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China- Africa Relations: Theoretical and Practical Perspectives on African “Migrants” in China

Guest Editor: **Agnes Ngoma Leslie**

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Table of Contents

Articles

Introduction - China-Africa Relations: Theoretical and Practical Perspectives on African “Migrants” in China

Agnes Ngoma Leslie (1-4)

African Students in China: Research, Reality, and Reflection

Li Anshan (5-44)

From Pioneers to Professionals: African Brokers in a Maturing Chinese Marketplace

Heidi Østbo Haugen (45-62)

The Bridge is not Burning Down: Transformation and Resilience within China’s African Diaspora Communities

Adams Bodomo (63-84)

Transient: A Descriptive Concept for Understanding Africans in Guangzhou

Dong Niu (85-100)

Review Essays

Recaptive Africans and U.S. Émigrés: Creating Communities and Journeying to Africa in the Nineteenth Century Atlantic World

Evan C. Rothera (101-106)

The Practice of Politics in Postcolonial Southern Africa: Cases from Mozambique and Zimbabwe

Clement Masakure (107-114)

Book Reviews

Semahagn Gashu Abebe. 2014. *The Last Post-Cold War Socialist Federation: Ethnicity, Ideology and Democracy in Ethiopia*. London: Routledge. 298 pp.

Review by Berihun Adugna Gebeye (115-116)

Tolu Babatunde Afolabi. 2017. *The Politics of Peacemaking in Africa: Non-State Actors’ Role in the Liberian Civil war*. London, U.K. James Currey. 203 pp.

Review by Emmanuel O. Oritsejafor (116-117)

Kwabena Gyimah-Brempong, Michael Johnson, and Hiroyuki Takeshima. 2016. *The Nigerian Rice Economy: Policy Options for Transforming Production, Marketing, and Trade*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. xiv 300 pp.

Review by John Olushola Magbadelo (118-119)

Barbara Casciarri, Munzoul Assal, and François Ireton (eds.). 2015. *Multidimensional Change in Sudan (1989-2011): Reshaping Livelihoods, Conflicts and Identities*. Oxford: Berghahn. 374 pp.
Review by Stefano Turrini (119-120)

Mark Dike DeLancey. 2016. *Conquest and Construction: Palace Architecture in Northern Cameroon*. Boston: Brill. 298 pp.
Review by Syprien Christian Zogo (121-122)

Toyin Falola. 2016. *Nigerian Political Modernity and Postcolonial Predicaments*. Austin, Texas: Pan African University Press. 480 pp.
Review by Victor Jatula (122-123)

Debra Faszter-McMahon and Victoria L. Ketz (eds.). 2015. *African Immigrants in Contemporary Spanish Texts: Crossing the Strait*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing Ltd. 282 pp.
Review by Anenechukwu Kevin Amoke (123-125)

Pamela Felman-Savelsverg. 2016. *Mothers on the Move: Reproducing Belonging between Africa and Europe*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 243 pp.
Review by Olagbenro (Ola) Oladipo (125-126)

Linda Heywood. 2017. *Njinga of Angola: Africa's Warrior Queen*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 320 pp.
Review by Heather Jordan (126-128)

Vincent Hiribarren. 2017. *A History of Borno: Trans-Saharan African Empire to Failing Nigerian State*. New York: Oxford University Press. 311 pp.
Review by Olivier J. Walther (128-129)

Ousmane Oumar Kane. 2016. *Beyond Timbuktu: An Intellectual History of Muslim West Africa*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 282 pp.
Review by Zekeria Ould Ahmed Salem (129-131)

Gaim Kibreab. 2017. *The Eritrean National Service: Servitude for 'the Common Good' and the Youth Exodus*. Rochester: James Currey Press. 207 pp.
Review by Dawit Woldu (131-132)

Mickie Mwanzia Koster, Michael Mwenda Kithinji, and Jerono P. Rotich (eds.). 2016. *Kenya After 50: Reconfiguring Education, Gender and Policy*. Palgrave Macmillan. 265 pp.
Review by Sheila N. Maingi (133-134)

Bea Lundt and Christopher Marx (Eds.). 2016. *Kwame Nkrumah, 1909-1972: A Controversial Visionary*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag. 208 pp.
Review by Kenneth Wilburn (134-136)

Chérie Rivers Ndaliko. 2016. *Necessary Noise: Music, Film, and Charitable Imperialism in the East of Congo*. New York: Oxford University Press. Xiv + 285 pp.
Review by Jeremy Rich (136-137)

Holly Porter. 2017. *After Rape: Violence, Justice, and Social Harmony in Uganda*. London: International African Institute and Cambridge University Press. 255 pp.
Review by Sverker Finnström (138-139)

Steven Press. 2017. *Rogue Empires: Contracts and Conmen in Europe's Scramble for Africa*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 371 pp.
Review by Adel Manai (139-140)

Richard Reid. 2017. *A History of Modern Uganda*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 403 pp.
Review by Jonathon L. Earle (140-142)

Ksenia Robbe. 2015. *Conversations of Motherhood: South African Women's Writing Across Traditions*. Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press. 317 pp.
Review by Heidi Barends (142-143)

Robert I. Rotberg. 2017. *The Corruption Cure: How Citizens and Leaders Can Combat Graft*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press. 384 pp.
Review by Benson Ohihon Igboin (143-145)

Lamin Sanneh. 2016. *Beyond Jihad: The Pacifist Tradition in West African Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press. 376 pp.
Review by Dauda Abubakar (145-146)

John Saul and Patrick Bond. 2014. *South Africa: The Present as History from Mrs Ples to Mandela and Marikana*. Johannesburg: Jacana Media. 312 pp.
Review by Claire-Anne Lester (147-148)

Luke Sinwell and Sphiwe Mbatha. 2016. *The Spirit of Marikana. The Rise of Insurgent Trade Unionism in South Africa*. London: Pluto Press. 208 pp.
Review by Seroala Tsoeu-Ntokoane (148-149)

Z. S. Strother. 2016. *Humor and Violence: Seeing Europeans in Central African Art*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. 344 pp.
Review by Rachel Ama Asaa Engmann (149-151)

Ann Swidler and Susan Cotts Watkins. 2017. *A Fraught Embrace: The Romance and Reality of AIDS Altruism in Africa*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 280 pp.
Review by Brad Crofford (151-152)

Theodore Trefon. 2016. *Congo's Environmental Paradox: Potential and Predation in a Land of Plenty*. London: Zed Books. 194 pp.

Review by Uchendu Eugene Chigbu (152-153)

Harry Villegas. 2017. *Cuba and Angola: The War for Freedom*. Edited by Martín Koppel and Mary-Alice Waters. New York: Pathfinder Press. 121 pp.

Review by Perseverence Muguti (153-155)

Tom Young (ed.). 2015. *Readings in the International Relations of Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 370 pp.

Review by Sankalp Gurjar (155-156)

Introduction

China-Africa Relations: Theoretical and Practical Perspectives on African “Migrants” in China

AGNES NGOMA LESLIE

Introduction

This is a special issue of the *African Studies Quarterly*, and the second issue of this publication devoted entirely to China-Africa relations. The first issue examined China and Africa’s political and economic relationships and media strategies. Ten invited scholars examined the major issues in this relationship, at multiple levels, from medium and small businesses to petty traders. The themes examined included the role of African agency in China-Africa discourse; micro-practices embedded in China’s foreign policy towards Africa; the capacity and challenges faced by African states in their efforts to moderate that relationship; and how African states have shaped this engagement. The issue (Vol. 16, Issue 3-4, December 2016) was titled: “China-Africa Relations: Political and Economic Engagement and Media Strategies.”¹

As Chinese investments continue to grow in all sectors in many African countries they bring with them increased numbers of Chinese citizens on the continent. The number of Chinese people in Africa was estimated at one million by 2014.² The Annual Report on Overseas Chinese found that the number of Chinese immigrants in Africa had risen sevenfold over the last two decades and was estimated at 1.1 million in 2012.³ At the 2015 Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) held in Johannesburg, China promised to triple its investment in Africa from twenty billion dollars in 2012 to sixty billion in 2015.⁴

This increased investment has led to a higher Chinese presence in Africa and also fueled travel by more Africans to China. The contributors to this issue focus on the African presence in China from both pragmatic and theoretical perspectives. The writers are a diverse group, selected based on their disciplinary specialization and national background. They include a Ghanaian scholar, Adams Bodom, who has conducted extensive research on Africans in China; a Norwegian scholar, Heidi Østbø Haugen, who has studied the history of African traders in China; and two Chinese scholars, Li Anshan and Dong Niu, who have studied the history of Africans in China and theorized about the future of their presence in that country. Together, the set of articles broadly examine the situation of Africans in China, from students to African traders and brokers in the commercial hub of Guangzhou in south China. Each of the authors has conducted extensive research on Africans in China, and they contribute the unique theoretical perspectives of their disciplines.

Agnes Ngoma Leslie is Senior Lecturer and Outreach Director, Center for African Studies, University of Florida. Her publications include *Social Movements and Democracy in Africa: The Impact of Women’s Rights in Botswana* (Routledge) and senior editor for the *Encyclopedia of African History and Culture: A Learning Source Book*.

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v17/v17i4a1.pdf>

Their articles address the following questions: What is the driving factor behind the flow of Africans to China? What have been the complexities of their experiences there? How are they dealing with the challenges of living and working there? What is the appropriate classification of the Africans in China?

Africans as Students

Li Anshan provides a thorough history of African students who form the second largest African diaspora community in China. He argues that while there may be some debate as to whether the students may be classified as immigrants, their existence and interaction with Chinese people has expanded China-Africa relations and the Chinese people's understanding of Africa. While much scholarship has focused on African traders in China, very little scholarship has been conducted on African students there.

Li Anshan is one of the first to provide a historical overview, from the 1960s to the present, including the political context, how African students have been perceived, and their impact on the Chinese political and cultural landscape. Li's study shows how African students have impacted cooperation between Africa and China and contributed to the cultural exchange and internationalization of China's universities. The article articulates the social issues that African students have endured, including racial attitudes and prejudice, and discusses their social adaptation and the evolution of China's international policies towards Africa and Africans.

Africans as Brokers and Traders

Heidi Østbø Haugen provides a historic account of African traders from the pioneering entrepreneurs to contemporary brokers, examining the role of brokerage in the emerging trade connections between China and Africa. That role has evolved since African traders first ventured to Mainland China to purchase goods and thus been a driver for change. Her article "From Pioneers to Professionals: African Brokers in a Maturing Chinese Market Place" notes the major impact of the African brokers living in Guangzhou including the expansion of exports from mainland China to all parts of the African continent.

The author also notes the challenges Africans have faced, which have led to changes in their way of conducting business in order to remain profitable. While Africans have been able to conduct business in China with varying levels of success, they also live with a degree of uncertainty and insecurity due to their tenuous residence status. Haugen relies on personal observation and interaction with some of the African brokers, uncovering their creativity and adaptability.

Haugen's article is related to that of Adams Bodomo, who conducted research on African traders in six cities in China. His article "The Bridge is not Burning Down: Transformation and Resilience within China's African Diaspora Communities," which focuses mainly on Guangzhou, provides an in-depth investigation of the fragile relationship between African and Chinese communities that led to media reports that Africans in Guangzhou were disappearing due to widespread police intimidation.

Contrary to the reports, Bodomo offers a theory of transformative resilience to explain that Africans in China are finding creative ways to adapt. Based on extensive surveys of Africans

and Chinese populations in China, he suggests that what is happening is the transformation of the African diaspora communities in reaction to sterner immigration policies and practices enforced by local authorities in Guangzhou and some other cities.

Bodomo conducted research in African communities in six cities including Hong Kong, Macau, Guangzhou, Yiwu, Shanghai, and Beijing noting the various nationalities, languages spoken, education and skill levels. His focus on the emerging African diaspora in China complements Anshan's and Haugen's historical accounts.

Africans as Transients

Dong Niu's theoretical analysis of the concept of Africans in China ably complements the other three articles. His "Transients: A Descriptive Concept for Understanding Africans in Guangzhou" contributes fresh insights into the study of African and other transient communities in China with a thoughtful and engaging analysis of African communities in relation to China's national immigration policies. Dong suggests that the classification of "immigrants" is at odds with the Chinese legal, non-immigrant system and how Africans describe themselves in China. His balanced research includes a theoretical examination of migration studies and suggests instead the concept of "transients" as a more appropriate term not only for Africans living in China, but also for other communities with no desire to integrate into the host country and with no possibility of being integrated into the host country, where their life is unstable and their future uncertain. He conducted extensive work on African communities in relation to Chinese legal policies. His theoretical findings build on Haugen, Bodomo, Castillo, and others who have pointed to the transient nature of African communities in China.⁵

Conclusion

This special issue of the *African Studies Quarterly* contributes to our understanding of China-Africa relations from practical and theoretical perspectives as well as to providing historical perspectives and examining the contemporary issues facing Africans in China. Written by scholars from Africa, Europe, and China the articles portray the challenges and resilience of Africans in China. The scholars contribute to the theoretical understanding of "migration" and "diaspora" studies. Beyond the analyses of African lives in China, these articles provide fresh insights regarding the African presence in China and, more broadly, the China-Africa relationship.

The four authors discuss the China-Africa relationship in four distinct areas: (1) the history of African students in China; (2) the history African brokers and traders in China; (3) the contemporary status of Africans; and (4) a theoretical analysis of their classification as "transient" populations. The authors offer valuable insights into what may be required for China to reciprocate to Africa's open-armed Chinese embrace, and an opportunity for African states to negotiate better conditions for their citizens who interact with the Chinese, both at home and abroad.

Notes

1 <https://asq.africa.ufl.edu/previous-issues/volume-16/issue-3-4/>.

2 French, 2014

3 Zhou, China Daily, 2017

4 For more on FOCAC 2015, see <http://www.focac.org/eng/>.

5 Bodomo 2012; Haugen 2012; Castillo 2014.

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African Students in China: Research, Reality, and Reflection

LI ANSHAN

Abstract: With the fast development of China-Africa relations, the African community in China becomes an impressive phenomenon and an attraction for international academia. Various African diasporic groups exist in China such as traders, students, artists, professionals, etc., with students forming the second largest group. Although there have been debates about whether international students can be considered as immigrants, the opinion that they are largely prevails in the scholarly literature. Studying African students in the context of China-Africa relations, the article is divided into five parts. The first provides a survey on the research on the topic, followed by an overview of the history of African students in China. The third part is an analysis of China's policy towards African students. Why do the African students want to come to China? What attracts them? What are their purposes? The fourth part will discuss the favorable conditions for their coming to China and their motivations. The last part will describe their contribution to both the African and Chinese societies. I will argue that by their initiative the African students' existence in China and their interaction with the Chinese people has brought various new things to China and made a great contribution to Africa as a whole.

Research, Debates, and Views

The international community currently shows great interest in China-Africa relations. Different issues, contradictory views and various debates have been presented for some time.¹ Related to this issue, the African diaspora has also become a fashionable topic among academia. It is presumed that the African community appeared in China in recent years, yet there is a long history of diaspora and contact between China and Africa.² Owing to the fast growth of the bilateral trade volume, increasing from \$10.8 billion in 2000 to more than \$220 billion in 2014, it is undeniable that the African community has boomed in China during this period.

LI Anshan is Professor and Director, Institute of Afro-Asian Studies and Center for African Studies, School of International Studies, Peking University. His research focuses on Sino-African relations, African studies, and Chinese in Africa.

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v17/v17i4a2.pdf>

Since China-Africa trade occupies a very important component in the bilateral relations, traders thus by far constitute the largest group within the African community in China. So far the studies have generally focused on African trading communities in China or their economic activities in Guangzhou, the commodity hub of China, and Yiwu, China's biggest commodity center.³ Some have studied their business transactions and deals in Hong Kong and Macau.⁴ Other researches include the living conditions, social practices, or religious activities of the African diaspora, and barriers between Africans and Chinese, management of the African diaspora by Chinese authorities, or the reaction of Chinese citizens.⁵ African entrepreneurs are also described for how they have transmitted their conceptions of China into their own countries, thus explaining the impact of Chinese development in a global context.⁶ More recently the research focus has gradually moved beyond Guangdong Province and its commercial hub Guangzhou.⁷

African students form the second largest group of African diaspora in China. Yet far fewer scholars have been involved in the study of this topic. The earliest work was done by a Ghanaian student, who had personal experiences in studying in China in the early 1960s. After their independence, fourteen African countries sent their students to China until the end of 1966 when China closed all universities because of the Cultural Revolution. Immanuel Hevi was among the group. He wrote the first book about African students in China, complaining about racism and other unpleasant phenomena. He listed six causes of African student dissatisfactions: undesirable political indoctrination, language difficulty, poor educational standards, inadequate social life, outright hostility, and racial discrimination.⁸ Although he indicated that many African students returned back home in 1961-1962, there was disagreement about his statements.⁹ While the book raised attention from the West, the study of the subject then almost stopped since all the African students returned back to their countries due to the Cultural Revolution. Until recently, scholars studying African students in China reviewed the historical context or explained the social background of China at the time.¹⁰

China resumed educational cooperation with Africa in 1973, and railway technology trainees arrived in China from Tanzania and Zambia in connection with Chinese funding of the Tanzania-Zambia Railway (TAZARA). There are several works on, TAZARA including documents, records, and the African trainees.¹¹ As for the first systematic survey of African students in China, Gillespie's work is one of the few books that put African student experiences in the context of South-South relations, emphasizing the knowledge transfer of China's educational exchange programs for Africa.¹² There were several studies on the conflicts between African students and Chinese students in the 1980s with a criticism of Chinese racism.¹³

With the establishment of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), beginning with the first summit in 2000, the number of African students greatly increased (see Table 2 below). In terms of the study of African students currently in China, there is a greater interest among Chinese scholars (or African scholars in China) than those outside China. The first study on the issue in China was by the Center for African Studies at Peking University. It was a general survey with a series

data based on the archives of the Ministry of Education, focusing on African students in China.¹⁴ Current research about African students are generally focused on four subjects, namely cultural adaptation, China-Africa cooperation, educational management, and professional teaching such as language, mathematics, engineering, and so forth. Using key words “African overseas students” as an entry, forty-seven articles are found in the Chinese Journals Network (2003-2014) containing journal articles and MA dissertations. Among them, five are on cultural adaptation, six on educational management, and fourteen on teaching the Chinese language, with the rest on China-Africa relations. Reports and memoirs have also provided information about the experiences of African students in China.¹⁵ There is an important study regarding the evolution and effect of China’s policy towards African students, in which the author argues that the scholarship policy has contributed a great deal towards the success of China’s international educational cooperation, especially with African students.¹⁶

Psychology is often applied in cross-culture studies, and two works are worth mentioning. One is an article based on an SASS (Study Abroad Stress Survey) of Africans and western students in China that was carried out in 2003 with two hundred forms sent out to foreign students at colleges in three cities in China. The thirty questionnaires were divided into four categories, e.g., interpersonal, individual, academic, and environment. One hundred and fifty-six valid forms were returned from eight-two Africans (forty-six males, thirty-six females) and seventy-four westerners (thirty-two males, forty-two females). Its purpose was to evaluate gender differences (male/female) and cultural differences (Africa/West) in the perception of stress. No group differences existed in the subtotal perception of the four stressors. Group variations existed only in their sub-divisional areas of stress. Cross-cultural orientation was suggested for foreign students. The study indicates that academic and interpersonal sources of stress were the most common and daily hassles defined as high pressure and challenges among both males and females.¹⁷ Another psychological study was an MA thesis based on an investigation of 181 feedbacks out of 210 forms, a rather high ratio for an investigation. The author was an African student, and the aim of the study was to examine cultural shock and adaptation among African students in China. It found that cultural shock is common for African students in China, and the best remedy is to increase social contact with local people. It also found that although all African students experienced cultural shock, the extent is different according to the grade and gender, e.g., more serious for undergrads than graduates, female than male.¹⁸ Other studies are either on cultural adaptation, cultural differences and their impact, or different concepts of time and family.¹⁹

As for the role in China-Africa educational cooperation, Ketema et al. suggested that Chinese universities played an important role in bilateral cooperation, King used African students in China as an indicator of China’s soft power, and Haugen analyzed China’s policy for the enrolment of African students and its effect and outcome.²⁰ Others argued that China’s educational assistance formed an essential

part of China-Africa cooperation and offered substantial support to Africa.²¹ Studies also discussed the management of African students or graduates in China, either in universities or society.²² The fourth subject always involves teachers who are doing language teaching and probing better ways to teach the Chinese language to Africans.²³ African students themselves wrote about their experiences in China and emphasized African agency in their behavior in Chinese society.²⁴

There are criticisms regarding the teaching methods and suggestions for improvement and different views on the effect of China's educational policy towards African students. One view holds that African scholarship holders are generally satisfied with their experiences in China, which thus promotes a positive view of the potential for strengthening China-Africa friendship with African countries through educational programs.²⁵ Although there are shortcomings and room for improvement, China's policy is rather successful in promoting China-Africa relations, building African capacity and bettering China's image.²⁶ Haugen, on the other hand, asserts that China fails to reach its policy objectives because of African students' disappointment with the quality of the education they receive, "Disappointment with the educational experience obstructs the promotion of Chinese values, thus obliterating the soft power potential of Sino-African educational exchanges."²⁷

Similar features characterize the above-mentioned studies, e.g., cross-cultural theory with questionnaires as methodology and concrete suggestions as the outcome. They involve the collection of direct data drawn from life experiences. Researchers sometime are African students themselves. The shortcoming of such studies is that they are usually based on a case study of African students in a place (or a university) or from a country, and thus limitations are inevitable. How to apply theories in case studies is another issue. Bilateral migration provides both an opportunity and a challenge. There are similarities between Chinese culture and African culture, and mutual learning is always beneficial to both, especially through people-to-people contact.²⁸ Yet, we still lack a solid study on the topic.

History, Reality, and Trends

The history of African students in China began in 1956, when four Egyptian students arrived. If we compare the figure with 61,594 African students in China in 2016, the trend is dramatic. The history of African students in China can be divided into four periods. The first started from 1956 to 1966 when the Cultural Revolution closed all the universities. The second is mainly about the trainees for Tanzania-Zambia Railway. The third runs from the 1970s to 1995. The fourth started from 1996 and got a promotion in 2000, the year of China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), and it lasts till the present.²⁹

The period 1956-1966 forms the first contact of African students with China. In 1953, the Chinese youth delegation had broad contact with delegates from Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Madagascar, and French West Africa during the International Conference of Defense of Youth Rights, held in Geneva, and students of both sides established links at the early stage. Even before the establishment of

China-Egypt diplomatic relations on May 30, 1956, the two countries signed the agreement of cultural cooperation on April 15, 1956.³⁰ The program of Egypt-China educational cooperation started the exchange of scholars and students from both countries. Four Egyptian students came to China in 1956, three were under the academic supervision of the famous artist Prof. Li Keran to learn the skill of Chinese painting. They became well-known artists in Egypt after their studies in the China Central Academy of Fine Arts.³¹

In 1957, eleven African students from Cameroon, Kenya, Uganda, and Malawi (all not yet independent countries) came to study in China. During the 1950s, twenty-four African students came under the scholarship of Chinese government. Many African countries won their independence in the 1960s and China started educational cooperation with them. African students or technicians arrived under various agreements or programs at Chinese universities for advanced study. In the 1960s, China sent various cultural delegations to Africa, learning different types of African dance while African countries sent young people to China for further study. In 1960, the number of African students in China increased to ninety-five. When the Cultural Revolution occurred in 1966, there were 164 students from fourteen African countries. The African students had to go back home since all the universities were closed during that time.³²

Among the young African students was a Ghanaian, Immanuel Hevi, who wrote a book complaining about racism and other unpleasant experiences in China.³³ His negative statements about the country immediately brought about applause from the West. What is more, he was from Ghana where President Nkrumah was strongly pro-socialist. Most importantly, the West was looking for something negative about China, and Hevi's book came out at just the right time. Hevi's complaint was somewhat understandable for several reasons. The first is the economic disaster in the early 1960s. Although African students, like all foreign students in China, enjoyed some privileges and a higher living standard than the ordinary Chinese citizen, yet China could not further improve the conditions as the early 1960s witnessed the worst economic period in China after the founding of the People's Republic of China. The second were the social conditions in the period. China's dogmatism, social taboos, and regulations set up a kind of "segregation" between African students and ordinary Chinese, especially African males and Chinese females. Thirdly, to make things worse, the pervasive politics created a vacuum for social interaction that made life less interesting for foreign students, including Africans.³⁴ However, this was also a period in which young African students saw China with their own eyes and had their first personal contact with Chinese people.

The 1970s was characterized by the notion of brotherly friendship because many of the African students were connected with TAZARA. During the 1960s and 1970s, two important events greatly improved contact between China and Africa: the dispatch of Chinese medical teams and the building of the Tanzania Zambia Railway (TAZARA). After China sent its first medical team to Algeria in 1963, Chinese

medical teams were dispatched to forty-seven African countries.³⁵ Supported by the Chinese government, TAZARA was built specifically to break the transportation blockage by the white racial regimes of southern Africa. TAZARA not only made a great contribution to the transportation of minerals from Zambia to the port of Dar es Saalam, thus helping the landlocked countries at the time, but it also improved the livelihood of the local people. Moreover, the process of building TAZARA provided an opportunity for mutual contact, since more than sixty thousand Chinese engineers, technicians, and workers joined the workforce in Africa, which enabled Africans to better understand China and the Chinese people.³⁶ In order to help Tanzania and Zambia run TAZARA, China agreed to train engineers for the two countries starting in June 1972. Thus the railway technology trainees came to China, followed by other African students who enrolled in Chinese universities in 1973.

This large group was trained for the future TAZARA project in various specialties. They started training courses at institutions such as Beifang Jiaotong University and the North University of Transportation. The two hundred would-be engineers from Tanzania and Zambia took different basic courses of public transportation, then trained in different special fields, such as transportation, Locomotive specialty, vehicle major, communication major, signal specialty, railway engineering specialty, and financial professional. Among this group, 179 finally graduated in September 1975. In 1973, China resumed the enrolment of international students. There were thirty-seven formal African students, followed by sixty-one in 1974. However, there was a great increase of African students in 1975, reaching 113, probably because Chairman Mao Zedong met with Zambian President Kaunda in 1974 when Mao put forward the "Theory of Three Worlds." In 1976, African students increased to 144. By the end of 1976, China had 355 students from twenty-one African countries, and the number with Chinese scholarships increased as well.³⁷ After their return home, they played an important role in the transportation and other fields in their own countries.³⁸

The years 1978 to 1995 form the third period, and it indicates increasing contacts. Since the opening-up, China resumed normal educational cooperation with African countries. However, the economic situation in China was not good enough and the international students were rather limited. In 1978, China enrolled 1236 new international students with 95 percent enjoying Chinese Government Scholarships (CGS). Among them, 121 were African students, about 10 percent of the total.³⁹ Together with nearly three hundred African students enrolled during 1976-1977, there were more than four hundred African students in China, accounting for one quarter of foreign students then. However, only thirty Africans received CGS in 1979, forty-three in 1980, and eighty in 1981.⁴⁰

The statistics indicate that African student numbers went on increasing in the 1980s except 1989 when the number dropped to 249 from 325 of the previous year. The number kept fluctuated between two and three hundred in the following years, never surpassing three hundred. The situation might be explained by the clashes

between African and Chinese students around the 1980s, especially with the clash at Hehai University in Nanjing in 1988.

Table 1: African Students in China (1976-1995)

Year	Scholarship	Self-financed	Total
1976	144	0	144
1977	142	0	142
1978	121	0	121
1979	30	0	30
1980	43	0	43
1981	80	0	80
1982	154	0	154
1983	230	0	230
1984	247	0	247
1985	314	0	314
1986	297	0	297
1987	306	0	306
1988	325	0	325
1989	249	2	251
1990	252	6	258
1991	272	15	287
1992	267	20	287
1993	225	58	283
1994	220	246	466
1995	256	721	977
Total	4174	1068	5242

With more African students, problems occurred, and racial tensions broke out during the 1980s. For many Chinese, it was the first time they saw foreigners and they could not help pointing to foreign students, especially African students. This became a very complicated issue, which was due to various factors such as African student complaints about economic or living conditions, political divergence between the US and Middle East, different social values, Chinese prejudice towards Africans, etc.⁴¹

Complaints and grievances resulted in conflict and even demonstrations. Clashes between African and Chinese students occurred in Tianjin, Nanjing, Beijing, Shanghai, and other cities during the 1980s. African students voiced their grievances by taking different forms, such as demonstrations inside or outside of campus, boycott of classes, hunger strikes, petitions. Occasionally, Chinese students took part in the demonstrations, which resulted in clashes. The incidents were described as “national racism” by some scholars.⁴² Analyzing from today’s perspective, differences of social systems, values, and culture might be the major cause. For a

people with a rather traditional character, the Chinese were not used to the close relations between males and females in public, while African students took a more open attitude about the issue. Therefore, the trigger of conflicts was usually the close contact between African male students and Chinese girls, which was disliked by ordinary Chinese. Of course, China was undergoing a dramatic social transformation at the time. With six students in a room, the Chinese students were not happy with the better treatment of foreign students who lived in a room with only two. In addition, foreign students enjoyed stipends and better conditions in other aspects on campus. Therefore, it was natural for the Chinese students and ordinary citizens to complain about the special treatment of foreign students. Combined with other inequalities or social dissatisfaction, this complaint gave vent to grievances, which led to the conflicts.

Table 2: African Students in China (1996-2011)

Year	Scholarship	Self-funded	Total
1996	922	118	1040
1997	991	224	1215
1998	1128	267	1395
1999	1136	248	1384
2000	1154	234	1388
2001	1224	302	1526
2002	1256	390	1646
2003	1244	549	1793
2004	1317	869	2186
2005	1367	1390	2757
2006	1861	1876	3737
2007	2733	3182	5915
2008	3735	5064	8799
2009	4824	7609	12433
2010	5710	10693	16403
2011	6316	14428	20744
2012	6717	20335	27052
2013	7305	26054	33359
2014	7821	33856	41,677
2015	8470	41322	49,792
Total	67231	169010	236241

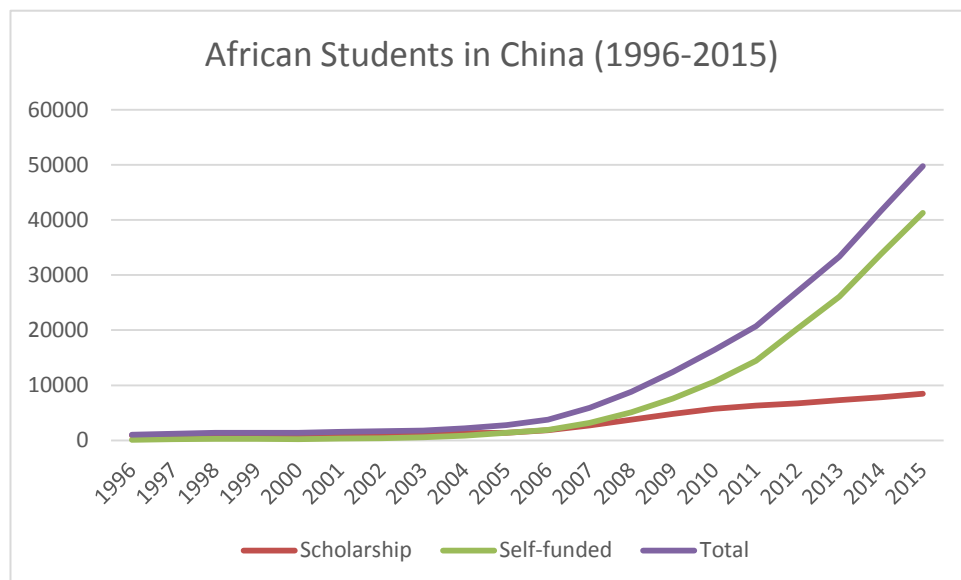
Source: *China Education Yearbook, 2003-2015; Brief Statistics of Foreign Students Studying in China, 2012-2015*, Department of International Cooperation and Exchanges, Ministry of Education of China.

One phenomenon was impressive, i.e., self-financed students from Africa who were increasing during the first half of the 1990s. In 1990, there were six, then fifteen in 1991. The number increased to thirty and then to fifty-eight in 1993. The figure jumped to 246 in 1994 and 721 in 1995. More and more African youth wanted to go to

China for further study, and the low fees and easy access to visas might explain the situation. After 1996, the history of African students in China entered a period of rapid development.

The significance of 1996 was because in May that year President Jiang Zemin visited six African countries—Kenya, Ethiopia, Egypt, Mali, Namibia, and Zimbabwe. This was the first time a Chinese Head of State visited the sub-Saharan Africa. During the visit, Jiang put forward five proposals for China and Africa to build a long-time stable and all-round cooperation for the 21st century based on the principles of sincere friendship, equality, solidarity and cooperation, common development, and the future. The visit and policy brought about a great increase of CGS for African students, which leaped from 256 in 1995 to 922 in 1996. With 118 self-financed students that year, African students for the first time surpassed one thousand in China.⁴³

Figure 1



After the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000, promoting China-Africa educational cooperation became an important issue. By the end of 2002, there were 1,600 Africans among the 85,800 foreign students.⁴⁴ In 2009, foreign students in China surpassed 230,000, and African students numbered 12,436.⁴⁵ The figures indicate that the increase of African students was closely linked to that of international students. During 1996-2011, there were 84,361 African students in China, with 36,918 holding CGS while 47,443 were self-funded.

The year 2005 was a turning point when self-funded students (1,390) from Africa outnumbered scholarship students (1,367) from Africa. This change may have been due to the success of the scholarship programs and the Chinese Education Exhibitions in Egypt and South Africa since 2003. However, this trend was also in sync with the situation of international students as a whole. In 2005, there were

13,3869 self-funded students from 175 countries studying in China, about 94.88 percent of the total international students, a growth rate of 28.56 percent from 2004. In 2009, of the 238,184 foreign students at 610 Chinese universities and scientific research institutions, 219,939 were self-funded.⁴⁶ The dramatic increase may be explained by Beijing Olympic Games. In 2011, the self-funded African students reached 14,428, doubling the number of African CGS holders (6,316). In 2015, there were 8,470 African CGS holders while self-financed students numbered 41,322. Most African students in China, no matter whether CGS holders or self-financed, are pursuing degrees and the degree-seeking students increased rapidly. In 2014, 84 percent African students in China set earning a degree as their goal, while only 16 percent chose non-degree courses.

The impressive trend of African students has three characteristics. First, the increase is rapid, along with the general increase of international students. Second, the number of self-financed African students increased faster than the CGS holders. Third, the overwhelming majority of African Students are pursuing degrees.

Policy Implementation and Effect

While China received foreign students as early as the 1950s, yet in the 1950s-1970s, its policy for international education cooperation was mainly ideologically oriented, i.e., to unite African countries in the struggle against the capitalist camp headed by U.S. in the first stage, then the against the two hegemonies, the US and the USSR in the second stage.

After the opening-up, China started to emerge into the international arena of educational cooperation. As a newcomer, the Chinese government has learned from its international partners, made its policy towards international students and carried it out step by step. There is no specific law regarding any group of international students such as U.S. students or African students, yet the policy is the product of international relations. No doubt, China's policy of international educational cooperation is closely linked with or even decided by its strategy. Since China's international education policy has gradually formulated after the opening-up, the article's focus is on the policy since the 1980s.

As early as 1978, the State Council endorsed a document to request that Chinese be more friendly to foreign students, that foreign students be allowed to go shopping publicly and be allowed to marry Chinese.⁴⁷ The 1980s witnessed the establishment of primary rules, regulations, and policy in the management of foreign students. In 1985, the State Council approved the "Measures of Administration of Foreign Students" issued by State Education Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Public Security and Ministry of Finance. The government realized that "the enrolment and training of foreign students is a strategic work in our diplomacy" and required ministries and different levels to carry out the instruction. The document has eight chapters with forty-three clauses, covering general principles, enrolment and status management, teaching, professional practice/field work, various types of management, such as ideological

work and political activities, livelihood and social, and organization leadership.⁴⁸

It seems that the Chinese government regarded foreign students as an element of the Chinese society and the management was dogmatic and strict. Its policy covered a broad range of topics including courses, Chinese language teaching, teaching materials, physical training, etc. As an important document, it governed the management of international students for many years. On July 21, 1999 the Ministry of Education issued a document for the administration of the enrolment of foreign students by primary and secondary schools.⁴⁹ In 2000, "Provisions on the Administration of Foreign Students in Universities" was issued by the government, which had eight chapters with fifty clauses. The provisions contain two added chapters on "Scholarship" and "Entry-Exit and Residence Procedures," which made implementation more applicable. These regulations were more systematic than the previous one.⁵⁰

In March 2017 three ministries issued a new document regarding the enrolment and training of international students, which went into practice on July 1, 2017. Its purpose is to standardize the enrolment, advising, and management of international students, provide them better services, and promote foreign exchange and cooperation in China's education, thus raising the level of internationalization. It covers four levels: pre-school, primary school, middle school, and university. Although the specific work is the responsibility of the local government, the educational administration under the State Council takes charge of the management of international students, including making the general policy for their enrolment and development and guiding and coordinating the concrete work of the local government, while ministries of foreign affairs and public security are in charge of the management accordingly. Since this document covers all education institutions, the previous ones of the same type issued in 1999 and 2000 were annulled.⁵¹

Although the related legal regulations and rules cover all foreign students, there are specific measures regarding African students, especially when some special events or unusual things occurred. For example, during the troublesome days in the early 1980s, racial discriminations occurred in Shanghai. Some Chinese called the African students names, and there were clashes here and there. In one case, the Minister of Education had to call a meeting with the leader of African diplomatic corps and fifteen African ambassadors in February 1983 to explain the problems between Shanghai residents and African students. The African ambassadors warned that the Chinese government should teach policemen as well as residents since African students were often harassed by the policemen, either being stopped by them without reason or getting a scolding, which was a nuisance for African students. If the situation persisted, Africa-China friendly relations would be damaged. Therefore, different local governmental departments also promulgated various documents regarding specific issues related to African students.⁵²

During the mid-1990s, after their graduation in China, some African students did not go back to their home countries. Instead, they took jobs in a third country

other than China and their homeland. This phenomenon did not fit with the original intention of the Chinese government to help capacity building for African countries. In 1996, the Ministry of Education of China issued a document that requested the institution of management to hand African graduates a return-ticket directly to the embassy of the student's country in Beijing at the end of the academic year in order to facilitate the students returning directly home. This has become routine now. A recent report commented on this: "Due to Chinese visa rules, most international students cannot stay in China after their education is complete. This prevents brain-drain and means that China is educating a generation of African students who—unlike their counterparts in France, the US or UK—are more likely to return home and bring their new education and skills with them."⁵³

In 2005, when Chinese President Hu Jintao participated in the High-Level Meeting on Financing for Development at the Sixtieth Session of the United Nations, he promised that over the next three years, China would increase its assistance to developing countries, African countries in particular: "China will train 30,000 personnel of various professions from the developing countries within the next three years so as to help them speed up their human resources development."⁵⁴ Since the CGS is closely related to China's international strategy, it is also a reflection of the focus of China's policy.

As we see from the statistics, before 2005 the number of African students who received CGS was always smaller than that of European students. Yet the situation started to change since 2006, a year after Hu Jintao's declaration. Although in 2006 African students and European students accounted for equal proportions, the actual number of African CGS holders (1,861) surpassed that of Europeans (1,858) for the first time. From 2007 onward, the number of African students with CGS began to increase substantially.

There were continuous policy promotions. During the China-African Summit (as well the Third FOCAC) in 2006 in Beijing, the CGS specifically for African students was increased from two thousand to four thousand annually. In the Fourth FOCAC in 2009, the CGS again increased to 5,500 every year. The number reached 5710 in 2010.⁵⁵ In 2012, the Fifth FOCAC announced the scholarships would reach twenty thousand for next three years. That is why the CGS for African students increased rapidly. In 2011, the number was 6316. By 2015, African CGS holders reached 8,470.⁵⁶

In order to implement the policy, different strategies were planned by the agents, universities, municipalities, various departments, and even individuals.⁵⁷ Regarding CGS, there was no evaluation system until 1997, when the State Education Commission issued the "Provisional Measures of Annual Review of Scholarship of Foreign Students." The measures made it clear for the first time that students had to undergo review according to certain standards with either "pass" or "no-pass" results.⁵⁸ Within three years, 7,118 CGS holders took the review exam; 7008 passed and 110 did not (1.55 percent). In 2000, two documents were issued by the Ministry of Education regarding the CGS annual review system and method.⁵⁹ With more accurate standards and more autonomy for the institutions entitled to enroll foreign

students, the receiving universities now had the real authority to carry out their own review of foreign students. In the same year, 2342 CGS holders at eighty-one universities underwent the review; 2314 (98.8 percent) passed, 28 did not. Among the unqualified students, seventeen were Asian, seven European, two African, and two American.⁶⁰ As for the universities that have the authority to offer CGS, there are strict qualifications. Usually only those universities that have high-level education, qualified professors who can offer courses in foreign languages, and adequate educational facilities can enroll international students. In 2015, only the 279 designated Chinese universities under the CGS-Chinese University Program were entitled to accept individual scholarship applications.⁶¹

The Chinese government wanted to get actively engaged in international educational cooperation. Therefore, different ministries, provinces, municipalities, and companies started to offer various types of scholarship. Owing to the complicated scholarship system and space, we describe one example, that of Shanghai Government Scholarship.

Table 3: Shanghai Government Scholarship – Class A

(Unit/time: RMB ¥/Annual)

Supporting Categories	Field of Study	Tuition	Accommodation	Stipend	Medical Insurance	Total
Undergraduate students	I	20000	8400	30000	800	59200
	II	23000	8400	30000	800	62200
	III	27000	8400	30000	800	66200
Master's students	I	25000	8400	36000	800	70200
	II	29000	8400	36000	800	74200
	III	34000	8400	36000	800	79200
Doctoral students	I	33000	12000	42000	800	87800
	II	38000	12000	42000	800	92800
	III	45000	12000	42000	800	99800

Source: "Shanghai Government Scholarship – Class A," China Scholarship Council Date: 2016-03-28 <http://www.csc.edu.cn/Laihua/scholarshipdetailen.aspx?cid=105andid=1293>

Note: (1) Full scholarship covers tuition waiver, accommodation, stipend, and comprehensive medical insurance; (2) Field of Study I includes Philosophy, Economics, Legal Studies, Education, Literature, History, and Management; Field of Study II includes Science, Engineering, and Agriculture; Field of Study III includes Fine Arts and Medicine.

At the end of the 1990s, a general framework for international student education was in place in China, which was compatible with Chinese culture and China's own educational system. Since then, China has kept improving its international educational cooperation in an effort to make itself one of the most popular destinations for foreign students. In the meantime, as economic globalization

accelerates, international demand increases greatly for those young talents who can speak Chinese or have a solid knowledge about China. As a result, the number of China's international students continues to grow rapidly. In 2016, they increased to 442,773, 45,138 more than 2015 (a growth rate is 11.35 percent). African students increased 11,802 to reach 61,594, which was a growth rate is 23.7 percent.⁶² International education in China gets more popular every year.

Western countries have long dominated African development theory and practice. Since gaining independence, few African countries have developed successfully under western guidance, and many have gotten into difficult situations.⁶³ In recent years, the world economy has been volatile, and major changes have taken place in the international balance of power. On the one hand, the U.S. financial crisis and the debt crisis in Europe landed the western economies in trouble; on the other hand, emerging economies have become the driving force of the world economy. Thus "Look East" becomes a tendency of some African countries.⁶⁴ Asia's experience with poverty alleviation and development becomes a model for Africans who want to find a way for their own countries out of poverty, and China offers an alternative development model for African governments. Nigerian historian Femi Akomolafe explained it this way: "Now to the lessons Africa can learn from the world's new economic giant: The first and most profound is that: It is possible! Whichever way we throw it around, China's economic performance is nothing short of a miracle. It shows what a people with confidence, determination and vision can achieve."⁶⁵

The Chinese experience is that to pursue the development of its own economy, a country can only rely on the concerted efforts and determination of its own people. Never in the history of mankind did a nation depend entirely for its own economy on foreigners.⁶⁶ One of the ways for the African governments to learn from China is to send their young people to China for further study. In 2005, the Rwanda government signed an agreement with the Ministry of Education to train their undergraduates, with Rwanda government scholarships. That same year, the Tanzania government also signed an agreement with the China Scholarship Council and agreed to train Tanzanian students in China's universities with Tanzanian scholarships.⁶⁷

Reasons, Motivations, and Purpose

Why do more and more Africans come to China for further study? There are various reasons, such as the favorable conditions provided by China, various motivations of young people and pragmatic purposes for personal development.⁶⁸ To know more about China and to learn more advanced technology from China are the main reasons that young Africans go to China for further studies.

The West has dominated the African media, and there are various untrue stories or even rumors about China. A typical one is the 1991 *New York Times* article "China Used Prisoner Labor in Africa" by Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights in the Carter Administration.⁶⁹ There was no source or

explanation for what she wrote, but since she was a former top U.S. official, the rumor of “China’s prison labor” spread around the world.⁷⁰ BBC’s irresponsible report “Angola’s Chinese-Built Ghost Town” is another example.⁷¹ The residential area soon sold out after it opened to the public for sale.⁷² Africans used to know very little about China, and most of the young Africans come to China in order to see China with their own eyes. China’s economic development and strong economy are the true attractions to young Africans. The Beijing Olympic Games in 2008 showcased China as never before to Africans and they were surprised to find an impressive China as shown on TV.⁷³ The event served as a stimulus to attract African youth who want to know more about China’s growth and its experience of development with modern technologies. They want to understand why China can be Africa’s largest trading partner for consecutive years and is now the second largest economy in the world. It is China’s growing presence in Africa, the commodities, television shows, Confucius Institutes, and Chinese people working in Africa that have aroused growing interest among African students. Maxwell Zeken is a 16-year-old Liberian who lives in rural Nimba County. Asked where he dreams of studying, he says: “I want to study engineering in China and come back to Liberia to build our roads and our cities. They say you must visit the Great Wall of China. I regret that my country didn’t build something like that.”⁷⁴

China’s readiness for educational cooperation has surely promoted the boom of African students coming to China. In recent years, the Chinese government has worked hard to strengthen its relations with African countries and has adopted several measures to encourage African students to become familiar with China, such as the Confucius Institutes, learning Chinese, and scholarships to provide favorable conditions to attract African students.⁷⁵ By 2017, there were forty-eight Confucius Institutes and twenty-seven Confucius Classrooms located in thirty-three African countries, which provide various levels of Chinese language learning (see Appendix for a listing of the Institutes and Classrooms).

Many African students learned Chinese before applying for a Chinese scholarship or for enrolment at a Chinese university.⁷⁶ For example, Dr. Belhadj Imen first won the top prize in a Chinese Bridge Competition in Tunisia, and the Chinese government then offered her a scholarship to study in the Department of Chinese Language and Literature at Peking University. Since Peking University is the top university in China, many international students have to learn Chinese before applying there for enrolment or a scholarship. It is the same case with other Chinese universities entitled to enroll international students. At the Shanghai Institute of Technology, about 130 African students are majoring in civil engineering and architecture. In their first year, they master Chinese and take a language proficiency test. This is a normal way for international students including Africans pursuing their degrees in China. Christian King, a student in philosophy and international trade at Renmin University, told Panview: “I started studying Chinese back home in Zimbabwe and it was very difficult at first. The tones and characters were

challenging, but after several years in China I am almost fluent. I love and enjoy Chinese now."⁷⁷

Scholarships also promote African students going to China. With Africa's importance in China's international strategy, the scholarships become more and more inclined toward African students. As for CGS holders, Asian students are always at the top. It is natural both for the geopolitical reasons and the many overseas Chinese in Asian countries neighboring China. Europe, although with fewer CGS recipient countries than Africa, had been long time at the second place. Yet the situation has changed since 2006 when Africa moved into second place in terms of CGS awardees.

Table 4. Comparison of CGS Holders between Africa and Europe (2003-2010)

Year	Total Scholarship	Africa	Percent (%)	Europe	Percent (%)
2003	6153	1244	20.2	1442	23.4
2004	6715	1317	19.6	1880	23.5
2005	7218	1367	18.8	1761	24.4
2006	8484	1861	21.9	1858	21.9
2007	10151	2733	26.9	2107	20.8
2008	13516	3735	27.6	2628	19.4
2009	18245	4824	26.44	3022	16.56
2010	22,390	5710	25.5	3283	14.66

As the Table 4 shows, the percentage of CGS for Africa and Europe was about the same in 2006, but by 2007 the number of Africans had risen to 2,733, 2007, outnumbering Europeans by 626. The CGS holders of Africa increased every year. Today, students from fifty-one African countries are eligible for Chinese government scholarships (for Europe, the number is thirty-nine). In 2010, there were 22,390 beneficiaries, with 11,197 were offered to Asia (50.01 percent), 5710 to Africa (25.5 percent), 3283 to Europe (14.66 percent), 1761 to America (7.87 percent), and 439 to Oceania (1.96 percent).⁷⁸ Clearly Africans have become the second most important in terms of CGS holders.

Besides the CGS, there are other types of scholarships offered to international students, such as provincial scholarships, ministerial scholarships, university scholarships, and various scholarships with specific purposes provided by companies, charity organizations, etc. CGS covers the waiver of various expenses, including tuition, teaching material fees, research and survey fees, dissertation guidance fees, one-off resettlement fees, on-campus accommodation, medical insurance, a round-trip international airfare each year for home visits, and one-time round-trip international airfare for all students. In addition, international students receive their stipends monthly. With the country's continued economic development, the value of the scholarship has raised many times over the past years.⁷⁹ More and more African students enjoy CGS or other scholarships.

Self-funded African students, however, have greatly surpassed the Chinese scholarship holders since 2005. In 2015, among 49,792 African students in China, only 8,470 were CGS holders while 41,322 were self-funded. I once met a Zambian student in the Shangdi region in north Beijing where I live. He told me that he came to learn Chinese in a small language school in Wudaocao, an area well known among foreign students. That surprised me because he looked very young and had come to China alone. He was living in a residential area far away from the city center, and he showed his determination to study Chinese language.

There are different motivations underlying Africans deciding to study in China. For instance, some like the reputation of Chinese universities and others want to pursue specific fields.⁸⁰ China's experience of development with advanced technologies has inspired young Africans. Chinese companies are building roads, bridges, hospitals, schools, dams, oil refineries, and modern railways in Africa. What is more, Huawei, a networking and telecommunications equipment and services multinational company, has been successful in African IT industry and China is cooperating with Nigeria in the field of satellites. The localization of Chinese companies has attracted talented youngsters in different countries. I have met various African students who were in master's programs, such as Serge Mundeke at Beijing University of Science and Technology and Odo Stephen Ogidi, a Nigerian student who worked as a post-doctoral fellow in electrical engineering at Dalian University of Technology. African students are also engaged in the social sciences, such as Erfiki Hicham, a Moroccan student who received his PhD. from the School of International Studies at Peking University. The aforementioned Tunisian scholar Imen Belhadj earned her M.A. in Chinese language and literature and Ph.D. in international politics and then undertook post-doctoral studies in Arab studies, all at Peking University.

All these phenomena make China an ideal country for young students to pursue further studies. In recent years, more African students are engaged in professional studies.⁸¹ According to a survey of two thousand samples in 2014, 84 percent of African students had as their goal earning a degree: 41.61 percent applied for medical science as their major, 21.56 percent chose engineering related subjects, while 13.94 percent chose business and management. In all, 98.33 percent applied for admission to the Top Five majors.⁸² A student from the Republic of Congo came to China in 2007. He once told me that after he saw several telecommunications products in the market that were "made in China" he decided to go to China. With a dream of becoming the minister of telecommunications in his country, he is now a graduate student in telecommunications at the Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications.

Obviously there are other practical reasons, among them the fact that tuition and fees are lower and it is easier to get student visas than for western countries. Moreover, if one has learned Chinese and has an understanding of Chinese culture, it is easier to find a good job at a leading Chinese companies such as Huawei and ZTE

(also a telecommunications multinational) back in their own country. To be sure, the Chinese know very little about Africa, and there is surely widespread ignorance regarding the African skin color. However, the friendliness and warm feelings of the Chinese people may also encourage young Africans to study in China.⁸³

Role, Contributions, and Agency

Since African students are becoming a big group in China, what role do they play? What contributions do they make to both China and Africa, or to bilateral relations? Human history is a history of (im)migration. Although international students are not always considered immigrants or members of a diaspora, their linkage with a diaspora is obvious. The first reason for considering them as such is their role as a bridge. As the second largest group within African community in China, they constantly function as a bridge between African culture and Chinese culture. As soon as they enter China and begin their social life on campus, they engage in cultural exchange and play a role as a bridge between different cultures through conversation with their fellow students, contact with the authorities and ordinary Chinese, courses and debates, social interaction, etc.

In a new situation, young Africans in common with other humans always face new challenges and have to experience cultural shock—more serious for undergraduates than graduates, females than males.⁸⁴ Cultural exchange or adaptation thus becomes important, since it can occur in daily life, the learning process, and social contact, and it brings about better relations with the host community.⁸⁵ Cultural adaptation becomes an active response to new conditions, a process of mutual learning. I personally have supervised many African graduates, including three Ph.D. recipients from Tunisia, Morocco, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. They told me various stories about their experiences involving ignorance and biased views on the one hand and on the other friendliness with warm feelings.

African students become the bridge between Africa and China. Moses is a Nigerian student majoring in Chinese language teaching. He came to China in 2013 and has a typical Chinese name “Wu Wengzhong.” Having learned Chinese in Nigeria from his childhood, he became addicted to Chinese culture during his stay in China. He has learned various kinds of Chinese arts and performances, including some superior arts such as *Xiangsheng* (Chinese cross-talk or comic dialogue) and lion dance, and has attended various performances and art shows. With his profound interest in Chinese language and culture, Moses participated in the “Hebei Provincial Foreign Scholars’ Chinese Talents’ Show” in November 2014. He showed his *Kung Fu* skills, recited Chinese classic poems, and performed self-composed Chinese cross-talk with his foreign partner. Thanks to his excellent performance and skill, he won “Best Creative Award,” “Best Eloquence Award,” and the “Silver Award of Recitation of Classic Poem.” He also received the “Best All-Around King” for his talent show presentation of Chinese culture. Owing to his capability in Mandarin and understanding of Chinese culture, his Chinese friends called him “China-hand.”⁸⁶

Tuition from African students has no doubt contributed to China's economy. Besides, their cultural knowledge about their home countries has contributed to multi-culturalism in China. Significant cultural exchanges are ongoing between African and Chinese students. Africans are learning the Chinese language, culture, and work ethic.⁸⁷ At the same time they are transmitting African culture, values, and skills.⁸⁸ Chinese students also learn about African culture on different occasions. There are various African culture clubs in Chinese cities, such as African dance, African music, and African drumming, which are the result of African students' contribution.⁸⁹ For example, Francis Tchiégué, a Cameroonian student, came to China for further study many years ago, having already received his Ph.D. in Cameroon. In China, he was attracted by the similarity between Cameroonian culture and Chinese culture and thus started to learn Chinese art, cultural skills, and cross-talk. He introduced African culture to the Chinese through various activities, and he even made a Chinese traditional costume from Cameroonian cloth. Francis was named "Envoy of Art Exchange between China and Africa." He is now trying his best to introduce African films to China.⁹⁰

There is an annual International Cultural Festival in Peking University, and African students set up booths to proudly introduce their own culture to the Chinese audience.⁹¹ My student Antoine Lokongo played the drum in the festival, and many Chinese students tried to learn this skill. In order to introduce African culture to ordinary Chinese, the Center for African Studies at Peking University and the *Half-Monthly Talks* co-run a special column entitled "Entry into African Culture." So far fifteen articles on different topics about African culture have been published, covering African world heritage, languages, films, the role of chiefs, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Nobel Prize winner Wole Soyinka, Ibn Battuta, Ibn Khaldun, the civilization of Ethiopia, etc.; some of them were written by African students.⁹²

Chinese students in London serve as a bridge between Chinese culture and British culture and between Chinese diaspora in Britain and British society.⁹³ African students play the same role. They not only serve as a bridge between African culture and Chinese culture but also a bridge between the African community in China and Chinese who are interested in China-Africa bilateral relations.⁹⁴ Thanks to the effort of African students, Chinese have begun to get familiar with African values, ideas, dance, drumming, pictures, sculpture, etc. A good example is my former student Wang Hanjie who wrote her B.A. thesis on "The History and Spread of Djembe Drum in China." When asked why she chose this topic, she told me with a smile that she was a member of the Djembe Club at Peking University.⁹⁵ In Wuhan, an important metropolitan city in middle China where advertisements projecting western brands and tastes are very popular, in an interview with some local women about their tastes for African cultural products in China they found it *hen ku* (very cool). "Their choice showed that they were avant-garde, cosmopolitan and even modern in their fashion tastes and preferences. This African cultural influence in Wuhan has been facilitated in no small measure by the annual Wuhan University

Autumn International Cultural Festival.”⁹⁶ In other universities in Beijing, such as Minzu University of China, there is even a specific African Culture Day.

Although some African students choose to move to a third country after they finish their university studies in China, many decide to return home after graduation and make important contribution to their own countries.⁹⁷ In addition to their participation in different fields of work, some of them were put in important positions and assumed high posts in their government. As of 2005, for example, eight former recipients of Chinese government scholarships were holding ministerial positions or above in their respective home countries, eight were serving as ambassadors or consuls to China, six were working as secretaries to their countries’ presidents or prime ministers, three were secretary-generals of Associations for Friendship with China, not to mention many experts and elites in other fields.⁹⁸ Taking Peking University as example, its former student Mulatu Teshome Wirtu became Speaker of the Parliament in Ethiopia and now is the President. After her education, Lucy Njeri Manegene worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kenya. Rakotoarivony R.J.Manitra went back to Madagascar after her M.A. studies and now serves in the Madagascar Embassy in China. Mapulumo Lisebo Mosisili returned to Lesotho after being awarded an M.A. and is now Principal Secretary of the Labor Department in Lesotho.⁹⁹

Another important aspect of African student experiences in China is that they develop Pan-African connections on their campuses. When answering the BBC’s question of why he came to China, Mikka Kabugo, a Ugandan in the African Students Association of Peking University, said he started to learn about China through a traditional Chinese medical doctor in Uganda. When he came to China, he found that Beijing was a global village where he could exchange ideas about African affairs with fellow African students from other countries. Such exchanges among African students helped broaden their global perspective. With fellow students in the same association, they examine African issues from a Pan-African perspective and think about how they can help their home continent.¹⁰⁰ What is more, through classes, debates, and various seminars held jointly by the African Students Association and the Center for African Studies at Peking University, they have learned a great deal about world affairs and the African situation, problems, and solutions.

Following their fellow students at Peking University, the Tsinghua University African students also formed an African Students Association on African Day, May 25, 2017, with members from twenty-seven African countries. During the opening ceremony, African students discussed various issues such as the thoughts of Presidents Julius Kambarage Nyerere and Nkrumah, heard a presentation by Dr. Chabalala, a student from the School of Public Health at Tsinghua University, about the continent’s contribution to knowledge development shared, and listened to Professor Tang Xiaoyang from the School of International Relations and Carnegie–Tsinghua Center talk about the structural change of China-Africa relations. Professor John Akokpari, Center for African Studies at Peking University, led a discussion

about opportunities for African students in the diaspora to become change makers in the development of their own countries. There are other African student associations as well, such as the General Union of African Students in China (GUASC) and the General Union of African Students in Tianjin (GUAST).¹⁰¹

Although most international students are not normally classified as immigrants, Bodomo correctly pointed out that the process of trading between Africa and China began with Africans who studied in China and remained there engage in business, and some ended up in trade with China.¹⁰² African students are often the first to carry out business between their home country and China. Although they have little capital to begin with, yet a solid social and linguistic background is to their advantage. Gradually they became major trade intermediaries between Africa and China, thus contributing to the economic activities between both sides. Dr. Abdul, a veterinary official for the Niger Government, is a good example. He received a Niger-China Friendship Scholarship from the Chinese government. After finishing his degree, he decided to change his profession by opening a new occupation that was unfamiliar for him but more profitable. Since 2000, Dr. Abdul has established himself in Guangzhou to export medicine and related veterinary products to Africa and Europe, obtaining these products directly from factories in north China with which he is familiar due to his training in China. After this success, he resumed his connections with the Niger government. Now fluent in Mandarin, Dr. Abdul serves as honorary consul for Niger and is responsible for conveying the demands of Nigerian students with scholarships at Chinese universities to any Nigerian minister who visits Guangzhou. He describes his role as turning “brain drain” to “brain gain.” According to Bredeloup, this type of situation has resulted from two facts: the opportunities created by China’s rapid economic development and the change of or even devaluation of the position of civil servants in Africa. There are quite a few examples like Abdul, including Patrick from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Aziz from Mali, etc.¹⁰³ As indicated in other studies, some of the self-funded African students and even CGS holders in Guangdong and Zhejiang entered trading activities for the first time in their life and became settled businessmen while studying in China.¹⁰⁴ Now, many African students like Dr. Abdul now serve as a business and cultural bridge between Africa and China.

It is generally assumed that China has made every move in developing China-Africa relations while the African agency in shaping and influencing deepening relations with China is either paralyzed or non-existent. It is interesting that an African student researched African agency in the making of Africa-China relations. Adu Amoah, a former Ghanaian government official, later became a student in China and married a Chinese woman. As president of the Wuhan University African Students’ Representative Committee, he used his own observations and experiences to indicate how African students can be the master of their own lives in China. He described a lively African migrant community emerging in Wuhan, “which may potentially add to the makings of an African diaspora in

contemporary China” and that “this migrant African population is constituted fundamentally by students,” “comprising a dynamic fashion of those pursuing their course of study and those who stay on after graduation.” Taking Wuhan as an example, Amoah describes how the African presence in China influenced the reality of Chinese society in the form of fashion, inter-marriage, the exchange of language learning (Africans can explain their own worldview and experience in Mandarin while teach English to Chinese students), and through the management of African enterprises such as nightclubs run by Africans. “This is necessary to dispel the interpretation of Africa ‘under the sign of crisis’. . .in popular and academic discourses in general and specifically, the patronising idea of Africa as a clueless, pliant and suppliant partner in Africa-China relations.”¹⁰⁵

African students have not only immensely improved cooperation between Africa and China and contributed a great deal to cultural exchange, but they also have promoted the internationalization of China’s universities.¹⁰⁶ For African students, there are definitely cultural shocks, homesickness, issues of social adaptation, psychological stress and frustrations, and difficulties and problem in daily life. Moreover, there are misunderstandings and prejudice from Chinese students and other international students as well as language barriers in the educational process. The English proficiency of Chinese teachers is not always good enough, which makes the learning process for African students more difficult.¹⁰⁷ In the future, there is thus much room for improvement.

Conclusion

In terms of the subject of this article, international educational cooperation involves three parties: China, African countries, and African students. At this juncture we can ask certain questions to the Chinese government, African countries, and African students.

Regarding the Chinese dimension, it is important that Africa is not a totality but a continent of fifty-four countries, which have different conditions and needs.¹⁰⁸ African students are not a totality but different individuals. Besides scholarships, does the Chinese government provide adequate living conditions for African students with their different religions, lifestyles, and cuisine in a society that is unfamiliar to them? Are Chinese teachers sufficiently qualified in their skills for transmitting their knowledge to African students? Are there good measures for African students to introduce their own culture to the Chinese society? Is there sufficient opportunity for African students to exchange ideas and experiences with their Chinese counterparts? China certainly needs to better address these and other issues.

As for the African countries, they must remember that the African students returning home are those who love their own countries and want to contribute the knowledge learned in China to their homelands. Do African governments offer a good opportunity for African students to work at home after their graduation in China? Do they show enough concern and care for their academic studies and life in

China and create better conditions to facilitate their studies and daily living requirements? Do the embassies provide suitable channels of communication with their students in China, look after their interests, and respond effectively to their reasonable demands?¹⁰⁹ Better conditions should be prepared for those who would like to return home for service on behalf of their own countries.

For African students in China, we should remind them that they are studying with great dreams for themselves, great expectations from their countries, and great hopes from their families. Do they make good use of their scholarships or give their best efforts by studying hard to meet the challenges ahead and thus be fully prepared for their futures? Do they take every opportunity to introduce African culture or the culture of their own countries to ordinary Chinese or to fellow students from other countries? Do they learn from having had good experiences or from the lessons of development of other countries and thus make good provision for the opportunity to use them when they want to realize their dream upon their return home?

The June 28, 2017 report “China tops US and UK as destination for Anglophone African students” that appeared in *The Conversation* underscores the need for China, African countries, and African students to address vigorously questions such as those posed above. “According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics,” the report stated, “the US and UK host around 40,000 African students a year. China surpassed this number in 2014, making it the second most popular destination for African students studying abroad, after France which hosts just over 95,000 students.”¹¹⁰ More and more African youth have come to study in China in recent decades, and their number is constantly increasing. They serve as carriers of African culture, mediators of bilateral trade and business, transmitters of social organizations and ways of life, and as a bridge between Africa and China. “It’s still too early to tell how these new dynamics might be shaping geopolitics on the continent.”¹¹¹ African students are definitely creating a new world. To integrate into a host society does not mean giving up one’s own culture. To build a linkage between two cultures and transform from an “enclave” to a “bridge” remains a difficult task but one that is worth trying and is workable.

Postscript

On November 11, 2017 the first “Amanbo Cup” of Employment/Innovation Competition for African Students was held in Shenzhen. Jointly organized by the Center for African Studies of Peking University, the China-Africa International Business School of Zhejiang Normal University, and the Center for China-Africa Sustainable Development, the competition was sponsored by Shenzhen Right Net Tech Co. Ltd. and was aimed at training and development young African talent for innovation and entrepreneurship.¹¹² The six finalists were selected from more than two hundred submitted African student projects. Those of contestants from five universities involved health care (1st Award), biological pharmacy and ecological

farms (2nd Award), and water resources protection, recycling economy, and preschool education (3rd Award). The competition is significant in three aspects. It was the first time for an African student entrepreneurship competition in China, and it will definitely play an important role in the future of China-Africa cooperation. Secondly, it was initiated by and under the sponsorship of a private enterprise and presided over from the beginning to the end by civil organizations. Thirdly, it was the first joint efforts university-institution effort to promote China-Africa cooperation with a focus on the development of young African talent.

Coincidentally, on November 15th, the African Students' Job Fair was held in Beijing with the theme of "The Belt and Road Initiative and Prospects of African Youth Employment" and organized by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) and the University of International Business and Economics. This was a recruitment effort of Chinese companies specifically for African students. A total of sixty-six state-owned, local, and private Chinese enterprises provided nearly five hundred job opportunities on the African continent. African youth both in China and Africa showed a great interest in the fair, with nearly four hundred attending the job fair in person and about one thousand young Africans from fifty-two African countries submitted their resumes online in advance.¹¹³ With the opportunity for Chinese enterprises to enter Africa under the special opportunity of capacity cooperation, the road for China-African cooperation will become broader and broader.

Appendix

Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms in African Countries (-Feb.2017)

Country	Confucius Institutes	Confucius Classrooms
Angola	Agostinho Neto University	
Benin	University of Abomey-Calavi	1
Botswana	University of Botswana	
Burundi	University of Burundi	
Cameroon	University of Yaounde II	1
Cape Verde	University of Cape Verde	
Comoros		University of Comoros
The Republic of Congo	Marien Ngouabi University	
Côte d'Ivoire	University of Felix Houphouette Boigny	
Egypt	Cairo University, Suez Canal University	3 at the Nile Television of Egypt
Equatorial Guinea	National University of Equatorial Guinea	
Eritrea	National Board for Higher	

Ethiopia	Education of Eritrea Confucius Institute at TVET Institute of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa University	Mekelle University、 Hawassa University (in total 5)
Ghana	University of Ghana, University of Cape Coast	
Kenya	University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Moi University	2 at CRI in Nairobi
Lesotho		Machabeng College International School
Liberia	University of Liberia	
Madagascar	Antananarivo University, University of Toamasina	1
Malawi	University of Malawi	
Mali		Lycee Askia Mohamed
Mauritius	University of Mauritius	
Morocco	University of Mohammed of V-Agdal, University Hassan II	
Mozambique	Eduardo Mondlane University	
Namibia	University of Namibia	
Nigeria	University of Lagos, Nnamdi Azikiwe University	1
Rwanda	College of Education, University of Rwanda	1
Senegal	Cheikh Anta Diop University, Dakar	
Seychelles	University of Seychelles	
Sierra Leone	University of Sierra Leone	
South Africa	University of Stellenbosch, University of Cape Town, Rhodes University, Durban University of Technology, University of Johannesburg	The Cape Academy of Mathematics, Science and Technology, Westerford High School, Chinese Culture and International Exchange Center (in total 5)
Sudan	University of Khartoum	
Tanzania	University of Dodoma, University of Dar es Salaam	Zanzibar Journalism and Mass Media College of Tanzania

Togo	University of Lome	
Tunisia		CRI in Sfax
Uganda	Makerere University	
Zambia	University of Zambia	2
Zimbabwe	University of Zimbabwe	
Total	48 Confucius Institutes	27 Confucius Classrooms

Notes

* I would like to thank Prof. Lin Fengmin, Dr. Xu Liang, Liu Qinglong, and Li Zhen for their help.

1 Li 2014.

2 Li Anshan 2015a, 2015b.

3 For African trading communities see Bertonecello and Bredeloup 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2009; Bredeloup and Pliez 2009; Bodomo 2007, 2012; Ditgen 2010; Cissé 2013. For their economic activities in Guangzhou see Bodomo 2007, 2010; Lyons, et al. 2008, 2012, 2013; Li et al. 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2012; Li and Du 2012a, 2012b; Bodomo and Ma 2010; Diederich 2010; Müller 2011; Haugen 2012; Bredeloup 2012. For Yiwu see Le Bail 2009; Bertonecello, Bredeloup and Pliez 2009; Osnos 2009; Pliez 2010; Bodomo and Ma 2010 2012; Ma 2012.

4 For Hong Kong, see Bodomo 2007, 2009, 2012; Ho 2012; Mathews 2011; Mathews and Yang 2012. For Macau, see Morais 2009; Bodomo 2012; Bodomo and Silva 2012.

5 Regarding living conditions, social practices, and religious activities see Li et al. 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2011; Li and Du 2012a, 2012b; Bertonecello and Bredeloup 2009; Li et al. 2008; Bodomo 2009, 2010; Xu 2009; Yang 2011; Müller 2011; Haugen, 2013b. For barriers, etc., see Bredeloup 2007; Li and Du, 2009; Xu 2009; Osnos 2009; Morais 2009; Bodomo, 2010; Haugen, 2012.

6 Marfaing and Thiel 2014; Cissé 2013.

7 Bodomo 2016.

8 Hevi 1963.

9 Larkin 1971.

10 Liu 2013; Cheng 2014.

11 Zhang 1999; Monson 2009; Liu and Monson 2011.

12 Gillespie 2001.

13 Seidelman 1989; Sautman 1994; Sullivan 1994; Li and Liu 2013.

14 China Africa Education Cooperation Group, 2005, hereafter CAECG.

15 Li and Li 2006; Li 2013; China Africa Project 2013.

16 Liu 2017.

17 Hashim, et al. 2003; Hashim and Yang 2003.

18 Disima 2004.

19 See Yi and Xiong 2013 and Gong 2014 for cultural adaptation, Long and Xiong 2014 regarding cultural differences and their impact, and Ye Shuai 2011 on different concepts of time and family.

20 Ketema et al. 2009; King 2012; Haugen 2013a.

- 21 Li 2006; Li and Luo 2013; Xu 2007; He 2007; Lou and Xu 2012.
- 22 Cheng 2012; Zheng 2012, 2013a, 2013b; An et al. 2014.
- 23 Song 2011; Lin and Ren 2010.
- 24 Amoah 2012; Lokongo 2012.
- 25 Dong and Chapman 2008.
- 26 Li and Liu 2013; Niu 2016; Liu 2017.
- 27 Haugen 2013a, p. 331.
- 28 Li 2014.
- 29 Li 2006; He 2007; Liu 2017.
- 30 Jiang and Guo 2001, p. 524.
- 31 Li 2006; Jiang and Guo 2001, p. 530.
- 32 China Africa Education Cooperation Group 2005, pp. 14-17.
- 33 Hevi 1963.
- 34 Cheng 2014.
- 35 Li 2011.
- 36 Monson 2009.
- 37 CAECG 2005.
- 38 Liu and Monson 2011.
- 39 Chen and Xie 2010.
- 40 China Africa Education Cooperation Group 2005.
- 41 Li and Liu 2013.
- 42 Sautman 1994; Sullivan 1994.
- 43 China Africa Education Cooperation Group 2005, p. 16.
- 44 China Education Yearbook 2003, p. 343.
- 45 China Education Yearbook 2010, p. 440.
- 46 China Education Yearbook 2009, p. 440.
- 47 Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Public Security, "Request for Instruction of better administration of social management of foreign students," April 29, 1978. See also Liu, 2017.
- 48 State Council Document No. 121[1985]. Circular of State Council's endorsement of "Methods of Management of Foreign Students" issued by State Education Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Public Security and Ministry of Finance. October 14, 1985.
<http://www.chinalawedu.com/news/1200/22598/22615/22822/2006/3/he999524311118360023570-0.htm> (Accessed June 5, 2017).
- 49 Decree No.4 [1999] "Provisional Measures of the Ministry of Education for the Administration on Enrolment of Foreign Students by Primary and Secondary Schools." July 21, 1999. http://www.pkulaw.cn/fulltext_form.aspx?Gid=23504 (Accessed June 5, 2017).
- 50 Decree No.9 [2000] "Provisions on the Administration of Foreign Students in Universities" issued by Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Public Security. January 31, 2000.
http://www.moe.edu.cn/s78/A20/gjs_left/moe_861/tnull_8647.html. (Accessed June 5 2017)

- 51 Decree No. 42 [2017] "Measures of the Administration of Enrolment and training of International Students by the Educational Institution," issued by Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Public Security. March 20, 2017. http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2017-06/02/content_5199249.htm (Accessed June 5, 2017).
- 52 Li and Liu 2013. For specific cases, see Liu 2017, pp. 167-71.
- 53 *The Conversation* 2017.
- 54 Hu 2005.
- 55 Li Anshan et al. 2012, pp. 58-60.
- 56 China Education Yearbook 2010-2016.
- 57 Li and Liu 2013.
- 58 "Provisional Measures of Annual Review of Scholarship of Foreign Students," issued by the State Commission of Education, March 28, 1997. <http://www.bjfa.gov.cn/affair/oversea/wglxsfg/23801.htm> (Accessed June 5, 2017).
- 59 Education (Jiaowailai) No. 29[2000] "Notice of the Ministry of education on the implementation of the annual review system of the Chinese Government Scholarship," April 26, 2000. http://www.moe.edu.cn/s78/A20/gjs_left/moe_850/tnull_1183.html (Accessed June 5 2017).
- 60 China Education Yearbook 2002.
- 61 China Scholarship Council, "Chinese Government Scholarship Application," August 12, 2015, , <http://en.csc.edu.cn/laihua/newsdetailen.aspx?cid=66andid=3074>
- 62 "Statistics of Foreign students in China in 2016," March 1, 2017, Ministry of Education. http://www.moe.edu.cn/jyb_xwfb/xw_fbh/moe_2069/xwfbh_2017n/xwfb_170301/170301_sjtj/201703/t20170301_297677.html.
- 63 According to Johns Hopkins University Professor of Development Studies Deborah Brautigam (Brautigam 2009, p. 308), "Where the West regularly changes its development advice, programs, and approach in Africa...China does not claim it knows what Africa must do to develop. China has argued that it was wrong to impose political and economic conditionality in exchange for aid, and that countries should be free to find their own pathway out of poverty. Mainstream economists in the West today are also questioning the value of many of the conditions imposed on aid over the past few decades."
- 64 ACET 2009.
- 65 Akomolafe 2006, p. 49.
- 66 Li 2013a.
- 67 China Education Yearbook 2006.
- 68 Liu 2017.
69. Cohen (1991) wrote that "I learned of the case of a Chinese construction company building a road in Benin using prison labour. 70 to 75 percent of the construction workers were known to be prisoners The company was the Jiangsu

Construction Company.....The company was able to underbid all its competitors by a wide margin because its labor costs were so cheap." There was no source and no explanation. Since she is a former U.S. top official, the rumor of "China's prison labor" spread all over the world (Yan and Sautman, 2012, 2017).

70 Yan and Sautman 2012, 2017.

71 Redvers 2012.

72 Situated in a spot about 30km outside Angola's capital, Luanda, Nova Cidade de Kilamba is a newly-built mixed residential project of 750 eight-storey apartment buildings for half-million people with a dozen schools and more than 100 retail units, all sold out soon after its finish. To report an unfinished residential project as "no residents" and the area as "ghost town" before it opens for sale is really a biased view, if not a malicious slander. I visited the area in February 2016 and it was prosperous. At a China-Africa Media Cooperation seminar held at Remin University on April 26, 2017, I exchanged ideas with Venancio Rodrigue, a reporter of Angola, who verified that BBC's report is a twisted story.

73 Several African students told me about their deep impression when they saw a different China in TV during the Olympic Games in 2008.

74 Pilling 2017.

75 Liu 2008.

76 Niu 2016.

77 "Africans learning Chinese can boost cooperation channels," March 23, 2015, CCTV.com.

<http://english.cntv.cn/2016/03/23/ARTIvEEYI0kItDGxV6F2JBK0160323.shtml>. Accessed June 23, 2017.

78 China Education Yearbook 2011.

79 "China's government scholarship for international students raised," January 22, 2015.

<http://old.moe.gov.cn//publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/s5147/201501/183255.html>

80 King 2013; Tsui 2016.

81 Bodomo 2011, p. 29.

82 "EOL and CUCAS jointly published 2014 Report of International Students in China." <http://www.eol.cn/html/lhlx/content.html>. Accessed June 25 2017.

83 Regarding whether there is racism in China, views are different. A Ghanaian student talked about her experience in China, saying, "Others often ask me if I found Chinese to be racist, and whether their treatment of me as a spectacle—taking pictures, touching my hair, rubbing my skin, staring at me—does not indicate a racist attitude. I respond that I find them curious. Many of the experiences I had were borne of ignorance, not racism. Despite always being identified as 'black' and 'African', I never felt discriminated against or antagonized, but rather treated with warmth and friendliness. Because I spoke Mandarin, I could often understand what people said about me, and they were rarely disparaging or maligning." (Baitie 2013).

84 Disma 2004.

- 85 Hashim, et al. 2003.
- 86 Yang, et al. 2016.
- 87 King 2013.
- 88 Amoah 2013.
- 89 Shikwati 2012.
- 90 "Cameroonian Tchiégué's life in China",
<http://tv.cntv.cn/video/C10616/3ce5c25b1bfc476095406544b5971b8a>. Accessed September 6, 2017.
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- 92 Shikwati 2012; Li 2015.
- 93 Wu Bing 2015, 2016.
- 94 Bredeloup 2014.
- 95 Wang 2013.
- 96 Amoah 2012, p. 108.
- 97 Bodomo 2011; Li and Liu 2013.
- 98 China Africa Education Cooperation Group 2005, pp. 20-21.
- 99 Lisebo Kikine to Li Anshan, Tue, 12 Feb 2013 00:18:24 +0800 (CST) (Li, 2013b).
- 100 BBC World Service Newday, "Why are African students flocking to Chinese universities?" June 29, 2017.
http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0577s49?ocid=socialflow_facebook. Accessed June 30, 2017.
- 101 King 2013.
- 102 Bodomo 2013; Haugen 2013.
- 103 Bredeloup 2014.
- 104 Bodomo 2012; Amoah 2013; Haugen 2013.
- 105 Amoah 2012, p. 110.
- 106 Liu 2017.
- 107 Hashim et al. 2003.
- 108 Apithy 2013.
- 109 I supervised several Ph.D. students from Africa. Some of them came across difficulties in finding a decent job after return. An absurd case is that one of them was even asked to translate his dissertation, which was written in Chinese, into French in order to prove his academic capability.
- 110 *The Conversation* 2017.
- 111 Ibid.
- 112 http://www.chinafrica.cn/chinese/focus/201711/t20171114_800109951.html.
- 113 <http://ge.cri.cn/20171116/c5c7ee5f-147e-a879-c315-8114acae8e4c.html>.

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From Pioneers to Professionals: African Brokers in a Maturing Chinese Marketplace

HEIDI ØSTBØ HAUGEN

Abstract: Brokers have played a key role in the establishment and development of African trading communities in China. Nigerians were the first African businesspeople to settle in the commercial hub of Guangzhou, South China, in the 1990s. They initially focused on trade in used vehicles and spare parts but soon ventured into a wide array of business sectors. Deficient commercial infrastructure in Mainland China initially compelled most foreign merchants to source goods via Hong Kong. This changed as Nigerians and other Africans set up as brokers in Mainland China and made the market accessible to itinerant traders and customers at home. In addition to mediating between itinerant traders and Chinese manufacturers, resident Africans offered accommodation, food, money transfer, interpretation, and logistics services. Initially, the brokers could charge generous commissions, from both Chinese producers and African customers. As the market matured, however, they experienced a double squeeze; clients became more familiar with Guangzhou's trading economy and eliminated the brokers from transactions with suppliers, and the costs of being based in China mounted as immigration control tightened. In response, some brokers have moved toward trading on their own by investing previous gains into a business. Others seek to control larger parts of the value chain by setting up production, warehouses, and wholesale outlets. Brokering has become professionalized, and the barriers to entry are higher. These changes are examined by drawing upon data from sixteen months of ethnographic fieldwork in Guangzhou between 2009 and 2017, with follow-up research in Nigeria, Ghana, Togo, and Gambia.

Introduction

"When you have time, come visit our factory," two Chinese men urged Mamadou.¹ They dropped in at Mamadou's logistics office a few days after selling computers to one of his clients. The three men spoke Mandarin Chinese, Mamadou with an accent from French-speaking Africa and the factory owners with a heavy Cantonese inflection. Mamadou listened patiently to their sales pitch and accommodated their requests to add him on WeChat, an instant messenger system used in China for communication, marketing, and payment. "Come by our factory," they repeated. "I will," Mamadou replied, but without enthusiasm. The manufacturers had

Heidi Østbø Haugen is a postdoctoral researcher, Department of Sociology and Human Geography, University of Oslo. She focuses on migration and trade between China and West Africa. Haugen studied Chinese in Beijing and worked for the World Food Programme in Dakar. A steering group member in the Chinese in Africa/Africans in China Research Network, she previously chaired the Nordic Association for China Studies.

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deliberately arrived in the early afternoon, a slow period for African logistics agents. After dark, the office would become busy with clients returning from their tours of markets and factories, full of chatter as they discussed news over glasses of sugary green tea and waited for Mamadou to confirm deliveries and shipments.

After the two Chinese men left, Mamadou turned to me and said, “This means they have very, very big problems.” He had lived in the commercial city of Guangzhou, South China, for eleven years, launching his business career by acting as an intermediary between West African traders and Chinese wholesalers and manufacturers. The generous commissions he could charge during his first years in China provided him with the capital to set up as a logistics agent, collecting and storing goods in a warehouse before shipping them to Francophone West Africa by air or sea. Over time, an increasing share of his income came from logistics rather than sales commissions. In 2016, factory owners started arriving at his office to ask him to send them new customers. They struggled because of tough competition among small-scale manufacturers in the Guangdong province, slow recovery in global demand in the aftermath of the world financial crisis, and unfavorable exchange rates between the Chinese yuan (CNY) and major African currencies. These problems were exacerbated by increasingly restrictive Chinese visa practices, which made traveling to Guangzhou more difficult and expensive for African traders.

This paper examines the role of brokerage in the emerging trade connections between China and Africa. Most goods produced in China reach consumers in Africa via brokerage services of some kind. As Mamadou’s career illustrates, the role of brokerage in the economic interaction between China and Africa has evolved greatly since African traders first ventured to Mainland China to purchase goods. Brokerage has both adapted to a shifting market and been a driver for change. The city of Guangzhou in Southern China has been a center for the production and trade in Chinese goods destined for African markets.

“Brokerage” as an activity rather than “the broker” as a professional will be at the center of analysis. Africans and Chinese in Guangzhou commonly engage in brokerage alongside other activities, such as trade, studying, teaching, sex work, or diplomacy.² The knowledge and networks acquired through these other activities are often what enable people to be effective brokers. Brokerage can be understood as the practice of connecting actors in ways that bridge gaps in social structure, thereby facilitating access to new resources.³ Scholarship on brokerage focuses on the relationships of trust and reciprocal obligations that enable economic transactions. A key tenet in this literature is that middlemen reduce transactional uncertainty and create opportunities for exchanges in environments where formal contractual enforcement is weak.⁴

Studies from the 1960s and 70s in postcolonial societies highlighted how brokers enabled new forms of political relationships, particularly between local tradition-oriented communities and modernistic states.⁵ More recently, ethnographic interest in brokerage has increased in the wake of worldwide neoliberal reforms; these reforms demonstrated that a state-centered understanding of power is clearly inadequate.⁶ This article contributes to a growing literature on transnational brokerage, in which the levels of scale that actors operate at and negotiate between is a central subject of analysis. The analysis will elucidate how different combinations of social and geographic distance create opportunities for brokerage.

The analysis of how brokerage in African trading communities in Guangzhou has evolved is based on data collected through participant observation and interviews during sixteen months of fieldwork in Guangzhou, South China, between 2009 and 2017. Supplementary material was obtained during shorter data collection periods in Nigeria (2011), Gambia (2015), Ghana (2015), and Togo (2015), where I reconnected with traders, suppliers, and return migrants I knew from the China fieldwork. Research informants commonly operated between formal, informal, and illegal economies, which made trust building through long-term ethnographic fieldwork essential. I conducted life story interviews with people who had lived or traded in Guangzhou when the city was still a new destination for African traders. Central events and turning points in these accounts form the basis for the periodization that organizes the discussion below. The rest of the paper is structured chronologically. First, I examine the role of brokerage when African traders first arrived in Mainland China and Guangzhou overtook Hong Kong as the main hub for trade in Chinese products (1997–2002). Next is an exploration of brokerage services supporting Guangzhou's trading economy during the period of strong growth (2003–2008). The final section discusses how the nature of brokerage has changed in an era of market maturation and declining profits (2009–present).

The Emergence of African Trading Communities in Guangzhou (1997–2002)

Serendipitous circumstances brought the first African traders and business brokers to Guangzhou in 1997. They arrived from Hong Kong, where Commonwealth citizens enjoyed visa-free entry. Hong Kong had become a springboard for Africans seeking informal employment in Taiwan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Japan. Undocumented African workers in these parts of Asia were occasionally deported back to the British colony, the closest territory where they could legally stay. There, they ran into wealthier compatriots on visits to purchase goods manufactured on the mainland.⁷

Both the itinerant traders and the deportees stayed in the Chungking Mansions or the next-door hostel Mirador. The costs of living were prohibitively high. Some migrants escaped to Shenzhen, a manufacturing center across the border in Mainland China, where food and lodging was cheaper. They commuted into Hong Kong to eke out a living in the trading economy. In addition to these commuters, a small number of African students, graduates, and English teachers lived in South China in the mid-1990s. A Nigerian teacher based in Guangzhou invited his friend, Ikechukwu Okani, to visit from Hong Kong. Okani had knowledge of mechanics from his time as a former apprentice with a motorcycle spare parts dealer outside Lagos, and his skills landed him an assembly line job in South Korea. However, his arm was trapped in a machine and permanently injured. Unable to work, he was forced to return to Hong Kong. While visiting his friend in Guangzhou, Okani noticed that people rode the same Japanese motorcycles that *okada* drivers used in Nigeria. He commissioned the help of Smith, a friend who was married and lived in Guangzhou, to locate a depot for seized and defunct motorcycles in the Sanyuanli district and negotiated with the managers. "It is scrap. It cannot be sold at the Chinese market," the managers informed the two Nigerians. However, after long consultations

with officials higher up in the government, the civil servants were eventually permitted to sell the defunct machines for export.

Dismantling used motorcycles and packing the spare parts for transportation to Nigeria were labor-intensive tasks. There was no shortage of young Nigerian men in Hong Kong with the free time and skills needed for the job. Very soon, about fifty Nigerians were employed at the motorcycle dump in Guangzhou. Customers were also easy to find. Many Nigerian dealers were already importing spare parts from other places in East Asia, and the favorable prices of the Chinese engines gave them a competitive edge in the thriving market for *okada* parts.

When Smith saw how the trade prospered, he decided to quit his job as an English teacher and become a dealer in spare parts as well. Together with a third friend, Smith and Okani landed a contract that secured them exclusive rights to deal in the discarded vehicles, effectively forming a cartel. They each claimed the right to work at the dump two days per week. "Now containers were being loaded every day," Basil Ukaere, an early Nigerian entrant to Guangzhou, recalled. "The people rushed in from Hong Kong. Everybody had a job. Within the space of three to four months, we had two hundred people in Guangzhou."⁸ Apart from the three exporters, the new African entrants were wage workers at the motorcycle depot. They lived in much the same way as Chinese migrant workers: lodged in a four-story building, and provided with three meals per day by their employer. With a stable income and few expenses, these employees soon started looking to start their own trading ventures. They were effectively locked out of the trade in used spare parts, but an abundance of other goods could be bought cheaply on the mainland and sold to African traders in Hong Kong. Opportunities for exporting directly to Nigeria were curbed by their limited capital. Only full containers could be sent to Africa at the time, and few had enough money to fill a container and wait three months for a return on the investment. In Hong Kong, by contrast, shipping agents sold space in containers, allowing small-scale traders to ship moderate quantities by sea.

I first learned about Okani's opportune discovery from his friend Basil Ukaere.⁹ The two were from the same hometown, and it was Ukaere had who brought Okani to Korea. When things started going well in China, it became Okani's turn to invite his friend to join him. I had known Ukaere since I first stayed in Guangzhou in 2009. Once the leader of the Nigerian Union (in the late 1990s to early 2000) in Guangzhou, he was well respected in the community and thus was very well positioned to know how Nigerians first came to China. His experience with contentious debates notwithstanding, he became visibly upset after listening to academic presentations given at a conference I invited him to in 2014. One presenter, employing irony that was misunderstood, confronted him with claims that Nigerians were ruining the reputation of all Africans in China through their unruly behavior. After the conference, Ukaere was eager to challenge this representation and demonstrate that Nigerians had in fact been instrumental in introducing other Africans to the opportunities present in China. The description of the genesis of the Nigerian community through trade in *okada* spare parts in China is based on his [Ukaere's] account. Interviews with Chinese people who did business with West Africans in the late 1990s and West African traders who bought goods in Guangzhou at the time corroborated his claims that Nigerian businessmen paved the way for direct trade from mainland China to Africa, as discussed below.

Hesitantly and slowly at first, traders from other African countries followed the Nigerians into Mainland China in search of cheaper merchandise. Guangdong was seen as a frontier, a dangerous and messy market with appealingly low prices, a place where you risked everything—including health and life—to make great gains. Seydou, a Guinean trader who had been traveling to Hong Kong since 1994, remembered how his West African friends warned him against going to mainland China in 1998.¹⁰ “No, you shouldn’t go, it’s dangerous, maybe they will kill you!” a compatriot said. Seydou went anyway. With the help of a Nigerian man, he found a shoe market in Shenzhen and marveled at how, less than an hour away from Hong Kong, the shoes were so much less expensive. Furthermore, the factories and wholesale traders in China were just as eager as the African traders were to cut the Hong Kong broker out of the value chain.

Seydou did not have enough capital to fill a container. In Hong Kong, he used to share a container with two or three other traders. However, a Chinese factory owner took a leap of faith and offered to defer most of his payment for a 20-foot container of shoes. Seydou repaid her upon selling the shipload, and 16 years later, they are still working together. “I could make 5,000 dollars by sending a container from Hong Kong. But I made 7,000 dollars by sending a container from China. That’s how [the business cooperation with the shoe factory owner] evolved, little by little,” Seydou explained.

As with many pioneer traders in Mainland China, Seydou started practicing as a broker for other traders from his home country. With him to facilitate their stay, they no longer felt afraid to go to Mainland China. Even though he charged a commission on each transaction, they could get the goods cheaper there than in Hong Kong or Dubai. Seydou had never tried to go to Europe, where he “heard others complain about not having any [immigration] papers.” In China, he had no such worries, and he brought his wife and children to live with him. His business prospered as Guineans gradually stopped sourcing belts, shoes, and building material from Italy and foodstuffs from Holland, turning instead to China for these goods.

Through the brokering and wholesaling of shoes, Seydou soon made enough money to fill containers on his own, and he expanded into new types of merchandise. “I thought, ‘What do Africans buy every day?’ Plastic bags! They get everything in plastic bags. Another thing they use every day is toothbrushes.” He shipped containers of these products. By then, Chinese traders had arrived in Guinea to sell shoes and consumer goods, but Seydou was not intimidated by the competition. “The Chinese are there in Guinea, but they don’t understand Africa,” he claimed, continuing:

They think they can take one or two containers of the same stuff and sell it. Guinea has a population of 9 million people. It’s not a big market like China, where you can sell a lot of the same piece. This year, this model is moving. The next year, people need a new model—the past year’s model is over! Every year you have to change what shoes and clothes you bring in. The Chinese do not understand how to do this and bring a lot that they cannot sell.¹¹

The Role of Brokerage

Brokerage played a different role in Guangzhou than it had in Hong Kong and Dubai, other global centers for the wholesale of Chinese goods.¹² In Hong Kong and Dubai, the merchandise is produced elsewhere and sold from warehouses. Transactions in ready-made goods are instantaneous; the payments are made and the goods delivered at the same time. In Guangzhou, by contrast, much of the merchandise is manufactured to order. The customer typically deposits 30 percent to start production, paying the balance when the goods are ready for delivery. This entails greater risks for both parties in the transaction; customers may fail to make the second payment, after which producers must try to recover their expenses by selling the products on the open market. The more customized the products are, the harder it is to find alternative buyers. Manufacturers, for their part, may deliver substandard goods or pocket the deposit without supplying anything at all. In transactions with deferred settlements, brokerage can offer some protection against opportunism. In the case of nonpayment, suppliers can locate and confront the brokers, who are based in Guangzhou. The customers rely on the brokers to control the production and delivery process in their absence. Both parties may expect brokers to possess the necessary trust, integrity, and cross-cultural competence to mediate in cases of misunderstanding and conflicts.¹³

Because Guangzhou is a production hub, there are several ways of making purchases, and brokerage plays a different role in each. The first method is buying stocks of general merchandise. The standard products kept in stock are the most accessible. There are dozens of specialized wholesale markets in the greater Guangzhou metropolitan area. Brokers bring traders to these markets, usually for a fixed fee, and bargain with wholesalers on behalf of their clients. The wholesalers may secretly ask the brokers whether they expect a commission, and prices quoted to customers include this amount. Brokers I interviewed justified the practice by arguing that they would obtain lower prices for their customers even with the commission included. Yet, most traders would eventually visit the markets on their own, using business cards and memorized public transportation routes to find their way.

A second way of sourcing goods—buying surplus production from factories—demands more of the broker. To access these products, a network of suppliers is needed. The surplus merchandise often results from failed transactions between factories and customers. Delays in delivery or substandard quality may cause customers to cancel contracts, and factories sell off stocks when customers do not have the balance ready on time. This problem intensified following the financial crisis, during which many European and American customers defaulted. Furthermore, some factories deliberately produce additional units to sell on their own, benefiting from economies of scale and the design costs shouldered by the customer who placed the original order. The factories cooperate with brokers to find buyers for these goods. African traders thus get access to high-quality merchandise that may be passed off as non-Chinese to the end customers. In Seydou's words:

It's not easy to hide that something is Chinese. [...] But what we do is to buy the stock from factories that produce for Europe. When the factory gets an order of 10,000, they may produce 15,000. They keep 5,000 and sell them as stock. Some of

the Africans and Arabs who come here, they like to buy this stock. They touch it, and we can feel that it's European, not Chinese.¹⁴

A final way to source products is by manufacturing them to order. Brokers may play a key role at all stages of the production process. They receive samples from clients in Africa and locate Chinese producers. The factories, in turn, produce copies that the customers may entrust the broker to check on their behalf. The brokers may also monitor the production process to preempt problems, knowing that the chance of a refund for faulty products is slim. This need for monitoring decreases if they have previously cooperated with the factory. Finally, brokers control the delivery before shipment. Some brokers request that factories produce an extra batch of goods in addition to their clients' order, to sell themselves. The brokers thus benefit from low unit costs and their clients' knowledge of the home market.

It is in the brokers' interest to maintain their position as liaisons between the Chinese suppliers and African customers. To secure loyal customers, West African brokers offered itinerant traders the chance to live and eat in their apartments in Guangzhou. The hosts thus retained great control over the traders' movements. This arrangement resembles historical ways of organizing West African long-distance trade, in which landlords provide traders with food and accommodation free of charge and enjoy a number of indirect economic benefits in return.¹⁵

In the early years of African trading in Guangzhou, African immigration to the city grew rapidly alongside trading volumes. To obtain a visa to go to China was still easy. Newly arrived migrants with no capital or prior business experience soon discovered that brokering for itinerant traders was their best chance of making a living. Some were better suited for this work than others. Prince, a soft-spoken Nigerian who arrived in China in 2000, quickly saw his savings disappear as he hosted incoming traders without getting much in return. When his younger and more assertive brother, Uzochi, arrived unannounced in 2001, new ground rules were established: Anyone housed in their apartment was asked about their business needs. The brothers called potential suppliers to tell them that they owed three percent commission on every order. "I'm bringing you this customer; don't joke with my percentage," Uzochi told them on the phone, to avoid introducing the topic in front of his clients. He also charged the customers a five percent fee. "You have to take what you can get right away. You know that next time they will go directly to the factory and cut you out," he explained.¹⁶

In an effort to prolong their time as middlemen between the supplier and customer, Prince and Uzochi carefully removed company names and addresses from the many product catalogues in their apartment. While they lost clients who became more experienced, more new traders arrived every month. On slow days, Prince would go to the airport to convince incoming African traders to stay with him. Nigerian traders were scrambling for good brokers in China in those days. More than once, the brothers were called by strangers requesting their services, and Uzochi presumed that their phone number had been stolen from other clients of theirs. Some customers never personally came to China. "Many people were afraid to go to China. They were afraid of getting lost and afraid of getting imprisoned," Uzochi said about the business climate in 2001. Brokering was tough but profitable.

The Consolidation of Trade Through Informal Institutions (2003–2008)

The period between 2003 and 2008 saw a consolidation of the African resident communities in Guangzhou and a continued growth in the number of African visitors. These trends peaked around 2008.¹⁷ At the same time, Yiwu in Zhejiang Province emerged as an additional destination for African traders.¹⁸ The upsurge in trade was supported by an improved institutional structure easing the movement of money, goods, and persons. Informal institutions filled the gaps left by ineffective or missing formal structures, and ensured that contracts were respected and facilitated flows across borders. As more people tried to make a living by engaging in brokerage for Africans in China, the profit margins in such businesses were squeezed. A downward pressure on prices for China-made consumer goods in African end markets also worsened profit margins.¹⁹ Commissions of the size collected by Prince and Uzochi became unimaginable.

Hospitality/Infrastructure

Guangzhou's infrastructure for visiting traders grew in step with the trade volumes. While the practice of brokers hosting their customers continues to this day, it has become much more common for traders to find their own accommodations. Chinese-run hotels and restaurants around the markets accommodate African tastes and religious beliefs. African migrants offer cheap guesthouses, and they have catering businesses delivering home-cooked meals, making sure the traders feel at home despite transiency.²⁰ The competition between brokers trying to recruit customers at the airport became fierce, and migrants searched for new ways to expand their client base. Some paid Chinese hotel managers to notify them whenever a guest from their home country checked in. Others teamed up with brokers of Chinese visas in their home countries, paying for each client the visa brokers sent their way.

Legal Papers

For people from most parts of Africa, the costs of obtaining a Chinese visa and retaining a legal status in China have increased greatly over the past decade. Consequently, an industry has developed to provide papers for entering and staying in China. Visa brokerage was offered from the inception of African trading communities in Guangzhou. The first Nigerian migrants who registered offices in the city in the late 1990s could provide invitation letters to support visa applications. With time, Chinese businesses started advertising that they sold legal documents for visas and residence permits. As in other instances of migration brokerage across Asia, the people who trade in migration credentials are diverse.²¹ Most are also engaged in other types of business, and some are themselves immigrants. The line between commercial brokerage and favors to friends is often indistinct.

Foreigners in China must register their rented housing at the local police station within 24 hours, unless they stay in formal hotels. The rule is a legacy of the household registration (*hukou*) system designed for Chinese citizens. The punishment for failing to register has become increasingly severe, and the registration procedure is an indirect tool to enforce immigration legislation. The system drives up the costs of housing, as low-end apartments cannot be

registered, and registration is denied in certain parts of Guangzhou. The system has also fueled a black economy in false registration and the brokering of housing for undocumented migrants. The commercial viability of migration brokerage has increased in step with the difficulty of obtaining legal documents. At the same time, the profit margins in the brokering of merchandise purchases have diminished. As a result, some brokers, both African and Chinese, who previously helped producers and customers connect have turned their attention to the brokering of legal papers. The Guangdong government's clampdown on undocumented migrants improved the profitability of migration-related brokerage.

Logistics

Traders must find ways to bring their goods home. In the 1990s, logistics was a main bottleneck for the development of direct trade ties from Guangzhou to Africa. The workers in the motorcycle depot, the itinerant traders they assisted in purchasing goods, and most other African procurers had to ship their goods via the Hong Kong port. The introduction in Guangzhou of "groupage," container transport where customers pay only for the volumes they occupy, revolutionized the capacity to export by sea.²² Logistics agents match clients who need to ship at the same time, which helps traders ship inexpensively, without needing the capital to fill a whole container. Wealthy traders may also prefer groupage, because it mitigates risk and allows their wares to reach the market at different times. The Africans who first opened logistics agencies that allowed traders to share containers from Guangzhou redirected trade flows to bypass Hong Kong.

Brokerage also facilitated shipment by air, matching international travelers and traders who required goods to be transported. "Hand carry" is an informally organized alternative to traditional courier services, such as DHL, FedEx, and UPS. Travelers sell their luggage allowance to brokers, who collect goods from traders for transportation. The goods are packed and delivered to the traveler at the Baiyun airport to be checked in. Once the traveler reaches the destination, the goods are handed over to a brokerage representative on the African side, from whom customers retrieve them. In Nigeria, the brokers have partners inside the airport who extricate the goods, and the traveler does not see the goods again after checking them in. The brokerage of luggage space provides a fast and reliable way to transport items quickly. Its significance to China-Africa exports extends beyond the value of the goods, as items such as release documents for containers and preproduction samples were often sent as hand carry.

The duties of logistics companies extend beyond the physical movement of goods from one place to another. Equally if not more important is clearing the goods through customs, both for export on the Chinese side and import on the African end. Logistics companies are required to be formally registered and licensed to clear customs. In practice, however, smaller unlicensed logistics agents commonly pay licensed ones to lodge declarations in their name.²³ Logistics brokers choose a different path for their goods whenever routines and fees as well as import bans, informal and formal, change at various ports. Experience enables them to accurately predict the costs of bringing in both legal and contraband goods, and they can therefore

advertise their prices by weight for goods of both categories. However, unanticipated events may arise—goods are seized, higher taxes are demanded—that may lead to conflicts over responsibility and compensation. Goods that are destroyed during transport or trapped in customs can ruin an importer. To have a stronger moral claim when things go wrong, importers often prefer to remain with the same logistics broker.

Traders may bring goods to their logistics agent's warehouse themselves or have factories and wholesalers deliver the merchandise. The logistics agent may be in an exposed position if disputes arise over payments and quality. Negotiating such situations requires experience and the trust of both parties. An incident with a Somali logistics broker is a case in point. When I was in his warehouse, the managers of a jeans factory rushed in. They had delivered goods, but the customer had not paid as agreed. Now they wanted to take their goods back, using physical force if needed. The logistics agent asked them to wait. Whether it was his calm and respectful demeanor or their long-standing relationship with his customers that convinced them, they let him try to work it out. He managed to contact the customer, who promised to pay shortly. The broker persuaded the manufacturer to leave the goods with him in the meantime. Once the factory received its money, the broker released the goods for shipment to Nairobi.

Money Transfer

The traders buy goods in Guangzhou and sell them in their home countries. They therefore need ways to transfer money back to China for new purchases. In the trading malls catering to Africans, crowds of Nigerians used to congregate in the afternoon outside offices bearing names such as Dollarman, Easy Cash, and Upwards. They waited for money to arrive, carried by couriers on journeys starting in Lagos, passing through Europe, Ethiopia, or Dubai, and ending at the Baiyun airport. Once couriers passed over green vacuum-packed stacks to the money transfer agencies, they could relax. Within an hour, the transfer agencies had handed out the money. Cash in hand, the receivers made their way to wholesalers, factories, and logistics offices to do business. Those who received money on behalf of others would try to deposit it right away, as holding on to cash was considered risky.

The Nigerian money transfer agencies operated quite openly, but similar services were run more discreetly by businessmen from most West African countries. Their formal sector competitors, Western Union and MoneyGram, have offices in the African trading districts. However, these more expensive options were only used if informal alternatives were unavailable, typically when the money arrived from Europe and North America. The informal money transferors usually charged a modest one percent commission. The official agencies were also constrained by legal limits as to how much they could transfer. Intercontinental money transfer systems can be found across the world, but what makes Guangzhou stand out is the direction of the money flow: Migrants in Guangzhou receive money from Africa, whereas migrants in other parts of the world generally send money to their home countries.

Receiving money through informal transfer agencies is straightforward. A nickname and phone number may be all that is needed. The users of the systems regard the simplicity as a sign of trustworthiness and a guarantee of smooth functioning. In the words of a Malian businessman:

Western Union is almost instant, but it takes quite a lot of paperwork. One must fill in a form and have a signature. [...] The French introduced signatures to Mali. But in many cases, signatures are not needed. Money transfer is an example. Somebody deposits money in Mali, the person receiving it makes a phone call here, they call you, and you take the money. No signatures, no paperwork is involved in this process. This system is superior. It works more efficiently than any other system.²⁴

The physical transport of cash described above has been made redundant by some money transfer agents. Trade flows from Africa to China are overall of equal size to those running in the other direction.²⁵ Money is needed on both sides to pay for the goods. Some traders engage in both the import of Chinese goods and the export of African products to avoid moving money across borders. However, most lack the necessary knowledge, capital, and contacts to do this. Brokers match the people transferring money from China to Africa with those moving money in the opposite direction. For example, Seydou, the Guinean mentioned above, observed that his customers who arrived from West Africa were uncomfortable traveling with money. He got to know a Chinese man trading in timber in Guinea, and through him, other buyers of natural resources in Sierra Leone and Liberia. When one of them needed 300,000 dollars to purchase timber, Seydou had his brother in Guinea collect the same amount of money from petty traders on their way to China. Once the brother collected enough money, he handed it over to the Chinese timber trader, who in turn called his people in China to release the same amount to Seydou. The petty traders received their money from Seydou once they arrived in Guangzhou.

The informal money transfer systems are used alongside bank transfers. There are Chinese factories that prefer to be paid in cash, while others require African customers to deposit money directly into bank accounts in Hong Kong. While some traders can count on one hand the number of times they have transferred money from Africa to China through banks, others portray a reliance on informal transfers as a sign of lack of sophistication and poor education. Cost and convenience are undoubtedly important factors when people choose a money transfer mechanism, but their preferences are also statements of identity.

The Nigerian money transfer agencies mentioned above operated openly until around 2012. Signs and posters promoted their services, and when the money arrived, people walked out of the offices with stacks of dollars while the sound of the banknote counter could be heard in the background. Today, the agencies are much less conspicuous. Most have been forced to move out of the main trading areas and run behind closed doors in anonymous offices. The police do not prosecute the agencies but have demanded that these move further underground. The managements in trading malls, which previously welcomed such agencies because they generate business, are now reluctant to rent out space to them. In short, the open defiance of the law embodied by the Nigerian alternative financial institutions is no longer accepted.

Information

Brokerage bridges information gaps to change the paths of global value chains. The Africans who settled in Guangzhou and worked as brokers forged links between producers and purchasers that not only brought goods to Africa through more direct paths but also efficiently channeled information about styles, standards, and prices from end markets to producers. A key idea about value chains is that the degree to which information is standardized in codes influences how firms work together and decisions about whether to outsource. Technical standards reduce the need to transmit information ad hoc between firms up and down the value chain and prevent misunderstandings and conflicts between trading partners.²⁶ Codified information plays a relatively small role in China-Africa value chains for several reasons. First, markets in Africa are fragmented, with great variations across space in tastes, quality appraisals, and purchasing power. Requirements are therefore highly uneven. Second, Chinese producers are appreciated for their flexibility and ability to make the products available in various qualities depending on the buyer's budget. Purchasers can determine which price/quality nexus to settle for on a case-by-case basis. Some buyers specifically request that factories violate formal industry standards to bring down costs. Third, some parties may have an interest in breaking with prescribed procedures. In the case of licensed producers making a surplus that they sell to traders in noncompeting markets, some license-owners tacitly accept this practice, because it reduces costs and allows the factory to offer them the goods at a lower costs by collecting a profit on additional sales. Finally, even in cases where it would have been better to work from codified information, the lack of common technical training and shared vocabularies may make this difficult.

Brokerage replaces codified information along the value chain. The brokers are often on-site during the various stages of production, evaluating samples with factory representatives, touching the materials that go into production, adjusting the settings of the machinery, and checking the products before shipment. They know the product and production processes well, to predict where things can go wrong. Instead of being standardized in codes, the information needed for the processes to run smoothly is embodied by the broker.

The main types of production-related brokerage are summed up in Table 1. The last column describes the reasons why each brokerage service may be made redundant. Direct interaction between suppliers and traders, increased trust between the two parties, and the greater mobility of the trader are all factors that undermine the reasons for brokerage to exist. Added to this are online services that match producers and consumers. However, these services have reduced the need for brokerage less than might be expected, as it has proved hard to build enough trust online to support transactions.

The final section of this paper discusses the responses of brokers as their capacity for income generation has come under threat.

Responses To Market Changes (2009–Present)

With good luck and hard work, the Africans who arrived in Guangzhou early could make a living from brokerage alone. The luck consisted of finding a few prosperous clients for whom they could successfully place orders with Chinese producers. The work involved meticulously

searching for reliable factories, following up on the production processes, checking the finished goods, and shipping them off in time. Successful brokerage was often rewarded with gaining new customers through word of mouth.

Table 1. Four Main Production-Related Brokerage Services and Their Characteristics

	Nature	Basis	Vulnerability
Matching	Connecting traders with producers.	Traders' and producers' limited networks; Incomplete information about potential partners.	Direct interaction between traders and producers brought together by brokers; Online matching services.
Monitoring	Ensuring that products meet the traders' expectations.	Potential for producing sub-standard goods; Traders' absence from Guangzhou.	Traders' presence in Guangzhou; Relationships of trust between producers and traders.
Accountability	Ensuring that traders and suppliers meet their commitments to each other.	Reduced market value of customized goods; Traders' absence from Guangzhou.	Traders' presence in Guangzhou; Relationships of trust between producers and traders.
Mediation	Prevention of misunderstandings and conflicts, handling of irregularities.	Deferred payments and liquidity constraints; Limited means of formal enforcement.	Relationships of trust between producers and traders.

As time went by and profit margins were squeezed, however, being a liaison between traders and factories no longer yielded generous profits. None of the successful businesspeople I spoke with in Guangzhou after 2014 relied on this kind of brokerage as their main source of income. If they started off as brokers, they then advanced their businesses in two main ways: reinvesting the profits from brokerage into their own trading activities or offering an expanding range of services to control larger sections of the value chains. Those who failed to pursue new

strategies saw dwindling profits. The costs of living in China also increased as acquiring visas became more difficult and expensive. China passed a new Exit and Entry Administration Law in 2012 with the aim of providing a more coherent framework for managing immigration.²⁷ The new law represented a formalization of a long-standing trend toward more restrictive visa policies and the intensification of controls to identify undocumented migrants within China.²⁸

From Brokers to Traders

A fundamental challenge to brokers is that they may be cut out of future transactions between the parties they brought together. Brokers from various African countries believed they had a moral entitlement to remain involved in deals between factories and purchasers they had connected. At the same time, they realized that, in reality, they would eventually be pushed out. One broker-turned-trader explained:

The reason why I can't rely on other people [as a source of income] anymore is that the first 1–2 times they come, you go with them. The third time, they go by themselves. If the Chinese factory is honest, they will call you when your customer has come and ask you to take your commission. The customer was from you, and they should call you every time the customer you brought returns. But 90 percent of them are not honest. They allow the clients to go there by themselves. You are cheated by both sides, the [African] customer and the Chinese agent.²⁹

He had invested in his own trading business when brokerage still offered handsome profits. By the time it was difficult to make a living from brokerage alone, he had amassed enough capital to ship a twenty-foot container of women's lingerie purchased at 12,000 USD per cubic meter. He continued to engage in brokerage, but alongside the lingerie trade, which had become his main source of income.

Even though brokerage may now only account for a fraction of the income of well-to-do businesspeople in Guangzhou, it is still not necessarily insignificant to their businesses. By placing orders for others, they preserve their business contacts at home, keep abreast of tastes and fashions, expand their experiences with suppliers in China, and achieve economies of scale by ordering goods for themselves on top of those their clients purchase. These indirect gains have been recognized and highly valued by the brokers. One large Chinese company with its headquarters in Guangzhou and branch offices in five African countries started offering a shipping service in 2013, long after the profit in the sector had declined. A company employee explained to me that the sole purpose of providing this service was to learn African markets better to know how to expand the company's own production and trading portfolio.

Brokers Controlling Larger Parts of the Value Chains

Brokering has become professionalized, with higher entry barriers. While the demand for the most straightforward brokerage services (such as taking itinerant traders to the markets) has declined, traders still need a range of amenities, including housing, money transfer, visa services, logistics, and storage. Those who offer a combination of services are better able to retain their customers. A number of businesspeople have therefore entered the highly competitive logistics

sector for the sake of collecting information and strengthening their customers' loyalty. At the same time, some established logistics agents have started to offer their own customers free help with placing orders. Some of them also engage in more segments in the freight chains by no longer merely handing goods over to Chinese companies after collecting and packing them but rather bundling enough orders to work directly with the airlines. Africans doing container shipping increasingly also run the warehouses in which their customers' goods are received, stored, compressed, and loaded.

New constellations of cooperative relationships have emerged since African traders have started to expect a wide range of services from a single broker. For example, some African brokers without much experience or investment capital have teamed up with well-established logistics offices to work from their premises. An outsider walking into the office may find it difficult to distinguish the boss from a lowly freelance broker. The logistics companies benefit from the customers such brokers bring them. One large Chinese production and logistics firm associated itself with self-employed brokers in a deliberate effort to develop its credibility by "appearing more African." The African brokers worked behind large wooden desks, while the Chinese employees sat at plain workstations.

Conclusion

The Nigerians settling in Guangzhou in the late 1990s laid the groundwork for an inflow of African traders from across the continent. Brokers staying in the city made the market accessible to itinerant African traders, allowing them to source directly from the mainland rather than via Hong Kong and Dubai. The emergence and growth of trading communities in Guangzhou were highly dependent on various forms of brokerage, including informal institutions for logistics, money transfer, information transmission, and legal papers facilitating the export of goods. Brokerage remains important as the trading links between China and Africa multiply and mature, but it has taken on new forms as the social distance between actors decreases when they have more experience in trading with each other. Place-based knowledge and relations were sufficient to achieve success as a broker in the past, but establishing a profitable operation as a broker today requires the financial capital to set up additional infrastructure for export or engaging in trade as well as providing services. There is a sustained need for trading infrastructure to overcome the obstacles associated with the geographic distance between the sites of production and end markets. The African brokers living in Guangzhou have been crucial to the expansion of exports from Mainland China to all parts of the African continent. However, their visa and residence status remains insecure, even in cases where they have married in China. Guangzhou may be where African brokers have made their money and established a family, but they cannot be sure that the city holds a future for them.

Notes

- 1 Pseudonyms are used for all traders and brokers mentioned in the text, with the exception of the first Nigerians in Guangzhou.
- 2 Cf. Le Bail 2009; Haugen 2013.
- 3 Stovel and Shaw 2012.
- 4 Uzzi 1996.
- 5 Bailey 1963; Scott 1972; James 2011; Lindquist 2015.
- 6 James 2011.
- 7 Many African traders in Hong Kong previously bought goods in other Asian cities. For accounts of trajectories of African traders in Asia in the 1990s, see Darkwah 2002 and Bertoncello and Bredeloup 2007.
- 8 Interview in Guangzhou, 25 January 2014.
- 9 Interviews in Guangzhou, 1 October 2009; 25 January 2014; 26 May 2016.
- 10 Interview in Guangzhou, 7 December 2014.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Keshodkar 2011; Mathews 2011; Verne 2012.
- 13 Mathews et al. 2017.
- 14 Interview in Guangzhou, 7 December 2014.
- 15 Launay 1979.
- 16 Interview in Guangzhou, 7 December 2014.
- 17 Marfaing and Thiel 2016.
- 18 Cissé 2015; Bork-Hüffer et al. 2016.
- 19 Lyons and Brown 2010.
- 20 Bodomo and Ma 2012; Castillo 2015.
- 21 Lindquist, Xiang, and Yeoh 2012.
- 22 Mathews 2016.
- 23 Cantens, Kaminski, Raballand, et al. 2014.
- 24 Interviews in Guangzhou, 8 October 2009; 10 January 2014; 4 December 2014. The quote is from the January 2014 interview.
- 25 UN Comtrade 2016.
- 26 Gereffi, Humphrey, and Sturgeon 2005.
- 27 Ministry of Public Security 2012.
- 28 Lan 2017
- 29 Interview in Guangzhou, 4 December 2014

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The Bridge is not Burning Down: Transformation and Resilience within China's African Diaspora Communities

ADAMS BODOMO

Abstract: Guangzhou, along with many other Chinese cities like Hong Kong and Yiwu where Africans visit, live, and engage in trading activities, is known for its ubiquitous pedestrian bridges. It is not uncommon to see many hawkers illegally displaying temporary stalls on these pedestrian bridges where they sell goods to mainly Africans and other foreign traders. From around 2012, the city security personnel, which has previously mostly turned a blind eye to these structures and activities, suddenly started clamping down on Africans on a regular basis as they became a prominent group of customers on these bridges in downtown Guangzhou—resulting in the sudden disappearance of Africans on these city center bridges and other prominent open door markets. This has led to some journalistic reports claiming that Africans were leaving China in large numbers. But if these Africans have all but disappeared from the pedestrian footbridges where are they now? Are they leaving China "in droves" or are they regrouping elsewhere in Guangzhou and other parts of China? How many Africans are in China and from which African countries do they come? What do they do in China? How are Africans responding to this and other unfavorable policy transformations such as an increasingly heavy-handed clamp down on illegal immigration? How resilient are African communities in China? This paper is built around, first, addressing these and other empirical questions towards an understanding of various categories of actors within China's African diaspora communities before turning to examine the theoretical implications of seeing these African diaspora communities as bridge communities for strengthening Africa-China linguistic, cultural, and trade relations.

Introduction

Since September 2016, several newspaper reports have claimed that the African presence in Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong Province and the manufacturing hub in China, is fast diminishing and that Africans were leaving China "in droves."¹ According to a 2016 CNN report, "[O]ver the past 18 months, although concrete numbers are hard to come by, hundreds—perhaps even thousands—of Africans are believed by locals and researchers to have exited Guangzhou."² The report and subsequent discussions mention that Africans who used to be visible at many sites including the ubiquitous pedestrian footbridges in the city are nowhere to be found in large numbers. This initial report has been taken up by many media groups and reported and debated in several fora including social media, and at academic conferences. This

Adams Bodomo is Professor of African Studies at the University of Vienna. He founded and directed the University of Hong Kong African Studies Program, where he was Associate Professor of Linguistics and African Studies 1997-2013. Prof. Bodomo is the author of ten books, including the first book on Africans in China, and about one hundred journal articles in Linguistics and in African and Asian Studies journals.

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v17/v17i4a4.pdf>

focus has given the impression that somehow the African communities of Guangzhou and beyond are fast diminishing and that the Chinese “dream” has ended for many Africans.

Africans complaints and demonstrations against police brutality go back to 2009, with two prominent such demonstrations being first in 2009 and then in 2012, as contained in the following excerpt: “State-run Xinhua news agency said “more than 100” Africans protested and disrupted traffic on Tuesday in the capital of China’s Guangdong province after the Nigerian’s death.”³

Given these two kinds of facts or events in the African communities of Guangzhou, this article suggests that what is happening is not that Africans are leaving Guangzhou and China as a whole in huge numbers; rather, we are seeing a transformation of the African diaspora communities in reaction to the policies and practices of local authorities in Guangzhou and some other cities. Faced with attempts by the local authorities to prevent Africans from buying and selling goods on pedestrian footbridges or even just from congregating in public places, African community members are finding ways to survive this onslaught by doing most of their sales in-doors within the city center or even moving away to the outskirts of the city and founding their own markets or even moving away altogether to other parts of China, like Yiwu, Zhejiang Province.

It is shown in the paper that there is a certain kind of transformative resilience, not just in the way the Africans react and adapt to law enforcement brutalities but in the way in which Africans are tenaciously clinging onto and even expanding their businesses in the face of societal challenges. Frank Millen, a restaurant owner interviewed by the author on a fieldtrip to Guangzhou (in February 2017) is an epitome of this transformative resilience that is mentioned here. This is discussed later in the paper as well as other interviews and field observations.

The article’s theoretical basis builds on the metaphor of a bridge to argue for a bridge theory of migrant-indigene relations. It is proposed that the best way to approach a relative complexity that involves a blurring of geographical as well as academic boundaries within diaspora studies is to evolve a theory that bridges boundaries: i.e., a bridge theory of global, areal, and diaspora studies (the GADS theory). This GADS theory can be stated as follows: in an era of globalization characterized by constant movement of people, goods, and services, diaspora communities serve as bridges between geographical areas of the world, linking their areas of origin to their areas of domicile, a study of which then requires interdisciplinary insights from different areas of study.

The GADS theory, as mentioned above, is an extension of the author’s earlier bridge theory of migrant-indigene relations that was developed to account for the interaction between Africans and Chinese.⁴ It is not all scholars who see migrant communities as serving as bridges. Lyons, Brown, and Li, for instance, while not directly contesting the bridge theory, attempt to provide evidence to show that African communities in Guangzhou constitute an enclave, disconnected from their host communities because of tensions between these communities.⁵ While there are often tensions between migrant and host communities, these tensions do not always constitute counter-evidence for a bridge theory if we look beyond migrant-host relations. Some actors within the diaspora communities as a whole burn bridges through their actions but the bridge as a whole is not burning down. Whereas migration has often been looked at two-dimensionally, in terms of the migrant community and its relations with the host

community, the bridge theory proposes that migration is, at least, a three-dimensional phenomenon involving the target migrant community, its source community, as well as its host community. This seems to be a strength of the theory because when looked at in this way we can see that socio-culturally, socio-economically, and socio-politically, a migrant community, rather than being isolated, most often serves as a bridge that mediates relations, interactions, and perceptions of its host cultures to its source cultures. For instance, on the one hand, Africans visiting Guangzhou often get their initial insights about the Chinese society through the eyes of Africans already living in China, including insights about the good relations as well as the tensions between Africans and Chinese. On the other hand, Guangzhou people, whether or not they like or dislike Africans, get to experience certain African cultural mannerisms, such as bargaining habits in the market, from Africans living among them even before they know very much about Africa.

There exist scholarly works that have used network theory to analyze the African presence in Guangzhou.⁶ This network theory, which tries to account for the relationships and interactions between different individuals in the community, may be thought of as similar to the bridge theory, but it is indeed different and can only be a subset of bridge theory. Networks cannot exist without socio-political, socio-economic, and social-cultural bridge building among community members and between their host and source communities.

Having stated the GADS theory, the article turns to providing background information about the African communities of China, especially that in Guangzhou. This information is based on both quantitative and qualitative interviews, involving some in-depth one-on-one interviews with community members in order to address questions such as: how many Africans are in China and from which African countries do they come to China? What do they do in China? How do they communicate with Chinese? How are Africans responding to this and other unfavorable policy transformations such as an increasingly heavy-handed clamp down on illegal immigration? How resilient are African communities in China? Answers to these questions should give us a fairly good idea of the everyday lives of Africans in China and their experiences living there.

Following the background information section 4, we then try to make sense of it all, returning to the GADS theory introduced earlier and using the empirical data to support the theory advanced. Tying all these issues together is a concluding section, which also includes a discussion of the future of the African presence in China given these rapid transformations.

Background of the African Diaspora in China

The African presence in China and other parts of Asia is not new. There are accounts of very early interactions between Africans and Chinese, especially the voyages of a Ming era Chinese Admiral, Zheng He, to the east coast of Africa in the early part of the 15th century.⁷ However, the formation of diaspora African communities, especially by African traders, is a new, 21st century phenomenon. This was triggered by the Asian financial crises of 1997 and China's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001. African traders who were in neighboring Southeast Asian regions adversely affected by the crisis began to move into the markets of Guangzhou and other southern Chinese cities to escape the financial crises and to take

advantage of market opportunities for cheap goods such as clothes, mobile phones, and building materials, as China's economy became more and more open. There were approximately half a million Africans in China as of 2012, with Guangzhou hosting the largest community.⁸

The African presence in China is only one aspect of burgeoning relations between Africa and China. As China steadily developed into one of the world's most important economies it needed raw materials to fuel its own rapid growth. It has pivoted toward Africa in an intensified manner since the turn of the millennium, and this has resulted in very close government-to-government relations between China and various African countries. These government-to-government links led to growing people-to-people relations, with Chinese visiting and settling in Africa and Africans visiting and settling in China in substantial numbers. There are now more than two million Chinese in Africa compared to half a million Africans in China.⁹ Official figures about the Chinese presence in Africa and the African presence in China are non-existent or hard to come by and researchers are left to make educated guesses as in this case. In the case of Chinese in Africa, for instance, French puts the figure at one million, but this author thinks that the figure is much higher.¹⁰ With an average of thirty to forty thousand Chinese in each of the fifty-five countries of Africa (they would likely be far fewer in smaller countries like the Gambia but much more numerous in larger countries like Nigeria), a figure in the range of two million is a realistic guesstimation. Africa-China relations as sketched here has been the subject of many studies that cover various socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural aspects.¹¹

In this section and subsequent sections we provide a general background of this African diaspora in China in the form of socio-cultural facts and statistics describing the community in broad terms, derived from fieldwork lasting over five years in six main cities in China (2006 to 2012). While these data may seem dated they are so far the first and most comprehensive we have of the African communities in China. This discussion then leads to a discussion of specific issues such as linguistic repertoire (language use and language choices in specific contexts).

Methodology

An important question is how best we can research a new, emerging diaspora, where there is quite a bit of fluidity in terms of contacts with the host communities.¹² In more established diasporas, one would have more permanent sociocultural structures and organizations to rely on during the field research.

The research results reported in this paper are part of results derived from a study lasting over five years by the author and his team of African and Chinese research assistants. This methodology consisted of administering questionnaires, doing focus group interviews, and general participant observation. To address the main theme about the everyday lives of Africans in China, i.e., what it is like to be African in this country, we had to pose and try to answer empirical questions about this community such as who these Africans are, where they came from, why they came to Guangzhou/China, how communication takes place, how the communities are organized, and how they contribute to the economy of their adopted country of residence—we decided to do an empirically-based socio-linguistic and urban anthropological

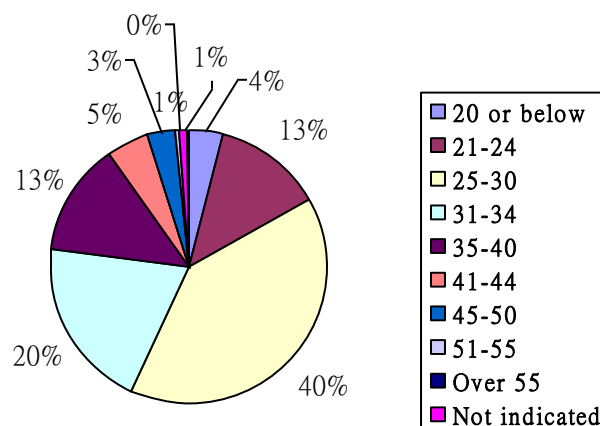
survey of six main cities in China: Hong Kong, Macau, Guangzhou, Yiwu, Shanghai, and Beijing. In terms of analyzes, the focus is more on Guangzhou in this article.¹³

General Statistical Profiles

Collating the statistical profiles of the various cities together, we had 736 returned and valid responses, though our research team interacted with between 800 and 1000 Africans during this research project over five years.¹⁴ As mentioned above the statistics are based on questionnaire surveys administered within the African communities after interacting with them and getting the consent of various community leaders and key personalities within the communities.

In terms of gender distribution, 82 percent of the Africans in China we surveyed were males. At the beginning of the African influx into China between 1997 and the turn of the millennium, African women were hardly seen among the trader populations. A salient socio-cultural feature of the African family system is that, in the average family business structure, it is usually the husband who travels to look for new sources of supply for the business, but with time the women begin to travel out as well. As African men got to know China better, more and more women began to arrive and, as shown, approximately 18 percent of the survey population were women, including some rather young women who are yet to marry and establish a family business. This number has steadily risen since around 2011 as more and more females come to do business and to study, showing once more that we are dealing with a more and more established diaspora, rather than just a group of itinerant males coming to Guangzhou and going back to Africa on a regular basis.

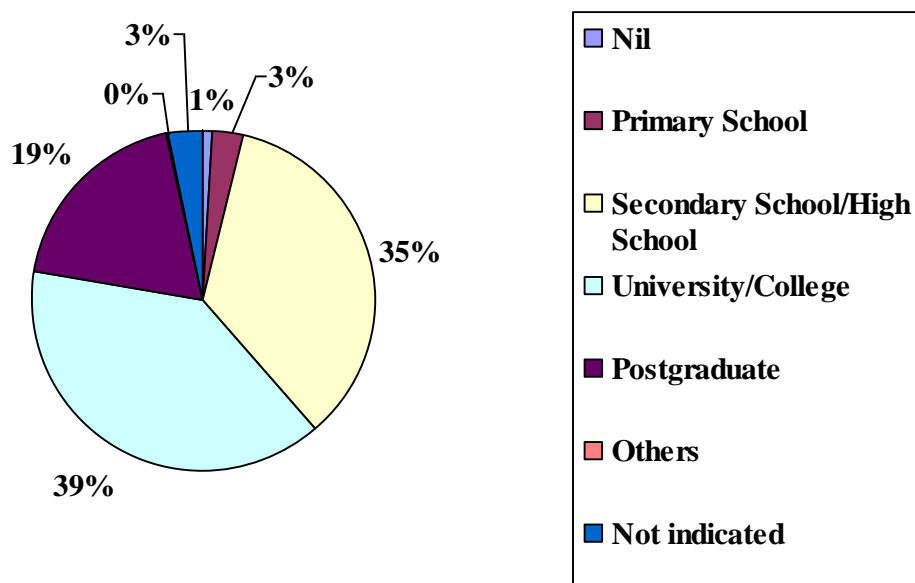
Figure 1: Age Group of Respondents



Age-wise, more than 60 percent of Africans in China are between the ages of 25 and 34, as shown in Figure 1. These figures indicate that this is a relatively young population that is in one of the most economically productive age brackets, which may vary from place to place but

which can be said to be between the ages of 20 and 55, especially with regard to work involving physical strength.

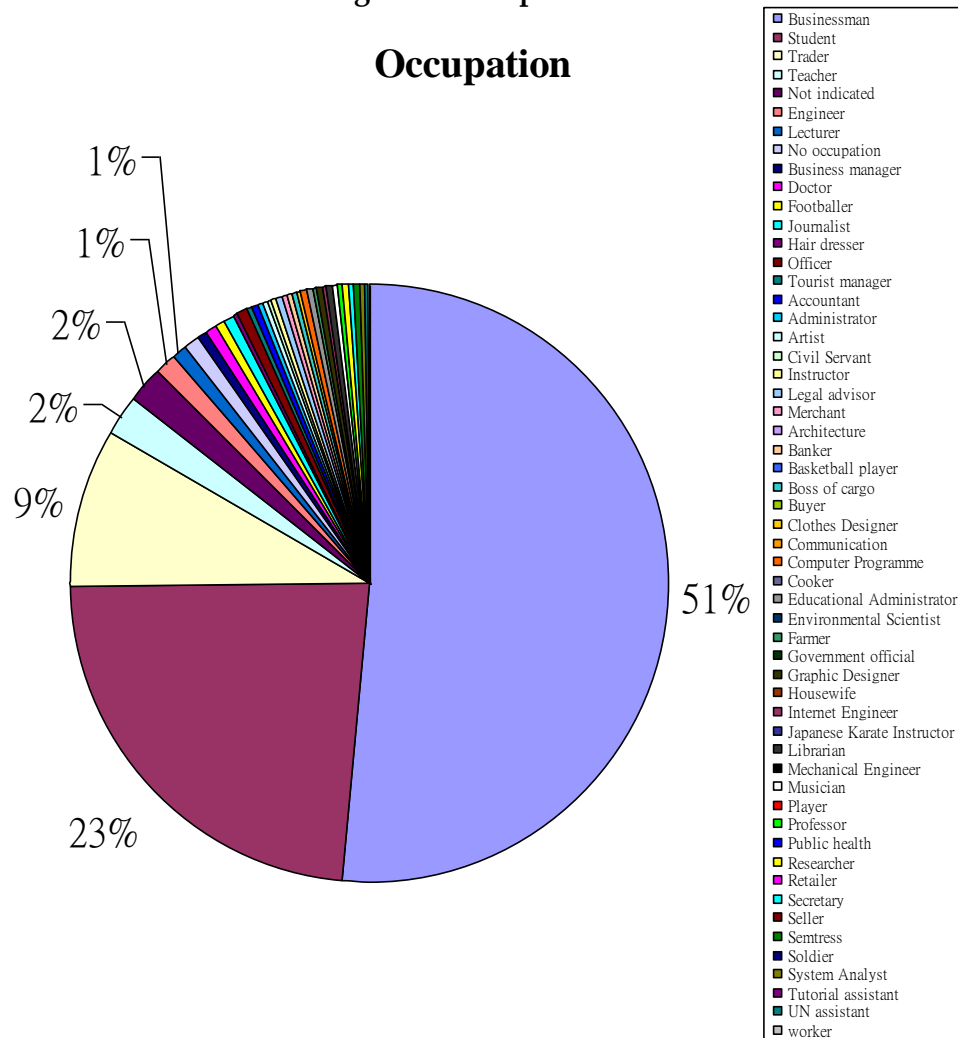
Figure 2: Level of Schooling



With regard to levels of education, most of the respondents (683 out of 736, or 93 percent) have at least completed secondary education; 288 had completed university/college, and 139 had completed postgraduate study, as can be seen in Figure 2. Most of the respondents (60 percent) chose to identify themselves as businessmen or traders. Figure 3 shows that, in terms of occupation, there are more traders or businessmen in China among the African migrants than any other profession, with more than 60 percent of them reporting their profession as such. The second largest group is comprised of students (more than 20 percent).

One of the questions we had to address early on in our research was that of which countries these Africans came from. As can be seen in Figure 4, the top ten countries of origin of those in our survey group were Nigeria with 125, Ghana with 87, Mali with 51, Guinea with 43, Senegal with 42, Tanzania with 36, Congo with 34, Kenya with 33, Cameroon with 21, and Niger with 20 respondents, respectively. This list suggests that there are more West Africans in China overall, with Nigeria having the largest number by far.

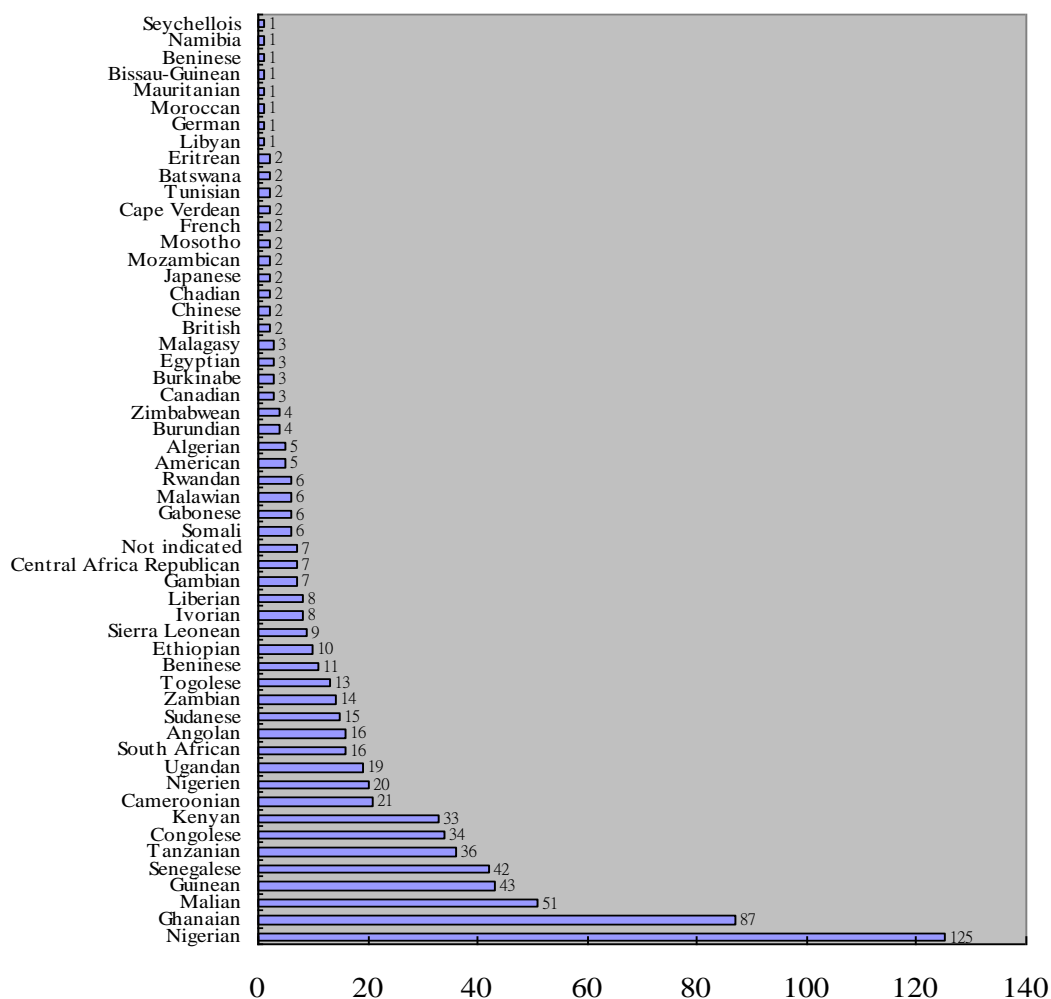
Figure 3: Occupations



Linguistic Repertoire

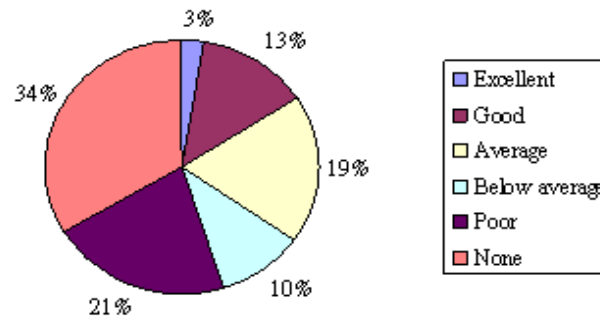
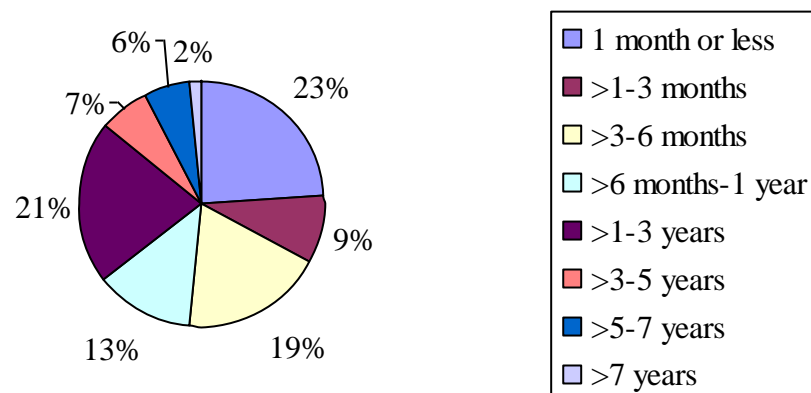
With the above broad characterization of the community, let us analyze the linguistic repertoire of Africans in China, especially that of African traders. The term linguistic repertoire refers to the gamut of languages that a community (such as the African community in China) speaks, reads, and writes and the choices members of this community make in the use of these languages in various communication situations. The term has been defined more broadly as "...a fluid set of linguistic resources that members of an ethnic group may use variably as they index their ethnic identities."¹⁵ As we do more and more linguistic analysis of diaspora communities in what may be termed "diaspora linguistics," terms such as linguistic repertoire will become more and more salient, and indeed feature prominently in sociolinguistic interactional studies.¹⁶

Figure 4: Nationality of Respondents



There were ninety-eight home languages spoken by the respondents; this figure may have increased over the subsequent years as Africans came from more diverse regions of Africa. The top ten were: French (133), Igbo (91), English (72), Swahili (55), Hausa (29), Twi (28), Arabic (28), Bambara (17), Mandingo (17), and Yoruba (15). In addition to their home languages, most of the respondents (577 out of 736) also spoke English and 173 French. Fewer spoke Chinese (139), and those who were proficient were even a smaller number, as Figure 5 illustrates.

How long the respondents have been staying in China this might influence the make-up of their linguistic repertoire, as for instance, that longer term Africans would speak Chinese more fluently and therefore become more functional in the market community. It was found that many only stay in China for a short period of time. Some 229 respondents (32 percent) have lived in China for just one month or less. 158 respondents (21 percent) have been staying for one to three years, as indicated in Figure 6. At the time of the survey not many respondents had stayed in China for more than three years; this fact indicates that the community is a newly establishing diaspora, rather than just a transnationally linked community. This tendency for short stays is a result of restrictive immigration rules.

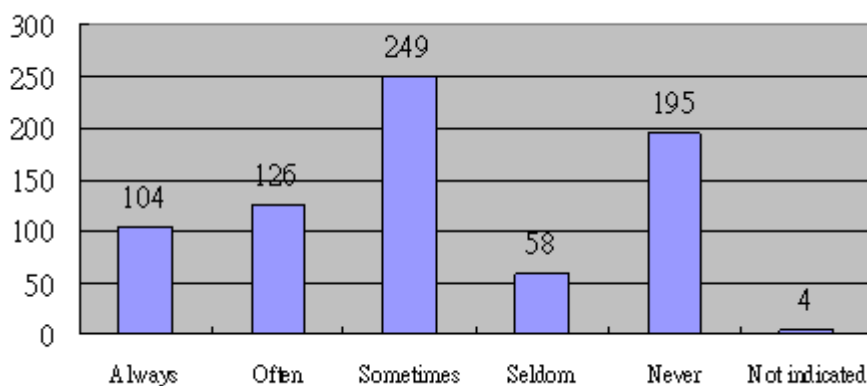
Figure 5: Proficiency in Chinese**Figure 6: Duration of stay in China**

Proficiency in English is another important issue in this market community where communication is very important. Some 254 respondents (35 percent) claimed that their English proficiency was excellent, 304 (40 percent) thought it was good, and 125 (17 percent) claimed average proficiency. It is a common feature among Africans in China to embellish their proficiency in the former colonial languages, English and French, even though the latter is not spoken in China. Some Chinese in the markets of Guangzhou, however, consider it a prestige language, hence the tendency of some Africans to overstate their proficiency in French. We also wanted to seek the respondents' opinion on whether English is a common language in China around their business district. Some 498 respondents (68 percent) think that English is a common language in China (32 percent did not) and indeed often insist on the Chinese learning "their" language, i.e. English in the case Africans from Anglophone countries and French for Africans from Francophone country.

As Figure 7 illustrates, less than a third of the respondents have come across significant communication problems, while over a quarter of them claimed they have never had problems

with market communications. This issue is related to the phenomenon of calculator communication.¹⁷ Most Africans think that even in the absence of an effective lingua franca, they can still communicate with their Chinese customers in the markets of Guangzhou by the use of their calculators.

Figure 7: Frequency With Communication Problems



One set of questions aimed at investigating how the respondents perceived their identity, whether and to what extent these people of African origins would identify themselves as Chinese. Some 278 of them (38 percent) said categorically that they would not identify themselves as Chinese, as shown in Figure 8. Still on the issue of identity one question investigates whether and to what extent the respondents think they are different from Chinese people in terms of their culture and the way they transact business in the markets. Some 225 respondents (31 percent) think that they are different from Chinese people to a very large extent, as shown in Figure 9. The survey also investigated to what extent the respondents think they are connected to the local Chinese community. Many people (21 percent) thought they have no social connection to the local Chinese community. Some 202 respondents (another 27 percent) thought that they are only connected to a small extent (given the limited communication between them beyond the market place), as shown in Figure 10.

Figure 8: To What Extent Do You Identify Yourself As Chinese

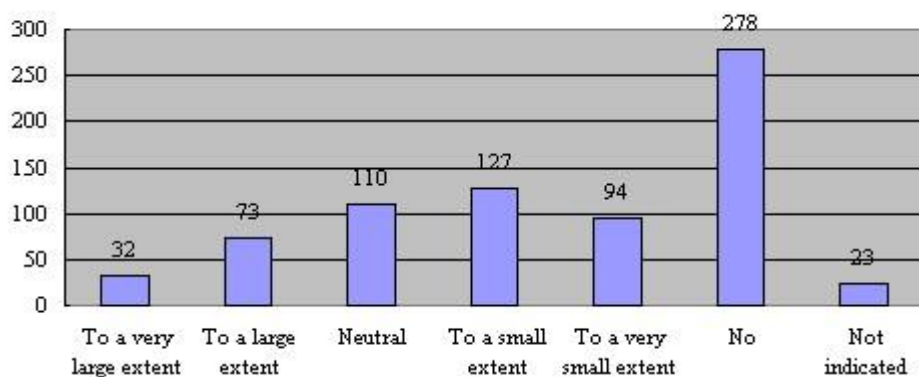
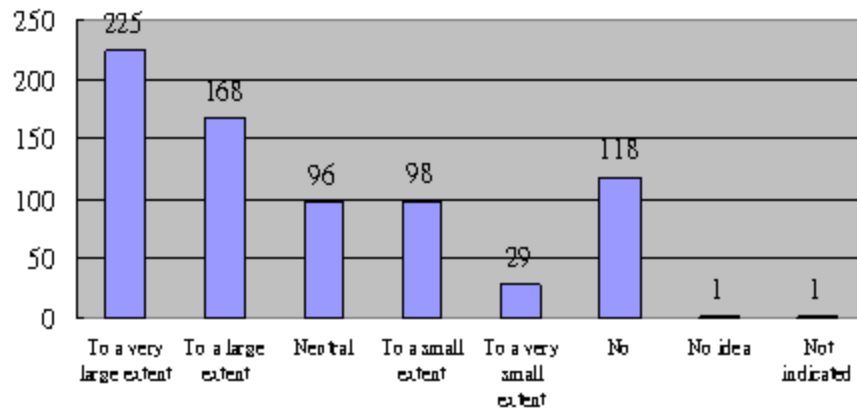
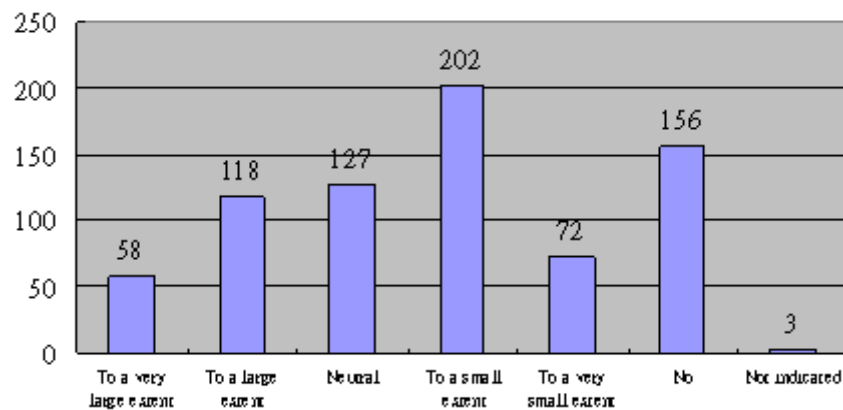


Figure 9: Degree Of Difference From Chinese People**Figure 10: Social Connection To Chinese Community**

In terms of analysis, this last set of questions were seeking a broad answer to the issue whether Africans in China would like to integrate into Chinese communities in China or they just want to be on their own. The answers here indicate that, at this point in their China sojourn, Africans in China did not try or even strive to fit or “integrate” into Chinese communities. This is not currently happening to any appreciable degree except maybe for those Africans married to Chinese, but even they hardly do this. The conclusion from this research project is that Africans are just happy to interact businesswise and cross-culturally in markets and workplaces, but not to integrate into Chinese culture and family settings. Among other reasons is that Africans cannot straight forwardly acquire Chinese citizenship.

Everyday Life in Guangzhou

Having provided a background of Africans in China and more particularly in Guangzhou, and having looked specifically at their linguistic repertoire, we supplement these quantitative studies with qualitative studies comprising in-depth interviews with three people (selected

from many in our research archive and discussed here due to reasons of space and brevity): an African man from Ghana, an African woman from Zimbabwe, and a Chinese woman from Jiangxi Province.

Frank Millen

In February 2017, the author interviewed Frank Millen (who gave permission to mention his name and even show his photo).¹⁸ Frank is a Ghanaian of mixed parentage who at the time of the interview, together with his Chinese wife, had opened an ultra-modern African restaurant in the heart of Guangzhou called The African-Pot. He told the author in the excerpt below about the challenges he faced due to the societal transformations mentioned at the beginning of this paper and how he is resiliently facing up to the challenges of law enforcement and other issues. One particular issue was police harassment. Police and security officers would come to the restaurant to check on the identity papers of African customers, while not doing the same at other nearby eateries like McDonald's or KFC. He and his Chinese wife, Jessica, eventually managed to persuade them to stop.

The biggest test, however, came when two Chinese journalists, a male and a female, tried to write negative reports about their restaurant. They enlisted two unsuspecting Africans in front of the restaurant and convinced them to buy a meal for them. While the Africans were eating their *fufu*, naturally with their hands, the journalists carefully photographed them. When the restaurant staff protested that photos were not allowed in the restaurant, the journalists had a good excuse in saying there is nothing wrong with taking pictures of their friends eating. A few days later the journalists published a negative report about The African-Pot restaurant in which they reported that Africans eat with their hands like animals. As Frank mentioned: "Four, five days later, there is this website in Chinese for food and so on. There is a review with African-pot and they said: '...you should see how they eat with hands like animals.'" His wife Jennifer was furious and called the woman journalist to protest: "...how could you write this?" But it was to no avail, so they had to persevere and do damage control. Their perseverance references back to the notion of transformative resilience, as the couple did not just give up but resolved to try and counter the attempt to tarnish the image of their business.

There often is, however, an unanticipated outcome to events. What was meant to be a negative report took on a rather different dimension, for it served as an advertisement of an exotic restaurant in the middle of Guangzhou. Many locals wanted to try out eating *fufu* with their hands, thus bringing many customers to The African-Pot. Frank and Jennifer catered to this increase in clientele by trying to adapt their dishes to suit Chinese eating habits:

So Jessica . . . decided to tailor-make the African food to Chinese ways of eating food: So she would have one dish, one plate where she would have a small portion of rice, fried fish, *fufu*, chicken, this, this, we called it Jungle Feast. So when people come and say we want to try *fufu*, we said we have regular size, and the other size is a little bit of *fufu*, a little bit of this, a little of that and so on. And everyone wants to try and it's not bad.

This extensive interview with Frank Millen speaks to the theme of this article—the resilience that African actors in Guangzhou and other parts of China develop to respond to or

counteract the prevailing social changes they face in their locales. This point will be further developed after summarizing two other selected interviews.

Our second interview was with an African woman who we met in the early days of our research, back in 2009, which shows that even in those early days Africans were already struggling with societal transformations.

Mrs. A.

Mrs. A., from Zimbabwe, told us that she had been an English teacher at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou and had been living in Guangzhou for more than three years with her family at the time of our interview. She no longer taught English, however, for she only had a one-year contract to teach at the university. At the time of the interview she was running a small import and export business. Here we see that when one job was lost Mrs A. did not give up and return to Zimbabwe or elsewhere but instead went into trade. As a foreigner she found that it was difficult to obtain and hold a job in Guangzhou. That is why she was running her own business. Mrs. A. perceived that there are a lot of cultural differences between Africa and China, which make intercultural interaction difficult. She thought that people would not employ her if they did not even understand her, explaining why it was difficult for her to land another job. Mrs. A. added that she did not understand the Chinese either. For example, she did not understand why they spit on the floor, though she thinks that this is because they are not educated. Thus it is not their fault if they do so since they lack appropriate education. For the same reason she thought that the Chinese discriminate against Africans mainly because they lack education in matters of interracial sensitivities. Finally, Mrs. A. believed that, given enough appropriate education, someday there will be better intercultural understanding.

Ms. R.

Our third interview was with a Chinese woman who works closely with Africans in the markets of Guangzhou. Ms. R. came to Guangzhou from Pingxiang in Jiangxi Province two years before the time of our interview (2010) and had been working in the TianXiu Building, which was one of the earliest spots for Africa–China trade in Guangzhou, since then. She attended high school so thinks she speaks fluent English and therefore did not encounter communication problems with her African customers. It is clear that the ability to speak English is an advantage in the TianXiu Building and in any other African business places in Guangzhou. Nearly every shop in the building wants an English translator and sometimes a French translator. According to Ms. R. Africans in the TianXiu Building mainly came from West Africa. Ms. R.'s main job was to take orders and pre-orders as well as sustaining regular contact with the customers. However, Ms. R. had not been receiving many orders in the days before our interview. She mentioned that when she first came to the TianXiu Building, there were many African businessmen and hence more orders. Many African businessmen owned shops in the building, as was the case with the shop opposite to Ms. R.'s shop. She mentioned that some of them even owned factories in Guangzhou. By the time of our interview in 2010, however, many Africans had left Guangzhou, having sold their shops to Guangzhou residents. Although Ms. R. could observe all these changes involving African business activities in Guangzhou, she did not know much about why they were taking place. She lacked a strong connection with the Africans in Guangzhou, for

they were simply just her customers. Ms. R's statement that Africans were selling their shops to Guangzhou residents does not imply that Africans were leaving China. In fact, though this interview was prior to 2012, business was still booming in the TianXiu Building during the author's latest field trip in February 2017—implying again the notion of resilience: some may leave but more will arrive!

Besides these three in-depth interviews the author also participant-observed Africans in an African restaurant in 2013 and was able to get the following important complaint about the everyday harassment they feel subjected to at the hands of the Guangzhou immigration authorities:

You want to know what it is like for me to live in China?...Every day before I leave my house...to go to the markets...factories...or even to go eat...to come here for dinner...for African food in this restaurant, I spend about, what...ten minutes gathering all the documents that prove that I am legally resident in China; I cannot walk out of my house...my hotel without my passport, my room key, and anything that shows that I am legally resident in China. And I have done this for the past three years that I have been in and out of China.

What these interviews have in common is that African (and Chinese) actors persist and persevere in the face of adverse factors that threaten their success in the Guangzhou markets. Frank and his Chinese wife Jessica are struggling against security personnel and negative journalistic reports and succeeding. Mrs. A. did not give up and walk away because she could not hold down her job as an English teacher; she found a way to start a small trading business. Ms. R. was a bit aloof but even she was not walking away despite having fewer and fewer orders—she was staying put. All four and even those participant-observed are displaying a considerable amount of resilience in their day-to-day activities and interaction with security personnel. Even the man who experienced many identity checks for three years was not saying he would leave any time soon. In the face of mostly adverse transformations in the markets of Guangzhou and other parts of China, Africans are not leaving China “in droves.” Instead they are displaying considerable amounts of transformative resilience!

Making Sense of It All: Towards a Bridge Theory of Diaspora Interactions

From these quantitative and qualitative studies depicting the background of the African presence, especially the everyday life of the Africans in Guangzhou, and the general condition of what it is like to be African in China, what can one make of this in terms of area studies and related fields? This African presence has been dubbed Africa's newest diaspora because it is mainly a 21st century phenomenon, only barely twenty years old. It is a relatively complex diaspora community, and we need insights from many areas of study, including African Studies, Chinese/Asian Studies, and various fields such as sociology, anthropology, linguistics, and history to understand the community. As a specific illustration, to fully account for the relative complex linguistic repertoires and cross-cultural communication intricacies in the markets of Guangzhou one needs insights from African culture of buying and Chinese savvy business transaction skills, among many other issues. This kind of approach involves an interaction of different area studies to the point that it might be best to just talk of global, areal,

and diaspora interdisciplinary studies. There are already studies that point to area studies being geared “towards the study of larger scale society.”¹⁹

The bridge theory of migrant-indigene relations is essentially a theory that attempts to make sense of the confusing, blurring boundaries between global, areal, and diaspora studies. The theory is general enough to allow one to study Africans in China from the perspectives of all area studies, including African studies, and Chinese/Asian studies, from the insights of diaspora studies, and generally from the emerging preoccupations of global studies, as these market places that we see in Guangzhou and other parts of China have become global market places involving a mix of people from all parts of the world, including Africans, Asians, and Westerners.

Conclusion

Africans in Guangzhou and other parts of China are facing a myriad of problems but they are not giving up yet and packing up to return to Africa or going elsewhere in the world. In the face of changing rules and attitudes about where African traders should operate and how they should do it or whether or not they should even be in China altogether, in the face of all these administrative transformations, Africans in China are finding innovative ways to adapt and exist in China. They are finding resilient ways to continue plying their trade and taking advantage of the market and educational opportunities that China affords them. There is a certain amount of transformative resilience within the African communities living in China, even in the face of sometimes irresponsible, racist official pronouncements, such as this one from Pan Qianlin of Tianjin:

Black brothers often travel in droves; they are out at night out on the streets, nightclubs, and remote areas. They engage in drug trafficking, harassment of women, and fighting, which seriously disturbs law and order in Guangzhou... Africans have a high rate of AIDS and the Ebola virus that can be transmitted via body fluids... If their population [keeps growing], China will change from a nation-state to an immigration country, from a yellow country to a black-and-yellow country.²⁰

Africans in China are digging in and are not going to disappear from China in the near future. As long as the Chinese continue to be interested in Africa, Africans will continue to be interested in China. As long as Chinese are present in Africa, Africans will be present in China.

To fully account for what it is like to be an African in China, to understand the everyday experiences of Africans in the markets of Guangzhou, one needs empirical, methodological, and theoretical insights. The GADS theory proposed in this paper has such a theoretical insight, which comes from disciplinary and interdisciplinary areas of study such as African studies, Asian studies, diaspora studies, and, ultimately, global interdisciplinary studies. Africa’s newest diaspora constitutes an exciting new territory for area studies in the era of globalization. Indeed, the study of Africa in an Asian context is more meaningful when we draw in comparative angles between Africa and China/Asia from various perspectives including the historical, the cultural, and the political.

The paper has argued that, faced with challenges that make it difficult for Africans to ply

their trade in China, Africans have shown resilience in the face of these transformations. Evidence for this argumentation is based on empirical, quantitative, and qualitative surveys of more than seven hundred Africans in China, located mostly in Guangzhou, to produce a profile of this community and to depict the everyday lives of these migrants from Africa.²¹ Even though these figures may not reflect the latest composition since they are six to seven years old, they have been supplemented with recent interviews and participant observation based on recent fieldtrips (February 2017). Moreover these figures remain the most comprehensive available, as they have not been supplanted by any other published survey. This profile indicates a complex sociocultural diaspora community and thus necessitates a careful study of African and Chinese political, economic, cultural, and linguistic systems in order to make sense of this complexity. The study has thus proposed a bridge theory of global, areal, and diaspora studies (GADS) as a theoretical, methodological, and interdisciplinary platform to analyze Africans in China and to understand the future dynamics of this diaspora community.

Notes

- 1 For example, Marsh 2016 and Liu 2017. Many scholars have written about Africans in Guangzhou, including Bodomo 2010, Lyons, Brown and Li 2012, Bredeloup 2012, and Haugen 2013.
- 2 Marsh 2016.
- 3 Lin 2012.
- 4 Bodomo 2012.
- 5 Lyons, Brown, and Li 2012.
- 6 See, for example, such as Cisse 2016 and Marfaing and Thiel 2016.
- 7 Li Anshan 2016, Wyatt 2009, Rashidi and van Sertima 1995.
- 8 Bodomo 2012.
- 9 Bodomo 2012, 2016.
- 10 French 2014.
- 11 For example, Brautigam 2003 and 2011; Brautigam and Tang 2011; He Wenping 2009, 2010; Holslag 2011; Li Anshan 2005; Li Pengtao 2010; Li Weijian, Zhang Zhongxiang, Zhang Chun, and Zhu Ming 2010; Liu Hongwu 2008; Meng Deli and Nie Dianzhong 2011; Michel and Beuret 2009; Mitton 2002; Park 2009; Prah, Kwesi and Vusi Gumedede. 2017; Rotberg 2008; Sautman and Yan 2007; Song 2011; Strauss and Saavedra 2010; I. Taylor 2006, 2008; M. Taylor 2011; Zhang Zhongxiang 2011; and Zhao Minghao 2010
- 12 In many fora, there are often discussions as to whether the African situation in China should be referred to as only just a transnational networked community or a real diaspora. My answer is that it is certainly a diaspora, albeit a new one, in the senses in which studies like Vertovec 1999 and Bodomo 2012 see diaspora as a social form, diaspora as type of consciousness, or diaspora as a mode of cultural production. The cultural productions in African communities in China such as food, linguistic communication norms, and patterns of clothing make it a rather distinct community from those of their Chinese hosts. They are not just some groups that come and go transnationally, they are there to stay and they have clear modes of cultural productions in China!

- 13 Bodomo 2012.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Benor 2011, p. 142.
- 16 For example, Gumperz 1962; Hillery 1955; Hymes 1972; Labov 1972; Ochs 1993; and Patrick 2002.
- 17 The phenomenon of calculator communication is extensively discussed in Bodomo 2012.
- 18 Frank Millen interview, Guangzhou, Feb 18, 2017.
- 19 Looser 2012, p. 97.
- 20 Pan Qinglin, member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Council, China's top political advisory body, quoted in Chiu 2017.
- 21 Bodomo 2012.

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Transient: A Descriptive Concept for Understanding Africans in Guangzhou

DONG NIU

Abstract: “Africans in Guangzhou/China” seems to have become a buzzword in international studies and China studies in the last decade. While there has been a large body of academic papers on Africans in Guangzhou, they described the daily lives of Africans with a common assumption that Africans are “immigrants.” This perception is at odds with the Chinese legal system and Africans’ self-definition. Based on continuous ethnographic fieldwork and following sporadic interviews with Africans in Guangzhou, this article argues that the classification and definition of migration produced by scholars should be used in the specific context of the destination countries, with consideration of the viewpoints of legal settings and the researched groups themselves. This article introduces the concept of “transient” in China, a typical non-immigration country, to describe Africans in Guangzhou who travel between Africa and China without desire to integrate into Chinese society and without possibility to be integrated into Chinese society.

Introduction

“Africans in Guangzhou/China” became a buzzword in international studies and China studies over the last decade. Over the past few years I have focused my research on Africans living in Guangzhou, China. I was first drawn to this research topic by my curiosity in why they moved to China and what they were doing there. However, when I was involved in an emerging interdisciplinary “Chinese in Africa/Africans in China Research Network,” in which scholars shared my interest in this research topic, I began to notice a difference in how different scholars defined Africans in Guangzhou. This difference first came to my attention as I read academic papers about Africans in Guangzhou, which described the daily lives of Africans with a common assumption that they are “immigrants.” Some scholars found Africans who had lived in Guangzhou for more than ten years, so they termed Africans as “migrants” and talked about their adaption, integration, rights, and the issues of the second generation of immigrants, including discussing these issues with me. Could Africans in Guangzhou be classified as “immigrants” just because it seemed like they were interested in staying there and they, as a visible group, were always there? Due to my familiarity with the Chinese legal system, I felt

Dong Niu is a Postdoctoral Researcher, School of Public Policy and Management, Tsinghua University. His research focuses on foreigners in China and social work with immigrants. His recent chapter “‘Unequal Sino-African Relations’: A Perspective from Africans in Guangzhou” appeared in the edited book *China and Africa: A New Paradigm of Global Business*

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that I had to disagree on how my colleagues defined Africans living in Guangzhou. Moreover, this definition was also at odds with how Africans in China define themselves. Throughout my fieldwork, many Africans would say things such as, “We are not immigrants here,” or “China is not an immigration country.”

This article introduces the concept of “transient” to describe Africans in Guangzhou who travel between Africa and China, without the desire to integrate into Chinese society and with very little possibility or opportunity doing so. The structure of analysis follows the factors affecting the categories of Africans in Guangzhou. It will first introduce the types of occupation, kinship, and visas of Africans in Guangzhou, which are the reasons why they are transients. Second, it will introduce the patterns of residence and social organization, which are the results of being transients. Before taking up this analysis, however, the article addresses the concept of “immigrant” and “transient” in the context of migration studies, as well as introducing the methodology applied in the study.

Immigrant and Transient

All migration theories are related to the typology of migration. The history of migration studies stems from the development of the classifications of migrants by different dimensions. However, these kinds of classifications are problematic. The dichotomies of migration studies—internal versus international, forced versus voluntary, temporary versus permanent, legal versus illegal—blur as both the motivations and modalities of migration become much more diverse.¹ In addition, King advances the argument of “migration as a dichotomized field of study,” in which epistemological dichotomies, such as macro versus micro, structure versus agency, emic versus etic, theoretical versus empirical are also stressed.² Collyer and Hass also stress the blurred edges of migration categories. They claim that the understanding of migration and migrants has focused on predominantly dichotomous categorizations based on time/space, location/direction, cause, and state’s perspective, and highlighted “fragmented migration” as a way of conceptualizing migration as a process, in which people shift from one categorization to another.³ Although the argumentation is accurate and profound, seemingly, fewer people have found the concept of “immigrant” itself problematic when it is placed in specific societies where the majority of people, their bureaucracies, or even “immigrants” themselves, have a clear categorization of “immigrant.”

The concept of transmigrants absolutely has its relevance when challenging the concept of “immigrant.” “The word immigrant evokes images of permanent rupture, of the uprooted, abandonment of old patterns and the painful learning of a new language and culture” as Nina Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristian Blanc-Szanton suggest.⁴ However, transmigrant, as a new category of international migration, emerged in the context of the United States where authors observed the experience of immigrants from Haiti, the eastern Caribbean, and the Philippines living in New York. In other words, the pre-requisite of being transmigrant is that “they settle and become incorporated in the economy and political institutions, localities, and patterns of

daily life of the country in which they reside.”⁵ They thus can “build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement.”⁶ Obviously, the concept of “transmigrant” cannot be used to describe people who travel back and forth between their home country and host country, without the desire to integrate into the host country and with little or no opportunity to do so.

“Transient” is not a new term to describe the global phenomenon of people being based in their home country and then traveling back and forth frequently between other nation states. As far back as the early 1970s, Bardr Dahya described transients by using the example of young Pakistani men in Britain who arrived there unmarried or unaccompanied by women. The majority of these young men planned to return to Pakistan when they earned and saved money for their families. They lacked the desire to learn English and were less incorporated in British society.⁷ “Transient” is also used to analyze the phenomenon of the international labor market and brain drain with reference to unsettled skilled migrants. In the early 1980s temporary skilled transients become dominant with the decline of settlement emigration in Britain.⁸ Transients are temporary or contracted professional, scientific, and technical migrants who may move quite often between nation states.⁹ The core meaning of “transient” in migration studies is connected with the concept of “transit migration,” “return migration,” and “sojourner,” and is related to “guest worker” in the formerly self-declared non-immigration country, Germany.¹⁰ The exploration about the concept of “transient” is inspiring and illuminating. They are still constrained in the rigid discourse of dichotomous migration categorizations, however, and cannot present transients’ individuality, high mobility, non-integration, and their instability of current life and multi-possibility of future life. Although some scholars, e.g., Nina Glick Schiller and Noel B. Salazar, have made important contributions addressing the relationships between mobility and immobility, localization and transnational connection, experiences and imaginaries of migration, and rootedness and cosmopolitan openness by challenging conceptual orientations built on binaries of difference that have impeded analyses of the interrelationship between mobility and stasis.¹¹ They thus provide a conceptual tool to define the group or the individual with high mobility, especially for Africans in Guangzhou, described in this article.

“Africans in Guangzhou” as an interdisciplinary research topic has been researched since 2007, when Zhigang Li, Brigitte Bertoncello, et al. presented their pioneering research.¹² There has been a large body of academic papers, which approached the analysis of this population from varied perspectives, with most scholars declaring that Africans in Guangzhou are immigrants. There have only been a few scholars who have found that Africans cannot simply be regarded as immigrants. The newly established diaspora, Africans in Guangzhou, is largely composed of temporary residents and visitors.¹³ Heidi Haugen classified Nigerians in Guangzhou into three groups: itinerant traders, students, and undocumented migrants.¹⁴ Robert Castillo used the concept of “transnational entrepreneur” to replace the mainstream typologies of the “immigrant.” As he stated, “to assume that most Africans in Guangzhou (or China) are (or desire to become) ‘immigrants’ is not only a point of resentment amongst those Africans living in Guangzhou...but more importantly a legacy of sedentaristic methodological

approaches that assume that settlement is normal, and treat distance, change, instability, and placelessness as abnormal.”¹⁵

The reality of international mobility is far more complex than what I could observe, and it is not necessary to challenge the existing developed framework for understanding international migration. However, this article will be embedded in the context of mobility rethinking to build up a feasible concept, “transient,” which can be accepted by our research subjects—Africans in Guangzhou—and have this fit within the context in which our research subjects are embedded—Chinese society.

Methodology

This article is based on continuous ethnographic fieldwork and following sporadic interviews with Africans in Guangzhou. Twenty-two months of continuous ethnographic fieldwork was conducted in Guangzhou from July 2013 to May 2015 and was carried out in conjunction with a larger study on Africans daily experiences in Guangzhou. This initial fieldwork was followed up by four return trips to Guangzhou to meet with informants and follow up on the situation Africans faced after my move to Beijing in August 2015. I tried to keep in touch with my African friends in Guangzhou by WeChat and met with them in Beijing when they visited their embassies in Chaoyang subdistrict or while they waited for flights at the Beijing Capital International Airport. Moreover, I interviewed some African students from universities in Beijing who had visited African neighborhoods in Guangzhou or who knew the neighborhood through social media or news reports. When I was in Beijing, I also attended a conference held by the Bureau of Exit and Entry Administration of the Ministry of Public Security (the highest bureaucracy taking responsibility for the management of domestic foreigners in China) and twice talked with officers in the Division of Exit and Entry Administration Department of Public Security of Guangdong Province (also known by Africans as “Guangdong immigration”). My continuous fieldwork, sporadic revisits to Guangzhou, remote interactions with Africans, and contact with authorities contributed to firsthand materials concerning Africans in Guangzhou. I can also confirm what I have abstracted from my materials is accepted by my African informants, as well as corresponded with the Chinese legal system and local management.

During my fieldwork, I encountered several social realities that contradicted the concept of “immigrant,” and this led me to develop the descriptive concept of “transient” for this article based on three sets of criteria. First, most Africans are traders and do not have complete families in Guangzhou. They keep close connections with their relatives who are still living in Africa and travel between Africa and China according to the limitations imposed upon them by Chinese visa policy. Second, several Africans from different countries will often rent an apartment and live together, which, as a residence pattern, is very common in Guangzhou. Third, the function of African social organizations in Guangzhou is not to fight for African rights but rather to help Africans settle down and be integrated into Chinese society, which

differentiates them from immigration associations in western countries. The terms “occupation,” “kinship,” “visa,” “residence,” and “social organization” discussed more fully below appeared frequently in my research materials. This in turn inspired me to organize an article under the descriptive concept of “transient.”

Participant observation was always the main way to obtain information on Africans’ experience in Guangzhou. Although semi-structured interviews could have helped focus more on a specific topic of research, most of the time questions were not posed until informants raised a topic, had something they needed to tell me, or I became really curious about a subject. During the research period, Guangzhou police were conducting a campaign against “illegal” foreigners, with “illegal” meaning foreigners who had broken the terms of their visa or overstayed their visa. In light of this situation most Africans, no matter if they were leaders of African associations or newcomers, became alarmed by any Chinese citizen collecting information, especially related to visa status. This negative attitude concerning inquiry towards the African community did not lead to much official discourse between a researcher and informants, so it forced me to go with them into varied social contexts to gain both their trust and a deeper understanding of what their daily life entails.

English and Chinese were utilized during and after fieldwork in Guangzhou. Newcomers from Africa preferred English, but for African students from universities in China and leaders of African social organizations in Guangzhou, Chinese was always the most appropriate and apt language for communication. When communicating with Africans who spoke French but not Chinese, student volunteers who were majoring in French at a local university provided assistance.

I also worked as a certified frontline social worker in a local social service institution based in the African neighborhood of Xiaobei while doing some of the Guangzhou fieldwork. The identity of social worker provided more opportunities to approach Africans from many different African countries, allow visits to Africans’ apartments, and also led to pursuing cooperation with African social organizations to help those in need. Though quitting the job and moving to Beijing some months later, some former clients have occasionally consulted via WeChat to ask questions about how to renew a visa or buy cheap airline tickets online. They regarded me as a trustworthy friend. Multiple identities sometimes trapped me into an ethical dilemma, especially when as a social worker, I was supposed to support the policies of the local government and help police to fight against so-called “three illegals” of Africans.¹⁶ At the same time as a researcher, I was expected to respect the privacy of my informants and assume an attitude of detachment and indifference. In the end, the reason for quitting as a social worker was because I chose to support my clients and informants without concerning myself if they were “legal” or “illegal.” The international and local atmosphere for Africans to do business or live in Guangzhou has changed dramatically in the last several years. Most of my informants or clients have left China because of forcible repatriation, failed businesses, or just normal graduation from their universities in Guangzhou. Meanwhile, new Africans are continuously arriving in Guangzhou in the context of the recent warming of Sino-African relations.

Witnessing these types of situations persuaded me that the categorization of Africans in Guangzhou as immigrants could be challenged, and hence this article.

China as a Non-Immigration Country

“In the age of migration” there can be few people in either industrial or less developed countries today who do not have personal experience of migration or its effects.”¹⁷ However, different countries have varied attitudes toward immigration. Some countries have immigration recruitment programs, such as the US, Canada, and Australia. Many like France, England, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland have declared that they are non-immigration countries; however, these countries actively recruit immigrants and have both a history of immigration and a large growing immigration population, which has been prompting their transformation from traditional nation-states to multi-national, multi-racial, and multi-cultural ones. Generally, immigration countries could be defined as those that have immigration programs or actually recruit immigrants, and have a relatively high proportion of immigrants in their population.

The rapid economic growth and huge social changes in China have happened since the Reform and Opening-up Policy in 1978.¹⁸ Statistics serve to demonstrate present-day China’s great differences from Mao’s era. For example, in 2016 the total number of foreigners who entered or exited China’s border amounted to 570 million individual entries/exits.¹⁹ Although the Chinese government would not neglect the majority of foreigners, and, as some scholars have declared, China has been a new migration destination for people from other global South counties, compared with Europe and North America present-day China is a typical non-immigration country.²⁰ “China is not an immigration country!” This declaration not only comes from most Africans in Guangzhou, but from both the central and local Chinese government officials.

China, indeed, experienced complex immigration and national merging in its long history, but since 1949 China has gradually drawn up a blueprint for a unified multi-nation country, composed of 56 officially recognized ethnic groups. In this country, first, there is no position for immigration law in its legislative framework, and so there is no immigration program to recruit immigrants. In all laws and regulations concerning foreigners in China, the most important are the Exit and Entry Administration Law of the People’s Republic of China, and Regulations of the People’s Republic of China on Administration of the Entry and Exit of Foreigners. Meanwhile, there are some foreigner-relative rules scattered among the Nationality Law of the People’s Republic of China, Regulations of the People’s Republic of China on Household Registration, General Principles of the Civil Law of the People’s Republic of China, Measures for the Administration of Examination and Approval of Foreigners’ Permanent Residence in China, etc. Correspondingly, there is no the concept of “immigrant” in Chinese laws and regulations, and there is no “immigration bureau” existing in the Chinese government. Any natural person who does not have the nationality of the People’s Republic of China will be

regarded as a “foreigner,” and different government departments manage all affairs about foreigners separately. Second, the conditions for obtaining permanent residency are extremely difficult. According to a government-backed report, there are just 7,356 foreigners who gained permanent residency (although called “permanent residency,” it has to be qualified every five years) from 2004, when the Measures for the Administration of Examination and Approval of Foreigners' Permanent Residence in China started to be implemented to 2013.²¹ Third, the proportion of foreigners among the total Chinese population is quite low. According to China's sixth national population census (2010), the country's total population is nearly 1.333 billion, but the population of foreigners who have lived in China for more than three months or can make sure that they will reside for more than three months is about 0.6 million.²²

Since 2015, policies regarding foreigners in China have been reformed. These reforms have allowed foreigners, who officially received permanent residency, to hold a Chinese identity card, which looks similar to a Chinese citizen's ID card. Yet this reform is not open to most foreigners in China. It is only focused on skilled immigrants, or so-called “professional talents.” Just a few Africans in Guangzhou belong to category of professional talent, such as the outstanding footballers serving Guangzhou Evergrandetaobao Football Club (广州恒大淘宝足球俱乐部) and Guangzhou R&F football club (广州富力足球俱乐部), whom the Chinese government wants to recruit.

In a word, China is a typical non-immigration country, which means it doesn't have immigration programs, hasn't actually recruited immigrants, and its foreign population is quite low compared with its total population. In this non-immigration context, the majority of foreigners, including most Africans, cannot get stable residence status, sufficient social services and necessary social benefits in China.

The Reasons for Being Transients: Occupation, Kinship, and Visas

The types of occupation, kinship, and visas explain why Africans in Guangzhou are not immigrants, but transients. As we know, normally the occupations of a migrant group should be diversified and those occupations such as civil servant, lawyer, and doctor will be common; the members of the group should live in at least nuclear family and foster their second generation in their host countries; they may get permanent residence or get naturalized in the host countries, or at least can hold a more predictable residence status. However, the following description about Africans in Guangdong differs much from their counterparts in immigration countries.

Occupation

For Africans in Guangzhou, occupation is an important part of their demographic profile and has been researched very well, especially by Adams Bodomo.²³ He lists twenty-one occupations, which include businessman, trader, student, teacher, artist, merchant, administrator, basketball player, boss of cargo, buyer, cooker, doctor, education service officer, housewife, journalist, lecturer, musician, football player, retailer, seller, and no occupation. However, as all scholars have found, most Africans in Guangzhou declared they were businessmen, traders, or

merchants and were doing business. In fact, those Africans who claim they are musicians, football players, or engaging in other occupations would not deny that they are doing business simultaneously. In general, most Africans fall into two categories: businessman and student. However, some African students were doing business in the name of studying different majors. Those newcomers could not resist the allure of their African pioneers' success through China-Africa trade and did everything possible to extend their stay in China. Meanwhile, most Africans in Guangzhou are medium and small business people. Generally, they share warehouses and co-rent containers, and they mostly keep their goods bought from Guangzhou markets as carry-on luggage for their flights back to Africa. This trade pattern was named as "trade similar to ant moving" by Chinese media, which means smuggling a small quantity of goods from Guangzhou to Africa.²⁴ Occupation, as a reason, drives Africans to travel back and forth between Africa and China.

Kinship

Few scholars have focused on the relation between African kinship and their high mobility. According to the number of Africans who have family members living in Guangzhou, all could be classified into three types: those who stay in Guangzhou alone, those who stay with some family members, and those who stay with his/her whole family.²⁵ Although doing business or studying in China is often based on a decision collectively made by the family, because of the increase in the cost of living in Guangzhou, most Africans cannot carry the heavy burden of supporting all their family members to come and live in Guangzhou. Commonly, as I found, an African family normally sends one of its members to go to work or receive higher education. So, when asked the question "Do you have family members living in China?" most Africans would answer "No! I'm alone." The sent Africans choose to bring their family members to Guangzhou only after they have earned significant amounts of money and became more established. Anyhow, most Africans do not have all of their family members in China, and so most choose to go back to their home countries to reunite with family members especially during Christmas and the Chinese Spring Festival, when the export-oriented factories stop working. This is why the African neighborhood in Guangzhou appears in recess during Christmas and Chinese Spring Festival, only becoming prosperous again during the China Import and Export Fair (also known as "Canton Fair").

Visas

The type of occupation they can attain or how many family members can stay in Guangzhou depends on the type of visa they are receive. As a typical non-immigration country, China strictly regulates visas, with each type of visa having just one purpose. For example, Africans who hold a family reunion visa (also known as Q visa) are prohibited from being hired for salaried jobs, and Africans who hold a student visa (also known as X visa) are supposed solely to study and attend classes and not do business in the markets. Because of their occupations, most Africans hold a business visa (also known as M visa) or a tourist visa (also known as L

visa). M visa validity normally extends from ninety days to one year, with renewing once per thirty days, whereas the validity of L visa normally extends from seven to thirty days. Some Africans have tried to stay longer by applying for a student visa, but in the context of the Guangzhou police campaign against illegal work and illegal stays by foreigners, undocumented Africans in Guangzhou are becoming less numerous. Most Africans have to leave China frequently. They must either go to Hong Kong or Macau to renew their visa or go back to their home countries to apply for a new visa.

Generally speaking, “Africans in Guangzhou” refers to business people who come to buy goods and sell them in Africa; whose stay in China is not stable, and travel frequently between Africa and China to reunite with their families and renew, or apply for a new visa. Chinese visa policy is what has shaped the high mobility of Africans. Because of their high mobility, statistics on Africans in Guangzhou should be based on a specific time point, and so, except for Chinese government departments such as the Bureau of Exit and Entry Administration, any individual or organization doesn’t have the capacity to count the number of Africans in Guangzhou. Since public pressure caused the Guangzhou police to start a fight against the so-called “three illegals” of foreigners in 2013, the population of Africans in Guangzhou has fluctuated, often falling anywhere from ten thousand to twenty thousand. According to a recent count, on February 25, 2017 there were 10,344 people from Africa staying in Guangzhou.²⁶ The types of occupation, kinship, and visas of Africans demonstrate that Africans are neither “immigrants” nor “transmigrants,” but transients.

The Results of Being Transients: Residence and Social Organization

Patterns of residence and social organization are key factors to examine to learn if Africans have settled down and been integrated into Chinese society. In some typical immigration countries, governments would assist landed immigrants to settle down and help them integrate into the host society aided by mainstream social organizations or ethnospecific social organizations. However, most Africans in Guangzhou are businessmen and students, who are not “professional talents” the Chinese government wants to recruit. So, there is no government department focusing on providing housing for Africans, and Africans cannot get formal social support from China. There are several NGOs which have been selected by the local government to help Africans, but their fundamental purposes are neither to help Africans settle down nor integrate them into Chinese society, but rather to impel Africans to obey Chinese laws and decrease conflicts between Africans and local Chinese in order to promote greater local social harmony and stability.

During my fieldwork, the sub-district government’s attitude towards Africans was very clear. They wanted to make sure that Africans registered their residence with the local police station within twenty-four hours of their arrival and leave the country before their visa expired. Transients’ individuality and non-integration could be reflected by the patterns of social organizations in Guangzhou.

Residence

As noted above, most Africans do not have all their family members in Guangzhou, so except those who married a Chinese citizen and brought houses in the names of their spouse, most Africans did not buy real estate and temporarily live in hotels or rent apartments. For newcomers, hotel residence is often the best choice, because the application for a tourist visa needs proof of a hotel reservation, and the hotel will register Africans' temporary residence. This saves short-term visa holders precious time in Guangzhou. However, experienced business people or long-term visa holders prefer to not live in hotels, because hotels are not convenient for storing goods and expanding social networks. Instead, they will rent an apartment. There are three patterns of apartment residence: co-renting with relatives and friends, "family hotel" renting, and renting alone.²⁷ First, there is co-renting with relatives and friends. Based on the large linguistic, cultural and institutional gap between China and Africa, most Africans need help from their relatives and friends, so many avoid living alone, especially away from their compatriots. At the same time, when it comes to business secrets, those who come from the same African markets do not want to live together, which leads to a common result that an African businessman would rent an apartment with other Africans who are his/her compatriots and have different business interests, or who are not his/her compatriots and have similar business interests. The following description may help to understand this kind of apartment residence. Entering an apartment rented by Africans, the feeling of familiarity came very naturally, because all African rental apartments seem to have a similar set up. For example, I have visited an apartment rented by Africans, where there were three bedrooms and one living room. In the living room, there was a table and chairs for dinner, a sofa set, a TV stand, and an electronic scale. The parts of the living room without furniture were stacked with packed T-shirts and jeans. Three Angolan men and two Congolese men rented the apartment together and share three bedrooms. During my fieldwork, all five Africans appeared to hold business visas, and they left mainland China to renew their visas or apply for a new visa.

Second, there is "family hotel" renting. Guangzhou apartment owners ask new renters for double rent as deposit, and to prepay one month's rent when lease agreements come into effect. If the rental unit is operated by rental agents, renters will have to pay 50 percent of their rent to agents. It means that new renters have to pay 350 percent of rent at once. Considering the rental rates, which during my fieldwork were between 250 to 500 US dollars for a one-bedroom apartment, a new lease agreement would cost an African 875 to 1750 US dollars, which is a considerable financial burden especially for any African who travels frequently and regards an apartment just as a place for sleeping. Africans try to rent a room from others residing more stably in order to decrease the financial risks since they cannot get long-term visas or are unable to foresee if their business will be successful. The sublease from original renters to secondary renters makes an apartment a "family hotel" with high resident turnover rates.

Third, there is renting alone. A few Africans, especially those established businessmen (who may be accompanied by spouses and children) and students, prefer to rent apartments

alone, because they do not want their private lives interrupted. In fact, there are some common features existing in these three residence patterns: simple furniture, numerous goods, and roommates without familial connections.

Social Organization

Africans in Guangzhou have also formed different types of social organizations, which are usually based on common nationality, center on leaders, provides internal mutual aid and guidance, and represent their people in interacting with other organizations or groups.²⁸ In the United States, African immigrants have developed various self-help groups and organizations in three levels to help new arrivals adapt and survive in their new environment.²⁹ The opening-up of the institutional opportunity structure in Italy favored an increase in the number of formal immigrant associations, because by doing so immigrants can get access to public contracts and funding.³⁰ Ghanaian immigrant associations fulfill a wide variety of economic, cultural, social, and political functions related to the needs of the immigrants in Canada. At the same time, the associations serve their needs in the homeland: the immigrants use them to contribute to community development efforts, fight for certain political rights, and maintain ties to the homeland.³¹ However, African associations in Guangzhou are very different. First, they are only run at the city level. Guangzhou is regarded as China's African hub, but the population of Africans in Guangzhou is too small to form organizations at different levels. Second, the associations cannot be registered formally in China because of limitations set by Chinese laws. Based on the Chinese logic as a non-immigration country, there are no immigrants in China, so there is no access for foreigners to register social organizations for mutual help. Thus, African associations in Guangzhou cannot get access to public contracts and funding from the Chinese government. Third, the associations' functions are limited. For most Africans, they exist just for providing mutual help and basic guidance for running businesses and visa application. "I always heard (our) association, but obviously the association can't do anything. I think we really don't need the association. Maybe only when somebody died or seriously ill, we need the association to donate," as one Congolese said. Fourth, the scale of African associations is not stable. As foreigners in a non-immigration country, Africans cannot get stable immigrant status in China. In this context, the members of African associations have not covered all Africans in Guangzhou. In most cases, the most active members of these associations are just their leaders.

In all, as the results of being transients, the patterns of residence, and social organizations of Africans in Guangzhou show, it is erroneous to talk about their integration in China. If their residence status is not stable and their future is uncertain, most Africans will not regard China as their new home. So, their dreams are embedded in their home country; they do not desire to integrate into Chinese society, and, actually, there is very little possibility for them to be integrated.

Conclusion

Conversations with fellow academics have led me to believe that Africans in Guangzhou should be reclassified from being viewed as immigrants to considering them as transients. Africans in

Guangzhou are very different from Africans trying to move or immigrate to other countries because they are restricted by Chinese law. Most in Guangzhou have not settled down or received citizenship. They are neither immigrants nor transmigrants, let alone do they constitute a diaspora. Rather, they are transients in China. The former categories have a stable status in the landed country, but transients are more unsettled. The types of occupation, kinship, and visas of Africans decide their individuality, high mobility, and non-integration, and make it easy to observe their distinctive patterns of residence and social organization.

This article introduces the concept of “transient” based on the argument that any classification or definition produced by scholars should be placed and used in a specific context, especially by the government of the host countries and the “immigrants” themselves. As we know, besides scholars, the classification of immigrants can be given by international organizations (such as the UN and IMO), different governments, or “immigrants” themselves. However, the tacit perception that Africans in Guangzhou are immigrants is at odds with the Chinese legal system and Africans’ self-definition. In China, the typical non-immigration country, public opinion is constantly alert to news regarding immigration from Africa to China. The emergence of an African neighborhood in Guangzhou seemingly was the result of poor management on the part of government officials of a particular group of foreigners residing in that city. Under the pressure of public opinion, Guangzhou police have strictly enforced Chinese laws on Africans in Guangzhou. In the process, scholars actually contributed to the deterioration of the environment for African business and residing in Guangzhou. The population of Africans in Guangzhou has decreased, and most of my informants have left to return to their home countries, which demonstrates that the concept of “transient” is valid for analyzing the existence of Africans in Guangzhou.

This article also wants to suggest that the concept of “transient” could be used broadly to describe not just Africans in Guangzhou, but all those who travel between different countries without desire to integrate into the host country or without the possibility of being integrated into the host country, where their current life is instable and future uncertain. Transients have been also found in other places, especially in East Asia. British and Singaporean migrants are, by their very nature, highly transitory and therefore almost impossible to “pin down” in China.³² With diversity and transient nature, westerners live in the “foreign gated communities” in Beijing.³³ Afro-Caribbean expatriates especially in Shanghai have little contact with a wide range of Chinese citizens.³⁴ Because of the lack of regional institutions pushing for family reunification rights, because of an elite political culture that still maintains the assumptions and repertoires of a “developmental state” where rights may be sacrificed for economic growth and order, and because of migrant perceptions of greater immigration control there is very little migrant settlement in South Korea and Japan.³⁵ No matter if the concept of “transient” could be used or not, it has to be placed in a specific context to examine the population in question, especially by the government of the host countries and by “immigrants” themselves.

Notes

- 1 King 2002.
- 2 King 2012.
- 3 Collyer and Haas 2012.
- 4 Schiller et al. 1992.
- 5 Schiller et al. 1995.
- 6 Schiller et al. 1992.
- 7 Dahya 1973.
- 8 Findlay 1988.
- 9 Beaverstock 2001; Beaverstock and Boardwell 2000.
- 10 Kolb 2008; Thränhardt 1995.
- 11 Schiller et al. 2013.
- 12 Li et al. 2007
- 13 Lyons et al. 2012, 2013.
- 14 Haugen 2012.
- 15 Castillo 2014.
- 16 “Sanfei (三非)”, the Chinese word literally means 3 kinds of illegal situations: enter illegally, work illegally and reside illegally.
- 17 Castles et al. 2014, p. 15.
- 18 Unless noted otherwise, the word “China” in this article means mainland China, which does not include Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan.
- 19 Bureau of Exit and Entry Administration of People’s Republic of China releases the data about foreigners in China in January every year.
- 20 Haugen 2012.
- 21 See the official website of Bureau of Exit and Entry Administration of People’s Republic of China.
- 22 National Bureau of Statistics of the People’s Republic of China 2011.
- 23 Bodomo 2012, p. 55-57.
- 24 *New Express Daily* 2011.
- 25 Niu 2016.
- 26 CRI Online 2017.
- 27 Niu 2016.
- 28 Niu 2015.
- 29 Takougang and Tidjani 2009.
- 30 Caponio 2005.
- 31 Owusu 2000.
- 32 Willis and Yeoh 2002.
- 33 Wu and Webber 2004.
- 34 Adams 2014.
- 35 Seol and Skrentny 2009.

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REVIEW ESSAY

Recaptive Africans and U.S. Émigrés: Creating Communities and Journeying to Africa in the Nineteenth Century Atlantic World

EVAN C. ROTHERA

Sharla M. Fett. 2017. *Recaptured Africans: Surviving Slave Ships, Detention, and Dislocation in the Final Years of the Slave Trade*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 312 pp.

Lisa A. Lindsay. 2017. *Atlantic Bonds: A Nineteenth Century Odyssey from America to Africa*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 328 pp.

At first glance, the similarities between *Recaptured Africans* and *Atlantic Bonds* seem superficial. Sharla M. Fett focuses on 1,800 recaptive Africans, who were first enslaved in Africa, captured by U.S. naval vessels during voyages to Cuba, transported to Charleston and Key West and housed in recaptive camps, and later sent to Liberia. Lisa A. Lindsay, on the other hand, analyzes James Churchwell Vaughan, a free person of color whose father advised him to leave South Carolina and seek his fortune in Africa. However, the stories of Vaughan and the captives have many striking similarities. In both cases, Africa loomed large. But, as both historians illustrate, it is not entirely correct to place the U.S. and Africa into a simple unfree/free dichotomy. Thus, both books suggest more nuanced perspectives about Liberia and colonization. Furthermore, Fett and Lindsay discuss the problem of sources and illustrate how historians can successfully excavate hidden or obscured histories. Finally, both affirm the importance of using an Atlantic World lens when talking about slavery and freedom in the nineteenth century.

Fett examines the contraband slave trade and focuses specifically on the “odyssey of roughly 1,800 African children, men, and women seized by the U.S. Navy from illegal slave ships headed for Cuban markets and brought temporarily into the United States” (p. 4). She discusses captives from four ships: the *Echo*, *Wildfire*, *William*, and *Bogota* and analyzes the social experiences of this overlooked group of people. While historians have spent a great deal of time discussing U.S. slave trade suppression, they have paid little attention to how U.S. authorities treated African captives. This is likely a function of the relatively small size of this group. Nevertheless, Fett argues that scholars should pay more attention to captives because

Evan C. Rothera is a Post-Doctoral Fellow, History Department, Pennsylvania State University. His dissertation analyzes civil wars and reconstructions in the U.S., Mexico, and Argentina. He has published articles in *The Journal of Mississippi History* and the *Journal of Supreme Court History* as well as numerous book reviews.

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v17/v17i4a6.pdf>

their collective efforts to escape apprenticeship and form new families “recreated fragile social groupings that defied the social annihilation imposed by slave traders and would-be rescuers” (p. 10).

Any study of recaptives would be incomplete without a discussion of congressional legislation about the international slave trade. Fett contends that U.S. policies evolved in a significant way during the antebellum era. Initially, U.S. law “treated recaptive status as virtually indistinguishable from that of chattel slavery” (p. 23). Many Jeffersonians, who did not approve of making concessions to federal power and fretted about increases in the free black population, wrote provisions into the 1807 law prohibiting the international slave trade that left the disposition of recaptives to state and territorial legislatures. Thus, in the period between 1807 and 1819, recaptives were often auctioned off to planters. However, a shift in federal policy occurred in 1819. New legislation prohibited the selling of recaptives by states, gave the federal government power over recaptive disposition, and linked recaptives with the American Colonization Society. This created “an alternative to reenslavement,” although, it should be stated, “it functioned more as a deportation order than a repatriation policy” (p. 29).

Fett is particularly concerned with how people in the U.S., both black and white, used recaptives for different ends. For instance, naval officers and slavers authored texts that illustrated how recaptive encampments “could be represented as venues of white imperial benevolence and ethnological exhibit” (p. 33). These accounts, she contends, formed a slave trade ethnography, an influential literary genre that shaped how people understood recaptives. When naval escorts brought the *Echo* to Charleston white southerners generally reacted with curiosity and opportunism. Slavers first sought, unsuccessfully, to gain possession of the recaptives. Proslavery apologists used recaptives to “refute the colonizationist vision of African ‘civilization, commerce, and Christianity’” (p. 59). Some white sightseers even chartered vessels to take them on sightseeing tours of the recaptive camp at Fort Sumter. Illustrated weeklies, in discussions of recaptive camps in Charleston and Key West, conveyed two messages about recaptives: they were “beneficiaries of U.S. benevolence” and a “rare opportunity for ethnographic observation” (p. 89). White people were not the only group interested in recaptives. Free black activists “linked the illegal slave trade and the Liberian removal of recaptives to broader vision of emancipation and black progress” (p. 100). Protests by James W. C. Pennington against the illegal slave trade “shaped African American formulations of a concept of human rights in a climate of hardening inequality and racial determinism” (p. 102).

Fett does an excellent job illustrating how recaptives became, in the eyes of many contemporaries, objects that could be exploited for a specific purpose. But that is not the entirety of the story. Through fine-grained analysis, she reconstructs the social worlds of recaptives and explores the contours of life in recaptive camps in Charleston and Key West, on the ships to Africa, and in Liberia. In “the midst of social isolation, despair, and uncertainty,” she asserts, “enslaved captives began to build the communal networks through which they might comprehend their ordeal” (p. 47). On the *Echo*, before the ship arrived in Charleston, some slaves plotted insurrection, but the uprising proved unsuccessful. Recaptives possessed language skills and knowledge of legal processes and could sometimes advocate on their own behalf. Those housed on Key West, in a camp characterized by “an ambiguous blend of protection and incarceration” (p. 81) began to reassert control over their lives. Many formed

hierarchies that gave adult men and women particular authority, likely because of the presence of so many young recaptives. Recaptives moved freely throughout the camp and often engaged in musical expression and dancing. Furthermore, recaptives practiced forms of mourning that mirrored West Central African collective expressions.

After spending a period of time in Key West and Charleston, recaptives made another journey across the Atlantic to Liberia. "Slave ship survivors in transit" Fett observes, "responded to the social crisis of death and loss by building shipmate communities through the day-to-day art of innovation amidst scarcity" (p. 125). Again, she offers a sensitive and nuanced description of captive social worlds and demonstrates how they were agents, rather than passive victims. On the ships, they improvised social worlds, developed their own rituals of mourning, sought out healers among their fellow shipmates, and "reasserted corporate belonging through artistic creation" (p. 151). Recaptives who survived and landed in Liberia "continued to confront death, dislocation, and dependency" (p. 157). Almost all were apprenticed to black American emigrant households or missionary stations. Many of them protested new forms of servitude and abuse. As in the other chapters, Fett successfully illuminates life for recaptives in Liberia. She discusses how some of them protested abuse, others attempted to escape to their previous homes, others sought to maintain shipmate networks, and still others found status within church circles.

Where Fett analyzes roughly 1,800 recaptives, Lindsay focuses on one family. According to family history, Scipio Vaughan, an African, was captured in Africa and shipped to the United States, where he married a Cherokee woman. On his deathbed, he encouraged his children to return to Africa. His son, James Churchwell Vaughan followed his advice and "found his father's people, reestablishing ties broken by the Atlantic slave trade" (p. 3). However, as Lindsay began to conduct research, some of the elements of this story unraveled. Scipio Vaughan, for instance, was born in the United States. James Churchwell Vaughan did travel to Africa, but he did not find his father's people. However, the history Lindsay unearths proves as fascinating as the family legends and reveals "new ways of viewing connections between Africa and America" (p. 5).

Because this is the story of a family, Lindsay begins by exploring Scipio Vaughan's life in South Carolina. Although he spent most of his life as a slave, he was, at the time of his death, a free man who owned land and real estate. Furthermore, because his Cherokee wife was free, Vaughan's children were also free. Lindsay concludes that at the end of his life Scipio not only gave his children a precious head start "in the dangerous world of slavery and white supremacy" (p. 42), but also sound advice: travel to Africa. James Churchwell Vaughan, alone among his siblings, chose to follow his father's advice. He left the U.S. for Liberia in 1852, a logical decision because free people of color occupied a liminal space in the United States. In addition, predatory white officials in South Carolina utilized legal chicanery to take advantage of his family. Like the recaptives Fett discusses, James Churchwell Vaughan formed strong ties with his fellow shipmates and likely named several of his children after fellow passengers.

Liberia seemed initially to present a counterpoint to the United States. As Lindsay notes, if Vaughan "left the United States frustrated that black people there could never truly be free, he had firm grounds for optimism when he stepped foot on African soil" (p. 77). However, he

chose to leave Liberia less than three years after he arrived. Lindsay suggests that Vaughan became alienated by the fact that Liberia was a settler society that was, in its way, as exploitative as South Carolina. While Liberians waged war against slavery and the slave trade, Vaughan, and others, had to confront the presence of unfree labor, specifically apprenticeship. Furthermore, Liberia seemed to be developing a plantocracy. Although Vaughan prospered, thanks to his carpentry skills, he, like the recaptives, found life in Liberia was no bed of roses.

In 1855, Vaughan accompanied missionaries from the Southern Baptist Convention to Abeokuta. His association with the missionaries proved transformative. Vaughan received an education in Yoruba language and culture and became a Baptist. Lindsay embeds Vaughan's life in the context of war between indigenous African kingdoms. Vaughan became collateral damage during a war, when his house was looted and most of his property stolen. Despite the turmoil, however, Vaughan established a new homestead, avoided "any identification with Yoruba political communities" (p. 138), married, and formed a family. Due to violence against Christians in Abeokuta, Vaughan and many other people fled to Lagos. In Lagos, he worked as a carpenter, used some of his profits to invest in real estate, opened a hardware business, and established the foundations of economic success. Indeed, within a few years, despite the turbulent nature of his life before arriving in Lagos, Vaughan's attained an economic footing secure enough to allow him to send his relatives in the U.S. a significant amount of gold coins.

Lindsay juxtaposes Vaughan's success in Lagos with the struggles of his family in South Carolina. Where many of his relatives did not fare well in postbellum South Carolina, Vaughan "was able not only to enjoy a comfortable standard of living, but also to pass along wealth and opportunity to the generations who followed him" (p. 171). Although Vaughan faced setbacks, such as a fire that destroyed his home and the death of several of his children, he nevertheless laid the foundations for a Vaughan dynasty in Africa. The crucial difference between Lagos and South Carolina was the fact that Lagos colonial officials "*wanted* Africans to succeed, not only to vindicate their rule but also to provide tax revenue for the official treasure" (p. 179). On the other hand, "despite its economic illogic, white elites in the American South instead wanted African Americans to fail, in order to validate and perpetuate their subordination" (p. 179).

The final years of Vaughan's life were rather quiet, but he nevertheless continued to exert an important impact on Lagos. He and several other members of the Lagos Baptist Church grew disgusted with missionary racism. They decided to secede and form their own church. The resulting Native Baptist Church, later the Ebenezer Baptist Church, "is considered a watershed in the history of Nigerian nationalism" (p. 205). Vaughan died on September 13, 1893 at age 65. As Lindsay comments, he "would be remembered with affection and pride, and not only in Nigeria. In the United States too, younger generations of his family would keep his name alive for more than a century—a prospect he probably never anticipated" (p. 214). Indeed, Lindsay illustrates the connections between Vaughan's descendants in Africa and his relatives in the United States and how the two groups of people maintained links with each other, sometimes by writing and sometimes by visiting. She concludes by remarking "though it might seem surprising to Americans today, Vaughan's brightest future turned out to be in Africa" (p. 232).

Both Lindsay and Fett confront the problem of sources. As Fett notes, there are plenty of sources discussing recaptives: writings of naval officers, reports from U.S. marshals and government agents, legal proceedings, and the records of the American Colonization Society.

However, “the archive of evidence on U.S. slave trade suppression is marked by a virtual erasure of first-person testimony from these specific recaptive adults and youth” (p. 7). This absence, in turn, threatens to silence key aspects of the recaptive social experience. Fett, therefore, should be commended for the subtle ways she uses fragmentary or partial evidence to recover recaptive voices. In addition, Lindsay states that James Churchwell Vaughan “did not lead the kind of life best suited for conventional biographies” (p. 5). Case in point, she only found one signed letter from him. Lindsay, like Fett, casts a wide net for sources. Both books could be successfully utilized in a historical methods class to talk about how historians should analyze people who seemingly left few traces on the historical record.

In addition, both authors caution against creating a simplistic free/unfree dichotomy between Africa and the U.S. Although Lindsay observes that Vaughan found a brighter future in Africa than in the United States, she also contends that his journey “was more complicated than leaving a land of slavery for one of freedom” (p. 75). Liberia looms large in both accounts. In Lindsay’s telling, Vaughan did well in Liberia because his carpentry skills were in high demand. Many of his fellow shipmates, however, did not fare so well and “death loomed over Liberian settlers” (p. 83). In addition, the captives Fett analyzes became apprentices in Liberia. Although captives were spared the horrors of Cuban sugar plantations, “the alternative of Liberian apprenticeship incorporated slave trade refugees into a Liberian colonial order birthed by U.S. second slavery politics” (p. 184). The presence of apprenticeship likely alienated Vaughan. For that matter, as Lindsay comments, outsiders “continued to point out the similarities between Liberia’s labor system and American slavery” (p. 99). Both authors do readers a service by illustrating messier and more complex histories that analyze degrees of freedom in the Atlantic world. Fett’s captives inhabited a liminal world and their status hovered somewhere between emancipation and enslavement. Both books reveal the robustness of slavery and the fragility of freedom in the nineteenth century Atlantic world.

Fett and Lindsay offer detailed and nuanced analysis of slavery and freedom in the nineteenth century Atlantic world. Both books successfully illuminate the social worlds of people and families often overlooked by historians and thus do an excellent job excavating hidden histories. Both also will work quite well in graduate seminars and will appeal to scholars interested in U.S. history, African history, transnationalism, race, and slavery and emancipation.

REVIEW ESSAY

The Practice of Politics in Postcolonial Southern Africa: Cases from Mozambique and Zimbabwe

CLEMENT MASAKURE

Bjorn Enge Bertelsen. 2016. *Violent Becomings: State Formation, Sociality, and Power in Mozambique*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn. 332 pp.

Sarah Rich Dorman. 2016. *Understanding Zimbabwe: From Liberation to Authoritarianism*. New York: Oxford University Press. 347 pp.

Blair Rutherford. 2017. *Farm Labor Struggles in Zimbabwe: The Ground of Politics*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press. 278 pp.

Introduction

Mozambique attained independence from Portugal in 1975, and five years later the British flag was lowered in Salisbury, now Harare, ushering in majority government in Zimbabwe. Sharing a long history that dates back to the precolonial era, the two countries have experienced their fair share of political, social, and economic challenges. Still, the liberation movements that defeated colonial white minority regimes have managed to stay in power, controlling the postcolonial state. The three books in this review put under focus postcolonial politics in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Despite their foci and being from different disciplines—anthropology and political science—the works by Bertelsen, Dorman, and Rutherford offer insights into the practice of politics in postcolonial Southern Africa. Indeed, while each book addresses a different subject within African politics, they nonetheless speak to critical issues germane to an understanding of the politics of postcolonial state making: the persistence of violence in different forms in the process of state making; the manner in which ruling parties have maintained control; and how the marginalized within society, whether in the Manica Province of Mozambique or farm workers in Zimbabwe, have contested state power, critiqued the state, and have, amongst other things, appropriated aspects of national politics to advance their interests in an effort to improve their livelihoods. Although these are not historical works, in their own ways, the books suggest to us that we rethink the past, and hence our understanding of the present by addressing the nature of the state, state institutions, and different historical subjects within the field of contemporary African politics.

Violent Politics and State Formations in Mozambique

The specter of violence haunts the relationship between state and society in Mozambique. One cannot talk of state making and nation building in Mozambique without paying

Clement Masakure is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow, International Studies Group, University of the Free State, South Africa, with a research focus on issues related to public health and the state in Zimbabwe.

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v17/v17i4a7.pdf>

attention to the violent nature of the process. The Nguni wars of the precolonial period, the colonial conquest, colonial violence in the forms ranging from forced labor to pillage and plunder, the wars of independence, and the civil war in the immediate postcolonial era introduced different forms of violence to Mozambicans. Recently, Mozambicans have been experiencing new forms of violence ranging from urban riots to public lynching. The different forms of violence are part and parcel of state making. And for Bertelsen, the state should not be viewed as a finite entity and a bureaucratically ordered polity, “but rather as an always-emergent form of power and control at multiple societal levels” (p. 3). Hence the state is a continually evolving and violently challenged mode of social ordering. Throughout his book, Bertelsen meticulously explore the multiple ways in which state formations are always challenged, in the process exposing the ambiguities and the antagonist nature of the relations between the society and state formations.

Based on extensive ethnographic research work spanning multiple periods between 1999 and 2011, Bertelsen introduces the readers to the impoverished communities of Chimio and Honde in Mozambique’s Manica Province. These marginalized communities are used as points of entry in analyzing the relations between colonial and postcolonial state formations and what he calls the traditional field. The locals employ various terms interchangeably to denote this traditional field: *tradição* (tradition in Portuguese), *tsika* (tradition in vernacular) or *tchianhu wo atewe* (the way of the maTewe) (p. 6). According to Bertelsen, a focus on tradition helps to “grasp experiential dimensions, and broad historical trends that crucially shape contemporary and past dynamics of statehood, sociality and power ...” (p. 7). Because various state formations “seek to incorporate, capture, effuse, eradicate, or accommodate” (p. 264), the relationship between the traditional field and state formations has predominantly been one of tension and antagonism.

Reading Bertelsen, it is clear that the dynamics of state formation and the traditional field are entangled and enmeshed in conflicts over territory. The conflicts over territory transcend critical historical junctures, continuing from the precolonial and colonial periods through the war of liberation and the postcolonial destabilizations, including the current state of Mozambique. At different historical epochs as the state evolves, the traditional field is subjected to the process of deterritorialization. For example, the practices of *tsiano wo atewe/tsika* that includes the rituals over the fertility of land and the position of spirits such as *mhondoro*, have frequently been attacked by various state formations and endangered by war and violence. Hence under Ngungunyane, the precolonial state killed all rainmakers as part of the efforts at creating a well-ordered state, and Frelimo under Samora Machel attacked the traditional field as part of the reordering independent Mozambique along the lines of scientific socialism. However, over various historical periods, the state has failed to control the traditional field. Ngungunyane’s failure to include rainmakers within state structures leading to their killing and Frelimo’s contentious relations with *tsiano wo atewe* indicate some of the ways that the traditional field challenged the state.

In this highly engaging work, Bertelsen also examines the connections between the topography of healing and the processes of deterritorialization and the historical instances of state formation. Thus, he examines the work of healers known as *n’anga* and *profete* and also highlights the importance of annual family rituals such as the *kutenda adzimu edu* (thank the spirits) in analyzing the relations between the arena of healing and state formation (pp. 121-48). In Southern Africa, an *n’anga* is loosely translated as a diviner and traditional healer while a *profete* is a healer/diviner closely associated with African independent churches. By

focusing on the contested topography of healing, Bertelsen suggests that “this social field is one characterized by spirits and healing potencies constituting forces that inherently upset hierarchical and structural sociopolitical orders of the state kind” (pp. 121-22). While the field of healing has acted against forces of the state order, this does not mean that the state has not attempted to capture and control the topography of healing. Indeed, the postcolonial state in its various formations, through the *Associação da Medicina Tradicional de Moçambique* (the Association for Traditional Medicine in Mozambique, AMETRAMO), has had problematic relations with traditional healers (pp. 160-89). On behalf of the state, AMETRAMO aims to standardize, bureaucratize and make legible the practices of the *n’anga* and *profete* (p. 160). However, the practitioners have contested this deployment of state power via AMETRAMO to reorder the field of healing.

Besides the topography of healing, Bertelsen also examines the relationship between arena of law and political authority and the traditional field. He does this by following cases of summary justice in the poor neighborhoods of Chimoio. Through summary justice, the inhabitants of Chimoio take the law into their hands, in most cases circumventing state agencies and institutions. Bertelsen examines two events where popular justices threatened the accused and the accused resorted to traditional agencies, rather than state institutions, to resolve the matter. By privileging traditional agencies rather than state institutions in solving the case, Bertelsen points to the ability of the traditional authority to reach into what is often seen as the domain of the state and government practices. Through an examination of the cases of summary justice, Bertelsen makes a strong critique of the idea of Mozambique constituting a “heterogeneous state” (p. 266). Instead, he proposes the idea of multiple sovereignties: that is “formations of power that compete, overlap, and wax and wane within the overall framework of the postcolonial state apparatus” (p. 266). Thinking of Mozambique constituting multiple sovereignties allows Bertelsen to examine the multifarious ways in which the inhabitants of Chimoio and Honde contested authority structures.

Reading *Violence Becomings*, one is left with the sense that the book is targeted for a specialist audience, especially anthropologists. This is not an easy read for non-specialists. The writing is dense and at times difficult to penetrate. Still, this is a theoretically grounded work that shows excellent use of ethnographic material to untangle and complicate the violent nature of the continuous process of state making and how this is contested at various historical moments and within different domains in Southern Africa. Indeed, Bertelsen’s overarching analysis underscores the ambiguous relations between the state formations and the traditional field from various angles. Looking at it from innumerable perspectives enables Bertelsen to capture the broad range of contests within which the violence of state becoming can be approached. At the same time, Bertelsen shows how the state, as a mode of organization is “an arborescent structure always in a state of becoming and always being contested, challenged and evaded...” (p. 270). Not only is this work a critique of the scholarship that sees the state as a static and dominant entity, but by focusing on state formation as an unfolding violent process, what he calls “violent becomings,” Bertelsen also allows readers to view the state from the perspective of its non elite subjects. He does an excellent job in delineating the trajectories of violence central to state making in Mozambique.

Coercion and Consent in Maintain Power in Zimbabwe

In *Understanding Zimbabwe*, Sarah Rich Dorman's, like Bertelsen's, Dorman's purpose is to comprehend the emergence of postcolonial nations, how state institutions took form, and the role of the society in negotiating new identities after independence. Closely related to this is the manner in which ruling elites maintain control and power over the nation. Dorman argues that the persistence of authoritarian rule in Zimbabwe and the ability of the ruling elites to stay in power "should not be understood primarily in terms of greed and corruption... nor as a personalized and expedient use of security apparatus" (p. 3), but rather the Zimbabwean case reveals "a complex picture of how individuals and groups became bound in the project of state and nation building, despite contesting or even rejecting aspects of it" (p. 3). In other words, the endurance of authoritarianism is partly due to the active balancing of coercion and consent and the ability of the ruling elites to monopolize discourses aimed at fostering national unity.

The postcolonial elites did not become authoritarian overnight. The roots of the ways Zimbabweans practice politics should be traced back to the colonial period. Thus, Dorman historicizes the rise of African nationalism, the colonial state's response to nationalist movement, the liberation war, and the process of decolonization and how they shaped the relations between political parties/guerilla armies and civilians. Important to note here is that while there were calls for unity among nationalists, the nationalist movement was diverse, burdened with ideological and personal differences, leading to "diverse lived experiences of elite and subaltern nationalists and their civilian supporters" (p. 21). The supporters ranged from ordinary folk in rural areas, who had an uneasy relationship with liberation fighters, to urban communities of blacks, whites, and coloreds. At the same time, civil society and church organizations had tenuous relationships with the state and liberation parties (pp. 21-29). By the time of independence, there were many ambiguities and tensions in the relations between the political groups and civilians, setting the tenor of the practice of politics in the postcolonial era.

In 1980, Zimbabweans gave ZANU PF under Robert Mugabe the mandate to lead the nation. The first seven years of independence saw the ruling party building alliances with the former adversaries and those who were outside its sphere of influence. While this was a period of inclusion as Dorman suggests, the state also deployed violence against those with the capacity to challenge its authority. The massacres in Matabeleland and the Midlands Provinces are emblematic of the state's use of coercion as part of the nation building project and the ruling party's assertion of power. In other spheres, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were reoriented, the state imposed technocratic top-down developmentalism in rural and urban areas, and the media became central to the nation-building project. Dorman cites Norbert Tengende whose pithy quote succinctly summarizes the relation between the state's nation building project and the citizens: "Nation building ...became the instrument of domination and control...marked by the marginalization of popular participation" (p. 36). This culminated with the signing of the Unity Accord in 1987, which turned Zimbabwe into a de facto one party state. And in the following ten years, between 1987-1997 not only did Zimbabwe begin to slide into economic problems, but also experienced increased securitization and militarization of key bodies.

The years between 1997 and 1999 saw further knocks on the economy. This was partly as result of austerity measures and increased labor unrest. It was also due to imprudent state spending by deploying troops to the Democratic Republic of Congo, paying unplanned

gratuities to war veterans, and the rise in corruption. At the same time, the struggle for a new constitution confronted by the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) led to political polarization. The government responded to civic society's push for new constitution by appointing the Constitutional Review Commission (CRC). According to Dorman, the NCA-CRC debate "...catalyzed a much broader set of questions about the role of NGOs, trade unions, individual citizens and their relationship to the state" (p. 137). The government's constitutional referendum loss in year 2000 had major implications for the nation, the state, civic society, and citizens. It was the immediate catalyst of what has been termed the Zimbabwe crisis, and it transformed the relations between the state, civic society, and citizens. The ability of society to challenge the state and the ruling party's conception of the nation was met with increased authoritarianism.

What happened from 2000 onward is an all too familiar story of how a nation turns from a breadbasket of the continent to a basket case. For the post-2000 period Dorman weaves together a complex story of connections between economic decline, land reform, massive displacement of Zimbabweans, violence, and state exclusionary politics. Politics shifted towards polarization as the state not only deepened the patronage system to maintain itself in power, but also deployed violence on the so-called enemies of the nation. These included the opposition parties, led by the Movement for Democratic Change and civic society. By the time of the 2008 elections it had become clear that the state's hold on power was under more serious challenge than before. In the wake ZANU's electoral loss in 2008 and the subsequent violence that followed, Zimbabwe was on edge. At the behest of the regional body Southern African Development Community, ZANU and the opposition parties entered into a five-year power-sharing agreement, commonly known as the Global Political Agreement (GPA). According to Dorman, the GPA did not lessen the tensions and accommodating demands from competing forces, but rather it "ratchet[ed] up friction and intensified demands for representation, recognition and access to state power" (p. 189).

Throughout the book, Dorman narrates a fascinating story in which the ruling elites maintain power thorough a combination of coercion, consent, and a patronage system array. At stake is not only the struggle for political power and control of the levers of the state, but defining who has the right to speak for the nation, and the very nature of the nation itself. Nationalism is at the center of this struggle, and for Dorman nationalism should not just be understood in ideological terms only. Nationalism should also be understood as an organizing principle or the practice of politics. Dorman's attention to nationalism as a way of doing politics opens up space for her to examine post-independence political demobilization, the consolidation of power by ruling elites, and the limits of liberation politics.

The major limitation of the book, as Dorman acknowledges, is that it focusses on formal politics. It does not pay detailed attention to grassroots politics and how the marginalized practice politics. Still, it does an excellent job in illuminating the practice of contemporary politics in Zimbabwe. It a good read not only for those interested in Zimbabwe under Mugabe's 37-year reign, but also for students of African politics and those interested in understanding how liberation movements have managed to stay in power. Based on extensive research spanning over two decades, *Understanding Zimbabwe* opens up space to interrogate transformations of postcolonial nations, the place of state institutions and the relations between the ruling elites and society.

Practicing Politics at the Margins

Blair Rutherford's work is a good companion alongside Dorman's. In *Farm Labor Struggles in Zimbabwe*, Rutherford moves away from grand politics to privilege the role of the marginalized farm workers in politics. Through a rich ethnography and using the labor case of farm workers at Upfumi farm, Rutherford makes a critique of the framing of the position and role of farm workers in Zimbabwe's postcolonial politics. Scholars and analysts have deployed two dominant narratives in their efforts to understand Zimbabwe after the year 2000. Anchored in the anticolonial struggle, the first narrative focus on politics as liberatory. Emphasizing the rights of Zimbabweans to have control of their resources, the politics as liberatory narrative is employed to support the post-2000 land reform program (p. 4). Anchored in human rights discourse, the second narrative is deployed by the critics of the ruling ZANU PF party. In what Rutherford calls politics as oppression, the narrative is highly critical of the violent nature of the land reform program and the use of violence by the state and its agencies against opposition forces (p. 4). Rutherford notes that these narratives have long genealogies within and outside Zimbabwe and "have come as universal grounds to evaluate Zimbabwe and to intervene, or to propose intervention of farm workers in Zimbabwe" (p. 4). In other words, farm workers have to either be part of the *Third Chimurenga* as the politics as liberation narrative would argue or as politics as oppression narrative would argue, rights of farm workers have to be protected. Rutherford's work moves beyond these narratives, bringing out a complex picture of the practice of politics on the ground. He notes that the focus on the everyday practices and struggles for livelihood by the marginalized and those on the margins of the society, living precarious lives and a makeshift existence, and how they are energized and how they can energize political actions, move moves away from the dominant narratives of Zimbabwean politics—those that emphasize land redistribution as part of social justice and those that condemn it (p. 3).

The story that is central to the book revolves around a two-year labor dispute between farm workers and an agribusiness company from 1998 to 2000. When Zimfarm, the owners of Upfumi entered the scene in 1997, the labor force consisted largely of single women and those of foreign origins. This was a time when Zimfarm was expanding its operations as it took advantage of the liberalization of the economy. And the first day Upfumi can under the control of Zimfarm, workers went on strike. This was going to be one of the many labor actions at the farm for close to eighteen months culminating in a decisive labor action. During this period, there was a growth of formal labor relations that was encouraged by the owners of the farm and increased demands of worker rights by the workers' committee. In mid-1998, human resource management personnel were changed at the farm. This move was seen by the farm workers' committee as an attempt by the farm owners to roll back the limited worker rights they had gained over a few years. At the same time, management at the farm was refusing to recognize seasonal workers who had worked for a continuous period of eight months as permanent workforce members as per agreement of the collective bargaining process. Workers downed tools, and a total of 879 were fired. To summarize the story, management offered some workers the opportunity to return to work but amended their contracts. Others returned while others moved elsewhere. Under the leadership of the worker's committee, a number contested the dismissals using the company labor relations department and also resorted to the legal system and political channels. While the workers

won their case in 2000, it was overtaken by events on the ground when politics was radically transformed as a result of the violence accompanying the land reform program.

The labor struggle is essential in understanding the oft-neglected part of national politics in Zimbabwe: the position of those often marginalized within electoral politics in post-2000 era. For scholars on Zimbabwe the labor struggle allows us to appreciate how women and people of foreign descent who constituted the majority of the workers took advantage of the shifting ground of politics to contest the authority of the farm management and ascertain their rights as workers. On a national scale, farm workers, just as civil society as demonstrated by Dorman in her work, became part and parcel of the struggles for democracy, human rights, and change. To be able to do this, the workers' committee at Upfumi "drew on translocal resources that were caught up with the exciting ferment of change at national scale" (p. 74). Through a web of networks, farm workers were able to incorporate in their struggle urban-based movements ranging from political parties to trade unions and NGOs. Not only did these networks enabled them to insert farm workers into national electoral politics, but the resources that came with these networks gave them a rare opportunity to challenge the agribusiness company.

Although the farm workers won their labor case in 2000, the ground of politics was fast shifting. The company stalled in its payments. Amongst farm workers themselves, there was a growing uneasiness with the style of leadership. At the same time, the agrarian reform that was unfolding made their lives more precarious. In the post 2000 era, farm workers' livelihoods were made "even more uncertain and unforgiving as the wider crisis and politicized violence impinged on their claims to land-based resources" (p. 26). With the land reform program, the meaning and practice of being a farm worker were also being altered.

In this rich ethnography of the world of farm workers at the turn of the century, Rutherford skillfully demonstrates the entanglement of labor struggles with national politics. He shows how the marginalized practiced politics by taking advantage of various networks from different political parties and civic organizations in the process reconfiguring the situation faced by farm workers on a national scale. However, this practice of politics was also problematic. While workers were successful in their lawsuit, they nonetheless received low compensation, were not rehired, and were silenced through intimidation by some of their leaders. On the whole, this work is a good contribution to agrarian studies, labor studies, and postcolonial politics in Africa.

Conclusion

Through their cautious, insightful, and moving ethnographies based on fieldwork in Mozambique and Zimbabwe, Bertelsen, Dorman, and Rutherford provide a deep understanding of the practice of politics, the postcolonial state, and the processes of state formations and nation making in postcolonial Africa. Each book is daring in its own right. Bertelsen's work compels us to rethink of the idea of the nation state itself. Whereas scholarship has taken a state centric approach, looking at the nation state as a unified and coherent entity, Bertelsen presents a different idea. By introducing what he calls the traditional field, Bertelsen brings to the fore how non-elite Mozambicans on a daily basis challenged, contested, and negotiated different state formations.

Dorman, just as Bertelsen also considers how ruling elites engage society in their efforts to maintain power. In Zimbabwe, the ruling party has tenaciously held onto power not just through coercion but also through consent and an extensive patronage system. As in

Mozambique, the deployment of power has been challenged and contested at various levels. Closely linked to this is how the marginalized, in this case farm workers, have also taken advantage of the shifting grounds of politics to stake their claim on national electoral politics as Rutherford notes. Not only do Bertelsen, Dorman, and Rutherford present a complex picture of the practice of politics in Southern Africa, but they seem to affirm the significance of non-state actors in state making and practices of politics in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The books offer space to rethink state formation, relations between ruling elites and society, and how non-state actors contest and negotiate the continuous process of nation building in Africa.

BOOK REVIEWS

Semahagn Gashu Abebe. 2014. *The Last Post-Cold War Socialist Federation: Ethnicity, Ideology and Democracy in Ethiopia*. London: Routledge. 298 pp.

Ethiopia's ethnic federalism is under stress more than any time since its introduction in 1995. Waves of protest movements in Oromia and Amhara Regional states, in particular, have not given ethnic federalism an easy ride since 2015. Hence, Semahagn Gashu Abebe's *The Last Post-Cold War Socialist Federation* is a significant contribution in understanding the sociology of Ethiopian federalism, the political context within which it came into being and is operating, and sheds light on why some ethnic groups are protesting. Abebe's underlying objective is to explain how the configuration of a Socialist federation in the restructuring of the Ethiopian state makes the transition to and consolidation of democratization and respect for human rights difficult.

Organizing the book in eight chapters, Abebe makes a compelling case on the disjuncture between constitutional design and practice in the operation of federalism in Ethiopia. His main hypothesis is that the ideological and political tenets of the TPLF/EPRDF, the ruling coalition since 1991, are more important than the formal constitutional rules in the operation of the federal system. Precisely because of this, he contends that there are two parallel constitutional systems in Ethiopia. In order to test this hypothesis, Abebe explores and examines in detail the scholarship on federal theory and comparative federalism in the first and second chapters. After examining the origin, essential components, basic features, and operation of democratic multi-cultural federations, Abebe could not find comparative relevance for the Ethiopian federal experiment in these systems. As a result, he turns his inquiry to former Socialist federations (Union of Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia) to get aid in understanding and explaining the Ethiopian federalism.

Abebe eloquently argues that, as the case with former Socialist federations, the original logic and the fundamentals of federalism in Ethiopia are linked to the ideological and political underpinnings of the TPLF/EPRDF. After giving a brief historical background to the Ethiopian state and its constitutional development in chapter three, Abebe discusses how the ideological and political convictions of the TPLF/EPRDF, in particular, the right to self-determination, revolutionary democracy, developmental state ideology, by party rules on *gimemma* (party evaluation), democratic centralism, and neo-patrimonial mobilization, give impetus to the origin of ethnic federalism and permeate its experiment and operation. From chapter four to seven, not only does Abebe demonstrate how these political convictions perform constitutionalist functions by pushing the formal constitutional rules into the periphery, he also identifies the socio-political factors within which each of these political underpinnings arise and operate in the context of the party, TPLF/EPRDF, and the state. In the final chapter, he holds that the ideological framework of the ruling party not only challenges the consolidation of democratic institutions and creates a hostile atmosphere for the operation of civil society

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v17/v17i4a8.pdf>

organizations and independent media, it also leads to a serious limitation on civil liberties and a decay in multi-party democratic competition.

Although the book discusses the political fundamentals of the ruling party in detail, the shift from “revolutionary democracy” to “developmental democracy” that accompanies the developmental state model was not considered. Even if it could not affect the general arguments of the book, discussion of the idea and practice of “developmental democracy” would have contributed towards its conceptual clarity. While the political ideology of the TPLF/EPRDF and its practice of government are mainly responsible for Ethiopia’s democratic deficit or even decay since 2005, the general biosphere of political discourse and competition is not less significant for the *status quo*. Similarly, even if the Marxist-Leninist influence in the restructuring of the state looms large, the attempt to address the unitary and assimilationist structure of the *ancien régime* by the TPLF/EPRDF should not be underemphasized.

In spite of this, Abebe illuminates the complex terrain of Ethiopia’s transition from military dictatorship to revolutionary democracy and disentangles the travails of the twofold constitutional system Ethiopia has been operating since 1991. Further, his book is a cautionary tale to the study of comparative constitutional law. Beyond constitutional text and formal rules, *The Last Post-Cold War Socialist Federation* shows that the field of comparative constitutional law needs to take the context within which the constitutional texts are situated and the informal rules in which the formal ones are embedded. Therefore, Abebe’s book is an important contribution to the study of Ethiopian federalism and comparative constitutional law methodology and of interest to academic scholars and policy makers alike.

Berihun Adugna Gebeye, *Central European University*

Tolu Babatunde Afolabi. 2017. *The Politics of Peacemaking in Africa: Non-State Actors’ Role in the Liberian Civil war*. London, U.K. James Currey. 203 pp.

Non-State actors have historically played a pivotal role in the polity of African states. However, very few of these organizations have had a profound influence in the peacemaking process as highlighted by Afolabi. In light of the evolving body of literature on peacekeeping and conflict management in Africa, such as F. Olonisakin, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: The Story of UNAMSIL* (2008), and G. A. Adebayo, *Managing Conflicts in Africa’s Democratic Transitions* (2012), few of these studies have taken an in-depth review of how non-state actors have advanced peacekeeping in sub-Saharan Africa.

As this study suggests, peacekeeping efforts have often been within the purview of the state. However, the role played by non-state actors in the peacekeeping process in Liberia was profound because it was a departure from the typical state-centric approach to peacekeeping. The study suggests that the shift to a non-state peacekeeping model was inspired by several factors such as the end of the cold war, which advanced the role of non-state actors in peacekeeping and the eventual decline of the state centric approach to conflict resolution.

In the case of Liberia, Afolabi suggests that civil society organizations have historically been active in the Liberian political process as far back as the arrival of the repatriated ex-slaves to Liberia by the American Colonization Society in 1822. This repatriation coincided with the advent of the various Christian religious denominations such as the Baptist Church the

Presbyterian Church and the Catholic Church in Liberia. The repatriated slaves introduced the Liberian society to western fraternal orders such as the Masonic craft, which was predated by the traditional secret organizations such as the Poro Society in Liberia.

These civil organizations are important in understanding the historical context of governance in Liberia, because they served as the outpost of the political elites. That is, the Liberian political elite by the nature of its membership and leadership roles in the church, and the masonic craft, leveraged their political control of the state through these civil organizations. It is through the historical and continuous membership of these political elites in civil organizations that one can better understand the nature of the Liberian state.

However, the invasion of Liberia on December 24, 1989 by Charles Taylor's troops from Cote d' Ivoire according to Afolabi is a watershed period because it provides the context in which one should examine the role of civil society in the post-cold war political re-engineering of Liberia. In the case of Liberia, civil society organizations had become not only preoccupied with the issue of governance, they shifted their focus to the mobilization of resources in order to address the political, social, and economic challenges of post-war Liberia. According to Afolabi, these efforts influenced the founding of region-wide civil society organizations focusing on peace and security issues in the sub-region and the Mano River area which comprised Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Cote d' Ivoire.

The emergence of these region-wide civil society organizations shaped the focus of post war Liberia. These organizations became preoccupied with the function of re-engineering the state through its collaborative efforts to seek a peace plan for Liberia. For instance, the Interfaith Mediation Committee of Liberia (IFMC), a joint initiative of Christians and Muslims, was instrumental in developing a peace plan that was later adopted by ECOWAS. The IFMC, also played an integral role in the reconciliation process with the establishment of Article 13 of the Accra Accord, which advanced the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Given these developments, Afolabi provided a lucid analysis in regard to factors that led to the Liberian Civil War and the regional alliances between warring factions. The book discusses the different phases of ECOMOG's involvement in the Liberian Civil War and the role of intercontinental groups such as the United Nations. However, the book provided only limited analysis into the role of major powers such as the United States and the United Kingdom in the peacekeeping process.

Overall, *The Politics of Peacemaking in Africa* makes a significant contribution to the body of literature on peacekeeping in Africa. It also provides a rich literature on the role of civil society in peacekeeping that could provide valuable lesson on how civil society can play a pivotal role in the re-engineering of societies and polity as is the case of Liberia. I recommend this book to students and academics who are interested in the nature of peacemaking in developing states and to policy analysts and other practitioners who are engaged in projects that are related to the role of non-state actors in conflict resolution and peacekeeping in Africa.

Emmanuel O. Oritsejafor, *North Carolina Central University*

Kwabena Gyimah-Brempong, Michael Johnson, and Hiroyuki Takeshima. 2016. *The Nigerian Rice Economy: Policy Options for Transforming Production, Marketing, and Trade*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. xiv300 pp.

This is an important publication on the consistent efforts of successive Nigerian governments since the emergence of civil rule in 1999 to revamp the country's rice production and wean the country off the consumption of imported rice. This quest for the transformation of rice production in Nigeria received increased impetus under the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) of President Jonathan's administration. The ongoing rice revolution, which this publication seeks to project, falls within the broader initiative of the Nigerian government to diversify the country's revenue generating sources from the extant abnormal dependence on petroleum and allied products to completely new sources. This book is an elucidation on the series of policies that had been formulated to catalyze agricultural transformation with emphasis on rice production in Nigeria. The objectives of the authors for writing this book include the assessment of the policy challenges and opportunities for transforming and expanding the Nigerian rice economy among others (p. 17).

Beginning with a Foreword by Sheggen Fan, Director General of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the book contains nine chapters and a rich collection of statistical and mathematical analyses, which are enclosed as appendices. Chapter one introduces the book giving a bird's eye view of its essence and components and providing a brief historical treatise on the country's economy and the evolution of rice policies. Chapter two presents detailed analyses of rice consumption and demand patterns in Nigeria, pointing out the urban/rural and regional preferences for different rice varieties. In chapter three, the constraints imposed on rice production systems in Nigeria by biophysical and economic environment are carefully analyzed in comparison with Asia while noting the comparative advantage that Nigeria has in rice production in West Africa. Chapter four examines empirically the policy options for inducing supply response in paddy rice production through an assessment of a number of representative farm budgets, price incentives, and other public sector interventions needed to promote output growth, drawing on lessons and experiences from other major rice-producing regions in the developing world. Chapter five examines the structure and conduct of postharvest processing, marketing channels, and competitiveness of domestic rice. Chapter six carefully interrogates the policy options for modernizing the rice milling sector. Chapter seven analyzes Nigeria's recent rice import policies in terms of their effectiveness and tradeoffs with regard to affecting the volume of import, domestic prices, and tariff revenues in the country. Chapter eight assesses the potential economy-wide effects of rice sector policies on sector output growth and competitiveness with imports, changes in the sector and overall food prices, rural income growth, and overall economic performance. Chapter nine which concludes the book summarizes the findings and discusses their broad policy implications along two key areas; how to increase rice yields through technology and market improvement, and policies to encourage domestic rice production of rice.

Throughout the book there is an emphasis on multi-stakeholders' roles in expanding the frontiers of rice revolution to encompass several non-governmental actors in rice production and every aspect of its value chain in rural and urban areas across Nigeria's regional divide was stridently emphasized. The formulation of rice policies which emplaced structures and

institutional arrangements for the encouragement of demand for locally produced rice, whose supply was also enhanced, was expected to create the right policy environment for discouraging rice importation even as the authors believe that increased tariffs and import bans have not succeeded in substantially reducing rice imports.

This book, however, is not without its shortcomings. First, there is too much of econometrics and modeling involved in the authors' attempt to empiricize their analyses through the utilization of scientific methodology for operationalizing the concepts and facts that are not amenable to quantitative analysis. It is not enough to import data from different sources and subject them to an analytical method of research without interrogating those data for relevance and accuracy. Second, there is no explanation for the high cost of local rice production, which is reflected in the high price of local rice and thus a disincentive for the consumption of locally produced rice and an incentive for rice imports. Third, our authors believe that increased public funding of the rice initiative would expand the supply base of the rice economy, but this presents its own problem of the likelihood of stultifying private sector investment in the rice initiative.

Overall, this book is an authoritative publication on the ongoing rice revolution in Nigeria. It is not just a reportorial account of developments in the rice subsector of the Nigerian Agricultural sector but a profoundly analytical and intellectual piece, which anchors its theorizing on empirical knowledge of the rice initiative in the country. Using scientific tools including econometrics and modeling, the authors demonstrate a keen interest in making valid projections on the effects and prospects of every policy initiative that the Nigerian government deploys to consolidate the palpable gains of its rice revolution. For its presentation of current and empirically verifiable facts and figures on how to transform the rice subsector of an economy, *The Nigerian Rice Economy* recommends itself to scholars, teachers, and policymakers with an interest in the development of agriculture in general and in the transformation of domestic rice production for increased competitiveness in particular.

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

Barbara Casciarri, Munzoul Assal, and François Ireton (eds.). 2015. *Multidimensional Change in Sudan (1989-2011): Reshaping Livelihoods, Conflicts and Identities*. Oxford: Berghahn. 374 pp.

Multidimensional Change in Sudan is a book useful to those who are just beginning to learn about Sudan as well as scholars who are more experienced and want to update their knowledge about the country's recent changes. Its geographical focus is the Republic of Sudan, also known as North Sudan since South Sudan's independence after 2011 referendum. A major contribution of the book is that it makes room for excellent scholarly contributions based on fieldwork carried out between 2006 and 2011 by both Sudanese and European researchers. The editors are aware of the importance of fieldwork and strongly reinforce the importance of conducting "deep, field-based and localized research" (p. 5) since "the rethinking of categories and of theoretical approaches [...] can be supported only by a sound underlying and contextualized set of empirical data" (p. 7).

The study concerns access to resources and their management. The interdisciplinary approach is emphasized: anthropology, political science, geography, history, and linguistics are equally useful in giving substance to the book. The historical period taken into consideration begins in 1989, the year of the seizure of power by the Islamists, and ends in 2011, the year of the secession of South Sudan from North Sudan. These two dates are recognized as important 'turning points' in recent Sudanese history because they represent a moment of change in comparison to the previous and successive political phase.

The book can also claim credit for its clear organization. The volume is divided into four parts for a total of sixteen chapters. It also includes an epilogue about "A New Sudan" by Roland Marchal. Briefly, these four parts discuss the following:

(1) *Land Issues and Livelihoods in the Capital Region and Rural Areas*: We are used to associating "land grabbing" to the vast extensions of land acquired by international investors with the aim of producing agricultural goods. However, the city of Khartoum is a type of laboratory where one can link "land grabbing" to the urban environment. This part is about the importance of "land" for "development" and stimulates rethinking of categories such as "rural" and "urban" but also the meaning of "modernization" and territorial "marginalization."

(2) *Water Resources at the Core of Local and Global Interactions*: This part starts with an analysis of Sudan's "hydro-agricultural mission" of building dams and reviving agriculture and its consequences on the geopolitical level. Further contributions are more focused on popular water management skills in urban as well as rural environments and in conditions of scarcity.

(3) *New Actors, New Spaces and New Imagination on Conflicts*: In this part, we are offered an interesting insight into the role of China and India in the Sudanese economy and, above all, about oil investments. The territorial effects in some of the communities in South Kordofan are also presented. Other chapters concern internal displaced people living in Khartoum and the actors involved in the processes of diplomatic and media internationalization of the conflict in Darfur.

(4) *Reshaping Languages, Identities and Ideologies*: Religion has played an important role in the reconfiguration of Sudanese society. Its close connection with politics has been fundamental. The territorial strategy of the Sudanese state has long been inseparable from the Islamist project. For this reason, the state has not limited its power to the installation of its formal domain on the national territory, but it has also initiated processes of linguistic change—just think to Arabization—and of ideological sponsorship through the educational system.

In conclusion, this book is a fundamental resource for those who are interested in the study of contemporary Sudan. Nonetheless, it does have some weaknesses. It seems that agriculture was not given enough space for analysis despite the fact that it is the cornerstone of the Sudanese economy. For examples, the Gezira scheme (the world's largest irrigation project) would have been an appropriate laboratory to observe changing relationships between the farmers and the state. Moreover, the many cases of "land grabbing" operated by foreign investors in Sudan with the aim of establishing monoculture (often reported by the Sudanese press) would have also constituted an opportunity to address the highly sensitive problem of national food security. In this sense, the involvement of scholars engaged in the study of Sudanese agricultural development would have further enhanced the volume.

Stefano Turrini, *University of Padova, Italy*

Mark Dike DeLancey. 2016. *Conquest and Construction: Palace Architecture in Northern Cameroon*. Boston: Brill. 298 pp.

In *Conquest and Construction* Mike Dike DeLancey investigates the palace architecture of northern Cameroon, a region that was conquered in the early nineteenth century by primarily semi-nomadic, pastoralist, Muslim, Fulbe forces and incorporated as the largest emirate of the forces of the Sokoto Caliphate. Palace architecture is considered first and foremost as political in nature, and therefore as responding not only to the needs and expectations of the conquerors, but also to those of the largely sedentary, agricultural, non-Muslim conquered peoples who constituted the majority population. In the process of reconciling the cultures of these various constituents, new architectural forms and local identities were constructed.

The text is organized into five chapters, each representing a distinct yet complementary view of palace architecture in northern Cameroon. Chapter 1 is devoted to identifying architectural elements and technology, and their associated terminologies. Not only is this nomenclature important for discussion of the architecture itself, but it also frequently provides clues to the origins of particular elements based upon the linguistic roots for the term itself. Because so few structures of more than a century in age still stand, and because so little archaeological work has been conducted in this region, language is used here to provide a window into the history of architectural form.

Chapter 2 investigates the proliferation of a specific architectural type, the pillared hall called a *sooro*, in the palace architecture of northern Cameroon from the time that Fulbe conquerors incorporated this region within the Sokoto Caliphate in the early nineteenth century until the present. It argues that the Fulbe rulers who conquered the region were not of sufficiently high status to employ the political symbolism of the *sooro*, but that use of this building type spread quickly after German colonial borders separated northern Cameroon from the rest of the caliphate in 1901. Eventually, the form expanded beyond the boundaries of the Fulbe and spread among non-Fulbe rulers. Ironically, the *sooro* as a symbol of power spread in direct relation to the loss of real power by rulers in northern Cameroon.

Chapter 3 considers the placement of the palace within the urban fabric, as well as its orientation, through examples taken from a variety of the constituent cultures of northern Cameroon, and in particular Ngaoundéré. This chapter explicates the manner in which architectural planning references a variety of cultures simultaneously, either in their individual particularities or drawing them together into a single regional whole. In the first half of the chapter, DeLancey indicates how a model drawn from the early history of Islam was used to mediate between the planning and spatial concepts of the Fulbe, Hausa, and Kanuri throughout the Sokoto Caliphate. In the second half of the chapter, he investigates possible meanings of the positioning of the palace of Ngaoundéré specifically for the Mboum population of Ngaoundéré.

Chapter 4 delves into ritual movement within, and in relation to, the palace of Ngaoundéré. On the one hand, it draws upon the idea that architecture is a result of, and exists in part to direct, human experience and movement. On the other hand, it draws upon the work of anthropologists and sociologists such as Victor Turner and Maurice Bloch who write on ritual, both in terms more broadly of initiation and more specifically in the case of royalty. DeLancey begins by studying the palace form more generally, followed by a brief case study of the plan of the palace of Ngaoundéré. This is followed by an analysis of daily movement into and out of the

palace. He then suggests here that it is also important to consider the restriction of movement based on a variety of factors. He then directs his attention to three particular rituals: those comprising investiture; Friday prayers and the council meeting which follows; and *juulde Layhaaji*, or the Muslim commemoration of Abraham's sacrifice which occurs at the end of the Hajj, or annual pilgrimage.

Chapter 5 builds upon the four previous chapters in its probing of the manner in which secrecy becomes one of the most important characteristics and functions of the palace. DeLancey suggests that various elements of secrecy and their effects are experienced as one gradually approaches and enters the palace. It becomes clear that the particularities of the "secrets," which by their nature are often hidden from the broader knowledge, are less important than the political strategies of maintaining possession over and publicizing this secreted knowledge. The physical embodiment of this mode of social control forms the basis for the principal aesthetic of palace architecture in northern Cameroon.

In conclusion, this study furthermore emphasizes that architecture, African no less than any other, must be contextualized in order to better comprehend the history of forms and architectural decisions.

Syprien Christian Zogo, *Laval University*

Toyin Falola. 2016. *Nigerian Political Modernity and Postcolonial Predicaments*. Austin, Texas: Pan African University Press. 480 pp.

This investigation of underdevelopment in Nigeria begins with the premise that Nigeria was created by globalizing forces and long periods of suppression during centuries of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, colonization, and imperialism; and that this history has generated a corrosive culture that has led to a post-independence political system that perpetuates poverty and corruption. "Politics and the political model that governs it cannot be divorced from issues of underdevelopment." (p. 208). Falola argues with comprehensive evidence that a study of broad external powers rather than isolationist analysis is necessary to understand this history. Without over-glorifying Africa's pre-colonial political formations, he makes the point that issues of statism, sovereignty, and democracy need to be supplemented by an understanding of how foreign occupation and the dynamics of colonialism, particularly its extractive economy, politics of divide and rule, and exclusive political structure, had a fundamental impact on Nigeria.

Three interrelated factors, he notes, have become apparent: ethnic division, leadership deficit, and underdevelopment. Colonial rule located Nigeria within the world trade system as a primary producer and its political system mirrored this requirement; Independence in 1960 was not followed up by interdependence among the constituent ethnic groups. Nigerian nationalism did not forge national unity. Ethnicity and power contestation divided the political class, leading to a gruesome thirty-month civil war. Military rule not only ended civil rule in the First (1966), Second (1983), and Third (1993) Republics; it also disrupted federalism as well as the evolving democratic processes. It led to a centralized system that used coercion and force as instruments of oppression. Sadly the violence that characterized colonial rule was extended to post-independent Nigeria by the military.

The return to multiparty elections in 1999 as well as efforts to modernize Nigeria is yet to yield satisfactory outcomes in the form of safety, security, employment, good life, and good governance. Instead, corruption, over-centralization, politics of division, and domination by one or two main ethnic groups and/or political parties have endured. States have become weak appendages of the center. Dependence on crude oil has resulted in environmental degradation, neglect of agriculture, and an ineffective political and civil service class that formulates poor policies with weak implementation processes. Protest has become endemic—"ethnic and religious nationalism has become powerful in the light of the failure of the Nigerian state to meet the expectation of its people" (p. 128).

Falola offers two central solutions: democracy and social movement. Although he questions the suitability of Western-style democracy to Africa and admits that the presidential style of government was copied from the US without proper consideration for Nigeria's history and society; he also argues that for democracy to deliver dividends there must be continuous public awareness and engagement, rule of law, protection of civil rights, ideologically based political parties, clear-sighted and honest politicians and, most importantly, dialogue, decentralization of power and an acceptance of the principle of free speech. The author also explores resistance to oppression and change through social movements—the coming together of a people for a common cause developed in the context of existing struggles. He concedes that social movements may have short term unexpected consequences, but in the long-run "for a society to move forward, it must be able to accommodate and learn from social movements and all assortments of agitation by interest groups" (p. 438). What drives them may be short-lived or enduring; political, social, economic, or environmental; peaceful or violent; fluid or static; social movements are ways through which societies transform and reinvent themselves.

Falola offers strategies for answering three leading questions about post colonial Nigeria: to what extent did colonialism shape the politics of Nigeria towards or away from modernization?; how did the inheritors of state power in post-independence Nigeria negotiate the delicate contours of ethnicity, power and politics?; and what is required to restructure and modernize Nigeria? In twelve packed chapters he negotiates the issues raised by these questions and presents a thesis that is of great value to historians, sociologists, and political scientists concerned with the complex history of Nigeria. Falola's hope is that a viable democracy and energetic social movements will strengthen and renew the much abused country—Nigeria.

Victor Jatula, *University of Utah (Asia)*

Debra Faszter-McMahon and Victoria L. Ketz (eds.). 2015. *African Immigrants in Contemporary Spanish Texts: Crossing the Strait*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing Ltd. 282 pp.

African Immigrants in Contemporary Spanish Texts is a collection of thirteen essays interwoven around the experiences of African immigrants and other minorities in modern Spanish texts. Shanna Lino's analysis of Marta Sanz's *Black, black, black* explores the irreconcilable contradictions between Spain's posture regarding its domestic issues involving immigrants and minority rights vis-à-vis its global outlook. Gema Perez-Sanchez raises almost the same issues

in *Los principes nubios*, unveiling Spain's inability to transcend its old self and morph into the realities of its new neoliberal status and membership of the European Union. But Lino's excellent reading leaves unexplored the text's arguably most inviting metaphor that connects Spain's declining economy and the troubled social relations among its various inhabitants: Luz's infrequent menstruation. Ana Corbalan suggests that the solution to Spain's challenges, as seen in Chus Gutierrez's *Return to Hansalla*, lies in dismantling the artificial construction of a homogenous Spain through productive engagement with other cultures and in bringing justice to the victims of the passage who have become the spectres haunting Spain's "national imaginary" (p. 100). Debra Faszter-McMahon sees this optimism in Iselmu's and Awah's poetry. Both poets, she argues, negotiate immigrants' agency through a gradual suspension of distrust to intimate interactions, a movement either from monologue through observatory silence to "a reciprocal gaze" (p. 229) (Iselmu) or from "uncomfortable interrogation" to exchange (p. 233) (Awah). In relation to Africa, Abderrahman El Fathi's poetry takes this interaction beyond individual spaces to a wider continental project. Cristian H. Ricci opines that El Fathi's poetry negotiates the ways Africa can attain relevance in today's world through a "poetics of inclusion" (p. 243). In Antonia Bueno's dramas, according to Victoria Ketz, attaining agency is by reverting to "North African oral tradition" (p. 91) through which the marginalized "shock viewers out of complacency" (p. 79), something that Javier Bardem achieves in reverse by championing the course of the oppressed Saharawi people at a global stage. Jill Robbins unveils Bardem's celebrity activism by exploring his social and erotic capitals as instruments of both sympathy and liberation in *Sons of the Clouds: The Last Colony*. Raquel Vega-Duran's contribution explores this bonding historically by using logotypes, book covers and movie posters to trace nostalgically the friendly relations—once enabled by the Strait—between North Africa and Spain before the Reconquest. The "texts" she investigates recreate this sense of unity in their design, textual arrangement, language and the pictorial images they embed. As the Strait facilitated multicultural interactions in the past, so does the virtual space currently. Using an online community, the Parejas Mixtas, Kathleen Honora Connolly highlights the anxieties shrouding mixed marriages in a multicultural Spain. Her focus on inter-cultural marriages is significant for it forms a core issue in the immigrant settlement debate.

Brian Bobbit's reading of Daoudi's *The Devil of Yudis* engages burial and cemeteries as symbolic sites for economic emancipation through local and transnational journeys. But Bobbitt blurs the positioning of the characters by swapping Marbuh's buried friends with Moroccans, thereby misreading their complaints as Moroccans' "active dissidence" and strivings to attain agency (p. 215). Focusing on Maria Nsue's *Ekomo*, Benita Samedro Vizcaya raises the question of how interventions—textual and non-textual—manipulate, batter, displace and disorient texts and people (immigrants) while contemplating how to bridge divides in her upcoming translation of *Ekomo* into English, the challenges notwithstanding. Abbeele and Levinas interact in Mahan Ellison's search for home, an unfixed category determined by circumstances and desires, in Donato Ndongo's *El metro*. Here hierarchical markings of West and Africa are supplanted by instituting those "of ideal over real" (p. 168) and stereotypes displaced by concrete experience with the Other. David N Coury and Cristina Ortiz Ceberio argue that Larbi El-Harti's and Lalami's works establish a new ethics based on storytelling by disrupting stereotypes and contesting "neatly divided cultural constructs" between East and West (p. 194).

While El-Harti negotiates “a point of coincidence” (p. 197) showing female oppression on both sides of the Strait, Lalami concentrates on Murad’s experience in Morocco. What sort of text Lalami’s is, however, is uncertain: an anthology of short stories (p. 193), a novel (p. 194), or a novella (p. 199)?

Together the essays weave a structure of narration with the arc resting perhaps on Corbalan’s expression: “a ghost never dies; it always returns to haunt us” (p. 100). How this haunting unveils itself and confronts us definitely differs. But justice demands a continuous and vibrant critical engagement that unfolds the bleak side of our humanity and offers insights towards the solutions to our pain. *African Immigrants in Contemporary Spanish Texts* gives many thought-provoking perspectives in this regard.

Anenechukwu Kevin Amoke, *Lancaster University*

Pamela Feldman-Savelsberg. 2016. *Mothers on the Move: Reproducing Belonging between Africa and Europe*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 243 pp.

At some point in their lives, many middle-class Africans make the decision to migrate or not. Usually, for different reasons, the choice to migrate is favored. Africa is a continent perpetually on the move. Contemporarily speaking, migration to the Global North by the continent's young population is at an unprecedented rate. While scholarship on the demography and drivers of out-of-Africa migration abound, little attention has been given to how young African migrants scattered across Europe negotiate familial and personal expectations of migration. In *Mothers on the Move* Pamela Feldman-Savelsberg ethnographically fills this gap. She examines how Cameroonian migrant mothers, through childbearing and -rearing, “manage to overcome the burdens of exclusion [from families] and forge new layers of belonging” in Germany (p. 1).

The book has six related chapters. Chapter One, situates the book in a theoretical framework. Here, Feldman-Savelsberg explains how “belonging is produced, reproduced, and challenged in social relationships,” with the metaphor of affective circuits (p. 11). She argues that the ties that bind cosmopolitan Cameroonian migrant mothers in Berlin to their homelands are not always continuous. They “can be slowed, dropped, blocked and picked up again” based on what migrants encounter in Berlin (p. 11). Chapter Two explores both the historical and socio-political drivers of migration among young Bamilékés and their English-speaking Grassfield compatriots. According to Feldman-Savelsberg, “their multiple histories of movement have created the current-day predicaments of belonging” (p. 51). Hence, migration often becomes an escape from “Cameroon's discriminatory” state policies, and a strategic step towards upward social mobility.

The third chapter explains how Cameroonian mothers start families, and how they cope with the challenges of childbearing through “kin-based social networks.” In this chapter, Feldman-Savelsberg presents five love stories of Cameroonian migrants “at the earlier stages of family formation” (p. 58). She argues that Cameroonian migrants’ choice of a marriage partner is almost always strategic. It involves a lot of planning and “emotional and material exchange with kin” both in Berlin and their homelands. Perhaps, the most compelling of the love stories is Maria and Paul’s. They had their marriage by proxy due to their immigration status as students and “the visa complications involved in moving across border” (p. 63). As a result of the familial

involvement in their marriage, a "long-standing affective circuits [of indebtedness] between and among ... their kin" was created (p. 63). Taken together, this chapter underscores the crucial role of familial ties in the lives of Cameroonian migrant mothers in Berlin. Chapter Four opens with the musings of Ariane—who doubles as a young mother and an international student. To Ariane, belonging is largely familial, and the task of navigating its many layers in "an unfamiliar social and bureaucratic environment" is daunting. Mothers like Ariane consider childrearing to be a "socially reproductive labor" that enables the development of affective circuits (p. 92). The social networks that memorializes childrearing is seen as an avenue to "work to ensure their children have legal rights" in Germany, and create ties with "wider circles of kin" in Cameroon (p. 92).

The fifth chapter examines civic engagement. It explores how Cameroonian migrant mothers in Berlin engender civic engagement through associational life. Feldman-Savelsberg notes that through "formal membership in association, [participation] in monthly meetings," and the use of "association resources in times of need," Cameroonian migrant mothers create and reproduce belonging (p. 130). They consider these associations to be particularly important because they serve as platforms for their children to get connected to their roots and to cherish things as simple as hearing someone speak their own dialects. In the final chapter, Feldman-Savelsberg foregrounds the interaction between migrant mothers and the law. The chapter casts a broader light on the idea of legal consciousness in Chapter One. Here, she notes that the multiplicity of legal rules and the burdens of foreignness strongly "affect[s] the connections that Cameroonian migrant mothers maintain with their relatives in Cameroon" (p. 164).

Overall, this is a beautiful contribution to scholarship on migration and belonging, although some points in the book seem repetitive. The argument that migrants' "reproductive practices" are paths to citizenship and logical steps to strengthening affinal ties is also compelling. And the evident trust and camaraderie between Feldman-Savelsberg and her respondents is remarkable. However, the "Europe" in the book title is somehow unnecessary, since the book focuses solely on stories from migrant lives in Berlin. Besides, what works in Germany might not work in, say, Turkey or Israel.

Olagbenro (Ola) Oladipo, *University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Linda Heywood. 2017. *Njinga of Angola: Africa's Warrior Queen*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 320 pp.

Njinga of Angola: Africa's Warrior Queen, the first comprehensive biography of Queen Njinga of Ndongo and Matamba published in the English-speaking world, is essential reading for scholars of Central and Lusophone Africa. In her lifetime, Njinga drove the narrative of seventeenth century Angola. Born to a royal Mbundu family in 1582, Njinga oversaw her kingdom's transition from continuous war with the Portuguese to a peaceful, autonomous, Christian state at the time of her death in 1663. The book covers the entirety of Njinga's incredible life as the leader of two kingdoms, describing her expert skills as a military and political leader, her initiation as an Imbangala warrior, conversion to Christianity, and transformation into an icon of resistance to colonialism by the leaders of Angola's independence movement in the twentieth century.

The narrative begins in the decades before Njinga's birth, providing a brief history of the neighboring Kingdom of Kongo, the founding of the Kingdom of Ndongo, and a description of Njinga's royal lineage, providing context to the world into which Njinga was born. Further chapters chronicle the rise to power of her father, Mbande a Ngola, her brother, Ngola Mbande, and Njinga's own ascension as queen and the perpetual oscillation between warfare and negotiation with the Portuguese. In 1626, the Portuguese colonial government selected her distant relative, Ngola Hari, as their preferred ruler of Ndongo. While Ngola Hari persisted as a rival to the queen throughout her reign, he was forced to pay humiliating tribute to the Portuguese and was never accepted as the legitimate king by the majority of Ndongo. His life as a shadow king serves as a symbol of what Njinga's royal position would have been reduced to, had she acquiesced to vassalage. Resistance and defiance are the root of her enduring hero status in Angola. In her later years, Njinga's political life turned from warfare to religious diplomacy as she leveraged her renewed interest in Christianity to broker a peace treaty with the Portuguese, while weighing the extent to which she and her court would continue to practice the Mbundu rituals expected of her by the people.

The author, historian Linda Heywood, spent years researching the letters and diaries of Njinga's contemporaries in archives across Angola, Italy, and Portugal. These primary sources bring to life a charismatic woman who dominated every room into which she set foot. She was as adept at using ritual and pageantry to make political impressions as she was at wielding a battle ax in war.

Heywood is committed to lifting Njinga's historical status to that of other famous women in history, and for this reason the focus on her subject is justifiably unwavering. It would have been natural to fill pages with descriptions of the various Portuguese governors who passed through Luanda in Njinga's lifetime. Instead, their numerous names and short terms serve to highlight the duration and constancy of the queen's royal authority across time. From the moment the narrative shifts from Ngola Mbande's demise to Njinga's rule, few words are devoted to anyone else. Action and actors outside of Angola are not described in great detail. In this regard, Heywood is a demanding author; she expects the reader to come to the table prepared with a basic understanding of the seventeenth century world. It is mentioned that the 1641 Dutch invasion of Portuguese Luanda was a piece of the Thirty Years War, but the events are told entirely from Njinga's perspective, elaborating the potential benefit she saw in making an alliance with the enemies of her enemy, rather than the motivations of the Dutch.

In a similar vein, little explanation is provided regarding the fate that awaited the thousands of slaves traded with the Portuguese under Njinga's watch. These are details that can be found in other publications. In many ways, *Njinga of Angola* serves as a complement to Heywood's past research on the Atlantic World, providing a view of the slave trade from the perspective of African leadership.

In a 2011 interview with *Bostonia* magazine, Heywood stated that, through her research, she aimed to "sort myth from fact." The most illustrative myth about Njinga, that she used an attendant as a chair in order to assert her power, rather than sit on the floor before a Portuguese governor in 1622, turns out to be true. Instead, perhaps the most important myth unwound by this book could very well be of the image of Njinga as an unquestioned hero of resistance to oppression. The narrative does not shy away from Njinga's involvement in the slave trade and

there is no evidence presented that she questioned the morality of the trading of humans, only that she insisted on her right, as queen, to control it. The most cynical interpretation of her life is that her famed resistance was only to the assault on her absolute authority over her own people. Heywood makes no such interpretations, presenting her subject's well-documented complexity in full view, without hagiography or judgement.

Heather Jordan, *Independent Researcher*

Vincent Hiribarren. 2017. *A History of Borno: Trans-Saharan African Empire to Failing Nigerian State*. New York: Oxford University Press. 311 pp.

For nearly a millennium, Borno and its eastern extension called Kanem was the economic and political center of an empire built on the control of the trans-Saharan commercial networks that linked the Sahel to the Mediterranean. Conquered in the 19th century, Borno has since then become a remote periphery, most famously known for hosting one of the bloodiest insurgencies of the world. *A History of Borno* draws out this paradox to trace the evolution of this pre-colonial state, from the Fulani jihad in 1804 until the year 2010.

The chapter that covers the 19th century is by far the most stimulating of the book but also the most problematic. The author challenges Jeffrey Herbst's thesis according to which African pre-colonial states adopted a non-territorial model of power because the cost of expanding power from the capital combined with military weakness and the absence of a decentralized political apparatus made the control over territory impossible. For the author of *A History of Borno*, by contrast, the case of Borno shows that some pre-colonial states exercised territorial control over their hinterland and maintained well-defined boundaries, in a similar way to Westphalian states. "Borno was a bounded territory with a codified relationship with its vassal states," the author argues (p. 14).

Hiribarren provides a number of historical arguments that makes this thesis difficult to defend, recognizing himself that "we still do not know what extent [19th century Borno leader] El-Kanemi actually dominated the whole territory of Borno after the Fulani jihad" (p. 24). Far from mastering its borders, Borno maintained ill-defined peripheries where the empire could episodically raid slaves if the population was pagan, as in many other peripheral regions in Western Africa, such as the Bandiagara Cliff and Hombori Mountains in today's Mali. Far from ensuring territorial control over its hinterland, Borno also relied on a person-based system to control its population, a property that Muhammad El-Kanemi did not call into question when he supplanted the Sufaywa dynasty that had ruled over Borno since 1380. Similar strategies were developed by pre-colonial states in other parts of Western Africa, where so small a population was scattered over so vast an area. Finally, unlike the European nation-states Borno did not define itself as an ethnic nation but as a Muslim community, which caused many embarrassments to the Jihadist Fulani of Sokoto when they attacked Borno at the beginning of the 19th century. This can be said of many political entities for which the European-inspired concept of nation was not relevant until the 20th century. In sum, Borno may be understudied but no different from many pre-colonial states that, from the Senegal River valley to Kanem, have flourished in the Sahel-Sahara.

The intention of the following chapters is to propose a detailed analysis of the historical circumstances that led to the delineation of the borders between the colonies of the United Kingdom, France, and Germany around Lake Chad. As in the Hausa country, Borno reminds us that West African borders of colonial origin were not always arbitrarily drawn from London, Paris, or Berlin. *A History of Borno* provides a very interesting account of the manner in which the colonial powers seized Borno and shows in detail how the European treaties had to confront the reality of an immense region and negotiated borderlines locally. The book also provides a detailed analysis of how Borno progressively became a provincial state within colonial Nigeria. The author highlights the durability of the historical boundaries of Borno, as well as the steps leading to the division between Nigeria and Cameroon during the late 1950s.

The book deals only very marginally with Boko Haram, a perfectly justified choice insofar as Boko Haram has been the subject of many other specialized works in recent years. More surprising, however, is the fact that the trans-Saharan dimension of Borno is largely absent from the book, despite its subtitle *Trans-Saharan African Empire*. The author argues that Borno's wealth came from taxes levied on its territory, without explaining that Borno owed its longevity to its unique control of the central road that connected both shores of the Sahara through the Fezzan. In the one hundred pages of notes and bibliography, the reader will find several references to the work of historians of African pre-colonial space, such as Paul Nugent and Allen Howard, but no reference to the geographers inspired by Jean Gallais, whose "mobile" approach of the Sahelian space originated from a region very close to Borno, the Nigerien Koutous.

In conclusion, the book is a valuable addition to the understudied Borno that will appeal to historians, geographers and political scientists working on the territorial nature of power in Africa. Those studying relational forms of power as well as social and trade networks across the region will be left wanting.

Olivier J. Walther, *University of Florida*

Ousmane Oumar Kane. 2016. *Beyond Timbuktu: An Intellectual History of Muslim West Africa*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 282 pp.

Much ink has been spilled on Timbuktu's collections of rare Arabic manuscripts. The celebration of the historic Malian city in the popular imagination might have led to sheer fascination about the materiality of its so-called "magic scrolls." In *Beyond Timbuktu: An Intellectual History of Muslim West Africa*, Ousmane Kane takes the symbolism of the historic city as his point of departure as he charts the transformations of the Arabic-Islamic tradition of learning in the region and its enduring, multifaceted role today. Timbuktu's libraries have often been seen as the unique hard evidence of a long ignored pre-colonial African literary past. In fact, Kane argues, it was but one of a network of centers of Islamic learning that flourished in pre-colonial Africa before and indeed well after the old city's intellectual decline in the second half of the seventeenth century.

Beyond Timbuktu is as much a careful overview of the contribution of African Muslims to the Islamic library as it is an exploration of the role of Islam in African societies, past and present. Drawing on a dense bibliography, it synthesizes rather creatively decades of

interdisciplinary scholarship centered on the study of Islam in Africa in order to explore the relationship between Islamic knowledge and power over time. In contending that Islamic intellectual influence in the continent both preceded and survived the European one, Kane's ambition is to "turn the discussion of the African Library on its head" (p. 10). In so doing, he seeks to illuminate the role of Islamic scholars in "the production and transmission of knowledge and in shaping state and society relations" (p. 18). In a nod to Timbuktu's old mosque/university, Kane claims that such an approach is in line with what he calls a "Sankoré epistemology."

The book has two dominant themes clearly outlined in the "prologue": first, the origin, content, and impact of the Islamic culture and knowledge in Africa; and second, the fate of the Islamic education system and the effects of its transformation on the postcolonial and contemporary public sphere in Islamic Africa. *Beyond Timbuktu's* nine chapters cover two main threads. The first five chapters explore the Islamization of Africa and the development of Islamic knowledge on the continent. Kane surveys the journey of the Islamic literature produced over time by African Muslim communities. Arabic literacy and the jurisprudence of Muslim legal scholars, theological debates, and Sufis practices and beliefs shaped for centuries African Muslim societies in ways often ignored by scholars of Islam working on other areas. The continent went largely under the academic radar at least until the recent emergence of "Timbuktu studies", as Kane calls the academic study of Islamic intellectual life in Africa which reached its "zenith" only in the late twentieth century (Chapter 1). Kane shows how the conversion to Islam of large parts of West Africa gave way to a growing emphasis on pilgrimage to Mecca, comprehensive knowledge of the Qur'an, and advanced knowledge of Arabic. Such developments stimulated the spread of Islamic education, piety, and communal engagement on the continent (Chapter 2), especially at the hands of the "clerical lineages" which emerged in almost all the region's Muslim societies (Chapters 3). The core curriculum of Islamic knowledge taught in African centers of learning covered the entire spectrum of classical Islamic knowledge (Chapter 4). But close reading of the African Islamic archive leads Kane to argue that historians failed to identify a number of writings concerned with Takfir (excommunication) slavery, jihad, Sharia, community building, etc. as "political" in nature (Chapter 5).

The remaining four chapters discuss how, in spite of the repeated shocks to which they were subjected, especially under colonial rule, Islamic institutions of learning survived their increasing marginalization in postcolonial Africa and continued to attract scores of students (Chapter 6). Beginning from the 1980's, the liberalization of the African education system as well as the efforts of oil-rich Arab and Muslim countries (Saudi Arabia, Iran, Libya) led to the creation of many Islamic universities. Kane offers here (Chapter 7) a fieldwork-based survey of the modern Islamic institutions of higher learning that mushroomed on the continent. Kane describes what one might call "the revenge" of the traditional Arabic-speaking elite in the wake of the so-called "democratization" of the African public sphere in the last decades of the twentieth century. Despite the fact that the Western-trained elite (termed here "Europhone elite") inherited state apparatus and power in postcolonial Africa, Islamic intellectuals and graduates from Islamic education (termed here "Arabophones") ultimately managed to make their voices heard in the postcolonial public sphere (Chapter 8). Kane shows then how various

Islamic players including Sufis, reformists and jihadist groups challenged both the western “space of meaning” and the postcolonial state. Kane has the humility to concede that political scientists studying Islam in Africa, himself included, failed to predict the radicalization of important sections of African Islamists (Chapter 9).

The “epilogue” of the book is an account of how most African Muslims today try to articulate modernity and tradition, science and religion, faith and reason, western, Arabic and indigenous epistemology etc. Therefore, Kane argues, Ali Mazrui’s notion of “Africa’s triple heritage” (indigenous, Arab, and western) is more relevant than ever. Yet, Kane laments the fragmentation of knowledge and education between European languages and Arabic and contends that this is a genuine challenge to the development of a solid education system in Africa. However, Kane does not give any suggestion as of how to overcome this central issue.

With *Beyond Timbuktu*, Ousmane Kane provides a fresh look at the history of Africa as a major site of Islamic knowledge and Arabic literacy. A particular strength of this book is his close readings of a number of African Islamic writings and his first hand data and analysis on Islamic universities in today Africa. His effort is praiseworthy, especially as he attempts throughout the book to ascribe intellectual and spiritual meanings to religious life without disconnecting it from its social and political functions. Last but not least, Kane enlivens his book with insights from his own biography as the grandson of Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse, arguably the most influential Sufi leader in twentieth-century Africa. This author is clearly moving on very familiar ground, beyond his own position as a leading scholar of Islam in Africa.

Zekeria Ould Ahmed Salem, *Northwestern University*

Gaim Kibreab. 2017. *The Eritrean National Service: Servitude for ‘the Common Good’ and the Youth Exodus*. Rochester: James Currey Press. 207 pp.

Gaim Kibreab provides a thorough examination of the Eritrean National Service (ENS) project with a close look at the structure, effectiveness, goals, and objectives and analyzes the overall impact of this major national project on the participants, the Eritrean state, and the current refugee crisis in Europe and Israel. He offers an empirical analysis about ENS through the examination of primary collected data from key informants, surveys, peer reviewed literature, reports, and national and international media interviews with Eritrean government officials.

The book begins by looking at the rationale, main objectives, and extent of ENS. It provides a detailed analysis about the early days of its inception with proclamation N0.11/1991 of the Provisional Government of Eritrea. The next two chapters present broader theoretical and historical perspectives of national services from around the world with special focus on the philosophical perspective on the role of national service as being both the highest good to society and being an anti-freedom that erodes all forms of social liberty. The author provides an extensive scrutiny of the Eritrean national service in this philosophical debate and how the Eritrean national service might be unique in that it defeats its own initial national building, national unity, and the building of professional army goals. In fact, the author made a compelling argument with painstaking evidence as to why ENS evolved into a form of forced slavery which led to the exodus of thousands of national service recruits.

In the subsequent chapters, the book covers a wide range of issues in the ENS project that includes government officials' motives and assessment of ENS, the relationship between the old guard (*Yikalo's*) and the national service recruits (*Warsai*), national unity, equality, gender violence, and the impact of this national project on the Eritrean social fabric. Kibreab presents a comprehensive examination of the Eritrean government officials' interviews, particularly the presidents and his former defense minister, who are the architects of the ENS. The interviews provide philosophical underpinning to both the inception and assessment of the ENS. At times these views are contradictory and fail to assess the actual outcome of the project. The book shows that the Eritrean leadership failed to understand the constraints of ENS on the establishment of effective military capability in the country and fulfil the intended missions. Furthermore, ENS, as a national project, has failed to cement the cohesion between the *Yikalo* and *Warsai* in order to transmit the core values developed during the liberation struggle. The author argues the unequal and hierarchical relationship between the two became an impediment to those core values transmission. He further asserts that the whole project became an institution of exploitation whereby their *Yikalo* commanders used national service recruits as laborers and sexual slaves. The book also provides an important piece of evidence that shows while ENS has generally provided national unity and understanding between the different ethnicities, its long term and open-ended nature weakened those benefits. This compulsory military service brought unequal treatment within the military and corruption that led people with money, connection, and privilege to avoid lengthy military service.

The book reveals the significant impact of ENS on the militarization of Eritrean society and the destruction of social values and norms. This militarization of the entire society weakened the traditional social order, the family unit, and the human resource of communities. More importantly, Kibreab examines how the current flow of Eritrean refugees to Europe through the Mediterranean Sea is directly linked to the open-ended and oppressive nature of ENS. The author made a detailed documentation, through key informants, of the sacrifices and suffering of refugees at the hands of ruthless traffickers on their way to Israel and Europe.

This book makes a vital contribution to an important and pressing political and social issue that is impacting millions of people in today's Eritrea. Aside from a few media reports and nongovernmental agencies' reports, this is the only work that is based on a systematic empirical and methodological rigorous study on ENS. Thus it makes a substantial contribution to understand the prevailing nature of ENS as a major source of human rights abuse in Eritrea. More importantly, the author makes a convincing case to the Eritrean and international governments as to why ENS is not a sustainable and reliable national project that failed to contribute to the betterment of society and the individual participants. I applaud the author for making this timely and important contribution to the current literature on Eritrea migration, refugees, national service, and human rights studies.

Dawit Woldu, *University of Houston Clear Lake*

Mickie Mwanzia Koster, Michael Mwenda Kithinji, and Jerono P. Rotich (eds.). 2016. *Kenya After 50: Reconfiguring Education, Gender and Policy*. Palgrave Macmillan. 265 pp.

Kenya After 50 is a collection of contemplative essays that examine the accomplishments Kenya continues to make and the challenges it faces five decades after achievement of independence in 1963. The book is a second volume produced from reflections shared at the sixth annual Kenyan Scholars and Studies Association (KESSA) in 2013. The introductory section notes that “the project identifies key milestones that Kenya has achieved since independence, the challenges of this experience, and future prospects” (p. 2). Many of the issues and topics addressed in this book remain relevant to Kenyan development discourse.

In the opening chapter, Kithinji examines the state of education in Kenya casting a lens on major curricula reforms starting from the post-independence British influenced 7-4-2-3 system and later the 8-4-4 system with Canadian underpinnings. He presents a historical narrative noting that the system “served to internationalize the British colonial education model that ensures continuation of policies and practices that encouraged narrow curricula specialization and limited access to higher education in the post-independence period” (p. 29). At the university level he proposes a system where students are not compartmentalized into strict, narrow academic disciplines but are instead exposed to a liberal education system that breeds the critical thinking and creativity that is much needed in Kenya. These arguments provide a good foundation to analyze the newest curriculum in town—2-6-3-3-3.

In the subsequent chapter, Ojiambo makes an assessment of the previous successful contribution of the Kenya National Youth Service (NYS) in addressing educational and development challenges in post-colonial Kenya. He postulates its role as a double-edged sword that contributed to both national development and at the same time ensured that the youth were offered “a holistic education that provides academic technical, vocational and affective skills.” (p. 58). In Chapter Three, Njeru calls for the incorporation of the mother tongue as an instructional language in school to boost students’ learning development as well as to foster national and cultural unity. Ndanyi in Chapter Four discusses the crackdown on Theatre as a Tool for Development (TfD) by the first president Kenyatta and how this process muted constructive criticism of government in the post interdependence period. He calls for tolerance among political elites toward dissenting opinions especially within the space of theatre.

The next two chapters deviate from the education component, with the first discussing Mpesa, Kenya’s renown global mobile transfer platform and the second examining the challenge of high road carnage. In the case of technology, Jacob describes Mpesa as a tool of nationalism given the fact that it has succeeded in connecting rural and urban areas of the country and facilitating an exchange of social communication. On road carnage, Manyara analyses trends in car accident rates in Kenya and their main contributors. Road deaths and related injuries continue to present an enormous challenge in Kenya today. Manyara recommends a move from punitive and ineffective efforts targeting driver behavior and instead calls for policies aimed at engaging relevant stakeholders and addressing structural antecedents to the problem.

The book’s second section focuses on issues of gender equality. Njorarai in Chapters Seven and Eight delve into an often forgotten subject on the role of women in sports both as participants and as leaders. He provides a historical account on the involvement of women in

local, national, and international sports, their often downplayed achievements, and their under-representation. He borrows from patriarchal theories as well as Ali Mazrui's demilitarization of women in sports, where male hegemony and women exclusion is dominant. Njorarai calls for government support for female athletes, noting that the gap in women leadership in sports within Kenyan universities highlights the need for women to ascend into leadership positions both in administrative and technical capacities.

Muhonja in Chapter Nine calls for gender-equitable ways of street naming in Nairobi, where she points out that street names carry political clout by representing key figures who were central to liberation movements. The absence of women in this naming process is an erasure of Kenya's unsung heroes and therefore needs to be reconsidered. Rotich and Kipchumba in Chapter Ten offer a summarized description of women's various milestones within political, entrepreneurial, leadership, educational, and sporting positions. The writers call for a celebration and acknowledgement of these achievements at the same time calling for "innovative monitoring and accountability strategies that will help alleviate the impending constraints" (p. 223).

The final chapter by Sanya and Lutomia examines feminism, justice, and women's rights in Kenya. Here they look at women's rights movement groups including progress made by Kenyan feminists since Nairobi's Forum 85 that is considered to have ushered in transnational feminism. They further highlight the need to situate men as feminist allies and to move away from the categorization of gender as binary as it excludes LGBTQIA persons who "remain subject to policies and policing driven by heteronormativity" (p. 240). They conclude by noting that although Kenyan feminists and women's groups have reached many milestones, the work remains unfinished. Academia must keep tabs on consequences and politics of such feminisms.

In conclusion, this book provides a broad perspective on select yet relevant topics covering Kenya's journey since independence. It serves as an important reference point for anyone interested not just in the negatives or non-accomplishments but also in often undocumented milestones that can inform future action pathways.

Sheila N. Maingi, *University of Florida*

Bea Lundt and Christopher Marx (Eds.). 2016. *Kwame Nkrumah, 1909-1972: A Controversial Visionary*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag. 208 pp.

In 1960 Kwame Nkrumah proclaimed at the Positive Action Conference for Peace and Security in Africa held in Accra that "We face neither East nor West: we face forward." Ever since, scholars have said much about the *Osagyefo's* quests to free Ghana from colonial rule and implement his United States of Africa. Bea Lundt and Christopher Marx in their roles as editors have organized an important instalment. After their fine introduction, they divide the eleven contributions into three parts: "Visions and Politics," "Opposition and Coup," and "Evaluation and Memory." Each contribution has an abstract, introduction, conclusion, and footnotes. "About the Authors" concludes the volume. The book does not contain bibliographies, indexes, maps, or a list of the twenty-seven black and white illustrations.

Kwame Nkrumah's noble goals were significant. Imagine that his quest to bring about an end to the Vietnam War in 1966 had succeeded, that he had persuaded emerging African

leaders to stand up to West by creating the Pan-African United States of Africa, or that he effected the ban of atomic weapons. Instead, his Ghanaian opposition with CIA knowledge overthrew Nkrumah during his peace mission to Vietnam; African leaders replaced his Pan-African goals with a demand for national and regional unity first; and thousands of atomic weapons remain a present danger to our world. Whether due to the Cold War, neo-colonialism, or lack of African vision, powerful leaders did not seize Nkrumah's pregnant moment.

Nkrumah attended Ghanaian mission schools and American universities in the 1930s and 1940s. As he grew into an intellectual revolutionary, Nkrumah was influenced by another US-educated student, the Pan-Africanist George Padmore. Arno Sonderegger assesses their time together between 1945 and 1959. Kofi Darkwah explains how some of their ideas to overthrow colonial regimes and unify Africa were brought to fruition in the creation of the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute at Winneba.

Women supported Nkrumah. Cyrelene Amoah-Boampong argues that the *Osagyefo* was a feminist—at least in comparison to Victorian colonial regimes that diminished women. She notes that Nkrumah's policies of gender equity and equality were revoked after his overthrow and were not reinstated until the 1990s. In the central part of the book Kwame Osei Kwarteng and Mary Owusu consider the rise of Nkrumah over other anti-colonial Ghanaians. Nna Yaw B. Spong analyzes Nkrumah's political life between 1948-1951. Samuel Aniegye Ntewusu assesses Nkrumah's failed agricultural policies in northern Ghana.

From an imperial perspective, a major question is the degree of US involvement in the *coup d'état* that ousted Nkrumah. Any involvement would have been ironic, given Nkrumah earned three US university degrees between 1935-1943, admired the unity of the US, and successfully negotiated with Dwight Eisenhower and John Kennedy to initiate the Volta River Dam Project. Jonathan Otto Pohl argues that the Nkrumah-US relationship increasingly frayed due to the US defense of European imperialism, particularly involving the murder of Patrice Lumumba and Togolese sheltering of Nkrumah's violent foes. After two years of discussions with the CIA and the US Embassy, Nkrumah's opponents overthrew the *Osagyefo*. In return, the US rewarded Ghana with economic and agricultural aid. Pohl notes that the precise nature of the CIA's role in the coup remains a mystery.

Charismatic leaders like Kwame Nkrumah are often controversial. Interpreting their significance can change over time. Felix Müller's chapter describes how Ghanaian intellectuals initially condemned Nkrumah, rehabilitated him, and more recently revere him. Carola Lentz evaluates that contested memory within the *Osagyefo's* statue in Accra's Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park. Sometimes decapitated, sometimes replaced, and sometimes absent, much like the present discussion of Confederate statues in the US or Cecil Rhodes in South Africa, the Nkrumah statue in Accra has been admired and vilified. The degree of appreciation of them all reflects those controlling history in any given present.

Harcourt Fuller's chapter concludes the book by examining Nkrumah's efforts to accelerate Ghana's industrial and technological development. Fuller illustrates his points by reproducing in black and white ten stamps originally in color. Although likely the publisher's decision, the black and white images prohibit readers from fully experiencing Nkrumah's intended semiotics of Ghanaian and African culture. Fuller's claim that the Volta River Project was a "white elephant" recalls Ali Mazrui's assertions in "Tools of Exploitation" (Part 4 of his documentary

“The Africans: A Triple Heritage). A careful look at a report in 1966 from the Economic Advisory Mission to Ghana (Sept.-Nov. 1965) for the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development reached no such conclusion. Dam projects of this size will incur problems, including financial arrangements and forced removals—all reached through compromise. The lack of competence in pursuing science and technology by subsequent regimes or nature’s vagaries cannot be blamed on Nkrumah. The Volta River Project remains a point of pride for many Ghanaians today.

This volume is impressive and helpful in bringing the *Osagyefo* to the world in 2018. Two topics in need of further exploration are Nkrumah’s relationships with W.E.B. Du Bois, who is buried in Accra, and Nelson Mandela, who clandestinely visited Ghana in 1962 before he was imprisoned for life on Robben Island. Advanced college students and Africanists will benefit from this update, for the problems Nkrumah addressed persist. The maldistribution of the world’s wealth and neocolonialism remain prevalent today partly because the wisdom inherent in Kwame Nkrumah’s Pan-African and anti-imperial agendas has largely been ignored.

Kenneth Wilburn, *East Carolina University*

Chérie Rivers Ndaliko. 2016. *Necessary Noise: Music, Film, and Charitable Imperialism in the East of Congo*. New York: Oxford University Press. Xiv + 285 pp.

From the initial colonization in the 19th century of what became the Democratic Republic of Congo, proponents of Western interventions have turned to humanitarian concerns to justify their actions. US and European foreign aid propped up Mobutu Sese Seko’s dictatorship from 1965 until the early 1990s. Particularly in eastern DRC, international development organizations have gained tremendous influence since the civil wars of the 1990s. *Necessary Noise* is a vital work that celebrates how Congolese artists and musicians have voiced their concerns about their society, even as development and humanitarian organizations have sought to harness and control Congolese performers. Rivers Ndaliko points out the political value of utopian visions within Congolese contemporary art and music.

This study concentrates on Yole!Africa, an artistic collective that formed as part of a growing movement of young artists in the eastern Congolese city of Goma in the late 1990s, just as the DRC was becoming embroiled in civil war. Petna Ndaliko, a youth leader and aspiring filmmaker from Goma, formed Yole!Africa while living in Uganda as a refugee. Though Petna himself was not at first able to return to Goma, he helped to organize a chapter of Yole!Africa in his city of origin. Two of the major goals of this association are to combat negative stereotypes about Congolese people and to highlight Congolese agency via music and film. Artists within the organization often debated each other over whether or not to seek larger audiences via works that were more commercially viable or attractive to potential international NGO sponsorship.

The author provides skillful analysis of individual works made by Yole!Africa as well as the broader political and economic context of artistic production in the DRC. *Tuko Tayari*, an early film by the collective made in 2007, rejected focusing on war and natural disaster that so predominated Western media coverage of Goma in favor of daily life. Another film, *Ndoto Yangu* (2008), offered a more pointed critique of Congolese president Joseph Kabila’s regime via

hip hop. Rivers Ndaliko notes how this more outspoken message risked being co-opted by international NGOs seeking “authentic” voices to promote their own ideas. This tension between foreign NGOs and Congolese artists is a major theme of the entire book. One of the more fascinating examples of this uneasy relationship is reviewed in Chapter Three. UNICEF and the international NGO Solidarités Internationales organized in 2013 a concert of Congolese musicians as a way of educating people in North Kivu about the dangers of cholera. Yole!Africa’s contribution to this effort was to hold a meeting in which concerns about Western mining and political manipulations were raised, alongside the assertion that international NGOs helped to perpetuate the misery of Congolese by providing assistance without working to radically change the political status quo. Songs inspired by these critiques unsurprisingly did not go over well with NGOs, who preferred lyrics about washing hands and clean water over more revolutionary themes. The financial inequalities of well-endowed NGOs dealing with struggling artists meant that more anodyne and pliable messages tended to win out. Similar conflicts play out among international organizations themselves. Even popularity for Congolese artists and NGOs poses problems, since other Congolese often assume artists favor particular ethnic groups or have been co-opted by international organizations.

Despite these challenges, Yole!Africa’s film and artistic productions provide remarkable reworkings of Congolese society. Several Yole!Africa film and musical projects articulate the suffering of Congolese women without treating them as passive and silent figures to only be redeemed by international intervention. “Twaomba Amani,” a song and video, featured footage of Congolese women protesting sexual assault and the lack of justice for its victims. The documentary *Jazz Mama* features the resilience as well as the adversity of female survivors of assault. Female artists and musicians working within and alongside Yole!Africa have voiced their own political and social critiques.

This book is a necessary read for anyone interested in current politics and art in the DRC. It also is valuable in its analyses of the relationship between African NGOs and international organizations. *Necessary Noise* draws from a range of critical theoretical insights and skillfully presents them in forthright, clear prose—no mean feat. Upper division undergraduates, graduate students, and general readers alike will learn a great deal from Rivers Ndaliko’s methods and her presentation. Two minor issues do emerge that readers should be aware of. How the Congolese government might be seeking to control artists and musicians for its own benefit is not discussed in detail here. Rivers Ndaliko’s faith in Patrice Lumumba’s vision for the Congo cruelly cut short by Belgian and Congolese enemies (p. 14) may be overly utopian. However, this book’s critical but still confident take on the potential for Congolese artists and musicians for social justice deserves a wide reading.

Jeremy Rich, *Marywood University*

Holly Porter. 2017. *After Rape: Violence, Justice, and Social Harmony in Uganda*. London: International African Institute and Cambridge University Press. 255 pp.

Over the last decade or so post-war Acholiland in northern Uganda—from where the Lord's Resistance Army rebels originated—has been subjected to a massive research intervention. The development leaves me partly puzzled: despite a virtual avalanche of books, articles and human rights reports, I have a nagging doubt that little is said that is not already known. For how long is it ethically sound to continue to produce and reprise research on more or less the same matters? When is the so-called field, including its informants (who, by the way, are real persons), exhausted? This question of research ethics in the field also has epistemological repercussions: what if yet another round of surveys end up only confirming or refuting the presuppositions established prior to coming to the field?

Such developments in mind, Holly Porter's *After Rape* stands out as different: thoughtful and important; a mandatory read. "Rape... is not just violence. It is also sex, in all of its complex variations" (p. 55). By way of this claim, Porter links rape during times of war with rape that takes place regardless of any war, and she finds support from fellow anthropologist Carolyn Nordstrom who argues that what people accept in peace will shape what they will tolerate in war. "Rape as sexual violence needs theories of both violence and sex" (p. 56).

Porter's work made me think of anthropologist Margaret Mead. When the discipline's ethnographic methods are in beautiful sync with the creativity and sensitivity of a particular fieldworker, anthropology can produce unique and groundbreaking stuff. Mead, when a young female fieldworker, produced exceptional and pioneer research on young Samoan women's agency and sexuality. Porter's study is a remarkable parallel. Two dimensions stand out. First, she anchors her arguments in the existing literature, both past and present, and still she advances previous analyses (mine included) in new, critical, and innovative ways. Second, Porter presents excellent (even if painful) ethnographic material that genuinely contributes to the body of research on Acholiland in particular and on the theme of rape in general. "Living here, really being here," Porter notes as she describes her approach as a fieldworker in postwar Acholiland, "has given this work its shape. The stories of rape and what happens afterwards occur within an Acholi rhythm of life, in which I engage" (pp. 22-23). Indeed, her ethnography has the true anthropological potential of comparison and cultural critique, to recall again the legacy of Mead's classic study. Porter quotes not Mead but Clifford Geertz: "It may be in the cultural particularities of people—in their oddities—that some of the most instructive revelations of what it is to be generically human are to be found" (p. 227).

Dwelling extensively on the concept of social harmony, which includes an assessment of Acholi views on male and female sexuality in relation to marriage, parenting, bridewealth and kinship ideologies, Porter shows the way women experience rape and its consequences are social and cosmological. Any redress, as Porter's informants are painfully aware of, must address the wider context. The ultimate goal will be to restore social harmony, and this will not necessarily acknowledge the agency and wishes of the raped women nor the agendas of outside intervening agencies such as the Ugandan state or the International Criminal Court. Integral to Porter's argument is a penetrating discussion on wartime and post-war justice, and the lack thereof. The argument is best summarised by Porter herself: "The book illustrates the centrality

of two integral aspects of lived Acholi reality: *There is a profound value of social harmony, and a deep distrust of higher authorities to dispense justice*" (p. 12, italics in original, repeated on p. 133).

Again, *After Rape* is an important read. And even if the read is harrowing the stories are superbly contextualised. A young woman summarizes a widespread idea of "love fight" among the Acholi that also informs Porter's analysis. "If you don't resist," the woman says with reference to men's sexual advances, "they will say that you are an easy girl. So, according to me boys should force girls so that they will know that we are good girls" (p. 121). To return one more time to the legacy of Mead's Samoa study, my only wish is for Porter to carry out some further research: are there possibly other sides to Acholi sexualities than those focused upon in this book? Are there ways in which young women and men explore their sexualities and desires outside the (heterosexual) norm of women as passive, unwilling and resisting; and of men, with biological "needs" that must be satisfied, as active and enforcing? Porter hints that there are...

Sverker Finnström, *Uppsala University*

Steven Press. 2017. *Rogue Empires: Contracts and Conmen in Europe's Scramble for Africa*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 371 pp.

Rogue empires is an old-new European phenomenon, which emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century, particularly in the 1880s and 1890s, and witnessed a fierce race among European powers not to grab land and colonize overseas territories, but to obtain treaties to indirectly govern them.

This trend started as an idea in the 1840s, when James Brooke, a common British subject, managed to sign a treaty with the Sultan of Brunei, which "overnight" made him king of the northwestern part of the island of Borneo, known as Sarawak, a dangerous place and a hunting ground for pirates, but not without significant advantages: it was still free of the sway of Dutch colonists present in the southern part of Borneo and enjoyed a strategic location in view of the expansion of trade with China via the First Opium War. More significantly, Brooke, like those who preceded him and those who would follow his scheme, cherished British colonization in Singapore, which started earlier and believed in the benefits of British civilization and free trade. His plan, he claimed, would profit other areas farther afield.

What is mostly striking about this apparently banal operation was that Brooke's scheme had serious implications for Brooke as the scheme initiator, for Sarawak, Brooke's would-be kingdom, for Britain, as a great imperial state and its attitude and relation with Brooke and his private property, and more generally, for western imperial and non-imperial powers, their perceptions of Brooke's scheme and of international law and the way it should operate in the late nineteenth century and after. Brooke negotiated a so-called "treaty" with a state as an individual and set up a pattern whereby individuals could treat with states. More importantly, Brooke generated a worldwide craze among individuals and later states for obtaining treaties and governing other peoples in the name of a superior civilization. This excitement would result in a competition between individuals and between states for the transfer of power and would make governance a commodity and a business transaction, which anyone could buy and sell, not least, brigands and adventurers and under duress and the use of trickery, force and extortion. This is because that is what actually happened.

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, and in the course of the partition of Africa, and to a lesser extent, Asia, international law received a blow with the emergence of a system of protectorates, treaties, split sovereignty rights, “rogues empires,” which brought about a legal chaos and questioned the capacity of powerful European states like Britain, France, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands to possess real influence over Africans and other peoples. Britain, the largest empire then, celebrated Brooke’s “rogue” kingdom, a private and virtual state, and many in Britain and over Europe, perceived Brooke as a hero and a liberal agent of civilization, but had doubts about the legal value of the treaty he signed and the legitimacy of his rule over Sarawak. Britain’s real position over the whole process was made more difficult, when Brooke’s scheme obtained an almost universal approval and many rushed to copycat the concept and obtain treaties, this new form of obtaining sovereignty or what remained of it in a context where the latter could be arranged, negotiated, transferred with the full endorsement of states. This was partly because these very states, in spite of the vagueness and the legal doubts about the validity of those “treaties”, the conditions in which they were made and the legitimacy of those who made them, were eager to mimic Brooke, the “white Rajah,” and have a share of the colonial remnants, and partly because Brooke’s initiative was not a novel one. Its origins go back to the East India Company, the company-state, which governed parts of the British Empire and acted as a sovereign state for long. The anomaly in jurisprudence started then, in the very early 17th century and continued. The controversy about it was enormous. How could a company act like a state? On what legal basis and how? The Brooke case in a sense is only one more case. The Berlin Conference, by approving Brooke’s scheme and many others, like the Belgian King Leopold II’s Independent State of the Congo made a gift for the many, no matter who it was, a filibuster, a chartered company, a state, a joint scheme: that of having a freelance state, a piece of territory to govern, regardless of the manner and the consequences.

Adel Manai, *Qatar University*

Richard Reid. 2017. *A History of Modern Uganda*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 403 pp.

In this thought-provoking monograph, Richard Reid has produced an important work on Uganda’s modern history. The book, broadly conceived, explores the extent to which the nation state is a useful starting point for writing cultural and political history (pp. 3–9). In the *longue durée*, Reid contends, the geography and unifying function of the state is not as artificial as it appears at first. By utilizing the nation as a rubric for evaluating regional politics, the book shows “how history has been used to mobilise and marginalise, how the past is continually evoked and reinterpreted, in the forging of political and cultural communities” (p. xxvi). The book welcomingly avoids using chronology to orient its larger arguments. By contrast, it focuses on key themes and moments, from pastoral immigration during the first millennium CE to the very recent athleticism of Stephen Kiprotich.

The first chapter uses literary and artistic production, such as the poetic novels of Okot p’Bitek, to expand the regional repositories from which we might recast Uganda’s national historiography. In Chapter Two, “Pensive Nation,” the book explores the immediate contexts

out of which the National Resistance Movement (NRM) secured power in 1986. For Reid, modern Uganda is a pensive nation, “a nation whose fragility had been established by the enclosure and claustrophobia of the late twentieth century, in which the capacity for violent ethnic conflict had been horrifically exposed [...] and in which the lack of real political leadership had been revealed” (p. 98). Reid argues in Chapter Three, “Rukidi’s Children,” that the Uganda inherited by the NRM during the 1980s was the product of a long history of migration and pronounced military political culture (pp. 117, 125, 180, 184). This same chapter underscores spiritual and religious change in southern Uganda during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (pp. 166–84), a theme developed further in Chapters Four (pp. 244–67) and Five (pp. 329–37). The following chapter, “The Adventures of Zigeyye and Atuk,” though, shows that the advent of world religions was part of an older history of trade relation with the Indian Ocean world of the CE fourteenth century (p. 188). Central to Reid’s argument is that communities have pursued spiritual, physical and psychological wellbeing across the long history of Uganda (p. 283). The final chapter, “Kings and Others,” focuses mostly on the kingdom of Buganda to highlight the spiritual and political costs of late colonial politics, which resulted in the dissolution and recreation of the region’s precolonial kingdoms. The volume’s epilogue reinforces the intersection of migration, the militarization of political culture and the remaking of historical knowledge (p. 350).

Since the late nineteenth-century, Uganda’s precolonial kingdoms have attracted an extensive amount of scholarship. Surrounding and following Independence, historians such as Kenneth Ingham (1958), Samwiri Karugire (1980) Jan Jørgensen (1981), and Phares Mutibwa (1992) continued to use the region’s precolonial kingdoms to orient national history writing. What makes Reid’s book so compelling is that he uses an extensive body of source material to push us beyond the southern-bent of Uganda’s national historiography. Be that as it may, the book at times also struggles to look beyond the perspectives of its kingdoms’ writers. Indeed, the final substantial chapter argues that non-central “regions which had been the historic founts of culture and ideology had now become [during the colonial period] borderlands and peripheries” (p. 298). As the volume maintains earlier, “the Nyoro-Ganda connection arguably remained the defining axis along which modern Uganda was being forged in this period” (p. 149). But communities in colonial Tesoland continued to view their economic, cultural and political contributions as central to the development of modern Uganda. The region maintained a relatively high standard of living throughout the colonial period. By 1953, for example, as J.C.D. Lawrance once showed, Teso District was the largest cigarette-consuming area in eastern Africa. And as Teso interlocutors have often reminded me, it was not without historic reason that a Teso activist, John Kanuti Akorimo, lowered the Union Jack and hoisted the national flag on 9 October 1962. In turn, one worries that the book at times places too much emphasis on the region’s military history. The book suggests that “[p]ostcolonial Uganda is a deeply secretive place, a space of shadows and dark recesses” (p. 352). If this is the case, however, surely communities have different ways of talking about the sources of these shadows. Again, communities in Tesoland have a dissimilar way of talking about the Obote government during the 1980s than royalist writers, the latter of which viewed the early 1980s as brutal and murderous—as does Reid (p. 75). Pro-UPC writers and republicans have argued that Obote was

trying to quell, following the Amin insurrection, a second military uprising in the likes of Museveni. This explained why the state needed to be more authoritarian during this period.

Be that as it may, Richard Reid's ambitious and thrilling new book is to be applauded. It is the best national history on modern Uganda published to date, and it is ideal for upper-level undergraduate and graduate students, and scholars in eastern African studies.

Jonathon L. Earle, *Centre College*

Ksenia Robbe. 2015. *Conversations of Motherhood: South African Women's Writing Across Traditions*. Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press. 317 pp.

In *Conversations of Motherhood*, Ksenia Robbe undertakes the ambitious task of comparing various representations of motherhood in South African women's writing from 1978-2006. Her analysis reaches "across traditions" to analyze novels by Elsa Joubert, Norma Stockenström, Sindiwe Magona, Marlene van Niekerk, Zoë Wicomb, Pamphilia Hlapa, Ellen Kuzwayo and Antjie Krog. Robbe's act of reaching across necessitates a cross-racial, cross-cultural, cross-temporal, and often cross-linguistic approach that interrogates the divisiveness of South African literary traditions, governed as they are by, at times, essentialised notions of difference.

Such "historically-informed" comparative approaches are severely lacking in South African women's writing. Robbe's study demonstrates the value of such work in exhuming how "transgressions" — that is, "how women imagine and cross the domestic and public spaces circumscribed by the boundaries of race, language and class" — may "translocate" boundaries (pp. 4-5). Translocation is a major focus of *Conversations of Motherhood*, a process Robbe defines as "attempting to trace and shift sociocultural boundaries, rather than imaging an all-encompassing framework for diverse texts." In so doing, she questions the "virtual borders between literary traditions that determine our habits of reading South African literature(s)" (p. 5).

Though Robbe's focus is on the affinities present in the various texts' treatments of motherhood, her comparisons remain attuned to the fault lines between them that "ward off any unifying approaches" (p. 9). Herein lies the strength of Robbe's study: it remains keenly aware of the differential power structures that govern each of the texts and their authors, while remaining aware of similarities and/or overlap. For example, her comparison of motherhood in Marlene van Niekerk's *Agaat* (2004) and Sindiwe Magona's *Mother to Mother* (1998) demonstrates how "master discourses of patriarchy, [...] nationalism and racism" affect the respective novels differently, even though certain aspects of their novels may point to "collective experiences of apartheid" (p. 166). Further, Robbe does not only explore 'motherhood' as a category in South African literature — she also critiques it, highlighting the sometimes inhibiting, sometimes empowering emblem of the mother and the nation, and the variety of forms that mothering can take.

The book is divided into five chapters (excluding the Introduction and Conclusion). The first chapter foregrounds motherhood as it has been represented and received as a "(post)colonial imagin[ar]y." Chapter Two considers Joubert's *Die Swerfjare van Poppie Nongena* and Stockenström's *Die Kremetartekspedisie* with regard to their "relations of outsidersness;" both of these novels are by white authors writing about black mothers. Chapter Three moves onto

Magona's *Mother to Mother* and van Niekerk's *Agaat*, exploring "co-authoring" (in the Bakhtinian sense) and the complicated nature of "Mother/Child-Making" as it is biologically, socially, and politically construed. Chapter Four then deals with Wicomb's *You Can't Get Lost in Cape Town* and Hlapa's *A Daughter's Legacy*, exploring the novels' subversions of time in their relation to motherhood/daughterhood. Lastly, Chapter Five compares Kuzwayo's *Call Me Woman* and Krog's *A Change of Tongue*.

Methodologically, Robbe draws from the fields of transnational feminism, postcolonial studies, subaltern studies, and gender studies to produce insightful and multifaceted readings of the respective texts. The main theoretical thrust of the book is, however, grounded in Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogics, in a more pervasive way than the introduction suggests. At times, the study seems to lapse into lengthy explications about "speaking subjects" and dialogicity, but Robbe manages to offset the potentially burdensome complex literary theory with close readings of the texts. One of the main "blind spots" of her study is noted by Robbe herself in the Introduction—the fact that her selected texts only represent novels written in English or Afrikaans, and do not give credence to a wider variety of South African literatures (for example, "Indian or black Afrikaans") (p. 20).

Nevertheless, a single study cannot be expected to include all possible texts or angles. *Conversations of Motherhood* is an essential contribution to South African and comparative literature. The groundwork Robbe has laid in this study opens up an encouraging critical space for further comparative analysis of South African literatures and the "translocation of traditions."

Heidi Barends, *University of Cape Town*

Robert I. Rotberg. 2017. *The Corruption Cure: How Citizens and Leaders Can Combat Graft*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press. 384 pp.

Robert Rotberg set out very early in his book, and in an unambiguous language, to make explicit the purpose of his research on corruption. Corruption is an ancient phenomenon and concept; it is universal; it has no class, race, gender, ethnicity, no one is immune from it; it has deleterious consequences; it is combatted right from time immemorial but there is a heightened global consciousness and commitment against it; the fight against corruption is winnable, though it is always a difficult one; individual and corporate efforts are critical in anticorruption crusade but not sufficient; technological equipment and media and social media chips are important but not absolute in themselves; legal and institutional rearmament is key but not adequate; political will with unreserved commitment is the elixir needed to attain a nirvana at both local and global spaces, which must be predicated on ethical universalism.

Rotberg's dissection of the nature of corruption is an exposé that hinges on human depravity, an inner inordinate quest to get what legitimately belongs to others in order to enrich oneself. Thus, anywhere there is corruption, there is necessarily the lack of integrity. "Indeed, corruption is the symptom, the absence of integrity is the disease" (p. 20). He argued that since integrity encapsulates transparency, impartiality, trust, fairness, and openness in public and private dealing, corruption exists if and when these are compromised. Corruption is

consequently not a value-free act; it has rippling effects, which straggle toward abuse of human rights, especially of the masses, terrorism, economic sabotage, injustice, etc.

Although there are problems inherent in statistically measuring corruption partly because grand corruption, for instance, is hardly overt, available studies and organizations' perceptions are useful in understanding and determining the extent and pervasiveness of corruption in contemporary society. Utilizing some of these tools, Rotberg critically and dispassionately assessed how many countries across the globe have reacted to corruption, particularly their leadership, and how the people have also begun to be radically involved in the crusade against it. Because leadership is key, Rotberg did not mince words in squarely interrogating leaders' reactions to corruption, many times naming and shaming the hypocritical ones and praising the efforts of honest ones. The examples of Hong Kong, Singapore, and Botswana keep resonating with forceful penetrative emphasis, a paradigm worthy of emulation. Tanzania and Nigeria's new leaderships are to be watched using a political will paradigm that worked elsewhere as a basis.

Rotberg also examined the anticorruption commissions set up across the globe to either frontally or ostensibly fight corruption. As a result of international bodies' intervention in anticorruption efforts, aid and other forms of interaction being predicated on determined efforts by national governments to deal with corruption, some countries set up such commissions and ombudsmen, but use propaganda as a means of securing their goal rather than fight corruption. Elsewhere, such commissions, being empowered and given considerable independence through strong legislation, have done creditably well. Anticorruption commissions, he argued, can only succeed if the president or prime minister as the case may be, demonstrates political will, showing example and allowing her or his family and friends to be investigated and prosecuted. Thus, once there are "sacred cows" that cannot be touched, the whole process is undermined. Of course, it is also imperative that the commissions themselves are above board, determine, and dispassionate. Rotberg added that unambiguous legislation is necessary for the commissions to achieve their goal. While these have worked elsewhere, the case of many African countries is disheartening. He writes: "The legal codes were just as strong, without a commitment to anticorruption efforts on the part of rulers and ruling classes, most of the African commissions were unable to change the prevailing political cultures of corruption that disfigured their countries" (p. 174). Here, Rotberg subtly argues that where there are leaders, corruption is fought as in Hong Kong or Singapore, but where there are rulers as in most parts of Africa, corruption is difficult to fight, though not impossible.

The argument that corruption cannot be fought and won from bottom up but from the top to the bottom is suffusing. It is demonstrated that in both government and business worlds, petty corruption, though cumulatively large and disastrous cannot be equated in magnitude and effect with grand corruption. Thus, if grand corruption mostly engaged in at the top is pummeled, petty ones can be dealt with more easily. Unfortunately, many commissions have succeeded more in handling the latter than the former. In fact, most laws and anticorruption commissions are deliberately crafted and created to deal with grand corruption. The international legislations and bodies are critically concerned about grand corruption, an understandable reason why Rotberg has joined the advocacy for the establishment of a global court to prosecute grand corruption that national courts and institutions are unable to handle.

Of course, once corruption, especially the grand type is criminalized globally, such an international court in the similitude of the International Criminal Court would be able to intervene to the advantage of the masses of the countries affected who are naturally the collateral for corruption.

Finally, Rotberg suggested critical fourteen ways that can be used to fight corruption globally. Though not exhaustive, he argued that as new ways are invented to corrupt the system so would new strategies be thought of to deal with them, just as the social media and civil societies have become not only megaphones and mobilizing voices, but sometimes now an active political force intervening pragmatically in anticorruption.

However, Rotberg, in his Research Note, has demonstrated the ethics of this research, there is a critical vault that his book has not really peeped into, namely the traditional and religious institutions in Africa and their relationships, roles and influence on political offices. It is being held widely that many of the traditional rulers and religious leaders who enjoy some form of immunity are used to launder money for political rulers. These sacred vaults require incisive investigation in dealing with corruption in Africa. Although Rotberg has demonstrated so much optimism in President Buhari's efforts to significantly fight corruption in Nigeria, an intellectualist perception would show that such optimism is being frustrated. For, according to Rotberg, personal integrity is *sine qua non*, but when it is a political smokescreen, it loses its salt.

Benson Ohihon Igboin, *Adekunle Ajasin University*

Lamin Sanneh. 2016. *Beyond Jihad: The Pacifist Tradition in West African Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press. 376 pp.

Lamin Sanneh provided an interesting analysis of the expansion of Islam in West Africa beyond other scholarly analysis, which he called the pacific tradition. The author gives an account of the expansion of Islam in West Africa; through North Africa, which was mainly transmitted by means of trans-Saharan trade routes without *jihad*. The Muslim pacifist tradition is promoted by religious masters (clerics) who dissociate themselves from jihadists (warriors) and the political class, choosing a peaceful means for promoting Islam. Unlike the argument of other scholars, Sanneh emphasized that this method was more successful in the spread of West African Islam than *jihad*. The religious clerics were successful through advocating education and scholarship, which gives them an important position in the society as promoters of peace, morality, and spirituality.

The author examines transmission by way of external influence, for example trade, travel, and pilgrimage. Islam's character has always emphasized good manners to both converts and those outside its fold regardless of gender, rank, race, culture or nationality. This can be seen beyond the scriptural context and from historical and cultural attitudes of Muslims today especially among the West African Muslims. In fact, these attitudes have been the bedrock for the expansion of Islam in Africa, what the author called "local accommodation." The expansion in the West African region through local social mediation therefore goes beyond external influence. As Islam expanded and shaped the lives of people locally, it is also being shaped by the African setting and culture leading to scholarly discourse on "folk" or "corrupt" Islam in

Africa. Sanneh cautioned that any attempt to disregard this understanding of the peaceful disposition of Islam in Africa for a more radical means of its expansion will distort the understanding of Islam in the region. For example, he disagrees with the theory that says the Berbers imposed Islam in Ghana alongside trade, arguing that trade can flourish only through peaceful adaptation.

The author highlighted that Islam expanded and dominates many places in West Africa through a gradual process of its accommodation, tolerance, and the culture of exchange in social relationships. This initiative has inscribed the religion into the hearts and minds of Africans. Ghana and Mali are clear examples. Rather than Islam conquering them, Muslim accommodation and tolerance attracted the people into its fold.

Throughout Muslim communities in West Africa, clerics took the responsibility of guiding people and making sure that Islam is recognized in both an individual's private life as well as in the public within the community. In taking this responsibility, the clerics have maintained considerable distance from the political class for several reasons. Avoid being corrupted, which will pollute their effort to guide by example and maintain their position as exemplary within the community. Their role is to teach and guide, which has produced a major impact within West African Muslim societies. The clerics have rejected the use of political offices for the propagation of Islam, fearing that it will do more harm than good. Therefore, they have maintained their role of teaching the young and old, leading prayers, presiding over marriage and birth ceremonies, Ramadan, and pilgrimage and directing burial customs. By doing so, they have design and run the affairs of the Muslim communities in West Africa. Presiding over Muslim practices indicates that the clerics have defined the Muslim religious and social life in the various communities, which gives them a privileged position of authority within the communities. This authority provided them with power, and so political leaders also need them in controlling the affairs of the Muslim societies, which gave them additional importance. The author states that "This authority allowed the clerics to affirm the *ummah* (the faith community) as the repository of Scripture and Sunnah and to place their moral example before and within the *ummah* in public teaching and witness." But as advocates of what Sanneh called "soft" Islam, the clerics still maintained their distance from the political leaders. They feel that peaceful obligation of faith and accommodation is more powerful than *jihad*.

Despite the emphasis Lamin Sanneh placed on the pacific tradition in West African Islam, we must also recognize the role played by jihadists in West African Islam as was emphasized by other scholars such as Roman Loimeier, Holger Weiss, and others. There were incidents of widespread *jihad* in the nineteenth century West Africa; examples are that of Usman Dan Fodio and Umar Tal that lead to prevalent presence of Islam in many parts of the region giving way to the pacific tradition. However, Sanneh indicated that the pacifists' approach has produced a stronger West African Muslim identity with robust affiliations to practice. Through this method, the Islamic spirit continues to be expressed through education, worship, and morality despite the subsequent presence of colonialism, modernization, and globalization. Islam has not been weakened in West Africa especially in regard to its role in Muslim communities, and clerics have maintain their position as a religious class and guardians of the community.

Dauda Abubakar, *University of Jos, Nigeria*

John Saul and Patrick Bond. 2014. *South Africa: The Present as History from Mrs Ples to Mandela and Marikana*. Johannesburg: Jacana Media. 312 pp.

The Present as History traverses a number of significant shifts in South Africa's social and political history. Using the Marikana Massacre of 2012 (the event where thirty-four miners were gunned down by the South African police as they were on strike for a wage increase) as a vantage point; the authors highlight the complexities of power and ownership in South Africa leading from pre-colonialism (pp. 13-142), to the period of transition (1989-1994) and the two decades since.

The book recapitulates the "pre-history" of South Africa's democracy that left "fingerprints" (p. 2) on the current dispensation. It provides a concise, yet pointed account of the history of conquest at the Cape in 1652; where, taking a materialist lens, the authors convey how the goals of class exploitation and racial subjugation have intersected in South Africa over time (p. 44).

In Chapter Two, the authors claim that the struggle for racial equality in South Africa has been more realized than those for class, gender, and environmental justice, and this has had a decisive impact on securing a democratic voice for all citizens (p. 63). It is elucidated how in the 1960s there was a "culmination of the white population's locking into place a closed, all-embracing system of racist colonialism and 'racial capitalism', [which]... emerged in South Africa out of the preceding several centuries of white and capitalist domination" (p. 64). It is shown how decades of mass struggle culminated in the overturn of the apartheid regime and its concomitant "Racial Capitalism." But the transitional negotiations had additional effects, where the principal victors of the struggle for freedom were "global capitalism" on the one hand and the "relatively thin layer of ANC-linked black elites" on the other (p. 63).

The analysis is useful in explicating the somewhat lesser-known history of South Africa's trade union movement and its effect on mass politics. It depicts the working class action that burgeoned in Durban in the 1970s and traces influence on the anti-apartheid movement by the "Ovambo strikes" that occurred between 1971 and 1973 in Namibia (then called South West Africa), which was at the time illegally occupied by South Africa (p. 74). The authors reveal the multiple and contesting paradigms within the trade union movement itself, such as the national-democratic focused trade unions, versus populist, "shop-floor" or "workerist" ones like the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU); as well as the confluence of the "workerists" and "populists" into the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

An historically-based explanation of the current ANC government's economic ideology and its relationship to capital is provided through the account of the ANC's relationship with the trade union movement during the struggle years. An example is where at Cosatu's 1987 Congress there had been a widespread call to "assert working class demands" and where Cosatu's office bearers had "endorsed the ANC's leadership of the liberation struggle" (p. 75). Significantly, the authors reveal how the ANC was already, at that point "rejecting the countenancing of any counter-hegemonic perspectives towards capitalism" (p. 76). In a description echoed strongly by the the current ANC leadership and policy trend, it states that the ANC subordinated others to "self-aggrandizement and global neo-liberalism" (p. 77). This is significant to understanding the contemporary allegiances and socio-economic policy of the ruling party, especially in its switch from the socially-oriented Reconstruction and

Development Programme (RDP) to the more neoliberal Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) in 1998. The evidence supplied by Bond and Saul suggests that the ANC, at its core, never aspired to fully realize national socialist revolution.

The ensuing chapters reveal the impact of the ANC's embrace of neoliberalism on the fledgling economy reliant on economic windfalls, (brought on by the discovery of minerals such as gold, diamonds, and platinum) asset bubbles, and vulnerable to capital flight. The book does well at tracing the delicate links between historically-entrenched discord in the trade union movement and the "unfortunate compromises" made by the "systemic corruption," "extreme inequality, unemployment and low pay" and how these trends are revealed in the Marikana Massacre (p. 176). This they show to culminate in the "moment at Marikana," where the ANC ruling party allowed the police force to "serve *white-dominated multinational capital* by killing dozens of black workers so as to end a brief strike" (p. 215). The latter quote's inclusion of the term "white-dominated multinational capital" highlights a problematic feature of the text.

Whilst remaining over reliant on racialized language, despite the caveat in the introduction, Saul and Bond do are able to distil dominant paradigms regarding the transition and the post-apartheid condition tactfully, as well as provide clarity on the complex cross-currents of the contemporary South African moment.

Claire-Anne Lester, *University of Stellenbosch*

Luke Sinwell and Siphiwe Mbatha. 2016. *The Spirit of Marikana. The Rise of Insurgent Trade Unionism in South Africa*. London: Pluto Press. 208 pp.

Sinwell and Mbatha offer an incisive yet empathetic account of miners' strikes that stained the South African platinum mining belt between 2012 and 2014. Strikes are a key manifestation of the class struggle over the distribution of national income and seek to reform of the labor relations system in any country. Strikes usually generate an extraordinary amount of pressure on the social system, which often leads to structural changes such as the reconfiguring of the industrial relations system, the economy, or the political system. The series of strikes leading to the Marikana massacre marked a turning point in South Africa's labor and mining sector.

Without much pretention the book provides details of how the locker room conversations between most hard working rock drill operators, RDOs, culminated into a strike action. RDOs are the least paid yet do most dangerous work of inserting explosives and drilling the rock to release platinum ore. Here the workers conceptualized first that were paid unsatisfactory wages and settled on R12,500 per month as a satisfactory wage increase for their labor. The strike was led by an independent strike committee, and the recognized union at the time, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), actively opposed the strike, siding with Lonmin management. The new politics created an open space to engage in what workers thought they needed to live decently. So, instead of being based on what management would consider rational, mine workers based their demands on the amount of money which they considered a living wage. By bypassing bargaining structures of trade unions, and instead by choosing to channel their demand directly to mine management structures they acquired an insurgent identity. "They opened their eyes. Now they could see they were being oppressed" (p. 19).

Chapter One provides background, a conceptual stance, and the authors' motivations for undertaking the task of producing the book. Chapter Two describes in detail how the two RDOs conversations at Lonmin led to the initial living wage demand of R12,500, galvanizing other mining workers across the entire platinum belt. Chapter Three sets out to describe the dynamic of the unprotected strike at Lonmin 2012 that led to the Marikana massacre and the eventual resolve that bound the workers to keep on demanding their rights. Chapter Four describes the strike at Amplats, which though less famous, took longer and had a larger mass of miners. This is where and how the wage demand rose to a R16,070 per month increase. Chapter Five focuses on the rise of AMCU and clearly demonstrates its less than stellar qualities under the undemocratic but charismatic Joseph Mathunjoa. Chapter Six focuses on the great 2014 strike at Impala, Amplats, and Lonmin, in which workers were protected.

The book contributes to politics of work in terms of providing a thick description of the days that culminated into the Marikana massacre and its aftermath. Moreover it provides a broad commentary that is useful to any scholar of Southern African politics of the intersectionality of work done by the hard men of the platinum belt in South Africa, the actions and reactions of the ANC led government and, most importantly, the rise of AMCU as a trade union of choice. It is insurgent trade unionism which the authors employ to explain the relationship between two periods of time: 2012, when workers went on unprotected strikes with their independent committee at the helm; and 2014, when workers went on protected strikes under the AMCU banner. Their insurgency gained them considerable amount of power. The notion of insurgent trade unionism highlights the diversity of existing union practices, and how they change over time according to shifting circumstances. Most importantly, it reveals the ways in which trade unions may be driven from below by the rank and file's collective and, in this case insurgent agency. However, it also points to new struggles within the union as well as with management. Many perspectives fail to comprehend the complexity of strike dynamics and the historical process of class struggle that is being unleashed because they focus on the formalism of industrial relations and on economic views. The consequences of this strike have been to reconfigure the political landscape and moral compass by which key protagonists are judged. The book demonstrates that beyond Marikana, workers subverted the dominant discourse and succeeded in changing the status quo, even if it is by small extent!

Seroala Tsoeu-Ntokoane, *National University of Lesotho*

Z. S. Strother. 2016. *Humor and Violence: Seeing Europeans in Central African Art*. Bloomington and Indianapolis. Indiana University Press. 344 pp.

Central Africa has been central to collecting, museums, scholarship, connoisseurship, and the art market, and it continues to be so today. In addition, recent studies of the African-European encounter have called into question the idea of an "authentic" African art. Clearly, this cross-cultural encounter ushered in new realities, preoccupations, ideas, and imaginations. Still, for the most part, scholarly, museological, and popular discourse on African artists' depictions of Europeans remains overly general. A critical analysis requires a contextualized approach firmly rooted in specific historical, political, economic, and socio-cultural circumstances and material contingencies.

Zoe Strother's *Humor and Violence* does exactly that. Her focus on Central West African art dating to the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods draws upon her extensive specialist knowledge, including her research amongst the Pende, in today's southwest Congo. The author's approach is highly effective since the select corpus of objects she examines are dated and contextualized alongside historical accounts by early explorers, travelers, ethnographers, and collectors, as well as contemporary theorists. Strother carefully weaves a fascinating, sophisticated illumination of the dialectic of humor and violence as a concept that provides insight into the psychology of power and resistance amongst oppressor and oppressed, whereby art mediates the mechanics and ethics of power.

Since I cannot do justice to the many instances Strother employs to illustrate this claim, I will provide just two. Strother's examination of portrayals of Europeans in Central African art stresses this was not based solely upon skin color or Western dress, but rather the performance of European identity. She sheds light on the ways in which Central African artists demonstrated an acute understanding of how Europeans dressed, but also the manner in which they ate, drank, worked, relaxed, and even guarded their valuables. She expands upon this argument referencing European body language such as walking, sitting, lounging, and greeting, as well as highlighting other accoutrements such as shoes, cigars, liquor bottles, tablecloths, eating utensils, and pets (usually yappy little dogs) as popular portrayals. Another illustration is Strother's insightful enquiry into Vili artists' depictions of slavery and the slave trade on ivory tusks dating to the 1880s. She provides a detailed analysis of an ivory tusk elucidating the enslaveds' capture and transportation in coffles, in addition to the negotiations between African chiefs and European merchants. Alternating images of Africans and Europeans divided into horizontal sections on the tusk allow for fruitful juxtapositions: Two women are represented witnessing capture—one wrings her hands while the other raises her arms in grief, portraying the violence of separation juxtaposed against a textile sale, unfolded for display; the brutality of a slave coffle holding six men chained together is viewed next to a European in civilian dress astride a horse bearing a Portuguese-style saddle. But, Strother cautions us the reader against overly simplistic readings. Her historical perspective is highly valuable. For, she notes, although significant numbers of export tusks were carved between the 1840s and 1910s, the earliest documented images of captives date to the late 1850s, in other words, exactly when European trafficking on the African west coast was ending. Yet, despite abolition in the Americas, slavery did not truly disappear on the Loango Coast for the reason many European trading posts continued to employ slave labor though the late 1880s, and the African practice of chattel labor continued and according to the author, may well have grown in importance. She also contends, by the 1850s (with the exception of Boma), caravans avoided ports, captives moved in small groups to avoid British patrols, individuals were less likely to be bound, and women were prized above all others. Thusly, Strother asks us to reflect upon the reasons Europeans were interested in collecting images of the enslaveds' capture and transport when no longer actively engaged in the slave trade.

Humor and Violence is a commendable contribution to the study of African art and of significance to those grappling with the ways Central Africans in the past understood, experienced, and conceived the world around them, by way of a detailed, sustained study of objects and aesthetics. Strother's expertise, notably, the "reading" of objects as texts is both

highly compelling and thought-provoking, and ultimately, herein lies the book's strength. It is well written in accessible narrative style lavishly accompanied by color and black-and-white photographs, together with hand-drawn sketches. This book will no doubt find itself on the bookshelves of those interested in African art.

Rachel Ama Asaa Engmann, *Hampshire College*

Ann Swidler and Susan Cotts Watkins. 2017. *A Fraught Embrace: The Romance and Reality of AIDS Altruism in Africa*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 280 pp.

In *A Fraught Embrace*, sociologists Ann Swidler and Susan Cotts Watkins elucidate the relationship between altruists, aid beneficiaries, and the brokers who connect them using the concept of romance. They note that altruists, brokers, and villagers "[e]ach arous[e] fantasies in the others that cannot be fulfilled," but they develop "working misunderstandings" to get by (p. 123). This compelling metaphor highlights the "clash between noble dreams and everyday reality" in AIDS altruism in Africa (p. xi).

A Fraught Embrace focuses in particular on brokers, who are too often neglected when the literature focuses on donors, projects, and beneficiaries without fully examining the crucial people in between. They describe four different types of brokers at varying levels of the aid chain: cosmopolitan brokers, national brokers, district brokers, and interstitial brokers. Swidler and Watkins also discuss a wide range of altruists, from "behemoths" like the World Bank and UNAIDS to "butterflies," individual altruists or small altruistic organizations that only briefly alight in countries to provide assistance. They use the term villager to describe beneficiaries, as this is the imagined reality for many altruists. Thus, in differentiating between types of brokers and donors, the authors effectively discuss a wide range of circumstances.

The authors draw on about twenty years of fieldwork in Malawi, as well as a wide range of materials that they and others had collected: longitudinal survey data, gray literature, NGO websites, local newspapers, formal interviews, and villager diaries. While using Malawi as a case study, they generalize their findings to all of sub-Saharan Africa. In doing so, however, they specifically note the possibility of variation by country, such as in their description of brokers: "We describe Malawian brokers here. The specifics are likely to vary across African countries, depending on factors such as the country's size, colonial past, and economic status" (p. 79).

Swidler and Watkins' greatest achievement in *A Fraught Embrace* is to effectively humanize and explain altruists, brokers, and villagers. For example, they cogently explain why donors focus on "sustainable" projects with short timelines, how this creates uncertainty for brokers who must constantly be searching for the next funding stream, and how such short projects may appear to villagers as chaotic and impossible to predict. In short, the authors go beyond describing what altruists and brokers *do* to deciphering *why* they do it.

Readers looking for a prescriptive account of what works in AIDS interventions should look elsewhere, as *A Fraught Embrace* is primarily descriptive and its few specific prescriptions are reserved for the final few pages of the conclusion. They do, however, offer useful critiques throughout, while taking special care to distinguish between altruists' intentions and effects. For example, they write, "Many of these development professionals are immensely dedicated,

generous, respectful of their African employees and co-workers, and devoted to the goal of assisting Africans. But we have come to see many of the donor projects they dedicate their work to as wrongheaded, pointless, or even perverse in their effects" (p. xiv). While recognizing that altruism has contributed to much good, the authors are similarly unafraid to critique donor practices that are not evidence-based. They call for modest help and real commitment rather than transformation, because "[u]tterly unrealistic goals, such as transforming communities, are a sure recipe for being fooled by those you want to help, having to fool your funders by 'creating success,' and in the end, having to fool yourself" (p. 213).

While the book's specific topic is AIDS altruism, the critiques and lessons are applicable to development more generally and would benefit a variety of audiences. Students of development and others new to the field would benefit from the authors' approachable style, especially Chapter Three's discussion of the structure of global altruism and Chapter Ten's critique of success being measured through testimonials, monitoring and evaluation, and reports. It could also serve experienced donors and development professionals well by drawing attention to brokers' desires, incentives, and circumstances, such the reciprocal social connections that exert pressure on finances, the uncertainty caused by short project timelines, and the pressure to report projects as successful to satisfy altruists' fantasies and secure future funding. In short, *A Fraught Embrace* is a concise, insightful work, and its contribution extends well beyond its immediate context of AIDS altruism in Malawi.

Brad Crofford, *Independent Scholar*

Theodore Trefon. 2016. *Congo's Environmental Paradox: Potential and Predation in a Land of Plenty*. London: Zed Books. 194 pp.

Theodore Trefon examines and then provides an excellent overview of the major ecological resources in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) with concise socio-political analysis. The book is about the "political economy of natural resources in the DRC" (p. 1). It reveals the various land, forest, minerals, and environmental resources in the DRC. Reading this book is essential for understanding the many environmental paradoxes that exist in the DRC.

Why is the Congo Basin (most of it in the DRC) "home to the world's second-largest contiguous tropical rainforest after the Amazon" (p. 14), yet, these forest resources have not been harnessed to benefit the livelihood of Congolese? Why are there more than a thousand minerals (including 46 percent of the global supply of cobalt), yet it has not helped in alleviating "the dire poverty of Congo's 70 million people" (p. 16)? Why does the DRC have "abundant arable land and an ideal balance of rainfall and sunshine" —in fact, experts claim that the DRC can feed the whole of Africa—yet, the majority of its people are poor (p. 41)? Why does the DRC have "more than half of all Africa's lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands," yet "only a small percentage of Congolese have access to clean drinking water (p. 69)? "How can so many people living in a country with so much water be thirsty?" (p. 85). What is the destiny of the DRC within the context of the global development agenda? These are only a few of the many questions answered by the book with reliable data and in-depth analyses.

The book is organized into seven chapters. It contains informative text boxes, tables, figures, and maps. The first chapter explores why the DRC is "a land of plenty," and concludes

that the nation is “a rich country of poor people” (p. 2). The second chapter dwells on the mystery behind how the exploitation of DRC’s “forests of wealth” (p. 13) impoverishes the people and their environment. The chapter provides an insightful argument on how “forest governance is more of a political challenge than a set of technical issues that need fixing” in the DRC (p. 13). The third chapter focuses on the issue of food and agriculture. It presents the factors required for linking agriculture to other sectors and development priorities in the DRC. It also explores crucial matters relating to land tenure, farming, food imports, agricultural policies, urbanization, land grabbing, mining and social issues in the DRC. The fourth chapter reveals important issues concerning the water resources of the DRC. It uses figures to illustrate the potentials of water resources in the country. It analyzed the potentials of DRC’s water resources in the hydroelectricity, transportation, drinking, sanitation, and the energy and fishery sectors. The fifth chapter describes how oil resources in the DRC provide “plenty for some” and “nothing for many” (p. 97). It particularly dwelt on the “Virunga oil saga” (p. 112), which is known to be a very significant issue in the DRC’s environmental history. The sixth chapter describes the “rise, decline and renaissance” of mining (p. 119). Using tables, it provides the rank of DRC’s minerals in the currently known world reserve, as well as the DRC’s mineral deposits by province. The seventh chapter wraps up the entire content of the book, and finally, speculates the destiny of the DRC in a global context. Perhaps it could have dealt broadly on the destinies of DRC and Africa first and foremost before delving into speculations about the DRC and the rest of the world. This perspective of DRC’s environmental paradox is, unfortunately, loosely explored in the book.

Readers will find this book useful in different ways. It will be a valuable scholarly resource for students of all backgrounds and levels who are interested in natural/land/environment resource economics, planning/policy, politics, sociology, anthropology, development, and management (to mention a few). To those seeking a general introduction to natural resource politics in Africa, a good place to begin from is the Chapter One. Such readers will benefit from reading the book cover-to-cover. To those who are already versed in the subject, and who may be seeking for answers DRC questions, Chapters Two through Six provide information on relevant aspects of DRC’s environmental concerns.

Uchendu Eugene Chigbu, *Technical University of Munich*

Harry Villegas. 2017. *Cuba and Angola: The War for Freedom*. Edited by Martín Koppel and Mary-Alice Waters. New York: Pathfinder Press. 121 pp.

Representing a nationalist narrative, *Cuba and Angola* assesses Cuba’s contribution to the freedom not only of Angola but other African countries from imperialistic attacks. It is a first-hand account of Cuba’s military mission in Angola targeting “the political education of new generations of revolutionary combatants” (p. 22). This was one of Cuba’s largest and longest internationalist missions which spanned from 1975 to 1991. The mission witnessed over 425,000 Cuban volunteers serving in Angola culminating in both the freedom of Angola and the strengthening of the Cuban revolution. The internationalist mission was named Operation Carlota reflecting Cuba’s ties with Africa which dates back to the era of the slave trade. The

book reflects a history of a small third world country that heeded the call for help from other third world countries in spite of limited resources.

Written in a novel style, the book has seven themes (chapters) and an introduction by editor Mary-Alice Waters. The introduction provides a brief background of what the book is all about including the methodology used. The first two themes outline Cuba's presence and intervention in Angola, in terms of Cuba's internationalism which dates back to the 1960s. Third, Cuba's intervention in 1975, which witnessed the defeat of South Africa's first invasion, is discussed. The book's fourth theme centers on the battle of Cangamba, which was the first major battle between Cuba and the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) on the one hand, and the National Union for the Total Independence of (UNITA) backed by South Africa and the United States on the other. The experiences of Cangamba are explained in a way that would teach new revolutionaries steadfastness. The fifth theme discusses the battle of Cuito Cuanavale. It reflects that the victory of Cuba-MPLA was not only a victory against capitalism and imperialism but also represents the victory of the Cuban revolution. The defeat of South Africa during this battle also culminated in the independence of Namibia. Other international missions in Mozambique and Ethiopia which were an extension of Cuban internationalism and solidarity with Africa are discussed in the sixth theme. The final theme focuses on Fidel Castro and praises his leadership skills, which were very critical for the success of Cuba's international mission and Cuban revolution. It was out of these themes that the author and the editors of the book weave a story that resonates well with the title of the book. Situated within the nationalist historiography, Villegas' book persuasively rejects and demystifies the popular perception that Cuba acted as a pawn of Soviet Union in Angola and elsewhere in Africa.

Cuba and Angola is a product of a combination of secondary sources (books and memoirs) and several interviews carried out between 2009 and 2016 by the editors of the book with Harry Villegas "Pombo", the author who was a participant in the Angolan mission. While these sources form one of the key strengths of the book because they "proved indispensable for understanding political and military events and verifying names, dates, and other facts" (p. 22), they are also part of its weaknesses. This is because the book "does not contain powerful eyewitness accounts of moments of combat and decisive battles in Cangamba and Cuito Cuanavale among others" (p. 21). In the end, the book represents the official nationalist narrative. The voice and perceptions of the Angolans and even ordinary Cubans about Cuba's involvement in Angola are not represented. Consequently, Fidel Castro and what Cuba had done to Angola and other African countries is uncritically praised while the United States, South Africa, and UNITA are denigrated. At some points, Villegas exaggerates his facts, as for instance when he argues that people willingly joined the MPLA because they treated civilians with respect and some enemy soldiers would even surrender to them willingly since other forces committed atrocities (p. 46). This reviewer feels that it might not be logical to argue that it was only UNITA forces and their allies which were responsible for all the atrocities.

Overall, *Cuba and Angola* is a very fascinating book for those who are interested in studying Cuba's internationalist missions in Angola in particular and Africa in general. The book is indeed a welcome addition to the growing corpus of work on Cuba's internationalism and contribution to the freedom of Angola and other African countries fighting against imperialism and capitalism.

Perseverence Muguti, *University of Zimbabwe*

Tom Young (ed.). 2015. *Readings in the International Relations of Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 370 pp.

Africa is considered as the continent of the future. Young demographics, rising economies, rich minerals and resources base, and relatively stable polities have generated ever greater interest in African affairs. In the last two decades, efforts have been made by great powers like the United States and Russia and emerging powers like China and India to engage with Africa in a more purposeful and practical manner. In addition to the interest of major powers, multinational firms, non-governmental organizations, and inter-governmental entities have had a sizeable presence on the continent. Engagement of such a diverse set of actors, increased international interest, and emerging African scenarios in response require a more nuanced appreciation of the international relations of Africa. *Readings in the International Relations of Africa* provides an entry point for fostering such an understanding.

This volume by Tom Young as editor introduces readers to the complexity of the politics of the continent. The book is a collection of previously published writings spanning over a period of the last four decades. The oldest piece in the book was published in 1974 (about the genocide in Burundi), and the latest piece in 2014 (about the terror attacks in Algeria). Overall the book contains twenty-seven scholarly articles divided in eight sections. The book opens up with a discussion on "Sovereignty and Statehood" followed by the sections on the "Africa and the International Order," "New States and the Continental Order," "Africa and the Great Powers," and "Conflict, War, and Intervention". There is a separate section dealing with key development issues surrounding New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and also a section on the geopolitical engagement with Africa in the post Cold War era.

Even though colonial domination cast a long shadow over the African engagement with the post colonial world, the writings in the volume do not dwell too much on the colonial period of late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is more contemporary in nature. Africa experienced the Cold War competition between the superpowers. Major focal points of the cold war years like the crisis of Congo in the 1960's, civil war in Angola in the mid 1970's, communist revolution in Ethiopia and the overall politics in the horn of Africa in the 1980's, apartheid regime (since 1948) in South Africa and international response to the policies of the regime, and interventions in Chad and regional politics surrounding the civil war (in the early 1980's) are covered in the volume. In terms of the post Cold War crises, Somalia and Congo find sufficient space in the book but Rwanda and Darfur do not.

Developmental issues of the continent have always been severe and needed concerted efforts by international agencies. Questions regarding Africa's development provide an opening to the various issues of the political economy of the continent and the world. Issues like the

nature and extent of international aid, policies of African regimes to utilize available aid, the relationship between donor and recipient states, role of international agencies like World Bank in facilitating developmental efforts, the nature of African state, and conditions imposed by donors for democratization and governance spring up in the debate about Africa's development. They find adequate representation in the volume.

Problems of Africa's development are not limited to the aid efforts of international agencies. It rather offers us a window to look upon the international relations of Africa using aid as a tool of engagement. Involvement of colonial powers like Britain and France, emerging powers like India and China, and the role of regional powers like Nigeria and South Africa assume importance in this context. The volume covers in detail British aid policies, overall French policies towards the continent, and also the emerging Chinese approach towards engaging with Africa. Chinese engagement with Africa opens up space for the discussion on the validity and utility of existing theoretical approaches of International Relations (IR) to explain the relationship.

The volume includes writings that discuss the emergence of the African Union and how foreign policies of regional actors like Nigeria and South Africa played a part in it. It touches upon the evolution of NEPAD as a development strategy in the new millennium and debates about the development problems of Africa in the new millennium. In terms of shortfalls of the volume, omission of any discussion on the processes of regionalization and the role of regional organizations like ECOWAS and EAC in the emerging African political milieu could be noted. To sum up, even taking limitations into account, it could be argued that the book provides an excellent introduction to understand the international relations of Africa.

Sankalp Gurjar, *South Asian University*