence was seen as proof of Gaddafi’s lingering influence over the African Union.

In addition to ambivalence and disregard, the AU dragged its feet and came off as undecided and confused as to how best to address and mitigate the delicate situation that was evolving in Libya. All of this happened even when the AU benefitted from financial support from Gaddafi’s government. At its apex, the AU was fully trapped in the situation and almost morbidly marginalized, which, regrettably, exposed its poverty of ideas when it comes to dispute and conflict resolution. All in all, the AU failed to act as a united force and lost a chance to speak with a unified voice. Most importantly, the AU failed to take collective action and collective responsibility in this regard. The AU should learn from these mistakes.

But not everything that takes place in Africa represents a challenge, as there are plenty of opportunities, best practices, and lessons learned to build on. In recent months, the AU and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has successfully mediated governance problems throughout the continent. Moreover, if desired, these problems could be mitigated in the future by scaling up initiatives already in place. One of these is the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). The APRM is currently designed to be a self-monitoring initiative to promote good governance through objective evaluation by other African nations. So far the APRM has done little to provide timely monitoring of the political temperatures of African civil societies. However, adjusting and improving this mechanism

as the continent goes forward could start regional policy dialogues on issues that African countries would not otherwise pursue themselves.

Because the stakes are high, Africa requires sustained assistance from donors and the international community. The AU could benefit from moral support from democratic, high-income countries by joining African calls condemning repressive regimes and to advocate for principles of accountability, democracy, and human rights. As a whole, the international community has the moral weight to criticize the AU for its reluctance to condemn Gaddafi. The AU's poor judgment was seemingly more than just anti-neocolonialism, since it showed that it was acting more like the old OAU instead of a modern and progressive African Union. In parallel, African governments must attempt to honestly evaluate their populations and understand their concerns, differences, and preoccupations so that appropriate institutions and policies are designed to empower their citizens to have a representative and inclusive voice in affairs that matter to them. Leaders are urged to search internally to find effective governance solutions that work for their people.

Last but not least, since 1997, policymakers in Washington have paid unprecedented attention to Africa and its continental rebirth. At that time President Clinton unveiled the "Partnership for Growth and Opportunity in Africa" to promote greater trade and investment in the region. But the initiatives to strengthen bilateral links with Africa fall short of what is truly required. What is needed is a more comprehensive approach that integrates policy in the areas of foreign assistance, trade and investment, and debt reduction. For this to happen, high-income countries in the West are required to promote economic relations more effectively, given the opportunities that Africa's renewal offers, not only to African nations and the United States, but also the larger global community as well.⁴⁰ Moreover, given that over 77 percent of Africa's remittances come from the United States and Western Europe, it seems prudent to push for modernization of financial services in African states so that the benefits accrued overseas can be more fully disseminated among local populations.⁴¹

Reflections

While it is true that moving from rhetoric to action requires patience and political will, there are some steps that could redirect the momentum into more solid grounding. For example, developed countries could pass legislation to increase African access to American, Asian, and European markets. As economic recovery brings more certainty to money markets and improves the balance sheets of powerful states, some thought could be given to the creation of enterprise funds to mobilize greater American, Asian, and European private sector investments in Africa. Also, Africa can borrow examples from other countries and regions that have successfully established economic forums or bilateral trade associations in American, Asian, and European cities. This could very well serve as an initial platform to start plans for free (liberal) trade agreements with African countries or groups of countries.

Under the type of concert advanced above, a number of cohesive agreements on adjustments, designs, and implementations of tactics, plans, and strategies are strengthened by the multilateral communication of opinions, proposals, and views. The AU is the perfect forum to bring about the impetus for radical change. However, the truth is that change in African societies must predominantly come from within. In terms of statecraft, a strong African foreign policy must be rooted in domestic reforms. Also, at the moment there is a growing capacity of African leaders and institutions working to improve economic

performance and governance, to promote democracy, and to resolve conflicts that for so long have manacled the continent to poverty and bloodshed. These initiatives need backing.

As a needed complement, it is believed that America, as well as Asia and Europe, are in need of broader policy frameworks to correct economic, diplomatic, and intelligence weaknesses in the African region. A holistic approach that goes beyond the classical remit of interstate rapprochement would bind the diverse and promising initiatives set forth by major states holding stakes in relation to counterterrorism, counter proliferation, emerging infectious diseases, democratic reforms, infrastructure development, good governance, and economic reforms.⁴² Regrettably, today, some of these initiatives operate in relative isolation. In fact, there is no coherent and dynamic policy arrangement guiding a route to a certain future. This is a potential area of work between the AU, the EU, China, the US, and other regional economic bodies, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

These suggestions will not end poverty in Africa, but they will raise hope within the bounds of realism. South Africa, which is the only African state belonging to G20, could use its position to spread the plans of the continent and the AU to integrate Africa into the world economy and to strengthen its voice on the global stage. Additionally, it is through this elite forum that a multiplicity of actors and processes are partially responsible for attempting to bring processes, development, human rights, and the rule of law to the non-western world. This being the case, the AU along with South Africa could present high-income countries with sets of winnable proposals that entail mutual benefits. These proposals could cut across issues and tackle concerns that are priorities for developed states (e.g. governance). In sum, South Africa can push for a “Comprehensive African Agenda” that seeks to integrate the continent into the global economy. The fact that South Africa has not done so in the past is a reflection of the lack of policy coordination. This situation can be reversed within the AU. An African concert could very well seek agreements that would help transform oppressive governmental systems that are at the root of all armed conflicts in the continent into a more open, transparent, inclusive, and democratic one. However, caution must be had in making peace dependent solely on accords because the collapse of agreements would likely lead to full-scale war and uncountable deaths that could undermine the gains so far attained.

Notes

- 1 For China, see Burgos and Ear 2012.
- 2 Burgos and Ear 2011.
- 3 Burgos 2010.
- 4 Barnett and Duvall 2005.
- 5 The G7 is a group of finance ministers from seven industrialized nations: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, and United States. The G20 is a group of finance ministers and central bank governors from twenty major economies: nineteen countries plus the European Union (EU), which is represented by the President of the European Council and by the European Central Bank.
- 6 Elrod 1976 and also Douglas 1997.
- 7 Jervis 1982 and 1985.
- 8 Kupchan and Kupchan 1995, p. 53.
- 9 Rosecrance 1992.
- 10 Kupchan and Kupchan 1995, p. 56.

- 11 Morgenthau 1973, p. 179.
- 12 Ibid, p. 349.
- 13 Little 2007, p. 163.
- 14 Uzoigwe 1988, p. 541.
- 15 Wesserling 1988, p. 533.
- 16 Morgenthau 1973, p. 180.
- 17 Burgos 2010.
- 18 Rodrik 2007, p. 12.
- 19 Burgos 2010.
- 20 Barnett and Finnemore 2004.
- 21 Carr 1964.
- 22 Little 2007, p. 105.
- 23 Morgenthau 1973.
- 24 Black 1990, p. 197.
- 25 For more information, see: African Union website at <http://www.au.int/en/>
- 26 A new AU headquarters is due to open in 2012 and it is being built by the Chinese.
- 27 *The Economist* 2011.
- 28 Pierson 2000.
- 29 Boli and Thomas 1999.
- 30 Today, Africa accounts for about 70 percent of the United Nations' peacekeeping operations in countries including Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- 31 Okonjo-Iweala 2009.
- 32 Harkavy and Neuman 2001.
- 33 Negash and Tronvoll 2001.
- 34 Onyango-Obbo 2010, p. 18.
- 35 Collier 2008.
- 36 Chua 2004.
- 37 Lyman and Morrison 2004.
- 38 Black 2008, p. 229.
- 39 Asmah 2011.
- 40 Council on Foreign Relations 1998.
- 41 Okonjo-Iweala 2009, p. 184.
- 42 Council on Foreign Relations 2006.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Martin Atangana. *The End of French Rule in Cameroon*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, Inc., 2010. xii, 131 pp.

This is a must read for any Africanist. The author's goal appeared to be to present historical information between the 1950s and 1960s on the processes and events leading to Cameroon's independence. His emphasis was on how France endeavored to establish and maintain their presence after their departure by creating systems that would protect their interests. He achieved the goal by condensing the vast amount of information into four chapters which clearly illustrated the processes of colonization, pre-First World War, and decolonization, post-Second World War leading to independence in 1960.

In the introduction the author contends with evidence from historical records that France was not willing to speed up the road to independence for Cameroon, rather they wanted to integrate "Cameroon into the French Union" for three main reasons: i) Geography, ii) potential wealth and iii) growth of French community (pp. x-xi).

Chapter one discusses the creation of structures and policies that do not serve the needs and demands of the greater Cameroonian population, e.g. the double electoral college system (p. 8). The double electoral college system was a system whereby the Cameroonian government was formed by elected Cameroonian citizens in Cameroon and appointed French citizens in France. This chapter also presents the rise, influence, and banning of the Union of the Peoples of Cameroon (UPC), the party which presented the greatest threat to the French.

Chapter two discusses "Loi Cadre" or the "Framework Law" and goes into details on UPC's activities and the reason for their banning which was because of the perception that it had ties or that is closely identified with communism. It also shows how the UPC struggled with the French government to be a voice on the road to independence, how they consistently denied ties to communism and declared that their two main objectives were "independence and unification of the two Cameroons" (p. 64).

Chapter three discusses the road to independence and how Andre Marie Mbida's government opposed independence and was eventually sacked and a new government headed by Ahmado Ahidjo as Prime Minister was formed with the help and influence of the High Commissioner, Jean Ramadier. Ahidjo was chosen and backed by the French because he would help maintain a close French presence (p. 85). Nevertheless, Mbida continued his opposition to Cameroon's independence by presenting arguments at the UN. This chapter also demonstrates that Mbida was not the only threat to the French but the UPC also which had been banned years earlier, such that the French military was used to suppress the UPC party. After the death of the charismatic leader of the UPC party, the French engaged in a psychological warfare to win-over the Bassa people who were dedicated to the UPC party.

Chapter four discusses the transition to independence after the "new statute" was signed on December 31, 1958. Consequently, 1959 was set aside as the year of transition and many agreements (later accords) were signed during this year. Though Cameroon had a new statute, the High Commissioner, a Frenchman, was still very influential and many laws and decrees had

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/pdfs/v12i4a5.pdf>

to be approved by him. Economic matters were still under French control and the UPC party still tried to stop/slow or postpone independence by presenting opposing arguments at the UN session. During this same UN session, Ahidjo requested to legislate by decree, something that the French wanted. In the end, the declaration of independence was preceded by violence. Not many people attended “the solemn proclamation of independence on January 1” (p. 115). The declaration of independence was also followed by violence and bloodshed, and in the months and years that ensued after the new republic was formed, the French backed many executions of the members of the UPC party.

This book is well written and historically rich. The sources used are from the UN archives, newspaper articles, journal articles, and books. The author could have used less direct quotes and more paraphrasing and presented just the salient quotes. Nevertheless, this book should be required reading for every Cameroonian high school student. As a Cameroonian, I have learned much from this book which I did not learn in high school. Historians, political scientists, university students, policy makers, and anyone interested in Cameroonian history would find this book illuminating.

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Richard Benjamin and David Fleming. *Transatlantic Slavery: An Introduction*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010. 96 pp.

Transatlantic Slavery highlights the recent exhibitions on display at the International Slavery Museum located in the city of Liverpool. The location of this slavery museum is appropriate, since Liverpool rose to be one of Britain’s major slaving ports that engaged in the transatlantic slave trade to the Americas in the eighteenth century. The Slavery Museum opened to the public on 23 August 2007, which coincided with the commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the end of the British slave trade in 1807. According to Richard Benjamin and David Fleming, “the story of transatlantic slavery is a fundamental and tragic human story that must be told, retold, and never forgotten. Africa and its peoples are central to this story” (p. 12).

The authors cover a wide range of topics, starting with early transatlantic slavery, Africans’ and their descendants’ resistance to enslavement, European colonialism in Africa, and the civil rights movement in the United States. They stress that slavery still needs to be confronted, since contemporary forms of this inhumane practice continue today in Africa and across the world. Therefore, the aim of this book is to demonstrate that enslaved Africans in the era of the transatlantic slave trade overcame institutional slavery and today enjoy liberties that were once lost. However, this book also stresses the plight of African-Americans who confronted racial discrimination long after the end of slavery in the United States. The foreword written by the Reverend Jesse Jackson reinforces the African-American experience and the aftermath of slavery, reminding readers that universal suffrage was achieved through the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s. The Reverend Jackson’s short piece provides a powerful opening to this narrative on slavery in Africa, the Americas, and beyond.

The book draws on a number of primary sources, including vivid quotes by historical figures such as Martin Luther King Jr., Mutabaruka, Walter Rodney, and others. The numerous

illustrations show African art such as masks, wood sculptures, portraits of Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth, a number of historical drawings and paintings, maps, and photographs that all tell a story about slavery. The human rights organization, Anti-Slavery International, supplied the majority of photographs that show contemporary forms of slavery across the globe. This book contains a timeline, highlighting major historical events from 1502 through 2010. It also includes a floor plan of the Slavery Museum, which currently host the following exhibitions to shed light on “life in West Africa,” “enslavement and the Middle Passage,” and the “legacy.” Finally, the authors recommend additional readings as well as museums and websites to visit, if a reader wishes to learn more about slavery in Africa and the Americas.

At first glance, *Transatlantic Slavery* might be mistaken for a coffee table book due to its small size and plentiful colorful images, but it is extremely informative and clearly complements a visitor’s experience or should entice someone to visit the Slavery Museum. The well-researched sections provide the historical background to what one might see in a day’s visit. This book engages public and “active” history, and the authors are to be commended for their efforts to encourage all audiences to visit the Museum and to learn more about the people who faced slavery in Africa and beyond.

Nadine Hunt, *York University*

John Campbell. *Nigeria: Dancing on the Brink*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2011. xxii, 183 pp.

Nigeria: Dancing on the Brink is an engaging, timely, concise, and brilliant analysis of a country “in trouble” with insurmountable challenges which, if not addressed and carefully managed (by Nigerians, the United States, and other partners), Ambassador Campbell fears is at risk of becoming a failed state. The book is well-written, illuminating, crisp, agreeably fascinating, provocative, and prophetic about the fate of Africa with a focus on Nigeria. Ambassador Campbell, with his rich insight and privileged access to credible sources of information as well as his first-hand experience, painstakingly articulates an impersonal and up-to-date account of the prevailing harsh economic realities and political problems facing the most populous country in Africa and the most strategic partner of the United States in West Africa. Ambassador Campbell explores complex issues with brevity and sensitivity to reveal, sadly, that Nigeria is rich and enjoys “ghost prosperity” while “most Nigerians are very poor” (p. 11).

Without sarcasm and ambiguity, Campbell bluntly allows facts to speak on the pages of this fascinating and truth-telling post-independence political biography of Nigeria and is distinctive in noting that “poverty is so pervasive throughout Nigeria” and “widespread poverty can clearly be seen in the faces of its children” (pp. 12-13). Like other yet to be developed nations, the country presents shocking contradictions. Paradoxically, despite its wealth and resources (human, natural, capital, intelligence, etc.), there is the inescapable “concentration of Nigeria’s vast oil wealth in the hands of a small group of wealthy Nigerians” (p. 12). The wealth and oil boom, based on a long history of mismanagement and abuse by the country’s ill-prepared and myopic leaders, have resulted in the incurable “widespread poverty,” lack of employment opportunities for university graduates, the state of underdevelopment, and lack of serious long-term investment in the agricultural sector that

would have helped in the take-off stage of economic development. The book compared Nigeria to emerging economies (such as Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan), and Ambassador Campbell demonstrates convincingly how these countries were able to break away from the cycle of underdevelopment.

The book is divided into nine chapters, excluding the introductory chapter, with three chapters raising interesting rhetorical and thought provoking questions addressed to Nigerian leaders. Chapter 3: "Who Runs Nigeria?" (pp. 23-39) is a must read by those interested in understanding leadership dynamics and political problems of the country. The answer was that "the same people had run Nigeria by the same kleptocratic rules since the end of the Biafra war" (p. 23). Nigeria is being led by a group of powerful and greedy "coterie of patron-client networks" with limited ambition, porous pockets, and an insatiable thirst for material accumulation. Ambassador Campbell acknowledges that breaking such entrenched networks and their stranglehold on the country is hard and an uphill battle for Nigerians. The book listed a plethora of intervening factors to explain why the country is dysfunctional and "dancing on the brink," among which are: the people and their leaders are corrupt and perverted, widespread incompetence and nepotism on the altar of mediocrity, a widening gap between Nigerians and the rulers, and more than fifty years of bad governments marked with a corresponding history of bankrupt leadership vision and bad policies. The author cites instances of bloody ethnic and religious violence (between Muslims and Christians), the militant insurrections in Niger Delta region, President Umaru Yar'Adua's ill-health with his almost six months of physical absence from the seat of political power while hospitalized in Saudi Arabia, and a feeble federal government in Abuja. Ambassador Campbell finds it unimaginable that the federal government could not control a significant part of its territory, coupled with the ongoing efforts by the militants in the Delta region to re-group for "renewed militant attacks on the oil infrastructure and kidnapping of expatriates" (p. 139) and the security forces appearing unable to provide security and guarantee safety for the people and/or their property. In chapter 3, Ambassador Campbell provides a lucid and insightful account of the intricacies and subtle nuances of Nigeria's political leadership entangled in the patron-client networks which, put succinctly, is a "harvest" that dwarfs national development. Thus, the author notes that, "Ubiquitous patronage and corrupt behavior fueled by oil money," in addition to other factors, have regrettably succeeded in pushing Nigeria to the point of "dancing on the brink" as leaders continue an orchestrated robbery of the people by "promoting self-aggrandizing economic policies" (p. 15).

In writing *Nigeria: Dancing on the Brink*, Ambassador Campbell provides an opportunity for honest reflection on Nigeria's post-independence political and economic paralysis; arguing that Nigeria, as "the Giant of Africa," is of strategic importance to the United States and the world. The author warns that Nigeria's predicament serves as a mirror and "its success or failure is a compelling example to other multiethnic, multireligious African states" (p. 143). Chapter 9 focuses on the sub-text: "Dancing on the Brink" (pp. 135-47), with a section devoted to whether Nigeria is "A Failed State?" (pp. 136-42). Some of the references cited seemed conclusive, one of which was Ujudud Shariff's article in the *Abuja Daily Trust* (in 2004) that "it appears beyond all reasonable doubt that Nigeria is not only a 'failed' state but also is fast slipping into anarchy" (pp. 136-37). The world should not allow that to happen; because if it happens in or to Nigeria,

then the other countries in Africa risk following suit. The book is prescriptive and provides a medicinal policy course of action to doctor the country back onto the right path for real development.

Benjamin O. Arah, *Bowie State University*

Paul Deléage. *End of a Dynasty: The Last Days of the Prince Imperial, Zululand 1879.* Translated by Fleur Webb, introduction and notes by Bill Guest. Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008. xx, 212 pp.

After the battle of Isandlwana on 22nd January 1879, a Pyrrhic victory for the Zulu and a disastrous blunder by Lord Chelmsford, the imperial grab for the Zulu kingdom was sharpened by the vengeance of wounded pride, and the British began the build-up of forces which would issue in the second invasion and ultimately the annexation of Zululand. Grasping this opportunity for a complex of personal and political reasons, Napoléon Louis Eugène Jean Joseph (b.1856), the Prince Imperial of France, grand-nephew of Bonaparte, a graduate of the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, with the help in high places of his mother the Empress Eugénie and Queen Victoria herself, volunteered for active army service in Zululand. The Prince's family had been living in exile in England since the Franco-Prussian war of 1870.

The Prince made an effort to act and be treated as a regular officer, but his presence at the front was in itself a challenge to the tact and leadership of the British high command. On 1st June 1879, when he was a member of a small reconnaissance party, at the Ityotosi River, just across the Zululand border, some combination of the young man's enthusiasm, his fellow-officers' incompetence and, possibly, their cowardice or self-seeking, led to his death at the hands of a small party of Zulu warriors. As Bill Guest writes in his "Historical Introduction" to this welcome book, both the Prince's death and the war itself have been controversial ever since (p. vii).

Paul Deléage, a young journalist, was sent out at his own request to report on the Prince's African adventure for *Le Figaro*. He followed the British army to the front, met and got to know the Prince, and, eventually, accompanied the body back to Europe. His account of these experiences provides a French, perhaps more particularly a Bonapartist perspective on the politics and psychology of the episode, but there is more to it than that. Deléage includes some of his despatches to *Le Figaro* and writes with a serious journalist's concern for detail (lodgings, food, travel, weather, landscape), and is not afraid to invoke principle or to acknowledge his own emotional involvement.

The French title of Deléage's book, published soon after his return to France, is *Trois Mois Chez Les Zoulous*¹: this English translation picks up and adds a flourish to the sub-title, ...*Les Derniers Jours du Prince Impérial*. These two threads, what one might call the anthropological and the tragic, combine to give Deléage's story substance. On the one hand he is alive to the exoticism of his new surroundings and the people he meets there: Afrikaners, Cape Malays, the people he calls "Cafres," including the Zulu, Natal Indians, Creoles, "settlers," and Mauritians. He is most observant, or judgmental, about the English, "who lack imagination" (p. 7). On board ship he reads English books to learn the language, and French for "the intellectualism of our French writers" (p. 6). He is horrified to see British soldiers flogged "for insubordination

and drunkenness under arms" (p. 102). The English soldier is "the product of recruitment on the pavements of the city" whereas the least French soldier is endowed with "honour and ... personal dignity" (p. 103). Deléage is both patriotic and on the imperial side, but he writes justly about the "English" responsibility for the war (p. 155).

The other strand of the narrative is the trajectory of a brave young man towards his untimely death. We know it is coming, but Deléage builds up his idealistic image of his hero even as he intertwines the sadness and tension of the denouement. The Prince is skilful and an eager military student. In only six days in Zululand he "gave incontestable proof of his intrepidity and courage" (p. 133). Pondering the Prince's enlistment Deléage has "secret forebodings" (p. 40). On the eve of the Prince's last day, "What did he see behind those bare mountains – death or glory? The very next day he would be confronted by both" (p. 166).

Fleur Webb's translation is, in my judgment, fair to the original, although, as with all translations, there are some details I would question. The introduction and notes are clear and helpful and some, but not all, of Deléage's original illustrations (photographs and drawings from photographs) are reproduced. A. Fernandus's "Donga where the Prince was killed and removal of the body..." would have been worth reproducing, as would the last portrait, a sad photograph by Kisch Brothers of Natal, in which the Prince appears in uniform and in military trim.

In this decade of imperial interventions and popular uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East, including against the "royal family" of Bahrein, Paul Deléage offers us a testament to the folly of war and the illusions of majesty.

Notes

- 1 The publishers, Dentu, advertised a series "Chasses et Voyages" of which Deléage's book may have been a part.

Tony Voss, *Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth*

Myriam Denov. *Child Soldiers: Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. xi, 234 pp.

The issue of child soldiers in African wars recently has received quite a bit of coverage from both the academic and journalist communities. Myriam Denov, an Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at McGill University, has added a fine study to this growing body of literature with her straightforwardly entitled but innovatively researched study on the children of Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Denov's stated purpose is to describe and explain how children were initiated into the RUF, what life was like inside the rebel army, and finally how the children left the RUF and attempted to make new lives as civilians. Denov seeks to show that these former child soldiers (FCS)—boys and girls—were indeed victims, but much more than victims. They were and are people with real agency, who in various ways (some big and some small) made hard choices about how to navigate a terrible world filled with physical, sexual, and emotional violence. The study shows that some of the children enjoyed aspects of life in the RUF—particularly the sense of power they felt over civilians and other children, but also, occasionally, the care and concern of a devoted commander or the

camaraderie among their fellow soldiers. But it also confirms that the life of a child soldier, both during and after the war, was usually brutally harsh and dangerous.

Before getting into the heart of the material on the RUF veterans, Denov moves through a brief discussion of the topic of child soldiers and their place in the history of warfare. She then describes the methodology of the book, which is based on in-depth interviews with about eighty boys and girls of the RUF, as well as data gained from focus-group discussions, many of which were led by FCS. This is an important section for scholars interested in how the author managed to deal with the serious ethical and accuracy issues related to gathering information from children (and using other young adults to gather it), many of whom were openly concerned about the legal threats and social stigmatization that might follow admissions of specific crimes or involvement in other unacceptable activities.

This is a well-written, well-organized book, with neat, organized chapters. Denov displays an excellent grasp of the literature of not only the war in Sierra Leone and the RUF, but also of the more general studies written on the many issues touched upon—children in war, female soldiers, Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programs, etc. It is a uniquely researched study, and its very subjects, as well as its assertions and conclusions, are based heavily on the statements made by the FCS.

Denov, however, rarely employs statistical data from the interviews to back up an assertion, so readers may find themselves wondering just how commonly held certain FCS views were. For example, on the effectiveness of the DDR programs, Denov defends the statement that “some children reportedly enjoyed and benefited” from such programs, by offering one child’s statement: “In the [DDR] camp, I really liked it. We had recreational activities – we went to concerts and did interesting things.” She then supports the opposite assertion that “many of those” who went through DDR programs “expressed disillusionment with a process they felt did not meet their needs,” by using statements from two other children (p. 160). Of course, in a group of eighty FCS, both assertions can be accurate, but Denov does not give the reader enough information from her interviews to reach a conclusion about which view predominated. The three quotes used to support the two positions are identified merely by the gender of the FCS (e.g., “(Girl)” or “(Boy)”), but readers would have benefited by learning the age of the specific FCS, either at time of fighting or at the time of making the statement, as well as other information, and certainly how many FCS made similar assertions. I grew curious how many of the quotes used came from the same FCS boy or girl, since they were never identified by name or number, and found myself wanting to know more about the particular experiences of specific children—to know their stories in greater detail as they played out in time. The popularity of Ishmael Beah’s memoir, *A Long Way Gone* (2007), shows that such readers’ desires are not uncommon. Including more quotes, and more information about the given FCS, would have been better, especially when asserting that a certain view was commonly held.

Denov generally is careful with definitions, but her obvious interest in securing more attention for female child soldiers encourages her to include the experiences of a number of girls who were not so much child “soldiers” —in the traditional sense of our understanding of the term “soldier”—but more like enslaved child “camp followers”—whose jobs were to cook, clean, and allow themselves to be raped by the male soldiers. But in raising this point, I am

drawing a distinction that Denov takes issue with, because it can have the undesirable effect of pushing those girls out of the realm of the increasingly studied child soldier, and into the still more obscure sphere of “war affected youth.” Certainly there were real girl soldiers in the RUF (as there were in Liberia), who fought with weapons just like the boys did, but we do not know how many of Denov’s forty girls fit into this category, and one suspects the experiences of the fighters and the sex slaves may have been very different.

In sum, this is an interesting study that seems primarily written for academics, as well as policy-makers and policy-advisors who deal with peacekeeping, DDR programs, post-war nation-building, and other related forms of humanitarian work. It acknowledges both the structural issues related to the topic as well as the agency retained by the FCS. Denov stresses that the children were often subject to tremendous structural forces beyond their control, but that they often still proved able to make some important decisions affecting their lives—both as soldiers and after ceasing to be soldiers. All scholars of modern African warfare, peacekeeping missions, and of course of the phenomenon of child soldiers should read this book. Anyone working in a field that deals with DDR should read it as soon as possible.

Lt Col Mark E. Grotelueschen, USAF, *United Nations Mission in Liberia*

Myron Echenberg. *Africa in the Time of Cholera: A History of Pandemics from 1817 to the Present*. Cambridge University Press, 2011. xxxi, 208 pp.

Even with advances in medicine and public health over the years and the availability of cheap and effective basic oral rehydration salts (salt, sugar, and clean water), credited for preventing 40 million deaths since they were formally endorsed by World Health Organization,¹ cholera has continued to emerge and re-emerge as a serious public health concern in poor resource settings with the African continent accounting for the largest percentage of the global reported cases and deaths. These outbreaks have recently increased in frequency, severity and duration potentially linked to socio-economic and environmental factors. Whilst there may be other books or survey articles on cholera in Africa, the book by Myron Echenberg seems to be the first to focus substantially on the history of cholera pandemics in Africa. Its publication is very timely with the emergence of large and prolonged cholera outbreaks in Angola, Congo, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and most recently in Zimbabwe in which cholera has shown its potential to cause morbidity and mortality as witnessed a century ago. The growing burden of cholera outbreaks in Africa, including the ongoing outbreak in Haiti, has revived research interests on cholera and attempts to establish realistic goals to control the disease in the developing world.

The book with ten chapters is divided into two parts. The first part has four chapters that give a detailed overview of the spread of cholera covering the first six pandemics from 1817 through to 1947. This section describes how human movement from other parts of the globe imported cholera into the African continent and how it facilitated its spread across the continent. More, specifically Chapters 1 and 2 give an account of the global spatial spread of the pandemics and the medical and public health responses invoked to contain the pandemics. Chapter 3 discusses case studies from Senegambia, Ethiopia and Zanzibar, with Chapter 4 covering cholera in North Africa and the Nile Valley (Tunisia, 1835-1868) and Egypt (1823-

1947). In these case studies, the political and socio-economic issues driving these pandemics and medical responses are comprehensively narrated.

Part two of the book consists of six chapters focusing on the African experience of the seventh pandemic since the 1960s through to date. This part gives a historical and epidemiological description of Africa's efforts and challenges in dealing with cholera outbreaks. Chapter 5 describes the medical advances that resulted in the use of oral rehydration therapy (ORT), antibiotics, cholera vaccines, and employment of water purification techniques to prevent or contain outbreaks. It also explains the scientific breakthroughs in the understanding of the biology and ecology of *V. cholerae*. Chapter 6 gives an overview of the consequences of cholera on the African continent over the years to date with a discussion of possible factors driving recent outbreaks. The author discusses how cholera problem has grown over the years with increased frequency, severity, and duration despite the availability of the cheap and effective ORT therapy among other cholera control measures. A discussion of the risk factors (environmental and geographic, armed conflict, and the dispersal of refugees) influencing the diffusion of the disease are carefully presented in Chapter 7. This discussion covers the changing environmental and ecological conditions in some of the large lakes in Africa (Chad, Tanganyika, and Malawi [Nyasa]) which have become long-term ecological reservoirs for *V. cholerae*. This narration to some degree explains why *V. cholerae* which has been shown to persist under coastal environments has become endemic and with severe outbreaks in arid and inland areas of Africa that are distant from coastal waters.² Social disruptions such as armed conflicts and natural disasters (e.g. volcanic eruptions and floods) resulting in large number of refugees are also discussed. The effects of public health policies and governments responses to cholera outbreaks in changing times as determinants of cholera outbreaks are discussed with Senegal, South Africa, and Angola as cases studies in Chapter 8. The 2008-2009 cholera outbreak in Zimbabwe, which was rated as the worst African cholera epidemic in recent years, is covered in Chapter 9. Some of the socio-economic challenges that resulted in the deterioration of the health system and its associated infrastructure are highlighted. The author concludes by making an assessment of cholera in Africa today and points out some of the challenges for its containment.

A minor criticism of this book is that on the discussion of cholera in Zimbabwe, the author focused more on the politics of the country than the country's history of cholera. In a nutshell, this book is well written, and the author managed to put together pieces of information in a simple style to come up with a very interesting detailed account of the history of cholera in Africa. This book contains useful information to individuals interested in public health and researchers' working on cholera prevention and control. Those who have a broader interest on the history of epidemics, factors driving the spread of infectious diseases in developing world and politics in Africa will find this book useful.

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Zindoga Mukandavire, *University of Florida*

Harri Englund (ed.). *Christianity and Public Culture in Africa*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2011. 240 pp.

The relationship between African Christianity and politics remains a major theme of scholarship on African spirituality, particularly with the rise of various evangelical and Pentecostal churches since the 1970s. The contributors to this collection of essays share a common dissatisfaction with the theoretical and empirical frameworks used to analyze the links between religion and politics in Africa. First, Englund and several of the other authors recognize how Pentecostal churches often are seen by observers as institutions that promote neoliberal values of individual materialism and a demonization of other spiritual traditions. They counter these prejudices as well as the common perspective of viewing African Christianity primarily through set beliefs as well as the political positions of church leaders. Instead, the contributors to this collection engage with the broader literature on public culture to transcend narrow definitions of political activity. Christian churches construct identities through public activity, not merely through doctrinal positions. By constructing identities of themselves and of others through a wide range of public activities, Christians shape public discourses on politics, ethnic identity, class, and gender.

The majority of essays do an excellent job of showing some of the possibilities that these theoretical approaches offer. Barbara Cooper's outstanding study of Christian naming ceremonies among Hausa people in Nigeria exemplifies the strengths of analyzing the public activities of Christians. In southern Niger, Sunni Islam is the predominate religious tradition, but a minority of evangelical Protestants belonging to the American missionary Sudan Inland Mission (SIM) emerged by the 1930s. Besides competing over theology, Christians and Muslims also struggled over families – marriage, the custody of children, and fertility. Christian men in the late twentieth century often complained that Muslim polygyny helps explain the continued dominance of Islam, especially since relatively few women had converted to Christianity. Missionaries and Hausa Protestants developed practices to gain control over children who typically belonged to families with both Muslim and Christian members. The control of fathers over small children rather than mothers was a common bond between the Muslim majority and the Christian minority. One of the most effective ways Christians could declare that a child belonged to their faith came with a modified version of a naming ceremony performed by Muslims, the *bikin suna*. In contemporary Niger, Christian ceremonies furnish opportunities for Christians to preach the superiority of their religion to families with members of both faiths, as well as to visibly show the differences between the ways Muslims and Christians celebrate the ceremony. Cooper's approach is welcome, especially as it highlights the agency of Christians (and Muslims) outside of leadership positions.

Another impressive chapter is Englund's own study of evangelical radio broadcasts in Malawi, particularly on the topic of Islam. He takes on a topic at the heart of many contemporary evangelical and Pentecostal churches—spiritual warfare. Instead of condemning

this belief as a sign of intellectual backwardness or proof of the threat of religious intolerance, Englund places radio broadcasts in Malawian political and cultural contexts to explore how the rhetoric and public uses of spiritual warfare are important elements in the intellectual resources of Pentecostals. Yao communities in northern Malawi as well as South Indian traders are largely Muslim, and the advent of democracy in the 1990s has also allowed anxieties regarding these communities' role in national and regional politics to reach a larger public audience. Pentecostals did not invent these tensions, but their emphasis on battling evil spiritual forces has increasingly led to competition with Muslims. Some Pentecostals view Muslims as lost people often engaged with occult supernatural forces, even as national and regional politicians seek to defuse religious conflict in the country. Pentecostal radio shows that give voice to individual transformations through faith seemingly respect religious tolerance. Most programs deal with the transgressions of supposed Christians instead of merely targeting Islam. However, some of the testimonies by former Muslims reveal how the rhetoric of spiritual warfare can take on a Islamophobic bent as well as a means by which new converts can form lasting relationships with the larger Pentecostal community. Interestingly, Englund notes (a bit too briefly) how metanarratives of global Muslim/Christian conflict so common in US evangelical circles can miss how Africans might address local and regional concerns, such as an effort to evangelize Muslims as one among many efforts to reform Malawian society.

Most of the other chapters provide other valuable insights on missions in post-colonial Africa, gender conflicts and Christianity, and literary appropriations of Christian imagery. One weakness to this otherwise strong collection is that some authors struggle a bit too hard to overturn previous scholarship on Pentecostal churches, particularly by arguing that Pentecostals do not always ignore social concerns. However, the ensemble of the chapters is quite strong. The book is best suited for graduate students and scholars, especially since it demands a firm grounding in critical theory. All in all, this study is a creative and inspiring work that should be read by researchers interested in new directions in the study of African Christianity.

Jeremy Rich, *Marywood University*

Jack Goody. *Myth, Ritual, and the Oral*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 161 pp.

In *Myth, Ritual, and the Oral* Jack Goody provides a thought-provoking synthesizes of oral methodological problems and analytical approaches. With over five decades of experience and scholarship, Goody has spent a considerable amount of time on the topic, contributing to our understanding in influential books like *The Myth of the Bagre* (1972), *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (1977), *The Interface between the Written and the Oral* (1987), and *A Myth Revisited: The Third Bagre* (2002). These works, among others, are consolidated in this tightly packed social anthropological text. Although Goody states up front that he is not saying anything new in the book, the work offers a fresh, insightful, and cognitive approach on the subject. Goody argues that myth, ritual, and oral literature is a creative, imaginative, and variable process that is difficult to analyze.

Goody shows the entanglements, variability, and transformations associated with myths, ritual, and the oral. He begins by addressing the problem of defining religion and ritual by viewing "classical statements and offering reconciliation." In this context, Goody questions existing interpretations and the "usage of concepts of religion and ritual, particularly as developed by Durkheim and those who followed him" (p. 31). In chapter 2, Goody addresses oral literature definitions and examines the process of moving from oral to written forms. He stresses the "context of recitation" as an important distinguishing factor in understanding oral literature, showing how variations are introduced and how changes are naturally embedded into the oral form. In the next chapter, Goody moves into an analysis of technology and understanding societies by showing how the audio recorder has impacted the work and scholarship of anthropologists. His key findings are that "one could now record with relative ease a plurality of versions of a single recitation" (p. 58) and that society was "less static than theories of traditional society would suggest" (p. 59). Among other things, Goody shows that the audio recorder reveals the flexible relationship between myth and society. In chapter 4, the author problematizes the belief that societies without writings are fixed, static, and unchanging. He argues that creativity, especially directed towards actions involving the supernatural, explains ritual variations and change.

The next few chapters deal with specific oral forms. Chapter 5 examines the relationship between folktales and cultural history. The chapter begins with the views that folktales are considered an example of "primitive thought," but to this the author holds that the audiences of folktales are usually children. This oral form is differentiated based on the audience and its association with untruth compared to the other oral forms. The next chapter is an extension of folklore study, providing a much more focused treatment of story characters based on the author's research in Ghana during the 1950s and 1960s. He concludes that folklore provides entertainment and lessons largely focused on children. Goody deals with the varieties of oral literature in Chapter 7. He accomplishes this through research on the Bagre, a secret association in Ghana that shows the possible variations in oral performances and recorded work. Goody demonstrates the difficulty of anthropological reconstructions of performances.

The last two chapters examine oral transformations and memory based on written text. Chapter 8 turns to the transformative process between oral and written forms. Goody holds that writing has made "significant contributions to new forms of literature" (p. 117). In particular, he shows the role and the use of the novel. For example, the author states, "The African novel emerged in a post-colonial context when largely oral cultures were being transformed, in their communicative practices, in their relationship between storyteller and audience, by the adoption of writing" (p. 154). Lastly, Goody addresses writing on oral memory. He cleverly shows that writing fixed oral forms, restricting the spontaneity and creativity often associated with them while devaluing oral tradition. Goody questions how knowledge was created before writing as a process "internalized," "memorized," and "presented." This understanding is compared with the frozen nature of text that is committed to memory, also generating knowledge.

Goody is commended for his years of scholarship and this innovative, provocative, and comprehensive book that will certainly elongate the conversations on and surrounding ritual,

myth, and oral literature. Scholars interested in the entanglements, discourse, definition, and analysis of such literature will find much to consider in this rich study.

Mickie Mwanzia Koster, *University of Texas at Tyler*

Sean Hanretta. *Islam and Social Change in French West Africa: History of an Emancipatory Community*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 311 pp.

With his investigations on the community of Sheikh Yacouba Sylla and what remains of the Sheikh's legacy in western Cote d'Ivoire, Sean Hanretta has certainly added a few pounds to the existing literature on Islam in West Africa. This work is not a mere addition to the countless volumes that inspired the Stanford University historian; it carries an originality of its own that must be hailed. In fact, Hanretta adopts an investigative gait that strays from ordinary historical research where heavy emphasis is placed not only on the outsider who narrates the story of the defeated, but also on archives that shun oral and memory-ridden accounts only to valorize those that are written. The logical consequence of what may rightfully be called "traditional historiography" is giving voice to the only dominant discourse in the colonial space where stories like that of Yacouba Sylla's community originate. The dominant discourse here is one propped up by oppositional binaries justifying the subjugation of the colonized in a pretentious civilizing mission which rather consecrates the diabolization of the "Other." In the colonial context, this Other must be held in constant check, i.e. under the colonizer's panoptic gaze. Such a gaze becomes even more penetrating when notable layers of identities like religion come into play.

In the French Sudan the colonized, i.e. the subject of Hanretta's studies, for the most part, trace their Muslim identity to the first contact with Arab merchants and travelers in the eleventh century. It happens that in the French Sudan, to a significant extent covering regions claimed by Old Mali, Islam has not just been a matter of faith; it has also a political leverage threatening to dismantle the colonial empire in need of stability. Yacouba Sylla's emergence means a lack of stability because it generates the calling into question of tijjani practices in currency for ages. Yacouba was at the forefront of reforms that threatened to not only rewrite the tenets of the Tijaniyya by initiating eleven-bead "zikr" (recitation) against twelve-bead recitations, but also to shatter the control of the French colonial administration of the Sudan. Sylla's innovations—reforming the Islamic bridalwealth, de-stratifying an organically hierarchical society as the Mande society, and de-gendering the devotional space initially controlled by the only males, among others—were a source of social upheaval. Even though the French could not care less about internecine strife among their colonial subjects who they claimed to be civilizing, their authority and dominance in the region would suffer if they remained passive. Hanretta reveals that the French action, which may be construed as taking side against the Yacouba Sylla's tijani obedience, rather fortified the latter's obedience, making it the main surviving Hamawi movement ever.

Hanretta sets the goals of uncovering stories of marginalized who undid the colonizer's divide and rule politics by not only taking advantage of the colonial presence, but also by consolidating the marginalized's presence through an operation of decentering that finally places them at the center, thereby presenting a reversed dichotomy that the colonial could not

have imagined. Hanretta writes, “[t]he unintended consequences of French rule [...] created a new geography for Islam in West Africa, a new space into which someone like Yacouba could be exiled and then find himself far from the pressures exerted by the orthodox guardians of religion and culture” (p. 283). The Yacoubian obedience of Hamawiyya (or Hamallism), Hanretta shows us, derives from a stock that traditional African societies look askance at. The casted members of society, the slaves and ex-slaves, women, all become central in a discourse that at first glance reveals itself as the site of the affirmation of an exclusionist and patriarchalist ideology that thrives on the arbitrary and inimical stratification of society. How this community came into being and how does its self-reflection contribute to its (hi)story are the questions that historian Hanretta attempts to answer.

Hanretta’s book divides into three major parts the life story of Yacoubian Hamawis, a denomination more preferable than Yacoubists—which bears a pejorative and demeaning value as “-isms” usually denotes—by which Hanretta calls the followers of Yacouba Sylla. Part One (“The Suffering of Our Father”: Story and Context) comprises two chapters dealing with a contextualization of the Hamawi Sufism in the Western Sudan as well as the Yacoubian Hamawi community’s origin and developments from Nioro, Kaedi to western Cote d’Ivoire where Yacouba Sylla ultimately settled after doing his colonial prison sentence in Sassandra. Part Two (“I Will Prove to You That What I Say Is True”: Knowledge and Colonial Rule) mostly grapples with the veracity of the sources that back up the story of the emergence of Yacouba Sylla; the sources in question are mostly colonial and of traditional oral nature. Here, Hanretta attempts at demonstrating how colonial accounts on Yacouba Sylla derive more often from hear-say, denigration from his opponents and panoptic eavesdropping than from truth. Hanretta accords more credibility to stories told by the members of the Yacoubian community. Lastly, in the third section of this work (“What Did He Give You?": Interpretation”), the author attempts to excavate female participation in the Yacoubian community, the Yacoubian ethics of work, and Yacouba Sylla’s involvement in Ivorian national politics and the place of his heritage in West Africa’s Cote d’Ivoire.

Hanretta utilizes the French colonial archives that had been amassed in the hopes of maintaining colonial grip on the West Sudan. Because the religious leaders constituted a counter-weight of sorts against the colonial administration, their every move had to be documented and analyzed by the representative of the Metropole. About Yacouba Sylla, a large amount of official accounts originate from colonial officers like Governor Charbonnier whose reliance on intelligence vies with present-day surveillance of potential trouble-makers of Islamist stock., “Most of the documentary evidence on the history of Yacouba Sylla and his followers comes from surveillance file, intelligence reports, and captured correspondence that were assembled and preserved by the French colonial administration” (p. 121). Also, colonial knowledge on Africans derived from recording behaviors and attitudes falling in French stereotypes about Africans and their religion that the French dubbed “Islam noir” (black Islam) as well as reports and/or accounts that a group could fabricate about the other. Opposition between twelve-bead tijaniyya (mostly Halpullaren like Seydou Nourou Tall who personified African collaborationism with French colonials) to eleven-bead tijanis (mostly Soninke) helped produce part of the French documentation on Yacouba Sylla (p. 147). Clearly, the divide-and-rule politics yielded a brand of African collaborationists that furthered the colonial enterprise.

Archival documentation achieved in the aforementioned mode needs to be spared facile readings that take colonial accounts at face value. In other words, the archival wealth available to the historian stands as the tip of the Yacouba Sylla story (i.e. the “*zâhir*” or the perceptible with the naked eye) as opposed to the self-representational accounts delivered by the sheikh’s community, which is more of a “*bâtin*” (interiorist) narrative. No wonder, Hanretta encourages historian towards more circumspection: “[...] the archive must be approached as the messy product of multiple, contingent, and shifting forces; it is simultaneously the site of contestations, the custodian of the tools of battle, and the deposit of the ruins upon which subsequent battles [must be] fought” (p. 125). Thus, he pits archival sources against the Yacoubian oral sources, which consist of the community’s own sense of its history (the elders and the sons of Yacouba Sylla) in hopes that from such a collision of sources would yield objective a knowledge about this atypical religious leader who caused both more fear and respect at the same time from the colonial regime in the French Sudan. Colonial archives on Yacouba Sylla became an imperative insofar as Islam in this part of the world was deemed localized, tolerant and peaceful. This conception was in synchrony with the French understanding of the separation of the State from the Church. Sylla’s mode of operation bordered an anarchism of sorts, his understanding of Islam being both heterodox and heteroprax. Therefore, he constituted a threat to colonial socio-political stability. Instead of the so-called “black Islam” more in tune with tolerance, pragmatism, and localism, he embraced “Arab” Islam which, according to French colonial administration, was synonymous with radicalism. Here, the colonizer sought to arrange a dichotomy whereby Islam in “black” Africa had to be gentle and cooperative whereas in the Arab world it would embody violence and its attending idioms. When Yacouba Sylla’s comportment fails to be read according to this drill, it comes to be taken for an abnormality – for it is against the “normal” doxa and praxis.

Overall, Hanretta delivers on the promise by foregrounding oral traditions or sources which are simply dismissed by certain objectivistic investigations that are fundamentally oblivious of the centrality of orality in Africa discursive strategies and intellection. He disproves the so-called “*verba volent script manent*” (spoken words leave no trace while written ones are permanent) in the sense that he debunks the truthfulness of the colonial archives which heavily rest on the so suspected oral sources. The permanence of the archives does not make them objective, trustworthy, and conducive to building the kind of historiographic scholarship Hanretta advocates. Wilfully or unwittingly, Hanretta puts the *verba* and the script on the same level thereby canonizing such a source in African historiography. He accomplishes his goal.

This contribution foregrounds Africans’ contribution to Islam by revealing the agency of the marginalized masses of the people who found a source of self-worth in Sylla’s twist on Hamallah’s Sufism. In that respect the French colonial administration had just reasons to fear Yacouba Sylla’s revolutionizing innovations since the latter were disrupting the apparent peace of the putatively orthodox and orthoprax Sufism in currency in the Futa Toro region of the West Sudan. Also, Hanretta’s work must be credited for putting Yacouba Sylla’s brand of tijaniyya on a pedestal that puts it at the antipodes of political Islam (Islamism) such as the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries have witnessed. This book must be taken seriously because it recalibrates historiographical investigations by viewing archives not as “an object in and of itself” but rather as “a means to an end,” thereby obscuring the path to simplistic reading to

which most historians of West African Islam seemed to have subscribed. That's why part two of the book ("Ghosts and the Grain of Archives") stands out as a quintessential section inasmuch as it debunks the pseudo-objectivity of colonial archives by allocating audibility to the suppressed narratives of the local, albeit oral and putatively unworthy of rationalistic trust. The rest of the work comes out as a validation of Hanretta's decision to give a chance to the other side of the story to be scrutinized with equal earnestness and respect, while keeping on the side of sanity. This makes the book an addition that swims upstream of fundamentally Eurocentric and "alterophobic" narratives seen thus far on Africans and their potentialities.

This work will certainly add to African literature on Islam in West Africa. As the author aptly puts, "[t]he story of Yacouba Sylla allows us to glimpse those paths that were lost in the wilderness, ones so entangled with the brute realities of colonial overrule that they ceased to lead anywhere. [...] They reveal [...] the creative intellectual activity of ex-slaves, casted persons, young women and others engaged in the process of reinventing their social and cultural lives in the context of a complicated set of negotiations between religious elites, French administrators, and the forces of socioeconomic change" (pp. 283-84). Sylla's story is somewhat resonant with leaders like Omar Tall and Samori Toure who, at the turn of the century used Islam to counter colonial inroads into West Africa. No wonder most of them were seriously combated by French and British colonial military forces. The subversive potential of religious groups and communities invited a panoptic gaze from the new proprietors who thought that they had to exert control in order to maintain their grip. Attempts to occlude religious movements like Yacouba Sylla, however, seemed to have almost always been a disaster for the French colonial power. West Africa is also home to the Murids whom the French sought to destabilize only to see an unabashed determination of tijani sheikh, Amadou Bamba; his combination of a strong ethic of work and religious observance outlived colonialism.

Although susceptible to run the risk of nationalistic and ideological re-appropriations by some Africentrist scholars, Hanretta's contribution will constitute a sure value for students of African history inasmuch as it will set a stage to be reckoned with for those specialists who purport to speak about Africa and things African without integrating narratives by Africans through the use of investigative means that nullify the undeniable agency of movements like Yacouba Sylla's.

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Neil Kodesh. *Beyond the Royal Gaze: Clanship and Public Healing in Buganda*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010. 280 pp.

The interlacustrine kingdom of Buganda has been the subject of a rich historiography, beginning with the work of John Roscoe and Apolo Kaggwa in the early twentieth century. This historical research has privileged the complex, centralized political organization of the kingdom, and particularly its *kabaka* (king). *Beyond the Royal Gaze*, Neil Kodesh's first book, offers a revision of historians' royalist bias and instead turns our historical gaze to the comparatively obfuscated realms of both clanship and Buganda's pre-colonial history.

Kodesh convincingly argues that the securing of communal well-being and the development of clanship in pre-colonial Buganda form the basis for the kingdom's complex

organization from the sixteenth to the early eighteenth century. In doing so, he moves here-to-fore peripheral subjects—spirit mediums, public healers, local leaders, and the common Baganda—to the center of his analysis. He contends that clanship and the pre-colonial production of knowledge (namely, clan histories) were inextricably linked to securing these healing networks. His aim is not to uncover new dimensions of what, exactly, constituted public healing, but he does illuminate how well-being was correlated with Ganda organizational and agricultural developments. For example, those leaders who could secure healing networks (via spirit mediums and medicines) earned the ability to allocate land beyond that occupied by the immediate ancestors, allowing these clans to expand in geographical scope and organizational complexity (p9. 93-97).

By arguing that healing networks formed the basis of Buganda's centralization, Kodesh problematizes simplistic bifurcations of "politics" and "religion" (pp. 18-19). In fact, he rarely employs the term "religion" but instead analyzes with considerable detail the quest of common folk who sought healthy families and people (i.e., spirits mediums and healers) who could secure this for them by connecting them to their ancestors (*mizimu*) and their land (*butaka*) (p. 130). Colonial taxonomies designated Ganda healing practices as "religion," thereby removing these practices from a complex social life in which people of various social ranks sought to improve their (and their children's) lot through activities such as marriages, banana cultivation, and assisting on military campaigns.

While gender is not an explicit analytical category, Kodesh does correct an androcentric bias implicit in the royalist historiography by giving consistent attention to the complex roles that notions of gender and marriage played among spirit mediums, clan histories, and public healing ceremonies. Thus, he does not focus exclusively on women's specific contributions to the organizational development of Buganda but rather offers a comparatively balanced analysis of the diverse ways that men and women participated in the complex social structures that made the kingdom of Buganda.

Beyond the Royal Gaze has much to offer methodologically. Kodesh is indebted to Stephen Feierman (*Peasant Intellectuals*), upon whose work he draws heavily. The uniqueness of Kodesh's research lies in how he heard many of Buganda's founding myths as told from the perspective of the heads and healers of Buganda's many clans. Through his acknowledged use of "historical imagination," Kodesh recreates how these stories may have been heard in their pre-colonial contexts by people gathered around shrines seeking healing. These alternative meanings of clan histories, which were marginalized by colonial historiography, offer new ways of conceptualizing the relationship between healing and Buganda's social structures. Importantly, he does not try to locate a distinct "African voice" through the project. Instead, he finds methodological freedom in the shifting nature of public knowledge and discourse, assuming that the variability and multiplicity of the stories he recorded offered new clues into the way that clan histories had functioned in Buganda's more distant past. Kodesh, however, is not carried away by imagination, as his analyses combine written historical accounts with archaeological and ethnolinguistic evidence that empirically ground his historical reconstructions.

Kodesh's work revises our understanding of the kingdom's history, but its significance extends into Buganda's more recent past. Kodesh views his work as laying the foundation for a

reconsideration of religious, economic, and political developments during Uganda's colonial era. Studies of colonial (and independent) Uganda have not suffered as greatly from the royalist myopia with which Kodesh diagnosed the historians of Buganda's pre-colonial period. Studies of colonial health and healthcare in Uganda, however, could benefit from Kodesh's foundation, as many of these have operated from the very bifurcation between "religion and culture" and "politics" which he problematizes.

It may be that the more lasting contribution of Kodesh's volume will be to not only direct historians' gaze beyond Buganda's "royalty" but also beyond the colonial period itself, for he offers a compelling and creative way to re-investigate the pre-colonial era.

Jason Bruner, *Princeton Theological Seminary*

M. Kathleen Madigan. *Senegal Sojourn: Selections from One Teacher's Journal*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010. xix, 231 pp.

In *Senegal Sojourn* Kathleen Madigan, a professor of modern languages at Rockhurst University, gives a monthly account of the year she spent in Dakar working with foreign language teachers and fiction writers as a Fulbright Scholar in 2003-2004. Each chapter of the book is organized by month (October-August), and although the separate journal entries in each chapter are not dated (some chapters have more or fewer entries than there are days in the month), they read as a daily record of her experiences. A final chapter includes Madigan's reflections five years after her sojourn.

In general, Madigan's observations lend themselves well to the journal form, as the reader has a sense of experiencing the triumphs and disappointments, both momentous and mundane, along with the author, and the chronological structure traces the arc of the author's acclimation to a country whose literature and film she knows well before arriving, but whose cultural practices and lifestyle are largely a mystery to her. Madigan describes activities to which most Americans would give little consideration (establishing an internet connection, installing an air-conditioner window unit, shopping for clothing, commuting) as major undertakings in Dakar, fascinating to Westerner readers precisely because most of us take them for granted. Madigan's descriptions of more profound matters—how to interact with Senegalese Muslims weakened by Ramadan fasting, working with writers and colleagues, navigating through cultural, political, and religious differences—are well observed and carefully rendered.

The journal form, which lends an intimacy to Madigan's writing, can also be a weakness. The colloquial style of the journal entries, although sometimes appealing, can also be trite and haphazard. Describing Senegalese writer Charles Sow, she comments rather vapidly, "Whenever I see him, he is sporting a beige cap, which looks great." Writing of a Christmas eve picnic organized by the American Embassy and attended by the American Ambassador Richard Roth and his wife, she says, "We are so thankful that he [Roth] does not embarrass us, and his wife Carol also comes across as one of us." To whom is Madigan referring in her use of the word "us," and what does she mean when she includes the Ambassador and his wife in that group? Is she talking about Americans in general, or only certain kinds of "enlightened" Americans who do not cause her shame abroad? Furthermore, the author seems unable to decide who her audience is. Is it scholars who have a background in West African culture and

history, or rather, is it the uninitiated reader? Madigan tries to appeal to both and is not always successful. As an academic with a background in West African studies, I found much to admire, especially her descriptions of encounters with Senegalese authors. I also appreciated her succinct endnotes on culture, politics, and history and her ability to describe Senegalese traditions and practices with sensitivity and aplomb. On the other hand, in trying to accommodate readers unfamiliar with her subject, she has a tendency to over explain, which becomes distracting. This is particularly noticeable with regard to her parenthetical definitions of foreign words or phrases (*boubou*, *baobab*, *Toubab*) some of which are repeated several times unnecessarily. A short glossary of such terms would have been beneficial.

As stated, her brief explanations of history, politics, culture, and religious practices contained in endnotes are useful and do not interrupt the thread of her journal entries. The maps, timelines, and photos she includes are also useful and attractive additions to the narrative. In all, *Senegal Sojourn* is an engaging and compelling book in spite of some weaknesses in editing and the author's attempts to appeal to too wide an audience.

Patrick Day, *University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire*

Anne Kelk Mager. *Beer, Sociability, and Masculinity in South Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010. viii, 232 pp.

Anne Kelk Mager offers an engaging and nuanced history of the development of South African beer culture and the rise of South African Breweries (SAB), the global brewing giant. Tracing the history of beer and its consumption in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa, Mager asserts that understanding beer and its consumption is critical to understanding how masculinity, social interaction, and commerce all intersected in the late twentieth century nation. Beginning with the relaxing of alcohol prohibition laws for nonwhites in 1961 (the same year that South Africa established itself as an independent republic) and the consolidation of SAB over the same decade, Mager's book attempts to both describe the development of the South African beer trade and examine the possibilities for social interaction and identification that the trade created. For Mager, the public act of beer-drinking opened a series of spaces that allowed for differing forms of masculinity to be contested across various and rapidly changing political and social contexts in late twentieth century South Africa.

Mager argues for a multifaceted approach, eschewing "conventional disciplinary boundaries in an attempt to construct the social and economic history of a commodity and its effects on society" (p. 11). Organizing a narrative around several interlocking themes rather than pursuing a simply linear chronology allows Mager to explore the many different ways in which race and gender come to bear upon the sociability promised by beer drinking in South Africa in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Mager seeks to cover an ambitious range of topics with her approach; chapters range from SAB's attempts to market heritage in a post-apartheid landscape, the social and economic impacts of alcoholism and drinking-related violence among black South African men, and the attempts of shebeen owners to unionize and gain legal respectability in the last decade of apartheid. While her interdisciplinary approach is effective in displaying the entangled and complicated history of sociability that Mager proposes, it is not always evenly applied; passages that critically engage with South African

beer-drinking rest uneasily alongside a more standard narrative of the rise of SAB. Mager's method leaves her overall focus unclear—is this a history of SAB, an investigation into sociability and masculinity in late twentieth century South Africa, or the story of a commodity and its representation in a particularly contested period? At its most deft, Mager manages all three within a coherent narrative. At other instances, particularly chapters two and seven, this unified idea is less obvious.

Mager combines a considerable number of personal interviews with an extensive reading of contemporary periodicals, business records, court cases, and government documents in order to strengthen her argument that the history of South African beer and beer drinking provides essential insight into the “competitive practices, masculinities, and sociability in South Africa” in the twentieth century (p. 11). Her interviews, particularly those with shebeen owners and SAB personnel, serve to ground her narrative by adding specific case studies to the larger story she tells about the business of beer drinking in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. In chapter five, her most ambitious, Mager charts the effect of the rapidly destabilizing apartheid order upon sociable drinking within black townships, SAB union demonstrations, and student culture at the largely-white University of Cape Town and Stellenbosch University. Mager avoids over-generalization in her analysis of these disparate spaces and events through her reliance upon individual stories. Her broad source base and careful interviews keep her analysis of the painful transition moments of the late nineteen eighties and early nineteen nineties tightly focused on the ways in which beer—and the masculine socializing it promised—could be marshaled by a variety of actors in a politically turbulent era.

Mager's interdisciplinary approach makes her work accessible to a wide range of scholars. Specialists in gender and socialization will be interested in her use of Geertz's notions of “deep play” and her definition of beer-drinking as a collective public experience that can reinforce a sense of masculine identity. Economic historians will find particularly useful her tracing of SAB's rise from regional brewer, to national monopoly, to global brewing conglomerate amid the background of racial restriction and political transformation throughout the twentieth century. Mager's research recalls work done previously by Timothy Burke in Zimbabwe in his *Lifebuoy Men, Luxe Women* (1996), which traced the way in which soap companies marketed particularly gendered dimensions of sociability for African men and women. Like Burke, Mager is interested in tracing both the economic history of a commodity and the cultural history of sociability for its users. Mager's work should have import for historians of South Africa as she offers a well-researched history of beer-drinking and its possibilities in the midst of the (post)colonial contestations of identity, politics, and nation during apartheid and beyond.

T.J. Tallie, *University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign*

William F. S. Miles. *My African Horse Problem*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008. xx, 173 pp.

An unexpected letter from a Hausa Muslim priest and friend arrived in Bill Miles' hands announcing that there was an inheritance dispute revolving around his horse that he had left in the care of the chief of a remote village in Niger more than a decade earlier. Miles now had an African horse problem, one that he felt he needed to resolve. He thus set off for the northern

Nigeria southern Niger border region with his ten-year-old son Samuel in early 2010 to resolve the issue. On its surface, the book is a memoir about the trip and the father-son relationship during it. Miles writes of his own concerns and hopes for his son over the course of the trip and further enhances the father-son dimension of the book by including excerpts from his son's diary that provide his perspective. He brought Samuel on the trip, for "I want[ed] him to see the horse as I do, as sign of an ongoing bond with all Hausaland. I need . . . [the local people of the village] to know that, tied up with horse title in Yekuwa [the village], are my and my son's deepest feelings of attachment to all of Africa" (p. 117).

Miles had been a Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV), 1977-1979, teaching English at the high school in the district administrative town of Magaria. While a PCV, he bought his first African horse and then in 1983 as a Fulbright scholar researching the Nigeria-Niger borderlands area a second horse. He acquired his third horse, Sa'a ("Luck"), the subject of the inheritance dispute, on a return follow-up research trip to the region. Owning a horse greatly facilitated his research on what was to become *Hausaland Divided: Colonialism and Independence in Nigeria and Niger* (1994), for it allowed for relatively easy travel between his two village sites of Yardaje, Nigeria, and Yekuwa, Niger. When it came time to leave in 1986, Miles decided that rather than sell the horse he would entrust Sa'a to the care of the village chief for his use but with the understanding that "'the day that I return, it would be here for me as well'" (p. 40). The arrangement was duly written down, with the appropriate signatures affixed to the handwritten document (which Miles reproduces in the book).

When the chief died, however, his son asserted ownership of the horse and sold it. The issue, though, was more complicated because the deceased chief's brother assumed the chieftainship rather than the son. The son's claim to the horse was therefore as much political in nature as it was about inheritance and ownership. Ultimately, through patience and understanding as well the good will of the Yekuwa villagers Miles was able to resolve his African horse problem and secure a new Sa'a, which again belonged to him and his son and heir Samuel. As the document attesting to Sa's ownership notes: "'This horse I leave in the hands of Chief Alhaji aminu, until the day that I—or my heir Ishmael, also known as Samuel Binyamin Miles, or my heir Arielle Pooshpam Miles—demand it'" (p. 155).

As interesting as the story line is (sufficient for National Public Radio's "All Things Considered" to cover it), however, its real value and interest to an Africanist readership lies with its insightful observations and details of Hausa village life in the two neighboring countries. "Even by Nigerian standards, Yardaje is poor. . . . Still, viewed from Yekuwa [Niger] . . . Yardaje, with its dozens of if bicycles and motorcycles (not to mention the chief's own Peugeot), seems like a bustling, cosmopolitan town" (pp. 10-11). Indeed, though culturally linked, the former colonial and now national border makes a real difference, and Hausa people on both sides of the border still refer to Niger as "'France'" (p. 166). Miles provides many insights into divided Hausaland and life on the two sides of the border, how the nature of the border has changed from when he first transversed it, and the ongoing ties that persist despite the international boundary.

Miles also writes at length about human relationships and how they define Hausa culture. "Herein lies the heart of the Hausa way: one human being presenting himself, herself, to another. Person to person. Soul to soul" (pp. 80-81). He deals continually with this human

interaction among the Hausa—the personal greetings, the remembrance of family and events of the past (such as his father’s visit during his PCV days), and the personal dignity that is so highly valued. For all the “grim material realities” of life in the two villages, “there is a sense of solidarity and purpose, an exuberance, that pulses throughout the rural Hausa village” (p. 12). The grim material realities explain for Miles why money “is like the wind.” As one longstanding village friend notes, “‘Friendship is greater than money. . . . Trust is greater than money. For when the money is all gone, all you can rely on is other people’” (p. 167). It is this very knowledge of friendship, trust, and the ability to rely on the people of Yardaje and Yekuwa that emboldened Miles to bring Samuel along on such a challenging trip and enabled him to resolve successfully his African horse problem.

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Michael Nest. *Coltan*. Cambridge, Polity, 2011. x, 220 pp.

This book is one of the first in the new Polity Press series on resources and deals with the mineral coltan, which is used to make electrical capacitors for our new information and communication technologies and game consoles. Coltan has attracted a lot of media attention in recent years because it has been associated with conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In this accessible book Michael Nest sets out to explain the nature of the coltan value chain, the ways in which it has contributed to conflict and to explore the campaigns around it, and their impacts.

It has been commonly accepted in the literature, based on some initial media reports, that the DRC contains 80 percent of the world’s reserves of coltan. Nest, however, debunks this, showing that in fact the country only contains around 9 percent, and that there are reserves distributed in other continents and countries in Africa such as Rwanda, Mozambique, and Nigeria. This is important because it means there are many other potential sources of supply and consequently potential to regulate the supply chain better. His focus, however, is on the DRC, with which he is very familiar.

Drawing on testimonies of those involved in the trade, he describes the different modes of extraction and structure of the global supply chains in detail. This is interesting and important because he shows that while the labor conditions associated with its extraction can be very exploitative, it can also be lucrative for artisanal miners. He describes in fascinating detail the relationships between the different rebel groups in Congo and coltan but shows that this only one source of revenue for them amongst others such as gold. The economic desperation of some rebels is illustrated by the testimony of one woman who used to assist in rapes and killed a number of people. As conflict declined she was thrown into poverty and says she would prefer to go back to that life. The Rwandans brought prison labor to Congo to mine the mineral after they invaded in the 1990s.

Nest is able to calculate the distribution of profits amongst various rebel groups and governments from the mineral, in addition to those for regional governments and the arms they could buy from these. This is a very valuable analysis because too often the story of coltan is surrounding by emotive renderings rather than detailed analysis. He also shows that for the production of coltan on a large-industrial scale there are incentives for peace amongst certain

actors, explaining why the Rwandans arrested the Congolese rebel leader Laurent Nkunda in 2009, who they had previously supported.

The chapter on the different campaigns, such as “No Blood on My Mobile,” is interesting and well researched. Certain European governments and also the US have been active in different initiatives and in devising legislation to try to eliminate “conflict coltan” from global supply chains. The German government is funding an initiative to chemically fingerprint coltan to trace its provenance. However, he argues that coltan is not a major cause of conflict in the Congo and that socio-political grievances and other resources are more important. He finds the main impact of Western campaigns has been to divert Congolese coltan to China. This shows the importance of engaging China on human rights issues and the need to reform the international trade regime so that the World Trade Organization in particular pays much greater attention to these issues as well. It also highlights the need to address the root causes of poverty and conflict in Africa and globally rather than just dealing with symptoms which can then recur.

This is a well written and accessible book which will be of wide general appeal to Africanists and others interested in the politics of natural resources. It would also be particularly suitable for use in undergraduate classes as a case study. It debunks many of the myths around coltan and challenges us to think more deeply about the nature and sources of conflict in contemporary Africa.

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Malyn Newitt (ed). *The Portuguese in West Africa, 1415-1670: A Documentary History*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. xviii, 246 pp.

No one is better qualified to edit a documentary history on *The Portuguese in West Africa, 1415-1670* than Emeritus Professor Malyn Newitt, who is the author or editor of twelve books on Portuguese colonial history. Intended to be part of a defunct series titled *Portuguese Encounters with the World in the Age of the Discoveries*, the explicit aim of *The Portuguese in West Africa, 1415-1670: A Documentary History*, which was picked up by Cambridge University Press, is “to provide a selection of original sources in English translation that would illustrate the interaction of the Portuguese with the peoples of Africa, Asia, and America in the period from 1400 to 1700. The emphasis would be on the way Europeans and non-Europeans reacted to these first contacts, and how their mentalities and cultures were changed by the experience” (p. xi). On this point, Newitt’s work does not disappoint.

For the majority of the documents appearing in this volume, Newitt relies on collections edited by Pierre de Cenival, António Brásio, and Louis Jadin along with the English translations published by the Hakluyt Society. He also consults the works of the prolific Paul E. H. Hair and Admiral Avelino Teixeira de Mota. The sources for this volume are often shreds and patches of originals, copies of originals, and partial translations and compilations. For example, in chapter two, “The Early Voyages to West Africa,” Newitt provides book 1, chapter 33 of Duarte Pacheco Pereira’s *Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis*. He titles the excerpt “Prince Henry ‘The Navigator’ is Remembered.” We learn in the prologue that Pereira abandoned the manuscript in 1506 and that it was not published until 1892. However, Newitt does not work from the original manuscript,

or the 1892 version; instead, he translates a 1988 version edited by Damião Peres and published in Lisbon.

Again, in document 33, "Warfare in the Kongo and Angola," Newitt bases his translation on the edited and previously translated version of another document. The extract is taken from Filippo Pigafetta's original *Relatione del Reame di Congo et delli circonvicine contrade tratta dalli scritti and ragionamenti di Odoardo Lopez Portoghese* published in Rome in 1591. Document 33 is based on pages 60 to 62 of M. Hutchinson's translated and edited 1881 work published in London under the name, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo and of the Surrounding Countries*, as well as pages 54 to 56 of António Luís Alves Ferronha's edited version published in Lisbon in 1989 under the title *Relação do Reino do Congo e das Terras Circunvizinhas*, which is attributed to both Filippo Pigafetta and Duarte Lopes. This is the major weakness of the work; even when extant manuscripts are available, Newitt often works from more recent publications. This potentially limits the audience for the book since historians and other serious scholars are likely to be skeptical of the accuracy of these translations since they are based on secondary and even tertiary sources.

This relatively short edited volume includes a list of seven maps, preface and introduction, fifty-seven documents with opening remarks by the author and notations on source materials, a two page glossary, bibliography, and index. Twelve themes are explored in the volume including: (1) The Portuguese in Morocco, (2) The Early Voyages to West Africa, (3) The Atlantic Islands, (4) The Upper Guinea Coast and Sierra Leone, (5) Elmina and Benin, (6) Discovery of the Kingdom of Kongo, (7) Angola, Paulo Dias and the Founding of Luanda, (8) the Slave Trade, (9) Conflict in the Kingdom of Kongo in the 1560s, (10) Christianity in the Kongo, (11) The Angolan Wars, and (12) People and Places. Newitt notes in his introduction that "in these documents, one can see an informal empire of trade, religious toleration and cultural assimilation coming into existence alongside, and often in opposition to, the military purposes of the Crown and the aristocracy" (p. 5). One of the most significant contributions to this volume is the fact that it traces the endlessly shifting social, political, and economic institutions of Africa and how the Portuguese struggled to understand and deal with them over time and place. Toward the end of his introduction, Newitt exposes the most significant reason that a volume such as this is exceedingly relevant for contemporary historians, social theorists, and students; he notes that more than one third of all the slaves transplanted from Africa over the entire history of the Atlantic slave trade were carried by Portuguese vessels to their colonies (p. 21).

The audience for this work is difficult to assess. As previously mentioned, it is unlikely that an academic would consult such a volume, instead opting for the original manuscripts or the more complete edited and translated versions such as the sources cited by Newitt. Also, as a documentary history, the selections are overly brief. Newitt does a heroic job of introducing each individual excerpt, but the methodology behind the selection process is not adequately explained. That being said, I could see myself using this text as a quick reference guide as a Lusophone African scholar as well as making it a supplemental reading in my course, "Prime Movers of the Atlantic World: Portugal and Africa." Those interested in this volume may also be interested in the University of Wisconsin's digital collections, particularly the sub-collection *Africa Focus: Sights and Sounds of a Continent* that contains several early texts translated and

digitized in their entirety that focus on Portuguese-West African encounters (<http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/AfricaFocus/AfricaFocus-idx?type=browse&scope=AfricaFocus>). Finally, for an alternative review of this work, see Liam M. Brockey's (January 2011) piece for H-Africa, H-Net Reviews (<https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=30843>).

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Michael F. O'Riley. *Cinema in an Age of Terror: North Africa, Victimization, and Colonial History*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press. 2010. 198 pp.

Michael O'Riley's book explores the methods by which North African cinema is used to inform contemporary debates on the legacies of colonialism and imperialism. His main objective is to demonstrate how "victimization and imperialist history can be understood to shape violence, occupation, control, and representation between and within nations" (p. 2). More importantly, he attempts to link these films and their focus on colonial history to terrorism in the post 9/11 era and argues their "spectacle of victimization" points to a "problematic ideological contest over the territory of the victim" (p. 19). Methodologically, his arguments are informed by Edward Said's studies of imperialism and run counter to Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" thesis, which he claims developed renewed interest, particularly in the United States after 9/11 and the beginning of the global war on terror. Although other nations are briefly addressed, O'Riley is primarily concerned with the French colonial experience.

The book is organized into five chapters, each focusing on the analysis of specific films and their relation to colonialism, terrorism, and victimization. He begins with Gillo Pontecorvo's 1966 film, *The Battle of Algiers*, and contends a Pentagon screening of the film in late 2003 points to "a larger strategy of Western neoimperialist surveillance and territorial expansion" (p. 25). Moreover, Pentagon staffers had ulterior motives by using the film as a "pedagogic" tool to "inform the neoimperialist practice of mapping out territory to be occupied" and also to reinforce "the imagined image of the nation that occluded the ambiguities of colonial history and ultimately used them to new imperialist ends" (pp. 31, 46). This claim is particularly open to question because it is not supported by empirical evidence. Does the Pentagon screening really point to "hegemonic" neoimperialism by the U.S., or was the film simply being used as a case study for its leadership who were caught unprepared to fight an insurgency? The lack of any discussion on U.S. military education or specific evidence of what the Pentagon intended by screening the film leaves the reader with unanswered questions.

O'Riley moves next to an analysis of Rachid Bouchareb's 2007 film *Indigènes (Days of Glory)* and its encouragement of legislation that emerged on behalf of colonial era veterans. The story deals specifically with the narrative of North Africans who fought for France in World War Two. O'Riley links this movie with the 2005 immigrant riots in Paris, which he argues were evidence of widespread societal marginalization in France among children of North African immigrants. The film found an audience within that community and reflected their desire for more opportunity in a nation their relatives defended. The riots and the film's debut in the Elysee Palace shortly before its public release were "clearly important factors in the shaping of government policy" (p. 57). Indeed, President Chirac was sufficiently moved by the film to

equalize pensions of North Africans with those of their native French colleagues. This is an important transition for the book's final chapters, which introduce films that emphasize a legacy of victimization and the ongoing struggle over its memorialization in France.

The strongest of these final chapters is the third, which examines victimization and French national memory as depicted in Michael Haneke's 2005 film *Caché* (Hidden). In his analysis of the film, O'Riley makes thematic links between its characters and cinematography to the Algerian War and unsuccessful French efforts to come to terms with it. Hannecke's visual use of film noir evocatively reveals the narrative of a French family haunted by the legacies of Algeria and suggests a darker or hidden past, which O'Riley claims has remained largely unresolved (pp. 84-85). The plot, which involves the abandonment of an adopted Algerian boy by his French family, is "central to the film's larger narrative concerning victimization" (pp. 87-88). This is metaphorically apparent by O'Riley's replacement of the family and boy with France and Algeria in his analysis. He also contrasts *Caché* with the 1961 Algerian protests in Paris, where French authorities arrested and interred over 11,000 people and killed an untold number in the process (p. 89). He convincingly shows how the architect of this disaster, Prefecture of Police Chief Maurice Papon, and many other postwar French civil servants had direct links as collaborators to the Nazi occupation government. Indeed, the pressure from the right remains a salient legacy in contemporary debates over anti-immigration policies in France.

O'Riley's book will primarily interest North African specialists and those who work specifically in the genre of "resistance" or "third" cinema. Unfortunately, it has little to offer the reader with a general interest in colonialism and is too specialized for use in an undergraduate course.

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Lahoucine Ouzgane. *Men in African Film and Fiction*. UK: James Currey, 2011. x, 180pp.

This collection of twelve essays by six men and six women is a remarkably significant contribution to the topic of men and masculinities in Africa. In his introduction, Ouzgane gives an overview of studies on the scholarship of men and masculinities in Africa by referencing four significant works from 2001-2008 and placing the current collection, one of the first works to examine masculinities in literature and film from the entire continent, on the level of works that fill the gap on the international literature on gender. This is all the more impressive as gender has often been used to refer to women, leaving men as the unmarked and unexamined category. The collection is an analysis of the depictions in literature and film of masculinities in colonialist, independence, and post-independence Africa, and explores the ways in which a serious examination of the male characters in these different genres introduces new insights into the ways of reading these texts. The purpose of the collection among other things is to offer new understandings of the ways in which African men perform, negotiate, and experience

masculinity, and to expose how only some of the most popular theories in masculinity studies in the West hold true in African contexts.

The essays are divided into two parts. The first, "Man and Nation in Africa," reminds the reader that any study of African men should not ignore the reality that patriarchal power is still in place across the continent in the hands of men who exercise it sometimes to the detriment of women. The five essays in this section try to address the ways in which the male is a representation of the nation; the masculine state is sexualized, sometimes troubled, other times powerless, impotent and often fragmented. However, only three of the essays can be said to do this. Najat Rahman's essay theorizes masculine subjectivity without relating it to man and nation, whilst Lahoucine Ouzgane's essay interrogates the depictions of masculinity in the works of Nawal El Saadawi and Ben Jelloun and concludes that they present fragmented, insecure and anxious masculinities.

The second part, "Alternative Masculinities," contains essays that indicate that masculine behaviors are being reinvented and reinterpreted. The essays in this section examine texts and films for the ways in which different and alternative ways of being male are represented. From West to East to South Africa, these essays trace the development of an alternative masculinity that is non-violent and non-oppressive, as well as non-normative on the continent. Colonialism, globalization, the rise of political homophobia, and a gay rights movement are seen as having contributed to the changing face of masculinity on the continent in both film and literature. All but Tarshia Stanley's essay on "Father Africa..." fits in the section. She examines Ousmane Sembene's films, "Faat Kine" and "Moolaade" as a critique of the failure of the men and the society, thereby making the plight of the men in the film the plight of the nation itself. For its representation of man as nation, this essay would have been better placed in the first section.

Many of the essays are primarily analyses of the images of men in text and film, and a few are reassessments of texts which have already been critiqued twice over. The originality of the essays in this collection, however, lies in the fact that the focus of analysis is now turned onto the male characters and masculinity, thereby opening up new insights in the reading of these texts. Furthermore, although the reader comes across many familiar and popular names such as Ngugi, Sembene, Nawal El Saadawi, and Ben Jelloun, there are a few other not so well known names such as Stanley Nyamfukudza, Charles Mangua and Jagjit Singh; nevertheless, more of the new writers and producers on the African artistic scene would have been welcomed.

The goals of the collection as outlined in the introduction are fairly well met in the discussions in the essays. These essays challenge the reader to look at Gender Studies in a new light as an all-inclusive endeavor that factors men in the equation as well as presenting the idea that masculine behaviors are not natural and unchanging, that they are liable to change and healthy models of masculinity are already emerging across the continent. Students, researchers, and professors in Gender Studies, African Studies, and Literature and Film will find this collection valuable. In both its limitations and strengths, *Men in African Film and Fiction* serves as a ground breaker in the discussion of men and masculinities in Africa and beyond, and the reader comes away from a reading of this collection with the desire to read more about the discussion and research on men and masculinity in Africa.

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Robert Anthony Waters, Jr. *Historical Dictionary of United States-Africa Relations*. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2009. lxx, 369 pp.

Historical dictionaries from the Scarecrow Press have long earned their place on library reference shelves. The *Historical Dictionary of United States—Africa Relations*, written by the diplomatic historian Robert Anthony Waters Jr., is part of a series of historical dictionaries on American diplomacy. Focusing on US-Africa relations during the Cold War, this volume stresses political, diplomatic, and military affairs and covers North Africa as well as Sub-Saharan Africa. It features a chronology listing major milestones in US-Africa relations, from the arrival of the first African slaves in the seventeenth century to the end of the George W. Bush administration in mid-2008. The dictionary includes entries on African countries, African leaders and other individuals important to US-Africa relations, US legislation affecting Africa, organizations, policies, and more. Other topics receiving attention include film, foreign aid, immigration, music, oil, peacekeeping, sports, terrorism, trade, and US military operations.

The dictionary has much to recommend it. The discussions of various American presidents' policies toward Africa are useful, from Franklin D. Roosevelt to the second President Bush. The writing style is vivid, not dry or dull, and many entries are enriched with vivid quotations that heighten the reader's interest. Besides being well-written, the articles are up-to-date and based on thorough research. The author offers excellent overviews of the Cold War's impact on Africa and how the Cold War affected US policy toward the Congo in particular. He provides a meaty entry on John F. Kennedy's policies toward Africa, explaining his relationship with the Congo and Algeria, his establishment of the Peace Corps, his foreign aid priorities, and his administration's triumphs and setbacks on the continent. Many entries are admirably even-handed. For example, the entry on Firestone identifies the company's achievements in helping Liberia develop, but also covers the controversies surrounding the company's operations there. The article on the Organization of African Unity discusses its origins, goals, successes, and failures. All entries are pitched at the right level for students, scholars, and the general public. Many articles contain interesting factual nuggets that are not widely known. Readers learn that after the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act was passed in 1986, "It was the first time in the twentieth century that Congress overrode a president's veto on a foreign policy issue." Liberian President Edwin Barclay "was the first man to spend a night at the White House as a guest" when he visited the US in 1944. Lyndon Johnson downgraded US military relations with South Africa in 1967 after black American sailors were poorly treated on shore leave. These and other anecdotes enliven what are already vivid, highly readable discussions.

It would be impossible for any author to include all facets of US-Africa relations in a single volume. Topics not covered include the Congressional Black Caucus, Djibouti, piracy, and the Save Darfur movement. The entry on the Trans-Atlantic slave trade is very short, given its historical importance and longevity. But to his credit, the author includes entries one would not necessarily expect, such as those on Zbigniew Brzezinski, Jesse Helms, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Robert McNamara, and Hakeem Olajuwon.

The dictionary does contain some errors on South Africa, which could easily be corrected in a second edition. Steve Biko was beaten to death by security policemen rather than prison guards (p. xxxvii); the South African government did not actually require that every black citizen reside in a tribal homeland (p. 23); Oliver Tambo was acting president of the ANC, not

Communist Party leader of South Africa (p. 162); Mandela was arrested in August 1962, not 1961 (p. 162); he was moved to a mainland prison in 1982, not 1984 (p. 163); he was inaugurated president of South Africa on May 10, 1994, not May 19 (p. 163); and South Africa's Liberal Party was not actually banned in 1968, but it chose to disband when the government prohibited political parties from having multiracial memberships (p. 226).

The author believes that since the late 1970s, Republican administrations have been more successful in Africa than Democratic administrations. Entries on Reagan, George Bush, and George W. Bush focus on foreign policy triumphs, such as increasing aid or opposing terrorism, whereas those on Carter and especially Clinton focus on African policies that went wrong, such as the failure to stop the Rwandan genocide in 1994. In downplaying Republican failures and Democratic successes in Africa, the author can seem somewhat partisan.

Despite this, *The Historical Dictionary of United States-Africa Relations* provides key, up-to-date information in an accessible format. It would be a good starting point for those wishing to learn more about American diplomacy in Africa since 1945.

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Daniel Zisenwine. *The Emergence of Nationalist Politics in Morocco: The Rise of the Independence Party and the Struggle Against Colonialism After World War II*. New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2010. 224 pp.

The self-immolation and subsequent death of Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia sparked the dry tinder of dissatisfaction across the Arab world.¹ Arabs not only in Tunisia but across North Africa, Arabia, and the Levant rose up to protest the regimes that had long denied them any meaningful role in self-governance. The swell of popular protest rolled over and toppled the regime in Tunis, similar revolts in Egypt swept away the thirty-year Mubarak government, and uprisings pushed Muammar Gaddafi from power and ended in his death after forty years in Libya.

A question facing international relations students and policymakers across the globe is why this movement is playing out differently in various countries in the Arab world. While the Tunisian, Egyptian, and Libyan regimes fell, and others in Syria and Bahrain are seriously threatened, states such as Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Lebanon, and Morocco are experiencing more moderate popular calls for reform. Answers to that question may be found in Daniel Zisenwine's work on the rise of the Moroccan struggle against French rule before, during, and after the Second World War. Zisenwine, a research fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center at Tel Aviv University, reviews the historical antecedents and subsequent birth of the Istiqlal (Independence) Party while Morocco was under French rule.

In establishing colonial power over Morocco, France effectively removed Morocco's ability to run its own affairs, with the Sultan ruling only in name. The French Residency (colonial government) controlled all substantial matters of governance save religion. That religious exception practically forced any Moroccan effort at independence or even reform to take on a religious, vice secular, flavor, since the mosques were the only place Moroccans could meet and discuss efforts to change their situation. Zisenwine notes that despite the Sultan's tendency to defer to French pressure, he remained a popular symbol throughout the reform and

independence movements. While his popularity among both nationalists and the Residency waned in the latter days of French rule, with the populace the Sultan remained an important part of their national identity.

Moroccan pre-war efforts to change this situation focused primarily on reform of the Residency and its governance of day-to-day Moroccan life, but once France was crushed by Nazi Germany in 1940, Moroccans perceived France was not the invincible superpower they had previously believed it to be. When Allied forces landed in Morocco in 1942, Moroccans were provided with additional Western audiences in the form of France's British and American allies. Thereafter, in the face of first Vichy and then Free French oppression, Moroccan political goals changed, and the Istiqlal party was founded in late 1943 with the goal of independence from France in mind.

After the defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945, Moroccans hoped the Atlantic Charter would be interpreted to mean Morocco would be freed from French colonialism. As Zisenwine notes, during the war American and British representatives in Morocco, while worried about alienating De Gaulle's Free French movement, were concerned about French practices and intentions in Morocco. France, however, sought post-war to keep its colonies in Indochina, Algeria, Morocco, and other locations. Zisenwine details the struggle of Istiqlal against French rule from the close of the war to Morocco's eventual independence in 1956. During that period, Istiqlal struggled to gain in confidence, legitimacy, and stability, as France's ability to influence events in Morocco weakened, and its legitimacy as the ruling power in suffered repeated setbacks. While there remained questions about Istiqlal's ability to govern if it gained power, as an opposition force it remained able to participate in the debate regarding the country's future—any failure in management of the country would naturally fall at French feet rather than those belonging to Istiqlal's opposition leadership.

The beginning of the end for French rule began on December 5, 1952 with the assassination of Ferhat Ashad, a Tunisian activist in Morocco. Resulting violence between French security forces and Moroccans broke out, resulting in Moroccan casualties when French forces opened fire on demonstrators. France sought to claim that Istiqlal had planned the violence, but those claims rang hollow with the populace. France had repeatedly sought to discredit Istiqlal, contending during the war that the nationalist party was influenced by Nazi attempts to disrupt French war efforts. During the 1950s, the Residency again sought to employ this method of ad hominem attack, accusing Istiqlal of being influenced by Communists. To what degree the French actually believed their own claims is uncertain, and those propaganda efforts to discredit Istiqlal generally failed.

In 1953, Thami el-Glaoui, a local pasha who supported French rule, sought to force the French to depose Sultan Sidi Mohammed. France's decision in August of that year to accede to el-Glaoui's demand resulted in groundswell resentment among Moroccans, with whom the Sultan remained popular. France believed that deposing Sidi Mohammed would calm dissatisfaction among Moroccans, but instead found itself with a full blown popular uprising on their hands. Sidi Mohammed was eventually restored to his throne, el-Glaoui's attempt to assert himself into a leadership role failed, Istiqlal assumed a place as a legitimate political force in Morocco, and French rule came to a close three years later, in 1956.

It is against Zisenwine's history that we can look at the events in Morocco over the past year following the "Arab Spring." As the author notes in his Introduction, after a period of post-colonial repressive rule by the Moroccan government, reform began to occur beginning in the 1990s, led first by King Hassan II, then by his son and successor, King Mohammed VI, both more committed to political reform than their predecessors had been.

Following events in Tunisia in early 2011, Moroccans called for greater reforms. Instead of repressing those calls, however, such as had led to the fall of governments in Tunis and Cairo, Mohammed VI welcomed plans by Moroccan youth movements to organize an Egypt-style anti-government protest on February 20, 2011.² Importantly for purposes of this review, the protesters did not demand the removal of Mohammed VI but rather sought greater governmental and social reform. In March 2011, the King announced he would institute constitutional reform. Given his earlier initiatives, it could be said the post-Tunisia movement in Morocco buoyed Mohammed VI's own reform goals. The important aspect of these events is that Morocco avoided both the violence present in the Syrian struggles for reform and also the *de facto* regicide in the Libyan uprising, as well as the regime collapse that occurred in Egypt and Tunisia. It is likely, based on Zisenwine's history of the Moroccan nationalist movement, that the country had previously experienced political reform and as a result had a general trust in the monarchy as an agent of change rather than one of repression.

In terms of Zisenwine's work itself, scholars and policymakers will find much of value in this volume to explain the difference in events in countries such as Morocco, Kuwait, and Lebanon and the tumultuous events in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, and Syria. However, as the author admits in his introduction, his book is a continuation of work he conducted for his doctoral thesis, and at times the reader is struck by the feeling that the book is one hundred pages of doctoral substance crammed into two hundred pages of book—that is, material was added solely to expand the thesis into book form, without adding much of value. In terms of organization, the reader will find chapters and even some paragraphs confusing, with apparent internal inconsistencies and contradictory timelines, and the author's narrative has difficulty progressing in a steady manner. As a result, readers might be frustrated in finding which direction the author is intending to take them. Despite the structural concerns noted immediately above, this work contains enough of value to explain the Moroccan experience at political reform to recommend it on those terms for serious students of the dynamics of Arab and African reform movements.

Note: The views expressed in this review are the author's own, and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of Defense or the United States Government.

Notes

- 1 Karim Faheem. 2011. "Slap to a Man's Pride Set off Tumult in Tunisia." *The New York Times* January 21, available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/22/world/africa/22sidi.html?pagewanted=all>
- 2 Giles Tremlett. 2011 "Morocco Protests Will Test Regime's Claims to Liberalism." *The*

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