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Jogoo La Shambani Haliwiki Mjini: The Village and the Town in the Mũgithi and One-Man Guitar Performances in Kenya

MAINA WA MŪTONYA

Abstract: The 1990s marked an emergence of a relatively new genre in the contours of Kenyan popular culture. The *Mũgithi* performance signaled a beginning of new directions, largely in Kenyan music and specifically in the contemporary Gĩkũyũ music in terms of themes and style. The performance, mostly an urban phenomenon dominated by Gĩkũyũ one-man guitarists, is a major site for negotiation of identities and incorporates the interface and interplay between the traditional and the contemporary, especially in the urban setting. This article highlights the inherent contradictions in creation and re-creation of urban identities as expressed in this music. The main argument is that identities are always contested and different socio-economic situations call for a negotiation, if not a re-negotiation of identities.

Introduction

Jogoo la shambani haliwiki mjini ("The village cock does not crow in town") is a Swahili proverb commonly used in East Africa to capture the rural/urban tensions that characterize everyday life. An examination of popular culture reveals, however, that the rural/urban distinction captured in this saying is not nearly so clear cut, for urban identities, like all identities, are always contested terrains. This is especially so with the knowledge that an argument for a fixed identity is always problematic. As Clark contends, it is the popular cultural forms expressed in the urban landscape that provide an arena for engaging with and framing these complex debates around identity.¹

Again, aware of the diverse interpretations of this tradition/modernity dyad, especially in postcolonial studies, this paper appropriates a geographical angle to delineate the urban/rural divide as expressed in the performance of *Mũgithi*. As Brodnicka is wont to remind us, it is always important to "differentiate the ideology of tradition and modernity from tradition or modernity as they are experienced."² In this light then, this article investigates the performance of urban identities in the changing cultural terrains of music in postcolonial Kenya. The one-man guitar phenomenon and the resultant *Mũgithi* performance epitomize these concerns. The word "*Mũgithi*" is derived from "*mixsi*" a term used in the 1950s in Kenya to refer to a particular train that ferried both passengers and cargo in the same compartments. It was probably an earlier version of third class and maybe the only train Africans could then ride. The etymology of *Mũgithi* is "Mixed train," which Nairobi youth in the 1950s referred to as simply "*mixsi*." A Gĩkũyũ rendition of "*mixsi*" would assume linguistic features common in other word borrowings. For instance, "s" is

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<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v14/v14i4a1.pdf>

realized as “th” (e.g. *thogithi* for socks; *thothenji* for sausage) and “mũ-” for the noun class marker.³

The two terms, one-man guitar and *Mũgithi*, are quite interchangeable. One-man guitar refers to a singer-guitarist backed up, at most, by just a drummer. *Mũgithi* is “train” in the Gĩkũyũ language. In the performance, there are no defined steps, and the participants, (mostly patrons in a restaurant) are linked by holding onto the waist or shoulders of the one ahead. Though the actual *Mũgithi* may take up only a few minutes of an entire night of undiluted revelry, it has come to define the night and has almost become an anthem in most clubs around Nairobi.⁴

I start by defining the terms in a Kenyan context and locate their origins before delving into the thematic issues. How this music becomes vital in the performance and propagation of urban and suburban cultures and identities constitute engaging arguments in the Kenyan popular music scene. The suburban restaurants in Nairobi have provided the space for this musical blending of cultural influences that has produced so many innovative and distinctively Kenyan urban performance styles. Similar to the *shebeen* in South Africa, the restaurants located inside and outside the busy capital city of Nairobi have facilitated the convivial interaction necessary for urban Kenyan social survival.⁵

***Mũgithi*: The Kenyan Context**

Owing to the informality that characterizes this performance, there exists scanty literature on *Mũgithi* as a musical genre. Maupeu and Wa-Mũngai (2006) locate the bar as the space in which Gĩkũyũ nationalism thrived at the height of the one party dictatorship of Daniel arap Moi (1978-2002) in the late 1980s. This was mostly achieved through the performance of *Mũgithi*. Mutonya (2005; 2007) similarly locates the politics of everyday life through ethnic stereotypes as expressed in the music, while Githiora (2008) examines how the *Mũgithi* performance embodies *Gĩcaandĩ*, a Gĩkũyũ poetic tradition while recreating Gĩkũyũ traditions and social-cultural discourses.

The performance referred to as “one-man guitar” should in fact be labelled as a “one-man, one-guitar,” an expression that captures the reality of *Mũgithi*. The *Mũgithi* performance has, however, been borne of a guitar tradition that has defined the popular music of Kenya over the years. Low has traced the history of guitar music, which has been present in the Kenyan music scene as early as the 1940s. However, Low’s research on the history of the Kenyan guitar styles is biased towards western Kenya, which coincidentally happens to be the “home of so much fine Kenyan guitar music.”⁶ His assertion could be buttressed by the fact that even before the contact with foreign musical traditions, the Luhya and Luo communities in Western Kenya had elaborate string instruments in lyres such as the Luo *nyatiti* and the Luhya’s *litungu*.⁷

In fact, musicians from other parts of Kenya in the 1960s who attempted the *benga* beat had to hire guitarists from these two communities. For example, in the development of popular music of the Gĩkũyũ people, where *Mũgithi* performance falls into, and forms the mainstay of this article, one unforgettable name would be Odhiambo Sumba Rateng (himself from western Kenya) who worked as a “session guitarist on many Kikuyu songs with a variety of musicians for over thirty years.”⁸

With the appropriation of the guitar in Kenyan popular music, it is only suitable to assert that what is defining about Kenyan music is the interplay of guitars. Added to the existence of the traditional lyres, as explained above, the first contact with the guitar as it is

known today was evident in Kenya “even before 1900 when guitars were played among the freed slaves.”⁹ In the 1950s and 1960s, the guitar playing styles in Kenya benefitted greatly from contacts with other parts of Africa like Malawi, Zimbabwe, the then Zaire, and South Africa, as well as with Latin America, North America, and Europe. Today, Kenyan pop remains as this *mélange* of musical styles that “borrows freely and cross fertilize each other.”¹⁰ The electrical guitar bands from the 1960s hitherto have also thrived on this rich culture. Presently, the *Gikūyũ* exhibit this “cross-fertilization” especially from the western country music tradition, in terms of regalia and beats. Stetson hats and cowboy boots are a common feature of many a *Gikūyũ* musicians that completes the picture of the Wild West, added to the western country rhythm that some of the musicians have adopted in their performances.

Although in this article I dedicate my efforts to analyzing the emergent *Mūgithi* one-man, one-guitar phenomenon in the 1990s, this tradition was vividly evident in the 1960s in Kenya. In the 1960s, however, especially with the advent of the electric guitar which could not be drowned out by audience noise or swamped by singing and other instruments, therefore better to dance to, other band members playing different instruments always accompanied the one-man guitarist. From the 1990s onwards the one-man guitarist was all by himself/herself as both the guitarist and the vocalist.¹¹

These performances then and now have been purely part and parcel of the urban culture. In the 1960s, the songs of the Kenyan groups were aimed at the “urban working class, whose *lingua franca* was Swahili,” while richer Kenyans with higher aspirations tended to prefer Zairean or Western records.¹² During this time, immediately after independence, the musicians had a conscious desire to develop a truly national music, hence their preoccupation with the Swahili language, which the independent nation had adopted as a national language.

While considering the *Mūgithi* spectacle of the 1990s, it is clear that the musicians are responding to the challenges of the Kenyan postcolony where the diverse cultures of the nation has been politicized, leading to a strong urge for Kenyans to identify more with their ethnic heritages, rather than as a nation. However, it is important to note that the emergence of *Mūgithi* also coincided with a period when Kenyans developed an affinity to their local music, which had been completely overwhelmed by Western music, as well as South African and Congolese beats. From the 1990s, Kenyans have evolved musical styles that consciously attempt to bring about a Kenyan rhythm. For example, the urban youth have *geenge* and *kapuka*, styles that have a resemblance to hip-hop and rap, especially from the US but with distinct local flavors. According to Nyairo:

...this fusion is not about how the local gets drawn and absorbed into Western modernity, but rather it is about the artful forging of local derivatives of modernity, a project that is clearly fraught with potential contradictions, and sometimes, given its techniques of appropriation, often lacks either consistency or cogency.¹³

Such fusion, however, is beyond the scope of this article. But as Githiora argues, “modern-day Kenyan musicians and especially *Mūgithi* and hip hop artists have either retained or continue to re-create traditional musical forms and practices by remaking modern music that is grounded in popular traditional forms.”¹⁴ It is against this background that the article turns its attention to the negotiation of urban identities in the performance of *Mūgithi* in Kenya.

Urban Space

The conceptualization and representation of urban identity is “an enactment of the complex and multi-layered interweaving of culture, tradition ... gender and class.”¹⁵ Therefore, any discourse about identity and the politics of location holds the possibilities for the emergence of new and innovative sites of meaning and knowledge. The emergence of the *Mũgithi* phenomenon in the urban space of Kenya then assists in the performance of this interplay of divergent identities. Like most popular cultural forms and productions in Kenya, *Mũgithi* performance becomes important in the discussion around the negotiation of urban identities because it straddles and dissolves distinctions. A study of this music provides insight into the manner in which old, new, and fluid cultural identities emerge, are negotiated or are contested within and between the spaces in urban areas where the music is performed. The one-man-guitar phenomenon and the resultant *Mũgithi*, is seen in this paper not only as a musical trend emergent in the city of Nairobi but also as a cultural site where urban identities are performed.

Like most urban centers, Nairobi is a cosmopolitan city housing people from disparate ethnic, religious, class, gender, and political identities who have to co-exist despite their diverse characteristics. *Mũgithi*, as music and performative act, becomes crucial in integrating the disparate lifestyles in day-to-day city living. The form of performance and music, though often in the Gĩkũyũ language, accommodates almost every participant, or patron in the bar. But as argued above, music, as sound, has this talismanic tendency to bridge all gaps as the universal language of humankind. It is only in a club where *Mũgithi* performance takes place that all reticence is disregarded as patrons, unknown to each other, celebrate the climax of the performance by linking up in a dance movement (i.e., *Mũgithi*, or train) that will involve everyone on the dance floor, irrespective of their backgrounds. In this sense, the cosmopolitan nature of the performances comes out clearly.

The *Mũgithi* performance has introduced a new mode of music where musicians have had to deal with limited resources. At the same time, the new style, which is enjoying popularity amidst an outburst of digitalized music, signifies a major shift in the music and entertainment circles in Kenya. The artistes' indulgence in taboo subjects like sex, which earlier artists hardly touched on, points to a major innovation in Kenyan music. However hedonistic as the *Mũgithi* craze may seem, it was, ironically, adopted from those familiar all-night religious *keshas* (charismatic prayer vigils) where Christians link up to "join the train to heaven" with Jesus as the driver of the train.

The Origin of *Mũgithi*

As noted above, the one-man guitar craze can be traced to the late 1990s. Amidst the economic depression characteristic of this period in Kenya, many club owners resorted to hiring solo artists instead of entire bands, which would lead to lower costs for the owner. The effect of economic depression did not only apply to the club but to the artists as well who had to make do with rudimentary and less expensive instruments. It was also a kind of cultural return to the music of the 1960s and 1970s, which afforded the interaction between the artists and patrons. Again, unlike in the past when people with a strong rural background embraced traditional music, a growing number of musicians based in the urban centers are turning to music they either heard during music festivals or from their parents. This recourse to the past for lyrical inspiration also corresponded with a burnout of the Congolese music on the Kenyan music scene, according to Kariuki.¹⁶

The late Jean Bosco Mwenda is credited with having started it all. Armed only with his guitar—no back-up drummer, as is the present trend—Mwenda was well known for his cover versions of western pop classics. Mwenda's acoustic-guitar style was quite popular in Kenya in the late 1940s and 1950s. His style, combined with the rhythms and vocals from *bodi*, a ceremonial music sung by Luo women, has been considered as the origin of *Benga*, a distinctive Kenyan music style.¹⁷ At Ngong Hills Hotel, he found particular demand for cover versions of popular Gikũyũ and Swahili numbers, which he often flavored with his own lyrics.

The origin of the *Mũgithi* performance can also be linked to what Ndigirigi accounts for the proliferation of bar productions. Faced with low audience turnout in conventional theater halls, performers literally followed the audience where they frequent most.¹⁸ Musicians have followed suit and have redefined the bar in urban centers as a space for performance. A criticism levelled against the bar productions was that they deal with issues of sexuality *ad nauseam*. Ndigirigi argues that the quality of such productions is generally poor: "The audience (which drinks beer during the performances with waiters moving in between the seats to take orders) is normally looking for entertaining diversion and not a quality performance. The bawdier the performances, the merrier the audiences."¹⁹

It is also true, however, that quality theatre productions and music productions as well, have emanated from this tradition. Successful music groups like Them Mushrooms and Bilenge Musica amongst others continue to attract huge crowds at Simmers Restaurant in Nairobi's central business district. The same pattern is prevalent in many entertainment spots in the peri-urban spaces around Nairobi as well as major towns in Kenya.

The bar in the context of the *Mũgithi* performance in Kenya may be seen in the same light with the *shebeen* in South Africa, which provided a place for the interaction "necessary for urban African social survival and the musical blending of cultural influences and produced many innovative and distinctive urban South African urban performance styles."²⁰ In fact, *marabi*, a whole new musical style in South Africa, was born there.²¹ In relation to the above, my argument is that *Mũgithi* performance has carved a niche in most urban restaurants and beer halls. The proliferation of *Mũgithi* artists even outside Nairobi attests to this.

The *Mũgithi* Performance

Kenyans refer to Friday as "members" day, which significantly marks the beginning of the weekend. The Friday evening culture involves all the extracurricular activities especially for most working people, and "clubbing" (dancing and drinking) is the major activity. On typical busy nights (mostly Fridays and Saturdays) in beer halls and bars, the performance usually begins at around 8pm, when musicians start by giving patrons slow numbers ranging from English to Kiswahili oldies. This is the time of the night when most people are just settling down, and it is a challenge to begin gradually working them up. By 11pm, the pattern is switched to playing up-tempo cover versions of more contemporary hits.

In fact most one-man guitarists follow a systematic order on any night. They start mostly with renditions of songs by popular country musicians like Kenny Rogers, then to gospel hymns. As the night wears on, they introduce local songs by renowned Kenyan musicians. Towards midnight, they bring in the funky beat by redoing songs popular with the youth. The switch to traditional music finally opens the floor to the *Mũgithi* performance. Seen in almost the same light as traditional music like *Mwomboko*, *Mũgithi* dwells on redoing

almost all songs, even the ones without sexually explicit tones, by corrupting the lyrics.²² Traditional music used heavily allusive language when engaging on themes of sex and sexuality. However, for the artiste to accommodate the disparate classes of people, a rendition of the traditional music as well as the contemporary becomes crucial.

The real *Mūgithi* action begins after midnight, when most patrons are on their feet and, properly intoxicated, free of all inhibitions. This is when the "adults only" segment begins. Mike Murimi, one of the artists says, "I realised that blending new wording and beats to the song, rather than simply singing straight, was more appealing to the audience."²³ He adds that it is due to the pressure from revelers that he uses the trademark bawdy lyrics, but he is quick to point out that naughty songs are not the main ingredient of his shows or the reason for his success.

<i>Mūgithi ũyũ x3 –</i>	This train
<i>Mūgithi ũyũ wa Daytona -</i>	This train of Daytona
<i>Salim nĩwe ndereba, Mūgithi ũyũ x4.-</i>	Salim is the driver of this train
<i>Ũthiaga ũkīgambaga -</i>	The train makes
<i>chu chu chu chu</i>	the chu chu chu sound while moving
<i>Mūndũ ahutie kīrĩa atarĩ.</i>	Touch what you don't have
<i>Mūgithi ũyũ, x4 –</i>	in this train ²⁴

In the one-man-guitar and the *Mūgithi* performance, there's the copying and parodying of music done by renowned artists, reworking or reproducing famous originals, releasing self-sufficient tunes into the flux of the dance hall. But I am arguing that reproductions are the products of experiential ownership and this experience then stimulates variants and even new work.

On a *Mūgithi* night, patrons experience renditions of song done by established popular musicians, for instance, the guru of Gikūyũ music Joseph Kamaru, Kakai Kilonzo, the renowned maestro of Eastern Kenya *benga*, Musaimo, and Queen Jane amongst others.²⁵ This is brought about by the need to accommodate the disparate age groups that patronize most of these restaurants and bars. Once in a while, the artist will introduce renditions of songs by musicians from all over the world but subtly done in the local vernacular and that somehow retains the beat and the rhythm. As argued above, this is a conscious effort, or financial strategy to give the performance a national and remotely global outlook. It is important to note at this juncture that until recently none of the music had been properly recorded and thus could not go beyond the walls of the restaurant. However, there existed recordings of live performances that produced copies of quite poor quality but which were able to sell widely due to the popularity of *Mūgithi*.

Of the most popular rendition, among most one-man guitarists (Salim Junior, Mike Rua, and Mike Murimi) is Tabu Ley's hit "Muzina." The late Tabu Ley from the Democratic Republic of Congo is one whose music is still very popular amongst Kenyans. The Gikūyũ have a male name, almost similar to the title of this song, "Mūcina" (pronounced Musina). The Jamaican ragga duo Chaka Demus and Pliers' song "Murder She Wrote" is also quite popular, and corrupted as "Mama Cirũ" (literally meaning the Mother of Cirũ, a short form of Wanjirũ, a female Gikūyũ name). A Luhya wedding song ("Ng'ombe"), Princess Julie's "Dunia Mbaya," and the Kalenjin Sisters' song "Magdalena" are all redone in the Gikūyũ language, thus forging a synthesis of the best of local traditional cultures and foreign modern life ways and technologies. Several examples suffice.

The *Mūgithi* performance, having originated from the prayer night-vigils, as indicated above, incorporates popular gospel songs. Most of them though are corrupted to fit the secular mood of the performance. One song, “Kuma Ndaiga Mīrigo Thĩ” (“Since I Let Go My Burdens”) in Christian discourses is meant to express the joy of the faithful after denouncing the sinful life. It is a song full of praise for the Lord. But Mike Murimi, one of the leading one-man guitarists, gives it explicit connotations, which are that for a girl “letting go her burdens” means acceding to a young man’s sexual advances. *Mīrigo* may mean burdens, but in popular discourse, especially among the Gĩkũyũ youth, it means the genitalia!

The corruption of the popular gospel songs might be indicative of a feeling of inadequacy in Christianity, an exotic spirituality, which is best expressed by a number of traditional Gĩkũyũ songs on a *Mūgithi* night. However, this can be subject to a host of other possibilities. Traditional forms such as *Mwomboko* are ubiquitous in any performance and again serve as a pointer to the different age entities in the audience. But it could also be indicative of how song travels and acquires new meaning in different contexts. The songs retain most of the gospel lyrics, but with snippets of vulgar language filtering throughout the songs. For instance, the original version of “Mīrigo Thĩ” (“Since I Let Go My Burdens”) goes.

Kairĩtu gaka - young girl
ũiguaga atĩ - how does it feel?
Kuma waiga mīrigo thĩ - after you let go your burdens.

The response:

Njiguaga o kūgoca – I only like praising God
Kuma ndaiga mīrigo thĩ - Since I let go my burdens.

Then follows the corrupt version. And the girl's response is distorted:

Njiguaga o kūgoca – I feel like praising
Ma ya Ngai nĩ – I swear by God
Tiga kuma hĩndĩ iria ndahoirwo- when he made sexual advances to me
Nĩ ngĩona ndingĩkira rĩngĩ – I decided to say it all
Nokĩo njiguaga o kūgoca – that’s why I always feel like praising
Kuma ndaiga mīrigo thĩ – since I let go my burdens

The *Mūgithi* artist here appears to give a gospel song lewd connotations, which leaves the audience craving for more. The huge success of *Mūgithi* as exhibited in the song arises from the interplay between the secular and religious. Harping on the popularity of the gospel song, the artist then introduces the sex theme, which is never a topic in religious circles, and manages to negotiate the blurred boundaries between the mundane and the spiritual. Despite the fact that performing songs with religious themes has been popular in secular settings as bars and other entertainment circles, the *Mūgithi* performance is unique in contemporary Kenya in that the theme of sex is introduced but in rather humorous terms. The same can be said of other serious issues like ethnicity in which the performance treats it lightly by application of ethnic stereotypes.²⁶

In the *Mūgithi* performance there is liberating humor, but which is more inward looking. The artists as well as audience members, especially during the call-response moment, laugh at themselves, mock themselves. These songs at the same time are also

reflective on the social realities in Kenya, the social change occasioned by urbanization, and most important in *Mũgithi* the play on rural and urban identities realized through language.

Like the Bakhtinian carnivalesque, which involves the “temporary suspension of all hierarchic distinctions and barriers among men ... and of the prohibitions of usual life,” *Mũgithi* may be seen in almost the same light because during the performance, the normal constraints and conventions of the everyday world are thrown off.²⁷ With the suspension of hierarchy in this performance, the reveler from the village will be as comfortable as his or her colleague from the city as they inhabit the same social space, the utopian ideal of an egalitarian society, yet in everyday practice, this is not the case. In the same way, this can be read as a social critique of the postcolonial authority that has neglected development in rural areas and concentrated all its efforts to appease the middle and even more so the class, the class of the ruling elite!

Urban Identities

From the above and coupled with the fact that the performance is mostly an urban phenomenon, it then becomes clear that the *Mũgithi* performance can be seen as a site where urban identities are performed. Although the performance could be said to have started in Nairobi, it is presently prevalent in other cities as well as small towns within and around Kenya. While considering urban identities in the one-man guitar and *Mũgithi* phenomenon, the ambiguities and contradictions of modernity are imminent. Being an emergent trend in the Kenyan music scene, a parallel study with musicians of yore is quite important, but it should not cloud its distinct features. Contrasting urban space *vis-à-vis* that of the village thus becomes a defining concern when examining urban identities in the said music. I will discuss urban identities from various angles namely, the space where the performance takes place, thematic concerns, and the language used.

The music of the one-man guitar is firmly rooted in contemporary urban society and reflects the discussion of ideas around crime, corruption, adventure, and intrigue, sex, love, and romance, conflicts of cultures, linguistic innovations, idiosyncrasies and stereotypes in the city. Most themes in the music are taken from the everyday urban life, and they are able to capture both the restless excitement and the frustrations of life in the city and its ramifications. The fact that the *Mũgithi* performance takes place mostly in urban bars and clubs points to a dialectic relation between music and space. The argument here is that music shapes spaces and spaces shape music. In various ways, as Connell and Gibson assert, sounds have been used “to create spaces and simulate patterns of human behaviour in particular locations.”²⁸ The kind of discourse that *Mũgithi* and one-man artists engage in their song and performance will look completely out of place if performed, say, in a stadium or in an open-air market stage. It is no wonder that this is music hardly ever aired on most radio stations in Kenya.

Several striking signifiers define the space of *Mũgithi* performance. Given that this mostly happens in bars and restaurants, beer drinking is inevitable. There is a shared community of patrons that frequent the bar. Some kind of carnival atmosphere is created within the *Mũgithi* space in which certain realities are suspended and new ones introduced. The performance creates and celebrates its own world and its own set of moralities.

The carnival nature of *Mũgithi* offers the participants a cathartic effect to experience a world out of the normal lived reality. There is a motivation during this carnival time during *Mũgithi* to create a form of human social configuration that lies beyond existing social forms.

For a nation that is so divided along ethnic lines, especially politically, during the performance, as seen above, a sense of egalitarianism exists where people from different classes, communities, and religions fuse into one apparent homogenous entity.

Mũgithi performance succeeds in bringing disparate identities together. For a first-timer to a *Mũgithi* night, the form of entertainment is alluring, but so is the variety of patrons. It has become a space where anybody, without boundary of class or status, will mingle freely and let their hair down with wild abandon, where the *matatu* tout will mingle freely with the high-powered corporate executive. This is where all inhibitions are cast aside as Ngaira notes:

Total strangers mark the climactic moment by linking up in a *Mũgithi*, which will snake across the dance floor, negotiate its way around tables and every available place. Everybody—the matronly housewife, the quiet academic, the shy, church-going girl, the noisy politician, the garrulous *matatu* driver, the repressed accountant and the lady of easy virtue—will joyously sing together, as one, the most bawdy lyrics imaginable.²⁹

The end result is the blurring of perceived disparities—urban/rural, men/women, employed/unemployed, student/teacher, etc. Popular music, in this case, *Mũgithi* reflects the fluxes and fluidity of contemporary life, unsettling binary oppositions established in earlier phases of modernity (traditional/contemporary, authentic/inauthentic, local/global), thus enhancing the dynamic nature of music.

The association of music and performance in a bar, with the accompanying homogenizing attitude amongst the patrons, drinks, and sexual adventure underlies the entertainment component of *Mũgithi*. In the same vein, the performance in the bar and the various topical issues addressed in the music gives the participants a chance to create a sense of space as well as to reaffirm various social identities and challenges in which every day urban spaces are gendered in particular ways. The performance and reception of *Mũgithi*, therefore, in particular locations, in this case the bar, may provide an effective form of resistance not necessarily by producing an alternative sound, since most of these songs are renditions, but by enabling people to experience music in distinctive localized ways to suit their demands. This in turn provides a means through which a sense of “urbanity” is created and contested, especially when one considers the thematic concerns of most of these songs.

Sex and the City

The one-man guitarists who entertain revelers in nightclubs in big cities like Nairobi specialize on renditions of popular songs but they infuse them with subverted lyrics. The theme of sex becomes quite prominent amongst many. The prominence of the sex theme accentuates the idea that cultural and social norms are not strictly adhered to in urban settings unlike in the villages. The fact that the one-man guitarists only perform in nightclubs in major towns confirms this fact. The guitarists therefore redefine and create a new audience and space for their music. The urban setting being cosmopolitan in nature encompasses people from all cultures and settings.

Sex, infidelity, and prostitution are the most overt themes and the explicit lyrics, performed especially during the ‘adults only’ segment attest to this. This explains partly why the music is never aired on any broadcasting station in Kenya. In fact, *Mũgithi* artistes performing in smaller bars and hotels deal with issues of sexuality in clearly explicit terms.

In a corruption of Simon Kihara's (better known as Musaimo) "Cai wa 14," one-man guitarist, Mike Rua assumes the traditional *Ngũcũ* beat, but subverts the lyrics to sexually explicit overtones:

Ndathiĩte gũcera Majengo – I went to Majengo
 Ngĩnyua ũcũrũ na kukumanga – and drank porridge with an aphrodisiac
 Ngĩgwata maraya ngĩnina – I slept with all prostitutes
 Ngĩambĩrĩria kũgwata ng'ombe –till I started mounting cows³⁰

In *Mũgithi* performance, messages about the relativity and arbitrariness of the social conventions are experienced. The above lyrics can never be found in a normal conversation, especially where people from different age groups are gathered, but this is more like the norm in a *Mũgithi* night.

What can be gleaned from the above is that the melodramatic representation of sex and sexuality is actually meant to evoke laughter and merriment as well as some relief, since sex and related subjects in Kenya are shrouded in some mystery and the subject hardly appears in public discourses. In most Kenyan communities, sex is not usually discussed openly, unlike the pre-colonial days when people received sex education through the performance of puberty rites. Due to urbanization and industrialization, these rites are seldom performed. When a proposal to include family life education in Kenyan schools was made some years back, it was met with a lot of resistance. In 1996, the Catholic Church participated in the burning of condoms and other AIDS materials as a protest towards the idea of introducing sex education in schools, a clear pointer to the conservative nature of most Kenyans.³¹ *Mũgithi*, however, works to open up discourses on sex and sexuality by introducing them into the public domain.

One-man guitarists have, however, transcended issues surrounding sex and secrecy, and in their songs, sex, copulation, and overt mention of genitalia form the mainstay of their performances. A clear example is the corruption of Sam Muraya's song, "Mama Kiwinya," where artists Mike Murimi and Salim Junior engage in clear and explicit obscene language, but which fires up the audience. Mention of the genitalia, goes on *ad naseum*:

Ngahutia nyondo – I touch her breasts
 Ngahutia kīnena – I touch her crotch
 Ngahutia matina –I touch her behind
 Ngahutia rūng'ũthũ – I touch her private parts
 Ngarĩra – and I cry.

Departing from the earlier musicians with their over-used theme of romance and relationships, the one-man guitarist, opts not to present sex, copulation, and genitalia in a private form that is separated from everyday life, but as in an open, quotidian sense.

The climax of the evening is the *Mũgithi* performance where patrons join together in a "train-like formation" dancing around the pub. The musicians in their lyrics call upon the participants to feel free to "touch what you don't have." This is a sexual implication for members of the opposite sex in the audience to engage in all manners of sexual/romantic gestures while still on the floor. It is almost similar to the *Pata Pata* in a South African context.³² This sexual play in dance was also dominant in performance in most traditional and folk music amongst most Kenyan communities.

The interaction between the traditional and the contemporary is manifest in such regards. Though mostly an urban performance, tradition comes to haunt the *Mũgithi* space.

By engaging in themes like sex, which are usually not in the public domain, the musicians are simply reminding their audiences of realities and emphasizing, though inadvertently, the need for the society to engage continually in discussions around such themes.

The Village and the City

As argued above, *Mũgithi* is mostly an urban performance. Themes of rurality or the country, as Ferguson argues, have often provided metaphors for the construction of indigenous critiques of urban, capitalist encroachment. The village is associated with moral purity as contrasted to the town, which is conceived as “immoral, artificial, corrupt and anomic.”³³ One-man guitarists deviate from this conventionality. Unlike most local popular musicians in Kenya, one-man-guitarists are overly concerned with the celebration of the city and its perceived ills while mocking the village. The city is not seen as a “sea, which has drowned many,” as singer Joseph Kariuki describes Nairobi. It is seen as an opportune space for one to earn a livelihood. It offers a glimmer of hope towards economic emancipation. Musicians like Joseph Kamaru and D.K. Kamau in the earlier days always castigated the city and its entrapments, singling out prostitution and the good-time girls who would fleece working and married men of all their wages and salaries. The village has been celebrated as virtuous while the city is evil, but *Mũgithi* artists work to subvert this paradigm while celebrating the city.

Sex and sexuality are inevitable topics in day-to-day life, and the *Mũgithi* artists bring them in the public domain, to make the themes items of discussion especially in the era of HIV/AIDS that continues to afflict Kenya. Silence about sex makes it especially difficult to educate the public on matters related to the syndrome. In most of these songs by earlier musicians, men drawn into dissipating pleasures of urban women and the fast life are castigated. In a rendition of a song by Joseph Kamaru, a man tells of his long journey to come and see his darling in town. Having not seen her for some time, he is taken aback when he discovers another man’s outfit in her wardrobe. To cushion this shock, he rushes to the shops for breakfast, but on returning, he finds used condoms in the room, and his hunger disappears.

In echoing themes of the village and the city, most lyrics in these songs portray the rural folk as a backward and primitive society where notions of romance are foreign to them. A song tells of this man from the village that meets a girl in town. A kiss from the girl leaves the man dazzled that he nearly faints! So, for participants to convince others during a *Mũgithi* night that they are not from the village, they engage in the weirdest sexual gestures on the floor. These musicians do not apportion blame to prostitutes and sweet-time girls, but lash out at the “primitive” man from the village who cannot cope with the fast life in the city.

Sex and drinking, which previously marked the city as evil, become positive icons of urbanity and the freedom of space and body that comes with the city in *Mũgithi* performance. What seems to have been treated as evil by the ambiguous and double discourse of modernity (for example, the Christian influence and its tendency to cast away reference to sex as evil) is thus reversed. There are certain subtleties that connect *Mũgithi* with *Mwomboko*, a traditional Gikũyũ genre in which there were no inhibitions on matters of sex and sexuality.

The ambiguity expressed in *Mũgithi* can be traced in this interface between *Mũgithi* and *Mwomboko*, or rather the contemporary and the traditional. Notes Masolo:

... due to socio-geographical concentration, the new musical tastes and styles [are] associated with the loose lures of urbanism. Even as the new guitar styles become popularly embraced, the conservative voice of tradition continues to regard them with moral contempt and suspicion. Widely associated with the moral permissiveness or decadence of the cities, the "modern" was in some ways seen as "corrupt" and "immoral" at the same time as it was admired as a "good" and "desirable" sign of new elitism.³⁴

The above at best describes the moral ambiguity of contemporary music, especially *Mũgithi*, which enables the performance to draw audiences from all spheres of life.

The irony of the whole *Mũgithi* performance is that despite lambasting the village, which is supposed to be unspoilt by western values, the artistes use vernacular in almost all songs; in this case, Gĩkũyũ. However, the suggestion here is not that the village is the custodian of vernacular languages. But given the cosmopolitan setting of the city, several vernaculars fuse into urban slang in Nairobi, called *sheng*.³⁵ It is therefore feasible to say that most vernacular speakers are mostly found in villages, where levels of inter-ethnic interactions are minimal.

I acknowledge, however, the fact that the migratory nature of the labor force, from the city to the village transports a number of urban styles, of dress, language and music. My argument here is that *Mũgithi* occupies a liminal space, bearing the past as it embraces the present. Traditional songs, where cultural values are exalted, play a major role in a *Mũgithi* night, but enjoyed and danced to by the diverse groups that patronize *Mũgithi* joints. The village thus is cast both as backward in some ways, but it is also as a bearer of wisdom and morality. Much however can be said of the duplicitous nature of the "country" much as it can be said of the "city."³⁶ Thus, as Haugerud asserts, presumed boundaries between town and countryside, like those between town and countryside are fuzzy at best.³⁷

Conclusion

Mũgithi demonstrates the audience members' willingness to mingle freely despite their diverse backgrounds, as they assert their diversity. Musical style may articulate and define communal values in heterogeneous, rapidly transforming societies. As Anderson argues, "communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined."³⁸ Thus, musical metaphor plays a role in the imaginative modeling of Kenyan urban society as a hierarchy in communal values, comprised of interdependent, yet unequal actors. *Mũgithi* performance style portrays an imagined community of a large number of people in the urban setting. However, these urban identities are not fixed identities. They are not created inside a self-contained urban grouping but at a site of many overlapping identities/players including the villager, the urbanite, the foreigner, etc. It is thus difficult to talk of pure urban identities, and the *Mũgithi* performance best attests to this. The recreation of rural identities through language, dance and the performance (again these identities are not fixed and exhibit ambiguities) in music and dance by the urban folks, point to the complex relationship of ethnicities and class identities, another broad area beyond the scope of this paper. The deliberate choice of language clearly emphasizes its cultural and political significance.

Notes

- 1 Clark 2003, p. 3.
- 2 Brodnicka 2003, p. 2.
- 3 I acknowledge Mzee Jeremiah Mũtonya's oral explanation of the term *Mũgithi* and Mũngai Mũtonya for the linguistic analysis. All translations of songs excerpts from the Gĩkũyũ language are done by the author himself.
- 4 Anthems are normally the undisputed positions of the musical presentation of place. Played in almost all the night clubs, dance halls, and bars in most urban Kenyan centers, Mũgithi has ascertained its position as most clubs' favorite.
- 5 Shebeens are taverns in black populated townships in South Africa, which have continually provided space for cultural expressions among the young blacks. It is this interaction, as Coplan (1982, p. 115) argues, that gives rise to innovative and creative urban performance styles.
- 6 Low 1982 p. 17.
- 7 *Nyatiti* is an 8-stringed plucked lyre from the Luo community located in western Kenya. *Litungu* is also a lyre, mostly seven-stringed, a traditional instrument from the Luhya community in Western Kenya too. However, the Gĩkũyũ too had a one-string instrument, *wandĩndĩ*. The influence of these traditional instruments has defined the various emergent guitar styles emerging in Kenya. *Benga* was born when Luo dance rhythms were pushed into the acoustic guitar. *Benga* in fact is a Luo word meaning "soft and beautiful."
- 8 Mutonya et al 2010, p. 33.
- 9 Paterson 1999, p. 509.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Low 1982, p. 27. With the development of this music, female musicians have entered the fray and are referred to as one-lady guitar. Their songs are devoid of the bawdy lyrics that characterize performances of their male counterparts, but the form and nature of the performance remains the same. Florence Wangari wa Kabera is the pioneer of this female tradition.
- 12 Low 1982, p. 29.
- 13 Nyairo 2004, p. 47.
- 14 Githiora 2008, p. 92.
- 15 Clark 2003, p. 3.
- 16 Kariuki 1998.
- 17 Stapleton and May 1989, p. 233.
- 18 Ndigirigi 1999, p. 90.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Coplan 1982, p. 115.
- 21 See Martin 1992, p. 197, where he avers that "*marabi*, South African jazz and even *kwela* were the offspring of a mixture: music from the city, in which supposedly ethnic origins disappeared to make way for the input of all."
- 22 *Mwomboko* is a traditional Gĩkũyũ dance of young people where a couple moved two steps forward, stooped, and made a turn. Men pressed their partners to their chests, and occasionally spun them around.

- 23 Ngaira 2002.
- 24 Daytona Nightclub on the fringes of Nairobi city is where artiste Salim Junior used to perform. But different artists in different renditions of this *Mũgithi* chorus mention the specific spaces where they are performing. While people are holding each other's waist, there is the license in the performance for men and women to touch each other in a sexually suggestive manner.
- 25 Though *benga* was initially a dance rhythm from the Luo, other variations of *benga* in Kenya have emerged (see Mutonya 2006). Kilonzo's variation is what I am referring to as Eastern Kenya *benga*.
- 26 For more on *Mũgithi* and ethnic stereotypes, see Mutonya 2005.
- 27 Bakhtin 1968, p.15.
- 28 Connell and Gibson 2002, p. 192.
- 29 Ngaira 2002.
- 30 Majengo is a famous Nairobi slum, known for its commercial sex industry.
- 31 See Wanyeki 1996: "Again, in 2003, a parents' caucus in Kenya fronted a crusade to ban Chinua Achebe's book, *A Man of the People* and other two textbooks from the secondary school syllabus." Those pushing for the ban on the books picked excerpts from *A Man of the People*, which they said were clearly explicit and were likely to excite students' imagination and stir their sexual desires. See also Mwangi 2003 for more on this attempt to ban Achebe's book. Such instances denote clearly the conservative nature of Kenyans, especially in matters related to sex and sexuality, which however, *Mũgithi* artists have subverted.
- 32 Also *phata-phata*, *patha patha* in the Xhosa and Zulu languages in South Africa. *Phatha* is "touch" or "feel." It is a sexually suggestive dance-style in which pairs of dancers touch each other's bodies with their hands, a dance tempo that Miriam Makeba popularized.
- 33 Ferguson 1992, p. 80.
- 34 Masolo 2000, p. 377.
- 35 *Sheng* has been defined as an acronym for Swahili-English slang, developed in Nairobi in post-independence Kenya. This innovation however incorporates also lexical items, not just from the two national/official languages but also from the wide array of the linguistic diversity defining the Kenyan nation. For more on *sheng*, see Githiora 2002, Githinji 2006, and Mũtonya 2007b.
- 36 Ferguson 1992, p. 90, asserts that the imagined locus of moral purity and wholeness of the village, as contrasted to the city, obscures the reality of the village too as the "seat of actual and antagonistic social relations."
- 37 Haugerud 1995, p. 139.
- 38 Anderson 1983, p. 15.

Discography

In this analysis, songs from three leading *Mũgithi* artists in Kenya, Mike Rua, Mike Murimi, and Salim Junior have been quoted. Discographic details of their works are hard to come by. The music is hardly played on radio stations in Kenya, and all of them perform live in various locations. However, this music is now available on copied tapes and compact discs,

but with no details such as dates of recording and recording companies. Such informalities inform my study of *Mũgithi* performance.

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To Be or Not to Be: Rethinking the Possible Repercussions of Somaliland's International Statehood Recognition

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Abstract: After the fall of President Siyad Barre in 1991, the northern region of what used to constitute Somalia declared independence from the rest of the country as the Republic of Somaliland. Although Somaliland is not internationally recognized as a sovereign state, it has survived for over two decades and currently constitutes the most peaceful and secure area of Somalia. Notwithstanding its accomplishments in state building and good governance, however, the international community has been highly reluctant to extend Somaliland international recognition, while at the same time showering the dysfunctional Somali Federal Institutions with aid and complete recognition in all international forums. Diplomats, politicians, and academics discussing Somaliland's status usually raise a number of issues that should be considered before the territory is to be extended formal recognition. This article seeks to examine many of those issues and discuss their validity in order to illuminate the highly complex situation surrounding Somaliland's international recognition.

Introduction

Shortly after the fall of the country's dictator president Siyad Barre in 1991, the northern region of what used to constitute Somalia declared independence from the rest of the country as the Republic of Somaliland.¹ Although Somaliland is not internationally recognized as a sovereign state, it has now survived for over two decades, and it currently constitutes arguably the most peaceful and secure area of Somalia. In fact, the government of Somaliland has in the past two decades managed to accomplish much in terms of building governance and providing security for its population, and its achievements in locally engineered state-building stand in stark contrast to Somalia's internationally funded governance structures. Notwithstanding Somaliland's achievements in state building, however, the international community has been highly reluctant to recognize the territory's claims to independence.

To put it another way, the inability or lack of interest of the international community in dealing with the complex political situation in Somalia is very clearly reflected in the status of Somaliland. African governments and the African Union (AU), coupled with the United Kingdom, the United States, and other Western donors have for years supported and provided international recognition to the Transitional Federal Institutions of Somalia, notwithstanding their abysmal record of ineptitude, corruption, and lack of popular legitimacy in the country. Yet, the same countries and international organizations still do not extend recognition to the only part of Somalia that actually boasts a legitimate and democratically elected government and has managed to remain largely peaceful since 1991.

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<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v14/v14i4a2.pdf>

It is almost impossible to find any discussion of Somaliland's independence that does not at least touch upon the questions of whether it would be good or bad to formally recognize Somaliland as an independent state, and what consequences this may have for other secessionist movements around Africa and the world. In fact, one could argue that the potential consequences of Somaliland's formal recognition, more so than the legal merits of its right to statehood, are at the core of Somaliland's recognition debate. Questions of setting a bad example or precedent for the rest of Africa, contributing to the balkanization of Somalia and adverse repercussions for the security and political stability of the region, and the economic viability of such a small state are amongst the key issues debated by diplomats, politicians, and scholars in discussing Somaliland's formal recognition. With this in mind, it is the purpose of this article to analyze such debates and questions in order to illuminate on the complexities that govern Somaliland's lacking international recognition. This article will first outline a brief background on events in Somalia since 1991 and then turn to a discussion of the arguments in favor of and against extending Somaliland formal recognition.

Somalia since 1991

As Major General Mohamed Siyad Barre's regime was overthrown in January 1991, armed conflict raged across the whole of southern Somalia. Clan-based militias fought each other for control of territory and resources and the post-Barre war, which may have begun as a struggle for control of the government, quickly turned into predatory looting and banditry by various militias. In 1992, a massive famine occurred in Somalia, and in March 1993 the US and the UN intervened to alleviate the famine and also assist the war-ravaged country. However, after the infamous and highly publicized 1993 "Black Hawk Down" incident in which Somali militias downed two US helicopters and killed eighteen soldiers, the US had had enough of Somalia and withdrew its troops from the country in March 1994. The UN followed suit soon after and the country was left at the mercy of its own warring parties and clan supported militias.² Since 1995, armed conflict has continued to plague south and central Somalia, but the nature of the conflict has changed. From 1995 to 2006 the majority of armed conflicts in the country occurred locally, pitting subclans against one another, and the duration and intensity of these conflicts was diverse.³

Although Somalia has been without a functional central government for the past twenty years, there have been international efforts to create one. There were thirteen international conferences on Somalia between 1993 and 2003, and each conference was tasked with developing or forming a central Somali government.⁴ At the 2000 Djibouti conference on Somalia held in the town of Arta delegates did manage to develop a Transitional National Government (TNG) of Somalia, but this first "national" government had difficulties gaining basic support in Mogadishu where it literally controlled only a few streets, and it never established any meaningful authority.

After the collapse of the TNG, there was another international conference on Somalia, the 2004 Nairobi conference, and it resulted in the formation of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia. Until August 2012, when its mandate ended, the TFG remained the internationally backed government of Somalia. Since the September 2012 presidential elections a new president and prime minister and a new (and no longer transitional) Federal Government have headed Somalia. However, although this new installment of a Federal Government in Mogadishu may be seen as a step in the direction of

finally building a permanent Somali government, it is important to note that the new president was not elected by the people (in a popular vote) but by the new Somali parliamentarians, who in turn were also not elected by a popular vote, but by a selected group of elders from Somali clans.⁵ In fact, the very survival of this government, much like that of the TFG before it, is still heavily dependent on international funding and military support.

From the late 1990s onwards much of south Somalia experienced slight improvements in local systems of governance. In certain areas local polities, generally comprised of Sharia courts, sprung up and provided some amount of law and order to the population.⁶ By late 2005, almost a dozen Sharia courts were operating in Mogadishu and they formed a loose coalition known as the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC), which by June 2006 defeated Mogadishu's warlords, who had effectively reigned over the city since the early 1990s.⁷ For the first time since the collapse of the Somali state, an organized group managed to unite Mogadishu, and bring a large degree of peace and security to its population. However, the success of the UIC was perceived as a threat by the TFG and Ethiopia, both of whom claimed that the UIC's leadership included Muslim terrorists implicated in bombings in Ethiopia and Kenya, a claim reiterated by the US.⁸ The rule of the UIC, which had for the first time since the late 1980s brought relatively centralized political governance to south Somalia, was brought to an end by the 2006 US supported Ethiopian invasion.⁹

The 2006 Ethiopian invasion of Somalia seemed a success when UIC troops retreated from direct battle, but the Ethiopians soon became bogged down in intense street fighting in Mogadishu. Once Ethiopian troops withdrew in 2009 the TFG quickly lost control of south Somalia. What sprung up in dominance after the fall of the UIC and currently is in control of parts of southern Somalia is the loosely affiliated Al-Shabaab group. The US and other Western governments have designated this affiliation of militias and clan-based groups as a terrorist group by because of its links to Al-Qaeda.¹⁰

Currently fighting Al-Shabaab in Somalia is the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) military force, which is made up of contingents of African troops mostly from Uganda, Kenya, Burundi, and most recently Ethiopia.¹¹ AMISOM forces are the main military force backing the current Federal Government of Somalia, and in effect constitute the "army" of Somalia. Although AMISOM troops have managed to force Al-Shabaab out of Mogadishu, given Al-Shabaab's suicide bombing operations within Mogadishu and Somalia, and its highly publicized attack on Nairobi's Westgate Mall, the fight for Somalia seems far from over.¹²

Developments in Somaliland since 1991

The Republic of Somaliland, roughly the size of England and Wales, faced grave obstacles upon its declaration of independence in May 1991. Although by declaring independence Somaliland managed to avoid getting dragged into a protracted conflict raging in the south, it still had considerable problems of its own. Somaliland's territory was devastated by a decade of insurgency and war; it lacked revenues, financial institutions, social services, and direct international support; and half of its population was displaced or living in refugee camps.¹³

In order to understand much of the rationale for Somaliland's aspirations towards international recognition and its view that the country deserves recognition, we need to understand the stark contrast between Somaliland and Somalia in terms of internal state-

building developments. The road to peace in Somaliland was paved by many peace and reconciliation conferences and clan elder meetings. Such conferences were concerned with constitutional issues and aimed at agreeing on a framework for power sharing amongst Somaliland's clans, creating mechanisms for the participation of clan elders in government, structuring institutions of government, and establishing ways of maintaining security.¹⁴ At one such conference, the 1993 Borama Conference, Somaliland's elders and politicians established the three main branches of the country's government: an executive comprised of a president, vice-president, and council ministers; a bicameral parliament comprised of elected representatives and a council of elders; and an independent judiciary.¹⁵

Somaliland did experience a flare up of hostilities and local conflict in late 1994 and early 1995, but the government has on the whole managed to provide for a large degree of security. The innovative blend of utilizing state and non-state actors in local governance has managed to maintain security in Somaliland and allow the government to focus and intervene only on issues of direct threat to the stability and integrity of the country as a whole.¹⁶ This is in stark contrast to the situation in most of south and central Somalia, where not withstanding AMISOM's recent success against Al-Shabaab, security and governance in the past two decades has been very local, community/clan based, and highly fragile.

Somalilanders believe they have earned a right to international recognition because of their significant achievement in governance and democratization.¹⁷ Somaliland boasts most attributes of a democratic state: a constitution that enables a peaceful transition of government (most notably when President Egal died in 2002 and the presidency was legally conferred to his vice-president Kahin), and guards civil liberties; a government in which the executive and legislative branches have been controlled by different political parties; active civic organizations; and a relatively free and independent media.¹⁸ Independent observers have reported favorably on the election processes in Somaliland in 2005 and 2010, and these elections have served to further institutionalize Somaliland's separation from Somalia and highlight the gap between Somaliland's democratically elected governments and Somalia's non-democratically elected TFG, and now Federal Government.¹⁹ The government of Somaliland draws its legitimacy from the people, and this is greatly aided by the fact that the government administers none of the very limited amounts of aid reaching Somaliland. This in turn forced Somaliland's political elites to develop accountable and representative institutions.²⁰

It should be noted, however, that the state-building process in Somaliland is not without issues: there are problems in aligning the goals and objectives of the elected representatives and non-elected elders in the bicameral parliament, issues with the 2010 presidential elections (which include charges of vote rigging and problems with the transfer of power), problems of media freedom and journalist intimidation, and disputes with the neighboring government of Puntland (a semi-autonomous region which considers itself part of a federal Somalia) over the bordering regions of Sool and Sanaag.²¹ Nevertheless, for such a young democracy with a very troubled past, Somaliland has set reasonably firm foundations for statehood. Although the country is still faced with international isolation, its example as a stable democracy that has survived for over twenty years, and a bottom-up locally engineered system of governance that highlights the ability of Somali people to govern themselves effectively makes calls for its international recognition ever more relevant.

Arguing Against Extending Somaliland Formal International Recognition

Sanctity of Colonial Borders in Africa

In his book *Contested States in World Politics*, the international relations scholar Deon Geldenhuys discusses Somaliland's recognition and asks why the international community has so far not recognized its claims to statehood. The issues he raises will form the main focus of this analytical discussion as they offer, in addition to other relevant literature, a broad analysis of the complex situation surrounding Somaliland's international recognition.

Perhaps the most pertinent issue influencing Somaliland's recognition in the context of African politics is the "dogmatic commitment to the sanctity of inherited colonial borders and hence a deep-seated antipathy to secession," coupled with an "almost pathological fear of setting precedents that would encourage disaffected ethnic minorities to break away from existing states."²² This "precedent" issue is also highlighted by the former US ambassador to Ethiopia, David H. Shinn who observed that "presumably, the African Union is reluctant to recognize Somaliland for fear that it would increase pressure by other groups in Africa to support changes in borders inherited at independence. The fact that Somaliland does not fit in the same category seems to be of little importance."²³

The point of territorial integrity or sanctity of borders received upon independence is crucial in Somaliland's fight for international recognition. The first Pan-African international organization, the Organization of African Unity (today known as the African Union) enshrined in its founding charter provisions against the re-drawing of borders inherited at independence out of concern for possible future colonial interference, but also to "shore up the stability of newly independent, multi-ethnic states whose inherited frontiers routinely divided nations, tribes and clans, sowing the seeds of potential secessionist movements across the continent."²⁴ This reluctance to meddle in territorial borders of its member states has been passed on to the AU, whose Constitutive Act in Article 4 requires all members to respect "borders existing on achievement of independence."

The Somaliland government's policy document on international recognition concludes that "the state of Somaliland and its people existed as a sovereign international nation until the Act of Union, at which time Somaliland sought unification with Southern Somalia."²⁵ For four full days in June 1960 Somaliland was a sovereign and independent state that received international recognition from thirty-five other states including the US (which sent a congratulatory message) and the UK (which signed several bilateral agreements with Somaliland).²⁶ Therefore, it would appear that when Somaliland seceded from Somalia and requested international recognition of its original colonial borders it was respecting Somalia's territorial integrity and borders inherited at independence, and remains in conformity with Article 4 of the African Union Constitutive Act.²⁷

Somaliland's secession stands in a considerable contrast to other relatively recent secessionist cases, such as those of South Sudan, Eritrea, or Kosovo. These states lack a history of existing as internationally recognized sovereign states prior to their recent independence, and all three were embroiled in civil wars with their "parent states" prior to their secession and international recognition. South Sudan, for example, formally seceded from Sudan after a referendum in 2011, but this was only achieved after a long and devastating civil war. The liberation struggle and Sudan's civil war have been fought for over two decades, and the South's independence was won by military means and only after that diplomacy. In terms of setting a dangerous precedent, one could argue that South Sudan's case highlights that secession can be won after decades long insurgency, rebellion,

and outright civil war, and that the secessionist party will be rewarded as long as it can “stick to its guns” long enough.

Eritrea’s example is similar as its independence was also preceded by an armed struggle against the “parent state,” and it too was allowed to hold a referendum on secession. Eritrea was in the late 1800s administered by the Italians, since the early 1940 the British, and in 1952 was allowed to join a federation with Ethiopia.²⁸ Its federation with Ethiopia formally ended in 1962 when its legislative assembly voted for its own dissolution and full reunification with Ethiopia. Eritrea, like Somaliland, was a colonial construct, but unlike Somaliland, it did not actually exist as an independent and sovereign state until its secession from Ethiopia in 1993. Again, while not in Africa, Kosovo constitutes yet another example of a territory that never existed as an independent and sovereign state prior to its armed conflict with “parent state” Serbia. Kosovo’s international recognition has proven more contentious than those of Eritrea and South Sudan, as it directly resulted from foreign interference (NATO’s bombing of Serbia). Many countries around the world still do not recognize Kosovo as an independent and sovereign state.

There are some key differences between the above noted cases of secession and international recognition and that of Somaliland. Somaliland has apparently existed as an independent and internationally recognized sovereign state even if for only four days. In layman terms that may seem irrelevant, but in terms of legal discussions it may be highly relevant specifically because it has the potential to render the “dangerous precedent” issue inapplicable in Somaliland’s case. Furthermore, Somaliland has not actually waged a civil war against a “parent state.” It simply declared independence from it at a time when the authority of that state had collapsed and disappeared, and it has not been able to reconstitute and revive itself since. This has had an important repercussion for Somaliland’s ability to seek formal dissolution of its union with Somalia (see below).

With the above examples in mind, it becomes difficult to argue that Somaliland’s case poses a dangerous precedent for the AU. Since the joining of Somaliland and Somalia was a voluntary union, Somaliland’s secession and request for recognition of its internationally recognized pre-union borders hardly presents a precedent in itself. There are many cases of voluntary dissolutions of unions between sovereign states. In 1989, Senegal opted to terminate its seven-year merger with Gambia as the Senegambia Federation, and, as already noted, in 1993 Eritrea formally seceded from Ethiopia.²⁹ To this could be added the cases of Egypt and Syria and their union in the United Arab Republic from 1958 to 1961 (when Syria seceded), and the brief union between Senegal and French Sudan which formed the Mali Federation from 1959 to 1960, when it fell apart and both countries received separate international recognition.³⁰ Therefore, Somaliland’s secession from its union with Somalia (or its dissolution of that union), although perhaps involuntary from Somalia’s perspective, can be seen as not dismembering the latter, but rather as restoring a previously sovereign state to its earlier internationally recognized status.³¹

An important point, however, should be made about the nature of Somaliland’s secession. Critics of Somaliland’s secession may rightfully state that the dissolution of the unions mentioned above was done through popular referendums or bilateral agreements between states; i.e., there was a consultation process between members before one state decided to terminate the union. This is a valid and important point as it can be argued that union dissolution can only be legitimated by popular vote or member state agreement. In the case of Somalia, however, it is unclear who Somaliland should have approached to discuss dissolution of the union in 1991. Somalia has in the past been poorly positioned to

engage in talks regarding either independence or significant autonomy for Somaliland, as it lacked any form of government between 1991 and 2000 and was thus unable to express an opinion on Somaliland's declared withdrawal from the union.³² The current internationally recognized Somali Federal Government is still struggling to establish its authority inside the country (and outside Mogadishu) and depends heavily on AMISOM troops and international funding. In the words of one scholar "there is no effective parent state" from which Somaliland could apply for secession.³³ From Somaliland's perspective it would perhaps be difficult to accept a dissolution negotiation with the Somali Federal Government as an equal partner when the latter has problems pacifying its capital, not to mention the rest of the country.³⁴ And even if it did negotiate, how could anyone know if the Federal Government's views were representative of the views of the Somali population they are supposed to represent. After all, the Federal Government is not a democratically elected government of Somalia.

Finally, another factor that appears to weaken the "dangerous precedent" argument in Somaliland's case is the recommendation of the AU's own Somaliland fact-finding mission. In 2005 the AU sent a fact-finding mission to Somaliland headed by then deputy chairperson of the AU Commission, Patrick Mazimhaka. This mission produced a four page unpublished document in which it recommended:

The fact that the "union between Somaliland and Somalia was never ratified" and also malfunctioned when it went into action from 1960 to 1990, makes Somaliland's search for recognition historically unique and self-justified in African political history. Objectively viewed, the case should not be linked to the notion of "opening a Pandora's box". As such, the AU should find a special method of dealing with this outstanding case.³⁵

The mission further added that "the AU should be disposed to judge the case of Somaliland from an objective historical viewpoint and a moral angle vis-à-vis the aspirations of the people."³⁶

The argument that recognizing Somaliland would somehow make a dangerous precedent in African politics is a complex one, but perhaps it is not as strong as it may seem at first. State secession is a highly contentious and controversial issues in African politics, and rightly so. The borders European colonial power left to most African states upon independence have created many problems for Africans over the past half century, and it often appears difficult to reconcile local self-determination aspirations of ethnically heterogeneous peoples with the territorial integrity of many African states. However, dealing with this problem with a "blanket" solution as the AU has done so far will not necessarily make it go away.

Somaliland's secession seems rather unique in that its history is different from that of many other secession movements. Somaliland, unlike South Sudan, Eritrea, or Kosovo, has actually existed previously as an independent state, and it appears to only be seeking a return to that status. Even the AU's fact finding mission sent to report on the situation in Somaliland and its independence aspirations has recommended that the AU not use the "Pandora's box" analogy as an alibi in not dealing with Somaliland's status.

Security Problems in the Region

The second important reason why Somaliland may not be receiving international recognition is because if recognized it could become a destabilizing influence on the region. There are three factors for discussion here:

- a) Somaliland's territorial sovereignty is internally contested and the government does not control all of the territory it lays claim to (especially in the east towards Puntland).
- b) The two Somali states could be fierce rivals thereby jeopardizing regional peace and stability, and a consolidated Somalia could in the future try and lay claim to Somaliland with forcible means.
- c) Recognition of Somaliland's independence could antagonize Al-Shabaab, which is committed to Somali unity, and could view Somaliland's recognition as outside meddling in Somali affairs.³⁷

As far as Somaliland's territorial sovereignty is concerned, it is internally contested, and there are problems with Puntland in the Sool, Sanaag, and Ceyn regions in the east of Somaliland.³⁸ However, as Herbst observes, there are few African states that exercise effective control over all their territory.³⁹ Or, to paraphrase Jackson and Rosberg, there are many African states that are empirically weak, yet are still extended juridical statehood.⁴⁰ The situation with regard to Somaliland's eastern regions is complex and the dynamics of local politics are difficult to guess at. It is entirely possible that recognizing Somaliland can contribute to a worsening border security situation between Somaliland and Puntland, but it is also possible that Somaliland's recognition will give it greater resources, authority, and international credibility in policing its borders and managing border disputes with its neighbors.

That Somalia and Somaliland could become fierce rivals in the future and thereby threaten regional peace and stability is based on several premises; namely that Somalia will develop centralized state-like features sometime soon and put an end to its political anarchy, that this united Somalia will be on bad terms with Somaliland, and finally that this united Somalia will indeed seek to annex Somaliland forcibly. First, how long it will take Somalia to develop a workable system of governance with centralized or federal national political authority is anyone's guess. Even if such a system of governance does come about, would it not (following over twenty years of destruction and conflict) perhaps be more concerned with rebuilding, reconciliation, and social questions rather than another round of fighting? It is possible that politicians in a new unified Somalia could use Somaliland's independent status as an example of foreign interference (balkanizing Somalia) and attempt a war in order to "unify" these two Somali territories, but such an act would very probably risk international condemnation and sanctions. While it is known that the Somaliland question is highly contentious in Somalia, attitudes do change, and it is possible that the future newly unified Somalia will accept Somaliland as a sovereign neighbor rather than seek fighting or annexing it.⁴¹

The third point is indeed a troubling one, especially as Al-Shabaab is a terrorist organization which could wreck considerable havoc on Somaliland, as it has in the recent past in Uganda and Kenya, and continues to do so in southern Somalia. Indeed, Somaliland's Foreign Minister Abdullahi Duale has acknowledged this much in a 2010 meeting with US Assistant Secretary Johnnie Carson, where Duale confirmed that Al-

Shabaab and related extremists “remain a ‘real threat’ to Somaliland, which they [the Somaliland government] do not take lightly.”⁴² Since 2012, AMISOM and Ethiopia’s (AMISOM-independent) military operations in Somalia (before Ethiopia formally joined AMISOM in January 2014) have significantly diminished the ability of Al-Shabaab to control large swaths of Somali territory and receive funding and arms, and there was even talk of the Islamist grouping moving its base of operations closer to Somaliland.⁴³

Al-Shabaab’s threat is a serious concern for any government in the Horn of Africa and it is possible that Somaliland’s recognition could provoke the group into launching activities in Somaliland. However, so far the Somaliland government has managed to keep Al-Shabaab activities at bay. A counterargument could also be proposed that if recognized, and with due foreign aid and development investment, Somaliland could bolster its internal security, establish better border controls, and police its territory sufficiently to prevent large scale terrorist acts. International recognition could allow the government of Somaliland to enter various intelligence sharing schemes and enhance its capabilities of fighting terrorist threats in the country. While the threat of antagonizing Al-Shabaab is a serious one, it is questionable whether the right of a people for self-determination should be held hostage by the potential of antagonizing a terrorist organization.

Questionable Popular Support for Somaliland’s Independence

A third reason often invoked for withholding Somaliland international recognition is the questionable domestic popular support for independence.⁴⁴ The Somali National Movement (SNM) liberated Somaliland, or the north of Somalia, from Barre’s brutal rule. The SNM was founded by Issaq expatriates (Issaq are the predominant clan in Somaliland) and remained essentially an Issaq organization.⁴⁵ When the SNM handed power over to the Somaliland transitional government, it too was dominated mostly by Issaq clan members. This is important because the Issaq were especially targeted in the 1980s by Barre and his repressive regime, and suffered extensively. As a result it is understandable that it is the Issaq of all the Somaliland clans who are the least willing to re-unite with Somalia and the loudest advocates for independence. However, other minority clans in Somaliland may not be as enthusiastic about Somaliland’s independence as the Issaq. As Bradbury argues, “among many Gadabursi, Harti and ‘Iise, attachment to Somaliland is much weaker. Indeed, many non-Issaq view it as an Issaq ‘project’ from which they feel politically and economically excluded.”⁴⁶

In Somaliland’s 2001 referendum on independence, two thirds of the territory’s eligible voters cast their votes, and with a 97 percent majority voted in favor of independence.⁴⁷ However, in the regions with the greatest opposition to the referendum, such as the Las Anod district of Sool region, voter turnout was only 31 percent.⁴⁸ The low turnout should not necessarily be a worrying issue in itself; what it demonstrates is that in a democracy people are allowed to express their opinions or withhold their support for certain policies. A major hallmark of democracy is the freedom of a division of opinions, and elections in stronger democracies than Somaliland’s are also marked by great divergences of opinions; one simply needs to look at Ireland or France’s referendums on joining certain European Union policies to understand this.

In fact, what is arguably more worrying than minority voter support for the independence referendum in Somaliland is an oppressive culture towards public discussions of possible union with Somalia. At the internationally sponsored conference on Somalia in Djibouti in 2000, Somaliland “not only refused to participate in the conference,

but its Parliament passed a law that prohibited representatives of the government or private citizens to attend, declaring attendance a treasonable offense."⁴⁹ This ban on participation in international conferences on Somalia was only overturned in early February 2012 in order to allow Somaliland to participate in the UK hosted London Conference on Somalia.⁵⁰ Among many Issaq, Somaliland's independence is sacrosanct and the right to debate independence publicly in the country is actually prevented by emergency laws.⁵¹ Leaders who might be willing to discuss such issues risk the wrath of the electorate and possible treason charges.⁵² Such stifling laws and public attitudes are not compatible with democracy and this is a real danger for free speech and democratic development in Somaliland.

The issue of questionable popular support for independence among Somaliland's minority clans is troubling especially with its possible implications for domestic political developments and governance. However, this issue per se need not negatively influence Somaliland's international recognition. Every democratic country has minorities, and they do not need to always see eye to eye with the majority. What is important, on the other hand, is that the majority of Somaliland's people respect the right of minorities to express their opinion and indeed disapproval of certain policies without experiencing physical harm, intimidation, and political marginalization (whether this is actually happening remains questionable).

Undermining the AU and Somali Government's Efforts in Somalia, and the Questionable Economic Viability of Somaliland

There are two more often cited reasons why international recognition for Somaliland is lacking: that such recognition undermines the efforts of the AU and the Federal Government in rebuilding Somalia, and that it is questionable how economically viable Somaliland as an independent state is.⁵³ It can be argued that to undermine the efforts of the AU and Somalia's Federal Government in rebuilding the country is not a difficult feat. Al-Shabaab has been doing so for years now, and up until September 2012 the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and its predecessor, the Transitional National Government (TNG), had done it to themselves countless times. While Al-Shabaab has been undermining these rebuilding efforts through gaining actual popular support, conducting terrorist activity, or outright military conflict, the TFG and TNG had done it through corruption, mismanagement, and a distinctive lack of popular support in the country. Somaliland's role here has so far been non-existent.

With over sixteen internationally funded conferences on Somalia and over twenty years of trying to bring about any kind of political unity and reconciliation, not to mention the countless millions of dollars in aid and development funding, Somalia has arguably had its fair share of opportunities to rebuild itself.⁵⁴ Somaliland's international recognition cannot change that record, and there is little evidence that Somaliland's lobbying for international recognition has adversely affected Somalia's state building efforts.

Economic viability is always an issue with state secession, especially with small states. Somaliland is poor, underdeveloped and one of the most resource scarce countries in the world, and as such may constitute another "economic basket-case" forever dependent on foreign aid.⁵⁵ However, while Somaliland has so far managed to avoid being an economic basket-case dependent on foreign aid, even if it were, would that prohibit it from gaining recognition? Looking at it from this perspective, one could argue that many African or Asian states should never have been granted independence or recognition. There are several independent and sovereign African states that rely to a great extent on foreign aid to fill

their budgets, and this can hardly be invoked as a criterion for state recognition. For example, Uganda's budget in 2006 was half made up of foreign aid, and who knows how much aid the country has actually received since independence.⁵⁶

On the other hand, with some 98 percent of the budget coming from oil revenues South Sudan's dependence on a single commodity is notorious, and with only sixty kilometers of paved roads, does it not also constitute a poor and underdeveloped state, an "economic basket-case" which for the foreseeable future will to a large extent depend on foreign aid for its survival.⁵⁷ As Spears has observed, "is a community which has been oppressed by its own government and which might be judged economically unviable less worthy of statehood than a similarly oppressed group which has a thriving industrial base?"⁵⁸

Somaliland has, notwithstanding immense difficulties, managed to survive for over twenty years now. Its record of self-reliance over this period suggests that the view of its economic unviability is exaggerated. There is no doubt that Somaliland's budget is limited and not adequate to meet the developmental challenges the county faces or will face in the future, but with very small and limited levels of foreign aid a basic system of public administration has been formed in the country, security has been established, private and public infrastructure is being rebuilt, and thousands of returnees have been absorbed into society.⁵⁹ While still poor, Somaliland's performance compares favorably with that of many wealthier neighbors, and oil exploration activities in the region might potentially unearth Somaliland's so-far unknown wealth in resources.⁶⁰

Economic viability is not the only, or main, presiding issue for international recognition of a state. As Adam has argued, "few states in Africa are economically 'viable' in the strict sense of the term. Political rather than economic viability criteria were used to recognize most of the states that seceded since 1989."⁶¹ It is political viability, namely the ability for local and national political governance, and the ability to provide basic public goods that are also important in determining the statehood viability of an aspiring political entity. Economic viability, although very important, should not be invoked as an argument against Somaliland's recognition, especially because Somaliland seems to have managed to survive to date largely through self-funding and remittances, and without any significant injections of foreign aid.

Arguing in Favor of Extending Somaliland Formal Recognition

Rewarding Somaliland for its Efforts in State-building

One argument that favors Somaliland's international recognition is that if such recognition is extended it will satisfy Somaliland's national pride and reward its efforts in state building and democratization.⁶² Somaliland has come a long way in the past twenty years, and its achievement in nation building and governance are impressive. As one observer concluded "since withdrawing from the union, the Republic of Somaliland has emerged as the most stable polity within the territory of the Somali Republic and since 1997 it has been one of the most stable areas in the Horn of Africa."⁶³ This is no small achievement considering Somaliland borders one of the most dangerous places in the world, the archetypical synonym for a "failed state."⁶⁴

Perhaps Somaliland's success in state building and governance can best be understood when contrasted with Somalia's failures. This is another reason why recognizing Somaliland may even be good for Somalia. As the argument goes, Somaliland's recognition could have positive consequences for the south because it would change the incentive structures for

Mogadishu (which receives lavish international attention and some \$ 750 million annually in aid) and force it to pull its act together.⁶⁵ While it is questionable whether Somaliland's recognition would be an incentive for Somalia, it is possible that Somalia's elites could receive less support from international donors, which could in turn influence the peace making and state building dynamics in the south.

Recognition Would Strengthen Regional Security

Another argument cited in favor of extending Somaliland international recognition is that it would strengthen the state and bolster regional security.⁶⁶ As already noted, international recognition has the potential to improve Somaliland's abilities and capacities in border control, anti-piracy activities, and fighting crime and terrorism. Currently "non-recognition means that Somaliland to a large extent stands outside the mechanisms established by the international system for regulating the flows of people, money and goods across national frontiers."⁶⁷ This has the potential to really hurt Somalilanders as they miss out on possible revenues from cross-border trade, and only "enjoy" the negative cross-border transactions such as smuggling, crime, and terrorism.

The terrorism issue is very sensitive for Somalilanders as they recognize the potential in their young population for radicalization. In a 2011 interview, the vice-president for academic affairs at the University of Hargeisa, Abdirahman Ahmed Hussei, observed an increasing trend of Islamization among students, partly because "people have become more observant, which is a consequence of the war and the extent today of political, economic, and social insecurity. Religion becomes a refuge in this environment."⁶⁸ International recognition could bolster development in Somaliland, which could have a beneficial effect on youth employment and social status, thereby influencing world-views and diminishing the prospects of religious radicalization.

On the other hand, there is also a potential for outside deliberate destabilizing activities, as radical elements from Somalia attempt to terrorize the newly recognized government in Somaliland. Although this could be triggered by international recognition, there is evidence that Somaliland's democratic governance and respect for female rights and empowerment are already under attack by radical religious elements from Somalia.⁶⁹ The argument here is that this is exactly why recognizing Somaliland would greatly aid the government in maintaining security and also would provide the region with a first constitutional Muslim democracy that is, according to US military officers, a proven partner in the war on terror.⁷⁰ As one ambassador of an African state argued back in 2006 "given the imperative of the regional counter-terrorism strategy, I cannot see how Somaliland would be overlooked."⁷¹

No Return To Union With Somalia For The Majority Of Somaliland's Population

A third argument for Somaliland's international recognition is that there is "no realistic way of persuading them [Somaliland] to rejoin Somalia short of launching a war."⁷² Considering that the majority of Somaliland's population was born after 1991 and Somaliland's declaration of independence, and that they do not have any memory or identity as citizens of a unified Somalia, it is difficult to imagine an incentive for them to join a union with the south. Add to this the still very grave material and security conditions in the south of Somalia, and it is understandable why Somalilanders may not be interested in re-joining Somalia.

Unfortunately, it has been over twenty years since northerners and especially Issaq were able to freely own property, hold political office, and conduct business in Somalia. A

legitimate reason why most Issaq do not wish to rejoin the union with Somalia is because "the opportunities for people in Somaliland to regain a financial and political foothold in the south are slim."⁷³ As Bradbury concluded:

Northerners have not only lost physical assets in the south from looting, but also rights to social protection, economic rights and rights of access and ownership. In a reconstituted Somalia, with Mogadishu as its capital, Isaacs and others who have fled or were chased out of the south are likely to feel more marginalised than they were before the war.⁷⁴

Moreover, the political elites of Somaliland are firmly against reverting back to any unity with Somalia; a fact highlighted by several confidential US embassy cables. For example, in 2004 US embassy officials met with a prominent London based Somalilander who was a "premier advocate for recognition." This person, Dr. Omar Duhod, in discussing the Somali Peace Talks in Nairobi stated that "if Somaliland is forced to go back to Somalia, there would be civil war" and added that the Somalis negotiating in Nairobi "are those that committed atrocities."⁷⁵ Similar arguments were raised six months later in a meeting between Somaliland's Foreign Minister Edna Ismail Aden and US Ambassador Ragsdale. When the US Ambassador asked Foreign Minister Aden if there was a way Somaliland could work with Abdillahi Yusuf, then president of the TFG, Foreign Minister Aden replied that this was not possible because Yusuf was an individual who had committed atrocities against Somaliland, and "will never have the support of Somaliland's people."⁷⁶ In 2007, at a meeting between US embassy officials and Somaliland citizens discussing Somaliland developments and recognition, US officials were told that "Somalilanders will never go back to Somalia after what happened to them under Siyad Barre" and that they would rather die fighting than become part of Somalia: "with or without recognition, they will never agree to go back to Somalia."⁷⁷ During a subsequent meeting with Djibouti's Minister of Communication an embassy official was told that while Somalilanders wish their southern neighbor well, "there is no going back, ever."⁷⁸

It appears that such views have not changed and Somaliland's leadership is still adamant that the territory will not re-join Somalia. In May 2012 Somaliland's then Foreign Minister Mohamed A. Omar stated in front of an audience of UK members of parliament and diplomats that "while we will never allow Somaliland to return to unity with Somalia, we wish our neighbor well, and stand ready to offer her advice and discuss matters of mutual bilateral interest on a basis of mutual respect and from our vantage point as a sovereign, separate entity."⁷⁹ Such sentiments have also been echoed in September 2013 by Somaliland's new Foreign Minister Mohamed Behi Yonis.⁸⁰

International Recognition Would Bolster Much Needed Foreign Aid and Investment

Somaliland's economy and development would be greatly aided by foreign investment and aid, which is currently not forthcoming in sufficient amounts. Foreign investment and aid have the capacity to strengthen the governance structures in the country and allow Somalilanders to rebuild much-needed infrastructure and engage more freely in international trade. International recognition would also allow the government to enter trade agreements and engage in international financial markets, which could further bolster government funding. However, an issue to be mindful of is that one of the reasons why Somaliland has achieved so much, especially in contrast to Somalia, is because its institutions and businesses have been homegrown and locally funded. Too much aid

coupled with poor administration of the aid sector and government spending could have a negative effect on the country (as seen from Somalia's case) as they could negatively influence government accountability and local ownership of governance. Unfortunately this is a trap for any developing country and can only be mitigated by professional and personal integrity of Somaliland's leaders, accountable and transparent practices and a strong regulatory framework, and governance that is in tune with the needs of the people.

Without Recognition Somaliland Might Worsen

Connected to this question of development and foreign funding is the argument that if Somaliland does not receive international recognition, the economic situation in the country might deteriorate. Youth unemployment in Somaliland is already a serious problem. One Somaliland politician noted that between 60 and 70 percent of an increasingly globalized, youthful population is unemployed, with more than half of the youth without opportunities to go further in their studies or find a job; a situation he characterizes as "a time-bomb."⁸¹ This is where the potential for religious radicalization and crime comes in. If Somaliland's youths do not see a chance for prosperity by legitimate means, they might resolve to activities that endanger their communities, the state, and by extension, the region. Moreover, local government officials and politicians should not be the only ones worried about youth unemployment in Somaliland. As one prominent Somaliland businessman stated "a lack of jobs goes hand in hand with a lack of hope, which creates terrorism and gets us back to square one. The West cannot worry about terrorism and then not recognise Somaliland."⁸²

Conclusion

This article has outlined and analyzed some of the most cited arguments against and in favor of extending Somaliland international recognition. This has been done in order to highlight the grave complexity that surrounds any discussion of international statehood recognition. In addition to legal arguments that form the basis of any discussion of state sovereignty and secession, it is also important to take into consideration economic, societal, and political issues. Apart from the legal validity of Somaliland's secession, other important issues influencing its international recognition include the possible repercussions of formally recognizing its statehood. It has not been the aim of this article to advocate for Somaliland's international recognition, but rather to expose the general ambiguity of the key arguments cited against extending Somaliland recognition.

The primary argument against Somaliland's recognition, namely the sanctity of colonial borders and how Somaliland's recognition could pose a dangerous precedent for the AU, seems rather questionable. Somaliland's borders are not in violation of Somalia's sovereign territory and are in conformity with Article 4 of the AU's Constitutive Act. On the other hand, Somaliland's situation is far more complex than that of a regional liberation struggle attempting to secede from a state that has mistreated its population. This is attested to by the AU's own fact-finding mission, which urged the Union to treat Somaliland's secession as "unique and self-justified in African political history."⁸³

Amongst other issues the article has argued that extending Somaliland international recognition may serve to bolster, rather than diminish, its capacity to police its borders, fight piracy, maintain regional security, and act as a partner in the war on terror. As for the question of Somaliland's economic viability as an independent state, an argument has been made that one need only look at other African states in the neighborhood, or other

secessionist states around the world to see that economic viability is hardly a determining issue when debating state recognition. Somaliland has over the past twenty years achieved considerable things with a very small budget, and considering how much money has been wasted on Somalia's governance and peace building exercises, Somaliland stands out as an exemplary cost-effective actor with abilities to fund itself and even maintain certain levels of governance regardless of its poverty and economic hardship.

An important argument in favor of extending the territory international recognition is that once accepted as a peer amongst the club of nations, Somaliland would be able to access international funding and greater levels of development aid which have the potential to foster greater development and economic activity, thereby contributing to the stabilization of its troubled neighborhood. Although aid and investment alone cannot guarantee greater development and prosperity, coupled with a locally owned and accountable style of governance and administration, they can allow Somalilanders a better future. Perhaps most importantly, international recognition can aid Somaliland in providing hope and employment opportunities for its youthful population; a population which can be a driver of both positive and negative developments depending on their options for a dignified existence.

Notes

- 1 Somaliland's territory is relatively equal to the size of England and Wales, encompassing an area roughly 137,600 square kilometers bordering the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, Djibouti, Ethiopia, south Somalia, and Puntland. Its permanent population is estimated between 2.5 and 3.75 million; see ICG 2006, p. 11; Eggers 2007, p. 218.
- 2 Clarke and Gosende 2003, pp. 143-45.
- 3 Menkhaus 2006.
- 4 Bradbury 2008, p. 49.
- 5 BBC 2012b; Al Jazeera 2012; United Nations 2013, para 2.
- 6 These courts generally administer Islamic Law (Sharia), and in some instances offer the parties a choice between the application of Sharia or Somali customary law, the Xeer; see Menkhaus 2006, pp. 85-86, and Johnson and Vriens 2011.
- 7 Mwangi 2010, p. 90.
- 8 Lewis 2008, p. 88.
- 9 In addition to providing logistical and intelligence support, in 2007, the US also actually bombed UIC positions in Somalia; see Reynolds 2007.
- 10 Al-Shabaab formally joined Al-Qaeda in 2012; see BBC 2012a; Al Jazeera 2011.
- 11 Ethiopian troops were operating in Somalia since October 2011, but only joined the AMISOM banner in January 2014; see AMISOM 2014.
- 12 Al Jazeera 2014.
- 13 Bradbury 2008, p. 77.
- 14 Ibid., p. 96.
- 15 Ibid., pp. 98-99.
- 16 Hagmann and Hoehne 2009, p. 49.
- 17 In a 2001 policy document Somaliland's Government explained why it did not engage

- with Somalia's representatives in negotiations at the 2000 Arta conference in Djibouti by explicitly stating that Somaliland "could only cooperate with a counterpart who had attained the same level of stability and legality, and who was conducting the affairs of his area through constitutional institutions and a system of justice based on established laws." See Somaliland Government 2001, p. 43.
- 18 Bradbury 2008, p. 218; Somaliland Times 2002; Hagmann and Hoehne 2009, p. 52.
 - 19 Bradbury 2008, p. 218; Kibble 2007; Walls and Kibble 2011.
 - 20 Eubank 2012, p. 468.
 - 21 For the press, see Williams 2013; CPJ 2013.
 - 22 Geldenhuys 2009, p. 143.
 - 23 Shinn 2002, p. 6.
 - 24 ICG 2006, p. 13.
 - 25 Somaliland Government 2001, p. 48.
 - 26 Shinn 2002, p. 6; ICG 2006, p. 4, note 12.
 - 27 ICG 2006, p. 16.
 - 28 Erlich 1983, pp. 1-9.
 - 29 ICG 2006, p. 13.
 - 30 Roethke 2011, p. 44, note 54; Eggers 2007, p. 220.
 - 31 Roethke 2011, p. 44.
 - 32 ICG 2006, p. 16.
 - 33 Clapham et. al. 2011, p. 9.
 - 34 There have been high-level negotiations between Somalia and Somaliland mediated by Turkey since 2013, but so far it is uncertain what result if any they have yielded; see for example AllAfrica 2014.
 - 35 African Union 2005.
 - 36 Ibid.
 - 37 Geldenhuys 2009, p. 143; Clapham et. al. 2011, p. 10.
 - 38 Relations between Somaliland and Puntland remain strained over these disputed territories and were not helped by the January 2012 announcement of Dhulbahante clan leaders and politicians from Sool, Sanaag and Ceyn that they were forming a new administration, called the "Khaatumo State"; see United Nations 2012, p. 5, para. 22.
 - 39 Quoted in Bradbury 2008, p. 249.
 - 40 Jackson and Rosberg 1982.
 - 41 In November 2005, Somalia's Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Geedi stated in an interview with the BBC that his government would not object to Somaliland's international recognition. He also stated in a subsequent interview that his administration would engage Somaliland in dialogue. Geedi was almost immediately roundly condemned for a treasonable offence; see ICG 2006, p. 19; Djibnews 2005; Samatar 2005.
 - 42 United States 2010, point 8.
 - 43 There were reports that Al-Shabaab was moving its base of operations to Puntland, which would have brought it much closer to Somaliland's borders; see Bayoumy 2012.
 - 44 Geldenhuys 2009, p. 143.
 - 45 Bradbury 2008, p. 66.
 - 46 Ibid., p. 251.
 - 47 Shinn 2002, p. 2.

- 48 Ibid.
- 49 Ibid.
- 50 United Nations 2012, p. 5, para. 23.
- 51 Bradbury 2008, p. 251.
- 52 ICG 2006, p. 19.
- 53 Geldenhuys 2009, p. 143; Clapham et. al. 2011, p. 10.
- 54 Walls 2009, p. 372.
- 55 Geldenhuys 2009, p. 143.
- 56 Mwenda 2006, p. 2.
- 57 CIA Factbook 2014.
- 58 Spears 2003, p. 91.
- 59 Bradbury 2008, p. 253.
- 60 Somaliland Times 2013, 2014.
- 61 Adam 1994, p. 37.
- 62 Clapham et. al. 2011, p. 11.
- 63 Bradbury 2008, p. 245.
- 64 Fund for Peace 2013.
- 65 Clapham et. al. 2011, p. 11.
- 66 Ibid.
- 67 Ibid., p. 18.
- 68 Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 21.
- 69 ICG 2006, p. 20; Somaliland Press 2011.
- 70 ICG 2006, p. 21.
- 71 Ibid.
- 72 Clapham et. al. 2011, p. 12.
- 73 Bradbury 2008, p. 252.
- 74 Ibid.
- 75 United States 2004a, point 4.
- 76 United States 2004b, point 4.
- 77 United States 2007, point 3.
- 78 Ibid., point 5.
- 79 Somaliland Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation 2012.
- 80 Yonis 2013.
- 81 Quoted in Clapham et. al. 2011, p. 13.
- 82 Ibid., p. 24.
- 83 African Union 2005.

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State Power, Land-use Planning, and Local Responses in Northwestern Zimbabwe, 1980s-1990s

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Abstract: The paper seeks to understand the rationale behind the introduction of the villagization program in post-independence rural Zimbabwe between the 1980s and the 1990s with a particular focus on the Gokwe South District. This is particularly interesting in that similar programs in the colonial era generated resentment and faced resistance among the rural population and were eventually abandoned. Given that the history of Africa is replete with examples of such programs that failed dismally, the most representative being the *ujamaa* experiment in post-colonial Tanzania, one wonders why a post-independence government would still have faith in such unpopular programs. The paper is based on fieldwork conducted between 1996 and 1997, and again in 2002-3 and more recently in 2011 in selected areas of Gokwe South District. The research made use of minutes of meetings of the Gokwe South Rural District Council, especially those of the Council's Natural Resources Board and Resettlement Committee; national and local newspapers; interviews conducted with Village Development Committees (VIDCOs), chiefs, village heads, ward councilors, Council and Agritex officials, the district administration and ordinary villagers. Largely in response to the influx of immigrants into the district, among other factors, state officials in Gokwe constructed a land degradation narrative to justify the program. Research work revealed that the program was not adequately explained to Gokwe rural communities. However, the program was eventually overtaken by the land occupations of commercial farms that began around 1997 and dominated the Zimbabwean political landscape for much of the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Introduction

This article analyses the rationale underlying the introduction of villagization, or in some official documents "internal resettlement" or also Communal Land "re-planning," by the post-independence Zimbabwean state in the communal areas of Zimbabwe in general and in the Gokwe District (see map below) in particular between the mid-1980s and late 1990s.¹ The paper further examines the varied responses of Gokwe villagers to the program. It seeks answers to the following questions, among others: Why did the state introduce the program when similar programs faced rejection from the rural populace in the past? How did the villagers understand villagization? Why did certain sections of the community 'support' it and why did others reject and how did they demonstrate their opposition to the program?

Villagization was introduced in communal areas in a manner similar to colonial policies of "centralization" in the 1920s and 1930s, in which "going into lines" was part of an administrative attempt to structure and control rural society.² These schemes were aimed at

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<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v14/v14i4a3.pdf>

re-organizing African land-use patterns and involved the ordering of settlement patterns in African areas through the demarcation of land into grazing, arable and residential “blocks.” These interventions were part of a so-called modernizing agenda that sought to transform what state officials and technocrats regarded as a “backward” and “traditional” African agriculture. This paper demonstrates that this conservationist ideology continued to inform land-use reform policies in independent Zimbabwe. The villagization of the 1980s reflected the same principles, i.e. just like centralization in the 1930s, it took place according to a set of authoritarian principles—rational, scientific planning and resource use—which all implied not only transformation but also improvement and progress.

The article highlights the continuities in conservationist discourse in Zimbabwe from the colonial to post-independence eras and argues that this genre of development discourse, whether espoused by the colonial or post-colonial state, attempts to portray development as a purely technical intervention. Yet, there is clear evidence to suggest that rural development is very much associated with the broad agenda of bureaucratic control in peasant agriculture.³ What villagization stood for—a more equitable distribution of land, proper management of land, and intensive use of arable land; and the economical provision of government services such as infrastructure, housing, and community services—all involved massive intrusion into the lives of rural communities for the state sincerely believed that it had the obligation to determine and organize the basic institutions of daily lives, including the spatial organization of community life itself.⁴

Some scholars have argued that development outcomes inevitably end up enhancing bureaucratic state power.⁵ James Ferguson, for instance, defines development as an anti-politics machine, an instrument “depoliticizing everything it touches, everywhere whisking political realities out of sight, all the while performing, almost unnoticed, its own pre-eminently political operation of expanding state power.”⁶ Ferguson found that one of the outcomes of the livestock development project he studied in Lesotho was the buttressing of bureaucratic state power. This study however, suggests that attempts at villagization in Gokwe to some extent undermined state legitimacy and authority. Field research conducted in the Njelele, Chisina, Nyarupakwe, Marungu, and Nyaje areas of Gokwe South district revealed a much more nuanced pattern of response to the program.

In some cases it was clear that the rhetoric of villagization created some space within which residents could comment on and articulate a local critique of state power through opposition to villagization. It also became clear that some residents supported the program on the basis of very limited understanding of it or a selfish desire to “benefit” from some aspects of the program that appealed to them. Some expressed uncertainty about what the program entailed because the responsible state authorities did not adequately explain it. Others expressed skepticism and outright opposition, particularly the vast majority who had entered the district through “improper channels” and were “illegally” settled in prohibited areas such as grazing, reserved forest, and sacred areas. One should bear in mind that villagization, with its emphasis on a particular order involving the demarcation of land into grazing, arable, and residential “blocks,” threatened the complex informal pattern of accessing land through a range of methods such as land grabbing, outright purchase, borrowing, inheritance, and squatting that characterized the frontier region of Gokwe. To this latter category, villagization “became a site of struggle between the villagers and the officials responsible for the program,” and also among the villagers themselves, over competing visions of development.⁷

Land Degradation Narratives and the Discourse of Land Use-Planning

Gokwe experienced several waves of immigrants at different times and of varying intensity since the late 1940s. By the 1990s, Gokwe officials began to craft a land degradation narrative to justify the introduction of villagization that blamed increased immigration for illegal and haphazard settlements, land conflicts, and general deterioration of the land. The history of immigration into the Gokwe district has been sufficiently dealt with elsewhere.⁸ Suffice here to say that Gokwe's first wave of immigrants were involuntary, having been evicted wholesale from Rhodesdale Crown Land in the post-Second World War period to give way to European ex-servicemen. The frontier nature of Gokwe attracted subsequent immigrants, especially those originating from land deficient regions of the colony. From the early 1960s, cotton introduced by state officials was successfully grown in Gokwe and acted as a powerful pull factor to immigrants. During the 1970s, many people took advantage of the guerilla war to immigrate to the district where land was still available. The removal of restrictions on movement to any part of the country after independence in 1980 witnessed an influx of people into Gokwe. The cotton boom of the early 1980s, aided by state policies emphasizing rural development, attracted more immigrants into the district. Also the droughts of early 1990s, the slow progress of the resettlement program in much of the country, and, finally, the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) in the 1990s, which witnessed massive retrenchments from formal employment, added more people in Gokwe villages.⁹

Primarily as a result of immigration, the first national census in 1982 registered a net immigration rate of 44.7 percent over the previous decade for Gokwe, the highest in the country. The population in that year had grown to 238,566 and the population density to 16.59 persons per square km from 130,400 people and a density of 9.07 persons per km² the 1969 national census. In 1990, the population had further increased to 291,851 from 281,801 in 1989. By 2000, the population had grown to 399,906 with a density of 27.81 people per km².¹⁰ Clearly by the early 1990s there was pressure on the land as the frontier was closing; cases of landlessness, illegal settlements, and haphazard cultivation as well as incidences of land conflicts were on the increase.¹¹ It is within this context that land degradation narratives and the attempt at villagization in the district should be understood.

This article argues that state officials crafted a land degradation narrative in Gokwe that informed both the decision to introduce villagization as well as opposition to it. From the early 1990s the Gokwe Rural District Council was alarmed by the increase in land conflicts resulting from land shortages in the district but also by what they perceived as "an ecological disaster" resulting from increased immigration, a haphazard settlement pattern, and the relentless cultivation of cotton in unsuitable areas. There was also a growing concern among Agritex (Department of Agricultural, Technical, and Extension Services) officials, Gokwe Council officials, and in the local and national press about the problem of rapid land degradation. *The Herald*, for instance, lamented that the agricultural success of cotton in the district, was likely "to be short-lived unless communal farmers adopt positive changes to land use plan." It pointed out that "experts predict an ecological disaster in the district whose cotton farming has lifted most communal farmers out of poverty and underdevelopment."¹² The paper proceeded at length to enumerate the "financial windfall" which intensive cotton farming had supposedly created for most farmers since independence:

The benefits of cotton growing are evident in the number of decent brick-under tile houses that are sprouting all over, progressively replacing the pole mud and thatch huts. More service centers are emerging as some farmers graduate into entrepreneurship. Livestock population is increasing while acquisition of modern farming equipment like cultivators and tractors, which were a dream a few years ago, are finding their way into the district. The trappings of luxury are also creeping in as fully solar-powered homes, radio and television sets, even cars are now basics for some of the more successful communal farmers.¹³

However, these benefits were derived at the expense of the environment: "poor land management skills and massive land pressure had begun to take their toll on the fragile soils of the once sparsely populated district." The incentive to grow cotton was said to have "led to farmers expanding their landholdings even into areas unsuitable for cotton growing," a situation which had led to the disappearance of "dense forests and permanent water supplies that attracted people only two decades ago." Within a short space of time, "the dense forest and water supplies had been replaced by over-grazed and over-used land, silted dams and rivers and gapping gullies whose negative impact would be difficult to reverse." Major rivers like the Lutope, Sengwa, Mudzongwe, and Munyati "have now been reduced to sand beds." To many officials, "Gokwe is a future ecological disaster."¹⁴

The local *Cheziya-Gokwe Post* echoed similar concerns about the environmental situation in some parts of Gokwe as follows:

Gokwe District which only in the 1970s had thick lovely forests, tall savanna grass, growing well in rich clay and sandy soils, has now been reduced by men to semi-desert. The historic forests have disappeared exposing the once rich soils to denudation forces, and gullies. People are still cultivating crops and do gardening on stream banks and on slopes. They plough along these streams to take advantage of the rich alluvial deposits on the rivers. The most affected areas are Chief Jiri, Sai and Njelele. Here the soils are sandy and the destruction of the vegetation by men has left these poor soils bare, erosion has laid the land to waste. These areas are also overstretched by over population of both people and stock. Thousands of people flocked to these areas in the early 70s from as far a-field as Gutu, Mberengwa, Zvishavane and other areas in search of land to farm.¹⁵

In interviews with a Mr. Goto, the District Agricultural Extension Officer (DAEO), he indicted farmers for having rushed "to make quick money through cotton," but "had overlooked the need for appropriate land-use plans." He pointed out that, "The farming success which had lured thousands of immigrants from all over the country, creating land pressure, had forced the Council to suspend any new settlements." Yet there was no evidence that farmers would change their "rudimentary farming methods." He went on to suggest that, "What was required before the situation got out of hand, was a proper settlement plan demarcating homesteads and grazing and farming areas."¹⁶ His concerns were shared by the district administrator who described the settlement pattern in the district as "destructive to the environment, with the area of land under cultivation being 80-90 percent. This resulted in no land left for grazing" and "this situation has to be corrected

urgently. River banks are silting very fast. If this is left unabated, there will be a desert in Gokwe very soon and the consequences will be discouraging.”¹⁷ He complained of:

a serious land degradation [problem]. . . farmers along the major rivers like Lutope, Mbumbusi, Sengwa and Kana are ploughing without conservation. . . Bridges that were built 5 meters above the river are now silted completely. Sesame river for instance is completely silted because there are more people clamouring for the land, more land is being tilled, and more trees are being cut.¹⁸

According to the district administrator, “a serious approach was needed to organize land use and settlement patterns in the district . . . To arrest the problem there should be [specific] areas for grazing, for tillage and for settlements.” In other words, he was advocating for villagization.

Some concerned individual residents of Gokwe shared a similar narrative with that of officials mentioned above through anonymous letters to the district administrator and the Council.¹⁹ Some, however, chose not to be anonymous. In a letter to the district administrator, J. J. Ndhlovu, concerned about the situation in his area, summarized what he felt were the root causes of environmental degradation and land conflicts in the district:

The root cause of our problem seem[s] to stem from the random settlement and land grabbing, which occurred with the advent of independence in 1980. From this period there was never any proper definition of boundaries from one village to the other. While boundaries are there on paper, in people’s minds they don’t exist and they are not to be observed. It is therefore in this background that people have taken to encroach on other people’s land, random tillage of land going to the extent of ploughing on land originally designed for grazing as well as along rivers. These short sighted practices have among other things resulted in massive deforestation through unwanton [sic] falling of trees. The ultimate result has been to a large extent the formation of gullies [sic] all over and at worst the washing away of top rich soil. We are now faced with a situation where we are to lose portions of our fields and our livestock because we have no grazing land.²⁰

These newspaper reports are backed by two major scientific studies of the soils of the region. One such scientific study was of the soils of the area, which occurred at the Sebungwe Seminar in 1982, where all researchers who had worked in the area pooled their general knowledge in all facets of production in an attempt to generate a major development plan for the region after independence and confirmed some of the concerns especially about soil erosion. The study noted that: “soil erosion was presenting a major threat, due to the high human population within the area, which on average was 100-250 villages per hundred square kilometers.”²¹ The other study, the 1966 Farm Planning Study by A.K. Bromley and C. B. Jones, was for a long time the standard work on the soils of the Gokwe area. The report categorized all the soils of the Sebungwe region into “high potential, medium potential and low potential soils.” No conservation threat was seen in the area in 1966, yet in 1982, at the Sebungwe Semina, it was felt that the human population had grown to such an extent that soil erosion had become a major threat through deforestation of the area to get access to the arable soils.²²

While state officials crafted a narrative about land degradation to justify villagization, there were other narratives that either confirmed or differed from the official version. Those who came into Gokwe villages illegally and therefore were considered squatters had a different narrative about the land situation in Gokwe more generally and the degradation scenario in particular. Squatters, who were threatened with eviction because of their “illegal” status, objected to the land degradation narrative presented above. They expressed their sentiments in anonymous letters to the district officials. One such letter, addressed to the district administrator, written on behalf of twenty-two families who faced eviction from the district to give way for villagization, read:

You as administrator . . . knows very well that places for homes, and fields is very scarce [in Masvingo], thus why people migrate here. [And] to our surprise you call them as squatters. If Zimbabwe is a free Republic that people may go any corner of the country to stay, why then you say, they should go back where they came from . . . Your area is full of room for other families to occupy . . . If they tell you there is not enough land. . . they are jealousy. I suggest A LAND DISTRIBUTION FOR YOUR FIELDS ARE TOO LARGE 80 ACRES PER PERSON WHEREAS THE BUSHES HAVE LARGE AREAS WITHOUT PEOPLE.²³

The district administrator’s response was to simply dismiss the letter by scribbling a few remarks in the margin, which read: “Pure and sheer cowardice. He [the writer] should have written down his name and got a positive response from the office.”²⁴ It is clear from the letter that its author was using the criterion of national citizenship to lay claim to land in Gokwe. The writer also did not think Gokwe lacked land to accommodate more people. If anything, more people could be absorbed without causing land degradation because “the bushes have large areas without people.” One is bound to agree with Mellissa Leach and Robin Mearns who wrote that “The way in which problem and solution are framed. . . offers a classical example of how received wisdom about the environmental change obscures a plurality of the other possible views, and often leads to misguided or even fundamentally flawed development policy in Africa.”²⁵

By 1994 the environmental challenges, real or imagined, that faced the district were sufficiently worrying for the Council to warrant a series of meetings specifically to find ways to resolve the situation. At the fourth meeting of the Council’s Natural Resources and Resettlement Committee on 20 January 1994, the district administrator (DA) reported that he had received “numerous field disputes from certain areas of the district and that the problems were getting worse with the passing of each day.” He complained about his staff spending a lot of time solving these disputes. He recommended that: (i) the Council adopt the Communal Land (Model) (Land Use and Conservation) by-laws of 1985 as a matter of urgency; (ii) chiefs and village heads be co-opted members of village development committees (VIDCOs) in their areas for this would involve them in all development issues in their wards, especially in matters relating to the allocation of land; (iii) all village heads who proved to be difficult and continuously caused problems be removed from the registers; (iv) all members of the Natural Resources Committee receive photos of the Communal Land (Model) (Land Use and Conservation) By-laws of 1985 so that they were familiar with what was involved; and (v) that the Local Authority circular number 160 (Squatter Policy) be followed when evicting squatters, that is, squatter eviction orders. The Council also

complained that it was not well informed about people who transferred to Gokwe or from one ward to another.²⁶

On 17th October 1996, the Council held another meeting “to look into strong measures of solving land disputes.” Members again emphasized that action on all land dispute problems could only be enforced if the Council came up with by-laws on land issues. Members noted that due to financial constraints and administrative incapacity, the Council was unable to come up with a plan that indicated ward and VIDCO boundaries as required by the Land Use and Conservation by-laws. After a lengthy debate, members went on to make recommendations to assist in solving the problem of land disputes in the district. These were that: (i) the Council should urgently prepare a district plan that clearly demarcated all wards and VIDCO boundaries showing areas of cultivation, settlement, and grazing and all other relevant details; (ii) all wards should submit sketch maps of their areas after consultation with the local people for incorporation into the district plan; (iii) the executive staff of the Council should prepare clear and well defined land by-laws which included issues like classification of land, requirements for registration, issuing of permits, maximum acreage and number of livestock per household, and conservation measures; (iv) executive staff issue prohibition orders on all people settled in unauthorized areas, e.g., grazing areas and traditionally reserved areas; (v) the executive of the Council should assess and deal with all cases of land disputes brought to their attention and refer only the most critical cases to the Council’s Land Resettlement Committee; and that (vi) the executive members of the Council should liaise with the magistrate’s court on how to deal with land dispute cases before the by-laws were approved by the Minister of Local Government and Urban Development.²⁷

It is clear from the concerns raised by the DA and the DAEO and from the two Council meetings cited above that much of the blame for increased land disputes and land degradation in the district was placed on unplanned and haphazard settlement patterns in the villages. What was needed to remedy the situation before it got out of hand was the proper designation of grazing, settlement, and cultivation areas. In other words, villagization, which was initiated by Prime Minister Robert Mugabe in 1984, was seen as the answer to the malady. The new government believed, just like its colonial predecessors, in prescribing technical solutions to problems of the communal areas. The government also based their technical solutions on the beliefs and practices of the colonial government.

The villagization program or policy of internal land-use reform was launched in 1986 with a pilot program in a selected VIDCO in each of Zimbabwe’s fifty-five district council areas. The Department of Agricultural and Technical and Extension Services (Agritex) was responsible for demarcating arable and grazing areas, and for assessing water requirements for human, stock and irrigation purposes. The Department of Physical Planning would then plan a consolidated village settlement.²⁸ The three components of the program were: grouping together of homes into consolidated villages at sites chosen for their suitability for providing infrastructure; a village housing program with loans available for construction of permanent brick houses, subject to rather high government set-standards, in the consolidated villages; and land-use planning including consolidation of residential areas, as well as arable and grazing areas. The aims of the program were, first, to make easier the provision of services such as water and electricity to rural communities; and, second, to reorganize land-use in the Communal Lands. Communities for the program were selected rather than have them volunteer for the program.²⁹

Underlying calls for villagization were the “unfounded assumptions about the inherent environmental destructiveness and lack of productivity of African farmers, as opposed to

their white counterparts.”³⁰ This is very evident from the tone of the reports of the early 1980s in which the origins of the program are to be found. The Riddell (1981) and Chavunduka Commissions (1982) set the tone for the agrarian reform debate by recognizing a pervasive demand for land and endorsing land distribution but proceeded to make proposals similar to the colonial officials.³¹ The Riddell Commission argued that peasant agriculture was an inefficient use of the land and called for “a substantial restructuring and transformation of agricultural production within the peasant sector.” This involved consolidating arable land into blocks, fencing grazing areas, registering land with title, and abolishing labor migration, thus creating permanent farmer and worker populations. Of significance was the Commission’s proposal for “blocks of land to be given to each village, dividing the land into arable, grazing and residential.”³² The Chavunduka Commission repeated some of the views of the Riddell Commission pointing out that “communal areas are handicapped not only by a legacy of colonial neglect and discrimination, but also the continuance of . . . traditional shifting cultivation.” It recommended that the government initiate, expeditiously, a study to identify existing land tenure systems in the communal lands with the aim of defining the future pattern of land tenure in those areas and the resettlement schemes.³³ The Communal Lands Act of 1982 and its 1985 amendment also called upon government “to introduce the demarcation of arable and grazing lands, and areas for rural housing construction.”³⁴

Policy papers produced by the Ministries of Agriculture and Land in the mid-1980s demonstrated a tendency to draw on colonial ideas and practice. For instance, the Ministry of Lands’ Communal Lands Development Plan of 1985 was very critical of communal tenure and its alleged destructive effects on the environment. Just like the LHA of 1951, it made proposals for the creation of surveyed, planned, and demarcated “economic units” and consolidated villages. It also called for increased state control over tenure through a system of leasehold that would exclude those who were not full time farmers, thus totally ignoring the links between and interdependence of rural production and urban earnings, which many scholars have ably demonstrated.³⁵ It also overlooks the contribution of communal areas to overall marketed crops in the post-independence period, described by Matte Masst as “the harvest of independence” and Mandivamba et al. as “Zimbabwe’s Agricultural Revolution.”³⁶ The Plan saw village consolidation as necessary “to restructure and reorganize the existing dispersed and isolated peasant settlements, to make for cost effective provision of social and physical infrastructure and services. . . .”³⁷ The Plan relied heavily for its information about communal areas on colonial research and reports done in the 1970s.

By 1985, the focus of the land reform program had clearly shifted from a concern with land distribution and the resettlement of the many landless families to an emphasis on internal reorganization of communal areas. In other words, land reform had come to mean the “efficient utilization of land” rather than the “redistribution and development of land and resettlement of the maximum number of families possible.”³⁸ The reasons for this change of policy are well documented in the literature.³⁹ Among other factors, the government was heavily influenced by reports from the Whitsun Foundation and the World Bank and various other consultancy reports which did not think that resettlement was the solution to problems of population pressure in the communal areas.⁴⁰

In attempting to explain why post-colonial Zimbabwean technocrats retained conservationism and colonial ideas about “development,” Drinkwater borrows from Habermas’s concept of “purposive rationality.”⁴¹ The post-independence government did not challenge the beliefs and practices that had informed technical development in the

colonial era. One of the reasons for this was the tendency of the post-independence officials to rely heavily on pre-independence research and technical data in devising their strategies and projects. In addition, most post-independence development plans were devised with the assistance of external funding agencies, whose financial control influenced the construction of plans and made it imperative to please them. Therefore, policy makers worked with development plans that had been produced by external sources. It took the new government time to develop its own more extensive data sources.⁴² To Beinart such projects, rooted in a scientific and modernizing logic, have been subjected to particularly critical scrutiny because they outlived the colonial era and remained central in the development strategies of independent African states and international agencies. He blames “political resistance and bureaucratic incapacity which played a part in the mishaps of planning, nevertheless lack of research, misunderstanding, scientific hubris and technical weakness have all been demonstrated by researchers.”⁴³ However, Munro, contrary to Drinkwater, argues that villagization, like the other conservation measures, “was driven not just by a particular bureaucratic rationality, but by the imperatives of constructing state authority. Technical order (the realm of scientific expertise) was intimately linked to political order (the realm of state authority.)”⁴⁴ It should be pointed out that the government’s development vision was far more contested within the state than Drinkwater’s account of a technocratic purposive rationality suggests. In the following section, the paper proceeds to demonstrate that this development vision was also contested by various elements of rural society.

Attempts at Villagization in Gokwe and Local Responses

From its inception the villagization program suffered from a lack of effective planning coordination between the various government departments involved, and more importantly, opposition from rural communities. State ministries and departments blamed each other for the problems and delays in implementation as some openly objected to aspects of the policy, while others did not co-operate or were simply unable to provide the necessary support. Agritex officials, who were responsible for the technical aspects of the program, were, for instance, critical of villagization.⁴⁵ In addition, Agritex had a host of other worries, most of which were clearly articulated in its 1988 position paper.⁴⁶ In that document, Agritex officials were hesitant to enforce technical calculations of carrying capacity, pointing out to the inadequacy of land in the communal areas to implement the villagization program successfully. Among other things, Agritex officials complained about the shortage of its own staff and poor resource allocation for undertaking land use planning. Its staff was already overcommitted due to their agricultural extension duties and a range of other non-agricultural responsibilities including drought relief work and public works programs among other duties. Partly for this reason, they complained that “there has been no opportunity for critical analysis of land use and management options for both Communal Lands and Resettlement Areas.”⁴⁷

Since the introduction of the program in Gokwe in the early 1990s councilors in particular were not readily forthcoming. In Mashame officials met resistance from the locals and were dismissed on the ground. Officials were also dismissed from Simbchembu in the northeast because people there said that they required more time to think about the exercise.⁴⁸ Government officials blamed councilors for failing to mobilize the people in support of the program. The Deputy Minister of Public Construction indicted councilors in general for failing to “mobilize and educate the people on the rural housing program, as

well as make them understand and accept the concept of planned villages,” and stressed that “households and their councilors must accept the concept of planned villages.”⁴⁹ Mrs. Chinho, the Executive Officer of the Gokwe South Rural District Council, admitted that one of the sources of resistance to villagization was that:

Gokwe is unique, it is quite unique. In other districts there is not much land to dispute over, where as in Gokwe there are still some vacant areas and many more people are still coming in. This presents problems because those who originate from the district and those who came earlier have reserved large tracks of land for their children and even for the unborn. Such households are very likely to resist attempts at having their land reduced.⁵⁰

She added that as a result “land use [planning] is going to be a big problem” for the council and that “there are areas where we have failed to remove people settled in areas that are not proper . . . the movement of people [into planned villages] will be the most difficult process.” She indicated that there were many areas of the district where council had failed to remove people settled illegally in order to facilitate planned villagization.⁵¹

Councilors were part of the new local government structures, which were unpopular with most rural communities. The council through the VIDCOs was the responsible authority, and yet these institutions were themselves relatively new and were struggling to gain some modicum of legitimacy and to function as organizational units.⁵² According to Alexander, “council and vidcos occupied a difficult position . . . [and] their role as policy implementers left them vulnerable where policies were unpopular.”⁵³ It is not surprising that councilors would object to the program because they feared to lose votes from their constituencies in council elections if they were seen to be supporting the unpopular program.⁵⁴

Even if the councilors had supported the program, there was often disharmony between the DA and the councilors over development projects in the district in general. With the introduction of councils in the mid-1980s, the DAs were having problems relating to the new autonomous rural district councils. The role of DAs was rendered vague.⁵⁵ The relationship between DAs and the councils was raised at a national level and debated by Members of Parliament in August 1997.⁵⁶ In that debate, parliamentarians “questioned whether DAs had any meaningful roles to play as rural district councils now have their own chief executives.” One MP described the relevance of DAs as “purely bureaucratic” while others suggested that there would be substantial savings if the positions of DAs were abolished. MPs generally felt that DAs were failing in their roles as co-coordinators of other ministries at the district level, adding that “their only visible function . . . now was that of installing chiefs.”⁵⁷

In Gokwe, the DA’s office and the rural council often accused each other of doing things without consultation. The councilors in particular felt that with their newfound autonomy, they did not need to consult the DA on matters pertaining to the development of the district. One of the biggest bones of contention pertained to the differences of opinion regarding villagization. The DA complained that the council came up with the villagization program, but this was not brought before the rural district development committee, of which the DA is a member, before being sold to the people. He strongly felt that he was being sidelined from playing a meaningful role in matters relating to the development of the district.⁵⁸ When the Chief Executive Officer of the Gokwe Rural Council was asked about the relationship between Council and the DA, he tried to play down the friction that existed: “DA’s position is that with the introduction of new local government structures, we have the

Chief Executive Officer who is supposed to work together with the DA. This is an advantage. DA comes to Council as an advisor . . . He is the leader of chiefs. When dealing with land disputes we help each other with DA because he knows village boundaries. We have worked with cooperative DAs.”⁵⁹ The discord cited between different sections of the bureaucracy, for example between state ministries and departments, the reservations expressed by Agritex officers about the villagisation scheme, and the internal rivalry between the DA and the council are not uncommon in any state. They clearly demonstrate that the state is itself made up of often-contradictory sections and individuals. This is useful in understanding the implementation of the villagization program.

Following the meeting held in January 1994, the Gokwe Council recommended that the villagization program be carried out as a matter of urgency following these stages: accelerated method documentation, pegging by physical planning, and settling people because there were numerous financial and human resources constraints that made it impossible for the program to be implemented any sooner.⁶⁰ At the beginning of that same year, the program had only been implemented in the pilot ward, Ngomeni. Some planning was done in Ndhambi, Njelele, and Nemangwe wards, but implementation had not yet taken place. The Acting District Agritex Officer attributed the lack of progress to the fact that “the Agritex Department was not receiving support from the community as some people resisted being moved if found settled in the grazing area.”⁶¹ The *Cheziya-Gokwe Post* carried an article in 1989 titled “Villagisation Programme Disregarded,” which reported that “people in parts of the district refused to allow the villagization program to be implemented” and that “new village settlements were sprouting haphazardly in apparent disregard of villagization.”⁶² Another article in the same issue titled “River-bank Cultivation Problem,” reported that stream-bank cultivation had reached alarming proportions along the Sengwa River, and it was alleged that Headmen Sai and Rutope were allocating land without consulting VIDCOs. As a result of the headmen’s actions people were ploughing wherever they chose. And in Ngomani ward (the site of the pilot program) along the Sengwa the situation was reported to be serious as people there were said to be using “force to do what they want including denouncing VIDCOs. Nobody can stop them planting along the Sengwa River.”⁶³

In many parts of Gokwe the program faced problems due to opposition or lack of cooperation from rural communities. There were widespread reservations or outright rejection of key aspects of the program. People were generally suspicious that they would be cleared out of certain areas, particularly from areas designated as grazing areas. This was especially true for the “squatters” settled in grazing areas who objected vehemently to villagization because they would be removed from areas they occupied and would be forced to go back where they came from.⁶⁴ Households had a very real fear that their consolidated plots would not be of the size and quality as their previous holdings. Plans to reduce acreages were resisted because they threatened household subsistence. Some households were reluctant to move into designated residential areas because they had substantial brick buildings. There was no policy provision in the program to compensate those who were relocated for building a new homestead. In any case the cost of rebuilding was prohibitive to many, e.g., molding bricks, cutting poles, etc. The Land Commission of 1994 in a national survey of the program also documented these concerns expressed by rural communities in areas where the program was attempted.⁶⁵

Additional problems of the program included the fact that planning of new settlements was done with little regard to sources of water. In such cases women objected to relocation

because they would have to walk long distances to collect water. There was also a general complaint that if people lived close to each other there was a likelihood of increased disease, witchcraft, and theft and that this would aggravate conflicts.⁶⁶ In other words, some people simply did not want to live close together. Nor did they want to be away from their fields.⁶⁷ This point was clearly expressed by one correspondent who complained that:

Most people have been forced to leave their usual places to live in line resettlement along the main roads . . . When we asked our local councilor and VIDCOs, they simply told us it was the government's policy . . . We parents need ploughing and grazing land. So how come we were told to settle along the roads where conditions are unsuitable for ploughing and grazing? Can't the road follow the people, instead of people going to the road?⁶⁸

The DA dismissed the complaint as "bogus and first class rubbish." He then proceeded to remark that the complainant should "get it clear that this administration is here to implement the policy of Government, there are no two ways about that, and get it clear also that when we talk about Government we talk about the people themselves."⁶⁹

The above exchange between the correspondent and the DA is typical of the manner in which villagization was introduced and implemented, i.e., there was little consultation between the officials and the communities whose villages were supposed to be planned. Although Agritex emphasized that "the planning process will involve effective and thorough public debate and community participation," this policy remained rhetorical only.⁷⁰ The general official view was that "[where] campaigns were carried out, overwhelming reception of the program was witnessed and where there was no education, there was total resistance."⁷¹ However, as Gasper has noted, "it is very unlikely that critics would stand up and disagree with the party leaders and civil servants who have just spoken at mass meetings."⁷²

Writing in his classic study on rural development in 1981, Morris offered probably the most important advice on "some general tactics for effective program development." He wrote that "*Always remember that persons are more important than programmes* [emphasis in the original]."⁷³ For most of the officials involved in the villagization program, it was clear that the opposite was true, i.e., programs were more important than people. The second point that can be made from the above exchange is that the latter's version of development differed significantly from that of the peasant. Writers on "development" projects in Africa have noted that the relationship between bureaucrats and peasants is generally top-heavy, with the former formulating the policies, and the peasants merely responding to these initiatives.⁷⁴ It is perhaps against this basic but fundamental difference of definitions and priorities that opposition to villagization must be understood.

Villagisation and resistance to it is not a novelty in postcolonial Africa. It had been tried in neighboring Zambia as village regrouping programs and in Tanzania's *ujamaa* policy, whose failures, due largely to resistance from rural communities, have already been thoroughly documented.⁷⁵ Research work in other parts of Zimbabwe where the villagization program was attempted reported acts of resistance to the plans of relocation of homesteads and consolidation of villages.⁷⁶ Villagers displayed a whole range of resistance tactics including physical attacks on state officials who came to peg the new homes; the removal of pegs from home fields and residential yards; and the use of the media to convey grievances to higher levels. Villagers also angrily confronted councilors at village meetings whom they accused for not properly consulting the "project beneficiaries" over aspects of

the project. Expressions of resistance sometimes took on innovative forms including making officials the objects of witchcraft, boycotting meetings and so on. The outcome of peasant resistance was that the implementation of the program was either suspended or postponed indefinitely.⁷⁷

It would, however, be grossly inaccurate to generalize opposition to the program. In Gokwe there was some ambivalence on the part of large livestock owners regarding the program. Some of them supported villagization because they genuinely believed that it was the only way to reserve the grazing areas that were increasingly being threatened by "hoards of illegal settlers." They also believed that they would benefit disproportionately from the proposed grazing schemes. One relatively wealthy informant said he supported the program "100 percent because we do not have grazing area. We use cattle for ploughing and we need grazing area and this program supports that idea."⁷⁸ Another informant indicated that support for the program among residents in his village was probably even: 50-50. "Those with cattle want it in order to be assured of grazing land. Those without cattle don't care," he declared.⁷⁹ "I welcome the program in order to have adequate grazing area. I will be the number one to accept it because I have a big forest area for grazing area which I want reserved," responded another informant.⁸⁰

In Svisvi communal area, the residents were so disturbed by large-scale illegal settlements and the lack of grazing area that they appointed a delegation in 1991 to hold an urgent meeting with the district administrator to ask for the villagization program in their area. They argued that because of lack of grazing as a result of people being settled in the grazing area "our cattle have become terribly thin due to lack of grazing and if the situation prevails for another two months, hundreds of cattle will die."⁸¹ To make matters worse, the people who had illegally been settled in the grazing area since 1988 did not want to see cattle near their homesteads and fields. A boy had been beaten to death the previous year in the area after he had driven cattle in someone's field due to lack of grazing.⁸² The death of eleven cattle due to poisoning in grazing lands added to the pressure to send the delegation to request for villagization. Veterinary officers put the cause of death as "chemical poisoning." Svisvi residents accused people settled in the grazing area of poisoning the cattle, presumably because they had eaten from their fields. Svisvi generally became the home of intense grazing disputes, which led the delegation to demand villagization urgently before "all our cattle are poisoned."⁸³ In Sai communal lands, the people also "opted for villagization" on the understanding that it was "expected to speed-up development projects in the area. Farmers resolved that for purposes of accelerated development, grazing and arable land had to be clearly demarcated." They believed that "it was Government intention to provide services as roads, water, electricity and others, but these would not be implemented without planned boundaries."⁸⁴

Landless households of local origin supported the program in the hope that the standardization of land holdings would bring about equitable redistribution of land. Some supported the program because they felt village heads were taking the law into their hands by allocating land in grazing and other forbidden areas. One informant reported that village heads were notorious for defying government laws by allowing people to plough anywhere, even in grazing areas, as long as they were given money.⁸⁵ Such informants fully supported the idea that laws pertaining to land allocation should come from the government and should be observed by everyone and strictly adhered to. There were complaints from many informants that village heads were allocating land in defiance of government laws. Such people supported the program in the sincere hope that it would bring some sanity and

perhaps equality in the allocation of land. These sentiments were expressed mostly by people who thought that village heads were biased in favor of their friends and relatives to whom they allocated large and better quality pieces of land. To these people therefore, with villagization, in which “unbiased” government officials allocated land, an area previously owned by one person could easily accommodate more people, which would help in easing land shortages.⁸⁶

Many villagers expressed mixed feelings about the program because they did not know exactly what it entailed and what benefits, if any, they would derive from the program because it was never fully explained to them.⁸⁷ For many households, the complex pattern of getting access to land through land grabbing, outright purchase, renting, borrowing, marriages, and inheritance that characterized land access in the frontier region of Gokwe, would be drastically affected by the government’s proposal to standardize plots. Even though the standardization of plots was likely to benefit young household heads to secure permanent access to fields, some large landholders were likely to oppose the standardization of landholdings for this would disturb the patronage-client relationship through which landless households had been able to access.⁸⁸ Village heads who benefited from the sale of land to new settlers objected to being moved into villages for this would spell the loss of power to allocate land, particularly to new immigrants who were more than willing to part with cash in exchange for a piece of land. Allocation of land to immigrants by village heads became an economic as well as a political strategy in the sense that village heads received substantial payments for the allocation of land. It was a political strategy in that it served to increase the strength of the lineage. Grazing and forest areas were sold and allocated to immigrants as a way of pre-empting the claims of neighboring lineages upon the same territory.⁸⁹

Some village heads became notorious for selling land for these reasons. Mtanhaurwa, a village head of Mtanhaurwa village under Chief Njelele, voiced concern about his people being “pushed into villages.”⁹⁰ He was well known for selling land and had previously been in trouble with the Council for illegally selling land. In a letter to the DA, one anonymous resident complained about the activities of the village head: “The grazing area is gone. The village head is selling land. He used to sell at \$50, but now he is charging \$1,000 or even \$2,000. Is it allowed to sell the soil? Help us please before we damage each other with axes and spears. If you do not sort out this problem we are starting a war.”⁹¹ In another letter, an anonymous writer complained that: “Is the village head allowed to sell land? . . . The village head sold land in the grazing area to people retrenched from work at ZISCO because of ESAP. All the grazing area is gone. The fields are sold to those with money for as much as \$1,000, or \$1,500, \$2,000.”⁹²

The illegal activities of this village head became the subject of much correspondence between the Council, the district administrator’s office, and the ward councilor as well as the police. When he was summoned to the Council offices he denounced the chief and councilor of the area and declared that the land belonged to him to do as he pleased. He did not turn up for the meetings called for by the Council and was taken to the police station where he was later released. He refused to pay the \$150 land dispute service charge that the Council charged for attending to land dispute matters.⁹³ One informant expressed bitter opposition to the whole villagization program and accused the council of being dominated by commercial farmers “who are taking advantage of the communal councilors’ lack of education to further their own interests.” The informant continued with regard to the land reorganization concept: “As far as I am concerned this is just another ploy to divert attention

from the need to designate more land for the communal people who are already overcrowded, reorganize themselves while some people still hold on to vast tracts of land.”⁹⁴

Councilors and VIDCOs were obliged to implement and enforce villagization, but their structures were weak and faced challenges from “traditional” institutions of village heads, headmen and chiefs. The association of councilors and VIDCOs with unpopular “development” programs further undermined their credibility in the eyes of villagers while the credibility of traditional leaders was enhanced because they identified themselves with the interests of villagers most of who opposed the program. Moore’s observations in the Eastern Highlands apply here. His informants told him that the general feeling there was that the village heads were responsible for the allocation of land and that the involvement of “outsiders” in the allocation of villagization land was way out of step with the “traditional” practice. Village heads were supposed to allocate land because they were more informed and familiar with the boundaries of their territories and also knew all the inhabitants of the villages.⁹⁵ In contrast, council members who received a government salary were perceived as imposing law on the land. One informant even indicted the government for not following the “proper African culture” and for embracing the white man’s culture of pegging fields. Rather than choosing their own sites for settlement, settlers were assigned them in the villagization program. Moore’s observations in the Eastern Highlands resettlement scheme apply here as well. He noted that: “When officials pegged fields, as they did during centralization, the NLHA, and in the resettlement and villagisation schemes, they fixed villagers to a single holding. Two forms of freedom were denied: settlers’ selection of their own site and the cultivation of multiple fields spatially separated.”⁹⁶

In general, in those areas where there was implementation of some sort, the program had a disastrous effect and it ran the same risk as the LHA of generating resentment and resistance and of being ignored and unenforceable in practice. The program involved complex physical exercises, disruptive movement of people on the ground, and the massive dislocation of production in the short run, and the disruption of community patterns of life.⁹⁷ Instead of lessening land disputes and environmental degradation, the program was likely to aggravate tensions among rural communities. For the program to succeed it was important for the planners to extract commitments from politicians and officials and agreements from the people regarding support for the key aspects of the plan, and this would limit potential adverse consequences. Such agreements were, however, likely to be disputed. As the debates on the pros and cons of the villagization raged on, land disputes and land degradation continued to plague the district largely as a result of increased immigration and resultant land shortages.

By January 1997, the situation in the district as a whole was sufficiently worrying to warrant the provincial governor’s intervention. He wrote to the DA that: “This office is taking cognizance of the problems affecting the status and welfare of the people in your district. We have received a number of reports about the problems in many of your wards . . . I am looking for at least a whole month to spend in . . . Gokwe to ensure that there shall be no recurrence of such problems in future.”⁹⁸ One wonders what sort of solutions the governor had in mind and how he intended to solve the complex land dispute problem in the district within a month. What is clear however is that 1997 was significant for the country because land invasions on a national level began in earnest in that year. Whatever the governor had in mind was overtaken by these events of a momentous nature. The year witnessed what Alexander calls “shifts in the nature of authority over the land as it [the land issue] was so radically unsettled once again.”⁹⁹ According to her, “A closely orchestrated

process of remaking the state took place in which the land stood center stage.”¹⁰⁰ Efforts by the state since independence, including interventions in communal area land use, i.e. villagization, had failed in redressing the land demands of the rural populace and in providing a basis for state building including.¹⁰¹

A number of political and economic challenges forced the ZANU(PF) government to end the status quo that had prevailed up until then. One was the birth of a new opposition party, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) launched out of an urban based trade union movement which began to challenge the political dominance of ZANU(PF). The new political opposition threatened the ruling party and in response the government sought to revalue the “land question” and to seek new means of state building. The other challenge was that in late 1997, the government was also forced to yield to the demands of veterans of the 1970s guerilla war for large sums of unbudgeted payments as compensation for their role in the liberation war. This fiscal expense together with the Zimbabwean army’s involvement in the civil war in the Republic of Congo in 1998 increased the budget deficit, which led the government to default on its loan payment. As a result, the IMF withheld financial support and additional aid.¹⁰² These major two financial commitments placed a huge burden on the economy.

In November 1997, the government used its power under the Land Acquisition Act to designate 1,471 farms for compulsory acquisition. This was followed by a spate of occupations of commercial farms, a development that spread countrywide up to 2000. Communal and resettlement areas residents as well as farm workers were largely involved in these occupations.¹⁰³ The land occupations were a clear testimony that existing land reform and resettlement program had failed and that the residents in both communal and resettlement areas had become increasingly impatient over their land grievances. They saw the government as indifferent to their land problem. Scholars are generally agreed that the land occupations during this period differed significantly from previous ones in that they were motivated more by political than by social, moral, or economic considerations.¹⁰⁴

The land occupations started in February 2000, soon after a referendum had rejected the government’s proposed Draft Constitution. The main opposition MDC and civil organizations had campaigned against the draft. The opposition performed well in parliamentary elections, which were held in June. These two political events shaped the dynamics of the land occupations. Developments from then onwards overtook the villagization program, whose momentum was already waning, as the government focused on the fast track land program that was to define the future agrarian transformation of the country.

Conclusion

The article has critically examined the rationales behind the post- independent Zimbabwean state introducing consolidated villages in the communal areas from the mid-1980s, yet such programs proved unpopular during the colonial period and were rejected by the rural populace. The article noted the striking parallels between colonial and post-colonial land-use reforms and proceeded to explain why this has been the case. It has also been observed that among other things the reasons for land use reforms range from the desire by the postcolonial state to assert its authority over the rural population to the aesthetic dimension of having faith in the representation of order. Scholars have argued that it is not only

political control that drives states to introduce such programs, but also a sincere belief in supposedly “modern” “scientific” land-use practices.

A central focus has been to examine how village communities in Gokwe South District reacted to the villagization program. The paper is critical of assertions by some scholars who have suggested that such programs end up buttressing bureaucratic state power. On the contrary, my research indicated a much more nuanced pattern of responses from the Gokwe rural communities, which varied from “acceptance” of the program based on a narrow understanding to outright rejection. More important for this article is that villagization opened up some spaces for the rural communities to critique and comment on the post-colonial government. Cumulatively, these varied responses forced the eventual abandonment of the program. However, the program was completely overshadowed by the land invasions, which began in earnest in 1997 and dominated the Zimbabwean landscape for the greater part of the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Notes

- 1 Gokwe has been chosen for a number of reasons. First, I carried out extensive field work between 1996 and 1997 for my PhD and have previously published some work on Gokwe (see Nyambara 2001a, 2001b, and 20002). Second, Gokwe has an interesting and unique colonial and post-colonial history of immigration, which made the land issue very critical. It was perhaps one of the few regions of the country that was not occupied by white settlers for a long time after 1890 because of its unattractive geography. It is hot, dry, tsetse-infested, and malarial.
- 2 Literature on centralization schemes in colonial Zimbabwe include Kramer 1998; Munro 1998; Bessant 1987; and Palmer 1977.
- 3 This study benefitted enormously from insights of Robins’ study (1988) of similar issues in the Gwaranyemba Communal Area of Matabeleland.
- 4 Munro 1998, p. 281.
- 5 Ferguson 1994; Escobar 1995.
- 6 Ferguson 1994, p. 254.
- 7 Robins 1988; see the abstract.
- 8 See Nyambara 2001, 2002b.
- 9 For additional information on massive retrenchment from formal employment as a result of ESAP, see Pangeti 1995.
- 10 Mutizwa-Mangiza 1992, p. 113; Government of Zimbabwe CSO 1984, pp. 75-6.
- 11 See Nyambara 2001.
- 12 “Disaster Looms in Gokwe,” *Herald*, 28 January 1997.
- 13 *Ibid.*
- 14 *Ibid.*
- 15 “Gokwe peasant farmers do not know what environmental degradation is all about,” *Cheziya-Gokwe Post*, vol. 6 no. 8 (July 1992).
- 16 Interview with Mr. Goto, Gokwe Agricultural Extension Office, Gokwe Center, 26 October 1997.
- 17 “Land degradation is threatening Gokwe,” *Herald*, 2 September 1997.
- 18 Interview with the DA of Gokwe South District, Gokwe Center, 24 October 1997.

- 19 See for instance, Gokwe Rural Council: XC/173/31, Disputes and Complaints, Provincial Governor, Midlands to DA, 9 December 1996; Gokwe Rural District Council Office, Anonymous to DA, 3 October 1995.
- 20 Gokwe Rural Council, J. J. Ndhlovu to DA, Gokwe South District, 9 July 1995.
- 21 Sebungwe Regional Study, 1982, cited in de Swardt 1984.
- 22 Bromley and Jones 1966.
- 23 Gokwe South Residents to DA, no date (DA's stamp indicates he received it on 13 June 1995); capital letters are in the original.
- 24 Gokwe South Residents to DA, 13 June 1995.
- 25 Leach and Mearns 1996, p. 4.
- 26 Gokwe Rural District Council Office, Gokwe, Minutes of 4th Meeting of Council Natural Resources and Resettlement, January 1994.
- 27 Gokwe Rural District Council Office, Gokwe, Minutes of 16th Meeting, 17 October 1996.
- 28 Cousins 1987, pp. 20-21.
- 29 See Gasper 1990; Cousins 1987, pp. 20-21.
- 30 Alexander 2000, p. 137, citing Palmer 1977.
- 31 Government of Zimbabwe 1981, 1982a.
- 32 Government of Zimbabwe 1981, para. 687.
- 33 Government of Zimbabwe 1982, para. 270.
- 34 Cited in Alexander 1994, p. 332.
- 35 See, for instance Bush and Cliffe, 1984; Potts and Mutambirwa 1990.
- 36 Masst 1996; Mandivamba et al. 2006.
- 37 Government of Zimbabwe 1986.
- 38 Government of Zimbabwe 1982, p. 23, cited in Drinkwater 1987, p. 89.
- 39 For example, see Moyo 1995; Bratton 1987; Weiner 1989; Palmer 1990.
- 40 Whitsun Foundation 1983; World Bank 1986.
- 41 Ibid., p. 288.
- 42 Munro 1998, p. 260.
- 43 Beinart 2000, p. 275.
- 44 Munro 1998, p. 261.
- 45 Agritex 1988. See also Alexander 1994, pp. 340-42.
- 46 Alexander 2006, p. 121.
- 47 Agritex, pp. 6-7.
- 48 Cheziya-Gokwe District Council, Natural Resources Board Workshop, 6 November 1991.
- 49 Cited in Alexander 1988, p. 340.
- 50 Interview with Mrs. Chinho, Executive Officer, GSRDC, Gokwe Center, 17 August 1997.
- 51 Ibid.
- 52 Agritex, p. 6. The relationship between the new local government structures and the rural communities has been explored by many scholars; see for instance. Mutizwa-Mangiza 1990, pp. 423-35; Murombedzi 1990. Gasper 1991, pp. 7-50; Brand 1991, pp. 79-96.
- 53 Alexander 2006, p. 164.
- 54 See Marongwe 2002, p. 58.
- 55 "DAs find difficulty in relating to new rural district councillors," *The Sunday Mail*, 21

- January 1996.
- 56 "MPs Question the role of DAs," *Herald*, 29 August 1997.
 - 57 Ibid.
 - 58 Personal interview with DA, Gokwe Center, 24 October 1997.
 - 59 Personal Interview with Michael Masaga, Chief Executive Officer, Gokwe Rural District Council. 23 October 1997.
 - 60 Agritex, pp. 6-7. In this position paper, Agritex enumerates some constraints and problems in implementing the program.
 - 61 Gokwe Rural District Council: Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the Gokwe Rural District Council Natural Resources Board and Resettlement, 20 January 1994.
 - 62 "Villagisation Programme Disregarded", *Cheziya-Gokwe Post*, vol. 1, no. 21, February 1989.
 - 63 "River-bank Cultivation Problem," in *Cheziya-Gokwe Post*, vol. 1, no. 21, February 1989.
 - 64 Personal interviews with Frank Madwala, Nelson Madwala, Doraushe, Gokwe, 18 April 1997; Erasmus Madziwa, Marungu, 22 July 1997; Jorum Kufandada, Mazalahedwa, Gokwe, 21 April 1997.
 - 65 Government of Zimbabwe 1994, p. 38.
 - 66 These were common problems often mentioned by rural communities wherever villagization was introduced. See for instance, Robins 1988.
 - 67 Brand 1994, pp. 67-68.
 - 68 Cited in Ranger 1993, p. 379.
 - 69 Ibid.
 - 70 Agritex 1988, p.1.
 - 71 Gasper 1990, p. 20.
 - 72 Ibid.
 - 73 Moris 1981, p. 122.
 - 74 See writings on *Ujamaa*, for instance Fortmann 1990, p. 287.
 - 75 For village regrouping see Kay 1967. There is a large body of literature on *Ujamaa*. See for example, von Freyhold 1979; Hyden 1980; Coulson 1982; Fortmann 1990. A more recent critical analysis of *Ujamaa* is that of Scott 1998, pp. 223-61.
 - 76 See, for instance, research work by Drinkwater 1991; Alexander 2006; Cousin 1987; Derman 1992; Robins 1988; Moore 2005; Spierenburg 2004.
 - 77 Robins 1988, pp. 273, 290-91; Spierenburg 2004.
 - 78 Personal interview with Madhumbu, Marungu, 30 October 1997.
 - 79 Personal interview with Calvin Chipoperwa, Councilor, Marungu, 31 October 1997.
 - 80 Personal interview with Jordan Mutero, Marungu, 29 October 1997.
 - 81 "Grazing: ten men delegation to meet Gokwe DA," *Cheziya-Gokwe Post*, vol. 8, no. 4, 1990.
 - 82 Ibid.; see also a heading like "Boy beaten to death over stray cattle," *Cheziya-Gokwe Post*, vol. 7, no. 9, 1990.
 - 83 "Eleven Svisvi cattle die of poisoning," *Cheziya-Gokwe Post*, vol 8, no. 5, February 1991.
 - 84 "Sai Farmers Opt for villagization," *Cheziya-Gokwe Post*, Vol. 7, no.1, 1990.
 - 85 Personal interview with Tawonesa Fakasi, Gokwe, 17 July 1997.
 - 86 Personal interview with Norman Jore, Marungu, 20 July 1997.
 - 87 Many informants expressed ignorance about the program: Personal interviews with

- Abe Mafa, Marungu , 21 July 1997; Mrs. Mabenga, Marungu, 21 July 1997; Molly Dube, Mudzongwe, 19 July 1997.
- 88 These methods of accessing land in Gokwe are dealt with in detail elsewhere by the author. See Nyambara 2001; 2002.
- 89 For similar cases from other parts of Africa see, Hecht 1985.
- 90 Personal interview with John Mtanhaurwa, Mutanhaurwa village, Gokwe, 23 October 1997.
- 91 Gokwe Rural Council: Anonymous to DA November 1994.
- 92 Gokwe Rural Council: Anonymous to DA November 1994.
- 93 Gokwe Rural Council: Anonymous to DA November 1994.
- 94 Personal interview with DA, Gokwe, 24 October 1997.
- 95 Moore 2005, p. 262.
- 96 Ibid.
- 97 Cliffe 1988, p.14.
- 98 Gokwe South Rural Council: XC/173/31/: Disputes and Complaints, Provincial Governor, Midlands Province to DA, 27 January 1997.
- 99 Alexander 2006, p. 180.
- 100 Ibid.
- 101 Ibid., pp. 180-81.
- 102 Moyo et al. 2008, p. 14.
- 103 Marongwe in Hammar et al. 2003, p. 163.
- 104 Ibid., p. 165.

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Improving the Contribution of Cooperatives as Vehicles for Local Economic Development in South Africa

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Abstract: There has been a growing realization over the years of the importance of cooperatives as vital instruments for socio-economic development across the globe. The article seeks to argue that the success of cooperatives in contributing to local economic development (LED) in South Africa is undermined by the lack of an active cooperative movement and faulty state support for cooperatives. Through a literature review, the LED contribution of cooperatives by way of training, provision of services, social cohesion, and infrastructure development is analyzed. Subsequently, there is a discussion of the challenges faced by cooperatives in the country such as the high attrition rate, leadership and management challenges, interference by government officials, and a lack of stability. The article endeavors to bring to light some of the possible solutions to the current challenges, among which is the need for establishing training institutions on cooperatives, the creation of an enabling environment for a strong cooperative movement to thrive, and provision of adequate funding. The article further underlines the need for a research and evaluation mechanism that will monitor the performance of cooperatives and provide necessary support.

Introduction

Cooperatives are arguably one of the most common approaches used to improve livelihoods across the globe. Birchall (2004) asserts that the cooperative movement, with millions of members the world over, can be a key partner to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In the face of growing unemployment and underemployment in South Africa, the cooperative model provides an alternative approach to dealing with socio-economic challenges affecting the country and of course many others in Africa and beyond. Research on cooperatives indicates that the foundation of successful cooperatives has been self-determination, self-responsibility and collective action, rather than government intervention and mobilization through incentives.¹ This article advances two main arguments. Firstly, it underlines the socio-economic potential of cooperatives in South Africa and argues that the government's current interventionist support model for cooperatives hampers their potential. The article seeks to unravel the importance of cooperatives and their potential in the pursuit of Local Economic Development (LED) in South Africa, which remains untapped due to inherent challenges facing cooperatives. Secondly, the article seeks to point out that the cooperatives' contribution to LED has been undermined by the fault-lines on which cooperatives are formed in South Africa and the weak cooperative movement. Cooperative forms of production characterize African communities.² Because these socio-economic arrangements are not alien to South Africa, they have a potential to boost LED. Although the

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organizational formations may have evolved over time, cooperatives remain a business model with which people can easily identify.

As cooperatives find global attention, evidenced by the declaration by the United Nations of 2012 as an International Year of Cooperatives, the article endeavors to evaluate their place in the pursuit of LED in South Africa. In doing so, the article starts by discussing the theory and history of cooperatives and their role in South African development efforts. The place of cooperatives in LED is discussed, drawing linkages and articulating opportunities and challenges. The article examines some of the success stories in the world, drawing lessons for the South African case. Importantly, the article moves on to discuss some measures that could see improvement in cooperatives' contribution to the country's socio-economic development.

Methodology

The article employs a qualitative research method. Firstly, the linkage between LED and cooperatives is discussed using the International Cooperative Alliance's (2012) conceptualization of cooperatives and Rodriguez-Pose and Tijmstra's (2005) key features of LED. The two form the theoretical anchor to the understanding of the two concepts. While there is a paucity of scholarly work that links them together, by using the two perspectives the article attempts to establish the bond between cooperatives and LED. The arguments presented are drawn from the critical analysis of existing data. There is also a close scrutiny of secondary data from scholarly literature, policy documents, government reports, and internet sources to build a sound historical background of cooperatives in general and specifically for South Africa. Deriving from this source of data the contribution of cooperatives to LED through job creation and provision of services is evaluated. The socio-economic and political conditions that influenced the rise of cooperative business and the role this model has played are built from the available literature.

Primary data sources, including the Department of Trade and Industry's records, official speeches, cooperative records, and conference papers, are also analyzed to determine the cooperatives' role in LED and the factors curtailing the full potential of cooperatives. Statistical data from both government and cooperative movement are examined to give a balanced evaluation of the importance of cooperatives in the pursuit of LED. Some case studies are briefly highlighted to substantiate the paper's arguments. The analysis is presented in thematic subheadings covering the types of cooperatives, their contribution, the different challenges that hamper their effective LED contribution, and, finally, a discussion of the possible interventions by the cooperatives members, the government and other interested parties.

The Theory and History of Cooperatives

A cooperative is defined as an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.³ While there is no agreement on the exact origin of cooperatives, they can be traced to 1750 in Europe, with France's cheese producing cooperatives in the community of Franche-Comte being some of the early-recorded examples.⁴ Cooperatives became formalized in nineteenth century Europe against the backdrop of the industrial revolution and related significant social change, and these were viewed as social and economic alternatives to the impacts of an emergent industrial revolution.⁵

The history of cooperatives across the globe is indicative of the centrality of active citizens in the face of socio-economic crisis. While some cooperatives emerged in the colonial period these were used as part of consolidating colonial rule and as such brought about mixed results and outcomes. According to the Overseas Cooperative Development Council (OCDC), the cooperative model transferred to developing countries was used as a means to organize farmers to provide products to the colonial power and were controlled by governments.⁶ This legacy of government-controlled cooperatives became the faulty foundation, which has stifled the cooperative work well after the colonial and apartheid periods. Birchall (2004) observes that the past record of the cooperatives set up and controlled by government, which miserably failed to lead to any economic and social development, are not part of the legacy of cooperatives as these were not true cooperatives. Chibanda, Ortmann, and Lyne's 2009 case study of ten cooperatives in three KwaZulu-Natal districts illustrate the challenge of dependency on government. In the ten cases of mainly agro-based cooperatives, nine of them had received capital from the government to start up their operations. While government support is critical, the ability to bring together members' resources and build from there helps cooperatives to own their development and grow with their business. In one of the ten cooperatives the provincial department of agriculture gave the cooperative members fifty cows of the Nguni breed and also assisted them with stock-feed and to determine when they would be ready for sale. An analysis of the study indicates that one of the main challenges for the beef cooperative was the operating capital as the respondents alluded to the fact that the government set the time at which it would be appropriate to sell the cows had not arrived.⁷ While the expert advice and capital assistance is very welcome for cooperative development, at times it cripples initiative and self determination, which are critical for sustenance of cooperative business.

It can be argued that the rise of global markets and fair trade response, democratization and the resurgence of civil society, and the demise of socialism have all led to a cooperative renaissance in developing and transitional economies.⁸ The African continent has seen a revival of cooperatives in the post-liberalization era after a period of decline brought by structural adjustment programs.⁹ The need for accountability and that of promoting true local, regional, and national change are compelling governments to promote cooperatives. These have grown from being community economic development strategies to becoming vital tools towards the realization of Millennium Development goals. The features that define a cooperative make it an attractive model for local economic development. The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) restated its 1966 draft of principles to guide cooperative organizations into the 21st century.¹⁰ These include:

- Non-discriminatory membership: Cooperatives are voluntary ventures open to anyone who is in a position to participate in their line of business and accept the responsibilities of membership without any form of discrimination in the ground of gender, social, religious, racial, or political discrimination.
- Equal voting rights: Cooperatives are democratic organizations run and controlled by their members. Members elect representatives on an equal vote basis and the elected representatives are accountable to members.
- Membership economic participation: Members contribute equitably towards the capital of their cooperative.

- Self-help organizations controlled by their membership: Cooperatives are designed to be democratically controlled by their members.
- Promotion of education, training and information: Cooperatives provide learning, awareness, and training for the effective contribution to the success of the co---operative.
- Cooperation among cooperatives: Cooperatives serve their members and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional, and international structures.
- Concern for the community: Cooperatives take responsibility for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

According to the cooperative identity statement adopted at the 1995 Congress and General Assembly of the ICA, cooperatives are based on values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, and solidarity. Philip notes that the ethical tradition of their founders include honesty, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others.¹¹ The OCDC postulates that for years cooperatives have been dedicated to conducting business in a way now being recommended as the most effective route to transformational development.¹² This include putting people in charge of their communities, increasing decision making trust and accountability through democratic participation, providing connection to the private sector, building and protecting assets at the community level, limiting the role of government, and working together to resolve post-conflict situations.

The cooperative model to development gives a humanistic angle to the transformation of livelihoods. Theoretically cooperatives stand a better opportunity of integrating the materialistic and social paradigms of development. Davids (2005) posits that the failure of competing paradigms made development theorists and practitioners realize that development had to become human centered. The same author asserts that this realization has resulted in a shift from macro-theories of modernization and dependency to a micro-approach focused on people and the community. The failure of neo-liberal approaches to bring about sustainable and inclusive development has prompted the majority poor to become agents of their own transformation. On the basis of the foregoing thinking, cooperatives with their member economic participation are modeled on an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach. Beginning with what members have, a cooperative through overcoming business and organizational challenges moves members to achieve collectively what each one individually could not achieve. The cooperatives are also seen as an alternative to a capitalistic development as they contribute to the development of the nation on a macro-scale through the direct transformation of the socio-economic situation of their members on a micro-scale.¹³

Categories of Cooperatives

A conceptual distinction is highlighted between worker cooperatives, in which workers in an enterprise own and control the cooperative, and user-owned cooperatives, in which members are users of the services of the cooperative without any necessary employment relationship within the enterprise such as cooperative banks, consumer cooperatives, and marketing cooperatives.¹⁴ According to Nyambe, a workers' cooperative is an entity established to provide jobs to its members instead of providing services, whereas a service

cooperative is established to provide services, such as marketing, credit facilities, and hiring of equipment and vehicles to its members.¹⁵ Furthermore, in a service cooperative members continue to retain independent economic engagements, whereas in a workers' cooperative members are also the employees.

Local Economic Development (LED)

LED has to be understood from a local perspective although the international context is important in appreciating the historical development of the concept and the adaptation of locally implementable good practices. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2006) asserts that LED strategies empower local societies and generate local dialogue and by so doing make local institutions more transparent and accountable, therefore contributing to the development of the local civil society. According to Nel and Rogerson, LED is a locality-based response to globalisation challenges, devolution, and local level opportunities and crises.¹⁶ It has won a lot of acceptance as locality-based response to economic crises and to the opportunities and threats brought by globalisation. As Blakely and Leigh (2010) rightly point out, whether poor or rich, local entities in a global economy have to face the challenge and opportunity to shape their own economic destinies. LED has therefore grown in popularity as a response to a number of challenges ranging from persistence of slow economic growth, the changes in the national and global environment, and the failure of the state to intervene at the local level. Swinburn points out that every country is made up of multiple local and regional economies, each different in its own way and each needing to be nurtured in its own way.¹⁷ It is the realization of the need for economic development interventions to be spatially cognitive that has also led to the emergence of LED as a discipline. LED therefore marks a move from a sector-based and state-led plan to a local government led one, which is bottom up and transparently implemented in partnership with public, private, and community actors.¹⁸

LED has found expression in a number of ways including place promotion, endogenous development, urban entrepreneurialism, and community-based interventions.¹⁹ The purpose of LED is to build up the economic capacity of a local area to improve its economic future and the quality of life for all.²⁰ It is seen as a process by which public, business, and non-governmental sector partners work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and employment generation. Rodriguez and Tjimstra define LED as a process where local actors shape the future of their territory, a participatory process that encourages and facilitates partnership between the local stakeholders, enabling the joint design and implementation of strategies, mainly based on the competitive use of local resources, with the final aim of creating decent jobs and sustainable economic activities.²¹ There are of course numerous definitions for LED, most of which underline two important aspects: first, LED is an ongoing process, and, second, it is driven by local actors from different societal sectors, which implies collaboration and even co-responsibility between the public and the private sector for the economic development of a location.²²

Rodriguez-Pose and Tjimstra (2005) identify four key facets of LED, which include territory, governance, integration and sustainability. The territory element of LED describes the fact that LED is to be tackled as a locality-defined effort. It emphasizes the adaptation of strategies to prevailing environmental conditions of a locality and broad stakeholder participation. This aspect of LED has seen the local sphere of government spearhead the facilitation of LED in South Africa because of its closeness to the people. The governance

dimension recognizes the need for reforms that empower citizens to participate in local governance. The success of LED strategies depends, to a large degree, on the existence of appropriate local and regional institutional systems and on the availability of the necessary frameworks and skills level at all government tiers.²³ Rogerson (1990) points out that the creation of a sound governance environment provides the starting point or foundation for LED activities. Sound governance will require the partnership of different actors at the local sphere. It takes transformation of the structures and functions of central and local government, the relations between them, and the relations with the market and the community.²⁴ The third dimension of LED pertains to integration of strategies. The attraction of inward investment, upgrading of human capital and labor skills, and the upgrading to local infrastructure should be tackled in an integrated approach.²⁵ This helps ensure a balanced approach. Fourthly LED strategies ought to be sustainable. The sustainability dimension basically aims to reconcile economic growth with the maintenance of non-renewable environment assets or natural capital.²⁶ A comprehensive approach to sustainable development should encompass environmental sustainability, economic sustainability, social sustainability, and cultural sustainability.²⁷

Economic sustainability has to do with the incorporation of environmental costs to consumer prices in a way that appreciates the impossibility of never-ending economic achievement based on natural resources. The social dimension of sustainable development highlights the need for citizens' participation in environmental governance. The cultural aspect of sustainability encompasses the emphasis of changes based on core cultural values and the acceptance of cultural differences. As Rodriguez and Tjimstra (2005) observe, LED promotes the formulation of more inclusive development strategies that take due account of the current situation within the locality and the social and environmental consequences of different policy options. In a number of ways cooperative development provides communities with a huge potential for LED.

Cooperatives and LED

Cooperatives by their nature are a critical tool for local economic development. Mensah et al. appropriately note that LED is founded on the belief that problems facing communities such as unemployment, poverty job loss, environmental degradations, and loss of community control can best be addressed by community-led grassroots, integrated approaches.²⁸ Cooperatives therefore form a very important component of local government's LED facilitation work in South Africa. From a theoretical standpoint, cooperatives provide an avenue by which local development can be facilitated. Firstly cooperatives act as an agent of community economic development by creating room for the direct involvement of communities and their leaders in the fight against poverty. In a study assessing the participation of stakeholders in LED in Alice, a town in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa, Khumalo (2009) notes that most initiatives supported by the local government's LED unit were agricultural cooperatives and mainly women-owned. This trend was not surprising given the long history of apartheid and patriarchy where women were excluded in the mainstream economy. Often, marginalized segments of the community have an opportunity of being represented in cooperatives whereas in many other initiatives they are left out.²⁹ Tracing the link between LED and Cooperatives, Harms points out that it is at the local level that the potential for job creation can be tapped in crafts, agriculture, retail, manufacturing, and marketing of local produce, tourism, housing, and other

services.³⁰ Furthermore, cooperatives enhance the employability of the vulnerable and often socially excluded in the locality. Cooperatives bring balance between community versus self-interest, which can lead to improved business performance and increased member benefit by providing distinctive services to the customer/member.³¹ According to the OCDC the cooperative business model that has successfully helped build the economies of the developed world can be applied to an even greater extent today to help developing country entrepreneurs rise out of poverty and find their niche.³² Secondly, the cooperative model upholds skills development, which is fundamental for local economic development as discussed earlier in this article.

One of the features of cooperative entities identified by the ICA is the promotion of education, information sharing, and training for their members which helps upgrade their skills. Mwesigye argues that all-round training is always provided to the membership, leaders, and staff of any genuine and well performing cooperative.³³ Philip observes that the high cooperative mobilization in Kerala State contributed to the state's 90 percent literacy rate by 1991, a figure above that of India's average of 51 percent.³⁴ The third point of significance of cooperatives in LED is related to closing the local leakage of currency. Cooperatives help in circulating money locally through the locally produced goods and services, which is positive for local development.³⁵ Cooperatives bring about economic democracy, which is a socio-economic arrangement where local economic institutions are democratically controlled.³⁶

The fourth contribution of cooperatives to the local economy has to do with employment creation. Mwesigye observes that with varying sizes cooperatives are employing one hundred million people around the globe and their membership is estimated above eight hundred million individuals.³⁷ In France cooperatives are said to be responsible for about seven hundred thousand jobs, and about sixty thousand people in Uganda are employed by cooperatives. Where there is a well functioning cooperative organization at least two people are employed directly and many others indirectly through various trades facilitated by cooperatives.³⁸ Data from OCDC indicate that India's one hundred thousand dairy cooperatives have twelve million members, eight hundred credit coops in Russia have ninety-two thousand members, and Europe has about fifty-eight thousand cooperatives with about 13.8 million members.³⁹

In addition to job creation, cooperatives are key players in service provision like in the example of Bangladesh where rural electric cooperatives serve a total of about twenty-eight million members.⁴⁰ According to Mwesigye, cooperatives are responsible for providing health care services for 25 percent of the population in Colombia.⁴¹ Cooperatives remain an important instrument for food production the world over as can be seen from the French cheese cooperatives and the Indian dairy coops. ICA statistics indicate that cooperatives contributed 45 percent of Kenya's gross domestic product in 2007, and they had a membership of about seven million with three hundred thousand people directly employed and a further one and a half million indirectly employed.⁴² Infrastructure development is another way by which cooperatives contribute to local economic development. Through pooling resources, members are able to develop infrastructure for production, agro-processing, marketing, storage facilities, and information centers.

Cooperatives are critical for less-tangible benefits as much as they are for tangible ones. Merret and Walzer (2004) assert that social capital, which is characteristic of cooperative enterprises, is a factor of economic production, as are financial, human capital, physical capital, and natural resources. Social capital refers to the connections among individuals,

social networks, and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that rise from them.⁴³ The explicit basis of a cooperative is fundamentally social capital whereas the basis dominant in conventional corporations is financial capital.⁴⁴ Research by Putman (2000) in the United States indicates that high social capital goes with high tolerance of racial differences, lower violent crimes, better health, and the improved welfare of children. This study augurs well with David's (2005) argument that development is not about index numbers of national income or about capital co-efficiencies. Instead it is about people's needs, their values, customs, and understanding of their circumstances. Cooperatives are evidently contributing in "significant ways to reducing poverty, promoting gender equality, providing health care services, tackling the HIV/AIDS pandemic, ensuring environmental sustainability and working through partnerships with a wide range of actors."⁴⁵ It is evident then that the value of cooperatives cannot be fully understood on financial terms alone, as there are other important benefits that may not be reduced solely to monetary terms.

Cooperatives and LED in South Africa

While self-determination and self-responsibility are indisputably key to the success of cooperatives, the support of the state in creating an enabling environment for cooperatives' business is equally essential. The history of cooperatives shows that this approach was employed during the apartheid era albeit, in an exclusive and limited way. The first to emerge were agricultural cooperatives when white farmers organized themselves into groups after the effects of Anglo-Boer War.⁴⁶ In the late 1970s and 1980s the country implemented a reform strategy, which sought to reconstitute the socio-economic bases of apartheid and provide a new structure for capital accumulation.⁴⁷ Furthermore, the reform entailed democratization of political and social life, deregulation and privatization of the economy, and introduction of programs for what was termed orderly urbanization. It is these late apartheid era reforms that opened up the room for the birth of new forms of production such as worker cooperatives.⁴⁸ Black cooperatives were formed in the homelands as a result of apartheid government, but they did not enjoy sufficient legislative and economic support as compared to white cooperatives due to apartheid policies.⁴⁹ The early black cooperatives emerged as a survival effort such as those formed by ex-political prisoners in the 1970s and 1980s as a means of employment creation and at the same time as a way of gaining acceptance into the community.⁵⁰ In light of the above, the cooperative model has a social dimension which is absent in other business forms.

The collective nature of cooperatives promotes social cohesion, which is a valid asset for LED. The history of cooperative movements as alluded to in the preceding paragraph indicates their social impact in times of crisis. The impact of jobs losses, due to the industrial revolution in Europe, saw the rise of cooperatives, as they became a source of living for those retrenched. In the same vein Rogerson records the emergence of rescue cooperatives in South Africa in 1989 to provide employment for employees who were at risk of retrenchment.⁵¹ The working together of employers and trade unions to provide employment for employees in the face of recessions that required retrenchment is a good ground for LED. The history of cooperatives in South Africa indicates the important role played by businesses like mines and oil companies, trade unions, churches, and other non-governmental organizations in supporting cooperative enterprises.⁵² The working together of different groups in the communities to support cooperative work creates not only economic benefits but also strong social capital for a people-owned development. The first

savings and credit cooperative, the Cape Credit Union League (CCUL), is attributed to the critical role of the Catholic Church in supporting the establishment of cooperative enterprises in the 1980s.⁵³

The importance of cooperatives in the economy has seen legislation enacted to provide for the formation and various aspects to their operation. In the preamble to the Cooperatives Act 14 of 2005 there is recognition on the part of the South African government that a self-reliant and self-sustaining cooperative movement can play a major role in the economic and social development of the country through job creation, income generation, facilitation of broad-based economic empowerment, and the eradication of poverty. The Act also underscores the government's commitment to creating a supportive legal environment within which cooperatives can develop and flourish.

The need to promote cooperative business has seen an establishment of a Cooperative Enterprise Development division within the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). The significance of this is that the new governing body is open to different sectors of the economy unlike the previous one, which was mainly agricultural. In 2002, South Africa became a signatory to the International Labor Organization's Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No. 193).⁵⁴ The government has also taken a couple of other steps as a way of promoting cooperatives. Some of the notable ones include the drawing up of the Cooperative Policy of 2004, Cooperative Integrated Strategy on the Development and Promotion of Cooperatives 2012-2022, and the Cooperative Banks Act of 2007.

For a long time, the primary target of cooperative development has been unskilled, unemployed people at the margins of the economy. However, there is a need to move towards encouraging more innovative cooperatives that will also attract the skilled who are not employed or under-employed. According to DTI, the recorded number of cooperatives since the enactment of the new Act up to 10 February 2012 is 40,720, including those that were previously functioning but changed their registration numbers under the new law.⁵⁵ The same statistics indicates that the total number of registered cooperatives as of 31 January was 54,461. However, the increased registration should not be mistaken for the socio-economic value of these cooperatives but rather as an indication of the increasing awareness following changes in terms of policy and legal provisions, which simplified the registration processes. In her speech at the launch of the South African Chapter of the United Nations' International Year of Cooperatives, the Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry Elizabeth Thabethe pointed out that although the number of cooperatives in the country has increased significantly in the past ten years, they have not done much to improve the economic and social conditions of their members and surrounding communities.⁵⁶ There is a general dearth of data on the extent to which cooperatives are contributing to socio-economic development in the country. Against this backdrop of data scarcity a brief look at some of the recorded examples will help in appreciating the importance of cooperatives in the economy.

Types of Cooperatives and Their Developmental Importance

The cases examined in this section help to assess the potential role of cooperatives in the country. Some cooperatives fall under what is known as user-cooperative category. Under these, there are financial cooperatives, which form the third tier of banking.⁵⁷ These financial cooperatives are in the form of *stokvels*, burial societies, savings and credit unions, village banks, and mutual banks. The 2003 estimate by the National Stokvels Association of South

Africa (NASASA) indicated that there were eight hundred thousand of these financial cooperatives with a membership of 8.25 million and estimated R400 million a month in savings.⁵⁸ Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs), the more formal and registered cooperative version of *stokvels*, had 8,884 members with an asset base of R21.7 million.⁵⁹ Agriculture Coops form another set of cooperatives, and this group is estimated to have started between 1910 and 1920. They are organized under the Agri-Business Chamber of South Africa with a focus on input supplies, joint marketing, and processing. This is the group rated most successful in 2003.

The third class of South African cooperatives is the Housing Cooperatives and Social Housing Initiatives. These provide a range of models of collective ownership of housing stock and form part of a wider set of “social housing” initiatives that also include self-build schemes, based on collective or cooperative approaches to home building. In 2003, about five thousand people lived in housing cooperatives.⁶⁰ The fourth group of cooperatives consists of consumer cooperatives. This group has little track record, though it has potential given the new Cooperatives Policy that allows for cooperative work in sectors where there used to be none. The 2007 statistics by the DTI indicate that the few cooperatives that submitted their financial data for the year 2005 had an assets base of R5.4 billion, 202,226 members, and a turnover of R6.7 billion.⁶¹

The statistics of cooperatives in the country indicate that the agricultural sector has the highest number of registered cooperatives making up to 25 percent, followed by services with 17 percent, multi-purpose cooperatives make up to 14 percent, and trading cooperatives account for 12 percent.⁶² At the bottom of the list are food and beverages, fishing, housing, environmental, burial, mining, and medical cooperatives, with each class contributing less than 1 percent of the country’s registered cooperatives. The data presented points to the need to promote cooperative work in sectors that for a long time have not been explored through cooperative work. One of the challenges limiting the growth of cooperatives in sectors like health and information and communication technology is the scarcity of skills among the disadvantaged groups such as women and the rural poor who have been the traditional focus of cooperative development.

DTI statistics indicates that there is lack of compliance with financial reporting requirements provided for in the Cooperative Act of 2005 by cooperatives with only 185 cooperatives complying in 2007.⁶³ This non-compliance hinders the establishment of reliable economic contribution of these entities. The current data by DTI shows that in 2007 the cooperatives contributed 0.33% to South African Gross Domestic Product, which is quite low compared to other countries such as Kenya where the figure is 45 percent. This is however, not a full picture given the challenge of non-compliance. It is also a challenge that other social contributions of these enterprises are not well documented.

Factors Hampering Effective Contribution of Cooperatives to LED

Following the attainment of majority rule many disadvantaged people are embracing the cooperative concept, as it promises to be one of the vehicles by which inequality and poverty can be reversed.⁶⁴ Despite the economic and social contributions of cooperatives, evidence shows that many of them have been short-lived and others are still vulnerable. The Department of Trade and Industry’s statistics indicate that a huge percentage of cooperatives in the country are struggling to survive. The national picture from the DTI baseline study for the period 2009 to 2011 shows that 22,619 cooperatives were registered, of

which 2,644 were surviving and 19,975 defunct, giving a 12 percent survival rate.⁶⁵ The fact that only a handful of cooperatives are commercially viable and sustainable is an indication that there is an urgent need to carefully diagnose the problem and vigorously address it if the economic contribution of cooperatives is to be meaningful. The challenge has been that a number embrace the concept without fully understanding it. A study of cooperatives in the Limpopo Province by Van der Walt indicates that 80 percent of the members did not have the necessary knowledge about cooperatives.⁶⁶ This lack of adequate knowledge of cooperative principles and expectations makes members dependent on the government for funding and sustenance, which is a recipe for failure. Besides a lack of understanding the cooperative business model by new participants, there is a plethora of other factors hampering cooperatives from living to their full potential.

Cooperative Leadership and Management

Most cooperatives in South Africa are composed of the formerly disadvantaged groups, particularly old women. In a study of cooperative members in selected areas of Gauteng and Mpumalanga provinces, Nyambe found out that of the cooperatives under study 61 percent were composed of women and that the biggest concentration of the members (21 percent) were between the ages of forty-one and forty-four years.⁶⁷ The study also showed that the education levels of cooperatives members were low. This group is characterized by limited skills and as a result management and business technicalities remain a challenge as noted in the case of Limpopo cooperatives by Van der Walt where management and conflict were identified as some of the problems facing cooperatives.⁶⁸ Due to lack of conflict management skills, infighting within cooperatives remains an obstacle. Limited technical skills result in poor quality services and products, which cannot compete favorably in the market. Owing to the various inadequacies, the channeling of support from the government and other development agencies tends to create yet another challenge of overdependence. As observed by Muthuma, the introduction of cooperatives in Africa followed a blueprint in which cooperative organizational principles were predetermined and imposed leaving little room for learning and innovation.⁶⁹ One other challenge is that the provision of “cheap” capital or material resources reduces the motivation of members to contribute their own resources. Instead of an organic growth that is gradual through members gaining experience by growing their business, a dependency syndrome sets in that leads to demotivation when no further external assistance is received. Government officials have been accused of forming cooperatives and thereby compromising the principle of autonomy and independence.

Related to the challenge of overdependence, prescriptions of external support tend to erode democratic control by the cooperative members. While support is not bad on its own, the complexity comes when cooperatives begin to view themselves as belonging to the government as was the case in the former dispensations where cooperatives were used as a means of organizing farmers to provide products to the homelands.⁷⁰ There is still a challenge of moving cooperative members from a handout mentality and culture of entitlement towards embracing individual contributions to projects.⁷¹ The DTI baseline study confirms Mayende’s observation by indicating that some cooperatives have not been formed on a genuine basis but as a way of accessing free money.⁷² Financial assistance such as the Cooperative Incentive Scheme is aimed at providing a grant for registered primary cooperatives.⁷³ Among other things the grant seeks to assist cooperatives to acquire their

start-up requirements, build initial asset base for emerging cooperatives to enable them to leverage other support, and provide an incentive that supports broad-based black economic empowerment.⁷⁴ The provision of working capital, infrastructure, business development services and other activities through the grant is an incentive aimed at the historically disadvantaged persons to start up cooperatives.

Marketing

Cooperatives face challenges in terms of reaching wider markets. If their economic contribution is to be enhanced then marketing needs to be improved. Undeveloped networks and value chains impact negatively on cooperatives.⁷⁵ Given the limited access to finance, technology, and other critical business infrastructure existing and emerging cooperatives find themselves limited to small local markets. This in turn impacts their profitability, which affects their ability to sustain operations. A lack of adequate government commitment to procure from cooperatives makes it difficult for these ventures to survive the harsh market conditions. And indeed government procurement from cooperatives has been identified as one of the strategies for supporting them.⁷⁶ For example, a DTI case study of KwaZulu-Natal Province identified a lack of procurement opportunities from local government and hostility from mainstream business as some of the challenges facing cooperatives.⁷⁷ Nyambe's findings in the case of cooperatives in four areas of Gauteng and Mpumalanga Provinces indicate that most cooperatives regarded their struggle to gain market access for finished products as a serious factor hampering their success.⁷⁸

External Support

Given the fact that many formerly disadvantaged people are embracing the cooperative concept and success stories are still limited, the need for external help cannot be overemphasized. The low asset base among communities is a huge factor curtailing the success of cooperatives. This, however, has to be given in a manner that does not undermine the basic principles of cooperatives. One of the challenges facing cooperatives is the lack of targeted support given inadequate economic and social impact statistics on cooperatives. According to Dyi, limited promotion and awareness, accessibility of cooperative registration to local communities, avoidance of formalization of informal self-help groups, and limited support from enterprise development agencies are some of the challenges curtailing the success of cooperatives.⁷⁹ Mayende (2011) points out that the current challenge in South Africa is bureaucratic domination and control of all processes. Observing the lack of organization among communities, Mayende argues that this has provided a good ground for the top-down model, which is not giving cooperatives a strong institutional voice to represent their interests. This argument is in accord with Kanyane, who argues that there is a danger that government-led cooperatives ultimately collapse when state protection and support are withdrawn.⁸⁰ Using the case of Limpopo Province, Kanyane notes that the 2003 grant assistance for seed capital to resuscitate some cooperatives and support others faced difficulties, as the grant was not implemented in a coordinated manner.⁸¹ Furthermore, one of the hindrances facing cooperatives in South Africa is that they are highly politicized and apparently in some cases funded by the government as a political exercise with no sustainability plans and back-ups in place.⁸²

Addressing Cooperatives' Challenges

Cooperatives success stories indicate that the environment within which they operate is critical. Such an environment entails cooperative policies and how governments render support. An enabling environment has to be created that promotes successful cooperatives. Drawing from the case of Kenya, Muthuma (2012) concludes that facilitative policies promote cooperative development through consultation and targeted involvement. The same author posits that paternalistic policies tend to stunt the development of cooperatives while laissez-faire ones neglect it. It is, however, not the responsibility of the government alone to create the required environment for cooperatives. A strong cooperative movement has been reported as a critical component of cooperative success in a number of countries such as Brazil, and on this observation Mayende (2011) underlines the fact that the critical element is that communities must become real owners of their development. Cooperatives have an obligation to form a strong movement, which can lobby the government and partners to create a conducive environment for cooperatives to thrive and self manage. Cooperatives have to organize themselves from primary to apex structures and build a strong self-support entity.

Assistance to cooperatives has to be well integrated, addressing issues such as:

- Allowing an organic formation and growth of cooperatives by ensuring that no government official forms a cooperative, for the government's role should be that of facilitation rather than prescription. Municipalities are well placed in supporting cooperatives by providing a fertile environment at the local level in which cooperatives can grow.
- Support cooperatives with technical, management, and leadership skills to manage their ventures.
- The government has to commit to a percentage procurement targeting cooperatives, and this should be accompanied with assistance towards production of quality services and products that will meet the market standards.
- Improve awareness on government funding support.
- Development of innovative programs that will propel cooperatives from being subsistence-based to becoming vibrant economic production and exchange entities.
- Promotion of research and learning from best practices internationally.
- A comprehensive training curriculum for cooperatives within existing tertiary colleges and the establishment of special training institutions to promote cooperatives.
- Training programs that are adapted to the nature of those being trained in terms of pitch and content.

In addition there has to be a consolidation of various programs bent towards economic development. There is need to anchor the cooperative development in the country with adequate resources in terms of skilled facilitators especially in sectors where cooperatives are still few. It is a positive step taken by the South African government to mandate different

sectors to promote cooperatives; however this may remain a strategy on paper unless resources are channeled to the attainment of set goals. To achieve a better contribution to LED, a periodic evaluation and impact analysis of the developmental contribution of cooperatives should be developed.

Conclusions

The study concludes that cooperatives are an essential business model with a potential to meaningfully contribute to LED in various ways including provision of services, social cohesion, infrastructure development, and employment creation among others. This study has argued that the lack of an active cooperative movement and the state's controlling support of cooperatives hampers their contribution to LED. These two main challenges manifest themselves in terms of sustainability of operations, leadership and management, poor access to markets, and the handout syndrome on the part of cooperative members. In terms of policy government support should be in the form of creating an enabling environment for cooperatives rather than interference, which compromises their autonomy, organic growth, and proper functionality. This article has concluded that cooperatives are a critical instrument for LED. The principles that govern cooperative activities bring a necessary balance between self and community interests. The history of cooperatives across the globe is indicative of the value of these enterprises in socio-economic development, which makes them attractive in the pursuit of LED.

The contribution of cooperatives to LED in South Africa includes stimulation of economic activities in smaller communities where big business cannot profitably operate. Improvement of human capital through training and development of members, infrastructure development, and job creation constitute some of the significant contributions of cooperatives. The article also notes that the participative nature of the cooperative model forms a critical factor towards the empowerment of the population especially the rural poor. This in turn promotes a bottom up development. Furthermore, the cooperative business model helps build social benefits over and above the financial gains. The article acknowledges the government efforts to promote cooperatives in the country through funding and policy, which, among other things, have simplified the registration process. Funding remains a challenge, however, given the fact that a number of cooperatives are formed by previously disadvantaged groups who lack capital assets to make a significant economic contribution.

The article has made a number of recommendations that can enhance the performance and contribution of cooperatives to LED. The need for the government to take a facilitative role that enables cooperatives to function as autonomous entities was underlined. In addition to this the government can help cooperatives thrive by committing a percentage procurement share to cooperatives. Another necessary development is the establishment of training institutions for cooperatives and the development of a cooperative curriculum in existing institutions, which will cater for the needs of cooperatives. The article also recommends the networking of cooperatives and the formation of a strong movement that will lobby for the improvement of legal and other reforms, which are necessary for cooperatives to flourish.

Notes

- 1 OCDC 2007.
- 2 McAllister 2008.
- 3 International Cooperative Alliance 2012.
- 4 Gibson 2005, p. 4.
- 5 Philip 2003, p. 3.
- 6 OCDC 2007, p. 7.
- 7 Chibanda, Ortmann, and Lyne 2009.
- 8 OCDC 2007.
- 9 Muthuma 2012.
- 10 OCDC 2007, p. 6.
- 11 Philip 2003, p. 7.
- 12 OCDC 2007, p. 8.
- 13 Kanyane 2009, p. 1126.
- 14 Philip 2003, p. 8.
- 15 Nyambe 2010, p. 5.
- 16 Nel and Rogerson 2005, p. 1.
- 17 Swinburn 2007, p. 2.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Nel and Rogerson 2005.
- 20 Swinburn 2007.
- 21 Rodriguez-Pose and Tijmstra 2005, p. 3.
- 22 Patterson 2008.
- 23 Rodriguez-Pose and Tijmstra 2005.
- 24 Hindson and Hindson 2005.
- 25 Rodriguez-Pose and Tijmstra 2005.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Haque 1999, p. 200.
- 28 Mensah et al. 2013, p. 163.
- 29 Gibson 2005, p. 6.
- 30 Harms 2007, p. 21.
- 31 Fulton and Keltinson 1992.
- 32 OCDC 2007, p. 8.
- 33 Mwesigye 2008, p. 16.
- 34 Philip 2003, p. 13.
- 35 Gibson 2005, p. 6.
- 36 Iuviene, Stitely, and Hoyt 2010, p. 5.
- 37 Mwesigye 2008, p. 5.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 OCDC 2007, pp. 10-11.
- 40 Ibid., p. 12.
- 41 Mwesigye 2008, p. 5.
- 42 Muthuma 2012, p. 177.
- 43 Merret and Walzer 2004.

- 44 Mcleod 2004.
- 45 Birchall 2004, p. 3.
- 46 Kanyane 2009.
- 47 Rogerson 1990, p. 286.
- 48 Ibid.
- 49 Kanyane 2009, p. 1130.
- 50 Rogerson 1990, p. 287.
- 51 Ibid.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 DTI 2012, p. 32.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 Business Day Live 2012.
- 57 Philip 2003, p. 15.
- 58 \$1.00 equals approximately R10.50.
- 59 Philip., p. 16.
- 60 Ibid., p. 17.
- 61 Satgar, p. 11.
- 62 DTI 2012, pp. 36-37.
- 63 Ibid., p. 41.
- 64 Nyambe 2010, p. 1.
- 65 Dyi 2011, p. 5.
- 66 Van Der Walt 2013, p. 6.
- 67 Nyambe 2010, p. 12.
- 68 Van Der Walt 2013, p. 7.
- 69 Muthuma 2012, p. 179.
- 70 OCDC 2007, p. 7.
- 71 Mayende 2011, p. 12.
- 72 DTI 2012, p. 39.
- 73 www.dti.gov.za.
- 74 Ibid.
- 75 Dyi 2011, p. 10.
- 76 DTI 2012, p. 36.
- 77 Ibid.
- 78 Nyambe 2010, p. 24.
- 79 Dyi 2011, p. 9.
- 80 Kanyane 2009, p. 1133.
- 81 Ibid.
- 82 Ibid.

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<http://www.slideshare.net/cooperatives/louw-van-der-walt-research-africa>. Accessed on 04/02/2014.

BOOK REVIEWS

Pade Badru and Brigitte Maa Sackey, eds. 2013. *Islam in Africa South of the Sahara*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc. 416 pp.

Despite the fact that since the end of the twentieth century no religion has attracted more attention than Islam, a glaring gap exists in the recent flood of publications on the religion. This is due to the shortage of scholarly work on Islam in Africa. This book aims to fill the gap. Editors Badru and Sackey and their contributors deal with the subject in sixteen chapters, arranged in four sections. Section I addresses the historical origins of Islam in Africa and the basic principles of Islamic theocracy. Section II looks at gender relations within Islam. Section III presents the Sharia Code and the conditions of women in Islam, while Section IV makes an assessment of political Islam and Africa and the African diaspora. In particular, the publication provides unique insights into culture and Islam, the concepts of *jihad*, slavery and *Sharia*, and the status of women in Muslim countries.

The publication rarely contains the misconceptions in much of the existing literature, such as “Islamic terrorism”, which, unfortunately, serve the interests of a minority of extremists (Muslims and non-Muslims) who are influencing global attitudes towards Islam and are trying to divide our world into Muslim and non-Muslim. In general, the authors seem to recognize the fact that most Muslims (and non-Muslims) want to live with and let live their neighbors of different faiths. By implication, this draws our attention to the need to make a distinction between Islam and individual behavior. Therefore, if a Muslim willfully murders an innocent person, he/she must simply be called “a terrorist” or “criminal” rather than any Islamic label, just as we would call a non-Muslim who commits such a crime. Thus, he/she is separated from the religion and the tempers of the world’s billion Muslims who may feel that it is their religion that is being targeted. For global peace the importance of this cannot be overemphasized.

At least two of the chapters (12 and 14), however, contain very out of date information. For example, in Chapter 12, O’Fahey states that the National Islamic Front (now the main opposition party in the Sudan) is the dominant force behind President Bechir and that the Sudan People’s Liberation Army/Sudan People’s Liberation Movement is led by the late John Garang. In Chapter 14 Janson’s analysis, though apt, is based on events only “after ten years of civil war” (p. 332). Understandable, because both chapters are reprints from earlier publications which appeared in 1995 and 2004, respectively. There are also a number of fundamental errors in the Preface and Chapter 2 (both by Badru). In the Preface he erroneously reports that it is the “Arab summer, which started in Mauritania ... (that) has put reform on the agenda of many Islamic utopian states” and that trousers are “strictly forbidden for women in Muslim countries.” In Chapter 2, he argues that: “Some” Islamic scholars believe that the Prophet received his revelations from the Almighty Allah. All Muslims believe this. The Prophet married Khadijah, because of “economic” reasons. No, as the Prophet’s behavior toward the honorable widow (not “mistress” as he put it) even when he became the most powerful man in Arabia indicated, the two had a very solid bond of love that was exemplary, especially given their age difference. Furthermore, his attitudes toward material possessions (based on Qur’anic injunctions) clearly portrayed a man for whom wealth was never a motivation for action.

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/pdfs/v14i4a5.pdf>

Another mistaken argument in the Preface is that African traditional religions have many shared beliefs with the “core doctrinal teaching” of Islam. The opposite is true, as Nyang (Chapter 1) points out. Badru also states that *Hajj* is a celebration of the Prophet’s triumphant re-entry into Makkah. No, it is an ancient spiritual obligation and one of the five pillars of Islam. Finally, he writes that the Prophet decided to spend “most of his time” in a cave perhaps because he wanted to stay away from his daughters after Khadijah’s death. No, he started going to the cave *before* Khadijah’s death (circa 619 CE) and the revelations started when she was still well and wealthy (610 CE). Such retreats are common religious practice even today.

Solomon (Chapter 15), a Muslim, blasts “Islamists” as “fascists”, drawing similarities with Mussolini and Hitler. However, his criticisms are on a minority of Muslims rather than Islam. He highlights the negative aspects of the reign of the Companions and asserts that Islam separates religion from politics. He narrates the historical tolerance of Islam. He reveals a bitter conflict of opinions among South African Muslims.

By being mostly objective or non-judgmental, the contributors to this book send an implicit message to Muslims for tolerance towards others. This is one of the messages of the Qur’an itself. I recommend this book for readers who already have a good knowledge of Islam, but seek a case study of Africa. It is not suitable for those who need an introduction.

Karamo N.M. Sonko, *Heeno International*

Abdul Karim Bangura. 2012. *African Mathematics: From Bones to Computers*. Lanham: University Press of America. 220 pp.

The poor quality of teaching, the low absorption rate of learners, and the general fear of and dislike for mathematics across Africa south of the Sahara is well documented. The root of this challenge has been traced to the pedagogy of mathematics in Africa, which is basically Eurocentric. In *African Mathematics*, Abdul Karim Bangura attempts to utilize historical and contemporary sources to highlight Africa’s contribution to certain branches and sub-branches of mathematics and furthermore to explore the possibilities of research and teaching of mathematics from an African centered platform.

The author explains that some of the earliest mathematics objects in human history have been discovered in Africa. The Lebombo Bone, dated approximately 35,000 BC was discovered in the mountains of South Africa and Swaziland, while the Ishango Bone, dated 9000-6000 BC, was discovered on the border of Uganda and the Republic of Congo. In *African Mathematics*, the reader is reminded that it was mathematical knowledge that aided ancient Egyptians in tracking the flow of the Nile in order to determine appropriate planting seasons. Beyond the much-discussed Egyptian hieroglyphic, the book also addresses little known but equally instructive Egyptian hieratic and demotic numeration schemes. The Maghrebian contribution to mathematics is also covered. Much of the mathematics of that era and clime were for practical purposes, such as inheritance division, the construction and maintenance of irrigation canals, and the composition of medications.

African Mathematics dissects several studies that explore geometrical expressions found in African art. In textiles, wood carving, mural decorations, and story-telling, communities and peoples across Africa south of the Sahara display in-depth knowledge and practical expressions

of geometry. The author also establishes several similarities in Africa's numbering systems, and, perhaps without meaning to, disproves the oft-held belief that the continent is overly complex, diverse, and heterogeneous.

In other mathematical sub-fields such as fractals, combinatorics, bifurcation, tiling, or tessellation the book utilizes numerous scientific evidence to link mathematics to several African activities, games, products, and processes. Under fractals, foremost mathematics researcher Ron Eglash's statement, that in Africa he encountered "some of the most complex fractal systems that exist in religious activities such as the sequence of symbols used in sand divination, a method fortune telling found in Senegal" and the Ifa divination system of the Yoruba of Nigeria is interesting to note.¹ Several African indigenous games are shown to involve Combinatorics. African board games are singled out for emphasis as they are "games of strategy, full of information, logic and intelligence [and therefore] it is imperative to ask questions of intelligence, logic and mathematical reasoning when investigating them" (p. 79). This analytical understanding of African games is worthy of note, especially in the light of its dismissal in certain quarters as a game for idle and unintelligent minds. One implication is that present day African researchers and intellectuals ought to further explore more indigenous African activities for deeper intellectual underpinnings.

The last two chapters of the book focus on the research and teaching of African mathematics. On the teaching of African mathematics across schools and colleges in Africa south of the Sahara, the author focuses on the language of learning. He cites an empirical study conducted in South Africa, where both teachers and students concede that the teaching of mathematics in English is not so that students can learn better, but rather so they could be more fluent in English and get jobs faster. This is despite the admission that students learn mathematics better, and teachers teach better in their home language. Essentially, the language of instruction is an area where African scholars and policy makers need to invest much time and effort to arrive at a progressive and balanced decision.

At a time when emphasis is rightly beginning to shift from how many schools there are in Africa to what African students are learning in classrooms, *African Mathematics* will generate numerous questions for all concerned with curriculum development and management. The major challenge of *African Mathematics* is that it appears to start out as a cross-disciplinary work, but somewhere in the middle it assumes a strong technical inflection, only to slip back into a cross-disciplinary mode towards the ending. But the fact is that the book ought never to have been written just for the very knowledgeable few in that narrow field of study. *African Mathematics* holds the promise of acting as a catalyst for indigenous knowledge-based exploration in all fields of study where African researchers can be found.

Notes

- 1 Eglash, Ron. 1999. *African Fractals: Modern Computing and Indigenous Design*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Chika Ezeanya, *University of Rwanda*

Alice Bellagamba, Sandra E. Greene, and Martin Klein, eds. 2013. *The Bitter Legacy: African Slavery Past and Present*. Princeton: Markus Weiner Publications. 211 pp.

Historians Alice Bellagamba, Sandra E. Greene and Martin Klein's edited volume makes a unique contribution to the study of the African slave trade in its highlighting the voices of men and women of slave ancestry and ownership within the continent of Africa. Their approach is a divergence from the prevailing emphasis on exploring the legacy of the slave trade and slavery in a trans-Atlantic context.

The editors' introduction not only contextualizes the individual contributors' chapters as part of the larger project, but it also offers revelations about the system of African slavery in pre-colonial Africa, post-trans-Atlantic slave trade abolition when as the editors remark, "Slave-raiding and slave-trading within Africa remained not only an important form of economic activity... it accelerated" (p. 94) as well as its legacies in colonial and post-colonial Africa into the contemporary moment. As such they elucidate a history that would most likely be outside the purview of the majority of scholars, most of who focus on the trans-Atlantic trade. There are several themes that run through the chapters. For example, as the editors make clear, the history of the slave trade and slavery is inextricably tied to memories of it. This dialectical relationship can be seen, for example, in Emmanuel Saboro's chapter on songs sung during harvest festivals amongst the Bulsa of the terror that a particular slave raider spread in the community and the people's triumph over him, and in Damian Opata's exploration of several Igbo proverbs that "both narrate and memorize slavery" (p. 54). It can also be found in Makhroufi Ousmane Traore's interviews with descendants of slaves and descendants of nobles. As Traore concludes, the sources show the different ways in which the two groups narrate their common past (p. 203). Other reoccurring themes are the tensions that exist between the metaphorical vestiges of slavery and physical manifestations of it. While there are references to slavery in the language of all of these communities that engaged in historical slavery and people still operate within the framework of the concomitant power dynamics, the physical evidence of past master-slave relationships are still being resolved. This can be found for example in Lotte Pelckmans' discussion of manumission documents still being considered necessary by descendants of slaves in Mali as late as 1992, or in the resistance to his questions about slavery G. Ugo Nwokeji faced when he conducted ethnographic research amongst the Aro in the Bight of Biafra.

All of the chapters explore the stigma attached to the descendants of slaves and the different ways that people try to negotiate this history that also shapes their contemporary realities. For example, Eric Komlavi Hahonou's article addresses the various state-sanctioned methods he deployed to overcome the stigma of slavery, as does Pelckmans. Alessandra Brivio's chapter on the Mami Tchamba Shrine in Togo explores how both the descendants of slaves and enslavers work through the history through ritual and ceremony.

Religion features heavily in the majority of the chapters with Islam being both a site of endorsement and a site of resistance to one's status as slave. Alice Bellagamba and Martin Klein state explicitly in their chapter that one of the documents they used in their research "clearly reasserts the role of Islam as a force for liberation" (p. 164), while Pelckmans' chapter demonstrates how intertwined Islam and nobility were. As she states, "Islam and nobility in the Haayre region over time became entangled over time and expressed in honor codes" (p. 67).

Her discussion of manumission elucidates how “moral boundaries based on inequality” (p. 66) are reinforced in the Muslim-supported self-manumission system.

Several authors also address issues of methodology. For example, Hahonou alerts the reader to the redundancies and tangents in the interview that is central to his chapter remarking that he left them in so that the reader could get a feel for what ethnographic material looks like (p. 30). Again, Nwokeji goes into great detail about the challenges he faced when he tried to interview “respondents” about the slave trade. One chapter that seems to defy classification is Zacharie Saha’s retelling of two twentieth century slave narratives from Cameroon. One of the narratives is a gem because it is evidence of not only slavery’s legacy, but its persistence as it tells the story of a man who was enslaved until 1968.

All of the authors rely primarily on the voices of the descendants of slaves and some also on those of the enslavers for their arguments. Their methodology is in line with the stated goal of the text: to present a “first-hand account of sources, which gives voice, as far as possible, either to former slaves or to men and women of slave ancestry” (p. 3). As such, each chapter offers a glimpse into very complex negotiations within communities that are haunted by the slave trade, slavery and its legacy.

One of the text’s unique contributions is its giving names and histories to both slavers and enslavers, not just numbers and statistics. In doing so, it adds a human dimension to a vast system that has extended across centuries and geographical boundaries to determine the presents and futures of Africa’s population. Its strength is also linked to a weakness in that the text’s confinement to West Africa leaves out other parts of the continent that were also affected by slavery and are also dealing with its legacy. While it is understandable that the editors could not address the legacy of slavery in every region of Africa, it is problematic that they allow West Africa to stand in for the entire continent as indicated by the book’s title.

The text would be useful in an upper-level undergraduate course as well as to scholars who are interested in learning more about the slave trade, slavery, and its legacy in West Africa.

Toni Pressley-Sanon, *University at Buffalo*

James R. Brennan. 2012. *Taifa: Making Nation and Race in Urban Tanzania*. Athens: Ohio University Press. 292 pp.

Brennan presents in *Taifa* the tumultuous evolution of consciousness of nation and race in urban coastal Tanzania from 1916 to 1976. The centrality of both nation and race is adumbrated in the immediate discussion of the word *taif*—a Swahili word that connotes race and nation almost inseparably. Through the lens of document-based history Brennan reveals the changing discourse and changing notions of citizenship, race, nation, and entitlement in the rapidly expanding city of Dar es Salaam. The book is a rich and insightful account of how the racial, ethnic, and socio-economic pluralism of Dar es Salaam was an inherent part of the emergence of a racially conscious TANU-led independence-movement.

Urban Tanzania is presented as a deeply unequal and stratified playing field on which numerous actors, institutions, and organizations negotiate urban existence. Brennan historicizes this pluralism as crucial to its development and the development of “Taifa,” thus emphasizing

the agency of a diverse set of actors (colonial government, African Association, TANU, Indian Association, a class of African tenants, and a class of Indian rentiers, to name only a few), and the significance of unintended consequences of implemented policies. He provides a thoroughly researched argument for how “the impact of colonial rule did not fully reinvent the language with which people identified one another” (p. 1). For example, it shows the reader the relative power and incapacities of colonial government. It was able to impose legal-racial categories whose implementation has had far-reaching consequences in Tanzanian history, yet it was not able to tackle the currents of unrest among and demands made upon its resources by the residents of Dar es Salaam. It’s emphasis on the unintended and the contingent, a view that relativizes and reveals as inherently relational the power and incapacities of important actors and organizations, makes this book a work of depth and detail.

Each chapter presents a new decade or period of time that describe the continuities and changes to categories and policies, articulated through the literate portion of society. The book is “primarily a work of documentary history, in which institutions and educated men loom large” (p. 15). The literature, poetry, policies, official documents, newspapers, and letters that are the primary source of Brennan’s work carry mainly male voices. The world of the informal and that of women remains in the background. This bias mirrors the bias of public culture and literacy during and immediately after colonialism. Material from a large number of formal interviews and informal conversations with those who were involved in the events described serves to make the account more three-dimensional. Due to the chiefly documentary sourcing, however, certain informal (e.g. black market) and female facets of urban Tanzanian social, economic and political life are inexorably underrepresented.

The text utilizes a range of published and unpublished sources, including key authors like Glassman, Iliffe, and Kopytoff to theoretically fortify and contextualize his argument within a history and social scientific tradition. Building on work by Glassman on identity and racial thought, Brennan describes how racial thought was imposed, used, and navigated by actors during and after colonialism. While increasingly, if not wholly, discredited as an analytical term, the concept of race is here treated as an emic mode of thought not discrete in its own right. While acknowledging the centrality of racial thought to the argument, a more critical engagement with the problematic of using racial categories such as “African” or “Indian” in the narrative itself would have been desirable.

In *Taifa* Brennan sets out to historically contextualize the rise of certain conceptualization of identity, nation and race in urban Tanzania. He achieves this by positioning himself in the difficult space between a recollected urban past, and a surviving public culture much more amenable to retrospective research. The questions Brennan seeks to answer are many and multifaceted. The book accomplishes its task by tying together a complex history into a graspable, yet dense, account that is accessible beyond a purely academic readership in terms of writing style and content. Brennan is particularly successful in that he unravels the particularities of urban Tanzanian history. With *Taifa*, Tanzania is not just another postcolonial African country; it is given a particular flavor. For those interested in the history of East Africa, this is a book full of intriguing insights, providing the reader with a coherent account of identity, nationalism and racial thought in urban Tanzania. After reading this book the reader

will be hungry for further reading. *Taifa* is, as any good academic book should be, replete with the kind of answers that breed a new multitude of questions.

Martin Loeng, *University of Edinburgh*

Anthony Butler. 2012. *The Idea of the ANC*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press. 139 pp.

Butler presents a short history of the African National Congress (ANC), the ruling party in post-apartheid South Africa. This short book is divided into five chapters, including an introduction and a conclusion. The introduction begins with the ANC centennial celebrations that took place in Bloemfontein in 2012. In his reflection of these celebrations, Butler attempts to respond to the questions of (a) how has the ANC survived for one hundred years, and (b) how has the leadership managed to have a stronghold on the people of South Africa even after being banished for over four decades and, according to the author, not meeting the expectations of a liberated and democratic South Africa in terms of economic justice?

Butler's attempts to answer these two questions fall short as the rest of the book reads like a critique of the ANC rather than a book that seeks to unveil how the ANC has survived. For instance, chapter two of the book, "Agency," addresses the roots of the ANC. This chapter provides a backdrop for the ANC's formation in a colonial South Africa. The author portrays colonial South Africa as an innocuous system, free of European violence against African people unless violence is perpetrated by Africans on other Africans as in the case of the Zulu expansion. Similar to many colonial sympathizers, the author reports colonial theft, pillaging and mass dispossessions of land as Afrikaners (people of Dutch descent who colonized South Africa) and the English as "establishing of a presence." It is the "presence," Butler contends, that led to the creation of a group of Christian educated elite which later formed the ANC. The connotations of this chapter and the book is that the ANC, which has branded itself as an Africanist and pro-poor organization, was founded by Africans who were "Christian and educated elite" and thus lacks legitimacy as an Africanist and poor people's movement. What Butler fails to grasp is a simple fact that Africans do not lose or delegitimize their "African-ness" by incorporating western beliefs into their lives. After all, culture is dynamic. He also fails to acknowledge that, as Nelson Mandela posited, one of the most effective leadership strategies is to "lead from the back and let other believe that they are in front," which was effective in branding the ANC as a people's movement.

The author's negative bias toward the ANC is transparent throughout the last three chapters. He provides a truncated history of the ANC in exile as a floundering and weak armed struggle. Butler actually sings praises to the prowess of the apartheid South African Defense Force ability to crush anti-apartheid resistance, and assigns blame to the ANC for continuing with the armed struggle, which, he reckons, "reduced the regime's willingness to contemplate change..." (p. 45). Differently stated, the author extrapolates that the ANC's armed struggle—albeit he contends was weak and disorganized—was to blame for the brutality of the apartheid system post 1976. The reader might wonder: was the ANC's armed struggle really weak? Why was a government as powerful as the apartheid government so determined to defeat a weak armed struggle?

This book is anachronistic in its pro-colonial and pro-apartheid tone. While linguists have repeatedly verified African languages as languages, Butler still asserts that it was the missionaries and anthropologists who convinced Africans that their dialects or communications methods were languages. It is obsolete to pose the question: “The ANC has prevailed, or at least survived; but can it govern?” This is a paternalistic question that was often posed to rationalize white minority rule during apartheid South Africa. The answer is *yes*, the ANC has governed for twenty years and if the leaders of the ANC continue to employ the strategies of its Christian and elite founders, it will continue to govern.

Shirley Mthethwa-Sommers, *Nazareth College*

John P. Cann. 2013. *Brown Waters of Africa: Portuguese Riverine Warfare 1961-1974*. Solihull, UK: Helion & Company. 264 pp.

Throughout history navigable rivers have provided humans with an effective natural infrastructure greatly improving commerce and security for the state. Africa as a continent is a large plateau that arises near the coast with few rivers that are navigable from the ocean. Mountains, cataracts, and enormous swings in precipitation resulting in shifting navigable channels prevent Africa from having such critical rivers as the Rhine, Mississippi, Volga, and Yangtze. Of those rivers in the interior well suited for transportation the “Scramble for Africa” by the European powers resulted in many of them being divided amongst the different modern political entities today. Although significantly less important than for Europe, Asia, or North America the control waterways and the use of specialized and adapted naval forces are critical to the security of states in Africa.

Between the early 1960s and mid-1970s, Portugal used Africa’s “brown waters” (i.e., rivers and coastal channels) to provide security in its “ultramar” (colonial) areas, even as other colonial powers were abandoning their empires. In the process, a barely-first-world state on a shoestring budget developed forces, institutions, structures, and systems capable of effectively suppressing insurgency. John P. Cann’s superb *Brown Waters of Africa: Portuguese Riverine Warfare 1961–1974* describes that process, how it evolved and compares and contrasts it with the French intervention in Indochina and U.S. involvement on the Mekong of South Vietnam. The book—the first extensive English account of the Riverine wars in Africa—is well-sourced, and benefits from resources provided by the Portuguese admiralty.

According to Cann, there are four key missions for riverine forces in support of counterinsurgency operations. The first and primary mission involves preventing the enemy from using waterways by establishing static posts at key points along the rivers and the maritime shoreline to project power and conducting continuous naval patrols from those posts. The second mission calls for the naval elements to provide ground forces with the ability to maneuver successfully against the enemy. It’s a particularly critical mission in delta-type environments where delineation between rivers and coast consists of many islands and inlets. The third mission requires the navy to supply waterborne artillery that gives land forces firepower on remote battlefields where ground cannon are difficult or impossible to deploy. The fourth mission—arguably the most critical in a counterinsurgency—necessitates that the navy

project power throughout river systems and coastal areas to support police and customs services, which are the security forces most connected to the population and thus vital to counterinsurgency operations.

Cann demonstrates that French efforts in the Indochina War—though ultimately ineffective because the French lacked sufficient force to destroy or completely deny the enemy access to the river ways—was a major influence on how the Portuguese fought in the ultramar. Thus, before they even began, the Portuguese military knew that a specialized, small, and relatively inexpensive force backed by land-based aviation could successfully combat insurgents. To increase their chances of success, however, the Portuguese committed far more assets: deployed one “naval unit” (vessel) per 12.3 km of waterway, versus French deployment in Indochina of one naval unit per 108 km. (Cann compares this to the U.S. deployment of one naval unit per 10.5 km of waterway in Vietnam, which prevented any threat to Saigon and meant the United States effectively “owned” the Mekong.)

Despite Portugal’s eventual success in the application of riverine forces in support of efforts to combat the insurgency in its colonies, Cann indicates that the Portuguese stumbled into the decolonization conflicts in Africa unprepared and had to scramble to catch up. The country was more focused on conventional issues, such as large, multi-national exercises and operations in Europe and in support of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). There was no formal document establishing either national or naval strategy, and counterinsurgency training in Portuguese military schools was more of a curiosity than a mainstream topic.

By the end of the war, Cann says, the country had performed a near wholesale conversion from the blue water navy supporting Europe to a brown water one. How this transition came about provides many lessons that are still pertinent today, from the importance of Riverine warfare and the criticality of joint operations between the maritime and land forces to the need to establish a permissive environment for the populations that remain vulnerable to insurgent action. As such, its audience goes well beyond those who are interested in African or colonial military history. Indeed, this work is especially relevant for anyone involved in establishing policies for and within modern African states, which are dependent upon control of brown waters because they are generally enormous in size, require lengthy travel between major population centers, and have a general lack of infrastructure.

Karsten Engelmann, *The Center for Army Analysis & US Africa Command*

Gloria Chuku, ed. 2013. *The Igbo Intellectual Tradition: Creative Conflict in African and African Diasporic Thought*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 342pp.

The editor Gloria Chuku in this collection seeks to unearth the creative conflict that characterizes the emergence of the Igbo intelligentsia from the slave plantations in the Americas to the Christian missions elsewhere in West Africa and from the twentieth century segregated European and American societies to the colonial and post-colonial African/Nigerian society. There is a contradiction that runs in the thoughts of the Igbo intellectuals covered in this book, orchestrated by the strong influence of their Eurocentric formations and their cherished cultural heritage openly despised by the European intelligentsia. The editor argues that they constantly

faced the dilemma of assimilating modern universalistic ideas without themselves becoming totally assimilated to alien models remains evident in the experiences of the Igbo intelligentsia discussed in this book (p. 1). This dilemma corroborates the experience which the African-American Du Bois paints in his *The Souls of Black Folk* where he states: "One ever feels this twoness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (p. 3). The creative conflict which the editor harps on is readily captured in the above and in some cases unfortunately created what Tempels Placid calls the *evolués* or the *deracines* but which the editor calls *oyibo oji* ("black Europeans"). This conflict led Ngugi wa Thiong'o to call for the decolonization of the African mind and the Martiniquan Aime Césaire to call for re-africanization of the tutored Africans through the veritable integration of modernity and what Janheinz Jahn calls the "valuable past" and Bogumil Jewsiewicki calls the "usable past" of African tradition in the building of a neo-African culture. The topics in this volume stylistically capture this tension.

In her introduction, the editor had pointed to a very significant factor in the development of Igbo intellectuals, which can be described as the "community collective education system." She obviously intended to emphasize the fact that the development of Igbo intellectuals was not pinned down to the arrival of Western formal education. The Igbo had rich social, political, and religious structures that accounted for order, progress, and development before the colonial era. The system had its internal mechanism of training and educating the youth who eventually grew into adults or elders. There might not have existed a formal school system, but the system in existence was more pragmatic thus engaging people from childhood. Perhaps a popular African proverb that corroborates this is "it takes the whole village to raise a child." This effective indigenous system shaped the capable men and women who working as slaves made immense contributions to modernity. In the colonial and post-colonial era, the African and especially the Igbo intelligentsia have ultimately played vital roles as cogs in the machine of the modern world in different sectors and places. This makes the editor to declare that "in spite of the continuous devaluation of the continent's intellectual heritage due to European ethnocentric and racist sentiments... Africa has contributed enormous intellectual products to the collective output of humankind and to the progress of human civilizations (p. 3). It should be recalled that Europeans such as the French anthropologist Lucien Lévy-Bruhl in his book *Primitive Mentality* painted the African as pre-logical. Also the German Philosopher Georg Hegel in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* exclaimed that Africa was a dark continent covered by the mantle of night, lacking in high culture and had made no contribution in world civilization. The topics discussed in this collection were in part to dispute these Eurocentric misrepresentations.

The editor attempts to show through the collection of topics in the book that the Africa presented in the pejorative Western scholarship was largely distorted. Such authors were racist, ethnocentric, and sentimental (p. 3). Africa nay the Igbo had an intellectual tradition prior to slavery and colonialism, the product of which created such thoughts as the Igbo cosmology, cosmogony, medicine, arts and crafts, etc. even though the Igbo tradition of that time may not be described as literate. One can say that the editor also attempts a deconstructionist project in this collection similar to the one carried out by V. Y. Mudimbe in his *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge*. In this work, Mudimbe described the debased

contemporary African episteme as the invention of racist European scholars, which ought to be deconstructed. The editor in this collection seems to do just that. She, however, went beyond Mudimbe in attempting a reconstruction by unearthing evidences of African intellectual tradition as exemplified by the selected Igbo intellectuals.

There are six other broad themes the editor considered in the volume after the traditional Igbo intellectual setting. The first was the slavery and emancipation era. In the first chapter, Chuku discusses the famous Igbo ex-slave Olaudah Equiano who left the coast of Africa to South America on board a slave ship very much pre-literate. At such a tender age he had to struggle with his Igbo culture and the strange norms of his European captors, squeezing through eventually into the alien culture only to be confronted by the dilemma of the two opposed cultures for much of his life. Having developed intellectually, he came to decry not only his condition but that of other Africans as well. His intellectual development was both a product of circumstance and the genius of his native Igbo industry. Like all intellectuals with social functions, Equiano became a crusader against slavery after he bought his freedom. The editor showed that Equiano's case was a reflection of those of other Igbo of the time such as Archibald Monteath, Edward Blyden, James Horton, and John Taylor to name a few.

The second theme was the colonial era where John Orij and Gloria Chuku addressed the two famous Nigerian nationalists Nnamdi Azikiwe and Mbonu Ojike showing the fervor of Igbo intellectuals during the struggle against colonialism. The third was the missionary contributions where Jude Aguwa used Bishop Anthony Nwedo as a point of discourse to address the intellectual impact of Igbo missionaries who included the likes of Fr. Paul Obodoehine, Rev. Chukwuma Onyeabo, Rev. John Taylor, Cardinal Francis Arinze, etc. In the fourth, Chuku singled out the illustrious Igbo historians Kenneth Dike and Adiele Afigbo to depict milestones in Igbo historiography, representing the accomplishments of others such as V. C. Uchendu and so on. In the fifth, Chuku and Philip Aka discuss the renowned Igbo economist Pius Okigbo and the legal luminary Ben Nwabueze as representatives of other classes of Igbo intellectuals. Also, Raphael Njoku discussed the accomplished Igbo literary icon Chinua Achebe under this intellectual purview. In the sixth, Chuku and Christine Ohale dedicated the last two chapters respectively to Igbo women intellectuals. Here they discussed Flora Nwapa and Helen Chukwuma as representatives of a very large group of Igbo women intellectuals who have played and continues to play immense roles in building their societies. Obviously, there is no gainsaying the fact that the topics addressed in this collection were carefully chosen and as such broadly represented.

I, however, find the fact that a section of Igbo intellectuals, namely the anonymous bridge builders, architects, fabricators and designers of pre-colonial times as well as the inventors such as Godian Ezekwe, Ugah Aguata (a science genius), engineer Roy Umenyi, Ben Nwosu, Emma Osolu, Drs. Sam Orji and Felix Oragwu (both nuclear physicists), engineer William Achukwu, and Njoku Obi (who made those eye-catching inventions during the Biafran secessionist war) a great omission in the collection. They may not have left many documents but neither did Socrates who stars as the intellectual face of ancient Europe. This does not detract from the quality of the book but rather confirms the editor's assertion that the Igbo have a very rich intellectual tradition accumulated over the years through unwritten and written genres (p. 3). This great collection simply foreshadows a second volume.

On the whole, the sources cited by the contributors are quite expansive thus capturing effectively the focus and goals of the book in general. In reading the volume I see philosophy, anthropology, sociology, art, education, religion, culture and above all history. I think this book should command the attention of everyone interested in African studies irrespective of area.

Jonathan O. Chimakonam, *University of Calabar*

Daniel Conway. 2012. *Masculinities, Militarisation, and the End Conscription Campaign: War Resistance in Apartheid South Africa*. New York: Manchester University Press. 176 pp.

Through the use of archival evidence, trial transcripts, and personal interviews, Conway provides a tight and compelling narrative about the End Conscription Campaign (ECC), the most important white-led movement opposed to apartheid and South Africa's border wars. During the last two decades of apartheid, South Africa had the most onerous requirement for mandatory military service and the stiffest penalties for defectors in the world. Conway shows how the ECC challenged the prevailing gender assumptions created by military conscription, and he emphasizes that romanticized images of the South African soldier as patriotic, brave, and masculine were not static and evolved as political circumstances changed. The ECC's vision of an alternative society free of apartheid merged in interesting ways with other progressive interests such as feminism, underground art, gay rights, and student protest to become a movement that spanned South Africa's white left. Those South Africans who resisted military conscription through conscientious objection or draft dodging were vilified by the military-security establishment as effeminate cowards and self-righteous martyrs, and even as seditious puppets of the Soviet Union. Never a large movement, Conway explains the ECC triggered a vicious reaction by the National Party vastly disproportionate to its size and influence.

The process by which the state manufactured legitimacy for the South African war effort was necessarily all encompassing, intolerant of dissent. Conway is right to note—and this is the greatest contribution of the monograph—that masculinity changed as social and political conditions changed, as emigration soared, the currency collapsed, the propaganda machine failed, and business opposition increased. As the South African war left Namibia and Angola on the border and entered the urban townships, the conflict became local and deeply personal for many white families. Consequently, conscientious objection and opposition to conscription took on different forms and generated new strategies of protest. Banned by the apartheid government in 1988, the ECC was a potent political force restricted to its historically unique circumstances, and it was not to remain a political fixture in South African society. But it is not a forgotten or irrelevant relic either, and perhaps we might question some of the interviewees who felt “left out” of post-apartheid nation building even though they suffered for the end of apartheid, including jail time of up to six years (the highest in the world) for draft dodging. Conway did not develop in detail the link between the ECC and modern South African politics, but it seems the ECC's presence is still visible, not least because Helen Zille, the chairwoman of the ECC from 1986 to 1987, won more than 22 percent of the nationwide vote against Jacob Zuma of the African National Congress in the 2014 presidential elections. Though small, the

ECC represented an outlet for South Africa's white left when it was out of power, and the alliances that it forged still exist.

The focus of Conway's book is on opposition to conscription at the front end, including state prosecution of draft dodgers. The state's violent reaction to desertion or insubordination on the battlefield is outside the scope of the book, but future research into South African court-martials may show results that accord with Conway's findings: to fight is a ritual of masculinity and to defect or desert is cowardly or effeminate. A disability perspective may also show that men who received medical exemptions from service or who were disabled in combat altered or challenged prevailing notions of masculinity in a war-mobilized society. Conway's tone is judicious throughout the text, and he places the ECC in proper perspective; he avoids overstating the ECC's importance as a small organization, but simultaneously avoids trivializing the ECC within the enormous scope and diversity of the anti-apartheid movement. He engages the underlying organizational tensions within the ECC without delving into the palace politics and personal leadership struggles that characterize any broad-based campaign. Foremost among these tensions was the one between the sizable membership of women, sexual minorities, and radical political activists on the one hand and, on the other, the ECC's need to reach "typical" white families by presenting as the face of the campaign white men who were called up for the draft. Conway's book is a highly readable, engaging history of a lost chapter of anti-apartheid activism, and memorializes not only the broad and costly impacts of military conscription on white society but also the deeply personal turmoil faced by individuals who refused to fight for a cause that they perceived was unjust.

Andrew Novak, *George Mason University*

Marisa O. Ensor, ed. 2012. *African Childhoods: Education, Development, Peacebuilding, and the Youngest Continent*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 262 pp.

African children are continuously represented within media as the victims of violence, poverty, hunger, and disease or of unscrupulous terrorist groups that force them into becoming soldiers. Other representations, e.g., of children starving, aim at attracting the mercy of westerners to support Africa's path to development and the budgets of many NGOs involved in the area. While media campaigns seem short-sighted, academics have been trying to understand the challenges of Africa and how to face them. This book, *African Childhoods*, is an example of the crucial role of academics in rehabilitating a misrepresented reality by media. Edited by Marisa O. Ensor, a sociocultural, applied, and legal anthropologist at the University of Tennessee, this book has been the result of two meetings of the American Anthropological Association.

The editor's scope has been to produce an understanding of African childhoods, which counter-balances the Western views of "children as helpless victims" (p. 9). The book's chapters are mostly based on ethnographic research, and they portray a more realistic image of the lives of African children. Authors deal with pan-African issues of childhood together with specific country studies. Contributions by twenty scholars are divided into four main themes: "The Political Economy of Child Survival in Africa", "The Social Context of African Children," "The Human Capital of African Children," and "African Children as Political Actors."

The first theme discloses the labor participation of children. In particular, this theme focuses on Ghana, Tanzania, Sierra Leone and Kenya, and it gives a contrasting understanding of child labor, one which is very far from the Western misrepresentation of exploited African children. It is argued that child labor in certain circumstances can benefit the child and the family. The theme also reveals the willingness (or the dream!) of young African children to work for the government. This however, as a young boy from Sierra Leone recalls: “[...] will only be possible with peace in Sierra Leone and I pray that it last forever!” (p. 52).

The second theme includes three chapters on Mozambique, Eritrea, and the whole of Africa. The authors analyze how children relate to the social structure. In detail, Elena Colonna proves that children are an essential help for the family in taking care of relatives in Mozambique. On the other hand, every day, children face the dangers of HIV and AIDS, as well as the terrible treatment of living in a place like Eritrea, “one of the most militarized societies in the world and one of the highest producers of refugees” (p. 109).

The third theme looks at African children as human capital. This theme is potentially the most important due to Africa having the youngest population on earth, which means that in the long run the continent can develop. However, the theme—which deals with interesting analysis of children in school dramas in Ghana, the policy of care and education in Tanzania, and the role of young Qur’anic students in Nigeria—does not give any explication of the mechanisms that are preventing these children from becoming effective producers of wealth for themselves and for Africa.

The fourth and last theme scrutinizes the topic of African children as political actors in South Sudan, Rwanda, Liberia, Senegal, and Uganda. The four chapters maintain that youth frequently form and assert their political ambitions with a powerful approach. This gives hope that in the future such a political ambition could lead those countries, and the whole of Africa, towards a more democratic system.

These chapters have been written mostly by long established academics, albeit contributions by doctoral candidates and other experts have been included. Scholars are representative of different nationalities and careers. They come from Africa and western countries, and all of them have spent a long time researching and studying Africa. This mix of nationalities, languages and experiences addressed the issues of African childhood from different standpoints, suggesting that African children are not helpless victims but rather are active participants in their societies. Therefore, the hope for an outcome is strong, and the future of Africa is in these young generations. Overall, the book is very enriching and realistic. It offers an accurate perspective of the issues relating to African children, but it also has another added value encapsulated in the research method utilized. Ethnographic research, in fact, is widely used by the contributors. Therefore, the book is a useful source of information for scholars, and for international organizations involved in the development of African countries. Nevertheless, it is also significant for who want to know more about ethnographic research and the challenges related to the use of this method in an African setting.

Cristian Talesco, *The Hong Kong Polytechnic University*

William Gallois. 2013. *A History of Violence in the Early Algerian Colony*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 207 pp.

In recent years the Algerian nineteenth century has benefitted from an abundance of new studies, as authors seek to build upon standard accounts of the conquest and its aftermath. Many of these examine the violence inherent in the colonization process, presenting the early imperial experience as coercive and disruptive, engendering physical assault, hegemonic social, political, and economic institutions, or the manipulation of environmental, cultural, and architectural norms and practices. The latest entry into the field is William Gallois's *A History of Violence in the Early Algerian Colony*, a book that provides a long overdue reassessment of the 1830-48 wars of conquest in Algeria, based upon archival material from the Service historique de la défense and a variety of published first-hand accounts, including memoirs, diaries, and letters.

For Gallois, violence was not simply the collateral damage of a colonial military campaign. Rather, the French unleashed a barrage of massacres and destruction that decimated entire tribal communities, inflicting thousands of casualties while sustaining virtually no damage themselves. Its purpose was not to defeat the enemy, but to communicate the necessity of complete submission to French authority. Thus to Gallois, violence in Algeria formed an integral component of the French colonial mind from the very beginning, rather than appearing only under settler rule or during the 1954-62 Algerian War. Of course, this strategy was based upon the assumption that Arabs and Kabyles were savages, unable to comprehend anything but brutality. In this regard, Gallois interestingly notes the influence of a series of works purporting to describe Barbary pirates who combined Islamic zealotry with the torture and murder of Europeans, which informed the views of French soldiers, ministers, and public alike. Although the truth was far less lurid—shipwrecked sailors mostly received food and shelter and not agonizing death or forced conversion—Prime Minister/Minister of War Nicolas Jean-de-Dieu Soult and the High Command ordered that any soldier's death would be avenged against the public at large, leading to the destruction of entire villages. Rumours of jihad, ambushes, and mutilation fed French military frenzy, evolving into a push for total domination.

As Gallois adroitly observes, the more sedate Algerian reality threatened to foil plans to use violent means to implement highly profitable colonial trade, a settler society, and military government. Hence Governor General/military commander Thomas Bugeaud resorted to exaggeration, portraying rebel leader Abd-el-Kader as a dangerous opponent, a fabrication used alongside the threat of Moroccan or British intervention to justify the human and material costs of occupation. This set the stage for a battle between "legalist" proponents of the *mission civilisatrice* who desired a military campaign in keeping with Gallic laws and "civilization," and Bugeaud's concept of total war, which in practice meant official tolerance of rape, murder, and massacres. Any tribe that refused to obey French directives faced the *razzia*, typically seen by historians to involve physical mass murder, but broadened by Gallois via a highly original typology of violence in French Algeria. In addition to mass killings, there were assaults on resources (principally food seizures, which simultaneously starved the conquered while feeding undersupplied French troops), lifeworld/environmental cases (the eradication of tribes through the elimination of their habitat, including the burning of crops), and finally exterminatory forays in which soldiers were permitted to kill at will.

These arguments are very convincing, not least because Gallois mobilizes substantial documentary evidence; material from the military archives supplemented by numerous first-hand accounts. Only the conclusion is somewhat less effective, positing that French actions in Algeria from 1830-48 constituted an act of genocide. It is certainly true that a significant portion of the population disappeared between 1830 and 1872, many succumbing to famine and disease after the conquest. Yet this does not necessarily evoke a parallel with the functionalist historians of Nazi Germany: that genocide need not be planned, but could react to unforeseen events and problems (in this case Arab aggression and the colonization of Algerian land), becoming a gradual evolution rather a premeditated mass murder. If they differ concerning its cause and path, Holocaust scholars (intentionalist, functionalist, and moderate functionalist) agree that an attempt to exterminate Jews did indeed take place. In Algeria, neither the metropolitan government nor the military ever attempted a full-scale annihilation of Arabs and Kabyles, planned or otherwise, a fact acknowledged by Gallois, who distinguishes between the more benevolent fate of tribes that agreed to French rule and those that rejected it. The locals lost their autonomy, their rights, and after the 1873 Warnier Law their land, but not their culture, language, and their lives. Thus by the late nineteenth century, Muslim population growth far outstripped the settlers, leading to widespread fear of revolt, as intellectuals, workers, and gradually the general public rejected second-class citizenship on their own land. This is not to deny evident value of Gallois's study. Whether or not one accepts the idea of an Algerian genocide during the period of the French conquest, the book clearly underlines the often-extreme violence—physical, structural, and symbolic—of the imperial system, and most importantly highlights what others have ignored: the prevalence of atrocities from 1830-1848, sanctioned by the metropolitan authorities and High Command alike. As a result, this work provides a very important contribution to the historiography of colonial Algeria.

Samuel Kalman, *St. Francis Xavier University*

P. Wenzel Geissler and Catherine Molyneux, eds. 2011. *Evidence, Ethos and Experiment: The Anthropology and History of Medical Research in Africa*. New York: Berghahn Books. 498 pp.

This book explores a range of medical research issues within various frameworks and highlights the implications that politics and ethics exert on medical research within a context of unequal power relations. Much of its contents is based on the results of a 2005 medical research conference held in Kilifi, Kenya. The book's eighteen chapters are organized into the themes of engagements, evidence and politics.

"Part I: Engagements," covers a range of medical research issues. Luis Reynolds Whyte investigates the impact of conducting interviews and maintaining records in building positive relationships while conducting medical research. Whyte builds a case that record keeping serves as a means of transmitting information and also building nurturing social relationships between researchers and respondents, arguing that ethnographers and scientists would benefit from an appreciation of the contributions of record keeping. Marylyn Strathern points out that all knowledge systems are products of their social contexts, which in turn influence scientific knowledge.

Melissa Leach and James Fairhead argue that the use of informed consent in clinical trials should recognize the influence of inadequate health care provisions in certain targeted populations. Their Gambian research subjects consented to participate in clinical trials in order to access needed health care and other services. Hansjorg Dilgers' AIDS research in Tanzania demonstrates that national politics and local sensibilities influence medical ethics and the outcomes of fieldwork data. John Manton situates his study within the history of clinical experimentation dealing with new leprosy drugs. He contrasts the impact of missionary with government clinical trials efforts, as well as the initiatives of colonial governments with post-colonial African states. George Ulrich argues that ethical awareness and standards need to be reinforced in research contexts.

"Part II: Evidence," explores the production of evidence in medical research. Steven Feierman reveals that doctors in Tanzania and Ghana generate evidence without the benefit of optimal diagnostic tools, compromising medical practices. Patrick S. Kachur focuses on the impact of evidence-based medicine in the study of anti-malarial combination therapy. When the Tanzanian Ministry of Health, working in conjunction with an American public health organization, introduced anti-malarial combination therapy as a matter of local policy rather than clinical trial, there was no need for informed consent or information about the drug trial. Researchers enhanced the drug delivery system to ascertain the validity of the research, affecting the results of the study. Ann Kelly focuses on the modification of construction of modeled trials of malarial vaccines in central Gambia. Access to much needed vaccines lured the local population into becoming research subjects, who found themselves at a loss when the clinical trials had concluded. At the same time, upon completion of the trials, the local nurses lost their opportunity to continue to develop their technical skills. Babette Muller-Rocstroh discusses the impact of the application of ultrasound technology to unintended purposes.

Stacey A. Langwick shows how medicinal plants have come to play a significant role in medical research. Medicinal institutes are in the process of placing traditional medicinal practices under the supervision of medical doctors. While analyzing the memories of Kenyan government medical scientists, P. Wenzel Geissler discovers a common medical narrative persists across different sector domains, regardless of the scale of operations. Suzette Heald explores the ethics of mandatory and confidential testing of HIV in rural Kenya by soliciting input from communities regarding their perceptions of the most effective strategies to achieve adequate preventive measures.

"Part III: Politics," links together the political and historical perspectives of medical research and public health. Kenneth S. Ombongi points out that the decline of biomedical research studies in post-colonial Kenya compromises the leverage by which the government relates to the community through medical policy. Guillaume Lachenal demonstrates that racism influenced unequal opportunities for Africans and French expatriates within the Pasteur Institute of Cameroon. Lyn Schumaker highlights the racist actions of colonial doctors and sanitary workers who called Africans "reservoirs of infectious diseases" who posed a danger to "civilized" European settlers. Vinh-Kim Nguyen illustrates the evolution of community-based organizations and self-help groups in Africa into established health care support networks that offer clinical trials for vaccines, microbicides, and other needed drugs. These poor communities that had initially been excluded from modernity find themselves reintegrated as experimental

subjects. Luise White closes the book with a discussion of the triumph of global humanitarian actors over the limitations of state sovereignty arguments and local concerns.

Onek C. Adyanga, *Millersville University*

Bonnie L. Hewlett. 2012. *Listen, Here is a Story: Ethnographic Life Narratives from Aka and Ngandu Women of the Congo Basin*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 258 pp.

"Listen, here is a story that I want to tell. This is the life of me, a woman who lives here in Nambele. This is the life of women and how the life for women here has been going for many, many years" (p. 227) – Blondine, an Ngandu woman

When you look in the news for the Central African Republic you encounter stories about rebels, terror, civil war, murder, and bloodshed. But what are the other aspects of life in the region that no news agency covers? A journey to the center of the African rainforest reveals what happens and has been happening for many years to the region's inhabitants. In *Listen, Here is a Story*, Bonnie L. Hewlett deals with the different aspects of women's lives of the Aka foragers and Ngandu farmers in this region of the Central African Republic, specifically, and reveals the social, political, cultural, and ideological dimensions in life of these people, generally. There are few studies exploring the subjective experiences of women in small-scale societies, and this volume is one of them.

This book, which is based on interviews with Aka and Ngandu women, compares different aspects of life of the women across these two forager and farmer societies. Although the lifestyle and cultural practices of these two groups who are living in a similar ecology differs dramatically in some respects, "the two groups are economically and socially interdependent; their lives intertwine in complex alliances of clan membership, lifelong friendship (at times), exchange, and dependency. It is difficult, if not impossible, to speak of one without speaking of the other" (p. 49). Overall, using ethnotheories, Hewlett discusses women's narratives by embedding them in a theoretical framework and argues why these people tend to behave in specific ways.

Each chapter deals with one stage of life of these women and finishes with some field notes from the author's personal journal (i.e., her first-person observations and daily life). To be better acquainted with the current life of these people, the first chapter deals with the socio-economical and historical context of the Central African Republic and the impact of colonialism on the inhabitants. Through childhood narratives of Aka and Ngandu women, the second chapter deals with the process by which children become acquainted with and learn the cultural models and foundational schema of their societies. We learn that by developing culturally specific values, beliefs, and practices, Aka and Ngandu children become Aka and Ngandu adults.

In the next chapter, through beautiful, interesting, and delightful narratives, Aka and Ngandu women explain how they have encountered and experienced their puberty, first menstruation, marriage, and love; that is the transition from Aka and Ngandu adolescence to young adulthood. In addition, the reader learns about the process of mate selection and attraction and first sexual experiences among these people.

Hewlett examines Aka and Ngandu beliefs regarding conception, fetal development and growth, and their practices as mothers during pregnancy, parturition, and child rearing and raising in the fourth chapter. The following chapter deals with gender inequalities and differences concerning divorce, infidelity, custody, household income, polygamy, and marital conflicts among the Aka and Ngandu. Chapter six discusses what the role of Aka and Ngandu as elderly women is and how they contribute to different aspects of these societies such as transferring culture, beliefs, traditional values, knowledge, and so on. We learn about their experience of menopause and stopping having children, what it means to be an old woman, and their social status as elderly individuals. The book's concluding chapter is about the effect of globalization and the forces of change on the lifestyle of these people such as the growth of Christianity, colonization, and education, affecting all aspects of their societies. Having witnessed the changes over time, how Aka and Ngandu women think of today's world is that it is so different from the world of their childhood.

Hewlett's colorful and fascinating descriptions and eloquent writing in addition to the beautiful and detailed narrative of Aka and Ngandu women would not let the reader put the book down. It should also be noted that the potential audiences of this book are general readers who are interested in the anthropology of small-scale societies and more specifically women's lives in the Central Africa rainforests. Especially, *Listen, Here is a Story* would be of interest to biological anthropologists, evolutionary biologists/psychologists, ethnographers, and sociologists.

Farid Pazhoohi, *Independent Researcher, Shiraz, Iran*

Marloes Janson. 2013. *Islam, Youth, and Modernity in the Gambia: The Tablighi Jama'at*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 320 pp.

In *Islam, Youth, and Modernity in the Gambia: The Tablighi Jama'at*, Marloes Janson looks at the emergence within the Gambia of a transnational Islamic missionary movement with origins in mid-nineteenth century India. Throughout the text, Janson draws upon five biographical narratives to explore why Gambian Muslims, in particular women and youth, are drawn to the highly conservative movement—and how a movement attempting to revive traditions from the seventh century describes itself as distinctly modern.

The Tablighi Jama'at consists of individuals who regularly embark in groups (*jama'at*) to engage in teaching or missionary work (*tabligh*) among other Muslims to call them to practice a truer Islam. Their key reform is to purge local Gambian customs from Islamic practice—including lavish celebrations for infant namings or weddings, local clothing styles, and the traditional religious authority of (especially Sufi) male elders. In contrast to other Gambian Muslims, Tablighis adopt new conservative clothing (including black *burqas* for women), pay nominal bride prices, discourage women from working outside of the home, and encourage all (especially youth) to preach regardless of formal Islamic learning. While Tablighis promote what they see as authentic Islamic practice from the seventh century, they also promote practices associated with Western modernity: the nuclear family and monogamy, reliance on technology, individualism, a preference for urban living, a focus on instant enlightenment

(rather than after years of Islamic learning), and the use of English. English, rather than Arabic, is their primary language because it was the language of the original Tablighi missionaries from South Asia—but further, South Asia is seen as the site of the “real” Islam rather than the “diluted” form in Saudi Arabia because “South Asian Muslims contributed much more than the Arabs to the development of Islam” (p. 245).

Janson offers a key contribution to other scholarship on recent Islamic reformist or piety groups, particularly Saba Mahmood’s (2005) and Charles Hirschkind’s (2006), when she criticizes what she calls the portrayal of a “facile trajectory from a-religiosity to piety” (p. 258). Rather than posing a unilinear and teleological path toward ethical perfection, Janson shows in her biographical chapters that religious conversion can also be ambivalent and shifting. While some remain dedicated to Tabligh work, others experience burnout or boredom and revert back to their former lifestyles. Still others, dissatisfied with the lack of scholastic credentials and disregard for traditional Arabic Islamic learning, turn instead to Gambian Salafi groups. Further, even among those who remain dedicated, their spiritual paths are rendered circuitous by setbacks, internal struggles, and temptations.

With her focus on the at times circuitous and ambivalent lived experience of religious practice, Janson also critiques a prevalent anthropological approach that treats Islam as a “discursive tradition”—a tradition of discourses that seek to instruct present believers on correct practice by referencing conceptions of the Islamic past and future.¹ Janson believes this approach “privileges intellectual debate and argumentation over religious practice” (p. 11), which is insufficient for understanding the Tablighis’ anti-intellectualism and their focus on orthopraxy rather than orthodoxy. However, because she interprets “discursive tradition” as a gloss for the sacred texts of Islam, Janson overlooks the ways in which the Tablighi Jama’at is part of a discursive tradition. Not only is their main practice—*tabligh*, teaching or missionizing—an entirely discursive one, but this discourse is instructing present believers on “correct” Islamic practice by referencing a conception of the Islamic past.

While Janson’s focus on religious practice is fruitful, her disregard of this discursive approach precludes lines of questioning that are important for understanding the movement itself. What conception of the Islamic past do Tablighis invoke, and how does it differ from others groups such as neighboring Salafis? How is that conception mediated by the *Faza’il-e-a’mal*, the only text to which Tablighis refer other than the Qur’ān? How do Tablighis justify their blanket disavowal of local custom when local custom (*urf*) is considered a source of law within Islamic law? And why do Tablighis disavow local Gambian customs, yet simultaneously embrace local Pakistani ones?

Further, Janson’s analysis would have been strengthened by increased attention to the political and economic forces at work in the lives of practitioners. Janson makes a strong case for *not* explaining religious movements solely within the framework of political economy, as if religiosity were simply an effect of “hard and deteriorating political-economic conditions” (p. 256). She laudably calls for a focus on the positive, constructive and emotive factors that play a part in belief. Yet her scant reference to neoliberal reforms and increased joblessness is insufficient for understanding the arena in which this movement operates, especially considering that reliance on new technologies and a preference for urban living have become hallmarks of Tablighi practitioners.

Lastly, considering the book's title and Tablighis' self-identification with modernity, the work would have benefited from a more focused interrogation of what precisely Tablighis mean by "the modern." What does it mean that one practitioner described the Qur'ān as a "progressive book" simply because it answers scientific questions (p. 20)? How do Tablighis' consumer desires for Western technology interact with their rejection of the West as a "symbol of immorality" (p. 21)? Janson references Lara Deeb's work (2006) when she discusses the "enchanted modern," constituted by a dual emphasis on material and spiritual progress in direct contrast to Max Weber's theory (1958) of the disenchantment and secularization brought about by modernity. Yet to say that Tablighis' modernity is one in which religion is central is not to conclude analysis, but to open up a space for new questions, specifically: how is Tablighis' conception of religion itself informed by the "modern" conditions and practices to which they ascribe?

Janson's book is a fascinating account of a little studied new Islamic movement and its integration into Gambian society. Its strengths lie in its close attention to the lived spiritual lives of her interlocutors, and the implications of this approach for the analysis of new religious movements. Its value can, perhaps, also be seen in the many questions that it opens up yet leaves unanswered.

Notes:

- 1 Talal Asad. 1986. "The idea of an anthropology of Islam." *Occasional Papers Series*. Washington D.C.: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University.

Caitlyn Bolton, *Graduate Center of the City University of New York*

Paul E. Lovejoy. 2012. *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 381 pp.

Transformations in Slavery (1979) emerged as "a work of synthesis" (p. xiii), whose major thesis is that both external internal forces combined to transform slavery in Africa. Paul Lovejoy's second edition relied on the Du Bois database rather than the Curtin census, remembering that even continental transformation "always occurs in context, which is inevitably local" (p. xviii) and drawing attention to transformations that made slavery, as a "mode of production", central to African societies, polities and economies.

The "Preface" to this third edition acknowledges that Marxist concepts help to "highlight the complexity of the slavery past" (p. xxiii) and recalls that the initial intention "was to focus research on continental Africa to counter the false impression that Africa's involvement in the slave trade was somehow passive, ahistorical, and only of interest in examining victimization and seemingly progressive under-development" (p. xxi).

Paul Lovejoy's account of the long history of African slavery, and his evaluation of the importance of the Atlantic trade to its development falls into three stages: 1350-1600, 1600-1800, and 1800-1900. By 1900, slavery was integral to "the African political economy," expanding by geographical spread and increasing in social and economic importance to transform the political order. In New World slavery race determined status, whereas "In Africa, the enslavers and the

slave owners were often the same" (p. 23). A central concept is this "*slave mode of production* [which] existed which involved an integrated system of enslavement, slave trade, and the domestic use of slaves" (p. 10). Early European slave traders fell into patterns established by their Muslim forerunners. The intervention of a trade in slaves was already undermining the bonds of kinship societies: "The net effect was the loss of these slaves to Africa and the substitution of imported commodities for humans" (p. 44).

Lovejoy covers the period 1600-1800 under three headings: the export trade, the enslavement of Africans and the organisation of slave marketing. The international trade required adjustments in the methods of enslavement and the development of commercial infrastructure and led to the increased domestic use of slaves. The political element varied from state to state.

Chapter 4 examines how "the articulation of the supply mechanism required the institutionalization of enslavement, which was disruptive..." (p. 66), and Chapter 5 looks at "the consolidation of a commercial infrastructure, which was integrative" (p. 66). Warlords perpetuated rivalries that retarded Africa's development. While enslavement continued to be a function of the state neither merchants nor warriors created a centralized state.

Between 1600 and 1800 four patterns of development drove the slave-supply mechanism: war primarily, and large-scale slave raiding; inter-state wars; the spread of lawlessness; and enslavement as a punishment. By 1800, African slavery was pervasive in and morally destructive to many traditional institutions. Although states attempted to dominate the trade, private merchants broke through government monopolies and established their own marketing arrangements. In effect "the African elite was committed to slavery; this elite owned the most slaves" (p. 107).

In the nineteenth century slavery had become integral to African economies, even after 1850. As the trans-Atlantic trade declined, slaves were not sent abroad but used domestically. "The dynamics of slavery in the nineteenth century involved the interaction between the forces of abolition and the pervasiveness of slavery in Africa" (p. 136). Even frontiers were adjusted to accommodate slavery.

Europe's reluctant commitment to abolition confronted an African political economy rooted in slavery, which took over "legitimate trade," the last stage of a consolidation of a slave mode of production. The vast availability of slaves made their employment in the domestic economy a necessity: the dynamic feature of slavery during the nineteenth century was the more intensive use of slaves in production. "By the end of the nineteenth century, slavery was the basis of political economy in Africa, whereas it no this view). In European settler societies post-abolition servitude survived (in *engagés*, *libertos*, apprentices) into the 1890s, but limited market development prevented the transformation of slavery itself into a productive system. Slaves no longer intended for export, filled the subsistence needs of the domestic sector.

The energy of abolition, eventually achieved because the modern industrial system and a slave-based social formation were incompatible, was distinct from the impulse to freedom. Colonialism sometimes compromised with indigenous slavery. One argument was that conversion to Christianity should precede the abolition of slavery, since unbelief was a form of enslavement. Abolition initially at least meant "a transition from slavery to other forms of servility and oppression: in general, freedom was not an option" (p. 254).

Essential to the slave mode of production was the need for continued enslavement and slave trading to sustain the social order and the economic base of the state. In the nineteenth century slavery was harnessed to capitalism and Africa internalised slavery, evolved from indigenous institutions, as a mode of production. Except for the relatively small plantation sector controlled by European immigrants slave owners were also Africans.

As with all good history *Transformations in Slavery* makes us see the present in the new light it casts on the past. This clear narrative is charged with philosophical sophistication and enlivened by well-placed anecdote.

Tony Voss, *Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University*

Carol P. Marsh-Lockett and Elizabeth J. West, eds. 2013. *Literary Expressions of African Spirituality*. New York: Lexington Books. 239 pp.

The academy values literature for its intersectional potential, and this volume features literature's intersection with African spirituality in a long view of African identity that is based on heritage as well as modern displacement or migration. The volume equalizes African-American and Caribbean practices of spirituality with continental African models based on shared histories of resistance against the West's imposed religions, whether through enslavement or colonialism. The volume explores "African spirituality for its Africa-Americas trans-Atlantic literary manifestations" in the context of a Mende proverb that guides the community to understand that "to cry over your dead, you must go back to your mother tongue" (p. 3). Twelve essays in three groupings—"Imagining African Faith Systems in the Postmodern World," "Integrations of the African and the Western in New World Black Atlantic Writing," and "African Deities and Divinations as Forces in New World Black Works"—collectively address the collection's topic in a format suitable for comparative African world literature graduate and advanced undergraduate studies in religion and culture.

The text's distinction is its use of literature to feature layers of African spiritual behavior whether historical, philosophical, or speculated. Views range from assessments of W. E. B. Du Bois' "post-sociological" (p. 64) period and attempts to reconcile the field of sociology with African American spiritual strivings (Manigault-Bryant in Chapter 4), to Ishamel Reed's emphasis in *Japanese By Spring* that the inherent adaptability of Yoruba makes it the ideal Diaspora religious belief system (Dickson-Carr in Chapter 10), to reading unintentional markers of spirituality in contemporary African American film (Bess-Montgomery in Chapter 11), to considering cinematic and literary representations of androgynous Haitian Voodoo deities to suggest a spiritual space for same sex desire (Chapter 6 by Strongman). The first contributors' essay on African writing and religion, both indigenous and colonial (Chapter 2 by Hawley), gives a thorough historical-literary overview that does not fail, like so many summaries do, to significantly reference Islam. Melvin B. Rahming's essay on cosmological aspects of Garfield Linton's *Vodoomation: A Book of Foretelling* is properly placed at the beginning of the collection (Chapter 2) because it is one of the more traditionally-structured literary criticism essays that introduces "critical theory of spirit" and "spirit-centered methodology" as terms the reader will likely use as effective tools to apply to the volume's eleven other essays.

The study envelopes readers into comparative literary analysis with its collective documentation of literatures written in or translated from English and French, representing three major regions through setting or author nationality: The United States (Ishmael Reed, Toni Morrison), Guadeloupe (Maryse Condé), Nigeria (Amos Tutuola, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka), Haiti (Jacques Roumain, Rene Depestre, Edwidge Danticat), South Africa (Zakes Mda), and Barbados (Condé and Morrison characters). The authors manage an impressive collective of spiritual-literary history with literature reviews and bibliographies that cover a thorough cross-section from related disciplines. The novel is the most consistent genre contributors analyze in the essays, followed by film, and the short story. The selections are regionally balanced, and editors admit its deliberate confinement to African, Caribbean, and African American worldviews with a hint of a future volume that would address the spiritual phenomenon in Afro-European, South American, and Canadian writing.

The volume is landmark because it summons our thinking toward myriad possibilities for framing the global African cultural pursuit of things spiritual through a multidimensional layering of comparative epistemology, philosophy, and religious practice that expand literary and artistic genres' interdisciplinary effect. The collection features applications of not only spirituality but also cosmology, healing, transformation, restoration, and a much-needed interventional that reiterates the value of ritual and ceremony in the collective syncretism of African-based resilience and adaptation that responded to the effects of psychological and physical trauma and grief that beset African communities through enslavement, colonialism, and beyond. Represented well by Kameelah L. Martin's essay on affirming the conjure woman as a prototype with early twentieth-century stability and post-1981 innovation, the volume's contribution to literary historiography is valuable. The collection will stimulate debate and discussion on antithetical topics of atheism and pessimism that are also woven into contemporary African world points of view. Well-read readers will notice that the volume does not feature studies on poetry and drama as traditional genres of orality and performance that are also rich in aspects of spirituality, communal ritual, cleansing, memory, music-dance-song in ecstatic practice, and communion with the ancestral cycle, but including these genres would have likely complicated a collection that has expertly managed a broad and multi-layered topic.

Christel N. Temple, *University of Pittsburgh*

Robert I. Rotberg. 2013. *Africa Emerges: Consummate Challenges, Abundant Opportunities*. Cambridge: Polity Press. 269 pp.

Today, the African continent is again full of hope. After the euphoric decade of the sixties, which brought freedom to many of the formerly colonized territories, then the miserable 1980s and '90s that followed, with all their hardships and struggles African people had to overcome, the continent is "ready at last to play an increasingly important role in the affairs of the world" (p. 1). As a 2010 report by the McKinsey Global Institute referred to Africa's growth acceleration and economic expansion, the "lions are on the move" — a description also echoed in Harvard Professor Robert I. Rotberg in the title of his introductory piece: "A Continent on the Move." Focusing on sub-Saharan Africa, he states that "almost for the first time in more than 60 years,

[Africa] has a golden interlude in which it and its people can take advantage of abundant new opportunities" (p. 2). However, he also warns us about the numerous serious challenges ahead. In *Africa Emerges*, one of the leading U.S. scholars of African statehood and development takes the reader on a journey through different periods, regions, topics, and dilemmas that matter for today's African realities and tomorrow's African futures. He does this by providing fresh data, first-hand stories, and country-specific details shown in their complexity and analyzed in a fine scholarly manner.

Robert Rotberg clearly sets his goal to offer a book, which is "intended to be an intensely analytical, dispassionate, examination of the African condition," and therefore "meant to set out the obstacles ahead clearly so that sub-Saharan Africans can overcome them" (p. 4). This is certainly accomplished with great care, coupled with a clean-cut identification of needs and call for actions, as in the case of effective government. According to Rotberg, "the door to the new prosperous, healthy, strong Africa that everyone wants will be opened by keys of enhanced governance." African leaders themselves "need to forge those keys and to make Africa work in the way it now can and should" (p. 188). Almost each of the eleven chapters concludes with such a punch line, which is no simple repetition of the often-heard rhetoric but rather the evident conclusion of a structured line of argument supported by facts and expertly analyzed processes.

Africa Emerges begins with a chapter, which looks closely at the challenges and opportunities Africa faces, on the major "essentials of modern developed life to be obtained if Africa is to prosper and grow" (p. 15). We can read detailed statistics and tendencies from governance to education, to infrastructure and economic growth, the latter ones very much connected to China's heavy involvement all across the continent. As a new major economic force in Africa, China channels about 75 percent of all its investment "into infrastructure construction activities" (p. 155) and thus undoubtedly has been erasing "the much-lamented infrastructural deficits." Rotberg's arguments keep returning to how China drives growth (also the title of Chapter 9) in Africa, and he is able to provide the reader with a genuine insight into the complexity of interactions among the myriad of articles, scientific papers, and books published on the topic over the last two decades. At a moment when there is a timely need in the scientific community to better understand the local interactions between Chinese and Africans, Rotberg draws our attention to how little Chinese firms "invest socially in their locales," and concludes that China "for the most part is in Africa but is not yet a part of Africa" (p. 163). In the context of present-day academic discourse on Sino-African relations this chapter alone is a "must read."

Throughout this scholarly journey we learn about the demographic dividend (Chapter 2), touching upon growing urbanization and migration within countries, the "massive unsettling effect of the preponderance of young people" (p. 29), as well as the interrelated questions of tropical climatic features and productivity, together with significant geographic realities and desired policy considerations (Chapter 3). As a centerpiece of all priorities for African governments, the education landscape is exposed in Chapter 4. We can surely agree with the author that "the future of Africa depends on advances in educational opportunity, [in particular] on ensuring that more and more of Africa's young – especially girls – are well educated" (p. 55). After sophisticatedly presented analyses of armed conflicts and their lasting

consequences, state failures and Africa's emerging middle class, which "wants to free itself from conflict" so that it can stay on the "path of prosperity" (p. 90) in Chapter 5, Rotberg laces emphasis on the imperatives of accountability, strengthening governance, and creating responsible leadership (Chapters 6, 10, and 11). Providing case studies and sound country-specific examples for all issues is both an asset and strength of the volume.

It was obviously intentional from the author and the publisher that no chart, graph, or table is included in the book, which is a pity, especially when we read about flows of numbers, percentages, and other numerical data. Some graphic illustration may have helped the reader get the messages even more vividly. Apart from this nuance, *Africa Emerges: Consummate Challenges, Abundant Opportunities* is a well structured, highly enjoyable read for fellow researchers, policy-makers, and university students. It is a useful guide for anyone working in the field to be able to comprehend the big picture with all its interweaving political, economic, and social threads while at the same time to compare micro realities. It is a highly valuable "personal attempt to come to terms with Africa's future" (p. 4) by one of the most knowledgeable thinkers of African politics.

István Tarrósy, *University of Pécs, Hungary*

Lahra Smith. 2013. *Making Citizens in Africa: Ethnicity, Gender, and National Identity in Ethiopia*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 252 pp.

In this book, Lahra Smith looks into the political and social consequences of extended citizenship in Ethiopia by developing the concept of meaningful citizenship and using a gendered lens. To this end, she managed to provide a well-articulated and empirically supported study of contemporary Ethiopian politics. The book follows a unique approach and makes two important contributions to the study of citizenship. First, it goes beyond the realm of formal or institutional analysis of politics and focuses on the practical significance of citizenship to individuals and communities in their day-to-day life experiences. Second, it discusses the issues of women's rights, unequal citizenship, and ethnicity by taking women as a distinct category of citizens, which hitherto have been overly neglected in other studies.

The author starts by providing a succinct summary of democratization and citizenship creation in Africa by asserting that citizenship forges an important link between ethnic identity and democracy in multi-ethnic states like Ethiopia. It then proceeds to analyze the historical context of the creation and expansion of modern Ethiopian citizenship, using historiographical perspective in explaining how the northern institutions, mainly land tenure and cultural imperatives expanded into the south, west and east during the first half of nineteenth century. In this regard, the author gave much attention to Emperor Haile Selassie's administration and his project of intensifying national unity, which she argued failed to create nationally integrated citizenship and sowed the seeds of contested citizenship in contemporary Ethiopia. This part of the book heavily relies on sources that tend to describe Ethiopian citizenship related to the Amhara hegemony with conquests and cultural domination without mentioning other historical accounts that show the role of other ethnic groups in the nation building process and the centuries of interaction of people and cultures.

The language policy adopted by the EPRDF-led government presented as a vital instrument of expanding citizenship in the country since 1991. Accordingly, Smith argues that the policy indicates the government's commitment to self-determination for all nationalities and persistently cited the choice of parents towards their children's medium of instruction as evidence of the emancipatory nature of the policy. However, given their significant size, the case of those who prefer the use of Amharic (the Gurage and the Wolaitta) was not given enough attention. Doing so, perhaps one could argue, would have painted a different picture showing the pragmatic nature of language rather the one solely hinges on identity. Interestingly, Smith seems to subtly propound the pragmatism of language in her discussion of the possibility of using English as a national language but failed to extend the same reasoning to Amharic. This coupled with the fact that language and ethnicity has been overly manipulated by the ruling elite to restrict citizenship rights and impinge on individual liberties of freedom of movement and access to resources, can limit the merit of Smith's argument.

In dealing with ethnic identity and claims of citizenship, Smith discusses the Silte referendum showcasing how some groups are contesting the terms of their inclusion into the contemporary Ethiopian citizenship. Interestingly, this is also suggested by the author as indicating the potential for institutional and legal procedures to resolving ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia. However, the Silte referendum should be understood as a rare instance, since mostly defining the identities of many communities have become a practical challenge and often led to the eruption of conflicts in many regional states as evidenced by several studies. In this regard, the section on Oromo nationalism does a better job of illustrating the complexity of identity politics and citizenship in contemporary Ethiopia.

In the closing section, the possible conflicts between gender and ethnic rights are outlined and Smith furnishes some interesting examples as to why this is not always the case. In fact, she asserts that ethnic communities are better suited than formally stated constitutional provisions in protecting the rights of women.

Apart from one factual error, i.e. the military rank of Mengistu repeatedly mentioned as general while being a colonel, the book is well-written and organized with an interesting reference to the case of an Anywaa woman, which reminds readers to focus on the main issue. The author was also explicit about the possible effects of her identity and involvement in the research process as well as annexing the instruments used in obtaining information are all commendable. In sum, this book can be useful and informative to students and researchers who have interest on the issue of citizenship in Africa in general and in Ethiopia in particular.

Zerihun Berhane Weldegebriel, *University of Trento, Italy*

Randy J. Sparks. 2014. *Where the Negroes Are Masters: An African Port in the Era of the Slave Trade*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 328 pp.

The ability of coastal African Atlantic communities to control the terms of the slave trade is a very well-documented theme within the historiography of the Atlantic slave trade. Randy Sparks' new monograph on the coastal port of Annamaboe on the Ghanaian coast thus follows in a long line of research in African and Atlantic history. Even with regards to the Fante

confederacy that served as middlemen in the slave and gold trades between Europeans and interior states on the Gold Coast, there already is substantial scholarship that has developed over the course of over half a century. One then might reasonably ask why a major academic press would then put out a monograph that focuses solely on one single Fante town in the eighteenth century. The response is quite simple: this is an elegant and well-organized study that draws on multiple European and African sources in its effort to reconstruct the daily operations of slave trading and some of its prominent European and African participants.

Several of the chapters are particularly exemplary in highlighting the multiple methods by which coastal Fante leaders successfully negotiated with Europeans to maintain their own independence and commercial interests. John Corrantee, the head trader and political leader of Annamaboe from the 1740s to the 1760s, is the subject of chapter 2. Even by the standards of other crafty coastal African leaders of the period, Corrantee was a remarkable figure. He managed to play off rival English and French commercial interests against each other through a variety of strategic maneuvers. For example, Corrantee sent one son to the court of Louis XV and the other to London. When the son bound for England was enslaved and shipped off to Barbados, Corrantee managed to have him released and even feted as a prize in the English capital. Sparks uses Dutch, English, and French sources to analyze Corrantee's careful diplomatic negotiations. It becomes quite clear that Corrantee's access to slaves coming from the expanding Asante kingdom gave him leverage over his European partners, but so did his recognition of how dependent the English fort was on his support in food and supplies.

The following chapter considers Richard Brew, an Irish slave trader who became the most influential European trader in Annamaboe from the 1750s until his death in 1776. Brew acted as a semi-independent entrepreneur, as he sometimes relied on the support of English trading companies and at other times openly rejected their demands. Brew managed to master the complicated political tactics of the Fante coast, and successfully used prisoners from Asante as bargaining chips for trade agreements. Although Brew did lose out in some of his scrapes with Annamaboe merchants at times, he had much greater problems with his creditors and business partners in England. One of the valuable aspects of Sparks' analysis of Brew is to show the importance of gossip and proper performances of masculinity in the commercial underpinnings of the slave trade.

Sparks moves away from this biographical approach in later chapters to explore the daily dealings of slave sales, the broader connections between Annamaboe and the Americas, and the cultural and social cross-pollination for European and African influences. One area that would have benefited Sparks' explorations in this area would be to more seriously consider the role of spirituality, as other historians such as James Sweet and John Thornton among others have done much more effectively. Sparks does well in delineating the varied roles of different players in day to day sales, such as gold-takers that could set the price of exchange for slaves. This study describes vividly the ties between Rhode Island rum traders with the Annamaboe market, which offers a human face to the triangular trade model. One of the biggest values of this study would be for teachers seeking to offer specific details to catch their students' attention while teaching different aspects of the slave trade. Sparks writes in a very accessible way without losing sight of the broader historiography on Atlantic slavery, and this study hopefully will reach an audience outside of academia. Its length makes it suitable for advanced

undergraduate courses. One minor flaw with the study is the references to oral traditions, since the author does little to explicitly state how this research was done. While specialists should expect no major new revelations here, this book is an excellent example of the growing genre of African Atlantic monographs centered on specific coastal communities.

Jeremy Rich, *Marywood University*

E. Ike Udogu. 2014. *Examining Human Rights Issues and the Democracy Project in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Theoretical Critique and Prospects for Progress in the Millennium*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. 219 pp.

The book is well-crafted, easy to read, and a testament to the author's mastery of academic writing. The author shows off his authorial gamut early in the book where he begins with a discussion of the treaty of Westphalia. After leaving his reader to wonder why a book on African politics should start with European history, the author tactfully proves his digression to be a worthy one with an analogy between the pre-Westphalian Holy Roman Empire and European colonial power where decolonization is depicted as Africa's fresh start, an unmooring from its centralized colonial past. Udogu, overall, does a remarkable job in briefly summarizing the political history of Africa and not just of the states picked for close scrutiny. The book is commendable as an introductory reading to students of African politics.

In depicting the general political trajectory of Africa from colonialism to independence and beyond, the first chapter tries to capture the essence of why the African state had an uphill battle in democratization. Especially interesting is the comparison of liberation leaders, many of who would morph into tyrants, with colonial masters at the personal level. Not only did these leaders, according to Udogu, inherit an institutional structure that was designed for exploitation, but they also had a state of mind and especially an education that led them to behave as if their fellow citizens needed to be told what is to be done by an enlightened and Europeanized self (pp. 5-6). Chapters two to seven discuss the political history of six African nations: South Africa, Kenya, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Liberia, and Nigeria. Special emphasis is given to the 2010 U.S. Department of State human rights report on these countries, although it is unclear why reports of other years or other reports of human rights and democracy are left out. One cannot but pause to applaud the author for doing an impressive job at capturing the political histories of these nations so concisely. The final chapter ends with a free-style discourse covering different themes relating to human rights and democracy in Africa with a brief discussion of development.

The title of the book raises a reasonable expectation that it will provide a theoretical critique of a prevailing paradigm and might even suggest fresh approaches through which we can view African democracy, human rights, and development. The title also suggests that, after analyzing past and present trends, the book will delve into the "prospects for progress" and, possibly, into what needs to be done to ensure such progress. Although the book delivers on most of its stated undertakings it falls short of delivering on expectations created by its title.

In the first chapter one begins to see that the author misses opportunities to engage with theoretical issues or provide theoretical critiques despite dealing with matters of theoretical

significance. Such opportunity is not taken up anywhere else, and there is, one might dare say, a lack of theoretical acuity that continues throughout the book. For example, despite recognizing that the Westphalian nation-state model was an imposition upon Africa and alien to its socioeconomic structures (p. 3) nowhere does one find a discussion about whether there can be other models that might do well in placating the inter and intra state tension and conflict that have resulted from the imposition. The same holds true for the lack of discussion on whether there is or ought to be an “African” take on Western sociocultural and political constructs such as human rights, democracy, or development. In short, nothing in the two presumably “theoretical” chapters or the empirical discussion in between them contributes towards the theory or theoretical critique of democracy, human rights, and development as manifested in Africa.

In a connected note, the book also misses the opportunity to provide theoretical critiques of positions regarding the connection between democracy, human rights and development. Because the book takes an uncritically laudatory treatment of this connection, it misses out on theoretical debates that are of the essence. One does not catch sight of the debates, theoretical or otherwise, emanating out of the interactions between neoliberal globalization, international labor, state sponsored Pan-Africanism, global civil society, their respective contributions to African politics, and the attendant theoretical discourse. It is because of this lack of theoretical depth that the author is, for instance, able to throw in development, human rights, and democracy in one book, devote a chapter to Ethiopia, and not wrestle with Ethiopia’s “theory” of “Revolutionary Democracy” or voices calling for the reinvention of Africa’s developmental state. Finally, the lack of theoretical rigor is seen in how the empirical section of the book painstakingly discusses the violations of rights connected to FGM, LGBT rights, underage employment, domestic violence, spousal abuse, harmful traditional practices, etc. Since these are not rights typically associated with democratization, a point assumed in the UN documents quoted in the eighth chapter (pp.175-85), one wonders why these rights find extensive treatment in this book. If there are reasons that the author assumes these rights are connected with democratization they are not disclosed in the book.

While the book is interesting on all other accounts, a reader who is looking for theoretical discourse or an exposition of future prospects will thus be frustrated. The problem, one should note, lies in the mislabeling of the book and not in its content. Worries about the title dissipate once one begins looking at the book as a discourse on political history rather than a theoretical exposé. In addition to being a good read in political history, the book successfully introduces the reader to common themes and problems confronting the modern African state.

Abadir Ibrahim, *St. Thomas University*

James Walvin. 2013. *Crossings: Africa, the Americas and the Atlantic Slave Trade*. London: Reaktion Books. 256 pp.

Foregrounding the notion that “the story of slavery in the Americas is [predominantly] the story of Africans and their descendants coping with and resisting the enslavement that trapped them,” in *Crossings: Africa, the Americas and the Atlantic Slave Trade*, James Walvin examines

across ten chapters the unsettling experiences of the African slave (p. 10). Here he focuses particularly on those encounters along the Middle Passage, from the spread of disease in overcrowded cargo holds, to the use of thumbscrews and iron masks, to the atmosphere of overwhelming dejection and distress among desperate slaves who starved themselves or leapt to their deaths in fear of their unknown fates. Interwoven into this narrative, however, is also an examination of the integral role that Britain played in the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. Once the fiercest transporter of slaves in the eighteenth century, by the nineteenth Britain had become “the pre-eminent force for abolition,” using its political strength to bring an end to this crippling and controversial trade (p. 10).

In the introduction, Walvin purposefully emphasizes the transatlantic slave trade in comparison to other forms of slavery such as the enslavement of Native Americans by the Spanish in the sixteenth century. For Walvin, what makes the transatlantic slave trade so unique (and particularly worthy of study) is the introduction of color as its most distinguishing feature: “To be black was to be a slave” — a factor that inevitably set in place the black/white racial hierarchy that would persist in the United States for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (p. 12). Thus, Walvin also highlights the implications of slavery in this text: how the millions of transplanted Africans were transformed by life in the Americas but also how the Americas were transformed themselves. For instance, in chapter ten of *Crossings*, Walvin posits that a direct consequence of slavery and its abolition was rampant poverty among black society at large. This essentially created not only a racial divide in the United States but also a pervasive economic gap that the Reconstruction era alone could not correct.

Of *Crossings*’ ten short chapters, perhaps the most insightful are the final two chapters of the book, respectively titled, “The Durable Institution: Slavery after Abolition” and “Then and Now: Slavery and the Modern World.” Here Walvin tackles one of his most significant questions insufficiently answered in previous histories of slavery: How could such a practice endure across four long centuries despite the mounting aversion among leaders of the Western world? In these chapters, Walvin thus focuses on the expansion of slavery throughout the Americas (directly tied to the sugar and cotton industries) even after the abolition of the slave trade in 1808. Therefore, what Walvin emphasizes in this text is that the end of the transatlantic slave trade is just a part of a larger history of slavery. After all, internal slave trades developed within the American South and Brazil, which he catalogues adeptly, “accompanied by all the personal distress of family break-up and upheaval” (p. 210).

In the end, *Crossings* has placed itself among the world’s most significant contributions to date to recording the history and horrors of the Atlantic slave trade. Offering its readers a deeper and considerably more comprehensive glimpse into the trade and its far-reaching impact on the African captives forced to inhabit its overcrowded and disease-ridden ships, the book reveals both “the stinking claustrophobia of the slaves’ conditions” (p. 61) and the crashing of ravaged African bodies “against each other in fettered filth along the bare boards of the deck” (p. 91) in an account as visual and unrestrained as the equally influential 1997 historical drama *Amistad*. While his argument is lost at times among the numerous historical threads that Walvin chooses to examine, *Crossings* is still a valuable contribution to twenty-first century scholarship on such an expansive topic as the transatlantic slave trade, backed by Walvin’s forty years of scholarship in the field. This work not only examines the multiplicity of

social and economic factors that invariably shaped the trade itself, but it also works to decentralize the data he finds necessary but “oddly sterile” and recover the era’s victims from “under a pile of statistics” (p. 93). In doing so, what Walvin offers is a more balanced historical narrative that he claims is the historian’s most difficult task to create while at the same time shedding new light on a subject revisited time and again, in this case in a manner both interesting and revealing for students and scholars alike.

Christopher Allen Varlack, *Morgan State University*

Kaye Whiteman. 2014. *Lagos: A Cultural History*. Northampton, MA: Interlink Books. 271 pp.

Fifteen years ago, John Reader wrote his seminal *Africa: The Biography of a Continent* (1999) to widespread acclaim from Africanists and curious non-specialists alike. His journalistic ability for synthesis and clarity made the long-denied history of the “Dark Continent” equally accessible and compelling, and challenged long held notions of an Africa void of worthwhile histories. This year Kaye Whiteman has succeeded in accomplishing a similar feat with the publication of *Lagos: A Cultural History*. Whiteman has brought forth to a wider audience the history of a specific city within the region that Reader introduced to many, and in Reader-worthy fashion has undercut one-sided narratives of Lagos as a place of suffering and bewildering chaos. In his “quest for the soul of the city” (p. xix), Whiteman has shown Lagos’s “profound sense of autonomy” (p. 243) along with its “emotional warmth” (p. xix), and, above all else, that “it is a city of people” (p. xix). Both scholars in need of general information and the general public will likely find what they are looking for behind the tastefully designed black cover bearing a tripartite image of Lagos’s famous “go-slow” markets.

Whiteman first visited Lagos forty years ago and has been a frequent sojourner since, including a spell in 2000-2001 when he first entertained the idea of writing a book. A journalist by trade, he edited the London based *West Africa* magazine for a number of years and has been a frequent contributor to the robust Nigerian press as well. His deep web of friendships within the country is apparent, as he seems to have discussed every episode in the book personally with an authority on the matter. Similarly, the breadth of secondary sources he utilizes is nearly encyclopedic, ranging from obscure historical monographs on Victorian era Nigerian newspapers to what seems to be almost every noteworthy novel set in the city. Although he provides a several page bibliography of sources and further reading at the end of the book, one only wishes he had gone to lengths to be as meticulous as Reader—who published forty pages of references and extensive footnotes in *Africa*—in documenting his sources throughout the book.

The book is broken up between eleven chapters, beginning with a broad overview of “The Story of Lagos” that highlights the major events that will be referenced throughout the rest of the book. The next two chapters cover the ecology of the city, starting with its topography and continuing to its changing architectural and infrastructural aesthetics. These spatial histories provide a useful survey of the physical expansion of the city from a Yoruba trading outpost in the early nineteenth century to the sprawling megacity it is today, and Whiteman is wise to

have included them, even in a book with culture in its subtitle. From this material backdrop, Whiteman takes the reader on a journey through a “city of the imagination,” vividly and informatively illustrating the literary, musical, cinematic, and visual artistic conceptions of the city with stops in the seedy joints on Bar Beach, the legendary floating city Makoko, the Fela-blasting Highlife clubs, the booming film studios of Nollywood, and the fictional scenes from the likes of Wole Soyinka, Helon Habila, and Chris Abani. Through his obvious love for Lagos and its people, Whiteman exposes a city of brilliant culture beneath its international reputation as “a hell-hole of crazy slums, endless traffic jams, con-men and chaos” (p. xvii).

Two additional chapters of particular note are chapter six, “Stories to Remember,” and chapter eight, “Prominent Personalities of Lagos.” These detailed accounts of specific events and people that have become part of Lagos’s lore (such as the assassination of General Murtala Muhammad and the remarkable history of Madam Efunroye Tinubu) read more like short stories than dry historical notes, yet are part of what makes the book an excellent quick reference source. The vignettes are enhanced by the fact that Whiteman personally knew several of the people and was a firsthand witness to many of the events.

In the fitting final chapter, “The Future City?” Whiteman muses about Lagos’s place in the world and the outlook for its development. Here he returns to the architecture and infrastructure that the book began with, rightfully tying the future of what he has compellingly shown to be a city of the imagination to its physical capacity to at least minimally host its creative residents. Whiteman also includes an interesting discussion from urban theory on what distinguishes megacities—extremely populous areas—from “world” or “global” cities—loci of “unique knowledge complexes” (pp. 251-52)—and speaks to the transition that Lagos is undergoing from the former to the latter under the astute leadership of governor Babatunde Fashola. For years Whiteman has written obituaries of notable Africans for *The Guardian*, but it is the world’s good fortune that for his first book he chose to write the opposite. He has announced of the arrival of a new world city.

Mark Duerksen, *Harvard University*

Bahru Zewde. 2014. *The Quest for Socialist Utopia: The Ethiopian Student Movement c. 1960-1974*. Melton, Suffolk, UK: James Currey. 299 pp.

This book digs into the core of the intellectual and political developments in Ethiopia, one of the largest, oldest, and most reputed states in Africa. The author, Bahru Zewde, is a respected Ethiopian professor of history who has lived close to what he narrates for more than forty years. In an impeccable scholarly exposition one senses an emotional drive to analyze the passing of historical events that can explain the constitutional order of Ethiopia that became a reality in 1994. How did Ethiopia, as the only state in Africa to do so, become a federal republic based on ethnically defined states? The answer is buried in the development of the Ethiopian student movement that made a decisive and fateful intervention in the political direction of the country, from the process that overthrew the government of Emperor Haile Selassie to the formation of the two regimes that followed, in 1974 and in 1991. The book sees this within the context of both

an international perspective of student movements as well as encompassing the thinking of earlier pioneers of change in Ethiopia.

Many studies have been dedicated to the Ethiopian student movement. They are all dealt with and the author uses as his sources everything that is related to his object of study: Ethiopian newspapers, university reports, and police and intelligence material as well as the wide range of student publications and pamphlets at home and abroad and, in addition, oral narratives.

The crucial circumstances from which the historical drama emerges were the Emperor's dedication to the development of education and the opening up of college and university education, starting in 1952. The idea of academic freedom and the initial encouragement on the part of the university leadership to let the students develop channels of expression and unionism proved to be exceedingly complex to handle. After all, the regime of Haile Selassie, however much an instrument for change in its early years, was a traditional autocratic political system in which initiatives had to come from the imperial "elect of God" and not from the ranks below. Expressions, either in prose or poetry, which tried to analyze critically the realities of Ethiopian society as well as the staging of demonstrations of protest, contributed to escalating confrontations with the regime. Leaders and writers were imprisoned and expelled, solidarity boycotts often led to the closure of the university, mass arrests of students could happen and indeed, a student leader was murdered, other students were killed and large numbers fled. How students developed from loyal to disloyal opponents of Haile Selassie is shown, as well as the movement's ability to come up with causes encapsulated in effective slogans: "Land to the Tiller," on the consequences of the unfortunate system of landownership, recurred for ten years on top of the reservoir of grievances as to the failures of the regime. The ensuing military dictatorship proclaimed very radical land reforms in 1975, and the forces that overthrew Mengistu Haile Mariam's dictatorship in 1991 dealt with the "Question of Nationalities," a topic that burst like a bombshell into the open in the student paper *Struggle* in November 1969. The challenge to the policy of unity of all the different ethnic groups by stamping it as assimilation into one hegemonic group, the Amhara, was unbearable to Haile Selassie's polity. Bahru Zewde dwells a lot on the development of a relentless, uncompromising and revolutionary Marxist-Leninist ideology within the most active circles of the movement.

The story changes from the home scene in Ethiopia to the various stages in North America and Europe where Ethiopian students had found their way to a large number of countries. They formed unions wherever they were and published a large number of journals. They travelled to meet in annual congresses, they made resolutions and constitutions, debated and voted. They practiced the habits of democracy. Several congresses were held in West Berlin. In 1974, two hundred delegates came from fourteen countries to the fourteenth congress. Bahru Zewde's book rightly places the driving force of the movement in the happenings in Ethiopia. What happened at home as well as student activists fleeing the repression fed the movement abroad. Ethiopian students abroad produce numerous, lengthy, highly theoretical articles. Obsessively occupied with the developments and prospects in Ethiopia, the great weakness of student writings, particularly abroad, was that they lacked empirical data on the realities in Ethiopia. Abstract Marxist theory aided the students in their interpretation of Ethiopian reality, yet their theoretical sophistication often had little to do with Ethiopia. The students abroad also aided

the credos that developed at home as to what should be Ethiopia's road to the future. The formation of the two Ethiopian political parties, Ma'ison and EPRP, both of them based on Marxist ideology, took place in student circles abroad in the years 1968-72.

Bahru Zewde finds that the debate on the question of nationalities took a surprising turn in 1969. The seventeenth congress of ESUNA, the student union in North America, had debated the issue of ethnicity in Ethiopia a few months before the article in *Struggle*, prescribing regional autonomy as a solution to what was perceived to be the problem of "regionalism". Earlier resolutions of the national union at home had been preoccupied with the problem of "sectarianism" and "tribalism" and worried about the unity of Ethiopia. Then a small group of students came up with a radically different approach. The blame is put on an extensive "tract" by an unknown author in 1970, "The National Question (Regionalism) in Ethiopia." Here, the principle of "self-determination up to and including secession" was advanced for the first time, a principle that found its way into the Constitution of 1994.

To safeguard Ethiopian unity and discourage secession, the right to secession had to be given. This has been a tremendously controversial issue, and one senses Zewde's concern about the wisdom of this as well as his regrets over the prevalence of leftist ideology in the student movement. The radical core injected the movement with dogmatism. They forwarded the "right" answers to complex questions. The movement, fighting for democracy, became divisive, repressive, and intolerant. Its writings, bearing a stamp of urgency, were highly polemic, full of labelling, accusations, and counteraccusations. Even so, the present reviewer finds Zewde's following statement hard to swallow: "The 'verbal violence' that it initiated was to translate itself into the physical violence that killed a generation" (p. 206). He has in mind the "red terror," the military dictatorship's dreadful killings in 1977-78 of several thousand young people. Until the party EPRP started to kill members of the Ma'ison for their willingness to aid the military government, the Ethiopian student movement was a peaceful movement. The military had proven themselves to be relentless killers almost as soon as they took over the reins of power in 1974, and a sharp focus of blame must be put on Haile Selassie's government for not supporting the freedom of expression that the students demanded and which might have forwarded a tradition of pluralism and pragmatism in approaching the development of Ethiopia. These remarks are in no way meant to diminish my opening sentences about Bahru Zewde's book: It is indeed an impressive and comprehensive piece of scholarly work.

Randi Rønning Balsvik, *University of Tromsø, Norway*