

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Naomi André, Yolanda Covington-Ward, and Jendele Hungbo (eds.). 2021. *African Performance Arts and Political Acts*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. 279 pp.**

Among the numerous studies of African performance arts published over the last two decades, a common theme has been the role of performance in nation-building projects during the post-independence era. *African Performance Arts and Political Acts* proposes a move away from this hyper-fixation on the state and toward an expanded understanding of “the operationalization of performance and politics in Africa” to include not only these high-level state operations but also “the banal and the everyday” ways in which social identity is performed (p. 3).

The editors’ introduction engages with the concepts of ‘performative’ and ‘performativity’ (specifically drawing from J. L. Austin and Judith Butler), which they suggest can help us bridge the gap between theatrical and more common settings in showing “how performance can shape everyday interactions and power relations” (p. 4). This broad framing of performance as both a set-apart art form and an everyday tool allows the volume’s contributors to investigate the ways in which social relationships, national cultures, and political resistance are continuously crafted in postcolonial Africa. Their contribution fills an important gap; although there are numerous volumes on performance and society, most have tended to neglect continental Africa, and where Africanist scholarship on performance does appear, it largely focuses on southern Africa. The volume’s geographic scope thus intentionally includes work about Senegal, Nigeria, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, and South Africa, giving readers a fuller picture of performance on the continent and an opportunity for comparison between 20<sup>th</sup>-century political contexts of African performance.

*African Performance Arts and Political Acts* is divided into four parts, with chapters grouped together according to common methods, lenses, and performance types. The three chapters found in Part One, “The Play of Social and Political Roles in Everyday Life,” attend to language’s role in performing urban/rural and class identity in Senegal (by Judith T. Irvine); experimenting with social hierarchies and ethnic relations in West African *sanakuyaagal* joking relationships (by Nikolas Sweet); and crafting the cultural ideal of gratitude on Nigerian radio programs (by Jendele Hungbo).

Part Two, “Expressions of Identity, Consciousness, and Migration,” investigates the political worlds that performances react to and create, shifting focus to the more “set apart” performing arts found on dance floors and in proscenium theaters. The first two chapters by Thomas M. Pooley and Innocentia Jabulisile Mhlambi examine *isiShameni* dances in a present-day South African migrant hostel and African oral traditions found in 1930s American and South African operatic texts. Of particular interest in this section are the final two chapters examining the one-woman show *Angalia Ni Mimi! Therapy of a Thwarted Artist* by Cameroon-born and Belgium-based playwright Marthe Djilo Kamga. Frieda Ekotto’s contribution introduces a theoretical framework through which to view Djilo Kamga’s work, and readers are then able to read the text of *Angalia Ni Mimi!* in the following chapter. Neither Ekotto’s chapter nor the introduction addresses the translation of Djilo Kamga’s text from its original French to

English, or from the physical presence of the stage to the page. This is a curious absence given that other chapters in the volume center both the body (such as David Kerr's on masculinity in the Dar es Salaam rap scene) and linguistic choice (as in Judith T. Irvine's chapter on the use of French and Wolof in Senegal) as central parts of identity performance. Nonetheless, the inclusion of Djilo Kamga's text highlights the volume editors' attention to interdisciplinary methods and focus on arts practitioners as vital contributors to research on performance.

Part Three, "Gendered Messages of Social Change," first presents a chapter by Anita Gonzalez addressing the capacity of theater to move beyond testimony and mobilize communities against gendered and sexualized violence in South Africa. The next essay by David Kerr offers an interesting examination of underground rap in Dar es Salaam, which centers rappers' bodies as tools of performing masculine identity between independence-era *Ujamaa* and contemporary displays of capitalist wealth.

The final section, "Songs of Protest and Activist Opera," offers readers a sample of how songs enact community feeling and political change within separate historical and geographic contexts. Yolanda Covington-Ward's examination of hymns in Kimbangu's movement extends her previous work on bodily encounters in *kingunza* to show how Kimbanguists sonically disrupted Belgian colonial power with their "seditious songs." Naomi André's chapter examines an adaptation of *La Bohème* into a South African setting that breathes new urgency and relevance into Puccini's tale as it relates to contemporary economic and health crises in the country. Finally, Nompumelelo Zondi's chapter on songs sung during #FeesMustFall protests demonstrates the ways in which students draw from historical memory of apartheid to make songs relevant for their contemporary struggles.

As evidenced by the interdisciplinarity of the chapters outlined above, this volume offers an important methodological toolkit for readers engaged in research on performance in Africa or elsewhere. Contributors, who range both in their places of origin and academic disciplines, employ classic ethnographic methods, movement and linguistic analysis, archival research, and questionnaires. The diversity of methods brought to this volume only further underscores the editors' suggestion that performance can be found on varying scales "beyond the theatrical and spectacular" (p. 1).

Many chapters in this volume, however, still focus on the "spectacular" settings of performing arts, such as dance floors and theaters. But the broad conception of performance advanced by this collection emphasizes the multiple layers of social and political performance that practitioners engage in before they ever set foot on stage. More than holding a microphone and repeating a party line, the political power of performance is found in minute, everyday interactions. *African Performance Arts and Political Acts* provides a methodological template for recognizing and investigating this fact.

Emily Hardick, *The Ohio State University*

**Leslie Anne Hadfield. 2021. *A Bold Profession: African Nurses in Rural Apartheid South Africa*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press. 558 pp.**

Leslie A. Hadfield's *A Bold Profession* examines the place of nursing in the history of apartheid South Africa between the 1970s and 1990s. Diverging from the historiography of South Africa,

which focuses on the oppressions of apartheid in the country's history, Hadfield explores the complexities of the apartheid government by unraveling the intersectionality of the nursing profession, gender, and politics in rural areas. Hadfield uses the Ciskei "homeland" territory as a fulcrum to discuss the interplay between "three major aspects of South African History" vis-a-vis "the impact of politics on health care, exchanges between medical practices and beliefs, and the intersections of the careers and family lives of professional African women" (p. 3). She argues that even though the dominant historiography condemns the apartheid regime in the light of oppression and inequalities, the racial policies of creating "homelands" for blacks inadvertently proved beneficial to the healthcare system. With this, Hadfield presents a nuanced narrative of a time that is often portrayed as the most oppressive moment in South African history, both politically and economically. Although the racial gatekeepers in South Africa built walls on racial relationships, they depended on black labor to drive the economy. Hadfield insists that this need to maintain a healthy population made the government invest in healthcare and the education of black nurses.

Without losing sight of the turbulence, instabilities, and violence that characterized the apartheid government in South Africa, Hadfield establishes women as the architects of their own stories by recounting how they navigated the troubles that came with the profession at that time. By empowering women, Hadfield ensures that their agency and contributions in the growth and development of the healthcare industry in South Africa are brought into the discussion of politics and gender. For instance, through their voices, in chapters three and four, Hadfield draws incisive conclusions about how these nurses straddle Western biomedicine and Xhosa belief systems. Hadfield argues that the ability of these nurses to deliver biomedicine in Ciskei was not only because they could "translate biomedical terms linguistically and conceptually" but because they "respected the Xhosa belief system" and "encouraged the adaptation and coexistence of Xhosa healing systems and biomedicine, shaping the ways patients drew on various healing systems today" (pp. 141-42).

How these women combined the enormous duties of the nursing profession, their marriages, and family lives formed a riveting account that Hadfield uses in scaffolding the making of the "bold profession." While some of these women had to sacrifice their families for work, Hadfield argues that most of them continued to perform their traditional gendered roles as wives showing the continuity and changes therein. According to her, "many secondary reports, studies, and newspaper articles from the 1960s through the 1980s rarely address Black African nurses' family relations or off-duty activities in depth, seemingly seeing nurses only as a nurse at work" (p. 144). In the *Bold Profession*, Hadfield not only illuminates the careers of these women but also investigates what they sacrificed—usually their family, beliefs, and other relations—in providing the rural Ciskei with biomedical health care from the 1960s through the 1980s. Through sharing the stories of the career and family lives of these nurses, Hadfield successfully delineates the transitions in gender roles as these women took up the duties of breadwinners and domestic chores.

The combination of ethnographic surveys, observations, extensive oral interviews, and archival materials that Hadfield employs in producing this book is commendable. One innovative aspect of her approach was sharing insights with the retired nurses she interviewed before completing the book's draft, which helped her vet the information she had gathered.

However, I expected an extensive discussion on memorization since this book depended heavily on uncovering the nurses' lived experiences. Apartheid South Africa remains a traumatic experience for many who lived through it, but Hadfield insists that these women had nostalgic memories. Moreover, this scholarly collaboration with, and reliance on the nurses in sorting the draft of this book may be credulous. Nonetheless, I recommend this deftly crafted book to students and scholars of history, anthropology, and public health. Policymakers and healthcare administrators will also find this work relevant because of its interdisciplinary nature.

Odinaka Kingsley Eze, *University of Mississippi*

**Sten Hagberg, Ludovic O. Kibora, Bintou Koné, Adjara Konkobo, Eulalie Zongo, Sidi Barry, Yacouba Cissao, and Pascaline Kaboré. 2021. "Femmes de devant!" *Combat du leadership féminin au Burkina Faso*. Uppsala: Uppsala University. 107 pp.**

This collective work focusing on female leadership and the challenges facing women leaders in Burkina Faso has involved eight researchers in anthropology and sociology who are members of the Forum for African Studies at the University of Uppsala (Sweden) and of the Institute of Social Sciences of the National Center for Scientific and Technological Research of Burkina Faso.

The first three chapters aim to describe and analyze the structures and circumstances that condition the participation of girls and women in public space, decision-making, and leadership roles within local arenas in Burkina Faso (p. 13). Begun in 2019, this study, structured around nine chapters covering fourteen communes in Burkina Faso, is well-documented, clear, and concise. Through the lens of comparative ethnography, the third chapter focuses on the perceptions and characteristics of women leaders across the different languages of the Burkinabe ethnic groups. Their portrait is described more as organizationally minded, particularly as significant social and political mobilizers. For the reader, the representations of a woman leader in this research raises the issue of double standards, as the requirements for a woman leader are not necessary for a male leader.

The fourth chapter showed that women's leadership spaces in rural and urban areas are interconnected. The testimonies show that women are involved in agriculture, school, and associations. The fifth chapter showed that women's leadership takes shape through their participation in political activism, associations, village councils, and development councils. In the exercise of leadership, women face cultural barriers, mainly those related to religion and occult practices. The title of Chapter 6, *Comment « entrer, « percer » et « rester »?* (how to enter, break through, and remain) summarizes the concept.

From the seventh chapter to the last, the authors highlighted that women's leadership played an essential role in the fall of the Compaoré regime in 2014. During the 2015 elections and the years that followed, their participation was regressive. The analysis shows readers that meeting women's expectations has undoubtedly failed. Even in the presence of the gender quota law since 2009, male involvement remains high. As a result of the multitude of abuses women leaders face, their participation is on the decline. More specifically, toxic masculinity, including stereotypes and misogyny, discourages girls and women from engaging in politics.

Women fight daily on several fronts: political, institutional, household, associative, financial, social, educational, psychological, cultural, and more. In this respect, the authors recommend coercive measures toward the perpetrators of violence against female leadership, although the representation of women during the legislative elections in 2020 is regressive.

This book offers a better understanding of how women's leadership has transformed since the popular uprising of 2014 until the legislative elections in 2020. The trend shows readers and researchers that women mobilizers can help advance the participation of women and men in political affairs and governance countrywide. In this regard, the book would serve as a practical and worthwhile text for policymakers, diplomats, and researchers, especially those working to promote gender equality in Burkina Faso. At the end of the book, a question remains for the readers to reflect upon: once socio-economic empowerment and education are guaranteed for everyone, how to establish the spirit of responsible accountability towards women and men in a transparent way? And what is the best way to use and implement the helping tools such as observatory gender monitoring to reach an inclusive gender equality through female leadership promotion.

Liberata Gahongayire, *Université Libre de Bruxelles*

**Melina Kalfelis and Kathrin Knodel (eds.). 2021. *NGOs and Lifeworlds in Africa: Transdisciplinary Perspectives*. New York: Berghahn. 2021. xv, 333 pp.**

*NGOs and Lifeworlds in Africa* is a valuable contribution to the wider literature on non-governmental organizations in its methodology, theoretical contributions, and interdisciplinary approach, and how the anthology brings together practitioners with academic researchers. Its interdisciplinary approach lends itself to an audience of development practitioners as well university researchers, in no small part because many of its contributors came from a development background before entering academia. Kalfelis and Knodel have managed to successfully weave together what they outline as their three ambitions for the collected volume: challenging facile distinctions between local and global categorizations of NGO personnel, analyzing relationships between European and African colleagues rather than focusing merely on critiques of European neglect of African perspectives, and focusing on NGOs from “an actor-centered angle” (p. 7). A number of the contributors particularly stand out in how they consider the careers and perspectives of individuals, from placing African NGOs management in a larger trajectory of career advancement to discussing how inexperienced European donor staff became participants in a much longer series of interactions between German agencies and Burkinabe organizations.

Any researchers who have tried to analyze the complex set of relationships between NGOs, state authorities, and outside donors know full well how hard it can be to find an effective framework to analyze these negotiations. This collection makes a persuasive case for using anthropologist Michael Jackson's concept of 'lifeworlds' as a way of understanding the personal position of NGO workers within their larger institutional context, especially with how African NGO personnel must negotiate with European, national, and local actors. One of the more remarkable examples that employs this approach is Molly Sundburg's chapter on career paths for Tanzanian aid workers (pp. 115-35). The main protagonist in this chapter is 'Michael,' a

longtime aid worker for an international NGO who serves as the keeper of institutional memory for the association's work in the country, even as higher-paid foreign personnel come and go. Michael increasingly hoped to use his management expertise and familiarity with foreign development programs to become a consultant for better pay, just as other Tanzanians in a similar position considered working for foreign state development agencies.

Several other essays deserve particular attention. Beata Paragi presents a damning portrayal of how international development agencies seek to downplay the violence of the Israeli state towards Palestinians (pp. 173-99). Donors require depoliticized images and testimonies of Palestinian suffering to generate revenue, which then can be given back in material support. While obviously stuck in a subordinate position, Palestinian informants working at NGOs felt they did learn some organizational skills and had some limited power to exert in their relationships with donors. While this obviously is not a case study set in Africa, this chapter's grim message likely would apply in wartime settings on the continent. Matthieu Brun's study of role of rural leaders in development programs in Morocco effectively uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, the latter being otherwise absent in any of the other contributions (pp. 270-94). Rather than single out leaders within a single NGO or project, this chapter maps out how individual rural notables are influential in numerous different organizations and are known in their communities as knowledgeable about development.

For historians of development, a few selections are intriguing. Abimbola Adesoji's essay on the long history of NGOs in Nigeria is a useful overview dating to the colonial period, although he does not engage with individual leaders or their personal negotiations with donors or Nigerian colleagues (pp. 203-25). Other chapters by Alain Sissao on the history of NGOs in Burkina Faso (pp. 136-52) and Koko Folly Lolowou Hetcheli on civil society in Togo (pp. 251-69) offer similar general approaches that do not highlight individuals. Hans Hahn, by contrast, points to the uneven archival and oral narratives that connected the German state development agency GTZ with a remote region of Burkina Faso (pp. 295-309). Instead of finding continuities from past to present among informants, Burkinabe tended to not discuss past failures of earlier development efforts. Unfortunately, the GTZ disposes of much of its records over time on its projects. Hahn provocatively states that development is always incomplete and in process, with NGO workers having little knowledge of past developments to inform their understanding of current projects.

All in all, *NGOs and Lifeworlds in Africa* is a thought-provoking collection that hopefully will find a wide audience.

Jeremy Rich, *Marywood University*

**Ousmane Oumar Kane (ed.). 2021. *Islamic Scholarship in Africa: New Directions and Global Contexts*. Rochester: James Currey. 489 pp.**

This work brings together twenty pieces and introductory essays emerging from two conferences held in 2017. The work shows Islamic communities in Africa adapting to current technologies, demanding a seat at the table of global scholarship, and repudiating many misunderstandings and derogatory framings of Islam. For openers, in one introductory essay

Britte Frede identifies three influential centers of learning in Africa: Al-Qarawiyyin in Morocco, Al-Azhar in Egypt, and Az-Zaituna in Tunisia.

Several trends extending across Africa emerge in the ensuing papers. One is the enduring importance of Ajami literature (items written in African languages, but using the Arabic alphabet), a category of writing frequently disregarded by North American and European scholars. Another factor is the ubiquitous presence, resilience, and flexibility of Sufi orders, whether in East Africa, West Africa, or the Magreb. A third recurring theme is the adaptability of Islamic educators in several African countries, whether co-existing with state schools, providing teachers to them, or providing an alternative to them.

Tracing roots of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Islamic scholarly renewal in Africa, Zachary Wright criticizes the reductionist portrait of African Islam as *Islam noir*--less orthodox, less bellicose, less scriptural. Subsequent essays show Tijaniyya Sufi and other masters as involved in producing scholarship, not lacking in general erudition, and successful in demonstrating the continuing relevance of Islam and Sufism. Oludamini Ogunnaike's piece on Shaykh Dan Tafa (d. 1864) highlights another example of Sufism in action and wielding broad influence during the Sokoto Caliphate. Of the same generation, Umar Tal (1796-1864), is described by Farah El-Sharif as a figure whose conviction of the centrality of the person and intercession of the prophet would have been condemned by earlier jurists such as Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), yet Tal comes to the same conclusion as the latter regarding there being no need to dogmatically follow one of the four legal schools. Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse of Senegal (d. 1975) puts it neatly: "We are Malikis, but we are not *mamalik* (slaves) of Imam Malik."

Describing a vital contemporary orality and new meanings of the "presence of the master," Diego Gonzalez's piece relates the same Shaykh Niasse accepted the use of microphones, speakers, and recordings, and today his grandson, Shaykh Mahi Cisse keeps in touch with students using texts, WhatsApp, and Facebook. Followers believe the *baraka* (the master's blessing/power) can even be transmitted over the air, via recordings, etc. The presence of the master need not be physical.

Caitlyn Bolton's article shows that far from being an "impediment to progress," hybrid institutions in contemporary Zanzibar embrace the idea of progress and even include "secular" studies. "Traditional" schools need not be inflexible. Similarly, Britta Frede's article on education of females in Mauritania shows evolving traditional schools produced increased numbers of literate women, with some teachers working both in old-fashioned venues as well as state schools. The Senegalese Muridiyya sect discussed in "A New Daara" attempts to balance agricultural and trade education, working in the community, and being good stewards of the land. A lack of stress on the five pillars of Islam and prayers, however, leaves this group open to accusations of heresy. Also in Senegal, much-in-demand schools for children of diaspora Muslims (mostly in North America and Europe) seek to provide an inoculation against the temptations of modern life.

Regarding Ajami literature, Kapteijns and Vianello show that in Brava, Somalia, Sufi masters and followers brought Islamic tenets and practices to the common people with poetry in the Chimiini language in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. *Steenzi* poetry was recited at Sufi street events and other venues. Such poetry also provided a way for masters to praise and communicate with each other. Abdulkadir Hashim describes Swahili (but written in Arabic

script) and Arabic elegiac poetry on the Kenya coast in the twentieth century. Some of the poetry had a political message. Poets praised each other; most of the poems were from Arabic models, and Alawiyya school Sufis played a role. In a still-current debate, in the 1980s Salafi (reformist/revivalist) ulema came and accused the Sufis of innovation (echoing Ibn Taymiyya's 14<sup>th</sup> century charges) and being unable to cope with modern problems. These criticisms, however, still do not represent the views of the majority.

Ebrima Sall's concluding essay calls for replacing "the colonial library" with a new library valuing African voices and texts, placing the "civilizing missions" in their proper context, and emerging from or at least reframing the entire "development discourse." Many of us would have no disagreement with these goals, but the *mushriq*-based Islamic community (Egypt, Arabia, and the Levant) also had a prejudiced view of most of Africa, propagating dominating hegemonies of what Michael Hodgson would call the "Nile-to-Oxus zone." Sall also neglects to mention Egypt's 4000 years of history before Islam arrived. Islam must have its seat at the table, but so must non-Islamic voices. The eight-volume *General History of Africa* published by UNESCO and making extensive uses of oral sources seems to point the way in this regard.

Kenneth Meyer, *Western Washington University*

**John Kinahan. 2020. *Namib: The Archaeology of an African Desert*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: James Currey/Windhoek: University of Namibia Press/Johannesburg: Wits University Press. xxvi, 517 pp.**

In English, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the sense of "archaeology" has changed over the centuries. What seems to have begun in English as a term for "ancient history generally; systematic description or study of antiquities" has sharpened its focus to suggest "the scientific study of the remains and monuments of the prehistoric period." The term "prehistoric" itself seems only to have been coined early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to indicate an earlier time before written records help our comprehension of the past. As the focus of study becomes more recent so the co-operation of the written record and the material can become more revealing, although in more recent historical eras the written record of the mercantile, imperial, and colonial powers could silence the non-literate voice of subject peoples.

Considering how far back John Kinahan's story of *Namib* takes us, it is remarkable how vividly he evokes this human past. The Pleistocene epoch from about one million to about 12,000 years ago takes us from the first hominin presence to the end of the Last Glacial Maximum but has left us only "surface occurrences of stone artefacts" (p. 39). However, evidence of human movement through the Namib as hunter-gatherer bands found refuge on the escarpment in time of drought goes together with the sense of a social life growing in complexity, and a rich rock art.

Between about 6,000 and 2,000 years ago the Namib suffered extreme aridity and was largely unpeopled. However, on Daures, an extensive desert massif, there are more than 1,000 rock art sites which witness to a burgeoning ritual life. The evidence points beyond the rock art itself to the conduct and accoutrements of both ritual rainmaking and age-group initiation of young women and men. It is at least possible that the rock artists were themselves shamans, and their ceremonial took them through "A two-stage process, of ritual preparation involving

concealment or occultation, and ritual performance involving revelation or manifestation..." (p. 170).

Over the next 2,000 years African farming communities crossed the border into the region of the Namib. Here the shamans acted as mediators between the pastoralists, for whom also they served as rainmakers, and the hunter-gatherers, and in this way seem to have acquired large herds of their own. Competition for already scarce resources intensified and the Namib people became not simply gatherers but harvesters and storers of plant foods, including the flesh of wild melons and grass seed found in the nests of the aptly named harvester ants. Pastoralists regulated webs of exchange that covered the whole region and governed admission to pasture and movement of stock in ways that reflected the complex structure of kin and property.

While the Namib pastoralists seemed at first to profit from their contact with European traders on the coast from the late eighteenth century, "trade goods" were of no ultimate value and the encounter undermined the indigenous economy. John Kinahan's field research in the Namib has discovered and recorded the wagon tracks of those early traders, remarkably preserved. The German settlement of South-West Africa in the late nineteenth century led to the collapse of the indigenous economy. Kinahan's particular research into the desert railway, concentration camps, and cemeteries, instruments of genocide, contributes from the testimony of archaeology "a material and landscape dimension to historical appraisals of the 1904 Ovaherero revolt and its aftermath" (p. 410).

Archaeology has much to tell us about even the history of the last century as Kinahan shows in his account of the Namib's record of the 1915 campaign which took control of the colony from Germany: entrenchments, shell craters, cavalry bivouac camps, and heliograph signal posts. And the Namib's last revelation is from a time within living memory: "60 km due east of Swakopmund...stone letters in black dolerite about 1m in height spelling out the words 'Heil Hitler'...with the date of 1938...picked out in white quartz pebbles beneath the lettering" (p. 423).

As its sub-title indicates, John Kinahan's *Namib* is a work of archaeology: it is based on scientific study of sites, terrains, *refugia*, artefacts, remains, and all the varieties of material that have survived human habitation of and in the grand desert which covers much of western and central Namibia. The book finds a clear context for that study in a just sense of local and universal history and is informed by an imaginative and reasoned evocation of pre-history and a close reading of the written record. The author maintains a remarkable balance between close focus and humane vision in his ability to sustain "a story of human survival over the last one million years in one of the most hostile environments on earth" (p. ix) The story is clearly told with sympathy and encouragement for the reader: the figures and tables are excellent and the organization of individual chapters exemplary. *Namib* clearly deserves and will find a readership within and beyond its immediate circle of specialists.

Tony Voss, *Nelson Mandela University*

**Emizet F. Kisangani and Jeffrey Pickering. 2022. *African Interventions. State Militaries, Foreign Powers, and Rebel Forces*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 323 pp.**

Since the end of the Cold War, Africa has experienced a rise in the number of military interventions. On a continent where interstate wars are relatively uncommon, the increasing military involvement of African countries, foreign powers, regional bodies, and intergovernmental institutions has been motivated by the hope of preventing violence against civilians, containing the spread of transnational organizations, and preventing political crises. *African Interventions* attempts to provide a comprehensive analysis of military intervention in Africa that goes beyond the classical dyadic framework often used in political sciences. Building on a mixed-methods approach that combines regression analysis with more descriptive narratives, their book is a valuable contribution to the literature dedicated to transnational conflict in Africa.

The authors distinguish between military interventions launched by non-colonial actors (chapter 2) and former colonial powers (chapter 3) and identify three types of interventions (supportive, hostile, and neutral). While this rationale provides some structure to the book, it also results in unnecessary repetitions. Somalia, for example, is discussed four times, depending on who was the main sponsor of the conflict and whether the intervention was supportive or not. By contrast, Nigeria is hardly discussed at all, despite having been the main epicenter of political violence in West Africa since the late 1990s and having conducted numerous foreign military interventions in the Gulf of Guinea.

From a conceptual perspective, the book builds on three theories to explain why states go transnational: diversionary theory, rebel movement theory, and role theory. The statistical analysis run on quantitative variables collected by the authors shows that these approaches have some explanatory power: leaders confronted with domestic instability target transnational rebels excluded from power, states tend to target rebel sanctuaries when they intervene internationally, and states cast themselves in certain roles in the international system and intervene accordingly.

While the results of the statistical analysis are positive and rather significant, it should be noted that none of the conceptual approaches tested in the book were developed with the African context in mind. Diversionary and role theories are mainly applied to great powers, and rebel movement theory was developed to explain “traditional” rebels interested in negotiating a larger share of the national resources, not Jihadist organizations motivated by destroying the state itself, as in many parts of Africa today. One should also note that the domestic conditions tested for the causes of intra-African interventions (mass unrest, elite unrest, economic growth, and inflation) over-emphasize the role of central governments, which is quite unexpected considering that one of the objectives of the book was to provide a more regional and less state-centric approach to conflict. As noted by the authors, central governments in Africa are only legitimately in control of strategic regions in a state. Thereby, interventions outside of the states are often limited in scope due to the low capabilities of state militaries and may not seem cross national to the eyes of local leaders who live in border regions.

Furthermore, none of these theories can account for regional or international military interventions from intergovernmental organizations such as the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), African Union (AU), and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which

probably explains why the book excludes them from the analysis. Including interventions by regional and international institutions would have provided a more comprehensive analysis of the conflict environment in which African states currently operate. Many of the interventions observed on the continent since the 1990s have involved multinational organizations, military alliances, and regional economic communities, often in combination with more “unilateral” powers. In an increasingly globalized world, this is difficult to ignore.

Building a comprehensive theory of transnational conflict would have required dedicating more attention to the specific nature of the African state. States on the African continent have an intricate history of clientelism and extraversion that results in complex alliances and rivalries both within and beyond the state. State elites are part of ever-changing networks with non-state actors such as allied militias, rebel groups, and foreign powers. Such international recognition endows them with a domestic power of command, without need for popular accountability, as Pierre Englebert demonstrated in *Africa: Unity, Sovereignty and Sorrow*. This rather complex combination of cooperative and conflictual ties can affect military interventions, especially when state elites are informally connected to other leaders across the region.

In conclusion, *African Interventions. State Militaries, Foreign Powers, and Rebel Forces* will primarily appeal to international relations scholars interested in the African context, who will find in this new book a well-written and insightful contribution to current scholarship.

Olivier Walther and Gabriel Madej, *University of Florida*

**Robert Mason and Simon Mabon (eds.). 2022. *The Gulf States and the Horn of Africa: Interests, Influences, and Instability*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 306 pp.**

*The Gulf States and the Horn of Africa* provides a good vantage point to understanding the complex interregional relations between the Gulf States and the Horn of Africa region in an edited volume that provides a tremendous opportunity to jointly explore issues that affect the sub regions. The book achieves this by bringing together scholars with a range of subject expertise and drawing on a range of field research across countries in the sub regions.

Mason and Mabon organize their book in two parts. The first part, which covers three-fourth of the book’s volume, approaches Gulf-Horn interactions from the viewpoint of Gulf States in eight chapters. Describing the Horn as a region endowed with crucial geostrategic position involving the Bab el-Mandeb strait with its major marine transportation hubs and located near the Middle East, the contributing authors assert that the Horn has long been a battlefield of major international powers. More recently, it has become a “crowded field” as many of the political and security issues that affect the Gulf States increasingly influence the Horn. The authors explain the motivations, foreign policy rationales, and the complex interactions of Gulf States with the Horn by discussing the Saudi-Iranian rivalry, Iranian foreign policy, UAE’s economic and foreign policy outcomes, the Turkey-Qatar bond in the Horn, and Kuwait’s engagement. Taken together these chapters describe the Horn as increasingly becoming a theater for intra-Gulf geopolitical competition.

The second part of the book consists of three chapters that explore Gulf States and Horn of Africa relations from the perspective of the latter. Unlike conventional analysis, this part takes into account the interests and motives of the Horn states as having proactive strategies with

relative autonomy and offers a refreshing view of the sub-region's engagement with other entities. Chapter 9 takes on the case of Djibouti and discusses how the smallest member state of both the African Union and the Arab League actively seeks to take advantage of the prevailing global as well as intra-Gulf rivalry in the Red Sea and Horn of Africa region. Similarly, Chapter 10 explains the relative autonomy of coastal Horn states and how three countries—Eritrea, Somalia, and Sudan—sought to take advantage of the changing regional political environment and sub-regional rivalries and balance their foreign relations orientation to ensure regime survival via “maximizing economic, financial, and military resources and other support from a wide variety of foreign sources” (p. 268). The last chapter thoroughly explains how Sudan's internal political strife shaped its relations with the Gulf States and disrupted its foreign policy.

Though a good attempt in making a departure from the conventional analysis on the Horn, the second part that deals with the view from the Horn covers less than a quarter of the book's volume and excludes Ethiopia, which as the largest nation in the Horn plays a key role in the security complex of the region. Discussing Ethiopia's role from the vantage point of the Horn, would have given the reader specific insights on contemporary situations given that the key practical challenge in the Horn is weakness or lack of strong state institutions in many of the states and the rampant mistrust and rivalry within and among states.

*The Gulf States and the Horn of Africa* provides the much needed discussion on the complicated relations between two increasingly important sub-regions in the Red Sea area. Relying on contributions drawn from prominent scholars on the region, the book offers useful insights into the multifaceted characteristics of interstate rivalry and its economic, political and security influences on regional relations. Thus, the book makes a significant contribution to the understanding of regional and international relations and serves as an essential read for people interested in the sub-regions as well as those with a more general interest in Africa and the Gulf States.

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**Emmanuel C. Onyeozili, Biko Agozino, Augustine Agu, and Patrick Ibe. 2021. *Community Policing in Nigeria: Rationale, Principles, and Practice*. Blacksburg: Virginia Tech Publishing. 157 pp.**

“With the mounting insecurity in Nigeria and the brutal militaristic policing of the country, Nigerians have been calling for the introduction of community policing to help to secure rights, lives, and property. The authors responded to the public clamor for justice by collaborating on this book project with a view to offer a theoretical framework and a comparative analysis of best and worst practices of community policing that Nigeria and Africa could learn from” (p. xv).

The book consists of five chapters. Chapter I discusses the theoretical origins of the professional police force by using the classical arguments and counter arguments of Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Cheikh Anta Diop, Frantz Fanon, Walter Rodney, Chinua Achebe, Max Weber, and others to provide readers with different perspectives. The conclusive argument of this chapter is that policing in Africa should not be based on only science and the police force but also traditional values and structures of Africans that promote peace, self-discipline, and security as opposed to conventional law courts, prisons, and institutional policing. Chapter II

provides a historical analysis of policing in Nigeria and Africa. The authors argue that colonial powers introduced professional policing which follows the Weberian structure and ideals to replace existing community-based and African-centered systems. In essence, the current police institutions do not meet the needs of Africans because they still perpetuate colonial and neo-colonial ideals.

Chapter III examines the different types of community policing that exist across nations in the world. The authors argue that African community policing and criminal justice system prior to the arrival of colonizers revolved around the principle of communalism, collective responsibility, and respect for elders, juju shrouded in secrecies, oracles, ancestor worship, supernatural powers, the Igwe-ka-Ala of Umuohia, the Ibini Ukpabe of Arochuku, and others. However, colonialism led to the introduction of Western policing and criminal justice ideals that disrupted and interrupted the full formation of a criminal justice system based on the African values and principles. The authors conclude that Westernized criminal justice systems obtain compliance from Africans by the use of force while indigenous criminal systems accomplish the same objective through community-centered values.

Chapter IV considers models viewed as best and worst examples of community policing around the world. The authors provide the pros and cons of each example of community policing discussed in the chapter. Among the examples of community policing discussed are the principles of Robert Peel (1982): reactive policing, proactive policing, problem-oriented policing, reassuring policing, intelligence-led policing, establishment of civil guard units in villages and urban areas, establishment of police-community bureaus, establishment of community policing unit local areas and putting in place strategies for planning, implementation, and assessment of models to produce people-centered policing and results. The authors also contend that community policing models are good because they promote safety, reduce fear of retaliation, reduce intra-and-inter group conflict. The chapter sounds a strong warning against the direct adaptation of Westernized community policing mechanisms on the continent because it does more harm than good—Nobel Prize winner Stan Cohen’s concept of “made-for-export.”

Chapter V examines some issues related to implementation of community policing in Africa. The authors warn against community policing aimed at arming Africans against each other and argue that community policing efforts should be geared towards strengthening democracy from an Africanist perspective while scaling back on colonial legacies related to policing and criminal justice in Africa. The authors argue that community policing is policing that involves the police force and the public. Finally, they argue that community policing, popular justice, and reparative justice would be a better system for Africans compared to the rational bureaucratic policing system introduced on the continent by colonizers.

Although the book was well put together and addressed various issues and actors in the criminal justice system in Africa, especially in Nigeria, it has several major limitations. First, the authors propose a communal system of justice founded on African values and institutions but fail to discuss whether contemporary Africans view themselves in an individualist or communal or both perspectives. Doing so would have laid a good foundation to discuss some of the challenges that community policing will face. Second, the authors contend that “Nigeria is a colonial amalgam of diverse ethnicities who originally do not share any cultural

background or values" (p. 72). While this is historically true the authors fail to capture the significant progress made between diverse groups in Nigeria to live peacefully. Overall, the book addresses an important issue regarding community policing in Nigeria and Africa and was well written.

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**Daniel Jordan Smith. 2022. *Every Household Its Own Government: Improvised Infrastructure, Entrepreneurial Citizens, and the State in Nigeria*. Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press. 216 pp.**

As with many African countries, a myriad of hydra-headed challenges has assailed Nigeria over the last three decades. One such challenge is infrastructural deficits, symbolized in the failure of the Nigerian state over the years to connect with its citizens via infrastructural provisioning. To be sure, this development has caused citizens to invent various strategies of exiting the state, ranging from migration to the extreme strategy of taking arms against the state. One of the exit strategies which the citizens have invented and which would appear to have received scanty attention from scholars and researchers is that of improvised infrastructure and entrepreneurial citizenship. This is the focus of the book authored by Daniel Jordan Smith, an anthropologist and a professor of international studies at Brown University. His study attempts to lay bare how Nigerian citizens over the years engaged the Nigerian state, or as the author puts it: "the ways that Nigerians across multiple social strata develop technologies, businesses, social networks, political ties, cultural strategies and everyday habits to cope with the constant failure of government-provided infrastructure" (p. 2).

Organized into six thematic chapters, including the introductory and concluding parts, *Every Household Its Own Government* more specifically attempts to frame the state-citizens disconnect in contemporary Nigeria through the prism of infrastructural deficits. Professor Smith, deploying mainly ethnographic data drawn primarily from the Ubakala community in South-East Nigeria, attempts to demonstrate why every household in the country is a replica of a government in contemporary Nigeria. For instance, in the first chapter, "Empty Pipes and H<sub>2</sub>O Entrepreneurs: Boreholes, Cart Pushers and 'Pure Water'" the author demonstrates through texts and pictures how the failure of state agencies to ensure regular public water supply to urban and semi-urban residents has led citizens to resort to sourcing water from private entrepreneurs. In this chapter, Smith not only identifies the factors that have nurtured this practice over the years but submits that such state of affairs has also incubated class inequality. As he avers on, "one of the brutal ironies of Nigeria's water infrastructural deficiencies is that inequality is maintained not only in disparate access to public water systems, but also in dramatic differences in cost. The poor pay many times more for their water than those who are better off" (p. 31).

Indeed, not only does the author tease out the class inequality that infrastructural deficiencies have wrought on society, he also argues that in spite of the country's infrastructural deficiencies, the Nigerian state is not totally absent from peoples' daily lives. Put differently, its citizens still encounter the state and its functionaries in their daily transactions. Thus, rather

than casting the state as an irresponsible entity, informal interactions of state officials with the citizens over time has further legitimized the state. Beyond these expositions, one core point that seems to run through all the chapters of the book is the antithesis that the state's failure in infrastructural provisioning has created entrepreneurial citizenship. As the author noted, while this state of affairs might be an aberration, it has nevertheless incubated robust informal economic networks, which in turn have provided opportunities for budding entrepreneurs and sources of revenues for government.

Overall, Smith's book is a worthy addition to the burgeoning literature on the politics of infrastructural provisioning in Nigeria. It has attempted through a robust ethnographic cum qualitative study to fill a knowledge gap. To be sure, while a few works have explored the subject, they would appear not to have been as eclectic in their approach as Smith. Another beauty of the book that is worthy of emphasis is the manner in which the author, through pictures, conveys his messages and arguments to his readers. These probably afford readers opportunities to connect more easily with the book. Therefore, Professor Smith must be commended for his lucidity in presentation. However, an observation is in order. The author could have situated the core issue of investigation within the context of the larger events that heralded it—that is, the neo-liberal onslaught courtesy of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). This variable was not theoretically woven into the core thesis of the book. Our contention here is that state abdication in social provisioning was a function of the “state rollback” paradigm courtesy of SAP regime. Notwithstanding this reservation, the book is a delight to read. It therefore makes a handy and worthy text for scholars, researchers, and policy makers who are interested in understanding the state-citizens schism in Nigeria through the prism of infrastructural deficiencies.

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**Paul Ugor (ed). 2021. *Youth and Popular Culture in Africa: Media, Music, and Politics*. Rochester: University of Rochester Press. 405 pp.**

Paul Ugor's magisterial edited volume *Youth and Popular Culture in Africa: Media, Music, and Politics* is a compendium of contributions by eighteen scholars of African descent both within and outside the continent. This volume consists of three parts with fourteen chapters in all. The first section focuses on media globalization, popular Afro Hip-Hop, and postcolonial political critique. The second examines popular online media and democratic participation and engagement, while the third discusses popular arts, everyday life, and the politicization of culture.

The first section consists of five essays. Bamba Ndiaye's chapter on hip-hop, civic awareness, and anti-establishment politics in Senegal perfectly portrays how local-global dynamic power defines the distinct character of contemporary African culture. David Kerr's chapter on underground rap and hip-hop culture in marginalized neighborhoods surmises that in spite of existing on the fringes of the music industry in Tanzania, underground rappers contest their marginality and assert their presence sonically and socially. Ibrahim Bangura's chapter on young people, music, and socio-political change in post-war Sierra Leone explores how war-weary, disaffected, and disenfranchised young people are main protagonists in social

change discourses, deploying a genre of Afro Hip-hop (*Ataya Bases*) to mobilize and engage the failures of post-war political-economic and social crises in Sierra Leone. Paul Ugor's concluding chapter in section one on the politics of pleasure in Nigerian Afrobeat—characterized by vulgarization and non-meaning as well as profit—is a by-product of the social deprivation of Nigerian youths and the state since 1980s.

In section two, James Yeku's contribution on the regeneration of play meticulously convinces his readers of the tripartite link between online social media, Nigerian youth, and cultural activism. Similarly, Kwabena Opoku-Agyemang's chapter focuses on the complex connectivity between youth, popular fiction, and discourses about social and cultural change in Ghanaian public space. Austin Bryan's chapter dissects popular homophobia and popular culture in Uganda that has now become a rich site for understanding contested power relations especially as regard to the youth.

Jendele Hungbo's chapter on Twitter, youth agency, and new narratives of power in #RhodesMustFall highlights how Twitter was deployed as a mobilization tool for the campaign and how social media has become a functional site for both socialization and civic discourse for disgruntled youth. In a somewhat similar fashion to the views of Yeku and Hungbo, Godfrey Maringira and Simbarashe Gukurume demonstrate how new cultural repertoires such as memes, video chips, political poems, and songs created by youth as part of popular entertainment in Zimbabwe have political undertones.

In the third section, Adeline Masquelier's contribution on dressing in style, fashion, and fandom in Niger focuses on how urban Nigerian youth are obsessed with formulating cosmopolitan urban identities. They do so through celebrity culture mimicking the sartorial style of the popular Nigerian Afro hip-hop artist Wizkid via the use of creative and experimental dress and fashion that doubly mask and contest their marginality. Adrienne Cohen's contribution describes how in the transformation of a socialist state to a neoliberal post colony, the generational change among Conakry artists is far more productive than narratives about cultural loss would suggest. In a similar manner, Connie Rapo examines cultural players and politics in Botswana especially in the context of political-economic dynamics. She traces how the socio-economic crisis caused by neoliberal policies led to the emergence of activist popular arts which now serve as a powerful creative platform for the youth to voice their opposition to the harsh realities around them. Kristi Kenyon, Juliana Coughlin, and David Bosc conclude the volume by examining #FeesMustFall and youth deconstruction of South Africa's liberation narrative. Their work highlights youth voices, drawing on interviews with student participants in the protests at two Pretoria universities, and more broadly those who contributed to the critical online forum of mobilization and discourse.

Ugor's edited volume reflects the dynamism and the changing faces of African youth, pop culture, social activism, and responsiveness to myriads of socio-economic and cultural issues. It is thus recommended reading for all who wish to understand more fully the mindset and outlook of youth across the continent.

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**Michael Williams. 2022. *The Pan-African Imperative: Revisiting Kwame Nkrumah's Vision for African Development*. London: Routledge. 138 pp.**

Michael Williams has dedicated a great part of his life studying and bringing to life the Nkrumaist view on Pan-Africanism. In this book, he reawakens a powerful ideology: Pan-Africanism, spearheaded by Kwame Nkrumah, who remains one of the Africa's most prolific contributors towards advocating for the unification of the continent. Divided into five chapters, this book coherently gives an account of the evolution and progress of this movement to date and concludes by providing some important guidelines through which this seemingly far-fetched dream could be realized as envisaged by Nkrumah himself. The author opens the book with an elaborate historical evolution of the Pan-African course, presenting a comprehensible account of Nkrumah and other well renowned activists to show that despite the times, perspectives, and the approach adopted by all, their focus was geared towards the realization of this common goal—the total liberation and unification of all peoples of African descent and Africa's resources for the proper development of the continent.

The author highlights one of the most disturbing problems plaguing the African continent in all developmental efforts as he posits why the Pan-African movements have not been very successful: “the failure of Pan-African organizations to create, transnationally, a principled and disciplined unity to ensure common action in the pursuit of common goals and objectives” (p. 29). It should be emphasized that this remains the very reason why the African Union as well as other organizations within the continent have so far been ineffective towards attaining their common goals.

The question of class is addressed across the book, which is an important aspect of the current state of social representation in the African continent. Though this is not something new, for the author cites Nkrumah who maintains that there is “no historical or even anthropological evidence to support the contention that African society throughout the period before the European invasion was classless” (p. 42). This class divide (pp. 91- 98) within the continent continues to represent a great impediment to the progress of the Pan-African course as the continent remains widely divided along class lines marked by a rising income inequalities.

The author fully explores the question of African Unity and carefully analyzes every aspect of the possibility for a prosperous Africa if finally united. Looking at the present predicament facing the continent, the idea of African Unity has been soiled by the complexities surrounding the fifty-five culturally and territorially diverse states, which in themselves remain largely diverse and divided. This division, which for centuries has proven detrimental to the progress of the continent as a whole, can be exploited for good by uniting forces to become one and a strong country under the guise of a united Africa as were the visions of Kwame Nkrumah. The nature of the future of a United Africa as one country, however, largely depends on the interests and wishes of the individual countries and its citizens, and the type of relationship they desire with their neighbors and the rest of the world. The fact remains that this part of the world has been at least for the past sixty years at the crossroads of cultivating some sense of national identity and then securing a future for its people, though plagued with leaders who are reluctant to stand against their self-aggrandization schemes fueled by greed and corruption.

The shattered African economies have for centuries been at the mercy of the rest of the world and it is true that only through a united Africa would the continent stand a chance to compete with the rest of the world to better bargain in all domains to better its economy. Williams talks of a “Union Government of Africa” (p. 63) as the machinery behind this great force for achievement, maintaining that this remains the “greatest challenge” (p. 65) towards Africa’s economic breakthrough, and this in itself represents a political victory for the continent. This book contains reminiscences detailing how a functioning United African government will propel and give force to the continent and its people to better handle its issues. Amidst the myriad problems plaguing the continent, *The Pan-African Imperative* is a timely reminder and clarion call for Africans to unite themselves in all fronts to secure a better future.

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