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# African Studies Quarterly

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# Inside the Land Occupations in Bindura District, Zimbabwe

KIRK HELLIKER and SANDRA BHATASARA

**Abstract:** Zimbabwe witnessed nationwide occupations of white commercial farms and other agricultural landholdings from the early months of 2000. At the helm of these land occupations were ex-guerrilla fighters (or war veterans) who were aggrieved by the slow pace of land reform since independence in 1980. Based on numerous case studies, significant literature exists about the Zimbabwean state's fast track land reform which soon followed the occupations, including its effects on agrarian restructuring, agricultural production, and on-farm livelihoods. However, focused studies of the actual occupations are rare, with scholarly commentary on the character of the occupations often not based on solid empirical research. In this context, the dominant scholarly (and popular) view is that the land occupations were the brainchild of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party. While political restructuring regularly has a top-down thrust to it, this prevailing view treats the occupations and occupiers instrumentally, as mere objects manipulated by powerful groups, a criticism raised by a small minority of Zimbabwean scholars. By way of an autonomist commoning perspective, we seek to restore the presence of occupiers, including ordinary men and women, onto the historical stage through a case study of occupations in Bindura District in Mashonaland Central Province. By looking inside these occupations, we conclude that everyday concerns, challenges, and agency, rooted in historical and contemporary experiences, intersected with a national project around land and gelled into diverse localised mobilisation in occupying farms. At the same time, we conclude that to consider the occupations as a commoning movement is problematic.

## Introduction

From the early months of the year 2000, Zimbabwe witnessed nationwide occupations of white commercial farms and other agricultural landholdings. At the helm of these land occupations were ex-guerrilla fighters (or war veterans) who were aggrieved by the slow pace of land reform since independence in 1980. These land occupations led to the state's fast track land reform programme, implemented from the latter half of 2000. Based on numerous case and comparative studies, significant literature exists about the fast track programme including its effects on agrarian restructuring, forms and levels of agricultural production and on-farm and

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<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v18/v18i1a1.pdf>

off-farm livelihoods.<sup>1</sup> Empirical studies of the actual occupations though are rare, with scholarly commentary on the character of the occupations often not based on solid fieldwork-based research.

In this context, the dominant scholarly (and popular) view is that the land occupations were the brainchild of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party, in a ploy to mobilise support for its waning legitimacy in the face of the rising opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).<sup>2</sup> While political restructuring regularly has a top-down thrust to it, this prevailing view treats the occupations and occupiers instrumentally, as mere objects manipulated by powerful groups, a criticism which the late Sam Moyo made consistently in offering a more de-centralized understanding of the land occupations.<sup>3</sup> From our perspective, Moyo’s account of the land occupations is more faithful to actual events than the top-down perspective when it comes to considering the form and content of the occupations, though we raise serious concerns about his analysis.

This article involves a case study of the fast track land occupations in Bindura District located in Mashonaland Central Province. In seeking to restore the agency of the land occupiers, we view the occupations in Bindura from the inside. In doing so, we offer an innovative examination by critically appraising the occupations from an autonomist commoning perspective informed by the work of John Holloway and Peter Linebaugh.<sup>4</sup>

### **Research Site and Fieldwork**

This article is based on qualitative research carried out in Bindura District between May and June 2016. The capital of Bindura District, namely Bindura town, is situated 89 kilometres northeast of Harare in Mashonaland Central Province. The district currently has twenty-one wards including nine communal wards, with the rest consisting of old resettlement areas from the 1980s, fast track resettlement areas, and a few remaining (pre-fast track) commercial farms.

Bindura District shares boundaries with Mazowe, Mt. Darwin, and Shamva Districts. We conducted fieldwork on land occupations in Shamva in 2015 and, during this earlier research, consistent reference was made to farms in Bindura (for example, Matepatepa) by the Shamva occupiers. A number of people from Bushu communal lands and other areas in Shamva had occupied farms in Bindura, particularly those close to the boundary shared by the two districts. This realization of inter-district occupations informed the selection of Bindura District as a study site. In addition, Bindura is the administrative capital of Mashonaland Central Province and provincial leaders of the national war veterans’ association (who actively participated in district level occupations) were based there.

The fieldwork for the Bindura occupations took place in five wards. Ward 2 borders Madziwa communal area and Mt. Darwin District, Ward 5 is situated in Bindura North, Ward 7 runs along the Shamva District boundary, Ward 19 borders Mazowe District and Chiweshe communal lands, and Ward 21 is located in Bindura South and borders Mazowe District. For the exact location of the wards, see Figure 1. Access to the district was negotiated with the Provincial Administrator for Mashonaland Central in Bindura town and the Rural District Council at Manhenga.

**Figure 1: Case Study Sites in Bindura District**

Source:<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/zimbabwe/informographic/bindura-district-map>

Regarding sampling, the research adopted a purposive sampling technique. Using this technique, we selected wards bordering communal areas and wards with people who had moved from Shamva District to occupy land in Bindura. We also sought to ensure that research sites were selected in diverse parts (or wards) of the district. The availability of the Councilor also determined the particular research sites that were selected. The research was qualitative in character in line with the importance of hearing the voices and collective experiences of those who participated in the occupations. The fieldwork was based on extended—in some cases, life history—interviews (including with key informants) and focus group discussions with war veterans, farm occupiers, and former farm workers (who lived through the occupations).

To select the research participants, the fieldwork relied on referrals and snowballing. Participants for focus group discussions were selected with the assistance of ward councilors who knew communal farmers, war veterans, and farm workers who had participated in the occupations. Because women's voices are often muted in patriarchal settings, focus group discussions for men and women were conducted separately. The focus group discussions were facilitated by a female Zimbabwean researcher (with women) and a male Zimbabwean researcher (with men).

More specifically, the study involved key informant interviews with two ward councilors and life history interviews with five war veterans and four (former) farm workers. As well, six focus group discussions which varied in size from seven to fifteen were conducted, with mostly

farm occupiers. The focus group discussions consisted of people of various ages, occupational backgrounds, marital statuses, and origins (such as ethnicity, clan and pre-fast track place of residence). Most of the occupiers originated from communal lands. At Saimoona Estates in Ward 21, a number of farm occupiers in the focus group discussions were based in Bindura town before the occupations. Some occupiers were also former members of the civil service such as soldiers, teachers, and police officers based in towns. They were thus not full-time occupiers as they would come to the farms during weekends to ensure that their names were maintained on the registers kept at the occupied farms.

At Chenenga farm in Ward 2, the wife of a former farm manager, the wife of a former soldier, and former farmers from Bushu communal area participated in the female focus group discussion. At Katanya farm in Matepatepa, the male focus group discussion comprised the ward councilor, war veterans, a former member of the ZANU-PF Central Committee, a former police officer, and former farm workers (such as a mechanic and driver). At Chipadze farm, the female focus group discussion was composed of the female ward councilor, married women, divorcees, unmarried women (with children), and widows.

To ensure data validity, we used a methodology (qualitative) that was in line with the objective of the study and its research questions. As well, data validity was enhanced by triangulating qualitative methods for data collection. To also maximize validity, follow-up life history interviews were conducted with some respondents (for example, war veterans) who had also participated in focus group discussions. Some of the war veterans enthusiastically provided their war autobiographies and this was critical in validating some of the data collected and in understanding their motives and strategies during the land occupations.

### **An Autonomist Commoning Perspective**

We analyze the land occupations in Bindura from what we call an “autonomist commoning” perspective. This perspective offers a fundamental criticism of the modern state form and argues that significant social transformation is not possible in-and-through the state, as the state (along with ruling parties) seeks typically to demobilize, co-opt, and institutionalize forces for radical change and thereby stabilize—or at best reform—the existing social order.<sup>5</sup> It thus questions the possibilities of state-centric change and stresses the importance of building alternative communities from the ground-up in a way which is not subordinate to the logics and rationalities of the state (and capital).<sup>6</sup> From this perspective, commoning invariably involves reasserting and reinvigorating locally-based autonomous processes and normally in an emergent rather than designed manner.

A politics of commoning is “not mediated by the State or capital.”<sup>7</sup> For instance, the public space, which is not to be confused with the (autonomous) commons, is a space “given from a certain [state] authority to the public under specific conditions that ultimately affirm the authority’s legitimacy.”<sup>8</sup> Because of this, radically different forms of authority and sociality would be associated with the commons, including “self-established rules, self-determination, self-organization and self-regulating practices.”<sup>9</sup>

This does not mean that the commons-as-process exists outside the presence and clutches of state and capital as “it” may simultaneously entail practices within, against and beyond the logic and hierarchies of state and capital. For example, “the realm of the common emerges in a

constant confrontation with state-controlled ‘authorized’ public space.”<sup>10</sup> Indeed, “the commons” is often domesticated, institutionalized, incorporated, and subdued by hegemonic regimes of authority, and repressed if the necessity arises. Further, many tensions exist within a commoning movement and this leads regularly to practices of exclusion and subordination.<sup>11</sup> Certain groups within a commoning movement may be incorporated into “it” in a subordinate fashion (including women) while others (even marginalized groups in society) may simply be excluded because they are seen as a threat.<sup>12</sup>

We use these thoughts on autonomist commoning in examining, critically, the land occupations in Bindura. First though we consider the existing literature on the fast track land occupations in Zimbabwe so as to position our perspective more clearly.

### **Land Occupations in Zimbabwe**

There are two broad views on the land occupations in Zimbabwe. The dominant perspective, noted earlier, argues that the occupiers acted at the behest of the ruling party. In February 2000, a national referendum was held around revisions to the constitution, including strengthening the powers of the executive president and more radical forms of land redistribution. The ruling party called on its supporters to vote “yes” while the opposition party (the MDC) campaigned for a “no” vote. In the end, the constitutional revision was rejected. This marked the first major defeat for the ruling party since independence and, with parliamentary elections taking place in June 2000, the dominant view claims that ZANU-PF sought to bolster its support amongst the rural electorate by ensuring the immediate invasion and takeover of white commercial farmlands.<sup>13</sup> Besides mobilizing rural support for ZANU-PF among communal farmers, the land occupations also became a violent means to demobilize commercial farmers and their workers from supporting the rising MDC.<sup>14</sup> Through this lens, the post-referendum land “invasions” are understood as an authoritarian state-led political campaign designed to crush opposition and bolster the ruling party’s diminishing support.<sup>15</sup>

The other view claims that the land occupations took place in large part independently of ZANU-PF, and that the occupations were not centrally coordinated but subject to significant forms of decentralized mobilization and organization, particularly by war veterans whose relationship to the ruling party was characterized by overt tensions during the latter half of the 1990s.<sup>16</sup> The land occupiers did not only include war veterans but incorporated diverse groupings with a range of motivations which are irreducible to the machinations of the ruling party.<sup>17</sup> For Sadomba, the ruling party and state had in effect negated the aspirations of the liberation struggle, as expressed symbolically and concretely in terms of failing to reverse a century-old grievance over unequal colonial land ownership structures.<sup>18</sup> Hence, for Moyo, the occupations meant to address the unresolved land question and were a form of protest against the ZANU-PF government.<sup>19</sup> The land occupations were thus the culmination of a process that had been brewing and unfolding beneath the surface since 1980 to address a nagging political question.<sup>20</sup>

For Moyo in particular, the situation in the year 2000 was marked by a near revolutionary situation, with war veterans establishing embryonic power centers on occupied farms.<sup>21</sup> These local centers of authority took the form of what became known as base camps established on

each farm and led by war veterans.<sup>22</sup> In certain cases, occupiers vigorously defended their occupations not only against white commercial farmers but also against state and ruling party intrusion. However, the state became increasingly involved in supporting the occupations (and in eventually expropriating land) from mid-2000, and a “radicalized state” pursuing radical agrarian reform—according to Moyo—formed temporarily.<sup>23</sup> Thus, through the fast track programme, the Zimbabwean state legitimized and protected the occupiers and their farm-based centers of power. But, crucially, it also effectively subdued the occupations, dampened the revolutionary fervour, and stabilised the situation. In the end, Moyo argues for the potential of state-centric radical change: “[T]he war veterans did not go far enough, either within the state, to guarantee the momentum and working class character of the revolutionary situation, or outside it, to prepare the ground for a sustained struggle against the reassertion of the black bourgeoisie [under fast track].”<sup>24</sup> Moyo does not wholly romanticize the occupations but he does tend to overplay implicitly the existence of commoning impulses in the occupations, such that any regressive character embedded in the land events of the year 2000 is reduced primarily to the state’s institutionalization of the occupations.

The occupations entailed a rejection of market-led land reform (which prevailed until the year 2000) and an undermining of the racially-based private property regime dominating the agrarian landscape in Zimbabwe. This undermining of colonial land enclosures signifies a commoning tendency in the occupations. As a self-provisioning land redistribution programme, the occupations restructured agrarian spaces on a strictly racial basis (but eventually with wide-ranging implications for the agrarian class structure). The occupations did not entail an overtly anti-patriarchal movement. Male war veterans were particularly prominent during the occupation process and women, broadly speaking, played subordinate roles including social reproduction activities such as cooking.<sup>25</sup>

Farm labourers (and their families) were in large part absent (or even explicitly excluded) from the occupations. By the year 2000, labourers were still structurally located in a highly subservient and dependent relationship vis-à-vis white farmers.<sup>26</sup> Added to this was the close relationship established between white farmers and the MDC, such that defending the occupations against white farmers and the machinations of the MDC implied suspicion by occupiers about the loyalties of farm workers. Farm occupiers felt compelled to hold all-night vigils (*pungwes*) with farm labourers in seeking to propagate and justify the reasoning behind the occupations, with these rallies regularly entailing tactics of intimidation.<sup>27</sup>

In examining the land occupations in Bindura District, we make no sweeping claims to the effect that the character of these occupations is typical of all other fast track occupations nationally. There was significant variation across the occupations, even at times within districts, including with regard to why a particular farm was occupied. Thus, in many cases, occupiers sought to reclaim a specific tract of land because of its ancestral significance (including the presence of shrines and graves on the land). In other cases, a specific farm was targeted for occupation because of the way in which the white farmer treated local people. Variations also existed in relation to the extent to which women were subordinated and farm labourers excluded, and the extent of involvement of local ruling party and state personnel (for example, the police and army) in the occupations.

This diversity exemplifies the fact that there was no central coordination of the land occupations, certainly not by the ruling party or state but not even by the Zimbabwe National War Veterans' Association (ZNVVA). There were calls by ZNVVA nationally to occupy farms and there is evidence of significant mobilization by local ZNVVA structures. But the playing out of specific land occupations was subject to local conditions and forces which were not structured in an unmediated and direct manner by national politics and processes.

### **Organization of the Land Occupations in Bindura**

There are no focused studies on the land occupation movement in Bindura District. The work by Sadomba is the most relevant, as he touches on Matepatepa in Bindura District along with Mazowe (which borders Bindura) and Nyabira (bordering Mazowe) in Mashonaland West Province.<sup>28</sup> By selecting a number of wards in different parts of Bindura District for our study (including Ward 2 in Matepatepa), we are not claiming that the occupations were in any way or necessarily organized or coordinated within wards or at ward level. In fact, the delineation of today's wards is different than they were in the year 2000. Overall, the forms and levels of organization of the occupations varied considerably within wards and the district more broadly such that any coordination of occupations was quite localized.

There were cases of significant levels of organization just beyond the borders of Bindura District. In Mazowe, for example, the well-structured Nyabira-Mazowe War Veterans' Association—formed in February 2000—performed a key coordinating function for land occupations in Nyabira and Mazowe.<sup>29</sup> Both Nyabira and Mazowe are closer to Harare than to communal areas (where many war veterans resided) so that war veterans from Harare led the occupations there. Many of the Harare war veterans would only come to the farms on weekends because they worked full-time, but they would ensure that there was a sufficient occupying force. The same was the case for some war veterans based in Bindura town with reference to the occupations in Bindura District.<sup>30</sup>

In Bindura District, there was some evidence of localized (cross-farm) coordination but this was fluid and adaptable and not highly structured as in the case of Nyabira-Mazowe. In the main, the occupations in Bindura District were led by war veterans. The role of war veterans included providing leadership and mobilizing people (often in communal areas), especially by drawing lessons from their involvement in the guerrilla struggle and explicitly making it clear that the land issue forced them to join the war and still needed to be resolved. As noted by Councilor Zanamwe: "As you may ... be aware, the war of liberation was all about repossessing our stolen land and, in 2000, the time was now ripe for us to take over the farms."<sup>31</sup> A war veteran added that "[w]e joined the occupations in fulfillment of our desire to take over the land that had been taken by our enemies over the past years."<sup>32</sup>

At times, war veterans were sent to particular areas where a shortage of veterans existed. Sadomba, as a war veteran and land occupier, recalls attending a meeting in Glendale in early 2000 in which a request was made for war veteran reinforcements in Matepatepa, with war veterans from Mt. Darwin soon moving into the area.<sup>33</sup> But some farms in Matepatepa, close to Chiweshe communal lands, were occupied by communal farmers without any war veteran



involvement. Chief Negomo in Chiweshe apparently supported these occupations, if only as a way of decongesting the communal area.

In Bindura District, occupations took on different forms, with occupations being relatively spontaneous or more organized depending on locality. In Ward 7, occupiers appeared to have settled in the following pre-set order: Chipadze, Koodoo Vlei, Beacon Hill, Chiwaridzo, and then eventually Avillion farm. Avillion was occupied last because part of it was occupied and farmed already by black farmers from the 1980s. In Ward 5, the first farm to be occupied in February 2000 was Kanjinga. After this farm, there was no particular order followed. New occupations emerged in the context of prevailing circumstances such as the existence of too many occupiers on a particular farm, and hence some occupiers needed to move elsewhere. For instance, in Ward 5, when war veterans heading the base camp at Kanjinga realized that there were more people present than the farm could accommodate, some people were moved to occupy Chenenga. Occupiers admitted that there was confusion, disorder and even conflicts and displacements during the occupations, with war veterans and other occupiers displacing each other.

Women occupiers at Chenenga therefore indicated that they were once displaced to Munzi farm and, when they thought they had settled, they were forced to move back to Chenenga. War veteran Musangomuneyi also talked about his conflict with war veteran Muropa who wanted him to move from Kanjinga farm in Bindura to Mhokore in Shamva. In Ward 7, some of the occupiers admitted that they attacked fellow occupiers and burnt their temporary shelters so that they could displace them as they were aligned to former state vice-president, now opposition party leader, Joyce Mujuru. The fluid character of the occupations in Bindura District was also somewhat different to the case in Shamva District, where occupations involved a district-wide coordinating committee led by war veterans and tended to follow a clearer sequence.<sup>34</sup>

This is not to argue of course that farm occupiers had no reason for occupying certain farms as opposed to others. Certainly, closeness to communal areas meant a greater likelihood of occupation. Kanjinga in Ward 5 for example was occupied for this reason. But the cruelty of particular white farmers, and the local reputation of farmers more broadly, was also a factor. One female occupier at Chenenga, who previously lived in a communal area, thus spoke about being fined for collecting wood on the nearby commercial farm. In Ward 7, Chipadze was occupied by people from Chipadze clan because they claimed it was their ancestral land. In this way, autochthonous claims also were of some significance. But war veterans still played a part in these cases, such as Nhunzva and Tito Pela at the Chipadze farm base.

Regarding how the occupations began, it was generally argued that several meetings were held by war veterans, normally in communal areas, where people were informed about the intention to occupy land. One occupier narrated how the occupations started: "The war veterans and all other stakeholders ... sat down and discussed the way forward. It was then agreed to approach the white farmers and advise them verbally, without any violence, that we were going to take over our land."<sup>35</sup>

While the occupations were largely initiated and mobilized—by war veterans—through meetings, word about the occupations was also spread by way of the radio, church meetings, and other informal gatherings and announcements. The case of Sirewo Chipadze from the

Chipadze clan stood out as he mobilized his kinspeople when occupying Chipadze farm. He moved to and around several places (such as Bushu, Madziwa and Murewa) where Chipadze kinspeople had settled after they had been displaced originally from their ancestral lands, and where they had only limited access to land.

While reactions of white farmers to the occupations varied across the district, there was significant resistance by many farmers, as an occupier from Chenenga farm highlights:

The white farmers did not take that [the occupations] well and they tried to fight us off the farms. The MDC supporters also joined in the fighting [supporting the farmers] and urged us to go back to our rural homes. They accused us of occupying the farm unlawfully. We lost a lot of our property during that time, and some of our belongings were burnt.<sup>36</sup>

Others spoke about how farmers would fire their guns into the air, or dump rotten fruit near the base camp of the occupiers, to discourage their ongoing stay. There were therefore various unpleasant encounters with white farmers during the occupations. Accusations were made against some white farmers that they would “cook up” stories (such as occupiers beating up school teachers) so that the occupiers would be arrested by the police for criminal acts. Conflict with farm labourers were also prevalent, with the white farmers sometimes instigating their labourers against the occupiers. This though reflected also a tactical weakness on the part of the occupiers. Unlike in Nyabira, war veterans in Mazowe and Matepatepa only realised months into the occupations the need to mobilize farm labourers in making the occupations more effective.<sup>37</sup>

At first, white farmers expected the occupations to be a passing phase and were quite adamant in resisting the occupations without fear of reprisals from the ruling party and state, and they often called the police to evict the occupiers. In being intimidated by white farmers and their labourers, some occupiers in Bindura District returned to their communal homes. When the occupations began, the initial response from the ruling party was in fact to label the occupiers as invaders and to have them evicted and even arrested. For instance, war veteran Jones Musangomunei emphasized: “Some of our [state] ministers supported the white farmers when the occupations started... Minister Msika is one of those who sent police to the farms so as to force us out of the farms.”<sup>38</sup> But, with support for the occupations (particularly from the state president) becoming increasingly clear even before the announcement of fast track, white farmers began to realize that the occupiers were there to stay, including with the tacit support of local state and ruling party personnel. In the case of Bindura District, the presence of the ruling party’s national political commissar (Border Gezi) in the area, as governor for Mashonaland Central Province, was significant in that he (in his personal capacity) often provided material support to the occupiers.

Violence by occupiers did take place, though they claim that this was a reaction to farmer-instigated violence. Otherwise, the sheer presence of occupiers and their tactics of intimidation were the weapons often deployed to force farmers off their land. For instance, occupiers were involved in singing, dancing and beating drums on the farms, and normally just outside the farmer’s main homestead, day and night. War veteran Jones Musangomuneyi said:

We would ... camp at his gate and start singing and playing our drums. The wives of these farmers got irritated by the noise and we knew they would be the first to leave. Indeed, that's what happened. They were the first to leave. The men braved it and tried to stay on until they eventually gave up and left.<sup>39</sup>

This loud presence then was supposed to constantly annoy farmers, to strike fear into their families, and to ensure that farmers left the farm "voluntarily."

When a farm was occupied, war veterans would immediately go and talk to the farmer and request (or demand) a map of the farm, in part to understand the layout of the land and to identify a location for their base camp to signal their presence on the farm. It was claimed that the war veterans were able to discern if the map was an original one or an adulterated and fabricated photocopy. In the meantime, as the war veterans talked to the farmer, the occupiers would always remain at a distance. This was followed by the immediate establishment of a base, or base camp, on the occupied farm. The bases were led by a base commander (normally a male war veteran), who was supported by a team of mainly war veterans, with positions such as chief of security, secretary, and treasurer. Registers were usually kept at the bases to indicate the name of the occupiers and their interest in acquiring land. There were also *pungwes* that were conducted to boost the morale of the occupiers, as well as to mobilize farm workers who might resist the occupations.

In the meantime, occupiers had to organize accommodation and to survive. The living conditions in the bases were at times challenging, including living in tents during heavy rains or even sleeping on the ground without any accommodation. They sought to grow their own vegetables, were sometimes donated cabbages and mealie meal by sympathetic black farmers in the area, or even went back to their communal area to replenish their food supply. Coming into the June 2000 parliamentary election, most occupiers were not registered in the area of the farm they occupied, so they had to return home temporarily to vote. War veterans ensured though that there was a sufficient occupying force at all times. Indeed, it was normal for occupiers who were on farms close to their communal area to spend time between the two places. This was notable with women occupiers, who sometimes left their children at home in the communal area in the care of relatives and needed to check on their well-being.

Finally, the land occupations nation-wide were supposedly guided by ancestral spirits. This is particularly significant for the Bindura District and surrounding districts. The medium of the spirit of the original Nehanda during the anti-colonial rebellion in the late 1800s was a woman named Charwe, who was born in the Mazowe Valley. The discursive construction of Charwe as a warrior against colonial rule became important during the guerrilla-nationalist struggles against Rhodesian rule in the 1970s. Mediums of Charwe arose in and around Mazowe after independence in 1980, such that the memory of Charwe remained alive "among her people in the Mazowe".<sup>40</sup> The occupations, as an awakening call to repossess land expropriated during the late 1800s, were seen as fulfilling Charwe's clarion call of "my bones shall arise," as manifested in the messages of local spirit mediums. These include the spirit mediums in Madziwa and the spirit of Chapoin Ward 5. Various rituals were conducted by mediums in the midst of the occupations, supposedly to strengthen the occupiers and weaken the resolve of white farmers.<sup>41</sup>

The occupations in Bindura District were in large part de-centralized with no clear evidence of pre-planned and ongoing coordination by war veterans across a range of farms. War veterans did mobilize communal farmers to occupy farms and they ensured that there was a base camp established on each farm. But there was also considerable self-initiative on the part of occupiers in moving onto a particular farm. The relationship between the state (and ruling party) and occupiers was marked by uncertainty, ambiguity and fluidity, with the occupiers not always guaranteed of state support and protection.

### **Memories and Motivations**

The land occupiers in Bindura were diverse in terms of their socio-historical backgrounds. Male war veterans were present on all the farms studied. And many of these war veterans, in recounting their guerrilla days, clearly were familiar with the area as it was their zone of military operation during the 1970s, with many meeting for the first time again during the occupations. Ordinary men and women as well as youth also participated and occupied the farms. What is even more interesting is that some farm workers facilitated and supported the land occupations. The presence of such diverse actors echoes the argument by Sadomba that the land occupations in certain instances became quite inclusive.<sup>42</sup> Certainly, both rural and urban dwellers were present in the Bindura occupations, with urban occupiers more prominent at farms, such as Saimoona Estates, close to Bindura town. Occupiers came from areas as far away as Masvingo, Bulawayo, Murewa, Seke, Dotito, and Uzumba. Most occupiers however came from surrounding areas such as Shamva, Chiweshe, Madziwa, and Bushu, mainly due to close proximity to the farms and strong ancestral ties to land dispossessed under colonial rule.

One of the critical questions which remains unresolved, and is particularly contentious, is why the land occupations took place at the time they did. In contrast to the dominant scholarly view on this matter, the occupiers in Bindura District deny that they acted at the behest of the ruling party. War veteran Musangomunei for example highlighted the political distance which existed between the ruling party and war veterans leading up to the referendum and occupations. He clearly stated that: "During the war of liberation, our ZANU-PF leaders had promised us office jobs, a decent way of living, with plenty of food for us and our families. Sadly all these promises were not fulfilled.... [T]hey had forgotten all about us as they were now comfortable and in power."<sup>43</sup> War veterans referred to the rejection of the new constitution in the referendum as the spark which ignited the occupations, without being ordered by the President to occupy land. In the end, the "no" vote in the referendum meant the denial of more radical land reform—including land expropriation without compensation—as stipulated in the draft constitution. In the eyes of the war veterans, they had lost once again, in the same manner that they had lost during independence negotiations at the Lancaster House Conference in 1979.

Land was central to the national liberation struggle, including the guerrilla war in the 1970s. But the narratives of ordinary occupiers in the district speak to multiple grievances and motivations for joining the land occupations, with current maladies hopefully being addressed and rectified through the occupations. Occupiers were aggrieved by various encounters with the colonial system and nearby white farmers (before and after independence), including worker exploitation, racism, and denial of personal liberties. War incarcerations during the

1970s, loss of land, cattle and other wealth, long working hours, *chibharo* (forced labour), and curtailed freedom of movement were all part of local memories. One occupier at Chipadze farm narrated that “[m]y grandfather told me that our forefathers were chased away from Bindura by the white people in 1918. They were forcibly moved to Madeira, onto a very small piece of land. Others were relocated to the Bushu area, Murewa, Chiweshe and Musana.”<sup>44</sup> Placement in “keeps” (protected villages to prevent villagers from supporting the guerrillas during the war) were also cited. In Matepatepa, occupiers referred to the famous “Keep 10” in Madziwa where black people had faced severe ill-treatment. For young men, growing up in protected villages was one of the most alienating and inhumane experiences during the armed struggle. One male occupier at Chipadze described “being harassed to unimaginable proportions when we were at these keeps.”<sup>45</sup>

Motivations for occupying land had gender connotations as well, which highlights the importance of identity-based experiences in making sense of the occupations: “As women within the clan, we faced a lot of problems, and these forced us to come here. It was difficult to be women married in a big [polygamous] family. If there were many sons, it meant many daughters-in-law and all of us in one homestead.”<sup>46</sup> In wanting to lead a different life, another female occupier at Chipadze farm stressed that she “wanted freedom and independence from my family so as to have a home I call my own where people can visit me.”<sup>47</sup> The issue of *chipari* (polygamy) in communal areas, which is intimated in these two quotations, drove many women to occupy farms. Those married into polygamous families ended up with small plots of land in communal areas to call their own and the emerging occupations provided the basis of escape from very troublesome and stressful arrangements.

Some men from communal areas left their wives behind to care for the communal homestead. Women at times though took the initiative in joining the land occupations. Many of the women had husbands working elsewhere when the occupations took place. As one woman put it: “When we first heard about the land occupations in Chipadze, my husband was still working. I am the one who came and registered for the land. My husband only got to know about this when he came back home at the end of the month.”<sup>48</sup> Even when the husband was present, some women seized on the possible opportunities arising from the occupations: “My husband was initially doubtful of the occupations. I had to push and convince him that the land was going to benefit us and our children. I told him if the occupations failed, we would have at least tried.”<sup>49</sup>

Hence, whatever the ostensible objective of the land occupations, deeply-felt historical memories and contemporary grievances were pervasive amongst the occupiers. These highly localized memories and motives made communal farmers susceptible to the national call by the ZNWVA to occupy farms and to the mobilization activities of war veterans in Bindura District. However, with reference to farm workers and women, the land occupations were in large part characterized by forms of exclusion and subordination.

### **Farm Workers and Women**

Farm workers occupied an intercalary position during the occupations. Occupiers observed that farm workers were generally against the occupations, though some labourers did participate because of their marginalized and exploited status on white commercial farms (including

workers at Chenenga farm in Ward 5 and Ashcot farm in Matepatempa). One Ashcot worker in Matepatempa spoke about his experience: “My boss did not allow us to participate in the land invasions, so I would sneak out at night and cycle to join the group led by war veteran Muchenje.”<sup>50</sup> There was an unusual arrangement in Matepatempa along the border with Chiweshe communal area, in which farm labourers with roots in this area worked undercover by assisting the occupiers in providing information about farm layouts and farmer presence as well as necessities such as food.<sup>51</sup> In the main, though, the evidence from Bindura indicates that occupiers engaged in forms of intimidation against assumed MDC-linked farm labourers (including through *pungwes*) who were regarded as anti-land reform traitors, and this took place increasingly as the June 2000 national elections approached. At Chipadze farm, female occupiers stated that “[o]n one of the evenings, some of our [MDC] deserters were beaten up and urged to come back the following day and rejoin the ruling party and surrender their MDC regalia.”<sup>52</sup>

In the case of women, there was evidence of women partially breaking out of the patriarchal mould. Thus, at some farms in Matepatempa, women participated in security patrols undertaken at the farms and in pegging the plots. Further, the base camp secretary at Koodoo Vlei was a woman, and she was involved in integrating new occupiers into base-life and ensuring food supplies. Another woman was also later selected as the treasurer and, with the secretary, she collected and registered cash donations.<sup>53</sup> In this gendered view, women (as caregivers at home or in the community) were seen—quite justifiably—as more responsible than men as treasurers, who would often use the cash donations for their own pleasures. Patriarchal discourses about women, including their moral character and sexuality, prevailed on the occupied farms. Women, particularly widows and divorcees, were sometimes accused of prostitution or seeking illicit love affairs when they joined the occupations. Married women, if their husbands were away or did not join them, were accused likewise. Women tended to be subordinated to the dictates of patriarchy during the occupations, including undertaking all the domestic chores at the base camps. Even the singing and dancing was done primarily by women and it was designed to boost the morale and militancy of the male occupiers.

Broadly, the failure of the occupiers to incorporate farm labourers and their families into the occupation process, as well as the subordinate inclusion of women, raises serious doubts about the presence of inclusive and leveling tendencies within the land occupations as a commoning movement. In this sense, we differ from the claims by Moyo as he tends to romanticize the character of the occupations.

## Conclusion

In examining the Bindura occupations from an autonomist commoning perspective, the occupations shared many similarities to the land occupations in Zimbabwe more broadly. More specifically, the nation-wide occupations were marked by internal tensions and ambiguities. On the one hand, the occupations involved an anti-enclosure movement in taking over farms marked by the private property regime and they had an anti-state moment in the sense that the occupiers—in seizing land—were acting against a post-colonial state which had failed to address the nagging colonial land question. On the other hand, the occupiers—mainly from

communal areas—failed in the most part to incorporate farm labourers into the occupation movement if only because they felt troubled by labourers’ close proximity to, and dependence upon, white commercial farmers particularly in the context of heightened political party tensions. Additionally, communal women were incorporated into the occupation movements in a subordinate and gendered position. However, there were some countervailing tendencies to these processes of exclusion and subordination as evidenced in the Bindura occupations.

In the end, the anti-state position of the occupiers was not in any genuine sense an (in-principle) anti-statist moment, which meant that the war veteran leaders were prepared to engage tactically with the state during the occupations, including receiving police protection and material resources from state and ruling party personnel. For this reason, the occupations became easily subsumed under the state’s fast track land reform programme. In other words, the occupiers expressed a deep dissatisfaction with the state’s incapacity to bring about radical land reform without, however, challenging the state and its modalities of operation. Because of this, the “autonomist character” of the occupations is questionable. They may have had an institutional autonomy vis-à-vis the state but they did not go against the manner in which the state institutes and reproduces modalities of hierarchy, exclusion, and subordination. Thus, while local forms of authority and solidarity existed at the base camps on the occupied farms, there was no real attempt to bring about a new kind of sociality in terms of everyday practices, which is exemplified most clearly in the maintenance of patriarchal arrangements around social reproduction activities. Of course, it might be argued that, even if the occupiers were inclined to undercut these and other such arrangements, there was simply no time to do so given the speed at which the state moved in under the fast track programme. But the absence of any clear emerging signs of reconfiguring everyday practices questions likewise the “commoning character” of the occupations.

## Notes

1 Scoones et al. 2010; Matondi 2012.

2 Hammar and Raftopoulos 2003; Selby 2006.

3 Moyo and Yeros 2005.

4 Holloway 2010; Linebaugh 2008.

5 Holloway 2010.

6 Federici 2012; Linebaugh 2008.

7 Thorburn 2012, p. 254.

8 Stavrides 2012 p. 587.

9 Bohm et al. 2008, p. 6.

10 Stavrides 2012, p. 594.

11 Jeffrey et al. 2012.

12 de Angelis 2014.

13 Masiwa and Chipungu 2004; Hammar and Raftopoulos 2003.

14 Up until the year 2000, besides state land such as national parks and forests, rural spaces in Zimbabwe comprised of large-scale commercial farms (mainly owned by whites), resettlement areas established in the 1980s for small-scale black farmers, and communal

areas. The communal areas were called Tribal Trust Lands before 1980 and were equivalent in status to the Bantustan areas of apartheid South Africa. Communal areas typically fall under the combined authority of local chiefs and democratic institutions. Communal area farmers have usufruct rights and they eke out a living from their agricultural plots while sharing common grazing land for livestock, while also receiving remittances. Large-scale commercial farms relied upon low-paid black wage labourers who normally lived on the farm in villages or compounds.

15 James 2014.

16 Kriger 2003.

17 Chaumba et al. 2003.

18 Sadomba 2008.

19 Moyo and Yeros 2005; Masuko 2013.

20 In this respect, land occupations had taken place before the year 2000. For instance, soon after independence in 1980, communal farmers occupied commercial land which had been abandoned by white farmers during the 1970s. As well, even in the years immediately preceding the fast track land occupations (in the late 1990s), there were highly localized and sporadic occupations of particular farms. In the case of these occupations, it was common for white commercial farmers to call on the police to evict the occupiers (who were labelled as “squatters”) and this was done with the explicit support and backing of ZANU-PF and the Zimbabwean state.

21 Moyo and Yeros 2005.

22 Chaumba et al. 2003.

23 Moyo and Yeros 2005.

24 Moyo and Yeros 2010, p. 93.

25 Chingarande 2010; Mutopo 2011; Scoones et al. 2010.

26 Rutherford 2001.

27 Magaramombe 2010.

28 Sadomba 2008.

29 Masuko, 2013.

30 Interview with war veteran Muronda, Chenenga Farm, Ward 5, 26 June 2016.

31 Interview with Councilor Zanamwe, Katanya Farm, Ward 2, 27 June 2016.

32 Interview with war veteran Chingwaru, Katanya Farm, Ward 2, 27 June 2016.

33 Sadomba, 2008:124.

34 Bhatasara and Helliker 2018.

35 Male focus group, Matepatepa Country Club, Ward 2, 27 June 2016.

36 Male focus group, Chenenga Farm, Ward 5, 26 June 2016.

37 Sadomba 2008.

38 Interview with Jones Musangomunei, Chenenga Farm, Ward 5, 26 June 2016.

39 Ibid.

40 Charumbira 2015, p. 211.

41 Email correspondence, dated 26 June 2016.



- 42 Sadomba 2008.
- 43 Interview with Jones Musangomunei, Chenenga Farm, Ward 5, 26 June 2016.
- 44 Interview at Chipadze Farm, Ward 7, 28 June 2016.
- 45 Interview with male occupier, Chipadze Farm, Ward 7, 28 June 2016.
- 46 Female focus group, Chipadze Farm, Ward 7, 28 June 2016.
- 47 Ibid.
- 48 Ibid.
- 49 Ibid.
- 50 Interview at Katanya Farm, Matepatepa, Ward 2, 27 June 2016.
- 51 Sadomba 2008, p. 139.
- 52 Female focus group, Chipadze Farm, Ward 7, 28 June 2016.
- 53 Ibid.

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# Mediated Sankarism: Reinventing a Historical Figure to Reimagine the Future

LASSANE OUEDRAOGO

**Abstract:** Thomas Sankara contributed significantly to the formation of the modern national identity of post-independent Burkina Faso before his assassination in 1987. This essay uses discourse analysis to examine the emergence of Sankara's ideology also known as Sankarism and his praxis in the Burkinabe public discourse. It discussed different creative ways that Burkinabe media users are employing to reinvent Thomas Sankara and Sankarism in attempt to reimagine their future. In the current Burkinabe socio-political context of a nascent democracy characterized by the emergence of active civil society movements and multiple political factions contesting the right to govern and claiming the capacity to provide a new direction to a country caught up amid local and global issues, the reinvention and re-appropriation of Sankarism call for an appropriate close examination. This paper is not so much about who Sankara was or did, but how he is now referenced and remembered. The author contends that in Burkina Faso, new media provide multiple trajectories through which Sankarism is creatively re-invented to construct a national ethos and participate in the contested exercise of state-making.

## Introduction

Thomas Sankara (1949-1987) is one of the most famous political figures in contemporary African history.<sup>1</sup> He served as President of Burkina Faso (formerly known as Upper Volta) from 1983 to 1987 when he was assassinated in a military coup led by Blaise Compaoré who became his successor. Sankara's pragmatic and ambitious agenda for his country and Africa, together with his eloquent speeches at international forums propelled him into the spotlights of the Cold War international politics and discourses. Three decades after his death, Sankara is now celebrated and often remembered with deep sorrow among people who are familiar with his pragmatic pan-Africanist and anti-imperialist ideology also known as Sankarism. Nevertheless prior to his newly recovered fame, his image had gradually been eclipsed from the Burkinabe official records and media. At the international level, even though Sankara was a major figure in post-independence Africa and a strong voice of the non-aligned movement during the Cold War, scholars have scantily documented his life and legacy.

In the wake of the Burkinabe 2014 popular revolution, however, which ousted Sankara's successor, many scholars have started to look back into Sankara's ideological legacy and what it could mean today. For instance, in June 2016 the *Journal of Pan African Studies* featured a call for papers "aim[ing] to bring forward the different ways in which activists, theorists and writers in and beyond Africa have engaged with Sankara's political philosophies and praxis since his

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<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v18/v18i1a2.pdf>

assassination in 1987.”<sup>2</sup> Naturally, in Burkina Faso, the ousting of his successor Blaise Compaoré has offered multiple opportunities for people to talk openly about Sankara and to freely display his images in the public sphere. This essay seeks to discuss Sankarism in current Burkinabe popular political discourse and media and to contextualize its significance and contribution to African thought. Such discourses are selected from messages in underground protest music as well as common people’s online discussions about Sankara and what he means to them today. The paper is structured to ask two questions. First, how significant was Sankara’s role in the emergence of the modern Burkinabe national identity? Second, what are the trajectories through which Sankara and his ideology are re-invented and re-appropriated to negotiate the construction of a national ethos within the current contested political landscapes of Burkina Faso?

### **Cyber Sankarism and the Public Discourse**

Thomas Sankara’s fandom is now a growing phenomenon among Internet users in Burkina Faso. From beyond the grave, his identity has risen up to own multiple Facebook pages and Twitter accounts. For instance, there are over one hundred Twitter accounts with some variety of the handle @ThomasSankara. These are all accounts from various parts of the world that tweet about Sankara. Also, his pan-Africanist philosophy of unity, independence, and progress is also prominently praised on many other social media accounts and websites, which share contents about him, hence providing a space where thousands of followers and visitors interact daily. In the Burkinabe cyberspace, Thomas Sankara has become a “hot topic, “ especially among the youth who claim his ideology. This phenomenon now transcends the collective online subculture to become more visible in the everyday discourse of both the common people and the aspiring political leaders in Burkina Faso. For example, young musician Patrick Kabré states:

I do not claim inheritance of Thomas Sankara. And to be precise, I do not care about the man himself, but, rather the words that he carried. I noticed that he did not speak for himself; it is as if he were incarnating the people, and that the desires, wills, and aspirations of the people were animated in the body and energy of one man. That is what I claim.<sup>3</sup>

Kabré is not an outlier in his sympathetic attitude towards Thomas Sankara’s memory online. He certainly embodies what most online Sankarists seem to do: spreading important quotes and ideas attributed to Sankara and making him well known to whomever cares to read. Many other people are posting similar items online. Mr. X, the author of a website that curates content about Thomas Sankara offers that “Like all the Burkinabe of my age, I did not have the chance to know Captain Sankara. This website was the fruit of the passion this man and his works nourished in me.”<sup>4</sup> Benewende S. Sankara, a 2015 presidential candidate and a longtime opposition leader campaigned with Sankara’s slogans. Not only did Benewende define his political party as a Sankarist party, but he projected himself as an embodiment of Sankara’s ideal: “We are the heirs of Thomas Sankara. We will continue to revive his legacy by using the rigor at the level of governance. If we come to power, the first thing we shall do is restore the authority of the state.”<sup>5</sup>

From top politicians seeking presidential election to lay people, sympathy and nostalgia about Thomas Sankara abound among most Burkinabe internet users. Some of these neo-Sankarists such as Mr. X and Patrick Kabré have even materialized their feelings about Sankara in their work. The former built a website and is now collaborating with Bruno Jaffré, an author of a Sankara biography, to curate contents about Sankara and to make him better known to the rest of the world. The latter has made his commitment to singing music composed about his idol. These forms of enthusiasm for Sankara's ideology, several decades after his death, constitute the object of reflection in this essay.

However, while most people look up to Sankara and his ideological legacy as an alternative social project, I have not found a consistent definition of Sankarism through my research. Sankarism clearly means different things to different people. Bruno Jaffré rightly observed that Sankarism remains a loosely defined concept which needs much more critical studies.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, in this essay I keep a broader and more general understanding of Sankarism as being the people's general perception and understanding of patriotism, pan-Africanism, and their rejection of neo-imperialism as embodied in Sankara's life and work. Even so, recent popular re-adoptions of this ideology in new media arouse much interest in this essay. For instance, in the 2015 presidential election, Sankara and Sankarism became visible and ubiquitous in campaign discourses, promises, and media. Dr. Abdoulaye Soma, a close observer of Burkinabe politics, reported, "all the candidates try to emulate Thomas Sankara ... everyone wants to take ownership of the October insurrection, which was largely imbued with the Sankarist ideals."<sup>7</sup> Even political parties that were known to be close to the outgoing regime such as the MPP utilized some popularly renowned Sankara slogans hoping to secure votes.<sup>8</sup> Sankara looms large in the social imagination of most Burkinabe and the new media offer the possibility of representing such imagination.

Thomas Sankara is certainly not the first historical figure to become so popular in both the imagination and media in contemporary Burkina Faso. "In this country, there are four iconic photos everyone knows. The first is Bob Marley. The second is Che Guevara, and the third is Patrick Lumumba, and the fourth is our own Thomas Sankara," Rasmane, a bookstore keeper at the University of Ouagadougou told me, waving a recent collection of Sankara speeches organized and published by one Simplice T. Sandwidi.<sup>9</sup> Local reproductions of Sankara's famous speeches with a new introduction are now a basic reading material for most students in Burkina who want to learn about their hero. It is no coincidence that Sankara is remembered along with Lumumba, Guevara, and Bob Marley since they are also internationally well-known historical figures. It is difficult to lay these figures to rest permanently in writings because their memories are now part of African collective imaginations although such memories are often contested ones.<sup>10</sup>

Although empirical data to support Rasmane's claims is yet to be researched, a quick ride around Ouagadougou reveals the persistence of these three figures on graffiti, murals, t-shirts, etc. As Theophile, a tailor and a designer told me, "It is impossible to go from one point to another in any city of Burkina Faso without spotting someone in the traffic proudly wearing a t-shirt with Thomas Sankara's effigy on the back. I design those t-shirts and the demand is always high."<sup>11</sup> The famous *Faso Dan Fani*, a local cotton cloth that Sankara promoted in an effort to boost the local economy is now an item of national pride for most people, especially officials.

Yet, when Sankara was in office, most government clerks called it “*Sankara arrive*” [Sankara is coming]. Sankara was known for showing up unannounced in some government offices and employees were expected to be wearing *Faso Dan Fani*. People would wear Western-style cloths and keep a *Faso Dan Fani* in the office until word came that Sankara was around.<sup>12</sup> Now, there has been a return to *Faso Dan Fani* largely because of its association with Sankara. There is indeed a local garment economy that is developing around the iconic image of Sankara.

### **From a Failed Colony to a Post-Colonial Nation**

In the current Burkinabe socio-political context, it is the historical figure in the person of Thomas Sankara that shapes the collective sense of the nation. When Sankara came to power, he sought to “build a new Voltaic society, within which the Voltaic citizen ... will be the architect of his own happiness.”<sup>13</sup> Though the fulfillment of such a promise is often debated among some Sankara scholars, the current popular reverence of Sankara remains unquestionable. Sankara inherited an economically and politically unstable country, which he transformed by establishing the basis for self-acceptance and self-reliance as a nation. He was successful in reshaping and redefining the national identity of Upper Volta, which he renamed Burkina Faso.<sup>14</sup> Two important and interdependent factors illustrate the state of the country that Sankara inherited in 1983. The first is the large migration of its people within the sub-region seeking better arable lands and living conditions. The second is the lack of natural resources and the resulting poor economic perspectives, which contributed to place the country among the least developed of the world. However, over his tenure, Burkina Faso began to show signs of economic and social stability.

From its independence to the advent of Sankara’s regime, Burkina Faso presented all the symptoms of a failed nation. When Sankara came in power, Burkina Faso was not just one of the poorest countries in the world, it was also among the world’s most politically unstable countries, undergoing multiple successive military regime changes and with institutions incapable of meeting the basic needs of its people. Sankara’s short term in office remains a positive transformative moment in the history of Burkina Faso. A few authors have already documented his immense legacy in terms of improving the living conditions of the people.<sup>15</sup> Some of his notable accomplishments include his investment in education, his unprecedented fight against the advancement of desertification, and his advocacy for women’s rights. His most often-cited deeds include vaccinating over three million children against the prevailing tropical diseases—yellow fever, meningitis, and measles.<sup>16</sup> Sankara’s arrival in power and his political ideology progressively turned what was a failing postcolonial state into a nation with a strong sense of national identity. New national symbols were created and old pre-colonial rallying symbols were revived, hence creating favorable conditions for a true national identity. The name of the country was changed from Haute Volta (Upper Volta) to Burkina Faso, which in local language means “Country of Upright People.” A new national anthem was introduced, and a new flag was invented to rid Burkina Faso of the persistent symbols of colonialism. These changes were undertaken with the participation of the masses organized from bottom up in Committees of Defense of the Revolution. Guy Martin argues that Sankara’s success in rallying the masses behind his cause is, in itself, an extraordinary case that speaks to how his neo-Marxist ideology was in line with the needs and aspirations of his people. He fulfilled the



people's desire to renounce the stain of colonialism and the weight of post-colonial economic and cultural exploitation. That is what Martin reported as "a higher stage of development in the Burkinabe society."<sup>17</sup> Perhaps, this common history is what allows the Burkinabe youth today to imagine a different Burkina Faso.

After Sankara's death, however, his image was discontinued in the public sphere. Sankara was not taught in Burkinabe schools and very little reference was ever made about him in official public discourse during the twenty-seven years following his assassination. Any physical reference to him was erased in the cities and towns of the country. As one would expect, the Compaoré military regime tried to convince the Burkinabe and the international community that Sankara had betrayed the democratic ideals and that having Sankara's iconography around was counterproductive. In fact, the Compaoré regime sought to literally bury Sankara along with his revolutionary ideas. So one might wonder where the persistent memory of Sankara comes from, considering that most of the people who now claim Sankara's ideology were born after his death or were very young during his years in power. Clearly, reference and reverence of Sankara among the Burkinabe youth are not based on a direct memory of him but rather from a "creative imagination" which stems partly from the failures of Compaoré's regime to meet the people's need for freedom, autonomy, citizenship, and self-direction. Also, Sankara has continued to exist in the private spaces and in the collective imagination of the people. For instance, while Compaoré's effigies were ever present in offices and schools around the country, images of Thomas Sankara remained in homes.

### **Sankarism in the Modern State**

Over his three-decade rule, President Compaoré successfully established a respected image of himself abroad. At home, he favored the creation of a political sphere with a multiparty system while simultaneously limiting the potentially subversive character of that public space.<sup>18</sup> His outward looking politics and his internal use of political clientelism allowed him to maintain absolute power for almost three decades. Alexandra Reza reported that Compaoré was a strong ally of the US and France, whom he allowed access to Burkina for military operations and surveillance in the Sahara region. This was a good trade for the powerful Western governments who chose to pay less attention to his human rights records.<sup>19</sup> The twenty-seven-year reign of President Compaoré established an apparent political stability, maintained with an internal brutal force, which international media drastically failed to cover.<sup>20</sup>

This longevity of Compaoré's regime was significant in erasing the image of his predecessor in the public space. However, when the 2014 popular revolution overthrew President Compaoré, Sankara's ideology resurfaced in the Burkinabe political discourse. First, public-spirited movements have utilized Sankara's ideology as the template for grounding their discontent against governmental malpractices and a yardstick for measuring and critiquing the failures of governmental institutions, expressing dissatisfaction, and demanding change. In that sense, Sankara's historical slogans and accomplishments were wielded as the norms for formulating their discourses. *Le Balai Citoyen* (The Citizen's Broom), one of the civil society movements in the forefront of the October 2014 revolution, efficiently utilized Sankara to legitimize itself as a spokesperson for the people against the dictatorship of President Compaoré.<sup>21</sup> This heterogeneous social movement was spearheaded by young popular

musicians who rallied the youth across the country through their use of Sankara's anti-imperialist and anti-bourgeoisie rhetoric in the lyrics of their music. Refusing to be spectators of the quotidian despair or to hop into the dreadful routes of migration to Europe, as is often the case for many dissatisfied youth across the continent, Burkinabe pop musicians have sought to critique their government by taking Sankara as an ideal reference. Pop music from Burkina Faso, especially hip hop and reggae, is mostly a medium for political advocacy. Because the dissenting nature of their musical messages restricted their access to public media, pop musicians turned to online platforms to publish and share with their fans. Their *modus operandi* is a combination of strong coded political messages in local languages or vernacular French with embedded theatrical sketches, which satirize the lavish lifestyles of the leaders and simultaneously portray the misery of the average citizens.

Two prominent public figures emerged among the pop musicians who stood as strong voices against government malpractices: rapper Serge Bambara (alias Smockey) and reggae musician Sama Karim (alias Sams' K. le Jah). They have produced music videos praising and mourning Sankara and demanding justice for him. Following their success in music, which granted them stardom and legitimacy in the eyes of the youth, Smockey and Sams' K created and led *Le Balai Citoyen*. This civil society movement mobilized millions of people in 2014 to protest against President Compaoré and his project to amend the constitution and seek another re-election.<sup>22</sup> The success of Smockey and Sams' K in mobilizing the youth to protest and oust the sitting president demonstrates that pop music, far from being just a marginal form of art, served as a strong communication tool for mobilization and action. *Le Balai Citoyen*, according to Zakaria Soré, claimed to follow Sankara's ideals and sought a society of justice and equity with the cardinal values of democracy in place.<sup>23</sup> The pop musicians presented a counter discourse that challenged state power with banality and obscenity in their lyrics and their music video performances. In fact, Burkinabe pop music grotesquely portrays the dominant discourse and appeals to larger audiences by framing the sufferings of the people and the insouciance of their leaders through words and images.

Achille Mbembe offered that in the postcolonial world, state power works through the grotesque and the obscene of the governing elite, which creates a relation of "mutual zombification" with the people; a relation in which both groups live in conviviality.<sup>24</sup> Oppositely, Burkinabe pop music employed the same "zombification" but only to unveil the shortcomings of the government's work and disrupt the fake sense of conviviality between the leaders and the people. They deployed the image of Sankara and his political ideal as symbols of what the nation ought to be. Music becomes more than a simple accounting of the state of affairs, but rather a confrontational call for action. As an illustration, when Smockey released his fourth album, he titled it "*Cravate, Costards et Pourriture*" which translates as "Tie, Suits, and Rot." Such a title exemplifies the ultimate zombification of the Compaoré regime represented by the rotting body in suit and tie. In the meantime, Smockey's work was a call for action to mobilize morally and physically against the military junta in power. Songs like *Thomas Sankara*, featuring Senegalese rapper Didier Awadi and "*A qui profite le crime?*" (Who benefits from the crime?), referring to the murder of Sankara, became very popular among the youth. Both songs feature excerpts of key speeches of Thomas Sankara in his own voice. Then the musician includes his own commentary that directly condemns Sankara's assassination and calls for

justice. The music videos also show images of Sankara mingling with a crowd of peasants as a way to demonstrate his closeness and care for the poor.

Currently, work to reestablish Sankara's image in the symbols of the country is already underway. Among other things, the new government renamed the military camp of Po after Thomas Sankara.<sup>25</sup> Considering the role of the army in the power structure in Burkina Faso, this renaming amounts to a political statement and an attempt to redefine the military deontology as envisioned by Sankara. Besides the idea of providing an ultimate role model to look up to, it reminds that the role of the army to serve the people with integrity.

The contribution of Burkinabe diaspora communities to the post-insurrection political discourse also includes a strong revival of Sankara's image and his political ideology. In December 2015, members of the Burkinabe diaspora in Germany created the "*Prix Sankara de l'Innovation*" to honor any person or group of persons who come up with innovations to better the living conditions of the Burkinabe people.<sup>26</sup> A similar award was introduced in the Pan-African Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou (FESPACO) in 2015 to "Celebrate the Pan-African creativity and hope embodied by the former President of Burkina Faso."<sup>27</sup> All these symbolic re-creations of Sankara have a public dimension, which testify to the political leaders' attempts to reinstitute Sankara's image in the Burkinabe public sphere.

"Kill me and millions of Sankaras will be born," warned Sankara during one of his last public speeches, as the list of his international friends grew thinner because most leaders sought to dissociate themselves with his left wing and anti-imperialist agenda. The Burkinabe youth have taken that slogan to mean that all of them are now newborn Sankaras. Protest signs always bear Sankara's image, but also some of the most striking phrases randomly taken from his multiple public speeches. "There is no true revolution without the participation of women," "Sankara's kids are now grown up," and "One step with the people is better than one hundred steps without them" read some of the signs.<sup>28</sup> Clearly, though the objective of the 2014 popular upheaval was to demand social change, that change was envisioned through Sankara and expressed through Sankara's social project.

Further, the host of emerging new media now provides a platform for representing, negotiating, and redefining Sankara and Sankarism. Though Sankara remains a mysterious figure for many of his fans, mostly, because they were not old enough to have known him and his revolutionary ideas, he is now a sort of national myth around whom the youth constructs its dream leader and envisions the future. Sankara's Burkina Faso, in this sense, becomes the ideal nation for most of the people today. The socio-political paradigm, which emerges from the marriage between online discourses and offline engagement, is an important factor in shaping Burkinabe social aspirations. In response, the national political discourse is then infused with the persistent image of Sankara and Sankarist ideology. Prominent actors of the public sphere such as politicians have understood that Sankara's image is now a rallying factor and they formulate their discourse around him. Sankarism becomes a sort of a symbol of unification even though Sankara's ideology is yet to be properly put to practice. As a result, the modern political history of Burkina Faso is a history of hope nurtured by the brief and enlightening passage of Sankara at the command of the destiny of the country.

As we enter the second half of the century since Africa has attained its formal independence, the continent still relies on its former colonizers despite an abundance of

resources. In the meantime, social dissatisfaction is widespread across the continent, as the elite have failed to attend to the basic needs and aspirations of the people. Furthermore, Africans remain the most vulnerable peoples in the face of new forms of global challenges such as terrorism, mass migration, Ebola, global warming, etc. In the case of Burkina Faso, regardless of what one might think of Sankara and Sankarism, the fact that people recollect his ideology and political practices as an alternative solution demonstrates a need for a new model in modern governance. It is also indicative of the enduring inefficacy of the imported ideas and thoughts that constitute a strong attribute of the neo-colonial African governance system. Therefore, Africa's presence on the global stage needs to be rethought with African interests put forward. Since the spirit of resistance to neocolonialism embodied by Sankara and leaders such as Patrick Lumumba and Kwame Nkrumah is still present in the memory of most Africans, these figures can certainly be historical landmarks for reference. But first, the epistemology on and about Africa must be widened to incorporate alternative thinking. The question of African thought and its position vis-à-vis the neoliberal world order remains an important one today and Sankarism could be a useful entry point.

## Conclusion

The disenchanted youth of Burkina Faso is reinventing and re-appropriating Thomas Sankara and his revolutionary philosophy of self-reliance and pan-Africanism in their drive to imagine a better future. The elusive figure of the leader of the 1983 revolution was first utilized in pop music as a way to denounce government malpractices and to invite the people for a collective action against the acting government in 2014. After the success in evicting the Compaoré's twenty-seven-year regime, it appears that more opportunities have arisen for discussing and reflecting on Sankara and his role in shaping the identity of Burkina Faso as a nation. The internet has become the sphere par excellence for debating and projecting what Sankara and Sankarism mean. Consequently, Burkinabe political actors are pushed to act upon some of these negotiated ideas and are working to reinstate Sankara's image in the public sphere.

## Notes

1 Harsch 2014, p. 10.

2 *Journal of Pan African Studies* 9.3: 218-19.

3 Forson 2015.

4 See Jaffré 2016.

5 Roger 2015.

6 Jaffré 2007, p. 293.

7 AFP 2015.

8 The MPP candidate won the 2015 presidential elections. Its leaders Roch Marc Christian Kaboré (the president), Simon Compaoré, and Salif Diallo were all members of the Compaoré regime before their defection in 2014.

9 Interview in Ouagadougou, June 2018.

10 See Burlin 2011 on how Lumumba is represented in two films and how such media allow for rereading of a historical figure widely dealt with.

- 11 Interview in Ouagadougou, June 2018
- 12 Ouedraogo in Shuffield 2006.
- 13 Sankara 2007, p. 99.
- 14 Jaffré 2007, p. 223.
- 15 See Hagberg 2002; Coleman 2013; Dickovick 2009; Englebert 1996; Harsch 2014.
- 16 Skinner 1988, p. 444.
- 17 Martin 1987, p. 78.
- 18 Bonnecase 2015, p. 152.
- 19 Reza 2016.
- 20 Mathieu Hilgers and Augustin Loada provide a detailed exposé of the semi-authoritarian regime of President Compaoré that was maintained over the years.
- 21 Henry 2015, p. 65.
- 22 Ibid., p. 69.
- 23 In this 2016 report, Zakaria Soré offers the nuances of *Le Balai Citoyen's* commitment to social change.
- 24 Mbembe 2001, p. 104.
- 25 See Sawadogo 2015. The Prime Minister Zida insisted that "This is the model that we want to give our army."
- 26 Some 2016.
- 27 Forster 2015.
- 28 See documentary videos reports by Deutche Welle 2015 and BF24 TV 2014.

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# Recalibrating South Africa's Political Economy: Challenges in Building a Developmental and Competition State

PAUL THOMPSON and HENRY WISSINK

**Abstract:** This article is situated at the cusp of debates raging in South Africa in which the delivering of a democratic developmental state is amongst the priorities of the African National Congress (ANC) led government. Thus, the narrative on South Africa's developmental path has taken predominantly a singular approach, which is either the developmental state or the neo-liberalism approach, without considering the intertwining of both concepts. This article goes beyond the regular discourse and introduces the "competition state" concept to the South African economic development discourse. The central objective is to articulate some of the obstacles encountered in the building of a combined developmental and "competition state." The study findings reveal that notwithstanding an admixture of policies, legislations, and strategies being pursued by the Government of South Africa, policy objectives have not been fully realised due to a myriad of structural and socio-political factors.

## Introduction

The sociology of socio-economic transformation by the post-1994 state in South Africa has been reconfigured on the foundations of its apartheid and pre-apartheid predecessors. South African society has undergone deep-seated socio-political, economic, and legislative changes since 1994. Notwithstanding, such changes have been evinced by protracted spatial and socio-economic developmental gaps that still exist across and within various demographic groups. According to Seekings and Nattrass the "post-apartheid democratic state; like its predecessors is a vehicle for representing a fluid array of interests to intervene in a capitalist economy at the expense of those on the periphery of the society."<sup>1</sup> It is this marginalized periphery that has triggered a multifaceted and inter-sectoral approach to inclusive socio-economic development. Attempts at re-constituting South Africa's political economy have led to an arsenal of public policies and legislation promulgated to act as agents of developmental facilitation. Either by design or inadvertently so, South Africa's policy space increasingly resembles features of a hybrid developmental and competition state paradigm. In development studies literature the developmental state is conceptualized and is said to exist according to "Johnson *inter alia* when the state possesses the vision, leadership and capacity to bring about a positive transformation of society within a condensed period of time."<sup>2</sup> Whilst the competition state thesis viewed in its narrowest form, speaks to the "transformation of the state from within, with regard to the reform of political institutions, functions and processes, in the face of the processes of globalisation," and importantly, the competition state thesis speaks to pursuit of "increased marketization."<sup>3</sup>

This article draws insights from the growing body of narrative on the need to build a democratic developmental state in South Africa. However, there is an absence of studies and

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<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v18/v18i1a3.pdf>

analysis on South Africa's simultaneous and combined pursuit of a developmental state and competition state agenda. This is rather paradoxical, given the raft of neo-liberal policies pursued by the national government over the last twenty-four years, which are aimed at re-integrating the republic within the global capitalist economy in the post-1994 era.

Thus, the aim of this contribution to the on-going dialogue is to articulate some of the extenuating factors that have hindered the state from achieving its stated ambition of being a developmental state and simultaneously promoting an internationally competitive and commodified state. But there is a wider significance of this article to scholars and post-colonial states in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region, as it implicitly speaks to the inherent contestation between the Washington Consensus doctrine and state-led form of development. The study also highlights that the construction of a democratic developmental state cannot be achieved in an ideologically or politically stagnant environment. Instead it requires an environment in which the agility of the state is a priority so it may pursue simultaneously nation building and global competitiveness. Essentially, post-colonial states, including those in SADC, need to demonstrate different versions to meet the developmental needs of its citizenry and devoid themselves of populist rhetoric without the corresponding deliverables.

This paper primarily frames and contextualises developmental and competition state theoretical constructs within a hybrid or dual model to reflect South Africa's post-apartheid developmental trajectory and policy directives. Also this paper seeks to explain some of the emerging factors that are inimical to the government's efforts. Structurally, this study is divided into five thematic sections and proceeds as follows. The first thematic section chronicles the evolution of South Africa's post-1994 socio-economic development strategies and policy framework; the second thematic section focuses on the developmental and competition state as the article's conceptual framework. The third section articulates selected underlying factors that have derailed South Africa's developmental state ambitions. The fourth section analyses South Africa's neo-liberal competition state initiatives and the attendant problems. Conclusions and recommendations are dealt with in the fifth section of the article.

### **Post-Apartheid Development Strategies and Policies**

Between 1994 and 2012, South Africa undertook a spectrum of substantive socio-economic policy, institutional and legislative reforms. These were influenced by both domestic developmental imperatives and the competition state economic doctrine. The present government inherited mass poverty, unemployment, racial inequality, a stagnated economy and a public bureaucracy that was designed to serve primarily a minority sub-group of the population. Thus, these socio-economic and systemic realities of life provided the impetus for the democratically elected government to enshrine socio-economic rights within the 1996 Constitution. Brand rightfully recounts that the South African "Constitution is replete with commands to the legislature to enact legislations to give effect to the Constitutional rights."<sup>4</sup> These rights are not only entrenched in the Constitution, but they are also protected as statutory entitlements in national legislations. For example, the Bill of Rights section (27)1 of the Constitution (1996), outlines three fundamental rights that everyone should have access to: healthcare services; sufficient food and water and; social security, including provision for those unable to support themselves and their dependants.

In lieu of the above *inter alia*, the African National Congress led government over last two decades has published a plethora of white papers, enacted legislations laws and adopted policies to give effect to these fundamental rights; and also to reduce South Africa's triple-challenge of unemployment, inequality and poverty. These included, but were not limited to the following national municipal and provincial socio-economic developmental framework:

- Reconstruction and Development Programme (1994)
- Growth, Employment and Redistribution (1996) with objectives to provide basic services to the poor, to alleviate poverty, achieve economic growth, reduce national debt, and stabilise inflation
- White Paper on Local Government (1998) which introduced the concept of "developmental local government"
- Expanded Public Works Programme (2004)
- Policy Guidelines for Implementing Local Economic Development in South Africa (2005)
- Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (2006)
- Department of Provincial and Local Government unveiled the framework for Local Economic Development (2007).
- Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF)(2009-2014)
- New Growth Path (2010)
- National Development Plan-2030 adopted in 2012
- Radical Economic Transformation (2016-17)

Policy discussions from the above list were framed in terms of South Africa's political ambition to build a democratic developmental state.<sup>5</sup> However, the resultant effect of South Africa's overall policy framework represents a convergence and divergence of both developmental and competition state polices. For example, there is an intertwining or convergence of state-interventionist developmental and competition state models in the government's Reconstruction and Development Programme. Forbes summarizes that "the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of 1994, embodies so, an admixture of socialist and neoliberal policies."<sup>6</sup> Whilst on the contrary, the Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy framework "represents a significant shift policy from the Reconstruction and Development Programme, — paradoxically a move to enhance neoliberalism and away from the socialist ideals of the Freedom Charter."<sup>7</sup>

In 2005 GEAR was replaced by the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of SA (AsgiSA) policy framework which was itself replaced in 2010 by the New Growth Path (NGP). In 2013 the NGP was morphed into the New Development Plan (NDP), which similar to GEAR and AGISA has also been framed into the image of neoliberalism, designed to take South Africa into 2030.<sup>8</sup> We contend that, inadvertently, there has been a co-expansion of the developmental and competition state models in South Africa. Such co-expansion is not inevitable, given the government's commitment to being a major player in the global economy and its simultaneous bullish attitude towards becoming a democratic developmental state. It is imperative to note that, the process which is unfolding is neither linear nor is it deterministic. A major criticism by a number of non-state actors such as the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions (COSATU) *inter alia* is that the competition state model is gaining primacy over an interventionist developmental state. At the root of such criticism is what Haque bemoans, as the loss of national autonomy from an eroding effect of globalisation or neo-liberal policies, which invariably prescribes the replacement of some

state functions with that of the market.<sup>9</sup> Notwithstanding the criticism, the list of socio-economic policies is constitutive of a nexus between the developmental and competition forms of state.

### Theoretical Perspective

There are a number of competing theories or concepts that can be used to explain South Africa's post-apartheid political economy. However, for the purposes of this study, the concepts of a developmental state and the competition state paradigms as a "hybrid" model are used to examine the shaping of South Africa's post-apartheid socio-economic development model. This is so in spite of a general feeling amongst a school of thought that subscribes to the view that the developmental and competition states are conceptually viewed as two incompatible forms of state. It is often noted that the rise of the competition state will and has led to the waning or at least a stagnation in the pursuit of the developmental state. The contrary view is that both forms of states encapsulate what Levi-Faur refers to as market building and market nurturing features.<sup>10</sup>

The developmental state theoretical approach in this article draws insights from the scholarly works *inter alia*, of, Johnson (1982), Amsden (1989), Wade (1990), Woo-Cummings (1999), and Evans (1995). Conceptually, the developmental state concept is not new, but it gained renewed notoriety within development studies discourse following the economic success of the former Asian tigers. Thus, it is hardly surprising that in South Africa political elites and trade unionists have advocated the necessity of a democratic developmental state to address the country's triple challenge of unemployment, inequality, and poverty.

The competition state concept is an analytical construct used to assess the ways in which industrially developed states began to restructure themselves during the 1990s in response to the opportunities and constraints resulting from globalizing economic forces.<sup>11</sup> Cerny originally coined the competition state concept to describe how economic policies and institutions of the state prioritizes the pursuit of global competitiveness on behalf of its national territory and to conform to the anti-inflationary norms of the international financial markets.<sup>12</sup> The competition state thesis was penned partially to narrate the transitioning from "Thatcherism" to "Blairism."<sup>13</sup> The internationalization of global capital in the latter part of the 1970s and early 1980s became the precursor for the rise of competition state theory. With free-market capitalism being the predominant socio-economic structure within the global economy, it is inevitable that the competition state orthodoxy forms the basis of the contemporary capitalist state that replaces the welfare state orthodoxy. Cerny observes that "in seeking to adapt to a range of complex changes in cultural, institutional and market structures, both state and market actors have re-invented the state as a quasi-enterprise association in a wider world context."<sup>14</sup> Fougner's logic is that most "contemporary states qualify for the label as competition states" and South Africa demonstrates constitutive elements of such a competitive state.<sup>15</sup>

The competition state orthodoxy is a useful paradigmatic tool for situating and analysing South Africa's attempt at socio-economic transformation and attempt at building an internationally competitive economy and state via its increasing neo-liberal policies such as the New Growth Plan of 2010. Similarly, the primacy some of South Africa's economic policies is aimed at the formation of a developmental state. Levi-Faur aptly notes that "the logics of the competition state and the developmental state are therefore similar – they are both forms of a capitalist state with an orientation toward development."<sup>16</sup> It is partly for

this reason O'Brien echoes a word of warning, in noting that "the developmental and competition state should not be categorised in absolutes, as 'either or' options for defining the entire apparatuses of a state, but instead should be used more fluidly to inform understandings of particular policy regimes within particular sectors at particular point in time."<sup>17</sup>

### **Building South Africa's Developmental State: Contestation and Failings**

Contemporary scholarship on the polity of development since the dawn of democracy in South Africa has given much currency to the creation of a democratic developmental state as noted earlier. However, Freund believes that South Africa's developmental state model is more of a superficial nature, and lacks to a large extent structural and institutional transformation.<sup>18</sup> The following three features have been stymieing South Africa's developmental state visions.

#### ***State Capacity***

One of the most profound enigmas in development discourse lies in the area of the state and what its inherent capacity should constitute. Notwithstanding of what constitutes state capacity, it has become well established in developmental state literature, and Levin for instance noted that "state capacity is widely seen as a defining element of a developmental state."<sup>19</sup> Kim amplifies that strong state capacity and autonomy are required to implement and sustain "big push" programmes. The state must also have the ability to insulate itself from particular interests in society.<sup>20</sup> Within the South African context, Kim's statement has imputed a subtle, but a very real and profound suggestion that technocrats and state functionaries should largely be left alone to get on with the process of economic planning and policy implementation.

Chang (2002), Kim (2009), and Thompson (2013) highlight how a highly capacitated state contributed centrally to successful shaping of developmental architecture of the respective economies of China, South Korea, Singapore, and the United Arab Emirates. In contrast, the developmental state ambitions of the Government of South Africa as encapsulated in earlier discussed policy instruments, are constantly being undermined. This is due in part to the fact that the post-apartheid state and stakeholders such as political principals, labour federations, and the capitalist class lack the capacity to sufficiently morph the state bureaucracy into a developmental state. For example, at a sub-national level, the state is dysfunctional, with provincial and local governments in the Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, and Limpopo are barely able to hold together these provinces and municipal structures. The scope and depth of the state's dysfunctionality at the national and sub-national levels act as inhibitors from it [state] taking on a "mid-wife" role and or a "demiurge function." The midwifery role entails "the shifting of production activities into new areas which are believed to be conducive to development and which are not areas that private capital would venture if left to market forces alone."<sup>21</sup> On the other hand with "the 'demiurge function' the state shifts to creating certain types of goods via state-owned enterprises or via joint ventures which link state investment funds with private-sector investors."<sup>22</sup>

There are a number of factors that have contributed to the diminution and weakening of the state's capacity. Amongst them is the policy adopted by the governing ANC of cadre deployment in the public bureaucracy. This has led to the continued "politicization of the public bureaucracy and the attendant domination by the political elites."<sup>23</sup> Secondly, in order

to comply with the Employment Equity Act of 1998, the public bureaucracy is caught up in a numbers game of replacing many experienced non-African bureaucrats with predominantly African comrades, who may not necessarily at times possess the corresponding skills set. The idiosyncrasies of South Africa's public sector recruitment are captured by Butler who notes that political appointments or liberation movement deployment undermines the principle of meritocracy in the recruitment of public sector functionaries.<sup>24</sup> The politics of appointment specifically at the provincial and local spheres of government in South Africa has stifled the developmental capacity of this state. It is for this reason and amongst others, the National Development Plan (NDP) outlines that "South Africa needs a fully capacitated state acting as developmental agent in order to reduce poverty and inequality."<sup>25</sup> On the basis of anecdotal evidence, a careful analysis of any organigram of decision makers in state institutions would highlight to a large extent that the South African state is a sinecure for former freedom fighters turned bureaucrats. Judging from past and current performances of strategic state institutions, many of these political appointees have demonstrated the lack of intellectual and technical skills needed to create a "capacitated" developmental state. Systemic corruption across all spheres of government has marginalized competent and honest functionaries, who are replaced with pliable officials sympathetic to a new post-apartheid kleptocratic network consisting of party elites and corrupt individuals from the private sector. This has also further eroded capacity of the state.

The dichotomy that faces the public bureaucracy has been summed up by Ferguson and Lohmann who note that the state "is not an apolitical machine that exists only to provide social services, economic growth and to implement poverty alleviation policies."<sup>26</sup> This articulation is not without empirical evidence, which can be seen in the anaemic growth rate and a sizeable percentage of the population that is receiving social grants. All successful developmental states demonstrate a nexus or positive correlation between a capacitated state and the level of socio-economic development that can be achieved.

#### *Acrimonious Business-State Relations*

Successful developmental states are based on a mixed economy model in which the government works in partnership with the private sector to achieve national development goals.<sup>27</sup> The sociology of post-apartheid South African development tells the story of a largely toxic business-state relationship. The toxicity of the relationship is based on deep-seated distrust between government and some industries (e.g. mining) and service-oriented businesses in the private sector. There are a number of drivers fuelling the acrimonious and frosty relationship between the state and the business community. For example, Soko explains, how "certain economically powerful groups in the private sector felt berated by the ANC-led government for publicly criticising government's policies and raising concern about the quality of political leadership and risk in South Africa."<sup>28</sup>

This much mooted acrimonious state-business relationship is said to have worsened under the presidency of Jacob Zuma but with ascension of Cyril Ramaphosa the acrimony is likely to change for the better. The economic developmental potential of South Africa has regrettably been "...stunted by deep-seated mutual suspicion and distrust between business and the government. This is evidenced by a growing distance between business and government leaders, even as the need for the two sectors to work together to solve SA's economic problems is pressing."<sup>29</sup> There is a narrative within political circles that big business has undermined South Africa's development and transformation by not investing sufficiently in the economy. This has arguably contributed to the national government not

achieving its developmental goals. The problem has been exacerbated according to Epstein who notes how “between 1990-2000 capital flight out of South Africa amounted to 6% of GDP. Specifically, in the post-apartheid period, South Africa continued to experience protracted capital flight by both domestic and foreign investors.”<sup>30</sup> Epstein also estimates that during “the period of 1994-2000 capital flight on average was estimated to be 9.2 per cent per annum.”<sup>31</sup> On the basis of the limited data presented above, there is seemingly a strong correlation between capital flight and the on-going distrust of the ANC-led government.

As the system of racial capitalism is being challenged and supplanted by a more liberal and inclusive form of capitalism and multi-party democracy: “...wealthy South Africans have moved more money out of the country during the more stable post-apartheid period than during the turbulent 1980’s when struggle against apartheid intensified.”<sup>32</sup> This was a crisis waiting to happen, as from the outset, established white-owned businesses that benefitted from the apartheid regime had noted their misgivings about those on the political left that occupy sensitive and important positions within ANC-led government. These misgivings by the minority white capitalist class are not without justifications, as antagonistic anti-white monopoly capital sentiments coming from elements from within the governing party and its alliance-partners have fueled existing distrust of government. The sentiment amongst some members of the capitalist class is that the government’s black economic empowerment (BEE) programme is an attempt by the current political class to deconstruct the architecture of the apartheid era system of racial capitalism. As push back to the perceived or real deconstruction of businesses entities who were intricately linked to the apartheid government, a raft of domestic “big businesses in South Africa have been on a ‘capital strike’ in recent years, by not investing or re-investing back into the economy according to a National Union of Metalworkers SA (Numsa).”<sup>33</sup> In addition, the continued politicization of state-business relations, racial, and ideological differences between the state and white capital have prevented South Africa from being morphed completely into a successful democratic developmental state. It is imperative to restate that the South African government cannot hope for socio-economic development without an alliance with businesses, and likewise, businesses need the government to create an environment that is conducive to sustainability.

#### *High Growth Rates and Capital Accumulation*

On the surface, the primacy of development in South Africa seems to conform to the conventional theory that a developmental state is “one whose ideological underpinnings is fundamentally ‘developmentalist,’ and its major preoccupation is to ensure sustained economic growth and development on the back of high rates of capital accumulation.”<sup>34</sup> Accounts by Wong highlighted how the historical records of East and Southeast Asian developmental state model has been characterised by rapid, sustained and exponential growth of real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in individual countries such as Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore.<sup>35</sup> It is further noted that “as a region, the East Asian economies collectively grew at a rate of near 10 percent per year, outpacing their developmental counterparts in Latin America and Africa.”<sup>36</sup>

Comparatively speaking, the South African economy has been facing serious growth challenges, not only is South Africa’s growth rate anaemic, “the country’s economic growth trajectory has remained weaker than some its peers.”<sup>37</sup> An examination of the country’s real GDP figures contained in the national treasury annual reports, highlight a steady decline in

economic growth since 2008/09 fiscal year. For example, economic growth declined from a high of 5.6 percent in 2006 to 0.5 percent in 2016. Government officials ascribe South Africa's declining growth rate to continued weak global economic activities. Notwithstanding the merit of such an argument, a closer analysis of the economy reveals there are a multiplicity of contributing factors (such as supply-side constraints, specifically in power generation, as was the case in the 2015-16 power supply crisis), structural unemployment, and capital flight. In addition, in order to give effect to the bill of rights, as outlined in section (27) of the Constitution, the Government of South Africa has not been able to demonstrate exclusive focus on economic growth. Instead the government's attention is directed towards reducing the society's pervasive social problems of unemployment, inequality and poverty. This diverts economic and human resources from aggressively pursuing economic growth as a developmental state imperative. This is further compounded by the systemic failure of the South African government and its alliance partners to effectively marshal financial resources to fast track economic growth. This is manifested in recent downgrades in South Africa's sovereign ratings by international rating agencies. The resultant effect is the limiting of the country's ability to raise cheap funding on the international bond market. In summary, the identified constraining factors have become inimical to South Africa becoming a successful 21<sup>st</sup>-century democratic developmental state, at least for now.

### **The South African Competition State and its Paradoxes**

This section of the study explores three of the central tenets of the competition state thesis and the extent to which these central characteristics of the "competition state" model have been undermined by South Africa's economic model. The "competition state" (neo-liberalism) orthodoxy is in many respects conceptually different from the developmental state thesis based on the central theoretical underpinnings discussed below.

#### *Shift from Macroeconomic to Microeconomic Policies*

An important corollary of the 'competition state' thesis suggests a fundamental shift from macro-economic to micro-economic policy prescriptions and interventionism. Such a shift is "reflected in deregulation, privatisation and industrial policy, the improvement in micro-economic efficiency, competitiveness, the creative destruction of old capital and technology to make way for the latest cutting edge production, financing and marketing methods."<sup>38</sup> In the case of South Africa, such policy shift or the ethos of globalisation has not been completely operational within the economy. Instead, there is the coupling of "micro-interventionism in concert with sound macro-economic policies."<sup>39</sup> This is a direct offshoot of South Africa's growing reliance on international capital markets and the requirements international trading agreements such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).<sup>40</sup> Thus, the government has had to maintain tight macro-economic supply-side policy, as prescribed by international capital and multi-lateral trade agreements. Haque describes such policy stance as the influence of globalization reinforced by the principles of a new political economy.<sup>41</sup>

Since the late 1990s South Africa's targeted micro-economic interventionism policies have resulted in the systematic deregulation of the wine, dairy, ostrich, forestry, and aviation sectors. This was necessitated by several imperatives: attract foreign investment and reverse capital flight, marketization of the economy, and liberalization of cross-border movement of goods and services. A 2008 OECD Report highlights that wide-ranging reforms which include liberalising domestic and foreign trade, and the lowering of support



for agriculture were also implemented in the 1990s.<sup>42</sup> For example, the Marketing of Agricultural Products Act of 1996, “led to the phasing out of certain import and export controls, elimination of subsidies, and the introduction of tariffs instead of control measures.”<sup>43</sup> The national economy through its’ internal structures and institutions of the state were bolstered by the external forces of globalization have charted new directions that are producing new capitalist social relations in general.<sup>44</sup>

The supplanting of an inward looking policy agenda with competition state policies in South Africa has been driven by an international politico-economic narrative of minimal state involvement in the economy. As Soederberg notes “an important facet of micro-economic intervention, and the ‘Washington Consensus’, is privatisation. Through this strategy, it is suggested that the role of the state in managing economic activity must be eliminated.”<sup>45</sup> This proposition can be construed to be theoretically in contestation with a strong interventionist and capacitated state; which is needed to achieve developmental priorities of any government. The signalling of an emphasis on fostering a pro-market environment, which is the shaping of a competition state occurred “when the national government announced plans for wide-sweeping privatization programme in late 1995 and in 1996, the government released its macroeconomic strategy tagged GEAR which envisions a broad-based privatisation programme.”<sup>46</sup>

The neoliberal oriented GEAR policy or the privatisation project by the Thabo Mbeki-led government had provoked strong criticisms from labour movements such the Congress of South Africa’s Trade Unions (COSATU) and other non-state actors. These criticisms stem from the perceived notion that the ascendancy of a competition state would result in continued socio-economic dislocation amongst those on the periphery of the society. This is due to the fact that getting market fundamentals right would transcend the necessity for sustainable safety nets for the most vulnerable in the society. Mostert believes that “privatization of state-owned assets via GEAR policies is a contradiction and abandonment of government’s pro-poor populist RDP policies, which endangers the delivery of basic social needs and leads to a loss of employment.”<sup>47</sup> Opposition to privatization must be viewed within the context of the likely disproportionate increase in poverty and inequality amongst the formerly disadvantaged segments of the society.

On the issue of inequality, the OECD highlights that “South Africa’s Gini coefficient, at around 0.70, makes it amongst the highest in the world. Income disparities appear to be even starker within South Africa than at the global level.”<sup>48</sup> The over-arching reason for advocating a competition and developmental state model is premised on the notion that only the free market and limited government regulations can deliver economic development and create a better life for all, not only in South Africa, but in other post-colonial states in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America as well. Paradoxically, the competition state orthodoxy requires the full commodification of public goods, such as education and health services which inherently would represent a substantial structural shift.

Such articulation has created a developmental paradigmatic dichotomy for the government. The need for inclusive socio-economic transformation in South Africa has pitted the leftists in the tri-partite alliance against a small but powerful domestic capitalist class who fervently believe in the “invisible hand percent” of the market and the disempowerment of the state and labour movements. Importantly, the competition state theory as a development model, paradoxically does not extensively lead towards poverty alleviation and an inclusive society. Instead, it can engender a rise in inequality, as the state pursues international competitiveness. This is an inherent flaw in the competition state

thesis, in addition to the de-politicization of state power. There lies the developmental dilemma of the post-apartheid state, which finds itself in a conundrum, as it performs a “juggling act” in the formation of a democratic developmental and a neo-capitalist state both of which are ideologically and operationally at the opposite end of the political divide.

### *Social Security Solidarity*

Historically, the South African state has been characterized by welfarism and in the post-apartheid era globalization has forced the state to reconfigure its' role in the economy in order to reap the benefits of economic globalization. Thus, South Africa's post-1994 democratic state has seemingly resolved a globalisation dichotomy it faces whilst, simultaneously, “ensuring that social security remains an almost exclusively statutory responsibility.”<sup>49</sup>

Contemporary politics and social policies in South Africa have been morphed to respond to the historically high level of poverty and inequality in the society, through the “provision of considerable social assistance programmes, public education and health care.”<sup>50</sup> The state has to ensure that social security [welfarism] is not sacrificed at the altar of neo-liberalism economic edicts. This represents a paradigmatic contradiction as the subordination of social security is a central characteristic of the competition state thesis.

**Table1: Social grant beneficiary numbers by type and fiscal years: 09/10 – 14/15**

Grants Rand (In Millions)	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Old age pension <sup>51</sup>	29 826	3 3 765	37 131	40,475	44,767	49 422
Disability Grant	16 567	1 6 840	17 375	17,637	18,034	18 957
Foster Child	4 434	4 616	5 011	5335	5478	5 851
Child Support Grant	26 670	3 0 342	34 319	38,088	43,600	43 428
Care Dependency	1 434	1 586	1 736	1877	2028	2 259

**Source:** South Africa, National Treasury 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017

Social development expenditures for a selected number of years in Table 2 show the government's pursuit of sustained fiscal “welfarism” policies. This is achieved through the allocation of financial resources within the national budget (and by spending more in real terms) for social grants. A comparison of social grant annual allocation data suggests that South Africa does not represent an ideal exemplar of a competition state. In part, social welfare policies are designed to serve welfare needs over economic imperatives in an increasingly globalised economy. Horsfall and Chai explain that to “be classified as following a broadly neo-liberal approach to the competition state, a country must demonstrate a low level of social expenditure as a percentage of gross domestic product.”<sup>52</sup> However, when juxtaposed against the competition state thesis, South Africa's welfare expenditure “rather than shrinking, social welfare has been increasing, not just as a percentage of the country's GDP but real expenditure terms.”<sup>53</sup> On the basis of the historically unparalleled levels of social inequality in South Africa, the state is legislatively and politically committed to having “a robust social welfare system as one of the pillars of the country's social protection agenda.”<sup>54</sup> The South African government spent an average of

3.2 percent of the country's GDP on social expenditures between 2009 and 2014.<sup>55</sup> In terms of the population, the number of people receiving some form of social grants increased from 16.496 million, in the 2014-15 fiscal year to 16.970 million in 2016-17 fiscal year.

The government is cognizant that a generic feature of the competition state is the constraint it places on "welfarism" and emphasizes "workfarism" as opposed to generous redistributive policies. However, the government's 1997 White Paper on Social Development states that "a social security system is essential for healthy economic development, particularly in a rapidly changing economy."<sup>56</sup> In light of this, the present South African economic model cannot be characterised as being an exemplar of a competition state, where social welfare policies are subordinated to "workfarism" as is suggested by the competition state thesis.

*From Extensive Interventionism to Strategic Targeting*

Competition state framers and theorists have positioned the transition from interventionism to strategic targeting as a quintessential logic that has shifted or depoliticised state actions away from the maximisation of social welfare towards the commodification of selected sectoral activities. This fundamental pillar of the competition state thesis speaks directly to a sea change in the

...shift of focus from interventionism from the development and maintenance of a range of "strategic" or "basic" economic activities in order to retain minimal economic self-sufficiency in key sectors to one of flexible response to competitive conditions in a range of diversified and rapidly evolving international marketplaces, i.e. the pursuit of "competitive advantage" as distinct from comparative advantage.<sup>57</sup>

For Thurow, the competition state thesis represents an observable shift that has to move away from comparative advantage based on natural resource endowments and factor proportions (i.e. capital labour ratios) to competitive advantage based on so-called "brain-power" industries, such as micro-electronics, biotechnology, the new materials industries, civilian aviation, telecommunications and so forth.<sup>58</sup> From the perspective of South Africa's post-apartheid state, the pervasive logic of supplanting the comparative advantage based on natural resource endowment with competitive advantage has not been fully realized yet, as South Africa is still considered to be a resource based economy, with heavily reliance on four primary commodities, namely coal, platinum, gold, and iron ore. Nonetheless, there has been limited success in internationalizing South Africa's tertiary education sector, as well as financial and telecom services. In addition, the hegemonic power of transnational corporations has forced government's policies to converge towards the competition state. The robust global competition for Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs), propelled the ANC-led government to not only to internationalize the state, but also motivated the state to offer investment incentives, creating an institutional and legal eco-system that would attract FDIs to the country.

The complexities and opportunities of globalisation forced the government towards what Drahokoupil refers to as the "Porterian" competition state.<sup>59</sup> The emergent question is what constitutes a "Porterian" competition state? Essentially, it is based on the convergence of:

...interventionist strategies aimed at promoting competitiveness by attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) via upgrading industrial base and the

increasing internationalization of the domestic state by forging economic globalization and the facilitation capital accumulation for transnational investors.<sup>60</sup>

Paradoxically, South Africa's multi-faceted pro-competitive and growth policies (such as the Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (AsgiSA) of 2007; the Industrial Policy Action Plan of 2009, and the New Growth Path of 2010, have not resulted in substantial investment in innovation driven industries and the re-industrialisation of South Africa. There are a number of inter-related domestic factors that have contributed to the anaemic response to South Africa's wave of neo-liberal policies. Amongst them are the previously stated acrimonious business-state relations, as well as high levels political risks due to the perceived and often times real political instability within the ANC-led government. Consequently, South Africa's locus in the global "pecking order in terms of Research & Development, investments in advanced-technology, manufacturing and economic expansion continues to remain low in comparison to many other developing economies" such as Turkey, Brazil, and India.<sup>61</sup>

### Conclusions and Recommendations

This paper sets out at exploring the changing socio-economic policy and legislative landscape of the South African state against the country's growing integration into the global economy. All tiers of government in the republic have designed a typology of development policies and strategies that transcend any single development paradigm, to comprehensively deal with low economic growth, poverty, inequality, and underdevelopment. There is a multitude of strong centrifugal forces that are creating dichotomies and cleavages within the economy, thus undermining the process of creating a democratic developmental and competition state.

This paper maintains that although the post-1994 South African state is developmental in ambitions only, and on the other hand it conforms to some basic features of a neoliberal competition state. The ever expanding array of socio-economic development strategies have brought about neither sustained economic growth nor less dependence on social welfarism and external sources of capital. Similarly, a very important reason for this failure lies in the contradictory nature of the some of the state's neo-liberal policy framework that is characterised by domestic imperatives such as the maintenance of welfarism and international necessities such as the signaling of creditworthiness to international financial institutions and ratings agencies.

#### *Developmental State: Recommendations*

- The public bureaucracy in South Africa has to emerge from being a mere political actor or a distributor of social welfare into a capitalist developmental state "*par excellence*."
- Strengthen the developmental capacity of the state, especially at the provincial and local spheres through a process of meritocratic recruitment of public officials and technocrats instead of the present widespread practices of cronyism.
- Increase presence of local and provincial governments in the economy through asset creation and asset leveraging.

- Integrate the Department of Small Business with the Department of Economic Development into a super developmental ministry.

*Competition State - Recommendations*

- At a national level, the Government of South Africa as a matter of urgency needs to dismantle the oligopolistic structure of some of the main sectors in the economy, namely banking, insurance, road transportation, construction, financial services, and mining.
- There has to be a concerted effort to internationalize many of South Africa's small and medium size enterprises.
- South African officials need to make a rapid shift from its comparative advantage based on its abundance of natural resources to developing a competitive advantage based on so-called "brain-power" enterprises.

**Notes**

1 Seekings and Natrass 2015, p. 258-59.

2 Fritz and Menocal 2007, p. 533.

3 Cerny and Evans 2004, p. 51. Cerny 1997, p. 259.

4 Brand 2005, p.12.

5 Burger 2014.

6 Forbes 2017, April 21.

7 Vissor 2004.

8 Forbes 2017, April 21.

9 Haque 2002.

10 Levi-Faur 2012.

11 Kirby and Murphy 2011.

12 Cerny 1990; Cerny & Evan 2004.

13 Horsfall 2012.

14 Cerny 2007, p. 251.

15 Fougner 2006, p. 165.

16 Levi-Faur 2012, p. 10.

17 O'Brien 2011, p. 183.

18 Freund 2007.

19 Levin 2007, p. 5.

20 Kim 2009.

21 Cypher and Dietz 2004, p. 215.

22 Ibid., p. 214.

23 Lewis 2010, p. 3-4.

24 Butler 2010.

25 NPC 2012a, p. 409.

26 Ferguson and Lohmann 1994, p. 178.

27 UNCTAD 2009.

28 Soko 2015a.

29 Soko 2015b.

30 Epstein 2005, p. 85.

31 Ibid.

- 32 Ibid., p. 86.
- 33 Payer 2016.
- 34 Mkandawire 2001, p. 291.
- 35 Wong 2004.
- 36 Ibid., p. 349.
- 37 IMF 2014, p. 5.
- 38 Jones 2002, p. 299.
- 39 Soederberg 2009, p. 84.
- 40 The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) is a United States Trade Act, enacted on 18 May 2000 as Public Law 106 of the 200th Congress.
- 41 Haque 2002.
- 42 OECD 2008.
- 43 Ibid., p. 6.
- 44 Haque 2002; Thrift 2010.
- 45 Soederberg 2010, p. 85.
- 46 Jerome 2004, p. 8.
- 47 Mostert 2002, p. 12.
- 48 OECD 2013.
- 49 Kirby and Murphy 2007, p. 9.
- 50 Seeking and Natrass 2005, p. 256.
- 51 Includes recipients of war veterans grant.
- 52 Horsfall and Chai, 2013, p. 136-37.
- 53 Ramia et al. 2013, p.143.
- 54 NPC 2012a, p. 376.
- 55 The national treasury documents also note that: "The social assistance programme provides a regular income to South Africa's most vulnerable households and is the government's most direct means of combating poverty. By the end of 2012-13, nearly 16.1 million people were beneficiaries of social grants, up from 2.5 million in 1998. "
- 56 Policy Brief 2006, February
- 57 Fougner 2006, p. 166.
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 Drahokoupil 2009.
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 Ünay, n.d.

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# An Appraisal of Green Militarization to Protect Rhinoceroses in Kruger National Park

JOHAN JOOSTE and SAM M. FERREIRA

**Abstract:** Trafficking of rhinoceros (rhino) horn threatens the persistence of two species living in Kruger National Park. Anti-poaching initiatives form part of an integrated approach adopted by South Africa. Several scholars see these initiatives as green militarization when authorities put people in readiness and assemble equipment, funding or approaches for war to deal with environmental emergencies. The militarization of rhino protection receives critique from several scholars and focuses on 1) ranger functions shifting more to law enforcement that are 2) increasingly militarized which 3) increases alienation of people living next to protected areas. We highlight that law enforcement was always a key element of ranger functions and that it is increasing. We illustrate militarization of rangers in Kruger, a responsible response given the changing global social context. We challenge, however, the hypothesis that militarization further alienates neighbours. The present qualitative narrative-based social science approaches introduce uncertainties that make it hard to evaluate the hypothesis. Complimentary formal hypothesis-based approaches may overcome these uncertainties. In addition, we postulate that improving protection of wildlife may carry crime reduction footprints into areas abutting reserves that can be beneficial to people living next to protected areas.

## Introduction

Wildlife trafficking is a primary threat to the persistence of several species worldwide.<sup>1</sup> Drivers of trafficking wildlife products associate with long histories of trade, inelastic demand for products often at distant markets, high profit potential, unclear wildlife property rights, human-wildlife conflict disincentives and inadequate law enforcement.<sup>2</sup> Poaching is the active killing or capturing of individuals of a species and the start of the trafficking supply chain. The drastic escalation of poaching often links with economic growth in primary consumer countries.<sup>3</sup> The first type of response to curb the consequences of wildlife trafficking requires broad-scale law enforcement across a local to cooperative international scale.<sup>4</sup> Authorities, however, do recognize that the multitude of drivers of poaching storms require integrated responses with a whole of government approach needing several functions to work together.<sup>5</sup>

Responses to threats of poaching for horn to the persistence of rhinoceroses (rhino) species in South Africa reflect integrated interventions. South Africa implements a strategic response of interventions embedded in national and international coordination.<sup>6</sup> Compulsory anti-poaching interventions rely on traditional perimeter and area protection tactics complimented by zone-, technology- and intelligence-led approaches. Biological management seeks to maximize the growth of rhino populations through skewing sex ratios

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<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v18/v18i1a4.pdf>

towards cows and establishing several new populations in safer areas where births are not constrained by environmental factors or high rhinoceros densities. Biological management was and remains the backbone of rhino recovery in South Africa.<sup>7</sup>

Apart from the two traditional responses, South African authorities also pursue long-term sustainability interventions through trade options of various commodities associated with rhinos at local and international scales (although international trade in rhino horn is prohibited at present), while advocating demand management interventions in end-user countries.<sup>8</sup> Game-changing interventions, however, focus on dealing with some of the causes of poaching such as inadequate law enforcement.<sup>9</sup> Providing career opportunities and disrupting organized crime irrespective of association with rhino poaching remains the highest priority.<sup>10</sup> This pillar also addresses the possible force multiplier effect of appropriate technologies.

The efforts of law enforcement staff and the organized approach to anti-poaching draw critiques of green militarization.<sup>11</sup> Militarization is an act by authorities of assembling and putting into readiness people, equipment, funding or approaches for war or other emergencies.<sup>12</sup> Authorities have a responsibility to ensure mission preparedness in terms of people, equipment, techniques and resources to sustain (e.g. budget). Green militarization refers to cases where such acts focus on environmental emergencies or threats such as wildlife trafficking that result in the plundering and degradation of environmental assets.<sup>13</sup>

Scholars focusing on risks associated with green militarization address a range of other issues as well, including governance and security, social media and philanthropy, as well as confluence of politics and capital. These issues focus on some of the aspects of the integrated approaches adopted by authorities. Critique of green militarization, however, have three specific associated aspects emerging from scholars: 1) ranger functions shifted from less conservation management to more law enforcement; 2) law enforcement responses are increasingly militarized; and 3) militarization intensifies existing alienation of people living next to protected areas. We use a case study of critiques of the protection of rhinoceroses in Kruger National Park (Kruger), South Africa, to review these prepositions.

### **The Law Enforcement Role of a Wildlife Ranger**

The primary responsibility of wildlife rangers working in protected areas is to ensure the territorial integrity and safety for an area of responsibility. Tasks are multi-faceted and include ensuring the day to day health and well-being of the wildlife, research and monitoring, game capture and introductions, population management, controlled fire burning programs, infrastructure and equipment maintenance, public relations, environmental education, as well as local community relations, liaison and involvement. Added to these are the normal day to day management tasks, human resource planning and administration.<sup>14</sup>

A key task that forms a focused part of ensuring territorial integrity of an area is law enforcement. All protected areas were proclaimed under legislation (e.g. South African National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act - Act No. 57 of 2003).<sup>15</sup> Wildlife rangers are essentially tasked with ensuring compliance with the various rules and regulations of these various levels of legislation (e.g. South African National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act - Act No. 10 of 2004).<sup>16</sup> Law enforcement has and will always be the key part of a wildlife ranger's job. The rhinoceros poaching is emphasising a certain

kind of law enforcement at present, but does not reflect a change in the role and conservation ethics of a wildlife ranger.

In addition, the social context of wildlife protection changed substantially in the past decade or two.<sup>17</sup> Society expects fair and equitable benefits from protected areas.<sup>18</sup> At the same time the globalization of economic processes impose poaching drivers very differently from what they were before – poaching supply chains were always transnational, but the involvement of organized crime was not as rigorous.<sup>19</sup> In this context, poachers seeking to hunt rhino change tactics. For instance, at present, much poaching takes place at night while this was not the case when the poaching surge started.<sup>20</sup>

This means a far more holistic requirement for empowering wildlife rangers to fulfil their law enforcement tasks. Authorities now have to implement ranger-wellness programmes and facilitate counselling of wildlife rangers that have had contact with poachers while completing their law enforcement roles, including: supporting the rangers' families, repeated training in rules of engagement procedures, and awareness programmes of organized crime's entrapment schemes. Rangers have better weapons and access to technology to ensure a day and night advantage given the changing tactics of poachers. What the responses in Kruger and elsewhere reflect, however, are responsible management empowering rangers with training and equipment to fulfil law enforcement as one of the multiple tasks that they are responsible for in a rapidly changing world. These responses necessitated that rangers' daily tasks became more dominated by law enforcement activities than previously.

### **The Increased Militarization of Wildlife Law Enforcement**

Green militarization could result from a redirection of a country's formal security forces to protect specifically wildlife. Such redistribution acts are common in several responses across Africa. The Botswana Defence Force, for example, has taken over all anti-poaching initiatives to protect African elephants and two species of rhinoceroses.<sup>21</sup> In South Africa's case, the redistribution of priorities of formal security forces involved minimal re-assignment to protecting rhinoceroses.<sup>22</sup> Militarization reflected by re-assigning formal security forces did thus not materialize in the case of Kruger and are often flagged as a symptom of the lack of Government commitment towards protecting natural heritage, perhaps unfairly given the strategic priorities of South Africa.<sup>23</sup>

Green militarization, however, also reflects an adaptation of approaches.<sup>24</sup> This is when management authorities responsible for protected areas apply the military principles, but formal security forces are typically marginally involved. A critical analysis of anti-poaching tactics associated with rhino protection in Kruger will highlight that most of the strategies of militarized responses are embedded at some level within tactics to strategies and management thoughts on approaches.<sup>25</sup> For instance, since 2013, authorities in Kruger increased ranger numbers from 250 to 400. Kruger management also implemented high level technologies and make use of medium level technologies such as canine systems as well as various sensor systems. The Mission Area Joint Operations Centre collates information and provides intelligence to direct patrolling efforts, investigations and arrests. These responses reflect on an increased level of readiness for emergencies through formal and informal activities. Wildlife law enforcement to protect rhinos in Kruger thus manifested through bold decision making in increased militarization since 2008 and decidedly so since 2013. This is in line with the broad concept of green militarization defined previously for Kruger.<sup>26</sup>

This trend, however, is not unique to wildlife management agencies. Several large scale businesses make formal and informal use of strategies of war as part of their outlook and financial growth potential.<sup>27</sup> Businesses engage in crime prevention initiatives based on such tactics in an attempt to curb asset thefts.<sup>28</sup> In addition, the private security industry is one of the fastest growing industries in South Africa.<sup>29</sup>

### **The Intensified Alienation of Neighbours from Wildlife Protected Areas**

A key critique of the implementation of anti-poaching tactics is the further alienation of neighbours resulting from militarized approaches. Published studies that made use of social surveys conclude that militarization approaches in Kruger are one of the key drivers of increased antagonistic perceptions that local people living next to parks have of protected areas and their managers. Several other studies and reviews that included Kruger as a case study also concluded more negative impacts on people's perception of Kruger and the management of the Park.<sup>30</sup>

By the end of 2017, SANParks Environmental Crime Investigations unit were aware of approximately 7500 people that were directly involved in poaching of rhinos and elephants in Kruger.<sup>31</sup> Household sizes of people living in municipalities abutting Kruger ranges from three to four.<sup>32</sup> If we assume that rural people have a typical circle of friends of fifteen and five of those are really close friends, often family members, we can estimate that approximately 135,000 to 142,500 people are directly or indirectly involved in poaching.<sup>33</sup> A total of 3,155,265 people lived in the municipalities that abut Kruger in South Africa by 2016.<sup>34</sup> This translates to between 4.3% and 4.5% of the people living next to Kruger in South Africa being directly impacted and thus also potentially alienated by green militarization activities associated with protecting rhinos and elephants.

SANParks conducted 30 public and 24 thematic focal group meetings during which 5762 people took part with a further 501 written inputs as part of the revision of the Kruger National Park Management plan. Of the 30 public meetings, 22 took place within the municipalities that border Kruger. It is noteworthy that no negative feedback on law enforcement and/or ranger related matters were received from stakeholders. Instead, safety for people was the sixth most flagged issue, poaching was the eighth and people flagged a need of more rangers within the top 25 concerns raised.<sup>35</sup>

In addition, benefit flows from Kruger are diverse including: employment and business opportunities, capacity building, infrastructure support, direct benefits from ecosystem goods and services, and managing relationships by restoring rights.<sup>36</sup> For instance, during 2013/2014, 2243 people were directly employed by SANParks in Kruger of which approximately 550 were directly involved in law enforcement. A further 949 were employed through the Expanded Public Works Programme, while Kruger concessions including tourism lodges, shops, restaurants and vehicle rentals (each of which contribute significantly towards job creation in the park) collectively employed 1277 people. In addition, Kruger stimulated the establishment of several abutting conservation areas that employ 7880 people, a fraction of which are also directly involved in law enforcement. Using the same logic as for people impacted by poaching, approximately 7.0% to 7.4% of the people living next to the park directly or indirectly benefit from Kruger. In addition, of the R346,858,898.41 total spent by Kruger management on goods and services for the 2014/2015 financial year, 90.19% was from Black Economic Empowerment rated companies.

These examples extracted from a diverse set of benefits that people derived through Kruger and its activities including law enforcement, provide a contrasting perspective on the importance of green militarization as a factor increasing alienation of people towards protected areas like Kruger. It is likely that general perceptions may be less negative than before unlike the perceptions described by various scholars.

Our reflections highlight the need for a study on general perceptions of people living next to Kruger. This could be complemented by also focusing on the impacts of poaching rather than just the effects of anti-poaching. The various studies that critique green militarization approaches, however, acknowledge and give weight to the legacy of past conservation practices. The forceful removal of people from land, South Africa's apartheid history and the existence of Kruger as largely a white elitist facility alienated local people communities from Kruger as a protected area long before managers equipped wildlife rangers with militarized skills.<sup>37</sup> The management of Kruger has changed emphasis and are now more people focused than before.<sup>38</sup> This also predicts changes in perceptions of people that may contrast those highlighted by scholars depicting increased alienation associated with militarization. Even so, the challenge of fixing the social injustices of the past remains a focus. Green militarization may serve, however, as an additional factor to be recognized together with past social injustices, rather than militarization being the key or only cause of alienation. Scholars that critique green militarization may add additional value if they could also provide potential solutions for the underlying pathology of past social injustices, or alternatives to militarization of anti-poaching tactics when authorities seek to protect wildlife assets.

### **The Perceptions and Factual Uncertainties of Militarized Alienation**

A key challenge is dealing with perceptions, versus factual certainties. Evidence-based conservation management is a key requirement for authorities responsible for complex socio-economic-ecological systems typical of managing protected areas.<sup>39</sup> Science-based techniques provide robust data. Evidence of intensified alienation through militarization should thus adhere to scientific principles of learning.

The quantitative science process typically starts with an observation or idea from which scholars construct hypotheses including alternative and null-hypotheses.<sup>40</sup> Researchers use experimental, comparative or experiential approaches to collect data that allows them to test these hypotheses. The science process focuses on seeking to falsify a hypothesis, typically through quantitative statistical approaches, but non-statistical patterns are as powerful.<sup>41</sup> Learning takes place through the falsifying process – a hypothesis remains true as long as it cannot be falsified. In the face of uncertainty and urgency, ecosystem managers often resort to adaptive management, a process of learning by doing.<sup>42</sup> Even so, the scientific basis of learning and obtaining information remains the same – adaptive managers have some idea how an ecosystem might work, conduct management as if they were correct, collect data, and evaluate predictions made from how they thought the system work using the science-based hypothesis testing approach.<sup>43</sup>

The social sciences make extensively use of learning processes embedded in qualitative approaches and narratives that capture the subtle nuances that quantitative science and hypothesis testing approaches neglect.<sup>44</sup> Various learning approaches thus carry different benefits and risks. The qualitative science approaches may capture nuances better than the

quantitative science processes, but learning may be less robust because the process does not explicitly aim to eliminate alternative explanations.

The present literature reflecting on increased alienation of local people towards conservation authorities through the militarization of law enforcement by wildlife rangers primarily make use of qualitative approaches. Authors of the published and peer-reviewed outputs associated with militarization effects in Kruger set a clear basis of their perception from other literature that people are increasingly more alienated by ranger militarization in Kruger. The authors, however, do not provide a clear set of hypotheses including null hypothesis. Some published studies made use of extensive individual and focus group interviews.<sup>45</sup> In some instances, studies also used ethnographic research methods. Even so, authors did not use quantitative analytical approaches to falsify hypotheses. Authors often used selected quotes to support their perception. This limits the exploration of alternative explanations for increased alienation of people living next to protected areas.

The combination of aspects of the approaches used by authors that critique wildlife protection efforts at present may impose limitations on conclusions. Applying complimentary quantitative and qualitative narrative and hypothesis-based approaches may add significant value and provide better insight into the role that green militarization may play in the alienation of people living next to protected areas, and specifically Kruger.

### **The Societal Footprint of Providing Security to Wildlife**

An alternative outcome of responsible managers empowering wildlife rangers to fulfil their law enforcement roles to militarized alienation is an expanded security footprint for people living next to protected areas. The integrated approaches implemented by SANParks require disruption of organized crime.<sup>46</sup> Investigations led by the SANParks Environmental Crime Investigations unit provided evidence that assisted the South African Police to arrest over a thousand wildlife criminals inside as well as areas abutting Kruger from 2012 to 2017. These likely have consequences for reduction in other criminal activities as were recorded elsewhere.<sup>47</sup>

In addition, providing secure areas within which people live next to parks is a key requirement if authorities seek to continue disrupting organized crime and provide for career and economic opportunities.<sup>48</sup> Provision of such opportunities is a key aspect that substantially changes the willingness of people to poach.<sup>49</sup> Green militarization provides an opportunity for options to expand the security skills into a footprint within the buffer zones of protected areas to contribute to regional safety and security for all people. The reality is that no project seeking to address social injustices of the past will succeed without real proof that authorities can maintain law and order.

The concept of focusing on people has been the basis of river catchment management strategies changing from water for animals in parks to sustainable use of water resources that benefit people across the region in and around Kruger.<sup>50</sup> The conservation outcome that resulted from a people-focused approach was substantially reduced mortalities of animals within Kruger during the drought of 2015/2016 when no perennial river stopped flowing.<sup>51</sup> Authorities could thus benefit from establishing and implementing security programs that place less focus on rhinos and more focus of people in and around protected areas.



## Conclusion

Our appraisal highlights that a primary role of wildlife rangers remains as law enforcement, but that the changing context of transnational wildlife crime resulted in ranger tasks being more law enforcement focused than before. In addition, responsible conservation management increasingly militarized the law enforcement role of wildlife rangers following significant societal change as well as a global trend set by big businesses participating in large-scale economies. Militarized law enforcement is an intervention of necessity to buy time whilst other more lasting solutions are pursued given this global context. Furthermore, authorities have the added responsibility to protect the staff made responsible for this dangerous and thankless task.

We find it hard though to conclusively support the preposition that militarization leads to increased alienation of people living next to protected areas towards wildlife as well as managers of wildlife. This is particularly so given the lack of recent knowledge on the trends in the perception of various stakeholders living in areas abutting Kruger. By combining different science approaches, authorities could rigorously evaluate the role of green militarization that could allow the development and implementation of responses embedded in interventions to fix social wrongs of the past.

For wildlife and people, addressing the social wrongs of the past hinges on implementing the game changing interventions – provide career opportunities for people, while disrupting organized crime. Disrupting organized crime starts with a broken-window or zero tolerance strategy. That way the militarization footprint of law enforcement associated with wildlife expands to a regional safety and security for people.

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## REVIEW ESSAY

# Guns in African History: The Examples of Central Africa and Nigeria

TIM STAPLETON

**Giacomo Macola. 2016. *The Gun in Central Africa: A History of Technology and Politics*, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press. 249 pp.**

**Saheed Aderinto. 2018. *Guns and Society in Colonial Nigeria: Firearms, Culture and Public Order*, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press. 300 pp.**

Guns have played an important and deadly role in African History. Relevant themes include the gun-slave cycle of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, the superiority of European firepower produced by new weapons such as the Maxim Gun during the “Scramble for Africa,” and the proliferation of small arms such as the ubiquitous AK-47 assault rifle in parts of post-colonial Africa. Moving beyond these well-known examples, historians Giacomo Macola and Saheed Aderinto have written books that seek to use the gun as a vehicle to explore broader aspects of the history of different parts of Africa.

Macola’s book looks at the development of a “gun society” in the interior of Central Africa, particularly the savannah region that now comprises Zambia, Malawi, and the southern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), during the second half of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. According to the author, “a gun society is one in which firearms are put to momentous productive, military and/or other symbolic uses, over a sustained period of time and by a politically or numerically significant portion of the population” (p. 19). Macola criticizes previous works on the history of technology in Africa, particularly the few related to imported firearms, for engaging in technological determinism in that African societies are seen as passively receiving and being moulded by technological innovation. The recent work of William Storey, which looks at the relation of gun ownership and trade to the rise of a racial hierarchy in Southern Africa, is criticized for relying on colonial sources and therefore failing to explore the adoption of guns within African societies.<sup>1</sup> The central theme of Macola’s “culturally sensitive” (p. 163) study is that the different meanings and functions of guns adopted by people in Central Africa “were shaped by pre-existing sociocultural relations and political interests” (p. 30). The author intends to use the gun as an example of technology through which to observe important factors in the history of Central Africa. A secondary aim is to revive interest in pre-colonial African history which engendered a great deal of scholarship from the 1960s to 1980s, the decades immediately following decolonization, but which has faded in recent years.

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<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v18/v18i1a5.pdf>

Macola's book begins with an "unashamedly encyclopedic" (p. 30) survey to introduce non-specialists to the pre-colonial history of the interior and southern portion of Central Africa. The subsequent chapters focus on the history of the gun in specific areas. Chapter Two looks at the upper Zambezi River in what is now western Zambia where, during the 1800s, the Lozi Kingdom did not initially adopt imported firearms because of the late arrival of the Atlantic trade and the fact that the Lozi did not export slaves but utilized them internally. After several decades of rule by the invading Kololo who also did not use guns extensively, the re-established Lozi kings of the late nineteenth century sought to centralize control of firearms, which became symbols of royalty and modernity. Nearby, the decentralized Kaonde and Luvale people, during the late nineteenth century, began to use guns as tools for hunting, symbols of manhood, and a form of currency. Looking at why such communities prized apparently obsolete muzzle-loaders, Macola explains that these represented an "accessible technology" (p. 59) as they were made with soft iron that could be mended locally.

The third chapter looks at the Yeke state, located in what is now Katanga in southern DRC, which was founded by the upstart invader Msiri in the 1850s and 1860s and used imported firearms to engage in the slave and ivory trades. Macola explains that the Yeke use of guns for military and economic purposes gave them short-term success but that their failure to develop gunpowder manufacturing made them dependent on importation. While Yeke power was undermined by a rebellion of the hitherto victimized Sanga people who blocked the delivery of gunpowder, Yeke fortunes were revived by the arrival of the Belgian colonizers of the Congo Free State who employed them as military auxiliaries and provided guns and ammunition. For Macola, the example of the warlord Yeke state undermines the technologically deterministic approach as possession of guns did not guarantee success. This is a strong and well-researched chapter but the cultural approach falls away as it focuses on a "war and society" or "new military history" interpretation.

The next chapter examines the impact of colonial rule on gun domestication in what is now western Zambia and Katanga. Coming under British rule by treaty, the Lozi Kingdom retained its guns and procured new ones from Angolan gunrunners until the 1920s when the colonial state of Northern Rhodesia imposed laws that limited gun ownership and hunting. The possibility that this delay was caused by the First World War, which was fought in two nearby territories with the last German force surrendering in eastern Northern Rhodesia, is not discussed. For Belgian ruled Katanga, the Yeke continued as gun-armed colonial military allies until the 1910s when they entered wage labor in the area's mines which meant that guns became individual hunting tools and symbols of manhood. By the 1930s, difficulty in obtaining guns stimulated local manufacturing of old-style muskets from gun scraps, industrial products and local materials, and gunpowder was made from charcoal and imported saltpeter.

The last two chapters shift the focus to the Ngoni who originated from Southern Africa and moved into what is now eastern Zambia and Malawi in the middle 1800s. Macola sees the Ngoni rejection of firearms not as a result of isolation from trade or of a failure to militarily adapt but as a deliberate choice informed by sociocultural factors. For the Ngoni, Macola claims, guns represented a threat to masculinity and social advancement, which were related to demonstrating prowess in hand-to-hand combat with edged weapons. After a bloody conquest by the British, which Macola recounts in traditional military history style,



the Ngoni sense of honor was reinvented as a desire to join the colonial military where their symbol of manhood changed from the spear to the gun. In this view, the Ngoni attraction to the colonial military led to them being defined as a “martial race” by British officers.

Macola’s interesting book suffers from major problems. Although the author warns that he is not writing a “technical compendium,” some explanation of types of guns such as flintlocks, percussion muskets, muzzle-loaders, breach-loaders, and rifles would have been useful as these terms appear repeatedly throughout the text. More seriously, some of the most important contentions are based on very limited or no evidence. This is particularly apparent with the claims that the Lozi kings used guns as symbols of modernity, and that Ngoni concepts of honor and manhood were the primary factors prompting their initial rejection of firearms and their subsequent alleged flocking to the colonial army. The possibility that the late nineteenth century Lozi kings adopted guns to prevent another Kololo-like conquest is not taken seriously enough. While honor may have been a factor in the Ngoni reluctance to use guns, tactical and environmental adaptations were also likely very important. In the same period, in East Africa, the decentralized Maasai and the Kingdom of Rwanda developed effective tactics against musket-armed raiders but these methods proved disastrous against much better armed colonial invaders who arrived suddenly.<sup>2</sup> The claim that the Ngoni dominated the ranks of British military units in the region is in some cases speculative (p. 151), exaggerated or not contextualized. With reference to Ngoni reasons for joining the colonial army, the entire cultural argument is based on a passage in a single colonial memoir (p. 154, note 78), and no Ngoni sources were used and no fieldwork was conducted in contemporary Ngoni (or for that matter Lozi) communities, which would have been accessible. After describing how colonial conquest left Ngoni communities shattered, the author unconvincingly dismisses poverty and hunger as instigators for military enlistment. Historians who conducted extensive oral and documentary research on African motivations for joining later colonial militaries, Timothy Parsons on Kenya and I on Zimbabwe, are set up as strawmen and criticized for ignoring “profound historical processes” (p. 154) and presenting a “lopsided perspective” (p. 156).<sup>3</sup> Macola would have benefited from reading Timothy Lovering’s well researched PhD thesis on African soldiers in colonial Malawi which discusses the Ngoni and other ethnic groups such as the Yao who used guns in the nineteenth century, enlisted in the colonial army and were characterized as a martial race.<sup>4</sup>

Macola engages in considerable speculation. Jumping about thirty or forty years of history, he guesses that the Yeke’s historical association with firearms informed their enlistment in Katanga separatist forces during the 1960s Congo Crisis (p. 114). There is nothing about possible Yeke military enlistment from 1910s to 1950s. While the book’s conclusion recommends that modern policymakers apply a deeper historical and cultural approach to the problems of militia violence in eastern DRC, an area slightly outside the scope of the book, not much is mentioned besides the well-known nineteenth century warlord Tippu Tip.

While Macola hopes to inspire new interest in pre-colonial history, the book deals mostly with the conquest and early colonial eras and employs just three oral interviews all of which are related to the Yeke case. In fact, the book represents a clear illustration of why Africanist historians have unfortunately shied away from pre-colonial history as the evidence is limited, it is difficult to address the period before 1800, and oral traditions are eroding and probably never focused much on social and cultural issues that currently

interest academic historians. If not for the detailed and well documented sections on military and colonial history, the book's pretentious, speculative, and thinly supported cultural approach would be fragmentary.

Using guns as a "window" into the history of colonial Nigeria from around 1900 to 1960, Aderinto differentiates between a gun society and a gun culture. For him, a gun society is one that "cannot do without firearms in its daily social, political, cultural and religious life" (p. 7) and a gun culture exists within a society in which guns are used for any purpose. Given his definitions, and in contradiction with Macola's view that a gun society existed in Central Africa and Storey's cautionary approach to the term, Aderinto maintains that no gun society existed in Africa before the twentieth century as firearms were restricted to certain groups and used for "empire building and slave-gathering" (p. 7). Aderinto's main point is that Nigeria became a gun society during British colonial rule when the liberalization of gun ownership became transformative. During this period more Nigerians possessed firearms than ever before and, more importantly for the author, guns influenced Nigerian society at different levels.

The book's first chapter discusses the arrival of guns in Nigeria through trade with Europeans and Arabs and looks at how the firearms trade evolved from a regular feature of the Trans-Atlantic system of the 1600s and 1700s importing single-shot muzzle-loaders to a restricted trade in the late nineteenth century when machine guns were used in colonial conquest. From the 1890s to 1920s, as the next chapter shows, the early colonial state regulated gun ownership to reflect social status with common people permitted to own old-fashioned muzzle-loaders popularly called Dane Guns, educated Africans possessing slightly more advanced shotguns, and Europeans and eventually some African elites monopolizing control of the most lethal firearms including revolvers and breach-loading rifles. In this growing Nigerian gun society, by the 1920s, firearms were not only used for hunting a dwindling amount of wildlife and defending against thieves but increasingly for firing salutes during important public events.

While the British did not want Nigerians to access the most deadly firearms with which they could resist colonial rule, the proliferation of the Dane Gun presented an opportunity for the colonial government and businesses to profit, as Nigerians were dependent upon huge quantities of imported gunpowder. During the Second World War, as Aderinto's third chapter discusses, the British supplied gunpowder to Nigerians in exchange for critical wartime materials such as rubber and palm oil. The next chapter looks at the importance of firearms in maintaining colonial rule. For Europeans in Nigeria, and elsewhere in colonial Africa, using rifles in hunting and sport shooting, and belonging to racially exclusive Rifle Associations symbolized imperial domination over Africans and the African environment. In a chapter on the role of firearms in public disorder, Aderinto re-interprets the shooting to death of twenty-one miners by the police during the 1949 Enugu Colliery strike as resulting not from a labor dispute but from the police trying to secure a store of explosives that they feared could be seized by the radical Zikist movement. Furthermore, he discusses how, in the decolonization era of the 1950s, guns were not just employed by the colonizers but that they began to feature within Nigerian political violence. Guns became institutionalized in everyday Nigerian life, which meant that armed robbery rose in tandem with the cash economy, and widespread hunting and celebratory shooting caused more firearm accidents that were often interpreted in a local context.

Gun ownership was not uniform thorough colonial Nigeria and the last chapter reveals that firearms were proliferated in the conservative Muslim north by Christian southerners who, from the early twentieth century, moved there to work or conduct business. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, with the rise of the nationalist movement, the colonial regime completely deregulated the ownership of Dane Guns, which were seen as unthreatening but tightened up rules around possession of shotguns and precision firearms among educated Nigerians who were at the forefront of calls for independence. In his epilogue, Aderinto discusses the demise of a gun society in post-colonial Nigeria where a succession of military governments strictly limited legal gun ownership and publically executed armed robbers by firing squad, and where hunting declined with the extermination of wildlife and celebratory gun salutes became less fashionable. Ironically, at the same time the Nigerian Civil War (1967-70) and conflicts in neighbouring Liberia and Sierra Leone led to a spread of illegal and highly lethal military weapons across Nigeria which, in the context of state and economic failure, were (and are) commonly used by criminals and insurgents.

Aderinto has written a solid history. His statements are supported by ample evidence collected from the three branches of the Nigerian National Archives (Ibadan, Kaduna, and Enugu), colonial newspapers, memoirs and some oral interviews conducted in western Nigeria. The richness of Aderinto's research shows why historians of Africa have gravitated to colonial and post-colonial topics. It would be difficult to write such a detailed and insightful history on the same theme focusing entirely on pre-colonial Nigeria. In addition, the book is clearly written and contextualized while addressing sophisticated ideas and an array of specific examples. Usefully, the author gives concise explanations of the relevant types of firearms at the start of the text. It is a relief that Aderinto recognizes but does not belabor the idea that the gun (like other weapons) became a symbol of masculinity in Nigeria as guns have taken on this role in almost every part of the world. My main criticism of the book is that it might be too sweeping to claim with absolute certainty that a gun society, the definition of which varies, did not exist anywhere in Africa before the twentieth century, as research on this theme is relatively new and the evidence is limited. Historiographically, it is tempting to ask if the different definitions of a gun society put forth by these books originate, to some extent, from the authors' personal experience; did Macola's location in gun-shy Britain influence his narrower definition and did Aderinto's position in the gun-loving southern United States widen his view?

## Notes

1 Storey 2008.

2 "Mr. J.M. Hildebrandt" 1877-78, p. 448; Kagame 1963, p. 174.

3 Parsons 1999; Stapleton 2011.

4 Lovering 2002. For the military enlistment of Malawians in Southern Rhodesia see Stapleton 2006, p. 36.

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## REVIEW ESSAY

# Nonhumans, Narratives, and Proximities: The Power of Things and the Cultural Politics of Race, Land and Water in Zimbabwe

ADMIRE MSEBA

Yuka Suzuki. 2017. *The Nature of Whiteness: Race, Animals and Nation in Zimbabwe*. Seattle: University of Washington Press. 232 pp.

Joost Fontein. 2015. *Remaking Mutirikwi: Landscape, Water and Belonging in Southern Zimbabwe*. Suffolk: James Currey. 365 pp.

### Introduction

Beginning in early 2000, Zimbabwe's postcolonial rulers expropriated large-scale farms, mostly owned by white farmers. They parceled the land to the country's black inhabitants. Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform Program (hereinafter FTLRP) elicited massive international and domestic criticism (and defense) and, above all, prompted a flurry of studies. Many of these studies focused on white farmers' relations with both the colonial and postcolonial states, their self-representations and their attempts to construct a sense of identity and belonging in this former white settler colony.<sup>1</sup> Many more studies were devoted to an examination of the politics of land in Zimbabwe. Some of the studies pointed out how throughout the twentieth century, land was at the center of colonial and postcolonial projects of state-making.<sup>2</sup> A number of these studies debated the logic behind the Zimbabwean Government's belated attempt at radical land reform.<sup>3</sup> Others examined the results of FTLRP exercise.<sup>4</sup> One strand of this literature documented the limits of this land reform by pointing to disruption in both agricultural productivity and the economy that accompanied Zimbabwe's fast track land reform.<sup>5</sup> Another strand questioned the idea that the land reform was a complete failure.<sup>6</sup> Many of these examined how local interests intersected with the broader politics of land and power that inspired colonial and postcolonial rulers' projects of state-making in Zimbabwe.<sup>7</sup>

The two books reviewed here, Yuka Suzuki's *The Nature of Whiteness* and Joost Fontein's *Remaking Mutirikwi*, contribute to this immense literature on white farmers and the politics of race, land and belonging in Zimbabwe. Unlike most of the earlier studies, they pay particular attention to how human and non-human actors assumed importance in the creation of identities and the legitimation of claims to land, power, and belonging.<sup>8</sup> In doing so, they raise the analytical plane to new levels. The remainder of this essay pays particular attention to the ways in which the two authors bring in ideas of nature, landscape, narrative,

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<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v18/v18i1a6.pdf>

and proximity to the analysis of the production of racial identities and the politics of land, power, and belonging in Zimbabwe.

### **Nature, Narrative, and White Identities in Rural Zimbabwe**

In *The Nature of Whiteness*, Yuka Suzuki highlights the importance of animals, especially wildlife, in how white farmers who inhabited the western parts of Zimbabwe constructed their racial identities and a sense of belonging in the country beginning in the twilight years of Rhodesian rule, but especially after Zimbabwe became independent in 1980. White farmers, she points out, deployed metaphors of nature to normalize racial difference at a time when white racial privilege was “out of place—both visually and politically” (p. 5). Moreover, white farmers appropriated the environment to legitimate their claims to belonging to western Zimbabwe. The imageries of western Zimbabwe that the white landowners constructed, Suzuki points out, depicted the area as pristine nature (p.14). Similarly, their understanding of the area’s social milieu erased Africans from the landscape. “When asked the approximate population of Mlilo,” Suzuki writes, “[white] farmers typically replied, ‘about a hundred, more or less.’ The question,” she explains, “was received, however, with the implicit assumption that one was referring to whites, when in reality, the black workers and their families who also lived on these properties easily doubled the total population of the community” (p. 18). However, as Fontein shows, attempts at Europeanising Zimbabwean landscapes never succeed in removing past traces of African presence just as the land reform and the re-Africanization of the land never completely erased traces of European presence in the land.

Suzuki’s deployment of how animals served Mlilo’s white farmer claims to belonging recalls David Hughes’ argument about white farmers’ uses of dams elsewhere in Zimbabwe.<sup>9</sup> However, among Mlilo’s white farmers, animals, were also instrumental in the construction of other identities. By paying attention to how pets were treated within the Mlilo community, for example, Suzuki draws out hierarchies of gender, ethnicity and social difference within this community. White farmers of British origin distinguished themselves from their Afrikaner counterparts by noting that whereas the latter left their dogs outside, they sometimes lived with theirs in the house. “The English,” she notes, “claimed this practice as another example of essential difference between the two groups, implying with subtle shake of head that their way—to allow animals indoors—was the kindlier, more civilized way to treat animals” (p. 133). Suzuki, then, is careful to disaggregate her white subjects even as the lens of whiteness that she uses has the potential of homogenizing them. She achieves this feat by deftly deploying the narrative technique. Her use of narrative enables her to nuance her discussion of the transition from cattle to wildlife. The story she tells is not of wholesale cooperation, but of individuals who turned their cattle ranches into wildlife ranches at different times. This process, she shows, was fraught with local conflicts among ranchers as well as generational struggles within families. The result is a nuanced discussion of the social world of white farmers in late colonial and postcolonial western Zimbabwe.

Suzuki suggests that this social world came to a crashing halt with the land invasions that accompanied Zimbabwe’s FTLRP at the turn of the millennium. The land reform, she argues, signalled an end to wildlife production as an economic activity in Zimbabwe as well

as the undoing of what many believed to be a colonial inheritance. Pointing to the need to factor in “the symbolic dimensions of wildlife with its connotations of white wealth and privilege,” Suzuki maintains that “[f]ar beyond everyday poaching,” the dramatic rise in the number of animals killed during the FTLRP “clearly signified something greater. Animals,” she adds, “were yet again utilized for their powerful symbolism, and their destruction was the physical manifestation of erasing, in one violent act, the wildlife ranching industry painstakingly built by white farmers over the past three decades” (p141). This sense of erasure marks a distinction between her work and Fontein’s study of the remaking of the Mutirikwi landscape to which I now turn.

### **Of Immanence, Proximities, and the Cultural Politics of Land and Water**

Where Suzuki saw erasures and ruptures in the wake of the country’s FTLRP, Joost Fontein stresses co-existences. In this study of contestations over land, water, and belonging in the Lake Mutirikwi area of Southern Zimbabwe, Fontein stresses the persistence, side by side and often times, over time, of past practices and different regimes of power. All of this, he suggests, is visible in the physical remains of the practices etched in the landscape—the graves, the ruins and the dam itself as well as the intangibles—the continued salience of ancestral spirits and ghosts of former white settlers such as George Sheppard. The past he shows, remains immanent in many important ways. Echoing earlier arguments about the legacies of colonial states on postcolonial processes of state-making by Jocelyn Alexander and Michael Drinkwater, for example, Fontein points out that the attempts at reasserting the power of technocrats in the post 2000s era reproduced earlier efforts at achieving similar goals by the Rhodesian state in the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>10</sup>

Unlike Suzuki who emphasises how White farmers instrumentally used animals in constructing identities and making claims to belonging, Fontein insists that “graves and burial sites are not simply passive and inert ‘criteria’ for assertions of belonging” (p. 62). Instead, he argues, “around Mutirikwi at least, graves and indeed ruins have a more active and affective presence” (p. 62). “[A]ncestral graves and sacred *mapa*” he emphasises, “create social obligations and can cause droughts, sickness, misfortune or even political and economic strife” (p. 68). He also suggests that “the agency of sacred places derives ultimately, from the intentionality of the spirits (whether ancestral or troubling, dangerous *ngozi*)” and different individuals respond to it (pp. 68-69).

Although Fontein is careful to point out that, in making the case that graves and ruins have an affective and active presence, he is not denying human creativity (p. 289), it seems to me that he overstates the power of things. My own encounters with Vashona ritual politics elsewhere in Zimbabwe reveals that graves, ruins, sacred groves, and spirits in and of themselves do not have the kind of agency that Fontein ascribes to them. Instead, the power resides in people who find meaning in these things. Put in a slightly different way, the graves or groves or spirits do not, by themselves, create misfortunes, or fortunes or as Fontein put it, social obligations. Human beings through their actions or inactions do. Consider, for example, how two elders who grew up at Chishawasha mission explained why it was important for them to continue sweeping the graves of their ancestors despite the ban on such practices by the Roman Catholic missionaries:

Tigere Mupfumi: Yes we have now converted to Catholicism but we should not abandon our cultural practices. You see those mountains over there. We go there and sweep the graves of our ancestors such as VaNzvere and

Chinamhora.... We go there to sweep, we will be supplicating the ancestors so that when the rain season arrives, we will receive good rains....”

Ndoro: This should be done annually. We begin with *Chipwa*,”

Mupfumi “Then we go and sweep *Nzvere’s* grave, then we go and sweep Dzama’s grave and perform other rituals and then we return to our homes knowing that the coming season will be good.

Ndoro: If I am not mistaken...in some places, after they had finished that work [sweeping graves and conducting rituals], it would rain even before the people have arrived back home.<sup>11</sup>

For these elders, misfortune would have fallen on them if they had stopped performing these rituals in conformity to the new rules imposed by the missionaries. But, this is not because of the powers of their ancestors’ graves but because of the inactions of the living. Conversely, for them, it rained not because the graves in and of themselves had any agency, but because they appropriately performed their rituals. More importantly, the elders made this point not as an assertion of the power of the graves of their ancestors, but as an articulation of defiance against Catholic missionaries’ authority and claims to the land.

Elders in the neighbouring Mangwende area described in similar terms the politics surrounding an important ritual site: a pool that they said belonged to *Nyamhita Nehanda*. In times of droughts, pestilences and other misfortunes, they told me, they would go and propitiate the spirit of *Nyamhita* at this pool. In my discussion with these elders, it became clear that it is not the pool that matters. In fact, its precise location is contested. Instead, what matters was that the rituals at the pool were performed by the right kind of people, those who belonged to the same clan as the original *Nyamhita* who is said to have drowned in this pool. One elder insisted that even the Mangwende chiefs of the area did not have the powers to perform the rituals at this pool, for “they cannot propitiate the spirit of their mother [*hava womberere amai vavo*].”<sup>12</sup> The point that these elders made speaks to Fontein’s argument about the politics of belonging. The elders stressed that only they, and not the others, could perform the rituals at *Nyamhita’s* pool in order to contest the authority of the Mangwende clan. Thus, they, and not Chief Mangwende and his clansmen, were the rightful “owners” of the land. This is the point that Fontein makes about autochthony. Pools, like graves, ruins and springs, then, become important in the politics of belonging not because of *what* they can do, but *how* people use them to legitimate their claims and contest others’. To be sure, Fontein makes similar observations. “One reason for linking graves and ruins is ethnographic,” he writes, noting that “in justifying current occupations and claims to land, people referred not only to *makuva* of their kith and kin but also *matongo*—ruined homesteads and birthplaces” (p. 65). But, I am not convinced that such references sustain the second leg of Fontein’s argument. That is, graves, ruins and rain have affective and active presence. Indeed, the points that Fontein raises to demonstrate the materiality of things such as the flooding of areas near the lake when it filled for the first time in contrast to what the engineers had predicted may say much about human miscalculations than the active presence or intentionality of water.

That said, there is much to learn in this book as is also the case with Suzuki’s *The Nature of Whiteness*. Fontein’s articulation of local aspirations for land and their entanglement with colonial and postcolonial projects of state-making—something that he achieves through his



insistence on the existences of multiple claims and regimes of power – should be commended. By paying attention to the localized politics of land, he offers a nuanced assessment of the politics of land in Zimbabwe. He raises pertinent questions about land reform and restitution and moves beyond the simplistic narrative that portrayed chiefs, their subjects, and others as people who were co-opted into the land reform by an overbearing postcolonial state.<sup>13</sup>

## Notes

- 1 On white farmers' engagements with the colonial and postcolonial state, Selby 2006. Selby's study built on a longer tradition of studies of white farmers' engagements with the colonial state, including works by Murray 1970, Hodder-Williams 1983, and McKenzie 1989. On white farmers' discourses and self-representation see Pilosof 2012. On white farmers' construction of the sense of belonging see Hughes 2010.
- 2 Alexander 2006; Moore 2005.
- 3 See for example, the chapters in Hammar, Raftopoulos, and Jansen 2003.
- 4 Scoones et al. 2010; Matondi 2012; Hanlon, Manjengwa, and Smart 2013.
- 5 Richardson 2004.
- 6 Scoones et al. 2010.
- 7 See Mujere 2011; Kufakurinani and Bamu 2015.
- 8 The exception to this in studies that predated Suzuki and Fontein's work is perhaps the work of Hughes 2010. . Even then, it should be pointed out that the original dissertation upon which Suzuki's book is based predates Hughes' book. See Suzuki 2005.
- 9 Hughes 2010 and Hughes 2006.
- 10 Alexander 2006; Drinkwater 1991.
- 11 Interview between Joseph Jakarasi, John Mupfumi Tigere and Edmund Ndoro 23 July 2014
- 12 Group Interview with Gatsi clan members, Nyamutumbu Hall, 11 March 2017.
- 13 Despite this nuance, scholars continue to ignore the local aspirations that Fontein so eloquently shows in favor of the narrative that the land reform was a simple political gimmick by the postcolonial state. For an account of this nature see the recent book by Charles Laurie 2017.

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## REVIEW ESSAY

# Precarity And Performance: The Production Of Ngoma Dance And Rooibos Tea As Cultural Commodities In The Post-Apartheid Heritage Industry

ARAN MACKINNON

Sarah Ives. 2017. *Steeped in Heritage: The Racial Politics of South African Rooibos Tea*. Durham and London: Duke University Press> xv +255 pp.

Louise Meintjes with photographs by T.J. Lemon. 2017. *Dust of the Zulu: Ngoma Aesthetics After Apartheid*. Durham and London: Duke University Press> xii + 338 pp.

The heritage industry in South Africa, perhaps more than most places, relies on maintaining links to a troubled past, one wrought by conflict and conquest, racism and exploitation. In the post-apartheid era, in a context of a downward spiraling economy and the concomitant rise in unemployment and inequality, the commodification and monetization of cultural heritage has taken off, albeit in deeply ambiguous ways. Both Sarah Ives, *Steeped in Heritage: The Racial Politics of South African Rooibos Tea* and Louis Meintjes, *Dust of the Zulu: Ngoma Aesthetics After Apartheid*, consider the origins, authenticity, ownership, and agency surrounding two important South African cultural commodities, rooibos tea and Ngoma Zulu dance performance. Both books explore efforts made by various actors and stakeholders as they construct and make claim to a positive, often idealized, nostalgic image of a cultural commodity, herbal tea in one case and “singing-dancing-drumming warrior” performances on the other. In so doing, the stakeholders seek to redeem each product from negative associations grounded in the colonial and apartheid pasts. Both products are also explained in terms of their “African-ness” by way of their natural origins in Africa among people with “African” identities and also a sort of uber-African essence whereby they gained added legitimacy through the representation of “authentic Africa” as exported to the world. Through often very personalized narratives, including first person observations, both authors raise compelling existential questions about the interplay among things, people, consciousness and identity, and illuminate the complex relations between production and consumption in a highly racialized capitalist context.

Ives, a Stanford-trained anthropologist, and Meintjes, a music and cultural anthropologist at Duke University, paint deeply intimate portraits of the people and places, geographic and temporal, involved in creating, developing, and deploying indigenous identities tied to specific commodities. Both authors write in a lively engaging style with

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<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v18/v18i1a7.pdf>

well-organized and compelling narratives. They both also provide first-hand accounts and detailed field notes, in some cases even serving as participant-observers of activities related to the production and performance of the commodities—Ives attends Rooibos farmers' association meetings and Meintjes films helped in the promotion of the Zulu dance performances. A central concern of both authors is the context of profound, persistent precarity in South Africa. The authors emphasize the historical and current precariousness of the majority of South Africans who struggle to make a living in the country. In both stories, the cultural products are also associated with violence; direct violence committed by people, and the structural violence inherent in South African society, past and present. It is, for the authors, this very precarity that defines and makes possible the essence of the cultural resources that people draw upon.

As the authors highlight the continued acute poverty and inequality in South Africa, they illuminate the creative and marginally successful outcomes South Africans have achieved in the heritage industry, but which remain fragile and threatened by the vicissitudes of racism and global capitalism. It is, apparently, a key element of South African brands that the apartheid past and the struggle against it are seen as integral to authenticity. This dimension also accounts for the authors' interest in questions surrounding indigeneity in the heritage industry and nostalgia for cultural forms that can provide opportunities to make a living and hope for the future. In this regard, these two case studies complement other important recent works on culture, identity and history in South Africa including John and Jean Comaroff's *Ethnicity, Inc.* (2009), Annie Coombe's *History After Apartheid: Visual Culture and Public Memory in a Democratic South Africa* (2003), and Leslie Witz, Gary Minkley, and Ciraj Rassool, *Unsettled History: Making South African Public Pasts* (2017.)

*Steeped in Heritage* focusses on the "highly racialized relations among plant, ecosystem, farmers and workers" (p. 23) in the Cederberg region of the Cape Floristic Kingdom—a UNESCO-recognized world heritage site—where hardy, deep-rooted fynbos, including rooibos, thrive. As Ives notes, this unique biome is home not only to the now globally recognized domesticated herbal tea, but also to native wild rooibos and, importantly, the original consumers of the plant, the San/Khoisan. Indeed, much of the mystique in the branding of rooibos for commercial sales, which seemed to emerge around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is associated with these earliest African people and their indigenous knowledge of the plant and environment. Rooibos then steadily grew to be an iconic South African brand with "a flavor as indigenous as licking the sweat from a Kudu's snout" (p. vii), boosted by the global celebration of the post-apartheid rainbow nation and its popular cultural exports such as music, wine, sport, and the Mandela icon. Ives argues that the wider use and then commodification of the tea was, if the pun can be forgiven, steeped in conflict as it coincided with the period of competition and conflict over land and labor in the Western Cape. It was from that point on that, following the well-chronicled white settler conquest of the Cape and the widespread annihilation of the Khoisan, they were marginalized from their ownership and control of productive resources in the region, including rooibos. And yet, the Khoisan still figured as central to the story as the truly authentic African culture that first discovered the remarkable beneficial properties ascribed to the tea.

Importantly, Ives remains mindful of the context of racial violence, historical and current, literal and structural, which conditions the struggles of workers in their bid to claim ownership of the land and the tea. This is, perhaps, where Ives argument is most compelling and prescient, as she provides a nuanced understanding of Marxist theory, especially “species-being,” as it applies to the coloured workers in the industry separated from both the ownership of the farms and their connection to the indigenous identity associated with the tea. Ives is careful to point out that many people in the region, white Afrikaners and coloured Khoisan descendants alike, see the original San as a largely extinct culture now blended into the predominantly Afrikaans-speaking population both white and black. This is a narrative which leaves open the opportunity for white Afrikaners to lay claim to the plant and the product through the historical processes of conquest and absorption of the San, hence “Khoisan” and then “coloured,” even though the marketing emphasizes the authenticity of the original users. It also calls into question what can be meant by “indigenous” as the Afrikaner farmers assert their own right to this identity as “natives”, not settlers, albeit through the justification of the empty-land myth and the disappearance of the “original” San.

Having established who is competing for control of rooibos as an indigenous “African” branded product, Ives then explores the various dimensions of the race and class conflicts surrounding its production. In turn, she addresses the ways in which coloureds and Afrikaners wrestled over claims to the land and rooibos production in the context of still unresolved state interventions in redistribution question. Chapter two considers the ecological and political relationships of the people to the land and the ambiguities of coloured workers being dispossessed from the rooibos farms they now work upon yet claim as their heritage. Chapter three examines the significant demographic change that has come to the Cedarberg region in the post-apartheid period with the arrival of black Africans from other parts of the country and the continent beyond. The tensions surrounding this development highlight both recent concerns about xenophobia and the extent to which the Western Cape is demographically exceptional. Chapter four re-works some of the book’s major themes through an analysis of rumor and gossip surrounding both the origins and indigeneity of the industry and anxieties about neoliberal corporate and state control of it. The final two chapters return to the precarity of people’s lives and work in the industry in a region where everyday violence and structural inequalities persist. Unfortunately, *Steeped in Heritage* has only one general map of the wider Western Cape, only one black and white photo of a rooibos farm, which is largely superfluous, and there is rather less historical development of the rooibos story than the title may suggest. Nevertheless, in sum this is a fascinating exploration of the dynamics surrounding identity and its ties to things and places in a racist, capitalist context.

Louis Meintjes *Dust of the Zulu* leaps out at the reader with the same energy and passion as the Ngoma dancers themselves. It is uncanny how deftly Meintjes captures the vibrancy and rhythm of the performers and performances in her writing, and T.J. Lemon’s photos are the perfect complement to the descriptions of harmonized bodies and voices. Her longstanding work in the field allows her to immerse herself almost completely in the context of Ngoma performances to the extent that she occasionally blurs the lines between observer and co-producer. Meintjes, who’s earlier *Sound of Africa: Making Music Zulu in a South African Studio* (2003) examined the technical and social construction of Zulu music, explores the development of Ngoma dance-singing-drumming performances though an

analysis of performers from Keats Drift in the Msinga district of KwaZulu Natal, near the heart of the old Zulu kingdom. This region epitomizes the long struggle of white conquest and African subjugation in South Africa, and the ensuing forcible subjugation of African men into the wider, white dominated migrant labor economy. It is, as with the Cedarberg, a region of profound precarity, though, arguably with a more distinct sense of a singular cultural identity among the Zulu. As Meintje's notes Zulu identities and associated perceptions of their martial prowess have been long in the making, and are very much a product of the colonial and apartheid pasts. Appropriately, Meintje's work is well-grounded in the considerable corpus of writing on "Zuluness" including works by Ben Carton, Johnny Clegg, Liz Gunner, Carolyn Hamilton, John Laband, Paul la Hausse, Shula Marks, Harriet Ngubane, Tom McClendon, Jabulani Sithole, John Wright, and many others too numerous to mention here. Her analysis of the historical connections between conservative Zulu politics and Inkatha could, perhaps, have been enhanced by a close reading of Nicholas Cope's underappreciated *To Bind The Nation: Solomon KaDinuzulu and Zulu Nationalism, 1913-1933* (1993.) Still, Meintjes seems at pains to elevate Zulu cultural forms in Ngoma from the troubled past of Zulu ethnic nationalism and the political violence of the Inkatha Freedom Party during the transition to democracy and is largely effective in this.

Meintje's tells the story of Zulu Ngoma dance performances as a creative struggle for both artistic recognition and economic survival through the experiences of the Umzansi Zulu Dancers from Msinga. She notes the tradition of Ngoma, though tied by the dancers to a nostalgic past and connected to a Zulu warrior pride, had its origins in a defensive competitive ethnic traditionalism. This was wrought in the oppressive South African migrant labor regime where it reflected the bifurcated lives of Zulu migrants as they operated in both rural communities such as Msinga and the male migrant labor hostels in Johannesburg. In this regard, it served to support ethnic associations needed to find work and survive in the hostile white-dominated capitalist industries of mining and plantation agriculture.

For those unfamiliar with Ngoma, Meintjes provides a detailed and captivating explanation of the physical—dance moves, styles of synchronization, bodily movement, martial movement; musical—singing, drumming, orchestration; spiritual—ties to cosmology and ancestors, emotional support, community unity; and ethnic—Zulu aesthetics, isiZulu language, political associations, heritage- dimensions. In the first three chapters, Meintjes considers the social and cultural meaning of Ngoma in gendered terms. She notes that Ngoma performance is primarily a male domain and an expression of men's prerogatives, including those over women. She describes how Ngoma performances are central to courtship between men and women, and that they are especially important in establishing attachments in rural areas where predominantly male migrant labor persists. Meintjes also considers how Ngoma reinforces Zulu concepts of masculinity associated military aesthetics. In chapter four, she tackles the thorny problem of the relationship between culture and political violence during the transition period and acknowledges that while Ngoma dance is not itself violent, it was clearly implicated in IFP-ANC violence across the country. Here, she begins to show how Ngoma performances reached beyond the confines of rural communities and the migrant labor compounds of Johannesburg to the wider context of national political conflicts and then to the global culture market.

Perhaps the most interesting chapter, five, explores the complex relationship between an iconic South African figure from the world music scene, Johnny Clegg, (and his successive bands Juluka and Savuka), and Ngoma in general and Umzansi Zulu Dancers in particular. Meintjes rightly credits Clegg with an impressive understanding of and commitment to “deep Zulu” culture, including his remarkable expertise in Ngoma dance, honed in rural KwaZulu-Natal and urban migrant labor hostels. He established his legitimacy with a fluency in the language, writing a number of well-received academic articles on the topic, and building an impressive catalogue of Zulu inspired music and performances. Umzansi Zulu Dancers and rural Zulu musicians such as Clegg’s collaborator, Siphso Mchunu, for their part, played a critical role in inspiring and teaching him, but as Meintjes shows, it was Clegg who took his interpretations of this Zulu cultural form to the global stage, and had impressive commercial success. Here she challenges us to reconsider who has ownership of the cultural commodity, and who indeed can claim authentic ethnic status associated with an indigenous identity since Clegg became known popularly as *le Zoulou blanc* in France. She further shows how Umzansi Zulu Dancers, in turn, sought to build their own performance careers as their art gained popularity through Clegg’s global success returned to South Africa.

Meintjes then revisits the question of precarity for both the cultural form of Ngoma and the people who struggle to make a living from it. In chapter six, she chronicles the ways in which the brotherhood of Ngoma accommodates and supports those suffering from the impact of HIV/AIDS. While this chapter diverges from the main narrative of identity and performance, it resonates with the larger argument about the resilience of people who deploy the positive spiritual and social supports to be found in Ngoma culture. In the remaining chapters, Meintjes emphasizes that Ngoma both operates in, and is inspired by the violent, precarious nature of life in South Africa. Following the world’s waning interest in South Africa, and the ebbing wave of struggle music and culture, Umzansi Zulu Dancers ‘hover[ed] beneath the radar of the national culture industry, hustling for performing and recording opportunities (p. 213). This is part of a larger pattern of the paradox of post-apartheid South Africa where the lifting of apartheid and the rise of a more open political space has coincided with diminishing opportunities on the global stage for many South African artists, in part because of the streamlining of the global music industry and also, perhaps, in part because of the loss of urgency and currency in the political struggle.

As the urgency and excitement over the struggle and ending of apartheid as well as the initial euphoria of the immediate post-apartheid period recedes into the past, South Africa and its brands have, perhaps, lost some of their luster. Following Nelson Mandela’s death and as the scandals of the Zuma years and state capture are further revealed, it would seem that marketing South Africa’s cultural heritage will become both more challenging and more needed for the artists and producers of the country. As these books show, their success will depend on engaging in complex and nuanced ways of embracing, rejecting, and reconfiguring select parts of the past to serve at once both as authentic sources of indigeneity and as the foil to the evils of the colonial and apartheid pasts against which the truly indigenous can be contrasted.





## REVIEW ESSAY

### There is No Privileged Site of Politics

TONY VOSS

**Julian Brown.** 2016. *The Road to Soweto: Resistance and the Uprising of 16 June 1976*. Woodbridge: James Currey/Johannesburg: Jacana. xi, 204 pp.

**Rico Devara Chapman.** 2016. *Student Resistance to Apartheid at the University of Fort Hare: Freedom Now, a Degree Tomorrow*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. xii, 135 pp.

After nearly a quarter of a century of democracy, South Africans are beginning to see more clearly the milestones along the road that took them out of apartheid. Two recent books remind us of the part played by students, and by workers in the struggle that culminated in the settlement of 1994. Rico Devara Chapman recounts the history of student resistance at the University of Fort Hare and Julian Brown brings us a revisionist history of student activism in the years between the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960 and the Soweto Uprising of 1976.

In 1997 Dr. Chapman, who now teaches in the Department of History and Philosophy, Jackson State University, spent some months in the then newly democratic Republic of South Africa. Dr. Jackson taught at Sakhululeka High School in Fort Beaufort and enrolled in classes in the education department of the University of Fort Hare in nearby Alice. He lived on campus in Beda Hall (a “dorm” in US parlance). The recurrence of the onomastic “fort” is not fortuitous: we are on what was for over a hundred years of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries a shifting frontier of war between colonizer and colonized, and Dr. Chapman is sensitive to this history, as he is to the fact that not all encounters between indigenous people and intruders were violent. Until their brutal and bureaucratic appropriation by the apartheid state in the late 1950s “mission schools,” despite an element of paternalism, were islands of forethought and hope: their gradual undermining denied the post-apartheid state many servants of the caliber of mission-educated Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela. Mission schools covered the country, from Zonneblem College in Cape Town to Tygerberg in the north, St Peter’s in Johannesburg and Adams College in KwaZulu-Natal, but they were concentrated in what is now the Eastern Cape Province. The University of Fort Hare, founded in 1916 as Fort Hare University College, was the jewel in the crown.

The history and ideological sequence of student resistance at Fort Hare (UFH) is complex, but Chapman has made use of the established historiography, rich archival resources, and

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<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v18/v18i1a8.pdf>

personal interviews to present an account, which is both clear in outline and full of distinctive detail, particularly in its survey of recent decades. Chapter One identifies UFH as the birthplace of activism in South Africa. This may imply a distinction between “student activism” and working-class resistance: the latter has been almost continuous since the earliest years of industrial South Africa. Significantly perhaps the first serious disruptions at UFH came in the early years of the Second World War, and the pace was maintained into the 1950s after the establishment of the ANC Youth League in 1944. Soon after 1948 the Nationalist Party government established “ethnic” or “bush” colleges, under the direct control of a Minister, in other parts of the country. This apartheid re-tribalization weakened UFH by ethnically limiting the University’s intake and opening up academic positions to often under-qualified whites. But, as Dr. Chapman shows, the implementation and management of Bantu Education met with almost immediate and continuous resistance. By 1960, Z.K. Matthews and others of the most eminent academics had resigned their UFH posts. On a number of occasions in the ensuing years, staff, both black and white, were to show sympathy with their students in the same way.

Robert Sobukwe’s split from the ANC and his founding of the PAC in 1959 led to an internal debate and divide on university campuses between Pan-Africanism and Black Nationalism, which was complicated in later years by the rise of Black Consciousness. The founding of the South African Students’ Organisation (SASO) in 1968, and its break from the liberal non-racial National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), was another milestone in the process of radicalization. Student politics thus carried a complex agenda. On the one hand, it responded to watershed events such as the banning of the ANC, the Sharpeville massacre, the Soweto uprising, the death of Steve Biko, the independence of neighboring African countries, and the Border War. On the other it maintained an educational responsibility that had to do with on-campus living conditions and academic standards. There was always some degree of privilege in being a student, but the bravery of resistance is not in question when one remembers that students have been shot down and killed on their own campus: for example, in the course of the attempt to grant UFH a patently sham autonomy under the violent oversight of the Ciskei Bantustan government. With the demise of apartheid in 1994 UFH seemed to regain its status as a “People’s University.” Student activism was directed towards the outcome of the first democratic elections and then and since has turned to the goal of ungovernability. The demands of a new distributive economy meant hard times for universities, and tuition fees became a recurring theme of protest and resistance.

Chapman seems able to end his story on a positive note, however. Under Professor Derrick Swartz, who was appointed Principal in 1999, UFH tightened its belt and regained its balance. Nomsa Mazwai, the first woman president of the UFH Students’ Representative Council, was elected to the post in 2006. Ten years later, in 2016, UFH reached its centenary, and this book is an honorable contribution to that celebration. Its sense of the South African historical and geographical context is, in my view, occasionally shaky, and it could have used another proofread, but it tells an important story.

Julian Brown, who teaches in the Department of Political Studies of the University of the Witwatersrand, makes an important point early in his book. Looking at the context in which he began his research, he sees a South Africa in which new movements like the Treatment Action

Campaign and *Abahlali baseMjondolo* ("Shack Dwellers") Movement were mounting a social critique of the post-apartheid settlement and insisting on "a more substantive form of democratic politics rooted in shared experience of exclusion and protest" (p. vii). By the time he had completed writing his book students throughout South Africa were campaigning against economic inequality, social exclusion and "the continuing influence of colonial thought on the contemporary academy" (p. vii), a sequence that illuminates the passage from "Rhodes must fall" to "fees must fall." This intertwining of the social and the political, the recognition that the legitimate interests of disadvantaged groups cannot be met without wholesale national (and even wider) political action which involves all the people, seems to me to be an important thread of *The Road to Soweto*. The deferred revolution of the ANC takeover of 1994 has at least made clearer what the real revolution will demand.

This well-written, engaging, and stimulating book has both a new story to tell and an argument to advance. The story begins with the Sharpeville massacre of 26 March 1960. This symptomatic, if spontaneous, manifestation of the reality of apartheid power, contemporary with the initiation of the armed struggle, was followed by an intense state campaign of repression, banning, censorship, arrest, and trial. Individuals were forced into exile, movements were driven underground, but resistance was armed and responded with sabotage and other violence. Yet by 1964, the state seemed to have achieved quiescence, and "standard stories" (p. 5) suggest that this repressive order remained undisturbed for at least the next decade, which from the Rivonia trial of 1964 to the Soweto Uprising of 1976 was a time of "private dissent and public caution" (p. 6). The responsibility of liberation was in the hands of banned and exiled South Africans.

Brown has a different story to tell, the story of a decade of the almost continuous "seething activity" (p. 9) of resistance within South Africa, in which citizens, students, workers, schoolchildren, and their parents and teachers all took part. While recognizing the activity during this period of the ANC, Brown places "little emphasis on the significance of the reorganization and development of the ANC's underground movement within South Africa during this decade" (p. 6), finding the real energy of resistance inside the country, and above ground, which is one element of what might be called the revisionist aspect of his argument. Although the story told in *The Road to Soweto* acknowledges certain landmark, watershed events in the resistance to apartheid between Sharpeville and Soweto, the emphasis is on continuity, cautious and spontaneous connection between activists, principled adaptation to changing events, and courageous reaching-outs beyond the ideological barriers and identities imposed by the state.

The story, which naturally coincides at many points with that told by Chapman, begins with a focus on the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), a liberal center of extra-parliamentary opposition. Although multi-racial, NUSAS was dominated by white English-speaking students, the Afrikaanse Studente Bond having been set up in 1948, the year of the National Party election victory, and had actively opposed racial segregation in universities. Having survived the intense repression of the early 1960s, NUSAS both accepted and struggled with its new role as "torchbearer for opposition politics" (pp. 16-17). In 1966, three thousand students, at the call of NUSAS, marched in protest in Johannesburg, and there were other large

demonstrations. These successes brought the wrath of the state down upon the heads of individual student leaders. At the same time racial divisions strained the unity of NUSAS: while white students claimed to be leading resistance on behalf of the black majority, black students felt that within the organization their interests were neglected.

In effect, independent black student organizations had been set back by the banning of the PAC and the ANC and their youth leagues in 1960. The difficulties of black student resistance were compounded by the “balkanization” of the “bush” colleges along ethnic lines. On many of these campuses SRCs themselves were banned. Although its black membership had increased fourfold and was active by the mid-1960s, “NUSAS was not an ideal home for black student politics” (p. 43). Black students could find an individual voice in the United Christian Movement (UCM), but a “revolutionary” (p. 40) moment came when a group of students led by Steve Biko founded the South African Student Organisation (SASO) in 1968. Seeming initially to withdraw from the confrontational politics to which NUSAS was more and more committed, SASO sought to speak in its own voice, to find an identity independent of the violence of apartheid categorization and to foster intellectual, cultural, and religious energies “that gave the humanism of Black Consciousness thought its particular character” (p. 48). SASO aimed for community outreach, upliftment, and “personal political education, based on cultural and social identity” (p. 17) and did not seek to influence or engage with the white electorate. But the two national student bodies could not advance independently. Black students were drawn to the confrontational and provocative activism of NUSAS, and white students were gradually drawn into social and community engagement. The interaction between the two bodies gave rise to new forms of and occasions for oppositional politics.

An indication of how far the politics of student resistance had come emerged in 1973, which saw a resurrection of explicitly working class action. In the “Durban Strikes” sixty thousand workers of that industrial port and holiday city came out on strike in the first three months of the year. Their action was orderly, organized by the workers themselves, without leaders or spokespersons, and their demands, on both economic and ethical grounds, eminently just. The measured success of these workers’ actions—less violence than might have been expected, improved working conditions, and a comparatively equable resumption of work—meant an extension of opportunity for working class political action in the future, an anticipation of the rise of the trade unions. The strikes broke various apartheid boundaries, spilling out into the segregated streets of the city, involving students who helped determine how the strikes were reported and understood, and releasing the conspiracy theorists lurking in the pro-apartheid electorate. Despite the ethnic distinctiveness of the Durban working-class demographic, by involving black, coloured, and Indian workers, men and women, the strikes did something to strengthen Black Consciousness. The crackdown that followed, legitimized by the conspiratorial Van Wyk de Vries and Schibusch Commissions of Inquiry into the actions of student organizations, targeted their student leaders both black and white, and led many into trade union activism or exile. State repression was becoming more intense and more sinister, but SASO and NUSAS, hampered as they were, found a new vision of their political future, committing their skills and training to workers in administration and education, engaging with “a public that could include workers, youth, urban professionals and possibly even members of

rural communities” (p. 115). Individual students as they left university helped to found new agencies of black politics like the Black People’s Convention and the Black Workers’ Project. Among these new institutions were the NUSAS Wages Commissions. The first was founded at the University of Natal in Durban in 1971: within two years five were active. These enabled white students to respond to the challenge of Black Consciousness. Without assuming any right to lead, they could contribute to what was in effect a revolutionary vision of South African politics, which by “linking race with class” helped to identify the target of opposition as “apartheid capitalism” (p. 121). Rick Turner, a lecturer at the University of Natal in Durban was one of those banned. He was supportive of radical student politics and even before the Durban strikes had encouraged students to co-operate with workers. Like Steve Biko, Ahmed Timol, Mthuli Shezi, and Onkgopotse Tiro, he was to lose his life at the hands of the state. Having been expelled from Turfloop, Tiro taught at Maurice Isaacson High School in Soweto, where he helped to strengthen the Southern African Students’ Movement for school students. The energy continued into 1976 and beyond.

South African student politics was naturally responsive to sympathetic events outside the country, and in 1974 a sequence of national rallies was planned to acknowledge and celebrate the success of Frelimo in Mozambique. Although only two took place, they were sufficient to provoke a characteristically violent reaction from the police. For eighteen months black leaders, many of whom had emerged from student activism and co-operation with resistant workers, were confined to the courtroom. Prison sentences would effectively remove them from public life. The baton was passing to the generation of schoolchildren who emerged in the Soweto Uprising of 1976. Brown shows clearly how both individual connections and a mass movement contributed to that crucial and bloody turningpoint of South African history.

In Julian Brown’s argument the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1976 fashioned, from the imaginative political possibilities opened up in the previous decade, “a material space that was beyond the state’s ability to control” (p. 170). From this moment on it was clear that apartheid was war. In 1977, the death of Steve Biko exposed the desperate callousness of the state, and by late 1977 all effective black student organizations had been banned, yet the new politics of protest and dissent was “not inextricably linked to personalities or to organisations” (p. 181). This made possible the formation of the UDM in the 1980s: ten years after the Uprising, in protest and insurgency “the ungovernability of Soweto in the months after June 1976 was extended across the country” (p. 182).

*The Road to Soweto* is an important, moving, and encouraging book, which revises our understanding of crucial decades of South African history, and puts forward an argument that both emerges from and explains that story. Derived partly from interpretations of France ’68, and particularly from the work of Jacques Rancière, this argument enables Julian Brown’s readers to see that “privileged theoretical knowledge” (p. 13) is not necessary for political action, that by speaking up non-citizens can make themselves citizens, and that “there is no privileged site of politics and no political sphere” (p. 15) South Africans in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century both called on and demonstrated this potential to deny and oppose the imprisoning categories of apartheid and help change the history of their country.

Julian Brown's is a more radical text than Rico Devara Chapman's, but both remind us that history is always written in the present, and that recall of the past can give us guidance in the present. The order of the state is always contingent, "whether the order be that of the apartheid state, or of post-apartheid liberal democracy" (Brown, p. 187), and the space of politics is always open.

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Adeleke Adeeko. 2017. *Arts of Being Yoruba: Divination, Allegory, Tragedy, Proverb, Panegyric*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 200 pp.**

Reading Adeeko's latest offering is an exciting experience in several ways. Apart from the scholar-critic's accessible style and elegant language, the book draws attention to the ever-refreshing fertile minefield of African orature. For the author, it is indeed a familiar terrain having earlier written *Proverbs, Textuality, and Nativism in African Literature* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1988). Though not presented as such, one may be tempted to see *Arts of Being Yoruba* as a sequel of sort, even if Adeeko did not state indicate so. However, both works read altogether offer important critical statements that benefit and further deepen African literary scholarship generally.

*Arts of Being Yoruba: Divination, Allegory, Tragedy, Proverb, Panegyric* is an important addition to the understanding of the context and poetics of Yoruba verbal arts. In this book, Adeeko attempts to fuse, in a most creative way, the discourse of identity and globalization within the aesthetic configuration of Yoruba artistic and cultural productions. Adeeko's novelty in the book lies in his re-conceptualizing of time and spatiality in a most profound way. He tactically dismantles boundaries and locates Yoruba artistic resources as distinguishing markers of Yoruba identity. For Adeeko, "being Yoruba entails embedding elements of the old (or things presented as such), many times imperceptibly, in motions and gestures mostly of recent, diverse provenance fit for addressing the future" (p. xiv).

The book is divided into six chapters with a section each for the introduction and conclusion. In these pages, Adeeko offers an array of textual experiences that are not limited by traditional classifications of genres and modes. The attention paid to Fagunwa's works locates the novelist oeuvre within a large construct of indigenous Yoruba worldview and epistemology. Akinwumi Isola is also foregrounded as a feminist of sort in the way *Efunsetan Aniwura* is re-read in the tragic mode. Together, Fagunwa and Isola are made to exemplify a vibrant indigenous language literature replete in the artistic resources that are quintessentially Yoruba.

One however wonders why despite his deep knowledge and familiarity with the diversity of Yoruba verbal arts, Adeeko still prefers, as has been the norm with scholars of African (Yoruba) oratures, to choose the seemingly "canonized" forms of Yoruba cultural production—Ifa divination poetry, panegyrics, and proverbs. Though this does not diminish the quality of his arguments, it certainly would have been richer if he considered other marginal/marginalized forms. The selected forms are, however, replete in intertextual aesthetics germane in affirming Yoruba identity and essence, especially in the sense conceived in this book.

Adeeko's dexterity in and familiarity with the intricacies of Yoruba verbal and artistic resources is evident. For example, by dwelling on the book launch and celebrity journalism traditions, he convincingly shows that Yoruba art is, indeed, a continuum, and that there are bound to be retentions and continuities especially as the society embraces modernity. Adeeko seems to be inviting closer attention to emerging trends that celebrate unique

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v18/v18i1a9.pdf>

cultural statements. A key strength of Adeeko's book is the ease with which he underscores these two modern varieties as extensions of traditions of the panegyric and the like.

*Arts of Being Yoruba* is timely and strategic. It is a commendable output, which makes pronouncements that further rekindles hope and sustained interest in African cultural studies generally. The book certainly offers ideas towards a definition and eventual evolution of a distinct poetics of Yoruba art, long advocated by Olabiyi Yai in "Towards a New Poetics of Oral Poetry in Africa" (*IFE: Annals of The Institute of Cultural Studies*. (1) 1986: 40-55). This clearly shows that, being Yoruba is indeed the capacity to constantly generate and re-invigorate artistic traditions, which ultimately constitutes a new modes of expression of collective heritage.

All said, it is indubitable that this book stands out as a bold attempt at repositioning Yoruba arts and charting its critical directions in the age of modernity and fleeting globalization. However, Adeeko's robust arguments and textual exemplifications hardly take into cognizance the realities of contested critical landscapes, such as embodied in the recent clamors for the decolonization of indigenous knowledge systems and/ or the integration of the same in the global epistemic order. Happily however, with books such as *Arts of Being Yoruba: Divination, Allegory, Tragedy, Proverb, and Panegyric*, the march has definitely commenced.

Oluwole Coker, *Obafemi Awolowo University*

**Alexius Amtaika (ed.). *Democratization of Africa: Dynamics and Trends*. Austin, Texas: Pan-African University Press. 401 pp.**

The aim of the book is to rethink democratization in Africa. In this continent, everyone wants democracy but remains elusive as to its fulfillment. The key question is: "Why does the future of Democracy seem uncertain on the continent?" (p. xv). Whereas in Europe, development preceded democracy, in Africa, both must be achieved concurrently. The book assumes that development is a pre-condition of democracy and is thus in line with the studies initiated by Seymour Martin Lipset: "People need more food than democracy" (p. xv). Alexius Amtatiaka argues that democracy in Africa comes from top to bottom; it is an elite democracy (p. xvi). Democratization is only one way of transplanting European values into African societies, and this process is accompanied by a devaluation of African values and traditions that could be complementary and useful. The willingness of Western nations to impose their democratic values at all costs, including aggressively, succeeds, as in the case of Libya, in destroying the country and in opening the way for radical fundamentalist movements, and in amplifying democracy migratory phenomenon. Eurocentrism has not yet disappeared; Western nations continue to despise traditional values and lifestyles. The West has not ceased to present human rights, democracy or justice as it conceives them according to its own values, unaware that other societies can interpret them differently, according to their own ones. It is therefore a criticism of Western universalism that the authors defend in this book (p. xx). The other theoretical problem that Amtaika raises is that of the Definition of Democracy which remains a relative term. But the author retains, for the purposes of the study, a content that could be considered as common to all definitions: social justice, quality, Liberty, fulfillment (p. xxi). This relativism pushes authors to be



cautious when they use the term democracy.

The book is composed of eighteen chapters but almost all, except for the introductory chapter are devoted to Nigeria and South Africa, and only one to Botswana, one to Lesotho, one to Ghana. In the introduction (pp. 3-30), Amtaika deals very succinctly with the Theory of Democracy and emphasizes the correlation between high level of economic development and the prevalence of the democratic political system (p. 12), ideas defended by Seymour Martin Lipset (Lipset 1959: 73) that established a link between wellbeing, economic growth and democracy. Amtaika defends the idea that development and democracy must be achieved at the same time and in a competitive way. Democracy will promote economic development, and growth and economic development will, in turn, make democracy sustainable. He also recalls Huntington who explains that “higher levels of literacy, education, and mass media exposure, all of which are conducive to Democracy” (Huntington 1986: 72) (p. 12). But he also recalls the studies initiated by Diamond and Platter (1994) that confirm the thesis by Huntington, showing that economic development must precede economic liberalization, which underlies the idea that authoritarian regimes would be better able to carry out the reforms necessary for economic development, as the South American examples seem to corroborate. East Asia such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, China, and Vietnam, but also Chile in Latin America. (p. 14) Amtaika does not agree with this idea although he acknowledges that some authoritarian regimes have done better economically than some democratic regimes in developing countries. (p. 14) He then discusses the role of the bourgeoisie, the market economy in and trade unions in economic growth and democratization. In Poland, for example, in the absence of parties, the union played a fundamental role in political change. (Huntington 1986: 78) (p. 16).

Amtaika thinks that in the West, Democracy has been adopted because the people have understood that it is in their own right and is it “strongly believed that Democracy can spread freely in Africa to be good” (p. 17). In another review of the literature on democracy, Kehdinga George Fomunyan (“Theorizing Democracy in Africa,” pp. 53-63) concludes that the latter, conceived as the power of the people, is a false chimera. All the other chapters are dedicated to some themes related to development or democracy, such as rights, representation, elections, good governance, or political parties. Finally, the title of the book is only weakly justified because the majority of the cases studied concern South Africa or Nigeria, which are far from being representative examples of Africa. Africa does not include only these countries; there are also French-speaking countries and of North Africa Arab countries that are so different from each other.

Abdelmalek El Ouazzani, *University Cadi Ayyad, Marrakech*

**Jan Beek, Mirco Göpfert, Olly Owen, and Jonny Steinberg (eds.). 2017. *Police in Africa: The Street-Level View*. London and New York: Hurst and Oxford University Press. 372 pp.**

*Police In Africa: The Street Level View* is an excellent compilation of observations with emphasis on different approaches of various aspects of law enforcement upon the African continent. This text is divided into three wonderfully informative sections, 268 readable pages, of what, who, and how elements of the legal process functions both in a theoretical and practical sense. With at least fifty four countries upon the continent, this book could not

include all of them, but it did cover a large swath from different regions so that one could get a feel for the overall attitudes of many legal elements in Africa that have been ignored over the years. These ethnographic approaches consist of the knowledge based from anthropologists, historians, criminologists, and international relations professionals as it relates to the criminal prosecution process. This book takes a deep look into the question of what do African countries use as their legal discretion at different levels of the process.

The first section reveals how several African countries legal structures have been influenced after many years of colonial and apartheid control. This section carefully dissects three different schools of thought between the judicial system and the African citizens. These authors dug deeply into how the legal forces are viewed in liberal political, Marxist state and institutional theory contexts. This book as a whole does not generalize these schools of thought through the African continent—although some authors make some minor assumptions—but takes them into consideration with local, social, and political structures. This section set-up the premise of how people visualize the legal machinery in spite of the fact that colonial policing has been a largely discounted area of study in numerous fields around the world.

The second section divulges the essence of the various African legal systems in comparison with the rest of the world. It studies who are the individuals that make up the police, judicial operators and legal policy system. This section, “Police in Africa,” explores the many different personalities that make up the legal process as well as perceived mental capacity. The book looks into how the chosen countries handle the distribution of the “use of force,” either through police or military components, and the amount of resources the police force has to fulfill its objectives. Furthermore, this section touches on whether or not the police force should be a professional organization. It explores how security reform has occurred in regard to these contrary forces and affected the legal process from its native origins. Additionally, it scrutinizes these individuals’ thought methodologies when it comes to working within the respective countries’ legal frameworks. In order to evaluate the foundation of the legal framework, this section attempts to blend all of these factors along with the mind-set of the rational choices made to decipher the institutional or organization as a whole.

The third section does a great job disclosing the moral and social lining of the legal apparatus in how these parts are intertwined through observation of Mozambique, South Africa, Ghana, and Niger to crack the underlining question of this book. It closely monitors the rational choices made between the common citizens, legal officials and political appointees in the distribution of justice. This section further supports through observation how these individual members are placed in an evaluation process throughout their interactions based primarily on the local socialized and cultural norms. These norms consist of everything from drinking, eating, and community interaction to moon lighting for additional income. It covers how each and every step that the legal officials and political appointees take toward reaching the pinnacle of their career is on fragile grounds that could crumble at any time. It is this constant state of uncertainty that seemed to be the heart of the ethnographic viewpoints from the many experts that contributed to this making of this book.

In conclusion, *Police In Africa: The Street Level View* is an excellent collation of ethnographic observations with emphasis on different approaches of various aspects of law

enforcement upon the African continent. The collection captures empirical evidence of how even the simplest of daily interactions touch upon how the legal apparatus executes the law in a fair and scalable fashion. The executions of this authority may leave some with the feeling of inequality based on the scalable nature of the discretionary practice throughout the process. Nevertheless, it is this discretionary methodology of implementing justice that gives the Western principle of dispersing justice its African appeal.

Raymond Cohen, *American Military University*, and Justin Cohen, *Howard University*

**Getahun Benti. 2017. *Urban Growth in Ethiopia, 1887-1974: From the Foundation of Finfinnee to the Demise of the First Imperial Era*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. xviii + 213 pp.**

Getahun Benti's book is so far one of the major research outputs published on the history of urbanism and urban growth in Ethiopia. The focus of the book is examining the southward expansion of imperial rule in the nineteenth century and the subsequent dynamics of urbanization and urban growth in Ethiopia 1887-1974 from the foundation of Finfinnee to the demise of imperial authority. The author's methodological sophistication deserves appreciation. Getahun extensively exploited various sources to substantiate his analysis. The lucidity and beauty of its language and neatness to address complex issues is quite attractive and a joy to read. In his introduction section Getahun deeply articulated worldwide state of affairs on the origin of urbanization. The author has an opinion that rural urban mutual reinforcement is a backbone for urban life improvement.

In chapter two of the book the author attempted to characterize urban growth in Ethiopia after the establishment of Finfinnee as a political capital to the advent of the Italians in 1936. A detailed discussion on Italian rule and the process of urbanization appeared in chapter three, 1936-1941. The author credited the Italian influence in urban growth in the country. Moreover, the author examined the characteristics of colonial urbanism that flourished under Italians. This section of the book covered residential segregation, divide and rule policy among the Ethiopian people to control mobility, and united resistance.

Chapter four addressed the contours of social, economic and demographic changes in the period 1941-1974, whereas chapter five explores the whole span of his study, 1887-1974. According to the author imperial southward expansion increased the migration and settlement of people from the north, particularly those of the Amhara, the Gurage, and others in present-day Oromiya and the south and southwest part of Ethiopia. In the last chapter, Getahun recaps his study of Ethiopian urbanization and urban growth in this way: "big process, little transformation" (p. 179). For the author the sum total of continuous interaction in terms of economy, politics, and technological innovation brought about sustained urban growth. Unfortunately, this was not to happen for Ethiopia owing to multifaceted reasons.

All in all, Getahun's book is a much-needed scholarly comprehensive work on the social history of Ethiopia in general and that of urban history in particular. It opens the deadlock for further research in this long marginalized field of enquiry in Ethiopian studies. However, the author needed to reconsider some of the limitations that prevail in the book as far as this reviewer is concerned. The first limitation is that sometimes the author goes beyond the span of the book and attempts to analyze political conditions in time and space.

This may reduce the value of this scholarly work for the academic readers. It is my suggestion that one can treat politics separately out of the academic environment. The other limitation is the term “Christian Abyssinia,” which is vague and ambiguous. The so-called “Abyssinia” was a name given to Ethiopians by Europeans probably after the Jesuit withdrawal in the seventeenth century. The Europeans did this deliberately to downgrade the people the then Ethiopia and its leaders. Ethiopia in the north and in the center was diverse in terms of religion, ethnicity, and cultures. Thus, an inclination to refer to Christian Abyssinia as a homogenous entity is misleading.

There are also minor editorial and conceptual pitfalls; for instance the one to denote Armenian spelled as American (p. 55), and Oromiya and Oromia (p.13) in the last paragraph. Some redundant ideas and concepts also prevail in the book. The author also missed in his analysis ethnic dynamics and people to people relations, and also interaction and integration beyond elitist politics as well as the author’s emphasis on strict cultural and political differences between “the north and the south,” to quote, “did not have common cultural and political institutions at least until Menilek’s conquest” (p.14). There were contacts in good and bad times since at least medieval times. The presence of a rich Cushitic civilization in northern Ethiopia as it is true in the south is a symbol of common identity between peoples of the region that call for a fresh perspective to approach Ethiopian history.

Ebrahim Damtew Alyou, *University of Gondar*

**Kris Berwouts. 2017. *Congo’s Violent Peace: Conflict and Struggle since the Great African War*. London: Zed Books. 216 pp.**

Kris Berwouts closes his 2017 book, *Congo’s Violent Peace*, with the sentence: “The immediate future looks bleak for Congo” (p. 167). Writing in early January 2017, noting the stated end of President Kabila’s constitutional mandate, Berwouts listed a best and worst-case scenario playing out in 2017. Writing this review a year later, I can conform, sadly, that the worst-case scenario has again become a reality in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Kabila has still held onto his presidency, which was initiated in 2001 after the assassination of his father, while at least seventy armed militia groups continue to inflict violence in the country; neighboring and outside countries profit from and cause further violence and suffering; and as always, Congo’s people, the children, the women, the regular civilians, suffer horrendously. 3.6 million people are currently displaced in the DRC; and another political and military coup is planned to topple Kabila, who has most recently claimed elections will happen in December 2018. Instability is the norm. The Vatican, for example, has postponed a mission to the Congo because of the violence. While it is too easy to throw up one’s hands and give up hope, Berwouts’ account is important in trying to understand the various layers and changing (corrupt) military and political leaders who exacerbate the conflict. The book, though, contains little reason to hope for any change and does not discuss individuals and groups working for peace in the DRC, making for sobering reading.

Berwouts’ account, researched through a number of visits and travels throughout the DRC, is meant as a concise and up-to-date (until early January 2017) account of the political and military situation in DRC since the Great African War. The first chapter provides a helpful historical overview of key events following Congo’s independence in 1960, a rushed

and bungled process poorly facilitated by Congo's former colonial powers. Five years of unstable governments eventually ended with Mobutu's thirty-two years of neo-colonial dictatorship (p. 11). Any account of modern Congo inevitably turns to the meddling of Congo's neighbors, particularly Rwanda and Uganda. The Great African War claimed 5.4 million lives, and wrecked inordinate suffering. The main title of Berwouts' book highlights the incongruity and horror: peace should not be violent, but for many civilians, there is little discernible difference between peacetime and wartime.

The second chapter highlights core causes of the conflicts in the DRC, particularly rooted in land and identity, and its exploitation by the powerful, both within the DRC and outside of it. Colonialization is blamed at the deepest level, forging "a territorialisation of ethnicity" (p. 35). Conflicts at the local level are exploited and overlap with foreign interference and violent meddling. The third chapter focuses on the election of 2006, a political platform where promises of peace and stability were made, while the reality continued to betray Congo's people. Chapter 4 helpfully highlights the devastating and destructive role Rwanda has played in the DRC. Because the West stood silent when the 1994 genocide in Rwanda erupted, guilt has often prevented the West from rebuking Rwanda's role in further destabilizing the Congo as it tried to reap and plunder its resources. President Paul Kagame of Rwanda encouraged these incursions, though growing international scorn regarding Rwanda's actions led to some positive changes. Berwouts, for example, cites a 2011 UN report that highlighted attacks against Hutus in Congo that "could be classified as crimes of genocide" (p. 87). Such reports sent clear signals that Rwanda's destabilizing policies would no longer go unreported and uncondemned.

Chapter 5 examines the election of 2011, again seeing Kabila elected amidst a range of voting irregularities. As Berwouts writes, such elections didn't hide the ongoing corruption, militia groups, and armies within the national army. This last element is the focus of the sixth chapter, analyzing the failed military coup of the rebel group known as M23 (Mouvement du 23 Mars), led by Bosco Ntaganda, previously linked with Rwandan Patriotic Army. He is currently being tried under the International Criminal Court under thirteen counts of war crimes and five crimes against humanity (from crimes alleged to have occurred in 2002-2003), though M23 also committed such crimes in 2012 and 2013. The final chapter and conclusion point examines the choice between new elections or new violence, and we have already noted what path has been chosen.

When peace is violent, what hope is there? In one brief note of hope, Berwouts referred to a young Colonel Mamadou Ndala who became revered by the people as he fought the M23 rebels, leading his troops on the front. As so happens in the DRC, however, such heroic figures are deemed dangerous. He was subsequently killed by government soldiers, who saw him as a threat to their power. Adding salt to the wound, Berwouts, in a footnote, clarifies that Mamadou, though liked, was no saint, as he was "also actively involved in bad governance" (p. 175fn 23).

Peter Admirand, *Dublin City University*

**Paul Bjerck. 2017. *Julius Nyerere*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press. 165 pp.**

*Julius Nyerere*, by Paul Bjerck written for the Ohio Short Histories of Africa Series, is a brief political biography of Tanzania's founding president, Julius Nyerere (1923-1999). Nyerere is a giant in African history; he led British Tanganyika in a non-violent struggle for

independence in the 1950s, and was the founding chair of TANU/CCM the political party still ruling Tanzania today. He was President from 1961 until retiring in 1985, and is well-respected as the father-figure who bequeathed Tanzania political stability in a region known for its coups, wars, and authoritarian dictatorships. Nyerere also continues to be remembered across the continent for his principled support for liberation and anti-Apartheid movements. Finally in his retirement he brokered peace talks in Burundi in the 1990s. A comprehensive English biography of Nyerere is needed, as Bjerck notes. I think that this brief history is a start, but still not the comprehensive biography one expects for such a significant figure.

President Nyerere created Tanzania itself in 1964, as a union between the two recently independent countries. Tanganyika on the mainland, became independent from Great Britain in 1961, and the islands of Zanzibar in late 1963. Through force of his personality, he charted an explicitly non-aligned course between Cold War rivals including Great Britain, China, the US, and USSR. Each jockeyed for influence in east Africa, threatening newly won independence. It is easy today to forget how tenuous Tanzania's new independence was, as Bjerck reminds us. Nyerere was a master of balancing between the competing political and economic forces the great powers brought. He did this while creating a strong sense of nation-wide identity as "Tanzanian," via his insistence on using Swahili as a national language, and establishing successful widespread literacy programs. He did this while resisting the entanglements that aid-bearing foreigners offered, which he saw as a form of neocolonialism.

Nyerere's greatest legacies were perhaps non-alignment and the sense of Tanzanian national identity. But his economic policies are the most critiqued. Tanzania's early economic policies emphasized self-reliance. This meant currency controls, and severe restrictions on imports, and the government also nationalized the factories, mines, farms, and other means of production. Such policies alienated foreign companies, and their sponsors in the capitalist west including the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

Nyerere's policies were at times economically disastrous; declines in productivity and even localized famine were consequences. Related to the same "self-reliance" policies in the 1970s Nyerere's government used the military and police to forcibly "villagize" the countryside. Nyerere's *Ujamaa* villagization policies concentrated millions of subsistence farmers into large villages, which in theory were commercially viable agricultural cooperatives. But the villages were often put into places unsuited for market agriculture by remote central planners. In addition price controls which kept produce prices artificially low made farming unattractive to the relocated peasants. Agricultural productivity went into decline, famines occurred in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

This situation was made worse, as Bjerck points out, by Nyerere's biggest foreign adventure, the 1978-1979 invasion of Uganda. The war forced the international pariah, Uganda's President Idi Amin into exile, a result applauded by the rest of the world. But other countries did not assist Tanzania with the costs of the war, even while appreciating Amin's exit. To pay for the war and occupation, Nyerere's government drained the maintenance and operations budgets of the state-owned companies, as well as budgets for development programs.

So, on the one hand sense of national unity and literacy soared under Nyerere, even while economic policies led to declines in agricultural productivity. Indeed, only after

Nyerere's 1985 retirement from the presidency did economic policy change, and Tanzania accept the "conventional economic wisdom" of The World Bank and International Monetary Fund. The international institutions of course insisted on an economic restructuring favoring free markets and foreign investments, policies that Nyerere had long resisted as neo-colonial. Whether this was in the best long-term interest in Tanzania is still an open question, and beyond the scope of this biography.

Bjerk's book is brief. It is primarily a political biography of the man most intimately involved in creating and ruling Tanzania. Indeed, at times I wondered whether I was reading a political history of Tanzania, rather than a biography of Nyerere. But in developing this approach, Bjerk avoids the pitfalls of both the hagiography of Nyerere's fans, and the emotions of his critics. In the best sections, Bjerk writes how Nyerere reconciled a non-violent social democratic idealism with occasional authoritarian impulses that forced the Ujamaa villagization, and even the jailing and exile of political opponents.

But the most important point that Bjerk makes is that the definitive biography of Nyerere has yet to be written. Bjerk has wrestled a bit with the archival research for this book, as well as using interview material with Nyerere's contemporaries, both fans and critics. But a biography will require more extensive research in Swahili and English. Such a biography would also highlight more Nyerere's personal life, the development of his political thought, the ethical tensions he wrestled during his career, and even his literary pursuits. In the meantime, we have in *Julius Nyerere* by Paul Bjerk a brief but thoughtful political biography.

Tony Waters, *Payap University, Thailand*

**Sandra Calkins. 2016. *Who Knows Tomorrow? Uncertainty in North-Eastern Sudan*. New York: Berghahn. 282 pp.**

Calkins's *Who Knows Tomorrow?* is a refreshingly unconventional exploration of living with uncertainty in Sudan. The book examines the often-difficult lives of the Rashaida people, a marginalized Muslim, Arab-descended group. Calkins's primary concern, however, is not a people or a place but a problem—that of uncertainty, which she defines as a "limited ability to predict even the immediate future" (p. 2). Thus, while richly grounded in the ethnography and history of Sudan, the book compellingly rises to the level of an existential predicament that all people share. At the same time, the book avoids the trap of simply applying or rediscovering the particular priorities and themes of Euro-American existentialist thought (e.g., the individual, will, etc.) among people shaped by very different historical experiences and intellectual and cultural traditions.

The analysis of *Who Knows Tomorrow?* is grounded in French neo-pragmatist sociology, anthropological discussions of uncertainty and risk, and Science and Technology Studies (STS). The book helpfully takes the latter's concern with the "how?" of material-semiotic processes outside the labs and other scientific and medical spaces where STS has developed. In exploring Rashaida experiences of uncertainty, Calkins aims to lay out a more general approach to the study of uncertainty as an inevitable dimension of social life. The book's conceptual framework is exhaustively spelled out in the Introduction and Chapter 1, the latter providing a critical and constructive genealogy for the intellectual concerns in play. Particularly important is the idea of forms. Drawing on the work of Laurent Thévenot, Calkins defines forms as "props for action, things that hold together and enable a processing

of uncertainty” (p. 64). Forms may be rules, conventions, lists, agreements, or norms — anything, in short, which people fashion and deploy to manage the unknown, the dangerous, the risky, and the threatening. And at a more general level, that of the nature of being human, Calkins adopts John Dewey’s view of human action as testing and experiment and of human life as defined by “the principal openness of outcomes” (p. 5).

With such conceptual scaffolding in play, the rest of the book explores how Rashaida people deal with a variety of uncertainties. Chapter 2 traces contested distributions of livestock and other charitable goods. Chapter 3 is particularly fascinating: it examines how men’s artisanal gold mining activities are woven out of the complex entanglements of metal detectors, cars, crimes, theologies of providence, and resource mobilization. Chapter 4 shifts to the often quite agonistic exchanges through which women deal with scarce food supplies, attending particularly to the ethics and aesthetics of such exchanges. Chapter 5 takes up sickness and the contours of the collective management of illness. In cases both chronic and acute, the question is not simply one of identifying and classifying the problem or of marshaling the right therapy but rather the matter of whether any kind of therapeutic action can be secured in the first place.

Throughout, Calkins’s book is careful to contextualize these universal concerns (food, money, health, etc.) as well as the general problem of uncertainty within the particular configurations of religion, kinship, and economy that shape Rashaida experiences and understandings. Though the book draws on myriad theoretical resources, it never skimps on the particularities of Rashaida life or on the severe difficulties that Rashaida face as they live with state indifference, pervasive poverty, and the vagaries of pastoralist and mining labor. Always the concern is “the concrete ways in which [Calkins’s] Rashaida hosts in Sudan manage uncertainties” (p. 58).

Here arises another strength of the book: it addresses difficult social and personal circumstances, where people deal with a great deal of suffering and other struggles, while never reducing people to these struggles. For Africanists, the book will interest those looking for fresh approaches that complement more familiar concerns in the study of African worlds. The clear prose invites use in undergraduate teaching, particularly the ethnographic chapters, and the robust conceptual work will enable serious engagement in graduate seminars.

Tyler Zoanni, *New York University*

**Ian Campbell. 2017. *The Addis Ababa Massacre: Italy’s National Shame*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. 478 pp.**

In this book, Ian Campbell provides a historical account of one of the most brutal, but neglected massacres of the modern times—the Addis Ababa Massacre of 1937. The book starts with a brief background that discusses the historical relationship between Ethiopia and Italy. In the late nineteenth century, Italy’s desire for conquest triggered various conflicts in the Northern region of Ethiopia that culminated in an all-out war at Adwa in 1896 that brought victory to Ethiopia and extinguished Italy’s dream of becoming a colonial power in Africa. As Campbell argues, the humiliation that followed the Battle of Adwa coupled with Italy’s unsuccessful involvement in the First World War that ruined its



economy, explain the rise of Fascism in Italy. In 1935 Fascist forces invaded Ethiopia in a manner that showed how calculated and ruthless Fascism was. Here, Campbell gives an excellent background illustrating the Fascist policy of terror and its method of implementation that pre-dates the Addis Ababa Massacre, helping the reader to understand the broader context of Fascism and its systematic and wide use of terror tactics such as bombing raids of civilians, use of chemical weapons, and mass execution of prisoners of war.

After discussing the history that forms the background to the Addis Ababa Massacre, Campbell provides a through account of the Massacre, which was triggered by an attempt on the Viceroy Rodolfo Graziani's life on February 19, 1937 by two young Eritreans in Emperor Haile Selassie's Gennete-Li'ul Palace that served as Viceregal Palace. Although, Graziani survived the grenades attack and no Italians were killed, a brutal reprisal began immediately as Italian soldiers opened fire with heavy machine guns at the Ethiopian crowd. These killings were not confined in the Palace grounds as regular soldiers and Blackshirts began to kill any Ethiopian found in the vicinity of the palace. Then, the killings continued throughout the day with militarized laborers and Italian civilians joined by forming killing squads that started to split the heads of Ethiopians they captured with pickaxes and shovels.

The way Campbell organized the book enables the reader to easily imagine the horrible Massacre by taking a journey into the past. This is so, as he painstakingly documented and recreated the events of the Massacre and its aftermath with details of accounts given for each day alongside a description of events that unfolded in each quarter of the city. One such fact, which has been largely neglected, is role of the official proclamation of *carte blanche* by the Fascist Party federal secretary, Guido Cortese, in intensifying the Massacre. Thus, Campbell reveals, in excruciating detail, how extreme and indiscriminate violence and brutality perpetrated against innocent and unarmed civilians was a standard policy followed by Fascist Italy.

Relying on several eyewitness interviews and formal dispatches from the British, French, and American envoys, Campbell also hints to often overlooked but critical motives of the Massacre— looting and extermination of the Ethiopian intelligentsia. He documents that the Italians killed the educated and those with some social standing with the bid to eliminate the learned aristocracy. In a later chapter, the book summarizes the fates of eighteen suspects who were alleged to be the masterminds of the plot to kill Graziani based on Italian documents and the Campbell's own two decades research. Using the principle of triangulation and dividing the Massacre into ten phases, Campbell also gives an estimate of the number of the Massacre's victims to be around 19,200 accounting 19-20 percent of the pre-massacre population of Addis Ababa.

Apart from his contribution in creating an important historical account of Italy's crimes of shame, Campbell also exposes the cover-up orchestrated by the allied forces, particularly the British government's systematic efforts to thwart Ethiopia's efforts to bring the perpetrators of the Massacre to justice. This infuriates any justice loving person given the extraordinary bestiality of the Massacre particularly towards women, children, and the elderly.

Based on meticulous analysis of various sources, Campbell chartered a fascinating journey across decades of history with a book that is richly illustrated with maps and several photographs that are rarely seen elsewhere. The background chapter and the Foreword by

the late Professor Richard Pankhurst are also very helpful for readers who are new to the particular history, and makes the book both easily readable and an important historical account that is interesting to both academics and the general reader.

Zerihun Berhane Weldegebriel, *Addis Ababa University*

**Neil Carrier. 2016. *Little Mogadishu: Eastleigh, Nairobi's Global Somali Hub*. London: Hurst. xv + 313 pp.**

Eastleigh estate, that bustling place of Kenya's capital city Nairobi where informal and formal business economies co-exist hand-in-hand, has lately been subjected to uneven analyses on how and why Somalis came to be dominant. The estate is generally regarded as a place built from money accrued from recent piratical activities in Somalia, intrinsically a hotspot underground for terrorists and illegal migrants in an environment deeply defined by insecurity chronic corruption. *Little Mogadishu* sets out to controvert this perception by lucidly showing how business in Eastleigh has nothing to do with piracy and terrorism. The fact that Neil Carrier has been researching the estate for two decades makes his study more nuanced than any recent studies on Somalis in Eastleigh. The central starting point of the study is Mohaa from Isiolo and his Nasiib Fashions.

Using ethnographic and historical data, Carrier presents a brilliantly detailed overview of the early Eastleigh development, tracing the long history of its formation. This history of Eastleigh was connected to inter-migration within Kenya, primarily pioneered by Indians. Carrier explores the dynamics of how a once modest residential place came to be a local and global commercial hub. The first Somalis who ever lived there constituted a small Isaaq community who came to the northeast Somali region in Kenya from British Somaliland after being recruited by explorers. The Isaaq were supplemented by some Somali pastoralists from the northeast, and together they began to involve the livestock trade to supply meat to Nairobi. There occurred three waves of transformation that changed the face of Eastleigh. The major transformations began in the late 1980s and heightened by the early 1990s when Somalis from both sides of the border began to heavily invest in the estate as a result of the conflagration in Somalia. The author examines how what were once small lodges were converted into "shopping malls." The last major transformation happened in the 2000s on the eve of Ethiopian invasion to Somalia.

Eastleigh is influenced by what is happening Somalia, both positively and negatively. The author assumes the challenge of countering the stereotypes that piracy money had contributed a large extent to the economic boom there, but it is not clear whether the war economy in post-1991 Somalia had any role. However, most of the Somali businesses are largely run by people who started their business with money lent by families or friends, donations and contributions from relatives or even earlier investments. The notion of petty bourgeoisie would not be appropriate for a people working hard to better their lives in hard times, but the author demonstrates how unique economic ideas of Eastleigh were deployed into other areas of Kenya as well as the United and the United Kingdom. The success of the business acumen is principally based on the concept of *amaano* (trust) because the role of Islam plays a crucial role here. The author reports how the practice of Islam is visible in almost every Somali-owned business center in the estate. This does not mean that clan

politics and kinship ties are not important for setting up and enhancing business opportunities.

Today, Eastleigh—the place where anything goes and where anything sells—hosts Somalis from Somalia, Somalis from Kenya, Somalis from Ethiopia, and Somalis from Somaliland (who mainly came before independence). In this locale, only Somalis from Djibouti are rarely found. But most recently, Somalis from the diaspora, mainly the Western countries, who went there as refugees, many of them through Kenya, returned to do business in Eastleigh. Carrier delineates among Somalis: he considers as “Somalians” those from Somalia and as “Kenyan Somalis” those Somalis from northeast Kenya. However, whether they are from Somalia or elsewhere in the region, Somalis see themselves “Somalis” and not two different Somalis. Not only Somalis live in Eastleigh, but also Oromos from Ethiopia and Meru from Central Kenya live and work with Somalis. Members of the major Kikuyu ethnic group of Kenya also live side by side with Somalis, although the Kikuyu became landowners in the 1960s when the state encouraged their move to the estate. Yet, Somalis are key to the booming business there.

By placing Eastleigh into wider temporal and spatial contexts, the author draws out the wider significance of Eastleigh by exploring the national, regional, and global networks of which it is a part. The study of mobility and migration on how people move from one territory and then mobilise capital to profit from earlier experience in business and trade, forming transnational networks and diasporic development from (in)formal economy, is very important and timely. All we knew previously about the history of Eastleigh came from earlier impressive studies by Paul Goldsmith and Lionnel Martin. Carrier utilises relevant sophisticated anthropological literature elsewhere in Africa and beyond to relate Eastleigh to African and global studies. *Little Mogadishu* is hopeful and humane in that it seeks to reveal how Somalis negotiated and continue to negotiate their identity, status and marginality in a way not much dissimilar to those other people in Kenya.

Mohamed Haji Ingiriis, *University of Oxford*

**Delinda Collier. 2016. *Repainting the Walls of Lunda: Information Colonialism and Angolan Art*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 253 pp.**

Delinda Collier's *Repainting the Walls of Lunda* is a book about a book; more specifically, it is a meticulous examination of the motivations, interventions, and legacies of a mid-century study of Chokwe murals by Portuguese anthropologist, Jose Redinha, entitled *Paredes Pintadas da Lunda (Painted Walls of Lunda, 1953)*. The seemingly tight focus of the study, however, is immensely generative, opening onto a broad field of inquiry that exposes the enmeshing of art, media, and political processes, muddies the periodization of Africa's “colonial” and “post-colonial” eras, offers new insights into socialist art making in the “Third World,” and challenges the romantic, racist stereotype of what Collier succinctly and effectively calls “the myth of analog Africa”—the enduring perception of the continent as “unmediated,” “natural,” and “primitive” (p. 75).

Collier's text uses the production, circulation, and ultimate dispersal of *Paredes Pintadas da Lunda* to reveal the process of what she terms remediation or the ways in which “media objects transact colonialism” (p. 2). The familiar understanding of “remediation” as a process of remedying that which is considered deleterious here gains a secondary, apposite connotation. Collier identifies the production of media objects motivated by a desire to halt,

or re-write certain narratives (the disappearance of “traditional” Chokwe culture, the forging of anti-colonial nationalism, the “correction” of colonialist endeavors, etc.) that both remediate and *re*-mediate; that is, they seek to correct/rewrite via a new medium that consumes that which went before. This concept of “remediation,” first made visible through Redinha’s attempted pinning down of Chokwe *sona* drawings via his own autographed paintings published in a static, printed book (the act itself predicated on the conceit that *sona* were pure, unmediated “traditional” images), is a significant contribution to both histories of African art in the twentieth century, and to methodological approaches to the latter. Attention to “remediation” demands that scholars look beyond the content of images to the significant surfaces on which they are rendered, the specific sources from which they have drawn, the manner in which they “recode” (p. 173) such sources and the networks in which they are embroiled. *Repainting the Walls of Lunda* is, thus, as much an invaluable history of Angolan artistic practice since mid-century, as it is an exemplary study of the ways in which walls, canvases, printed pages, screens, and other “media technologies” obsolesce and are obsolesced, and the material, political legacies of such processes.

*Repainting the Walls of Lunda* is a stratigraphic study; it excavates layers of reproductive media that have presented, represented, and displaced Chokwe artistic practices since mid-century. Tellingly, Collier’s starting point for this study was the 2006 website for the first *Trienal de Luanda*, on which the original plates of *Paredes Pintadas da Lunda* had been appropriated, digitally altered (to remove the signature of Redinha, held up as embodiment of Angola’s formal colonial masters), and repackaged via the supposedly “democratic” medium of the internet. The website declared itself to be an “anti-colonial” gesture. As Collier reveals, however, it did not so much wrest Chokwe artistic practice out of colonialist hands and return it to the people as to further disperse Redinha’s earlier intervention: the Trienal website “[converted] the media object of colonial capital, the book, into an even more ephemeral media operation, the...Internet” (p. 216). Taking this radical dematerialization as a starting point, Collier traces the evolution of *Paredes Pintadas da Lunda* that leads to this point. This journey takes us from the extractive operations of the Portuguese diamond mining company, Diamang, for whose museum in Lunda Redinha produced his original text, through the post-independence years of civil conflict, in which anti-colonial artists (most notably, and eloquently, Vitor Manuel “Viteix” Teixeira) used painting to “remediate” Chokwe symbols in pursuit of a new nation, through to a postwar era in which contemporary art is burgeoning under the sponsorship of an African business elite that have benefited from Angola’s immensely rich natural resources and export economy.

*Repainting the Walls of Lunda* provides many new insights into three seminal eras in Angola’s modern history. Collier’s study of Diamang reveals the company’s mobilization of photography not simply as propaganda, but as extension of its colonialist apparatus. Her explication of Angola’s anti-colonial artists’ embrace of the socialist “New Man,” and of the latter as “a type of networked discourse” (p. 136) intervenes in global histories of Cold War-era culture, which so often remain limited to tracing Soviet imperialism or deriding derivative socialist art. And, finally, in its mapping of the country’s shifting art scene amidst a tumultuous economy of diamonds, oil, and the global networks in which resultant capital flows, *Repainting the Walls of Lunda* helps us to better understand the rapid growth of Luanda as a burgeoning global art city. In confronting both long-standing misconceptions

and urgent contemporary phenomena, the contributions of Collier's book to histories of art, media, technology, and colonialism in Africa are manifold.

Kate Cowcher, *University of St. Andrews*

**Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff. 2018. *The Truth About Crime: Sovereignty, Knowledge and Social Order*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 347 pp.**

"How do we understand ourselves?" Perhaps a more relevant question we should be asking is "how do we express ourselves to the sovereign and how has the sovereign selected to respond?" Jean and John Comaroff argue that the answer(s) to these questions cannot be found by studying our arts or sciences. Instead, the argument is made that we should turn our attention to the crimes we commit. *The Truth About Crime: Sovereignty, Knowledge and Social Order* argues that there has been a seismic shift in the way crime is perceived. From this perspective crime is no longer about preventing the acts pertaining to what constitutes a criminal act, but instead crime is a means of revolt as the sovereign seeks to use the arms of crime prevention as a means of advancing its own interests instead of protecting the people. This shift by the sovereign indicates that people may turn to crime to highlight their socio-economic plight(s).

This disconnect that has occurred between the sovereign and the citizenry is largely the fault of a fracturing social contract, which has resulted in the citizenry "retooling [their] conceptions of poverty, personhood, citizenship and the social contract" (p. 223). This has resulted in the emergence of a new social order. This new social order is one whereby the act of securing one's self and one's community has become privatized. This privatization of security has made it harder to distinguish between "law and lawlessness" (p. 187) due to the fact that the means by which private security is provided can be broad and thus include: kangaroo courts, rouge justice, NGO intervention, "lone ranger" and faith-based vigilantes.

In the South Africa context, the above-mentioned arguments play out in a number of ways, but the most fitting example that encompasses the social disconnect between the sovereign and the citizenry and how the citizenry have responded is that of the Marikana Tragedy. The African National Congress (ANC) has been in power since 1994, and while there have been improvements in socio-economic conditions, race relations, and international interaction, South Africa has become the most unequal country in the world. The Marikana Miners' Strike commenced on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August 2012 with mine workers demanding a wage increase of R12,500, citing that the remuneration of the mine bosses was unfair in relation to their own. Concerns within South Africa's political elite began to grow as elites came to the realization that the strike could have a crippling affect on the country's already struggling economy. These concerns prompted then-businessman and current president, Cyril Ramaphosa to ask the Ministry of Police to address the situation, which resulted in the killing of thirty-four mineworkers on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August 2012.

The Marikana Tragedy is considered the most brutal use of state (police) force against the citizenry in the post-Apartheid era. Events such as these have furthered the public's distrust in the South African Police Service and clearly illustrate how business and political heavyweights can use their influence to resolve a situation to maintain social order. However, there is a greater issue at play, which one could expand on and that is the relationship between the ANC and the Congress of South African Trade Unions and how cooperation between these two groups helps to keep the ANC in power despite its poor

governance record in certain respects. The arguments put forward in this book as well the example of Marikana should help to pave the way for further invagination on the current state of the social contract in South Africa and what that means for the further of crime and the ANC's political sustainability.

While the *Truth About Crime* is an exciting and, somewhat, unusual read, it is not without its shortcomings. Firstly, given that the vast majority of the book is orientated around South Africa one would expect an approach that is more primary in nature whereby the authors obtain the thoughts of ordinary, every-day South Africans on how they perceive the shifts in crime within the South African context. Such an approach would enrich the text and aid discussions pertaining to domestic policy. Secondly, one is left pondering on the usefulness of the book's cover in relation to its content; as a reader the reviewer experienced a disconnect between the two elements as South Africa serves as the main case study while the cover seems to depict an individual held hostage by a terrorist, which is hardly relevant to the South African context.

Overall, *The Truth About Crime* would be a useful book for anyone examining the relationship between the state and the citizenry and how the citizenry responds in the fields of political science, criminology, anthropology and sociology.

Sven Botha, *Student of Political and International Studies, Monash South Africa*

**Yolanda Covington-Ward. 2015. *Gesture and Power: Religion, Nationalism, and Everyday Performance in Congo*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press. 287 pp.**

Looking at Yolanda Covington-Ward's *Gesture and Power* sociologically, the work is a fine blend of Congo's colonial history, an impressive page of Cultural anthropology, an introduction to African body/performance studies, and a crisp work on sociology of religion. The text refers to the art of body politics, which was perceived by colonizers as a threat to the regime, and a budding dominant tradition based on gestures and religious dramaturgy. The title of the book is apt as gesture is power since the very gesture was proving as a tool of resistance against the oppressor.

The work sees the body as the centre of resistance and a silent polite retaliation taking the refuge in religion/spirituality practices. In south Asian cultures as well especially in case of India body protest politics continues till date in terms of hunger strikes coupled with singing anti-regime songs, dancing, playing music, and speeches against corruption, against draconian laws, etc. Also India's *Baba* (religious seers/leaders) culture is thriving by virtue of body politics in terms of singing, dancing, and delivering sermons and enjoys a tremendous fan following, have followers in millions. These *Babas* even decide the fate of elections and contesting political parties bows before them for support in elections. Even some of such religious cult heads when convicted for heinous crimes, provoke their followers to violence and anti-national activities.

Therefore Covington-Ward's analysis is not just a simple commentary on cultural performances in colonial Congo, but a work that amply locates religion and nationalism and globally theorises the problematic and political nexus between religion, power, people, and the state through gestures and performances or for that matter a clear triangle of

nationalism, civil religion, and bodies. Covington-Ward also portrays how gestures slowly become silent slogans what she calls performative encounters to shape power politics.

Covington-Ward's methodology is also interesting and novel; from taking help from archives, to the in-depth field study in Congo, her sociological insight is more mature, and grounded. The author while writing the phrase *Neither Native nor Stranger* finely displays her own awkward position as a researcher and reflects upon both her field work woes and her own style of doing the perilous ethnography. She in a very subtle way describes how performance shapes power-politics in everyday life, which itself get shaped by individual activities shaped by religion, spirituality (spirit-induced trembling), or art (performance and gestures). Taking religious practices or spiritual practices as a weapon against the oppressor thereby acting as a pressure tactic forcing the powerful to suppress the same. Also the book if read between the lines reflects simply that that political authority is very much developed from the religious authority and how religious authority is developed from individual (cultural/religious) performance or impact to a collective mass appeal while keeping the body at the centre. Not only this, even how the daily interactions and spiritual worship are basically political in nature and how are such embodied everyday cultural performances /acts perceived by the other. The work also gives a fine interconnection of performance and the role of the state (state-enforced production of dancing and singing), the performance, and its gendering—what they call “animation politique.”

This 287 page work seems a labor of love. It clearly states how culture, cultural dance, spiritual acts, and religious acts have manifest and latent functions at the same time. Also how culture is not just a culture but a change factor too and how performance is not just a performance but a pressure tactic and a resistance tool at the same time. The book throughout its four parts also shows how gesture and power combination were reflected in the colonial Congo in terms of a new movement of nationalism; and also how individual and group actions and covert resistance symbols infer to spiritual and political authority, freedom, and a sense of one's own identity.

As far as the politics of the oppressed is concerned, the deadly and lethal combination of three ideological and cultural apparatuses, viz. gestures (*bimpampa*), spirit induced trembling (*zakama*), and dance (*maniku*) along with other symbolic cultural practices virtually acted as war weapons in the colonial Congo against the Belgians. Whereas the introduction of the book is the microcosm of the whole, the central argument revolves around the body's role, music, dance, and power of performances makes it a dense body of work that throws a deep sea of new themes to the future researchers to work upon.

The beautiful part of the work is its jargon free writing, and the weaker part perhaps is its being restricted to Congo and not having a few dense case studies from other African states besides an underdeveloped and less simplified description on the historical-colonial part. The book, however, is one of the finest works on ethnography given its style of description, rich theoretical background, and methodology.

Adfer Rashid Shah, *Jamia Millia Islamia University*

**Aaron R. Denham. 2017. *Spirit Children: Illness, Poverty and Infanticide in Northern Ghana*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press. 217 pp.**

Studying infanticide is not at all easy. The emotional, social and legal burdens that accompany the intentional or subconscious killing of a dependent child make it incredibly

difficult for outside researchers to properly understand the processes behind a tragic but pervasive phenomenon. What Aaron Denham has produced is, therefore, remarkable. In a thoughtful and often moving study of Nankani families in Ghana's far north-eastern savannah, Denham has produced a rich ethnography which explores the complex reasons which might lead to the diagnosis of a "spirit child" and, in some cases, its death at the hands of community "concoction men."

Spirit children had not escaped the notice of earlier academics working in the Kassena-Nankani District (KND), an area that has long been a locus of Africanist research in a number of fields. In 1912, in what is perhaps the earliest detailed European-language account of the region, the French colonial administrator and anthropologist Louis Tauxier noted that, if "the Kassouna-Boura women give birth to evil spirits," those children "would later kill their father or mother."<sup>1</sup> Despite frequent descriptions of spirit children and infanticide in these districts (one 2001 study suggested that perhaps 15 percent of mortality in children under three months was due to spirit child-related infanticide) this is the first full-length study of spirit children and their families.<sup>2</sup>

Spirit children are nonhuman and usually malevolent. They come from the bush and ultimately want to return there. Spirit children are most commonly infants deformed or disabled from birth, or following a period of debilitating sickness. Family crises, illnesses, or deaths that coincide with a pregnancy or recent birth might also suggest that the newborn is actually a spirit child. While these may be the most common manifestations of spirit children, the discovery and deliverance of a spirit child is much more complex. Refusing to simplify the issue, Denham presents a subtle exploration of family relationships and the social, economic, medical, and religious influences that combine to form a complicated ambivalence regarding infants. In KND personhood is not automatic but something that is earned over time, and children occupy a liminal space in the social order. The naming of all children is delayed, usually by at least a year; while spirit children are left in the bush, children who are not spirits are buried in peripheral areas on the outskirts of a farm rather than in ancestral graves.

As the book's subtitle suggests, the liminality of Nankani children and the use of infanticide is bound up with the pervasion of poverty and illness in KND. Despite this, Denham does not emphasize the medical and economic exceptionalism that underlies the spirit child phenomena. This is a laudable attempt to avoid the reductionism of "rational choice" models of infanticide. While Denham certainly succeeds in emphasizing the shortcomings of economic approaches to infanticide, the reader is denied some important contextualization. KND has long been one of Ghana's poorest districts; a long history of famine appears today as seasonal food insecurity and endemic malnutrition, something exacerbated by population densities which are extremely high for a marginal savannah economy. As Tauxier noted in 1912, the wrong children born at the wrong time might well contribute to a family's ruin. The relationship between spirit children and food, or the lack thereof, is readily apparent and partially addressed but not fully fleshed out. Denham largely ignores a rich seam of research, which explores the nature of poverty and poverty-related illness in this specific environment.<sup>3</sup> This may disappoint readers hoping for a more thorough disaggregation of infanticide and the environmental realities specific to KND. The discussion of medicine is more rounded and more interesting, offering valuable insight into the intersection of social, spiritual and biomedical understandings of health. Families



usually arrive at a spirit child diagnosis only after exhausting biomedical or traditional medicines, or their ability to pay for any such treatment.

Despite some frustrations, this study will doubtless prove valuable to psychiatric and medical anthropologists, as well as students of infancy and family construction. As the most thorough anthropology of infanticide yet written, *Spirit Children* adds valuable texture to a practice, which had, until now, received little detailed analysis. It is testament to the skill and sensitivity of the author.

**Notes:**

1. L. Tauxier, *Le Noir Du Soudan: Pays Mossi et Gourounsi, Documents et Analyses* (Paris: Emile Larose, 1912), p. 329.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

John Nott, *Maastricht University*

**Nuno Domingos. 2017. *Football and Colonialism: Body and Popular Culture in Urban Mozambique*. Athens: Ohio University Press. 325 pp.**

Nuno Domingos' *Football and Colonialism* represents a comprehensive look at the growth of football in urban Lourenço Marques (now Maputo). Domingos does a good job combining a comprehensive historical study—benefiting from archival work—with anthropological methods supplementing historical findings by interspersing interviews conducted with former footballers in both Mozambique and Portugal throughout the narrative in order to provide a detailed image of how football shaped the colonial experience in urban Mozambique.

Domingos's well-researched text reminds the reader at the outset that "despite being the object of surveillance and political co-option by state institutions, religious and economic actors, sports associations promoted practices and consumptions, mobilized people and enabled urban encounters and, in some cases, were even converted into sites of organized resistance" (p. 9). Throughout the book, Domingos shows the various ways that indigenous and mestizo residents of suburban Lourenço Marques used football to create connections, both reproducing—and transforming—the colonial system (p. 18).

The book opens with a few historical chapters on the development of football in suburban and urban Lourenço Marques, emphasizing that the sport organized itself according to the logic of colonial structures while also creating new urban identities. In the middle portions of the book, Domingos shows how football was influenced by local characteristics, and local traditions—like witchcraft and faith healing—were introduced to the colonial urban environment through football. In the latter portions of the book, Domingos goes on to show just how football created a space where locals could form an identity as well as make connections with the wider world, allowing for an escape from the constraints of the colonial system while offering a chance to integrate with the modern international system. Specifically, this meant (in some cases) abandoning the local style of play and adopting the rationalized, "modern" style of football, affording opportunities for some local players—including the famous Eusebio—to make their mark on European and indeed world football.

The utility of *Football and Colonialism* lies in its ability to show how, for the residents of colonial Lourenço Marques, football was much more than just a tool for colonial social control (as was the case in the metropole under Salazar). Instead, football provided a social and cultural context within which connections could be made in the urban area. These connections offered opportunities for integration with wider (non-indigenous) structures without completely legitimizing the status quo. These connections also—notably—did not descend into a wider struggle and violence between colonizers and colonized. Instead, Domingos stresses the ongoing give-and-take between indigenous and colonial cultures within the colonial system, using football as the lens through which to view this interaction.

Football offered residents of suburban Lourenço Marques opportunities to develop connections among themselves (including opportunities for education), opportunities to develop connections with “downtown” (where the majority of Portuguese settlers and Europeans lived), and opportunities to develop connections with the metropole (by following metropolitan teams like SL Benfica or Sporting Lisbon). Interestingly, the connections Domingos refers to also include connections with indigenous culture. Throughout, Domingos points out how football played a role in developing a unique sense of morals in suburban Lourenço Marques while also providing opportunities for the integration of witchcraft practices and *vovo* into football. Domingos’ narrative presents these indigenous connections provided by football as unique responses to the modernizing processes driven by Portuguese colonialism (p. 151). This is in stark contrast to the homogenizing effects of modern football in the current era that seek to impose the logic of rationalized neoliberalism on the world’s game at the expense of local cultures.

Domingos’ unique amalgamation of historical and anthropological approaches allows for an in-depth study of the social role of football in a colonial context, but it does not allow the reader to forget that they are reading a historical work. Indeed, a little more emphasis on the anthropological side—and ethnographic methods in particular—would have made Domingos’ analysis a little more engaging as bringing out the human voice of participants could have livened up the prose. Still, Nuno Domingos’ *Football and Colonialism* offers amazing insight into football in colonial Mozambique and represents a very important addition to the academic literature on football. As a well-researched work that integrates sociological and anthropological theory seamlessly into the historical narrative, it will also be of immense value to students of African history, colonial history, urban studies, as well as to those with an interest in popular culture and sports more generally.

John Konuk Blasing, *University of Florida*

**Ernest N. Emenyonu (ed.). 2017. *A Companion to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie*. Suffolk, UK: James Currey. 300 pp.**

The purpose of a companion is to acquaint its readers with not just the works of the author, but also all that is behind the work. Its purpose is to unearth the soil of the writing so as to explore those facets of the author’s thought that feed the literature. Every book is a person in itself accompanied by its own subjectivities. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a prolific female writer of the postcolonial whose influence as a modern day feminist is much known. Her works speak to the readers in their own language, thus making them global in

character. *A Companion to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie* does justice in underlining this dialogue.

Being thematically organized according to the milestones of Adichie's career, the companion is further mostly subdivided under each segment into various premises. Though there are no such divisional headings, these subthemes are hard to miss. The first seven chapters of the book are devoted to a thematic critical analysis of Adichie's debut fiction writing, *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), from diverse vantage points. This work, as is well known, brought her much critical acclaim. The seven chapters carefully assimilated in this companion cover key areas that would appeal to the literary and more so emotional sensibilities of the reader of this postcolonial text. The recognizable subthemes, if one may call them so, cover gender; motherhood and the significance it holds in Igbo culture in particular and in Nigerian culture at large; abuse in the domestic sphere; and the gendered idea of spaces (brilliantly articulated in the chapter by Jessica Hume titled "Dining Room & Kitchen: Food-Related Spaces & their Interfaces with the Female Body in *Purple Hibiscus*").

Chapters eight to twelve are similarly placed in the organizational structure of the book. These are devoted to the 2006 publication *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Premised in the Biafran War of 1967-70, this novel recounts the angst and the vulnerabilities that accompany life in a war torn state. The companion does a thorough job of acquainting the readership with the complexities of not just the characters of the novel but also allows one to revisit the past that scarred a nation and its people. The essays in this section deftly navigate one through the endurance as well as the aftermath of war, and also dwell upon the post independence struggles of the states of the global south, thus enabling a wholesome appreciation of the text amongst the readers.

The last four chapters of the book are dedicated to the 2013 novel *Americanah*. Though all four essays in this part are engaging, the last chapter "'Hairitage' Matters: Transitioning & the Third Wave Hair Movement in 'Hair', 'Imitation' & *Americanah*" by Cristina Cruz Gutierrez stands as a brilliant piece of critical writing that leaves the reader with much fodder for thought.

Of the intermittent chapters, Chapter thirteen is based on Adichie's collection of short stories titled *The Thing Around Your Neck*. Whereas, chapter twelve talks of the responsibilities that accompany Adichie and her kind as writers. It is this particular essay that stands out in the book for its broad scope as well as its distance from any narrow singular text. It provides a refreshing space for thoughts to be paused and the act of writing to be studied as a job that brings along its own share accountability/ies.

Overall, the keywords that proliferate ones thinking while reading the companion are politics, women, domestic space, voice, and home amongst others. The essays have been carefully selected and compiled to allow the reader a certain familiarity, and a fair intimacy too if one might say, with the works of Adichie, and more broadly with the Nigerian- Igbo literature of her generation as well as the African writings of her predecessors. The chapters weaved together fall seamlessly within this jacketed treasure-trove. Despite the want of more works to be covered, as the title suggests the book is a true companion to the works of this gem of a writer of her generation who talks of the complexities of politics, race, identity, and gender with much innocence, poise, and power. Whether you are an ardent Adichie lover or a novice to her world of literature, this book is equipped to be a beacon of light as you devour the words to make sense of the world.

Khushi Singh Rathore, *Jawaharlal Nehru University*

**Toyin Falola and Jamaine Abidogun (eds.). 2017. *Issues in African Political Economies*. Durham, North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press. xxi, 402 pp.**

Political Economy, which has a long established history, more than four hundred years to be precise, is found in the works of economists such as Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and Karl Marx. It unapologetically eschews the belief by some in the social sciences field that politics and economics are not interlinked. Therefore, it uses the crucible of politics and economics to discuss the relationship between politics, society and economics. Despite Political Economy's usefulness, there is a dearth of literature on its application in analysing African polities. Notable exceptions are works by, amongst others, Claude Ake's *A Political Economy of Africa* and Olu Ajakaiye, Allan Drazen and Joseph Karugia's *Political Economy and Economic Development in Africa: An Overview*. Therefore, a book such as Falola and Abidogun's is a very welcome addition to the fledging pool of literature on African political economies.

The overarching aim of Falola and Abidogun is "detailing local and regional economies in Africa that describe case studies squarely situated within the global context" (p. 1). Vital to note, delivering on this objective is a very tall order, for how can one comprehensively discuss local and regional economies in a big continent such as Africa which consists of fifty-four national and hundreds of regional economies? Such a task would require a multi-volume book such as Levinson and Ember's *Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology*. Nonetheless, the authors undertake the assignment in nineteen essays. The book is divided into four sections (or themes): (i) The Political in the Economy (chapters 1- 5); (ii) Risk Analysis and Security Measures (chapters 6-9); (iii) Views on Resource Capital and Development (chapters 10-14); and (iv) Wealth of the Nations; African Voices in Reflection (chapters 15-19). As it is the norm, the book starts off with an elaborate introduction that gives a reader a foretaste of issues that are to follow by summarising the four themes. Regarding the four themes, The Political in the Economy discusses the interplay between politics and the economy. Risk Analysis and Security Measures discusses various issues that pose risks in trade and politics and eventuate in large scale security issues. For instance, chapters 8 and 9 discuss political corruption in South Africa and Nigeria respectively and how the same has a disenabling effect on macroeconomic objectives such as economic development. Views on Resource Capital and Development discusses the nexus between resources and political economies (read economic development). For instance, chapter 10 discusses the resource curse; a case whereby predatory politics means that resource-rich regions present macroeconomic maladies such as underdevelopment in Nigeria's Niger Delta. Finally, Wealth of the Nations; African Voices in Reflection discusses how political aspects impact economic ones. It surveys a variety of issues, for example, case studies on the politics of poverty in chapters 15 and 17.

In a salutary manner, the book addresses an important subject of the interplay of politics and economics in African polities. However, the task is unwieldy given that Africa is so large with its fifty-four national and hundreds of regional economies. In this regard, the book title should have read *Issues in African Political Economies: Selected Case Studies*. Hence, from the get go, the reader would be aware that the book does not cover the whole gamut of African polities. It is only by reading the table of contents that the reader gets to appreciate that the book discusses select case studies. Despite the inadvertently deceiving title, the book

has a lot of strengths. Some of them are: it is written by experts in the field and therefore covers key issues in African political economies; it is abundantly referenced, therefore, pointing the reader to additional sources; and it is written in a non-technical language. Therefore, it provides very useful reading material to general readers and scholars who are interested in African political economies.

In the end, did the book achieve its overarching objective; that is, “detailing local and regional economies in Africa that describe case studies squarely situated within the global context” (p. 1)? The answer is in the affirmative. Through a judicious selection of case studies, it discussed local and regional economies in Africa and also situated them within the global context. However, the book should have ended with a concluding chapter that addresses pertinent issues such as “what is next?” That is, the book should have identified questions that it did not answer, which other researchers should explore.

Emmanuel Botlhale, *University of Botswana*

**Toyin Falola and Bola Dauda. 2017. *Decolonizing Nigeria, 1945-1960: Politics, Power, and Personalities*. Austin, Texas: Pan-African University Press. 612 pp.**

Nigeria, the world’s most populous black nation and a former British colony, has, undoubtedly, a plethora of historical documentations of its decolonization making yet another volume on same subject seemingly hackneyed. But the uniqueness of Falola and Dauda’s account of the political ferment of the fifteen seedy years before Nigeria’s political independence in 1960 is unarguable. Beyond mere chronicling, the book critically reviews, interprets and interrogates the past in light of the present and with an eye on the future. It wades through the labyrinthine intercourse of the triad of politics, power, and personalities as they played out in Nigeria mainly, but not exclusively, between 1945 and 1960. In constructing *Decolonizing Nigeria, 1945-1960*, the authors revealed the many tripods of the politics of the period. First is the British ethnic politics of tense relationship among the Irish, the Scots, and the English that seeped into Nigeria through the colonial heads of the then three regions of Nigeria. Another tripod was world opinion represented by the United States that put the imperialists on the defensive, the imperialists themselves who had a secret plan to disengage from Nigeria and Nigerians who through another tripod of Azikiwe, Awolowo, and Bello hankered after self-rule.

The authors adopted neither the top-down nor bottom-up approach to historiography. Instead, they embarked on historical post mortem of the “cadaver” of small events, mainly, and the forensic examination of “crime-scenes” in order to determine both means and motives behind the political maneuverings of the period. This unconventional methodology sets the book apart from others of its kind like Lawal’s *The United States and the Decolonization Process in Nigeria (1945-60)*, which surveys Nigeria’s decolonization during the same period but focuses on the role of the United States, and Bretton’s *Power and Stability in Nigeria: The Politics of Decolonization* concerned largely with stability of Nigeria at independence.

The authors examine decolonization as a “dilemma” whose time had come. Various factors conflated to birth this dilemma. Nigeria’s introduction to world economy during the world wars and the post war zeitgeist of British colonies, Britain’s economic devastation after the wars, and the consciousness of the antithesis of Western civilization which made Nigerians aware that “those who had long-standing traditions of liberty, rights, and self-

determination were not essentially different from those denigrated as savages” (pp. 29-30). The authors observe that when the Allied Powers described Hitler as the enemy of democracy, they inadvertently paved the way for British imperialists to be reminded that there was no democracy in Nigeria. These were some of the radical events of the period.

Also, the authors study the consequences of the forced union called Nigeria. Whereas the South criticized colonialism, the North criticized indirect rule. Consequently, the demand of the North was reformist. The authors observe that the political parties of the period were not truly “national” but essentially avenues for realization of ethnic agendas. The fear of domination was bolstered by the absence of primordial bonds in a plural society like Nigeria. To whom, then, should self-government be handed over? The imperialists did little to hide their disdain for the educated elite-nationalists who in turn nursed fear of sabotage by British career administrators. Southerners entertained fear of domination by the North and Northerners wanted Northernization as against Nigerianization of the civil service. These, the authors say, were evidences that Nigeria, a conglomerate of 248 ethnic nationalities, was far from being unified.

The dissimilar approaches of the triad nationalists perhaps bear the loudest testimony to the yawning lack of unification in a supposedly unified Nigeria angling for decolonization. The authors point out that while Azikiwe dreamed of utopian Africa with a revived glorious past, Bello saw no structural problem in one region outweighing the other two in size and population and in a political party that clearly excluded the rest of the country, and Awolowo knowing the socio-economic and political advantage of the West pressed for regionalism.

The authors note that the national question remains unresolved and attempts to “satisfy” sections of the country have only contributed to division and disunity. Despite the wobbly nature of the Nigerian union, however, the authors rule out its disintegration claiming that the centripetal forces of self-interest are stronger than the centrifugal forces of religion and ethnicity. It remains to be seen how far and well a country can survive on self-interest of few instead of on cohesiveness of all its units.

Oluchi J. Igili, *Adekunle Ajasin University*

**Toyin Falola and Wanjala S. Nasong’o (eds.). 2016. *Contentious Politics in Africa; Identity, Conflict and Social Change*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press. 354 pp.**

The eighteen essays in this volume—one of several Toyin Falola has put together with collaborators in recent years—deal largely with Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa and their neighbors; in other words the most populous areas of Africa, but that doesn’t mean this work doesn’t shed light on problems facing Africa as a whole. It does.

In Chapter 1 Falola and Nasong’o provide a summary of the papers and explain they have divided the volume into four categories: Violence, War and Political Change, Socioeconomic Change and Development, Social Movements and Identity Politics, and the Politics of Revolts and Protests. But, some readers might observe that since all these categories overlap, why not simply let the papers speak for themselves.

The papers were given at a conference, and carry with them the burden of providing a theoretical framework in less than ten pages, followed by an outline of a conclusion; some of

the authors struggle less than entirely successfully with this dual imperative. In N. Jackson's piece on Cameroon (Chapter 15) rarely has so much abstract explication been imposed on such a small polity, though the second half of the piece is engaging. P. Eke's piece on the Niger Delta Militancy and Boko Haram in Nigeria (Chapter 12) exemplifies the opposite quandary: a praiseworthy review of current definitions of social movements is presented, but followed by a hurried summary of the two Nigerian movements, with only tentative steps towards a conclusion.

In the second piece in the anthology O. Balogun and M. Balogun assess Hobbesian concepts of self-defense and violence with regards to contemporary Africa, but find their application today problematic. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 deal with war on the continent of Africa and are recommended for their unique perspective, focusing as they do on war as presented first by historians, then by newspapers, and finally in imaginative literature. The choice of the Boer War in Chapter 3 serves as a reminder of that relatively recent (1890–1902) but often forgotten conflict. The author highlights a common feature of the historical reports by Hobhouse, Doyle, St. John, Cull, and Pakenham, all of whom mention the notorious "concentration camps" set up by the British in the period 1900 to 1902 and the frightening death toll from disease and malnutrition, particularly among children; yet make no mention of the even greater number of black "native" populations similarly incarcerated and suffering even greater losses. This could hardly be bettered as an example of colonial myopia. Today, in Borno Province, Nigeria, camps for the Internally Displaced People are fulfilling a similar role in the campaign against the terrorist movement Boko Haram.

The focus of Chapter 5 is the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) using two novels as exemplars, the *Season of Anomy* by Wole Soyinka and *Half a Yellow Sun* by Chimamande Ngoze Adichie. For those interested in lexical structures and detailed linguistic analysis, this chapter will be a delight. The interrelationship between historical accounts and novelistic accounts is well made. Historians' views are seldom objective *vide* the accounts of the Boer War mentioned below. Some translations of Hausa words given are incorrect. "*Ranka ya dede*" means "May your life be long," a greeting reserved for emirs, chiefs, and other in authority. The word "*nyameri*" though used by Hausa people is regarded as a corruption of an Igbo request for water. "*Allahu Akbar*," is, of course Arabic.

Some might complain that Alexius Amtaika's topic of post-liberation South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique (Chapter 6) requires a book, not a mere twenty-six pages, but Amtaika, moving at a sprinter's pace, presents several thoughts and observations mostly related to the juncture of ideology and economic progress that need not be taken as exhaustive conclusions. Among his musings are that liberation movements had difficulty navigating the transition from waging war to governing the liberated nations, and that democratization is not safe without demonstrable economic progress. This is perhaps one of the best essays in the book.

The fraying of national identity and public security in Kenya following the violence of the 2008 election are the topics of B. Muhonja and G. Obaso in Chapter 9. Following the election the "land of peace" became the nation where over eleven hundred Kenyans were killed, citizens reverted to thinking of themselves as Luo, Kikuyu, and so forth rather than Kenyans, and ambitions became smaller (can I obtain food today, etc.). Lina, the subject of Muhonja's and Obaso's account, moves back to her smaller, ancestral town. This is a tale of devolution on all levels.

In Chapter 13, M.O. Odey presents a gloomy yet accurate picture of a Nigeria in which personal identity is bound up with ethnic and religious affiliations, which are played upon by leaders in both spheres to the detriment of national unity. In the following chapter, I.D. Sule adds to the gloom by pointing out the deleterious effects of globalization on African society in general and Nigeria in particular. The chapter relates uneasily to Marxist-Leninist theory, mentioning favorably state-inspired censorship of the internet as allegedly practiced by China and North Korea. Chapter 16 by N.G. Esew describes the issue of Indigene versus Settler. The irony of the liberal, explicit, definition of nationality against the parochial definition of indigenous status is pointed out. *Colonialism by Proxy*, a recent publication by Moses Ochonu, adds further support to Esew's arguments.

It has been said that, "in Nigeria, politics is warfare conducted by other means," thus reversing the famous von Clausewitz dictum. Chapter 18 by B.A. Ojedokun describing the elections of 2003, 2007, and 2011 illustrates this, mentioning also the huge salaries and allowances of elected officials as being something engendering violence. The subsequent 2015 election was better, so some lessons were learned. A suggestion of using Proportional Representation to reduce conflict is welcome. Chapter 19 by G.A. Animasawun and Y.A. Aluko is also critical of the repression of protest and the use by the government of the day of police who do not hesitate to shoot to kill. They quote examples of both military and civilian governments using similar tactics showing, through the theories of both Marx and Gramsci, that coercion by the Nigerian state of its citizens shows little difference from its colonial predecessor, whether under military or civilian control.

Other pieces have a more modest and tighter focus, and their challenges are less daunting. The items on Women's Movements in Kenya (Chapter 7), Marianist Projects in Kenya (Chapter 8), NGO-Government Interactions in South Africa (Chapter 10), and the role of the South African Development Community (SADC, Chapter 11), all expand our understanding of the mosaic of NGOs and trans-national entities active on the continent. In their essay on Women's Movements Musalia and Wasonga make the apt observation that the efficacy of the movements in Kenya has been directly proportional to the extent to which the movements are autonomous, and not chained to any incumbent administration, or to one charismatic figure. In the item on the SADC, K. Goto and M. Langelihle describe the economic collapse of Zimbabwe and note the difficulty in dealing with a charismatic leader of the struggle for independence. They find that the SADC must clarify its own goals and not shy away from taking on a more political role, both considerable challenges.

Regarding N. Esew and A. Johnson's piece on the role of youth in the revolutions in South Africa and Tunisia (Chapter 17)—and we can see why they picked those two nations: they bracket the continent—this is more a sketch of a paper than a paper, but the subject is one which won't go away and cries out for further study. Rulers take for granted the quiescence of their youth at their own risk, though the situations in South Africa and Tunisia were very different. The overturning of apartheid in South Africa was the result of decades of organized struggle, whereas the eruption of the Tunisian uprising in December 2010 and January 2011 took most of the opposition parties and entities by surprise (see for example Anne Wolf, *Political Islam in Tunisia: A History of Ennahda*). In the Tunisian case, the leaders of opposition parties had to rush tardily into the streets in order to catch up to the demonstrators. The significance of a single "trigger event" looms large here. But the youth played key roles in both revolutions.



It would of course be unrealistic to expect that this volume could summarize political activity in all of Africa with its fifty-four nations, but Falola, who has edited five other volumes on African themes, no doubt believes that with continuing efforts the concerns and current needs of the continent will emerge with growing clarity. These volumes are making progress in presenting just such a panorama of topics and challenges.

Paul Turton, formerly of *Ahmadu Bello University*, and Kenneth Meyer, *Western Washington University*

**Sati U. Fwashak. (ed.). 2017. *The Transformation of Central Nigeria: Essays in Honour of Toyin Falola*. Austin: Pan African University Press. xxxii + 485 pp.**

The book is divided into four parts, namely: economic, political and religious transformation; infrastructure; women, language, and cultures; conflict and security. There are forty-two contributors.

Major concerns in Part 1 include scholarship on economic development in agriculture. It remained a self-sufficiency and viable practice in central Nigeria. Another concern in the book was political transformation. Central Nigeria had participated in politics of forty political parties and produced people into viable positions at local, state, national and international levels. Nevertheless, the challenge of egocentricism remained the bane of development and caused crises in the area. The economic transformation had been enhanced by Zakat distributions among the Muslims in Jos as it was critiqued from Pentecostalism perception that extension of the hand of friendship increased economic transformation of both individual and church.

Part II examined infrastructure: water, energy and railway transportation. Water and power suffered distribution difficulty until recent times when devices were deployed to address it for the sake of transformation. Settlement of Shendam and colonial people was demarcated and the influx of the Tarok at lowland area Nding-chu (site close to water) distinguished them on the plateau. However, information communication technology (ICT) was examined and discovered immense contributions to teaching and learning in the transformation processes. Eight relevant creative skills were identified. The scourge of HIV/AIDS was first discovered in 1981 but diagnosed in 1986 in Nigeria. Interactions between independent bodies and governments on awareness and providing ways of reducing it were taken seriously and effective in the economic and political transformation of central Nigeria. Women were not left out in the transformation struggles. Activities of women in quarrying and mining were explored. It was discovered that women were not indolent; they were as active as men were in other economic and political spheres. In quarrying, a woman earned about N8,000 per trip load between nine to ten hours. They equally participated in small and medium agro-allied business and social works.

Chapters 22-27 examined the linguistic landscape with reference to Cara language. The fear of extinction of indigenous languages because of insensitivity to them by various original speakers motivated scholars towards examining a paradigm between endangering and sustenance of indigenous languages (p. 317). Through broadcast news practice, the socio-communication context in central Nigeria was examined. Findings included an emphasis on socio-economic development strategies and a support plan-structure was suggested for journalism development (321-332).

Using Plateau and Nasarawa states as a target, the significance of cultural festivities and social cohesion were explored. They agreed that culture was rich in scholarly definition and it remained a potential way of life of people. Pu'us Ka'at, Achili and other festivities were identified to be unifying socio-economic transformation of Mwaghavoul people on the Plateau. The organizers were recently scouting for sponsors like Coca-Cola, MTN, NASCO, Globacom, and the rest. Music took a very crucial position in cultural dance. FESTAC 1977 was examined in the development of the economic transformation of central Nigeria. Traditional music was identified to be derived from cultural practices. Mahku could not hold his scholarship; he explored historical antecedents of music ethnography and some popular songs. The year 1955-1960 marked as an era of the big bands in Lagos and known as the period of touring to central Nigeria especially by the Hubbert Ogunde cultural and theatre group from Yorubaland. 1960, therefore, engaged developmental stages in music, and 2005-2015, according to the author, was music digitization with the help of technology.

Tensions, conflicts and incessant crises adversely affected the socio-economic and political transformation in central Nigeria. Ethnic groups attacked one another in the name of the settlers and the indigents since 1994; it persisted through 2010 and till date. This brought about negative thinking towards environmental planning and gender issues. Part four examined conflicts and security issues. Recently, a rift between meat and food called for reflection on the space of agriculturalists and pastoralists. Governments were blamed for the inability to provide space for the duo. The Fulani were known to be a resource of meat and farmers provided food in central Nigeria until recent they engaged themselves in conflicts. It had grown to a level of using sophisticated weapons and its effect slowed down the transformation. However, state police were suggested in providing required security and sustaining peace for effective transformation. Contributors and the editor used efficient methods in preparing and writing the book.

Huud Shittu, *University of Jos*

**Sandra E. Greene. 2017. *Slave Owners of West Africa: Decision Making in the Age of Abolition*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. 126 pp.**

Sandra E. Greene's latest book, *Slave Owners of West Africa*, is a welcome and timely addition to the historiography of slavery and abolition in West Africa. It provides an insight into how slave owners from what is now southeastern Ghana responded to the increasing criminalization of slavery in that region between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by focusing on the lives of three prominent members of that group: Amegashie Afeku of Keta, Nyaho Tamakloe of Anlo, and Noah Yawo of Ho-Kpenoe. Greene's previous research focused on this exact same region, especially on the Anlo-Ewe. Consequently, the book offers a detailed and at the same time refreshing look into the rationale and anxieties of West African slave owners towards the impending loss of their human property under foreign, colonial rule. Finally, the book comes after a stream of publications, several of them Greene co-edited, centered around African narratives of slavery and the slave trade, a perspective often underrepresented in studies about two of the most dreadful yet fascinating events of human history.

*Slave Owners of West Africa* is divided into three chapters, accompanied by an introduction and a conclusion. The introduction immediately calls attention to the book's main point. "By analyzing not just what these individuals did, but *why* they took these particular approaches to slavery and its abolition," Greene argues, "these sketches bring to life the complexities that made it possible for slave owners to make such different decisions about how they would handle the massive disruptions that accompanied the colonial abolition of slavery" (p. 5, emphasis in the original). The following chapters then discuss three, separate cases. The first, on Amegashie Afeku, focuses on a resolute attempt at preserving slavery and the old hierarchical order in the region. The second, about Nyaho Tamakloe, examines a dramatically different approach, aimed at adjusting to abolition and erasing the stigma associated with slave descent. The third case, on Noah Yawo, centers on what could be, perhaps, termed a moderate approach: it accepted abolition but only when economically feasible. Finally, the conclusion points out that, although the slave owners' responses to abolition differed significantly, they were similar in at least one respect: "All sought to preserve their economic and social status" (p. 85).

Readers unfamiliar with the historiography of slavery in Africa may find Greene's book rather naïve or its conclusions only too predictable. Where have slave owners ever given up their property willingly? When did they do so without demanding compensation or caring after their own status or wellbeing? It happens, however, that historians' understanding of slavery in Africa is not so straightforward. There has long been a tendency of separating slavery for social or political aggrandizement from mere economic enrichment. Moreover, slavery is often described as an institution that transformed over time, almost in linear progression, from a primitive form of expanding lineages through the accumulation of dependents to a fully-fledged system of economic exploitation, thanks in large part to external forces, meaning the presence of Europeans or Arabs in the continent. Greene's book further complicates this picture. It shows that one form of slavery does not necessarily preclude another. Additionally, regardless of their backgrounds or motivations, when confronted with the imminent loss of their captives, slave owners could not help but reveal the underlying nature of the practice: a greedy move towards self-preservation and growth at the expense of others, rooted, of course, in violence and relations of power.

The history of slavery in Africa will remain a controversial subject for many years to come, especially in this age of heightened cultural sensibility. Not every book will address the issue directly or without reservations. Greene's, however, offers a frank, balanced, and honest assessment. It does not have all the answers for, as it often happens, the sources themselves do not always provide them, but it asks the right questions. It is a must-read book for anyone in the field.

Daniel B. Domingues da Silva, *Rice University*

**Dinah Hannaford. 2017. *Marriage Without Borders: Transnational Spouses in Neoliberal Senegal*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 170 pp.**

Dinah Hannaford's *Marriage Without Borders* provides a critical examination of transnational marriages within a neoliberal Senegalese society. Hannaford argued that transnational marriages are reflective of a contemporary global rupture in family networks...signal[ing] a move away from more traditional companionate values for marriage, in which love and emotional closeness long have been seen as constitutive of a successful marriage" (p. 4).

Through a number of oral interviews conducted during her fieldwork in Senegal, Hannaford dissected the various elements of transnational marriages and their impact in the social, economic, and domestic spheres. Analysis of gender dynamics, economic expectations, and the role of social prestige in the determination of a marriage's success served as crucial parts of Hannaford's work.

The book opened with a cultural analysis of the marital institution in Senegal and deconstructed the social implications of identifying as *Immigre*. In chapter one, Hannaford detailed the compulsory nature of marriage in Senegal and how the mythical image of affluent migrants disrupted existing class hierarchies. The perpetuation of these myths made marriage a highly competitive arena in which Senegalese men attempted to fulfill idealized gender roles as husbands and caregivers. Chapter two built upon this examination and moved away from the domestic sphere, instead, examining the "precarious" lives of Senegalese migrants in Lecco, Italy. Hannaford's personal interviews highlighted the challenges migrants faced of living and working abroad, including fidelity, the distribution of remittances, and the burden of fulfilling the "image of the migrant worker as a hero" (p. 49).

Chapters 3 and 4 served as the most compelling parts of *Marriage Without Borders*. In these chapters, Hannaford critiqued the impact that these marriages had on women and the gendered power dynamics within these kinship networks. Although migrant men faced difficulties in fulfilling idealized expectations of masculinity, Senegalese women juggled multiple gender expectations. When a male migrant traveled abroad to find work, women often moved in with the husband's family and served as an intermediary who distributed money on the husband's behalf. This often increased tensions between a wife and her in-laws. Additionally, Hannaford argued that because hierarchical class norms have broken down in neoliberal Senegal, stress on wives increased when urban women were forced to cohabit with in-laws in rural areas and vice-versa.

It is clear that men possessed a disproportionate amount of power within these transnational marriages. Husbands possessed numerous means to communicate with their wives and families in Senegal, including services such as Skype or Facetime. However, in an attempt to obscure details of their financial struggles and possible infidelities from their wives, men controlled the means of communication. This is perhaps best illustrated in the discussion of the presence of landlines in the homes of migrants' wives. Husbands used landlines in an almost Foucauldian manner to surveil and control their wives' social behaviors by calling the house at all hours of the day to ensure their presence in the home. In one instance, a husband timed his wife's route to a friend's home and called the friend to ensure that the wife did not make any unscheduled stops. Hannaford's integration of these personal stories illustrated the salience of gender expectations in transnational marriages.

The final two chapters focused on the creation and maintenance of intimacy in transnational marriages and the complications that occur between a husband and wife when they reunite in Senegal. The author found that women used sexual relations in these marriages as a counterbalance against men's threats of withholding financial support from the household. However, sex was not solely a transaction to ensure financial support, but also a means through which wives built closer relationships with their husbands and overcame problems created by distance. The maintenance of a strong relationship while apart often smoothed the reunion process. However, Hannaford showed that a husband's

return from abroad could disrupt the domestic sphere and create tensions over a wife's ability to work, cramped living quarters, and a loss of income.

In its totality, this book is a finely constructed examination of transnational Senegalese marriages with few weaknesses. The author seamlessly transitions from discussions on socially constructed myths of wealthy migrants to in-depth analyses of surveillance from abroad and the tensions that arise within the domestic sphere. The scope of the book is impressive, as it covers a diverse set of complex issues like gender, class, kinship, economic standing, and cultural understandings of prestige and power, all under the conceptual framework of "transnational marriages." Yet, despite its ambitious scope, the book is quite accessible to the reader and avoids the trappings of becoming too jargon-laden. *Marriage Without Borders* is useful for undergraduate and graduate students alike, providing a nuanced discussion of the influence of neoliberal and globalized economic systems on Senegalese socioeconomic and political institutions. This book is an excellent piece of scholarship, perhaps best suited for students in the fields of gender studies, African studies, or sociology.

Michael R. Hogan, *West Virginia University*

**Danny Hoffman. 2017. *Monrovia Modern: Urban Form and Political Imagination in Liberia*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 232 pp.**

The complexity of modern African political vision, according to Danny Hoffman in *Monrovia Modern*, is at once artifact and architect of the built forms of urban space. In this text, Hoffman mobilizes many years of thinking through violence and its aftermath in contemporary West Africa. In particular, *Monrovia Modern* extends and elaborates analyses linking political life and built forms that Hoffman introduced in his earlier text, *The War Machines*. He begins with the 2008-2010 eviction of ex-combatants of the Government of Liberia Armed Forces, from the still-unfinished Ministry of Defense Building. The story that he seeks to tell, while animated by a striking visual ethnography of built forms, is not one of architectural theory. Rather, he seeks to outline the contours of the contemporary African political imagination. Locating the limits of political possibilities in the sinews of the built form, Hoffman focuses on four buildings in the city of Monrovia. Each of these structures is representative of the modernist architectural planning that Hoffman argues is most salient for contemporary African cities (p. 14). The style of *modernist international style*, Hoffman argues, divorced architectural function from cultural or ethnic form and rendered impossible the development of lasting identities around which individuals might coalesce politically.

Borrowing from Chatterjee's (2004) conception of "political society," Hoffman laments the development of urban life ruled by pragmatism and profitability, in lieu of political mobilization that might lead squatters to fight back against eviction. As a contribution to the debate on the habitability of modern urban space, Hoffman's description of life in Monrovia seeks to document the processes by which residents "learn how to inhabit" Monrovia amongst the ruins of failed modernist planning (p. 4). While he tells us that political futures and creativity are only thinkable in what is known in Liberian English as the "gaps" in urban space, he warns us neither to overstate the political imagination, nor to think of these space as Foucauldian heterotopias. The ex-combatants and other residents that he follows, themselves fall short of seeing their own inventive practices as sites of political life. Pointing

to an important analogy Hoffman outlines early in the text, we must see his interlocutors as the residents of Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya. Even though its residents live in urban space, “politically they belong nowhere” (p. xxi) and are thus incapable (by circumstance) of forming collective demands on the state, or otherwise operating as political citizens with the right to make demands on their government.

As a crucial intervention to visual ethnography, Hoffman’s work also reminds us that Africans are media consumers as well. Often the subject of violent images, Hoffman argues that throughout the unfolding of the Liberian civil war, the ex-combatants that Hoffman follows were as aware of the “political economy of the photograph” (p. 30) as its western producers and consumers. They are astute participants in the production and circulation of images of African violence. Through his commitment to photo writing as both theory and method, Hoffman tells us that photography is both a constitutive element of modern architecture as well as the character of African modernity. The camera itself, Hoffman argues, is a crucial element in the debate over modern urban space and how individuals might dwell in it. Thus what it means to inhabit urban space is not primarily about the conduct of one’s body in space. Rather, it is about the work of the camera to produce images that shape and make demands on built forms.

On one hand, this text is about the urban lives of ex-combatants in Monrovia. On another, it is about contemporary life in African cities and the limits and future of African political imagination. As Hoffman’s dissatisfaction with Liberian political life emerged from a comparison with the global Occupy movement and the Arab Spring; it is important to remain cognizant of the political forces in urban refugee camps (Rawlence 2016) as well as the political ethos that is demanding radical change throughout the continent (Branch and Mampilly 2015).

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Zachary Mondesire, *University of California, Los Angeles*

**Steve Itugbu. 2017. *Foreign Policy and Leadership in Nigeria: Obasanjo and the Challenge of African Diplomacy*. London/New York: I.B Tauris & Co Ltd. 275 pp.**

In territories with a longer history of Weberian statehood, foreign policy decision-making appears so routinized and bureaucratized to the extent that every major foreign policy decision tends to be a product of dialogue, consultation, and consensus among the various stake-holders within the state apparatus. However, this truism would seem not to be the case in Africa in which foreign policy decision-making processes are not only de-bureaucratized but also personalized by the heads of government. This state of affairs, over the years, would seem to have impacted on the quality of African states’ responses to

foreign policy challenges. Perhaps, the observation of this scenario motivated the writing of this book. As author Steve Itugbu avers, “aside from the political intrigues within the AU and its insistence upon assuming sole responsibility to resolve conflict, the events in Darfur demonstrated that many African states had strongmen leaders who personalized the conduct of foreign policy” (p. 1).

With an empirical insight from how Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, Nigeria’s president (1999-2007), handled the Darfur crisis, the 275-page book attempts to lay bare the problematic associated with de-bureaucratized and personalized diplomacy in Africa. It starts with a well crafted introduction in which the author not only sets the background and the rationale that informed the writing of the book but most importantly presents the methodology and the theoretical framework that frame the major arguments in the book. Specifically, he anoints Graham Allison’s classic foreign policy decision models for this task. In the author’s words, “this book seeks to explore, scrutinize and determines the constituency of Allison’s model with regard to African realities” (p. 4). In the first chapter, the author would seem to have set out to achieve two tasks. First, an attempt is made to x-ray Obasanjo’s personality and the historical, cultural, and sociological variables that shaped it. Perhaps, the aim here is to explain the roles these variables have played in influencing Obasanjo’s attitude towards foreign policy. Second, the author dissects operational factors that had for decades shaped Nigeria’s Afro-centric policy. The central thesis that the author seems to put across to readers in this chapter is that Obasanjo’s action to lead the intervention in Darfur was informed by the country’s foundational principle of putting Africa first.

In the second chapter, the author on the one hand historicizes the background to the Darfur crisis and on the other hand explains why Nigeria and other African states’ responses to the genocidal crisis in Darfur were lackadaisical and slow. Drawing on an avalanche of secondary literature on state formation processes in Africa, he informs the reader that the Darfurian crisis like many others that have plagued the continent had its root in the arbitrariness that characterized the formation of the Sudanese state. The slow response of Nigeria, the AU and other states in Africa to the genocide, the author informs the readers, was due to these actors’ poor reading of the events that led to the genocide. The concern of the author in the third chapter is the exploration of the philosophical principle that motivated Obasanjo’s diplomacy on African conflicts. Although, he admits that many philosophies tend to shape statesmen’s approach to external intervention, he establishes, notwithstanding, that Obasanjo’s approach was informed by the African communitarian spirit.

The author’s preoccupation in the fourth and fifth chapters is the presentation of the primary data collected from the in-depth interviews with some sampled elites who worked in close contact with Chief Obasanjo while in office. His message to the readers in these two chapters is that the greater percentage of the elite interviewees affirms that Obasanjo’s strong personality impacted on the country’s foreign policy sector especially during the Darfur crisis. It is on the basis of this finding that the author concludes that Obasanjo’s approach to African diplomacy confirms the reality that has confronted the foreign policy sector in Africa: the personalization and de-professionalization of foreign policy.

Over all, the book is a worthy addition to the burgeoning literature on Nigeria’s African diplomacy. It addresses, with an empirical study of Chief Obasanjo’s towards the Darfur crisis, the challenges of institutionalizing foreign policy decision-making in Africa.

However, one major lacuna observed is that the author in the data analysis chapter fails to synthesize and corroborate the results from the interview data with extant desk studies on the subject. This would have further balanced and strengthened his conclusion. This, notwithstanding, the book is an inspiring read and would, undoubtedly, be of great relevance to African scholars and researchers with keen interest in foreign policy research in Africa and beyond.

Adeniyi S. Basiru, *University of Lagos*

**Ching Kwan Lee. 2017. *The Spector of Global China: Politics, Labor, and Foreign Investment in Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 256 pp.**

Ching Kwan Lee's *The Spector of Global China* adds to both a rich ethnographic history of labour in Zambia (Burawoy's *The Colour of Class* and Ferguson's *Expectations of Modernity* as two key examples) and an emerging body of work exploring China in Africa (including Alden's *China in Africa*, Brautigam's *The Dragon's Gift*). Building upon the former's focus on Zambian copper workers' responses to structural change, Lee differentiates between the practices of specific companies through a detailed ethnography. To the literature on "China in Africa," Lee first contributes a relatively rapid dismissal of the characterisation of Chinese involvement in Africa as neo-colonial or imperialist. She then notes the problematic way that "China in Africa" is used to conflate Chinese traders of all sizes and all waves of migration with the Chinese state. Despite focusing on Chinese capital in Africa, one of Lee's initial realisations was that national origin was not the best way to categorise investments when analysing them. She pushes past the varieties of capitalism literature in order to understand the differing ways different types of capitalism operate in the global economy. Accepting that global capitalism, in some guise or another, is pervasive throughout Africa, Lee claims that focusing on types of capital (rather than origins of capital or types of capitalism) allows from a more nuanced understanding of foreign investment.

*The Spector of Global China* focuses on Chinese state owned enterprises. It argues that conceptualising their activities as a form of capital "state capital" is a productive way to differentiate these activities from the financial capital, which comprises the majority of global investments. Building from this, Lee's core claim is that state capital's greater interest in long-term relationships, when compared to financial capital's focus on short-term profits, actually provides for a more flexible relationship with African governments, civil society and labour. This claim is supported by ethnography with three Zambian mining companies: Mopani Copper Mines, KCM and the Chinese state run NFCA, as well as a Chinese managed construction company. While Mopani is owned by the Swiss giant Glencore and KCM is owned by the India-based Vedanta, both are traded on the London Stock Exchange. Lee claims that the imperatives of this form of ownership encourage a focus on short-term profits, a key feature of what she refers to as financial capital. Across six chapters Lee differentiates State and Financial Capital; compares their relationship with African labour; managerial ethos; and interactions with the state and civil society; before providing new prescriptions for the study of China in Africa. For example, when discussing a company's relationships with the state, Lee explains that unlike Mopani and KCM, NFCA did not oppose a substantial increase in mining taxes, viewing its long-term relationship with the



government as more important than the profits lost. Later, Lee argues that the same long-term focus ensured that NFCA did not retrench workers or force them onto non-ongoing contracts when copper prices dropped, but that they paid ongoing staff much less than the other mines.

It is this depiction of state capital that offers the most promise for future research, and it is also the most interesting aspect of the book. Lee freely admits to presenting both financial capital and state capital as perfect types and it appears that there has been increasing convergence between NFCA and the activities of the other mining companies. In particular, since the end of Lee's fieldwork, NFCA has attempted to move many workers onto temporary contracts and threatened to fire others. In that context, I wonder how Chinese state capital's imperatives change in response to trends in China, Africa, and globally. Similarly, while Lee speaks rightly about the need for more nuance in exploring China in Africa, I would have also liked to learn more about how Zambian understandings of the Chinese, especially national and the whole of Copperbelt discourses affected interactions between Zambians and the Chinese. In another paper Lee notes that Zambians rely on colonial narratives of care and paternalism when negotiating with South African and British management. How do frequently Sinophobic narratives about the relationship between Zambia and China affect similar negotiations? Building upon Lee's observation that NFCA did not object to the mining tax in the same manner as Mopani and KCM, how important is national distrust of the Chinese in constraining the political activities of Chinese firms? More generally, how is Chinese state capital shaped or constrained by Zambian understandings of development and labour, which have been formed through ongoing (exploitative) relations with the west?

Ching Kwan Lee is an excellent ethnographer and the access she obtained to mining companies through her friendship with Zambia's former acting president is exceptional. For academics studying mining or construction in Zambia, with or without a Chinese focus, this will prove an invaluable text purely for its details. Its core depiction of Chinese State capital is an interesting insight that opens productive space for the ongoing study of both China and other forms of capital.

Thomas McNamara, *Université de Liège*

**Hilary Matfess. 2017. *Women and the War on Boko Haram: Wives, Weapons, Witnesses*. London: Zed Books. 270 pp.**

Boko Haram may have faded from the limelight since the insurgency's peak in 2015, but the group still presents an interesting puzzle for scholars of Northern Nigeria and experts on civil conflict alike. Hilary Matfess, a PhD candidate in Political Science at Yale University, recenters and explores Boko Haram through the lens of gender in her 2017 book *Women and the War on Boko Haram*. Matfess casts light on the sect's previously misunderstood relations with the female population of the Lake Chad Basin region and convincingly argues throughout that the highly gendered nature of the conflict is absolutely critical to understanding the insurgency. Relying on a trove of personal interviews with women ensnared in the conflict, Matfess at once debunks popular narratives surrounding Boko Haram and furthers our understanding of how the group functions, particularly in relation to the women caught up in its violence.

The book comprises ten chapters. The introduction explains the book's research puzzle and methodology. Here Matfess clarifies the thoroughness of the research, comprising of nearly one hundred interviews with female members of the sect, IDPs, and political figures in Northeastern Nigeria. This methodology permits an exploration of the insurgency in a way that would otherwise be impossible. The following two chapters, "Understanding Boko Haram" and "Precursors to the Insurgency and the Sharia Debates" provide critical background information on Nigerian politics and Boko Haram, as well as the intersection of these with gender.

"Being a Girl in Nigeria" (Chapter 3) segues into the book's core research question. The ethnographic research method allows for considerable inferential leverage and consequently Matfess debunks popularly held narratives surrounding Boko Haram in Western discourse. In contravention to popular thought, many women are willing members of Boko Haram. Further, Boko Haram provides advancement opportunities absent elsewhere in Northeastern Nigerian society. Matfess relates the story of a commander's wife who stated unequivocally that "there was 100% better treatment under Boko Haram" (p. 61).

Matfess does not dwell on the events of the 2014 Chibok abduction too much. She notes that though the action came to be enormously symbolic, it was only a small proportion of the group's total abductions and, in the context of African insurgencies, not entirely unusual. Indeed, in the mass-abductions of schoolgirls Matfess notes parallels between Boko Haram and the Lord's Resistance Army in East-Central Africa (pp. 96-99). Equally we learn the insurgency does not practice gang rape as a socialization mechanism, something that ultimately sheds light on the organization's internal culture and recruitment tactics (p. 89).

Chapter 5, "Women at War," discusses women's role in the insurgency from economic, social, religious, and military angles. The heterogeneity of the female experience in Boko Haram is enormous, ranging from willing participants, content to assume a veil of ignorance about the group's most brutal practices (pp. 126-27), to female suicide bombers whose willingness to participate in the violence is clearly highly suspect (pp. 132-134). This chapter is hugely important because of the valuable insight into an aspect of the insurgency (and insurgencies in general) that is typically overlooked.

In the final chapters, Matfess turns her lens to the women in Northeastern Nigeria's IDP camps. This is followed by assessments of the humanitarian response to the crisis as well as policy recommendations. By considering this group of women specifically, Matfess naturally zeroes-in on the scale of the humanitarian catastrophe caused by the group. Her conclusions, however, are not entirely tragic, taking heed of other post-conflict success stories she sees reasons to be cautiously hopeful for positive social transformation in Northeastern Nigeria.

The only shortcomings of the book (and these are limited indeed) are that the timeline of events surrounding the insurgency is hazy, particularly the temporal variation in the devastation caused by the group before 2009 and after 2015. And, in light of the enormous heterogeneity of experiences the book reveals, for scholars of micro-mobilization in civil war, there could have been a more explicit explanation of the patterns of the trajectories of the women caught up in the insurgency. But, these criticisms are slight. On balance, Matfess' work is a resounding success. Her interviews grant her remarkable purchase on her subject matter and consequently we know more about the secretive insurgency. The result is a book

that is both useful for the scholarly community as well as one that is eminently readable for a popular audience, too.

Louis Metcalfe, *University of Oxford*

**Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Siphamandla Zondi (eds.) 2016. *Decolonizing the University, Knowledge Systems and Disciplines in Africa*. Durham: Carolina Academic Press. 285 pp.**

The book is a timely and worthwhile read, as it addresses challenges, circumstances where students are refusing to be taught using, “white curriculum” in South Africa, calling for teaching to be a “negotiated activity” thereby pausing issues of context and relevance. Tertiary tuition for South Africans demands attention from policy makers so as to be inclusive to people of all backgrounds. In that light, approximately a dozen of scholars wrote thirteen chapters calling for the decolonization of not only the South African universities, knowledge systems, and disciplines but can also be used for other universities outside South Africa. The book grapples with the question of coloniality of knowledge using different viewpoints, which include, methodology, African research subjects, the decadence of disciplines, and disciplines as carriers of coloniality. Some examples of academic disciplines that are illuminated encompass political science, anthropology, psychology, law, and other humanities.

The experienced African decolonial scholars Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Siphamandla offer the introductory chapter of the book, whilst Ndlovu-Gatsheni independently focuses on the second chapter. The first chapter contextualizes the gist of the book within the background of South Africa’s universities attacking coloniality from the vantage point of the “Rhodes Must Fall” decolonial discourse (p. 4). The book is identified as that which deals with complex connections among power, epistemology, methodology, and ideology. These aspects have been used by all the authors of the book to provoke questions about the role of knowledge in society as well as possibilities of epistemological decolonization (p. 5). The book is thematically organized into three main parts, first part encompassing issues of Modernity, Knowledge, and Power; the second part Decoloniality, Disciplines, and Ideology; whilst the final part focuses on Methods, Methodology, and Subjectivity.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni and S. Zondi address a critical question on the position of Africa in knowledge production. In chapter 2 the problem of the university in Africa is that it has failed to produce indigenous and endogenous knowledge. African people must stop the habit of normalizing coloniality and rise up to embrace decoloniality, which enables them to unmask the constitution of Euro-America-centric modernity and to pass critical judgments on the enduring impact of the critical slavery, imperialism, colonialism, apartheid, neo-colonialism that constitute coloniality (p.31).

Coloniality causes mental confusion among Africans with some Africans who are socially located on the oppressed side of the colonial difference, thinking epistemically like the ones in the dominant positions. A decolonial thinker is not neutral since s/he is not in a neutral world formulates an imperative tenet that other like-minded thinkers should embrace at all times. The professors and other academics require decolonization of the mind and an introduction to decolonial epistemic perspectives before they can be entrusted with the challenge and task of producing decolonized and fully Pan-African students capable of implementing the Pan-African vision (p. 42). Decoloniality, thus is interpreted as redemptive

epistemology, a liberating force and an ethical-humanistic project gesturing towards pluralism in which different worlds fit.

In Chapter 3, there is a call for the Africanization of social sciences as most universities suffer from the effects of colonialism that is an overreliance on Euro-American models of epistemology. Serges D. Kamga in Chapter 4 critiques the role of the international law in subverting the cause of decolonization of the principle of “sovereign equality of states.” He employs the Third World approaches to international law and sovereignty as the basis of the contested idea of the so-called cooperative equality, justice and fairness.

Part II has four chapters that critique disciplinary decadence that is argued to epitomize the knowledge presented through academic disciplines. W. Mpofu demonstrates an appraisal of Ngugi Wa Thiongo’s *Devil on the Cross*, at the same time unmasking the satanic machinations on African politics, economy, and social life in the form of poverty, environmental pollution, political violence, class exploitation, and muzzled voices among others.

Part III focuses on “Methods, Methodology, and Subjectivity” with four chapters that succinctly tackles disciplines such as political science, story telling, African politics, and lastly, Afrocentric analysis of African integration. However, the decolonial scholars all in all may not be appealing to amateur readers due to dense decolonial jargon which demands some (re)orientation. Having noted the above, the book remains a thorn in the flesh for academics and policy makers to re-think, re-energize their approaches in dealing with tertiary institutions not only in South Africa but Africa as a continent, not leaving out other Third World countries.

Brian Maregedze, *University of Zimbabwe*

**J. Oloka-Onyango. 2017. *When Courts Do Politics: Public Interest Law and Litigation in East Africa*. New York: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 380 pp.**

Oloka-Onyango draws from a distinguished career as a teacher and litigant in his *When Courts Do Politics*. Among other things, the book succeeds in grounding theoretical concepts of personal interest law in East Africa’s contemporary legal questions. Oloka-Onyango evinces his considerable legal prowess in an inviting narrative, but more importantly the work offers a comprehensive survey through constitutions and regimes. This longitudinal study restricts itself to Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, and necessarily draws on courts’ experiences with both colonial and post-colonial governments. Oloka-Onyango’s topical concentration on public interest law concentrates on the pressing human rights questions of our time as they play out in East African courts.

Oloka-Onyango chooses contemporary examples of incendiary public interest legal case law for the book. For Oloka-Onyango, public interest law rests on concepts such as establishing standing (Chapters One and Two), public interest within transformative constitutionalism (Chapter Three), establishing the legal status of gender (Chapter Four), the legal duty of the state with regards to poverty (Chapter Five), and the courts’ contentious role elections (Chapter Six). The author continually piques readers’ interest with subtle glimpses into implementation hypocrisies, likely court intents and juxtaposing state acts, and lively discussions of *de jure* versus *de facto* law in East Africa. Oloka-Onyango guides the

reader through the depths of human rights abuses in courts and public life. Though at times the manuscript reads as Uganda-centric, Oloka-Onyango can be forgiven for driving East African public interest questions from his experience as an attorney in Uganda's courts.

A question that motivates Oloka-Onyango's study is the "political question" doctrine. East African constitutions treat this differently, with Uganda's constitution perhaps being the most empowering. While "there is virtually nothing beyond the purview of judicial scrutiny (Tumwine-Mukubwa 2004, Herman 2013)" (p. 66), imperial executives often weigh in on courts' decisions. Oloka-Onyango, as an officer of the court, is rightfully proud of pivotal moments when courts and attorneys successfully argue against oppressive executives; as such, this book needs to feature in graduate student reading lists, university libraries, and the personal libraries of any serious student of Commonwealth legal studies or East African politics. The reasons are obvious. This book chronicles judicial victories against executives and executive dereliction when court decisions do not affect statutory changes. *When Courts do Politics* highlights when the courts attract lay interest: When courts enter politics and when political calculations subvert courts decisions.

*When Courts do Politics* summarily condemns colonial courts for representing Britain instead of the African public but notes their contributions to contemporary case law. The book also summarizes foundational cases in post-colonial case law. Where states attempt to reset rule-of-law following extra-legal constitutional change, as in the case of Uganda, foundations for public interest litigation become nebulous. Oloka-Onyango notes, however, that when a constitution accounts for public interest law, the need for litigation to define "matters of social or civic concern that relate to the process of governance in all aspects that have aroused the attention of a community or prominent section of it" (p. 80). Anticipating questions, constitutions like that of Uganda are able to circumvent some problems by being (a bit more) inclusive.

*When Courts Do Politics* provides an essential starting point for anyone interested in the history of case-law, pivotal legislative decisions, and (the seldom lauded) effort of East African courts to support the rule of law despite budgetary neglect and executive interference. Readers will be satisfied with another exemplary piece from Oloka-Onyango, and the book further enhances the position of Cambridge Scholars as a publishing house.

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Ryan Gibb, Baker University

**Robert J. Priest and Kirimi Barine (eds.). 2017. *African Christian Leadership: Realities, Opportunities and Impact*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books. 297 pp.**

This book is a compendium in twelve chapters of research undertaken by African scholars. It showcases some of the issues being faced by African Christian churches with reference to Anglophone, Francophone, and Lusophone countries of Africa.

Chapter one reports the historical background to the emergence of the Africa leadership study which was stimulated by discussions within the Board of the Tyndale House Foundation, the composition of ATS team and their characteristics, which helped in carrying out a reliable and valid research. Priest ends with the foundation of the book: founding, research, collaboration, African authorship, contemporary focus, global relevance, and augmented by online resources.

Chapter two highlights “Characteristics of Influential African Christian Leaders” as church commitment, vocational excellence, community connectedness, cultural flexibility, endurance, learning, mentorship, technology, and civic engagement. David Ngaruiya discusses areas of influence of leaders as drug abuse prevention, children/youth and sex education, fight against HIV/AIDS, entrepreneurship, among others. He expatiates on childhood homes, educational backgrounds, and broadening experiences as criteria that are germane to the formation of African Christian leaders and their implications of the findings.

Chapter Three traces the patterns of “Formation of African Christian Leaders” as parents/parental figures, extended kin, environment, church leaders, Christian organizations working with the youth and children, life-skills curriculum-based programs, undertaking of various forms of unremunerated services, high levels of formal education, mentoring and opportunities to exercise leadership in diverse areas of life. Chapter four examines that many of the influential leaders and organizations are bridging social capital among ethnic, denomination, and religious groups by building inter-ethnic churches, networks, and organizations. Steven Rasmussen concluded that investment should be made more in relationships, human capital, churches, organizations and research.

Chapter five discusses “Leadership Responses During Armed Conflicts,” which involved engagement in humanitarian and partnership activities, training and teaching institutions, peace building, social cohesion and faith enhancement learning from the conflict that broke in CAR during the ALS research. Chapter six explains “Word and Deed—Patterns Of Influential African Christian Organizations,” which has become norm for most evangelicals. Evangelism was combined with a broad range of concerns that have relation to human flourishing, which is a new face successful for Africa and the church.

The focus of chapter seven is on “African Christian Organizations and Socioeconomic Development,” emphasizing their opportunities and advantage as mobilization, networks, trust, faith motivation, and grass-root presence with impact in health, education, training and leadership development, income generation, employment and poverty reduction, and other socio-economic challenges, especially while maintaining religious identity.

Chapter eight reports on the realities and opportunities of African women in leadership by exploring experiences of the seven women leaders and three of their organizations. Despite marginalization and discrimination against women, they were able to make impact in public and non-government sectors through holistic approach. Therefore, for women to be better placed, their writing and mentoring should be of high priority and follow the older women footsteps. Chapter nine reports that empowering leadership is a new dawn in Africa leadership style by discussing tools for empowerment toward servant leadership as education, exposure, choir/music, prayer, and mentoring with accessibility and ability to identify opportunity and risk as characteristics of servant leadership and ability to sail through the challenges of empowerment. Chapter ten reports the reading and leading challenges for African Christian leaders. Robert Priest, Kirimi Barine, and Alberto Lucamba

indicate that African Christians and leaders are good readers, highlights favorite authors of African Christians, reading pattern in a globalized world, focus of books by favorite authors, factors contributing to these patterns, implications and what it requires.

Chapter eleven states that the family, churches, and other social units have roles in influencing would be leaders. In the same vein, the qualities and roles of influential people, socialization, the kind of equipping of leaders, modeling, mentoring, coaching, discipling, reading, and writing have an influence on leadership.

Chapter twelve narrates how the Tyndale House Foundation started the progress made over time, expectations, and visions of the foundation. Mary Kleine Yehling explains that it has created room for partnership with scholars to undertake research and publish resulting relevant works. The book concludes with the joint reports on lessons learned through the ACL study.

In conclusion, each chapter has a list of references, a bibliography, and rounds off with an index. The book highlights various problems with suggested solutions and gives recommendations on improving the situation of Christian leadership in Africa. However, the book's potential reach is limited in the sense that it is a research project compiled by Africans scholars within African countries, which may not allow it to have the expected global recognition and impact.

Oti Rotimi Alaba, *The Redeemed Christian Bible College, Ogun State, Nigeria*

**Ratsimbaharison, Adrien M. 2017. *The Political Crisis of March 2009 in Madagascar: A Case Study of Conflict and Conflict Mediation*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. 171 pp.**

Ratsimbaharison's book is an excellent contribution to the scholarship on conflict analysis and mediation. Its main objective was to investigate why the 2009 political crisis occurred in Madagascar when its economy was flourishing and why it took the mediators over two years to resolve it (p. 8). The author's main argument centers on the personal animosity between President Ravalomanana and the Mayor of the Capital City, Rajoelina, which escalated to the stages of political-crisis due to the prevailing political environment between 2002 and 2008 (p. 9). Per the book, the crisis is traceable to the 2001 postelection conflicts (p. 2) where Ravalomanana, the then Mayor of the Capital City (p. 32), organized public protests to overturn the 2001election results and eventually sent President Ratsiraka into exile.

Rationalizing why the crisis occurred, the author attributed it to the undemocratic nature of the Ravalomanana's regime that incentivized his opponents led by Rajoelina to resort to unconstitutional means. According to the author, Ravalomanana's despotic inclinations made him shutdown Rajoelina's VIVA-Television station for broadcasting interview with former president Ratsiraka. Rajoelina gave Ravalomanana a 25-day ultimatum to reopen the television station or witness street protests. Since that was not done, Rajoelina led the protest in March 2009. Ravalomanana attacked the protesters killing 28 and injuring 172 (p. 60). Consequently, the Defence Minister resigned, the military divided, and the CAPSAT unit led a mutiny to overthrow Ravalomanana's regime. Conflict-mediation teams were established to resolve the crisis. Meanwhile, the citizens had high expectations for Ravalomanana's regime, which were partly met with unprecedented economic-growth (2002–2006) at the expense of the poor. Indeed, the percentage of the poor

living on less than US\$1.90 a day increased from 69 percent in 2001 to 74 percent in 2005 (p. 22). Moreover, the economic growth benefited only those closer to the regime, leading to a general sense of discontent. Finally, the book argues that aside these Rajoelina also exploited the necessary triggers to whip public sentiments against Ravalomanana. First, the regime had secretly leased about 50 percent of Madagascar land under cultivation to Daewoo Logistics for 99 years. Rajoelina argued that Ravalomanana was unfit to govern for breaching an ancient tradition of not selling land to foreigners. Second, the administration had fraudulently purchased another presidential jet costing \$60 million (equally paid by the state and Ravalomanana). These factors exacerbated the protest. The writer was worried that the crisis could recur since the causes had not been addressed.

The author argued that the conflict mediation was unduly prolonged because the actors especially, Rajoelina adopted contending negotiation styles (they were unyielding on their entrenched positions). Finally, evaluating the impact of the mediation teams, the book argued that the Filankevitry ny Fiangonana Kristiana eto Madagasikara (FFKM), a local Christian mediation team which had successfully mediated similar conflicts in Madagascar failed in the current one because it was imposed on the parties. Second, its timing was wrong since the combatants were not ready for mediation. Third, FFKM was not considered neutral due to its closeness to Ravalomanana. Again, there was division within FFKM; the Protestants supported Ravalomanana while the Catholics supported Rajoelina. Finally, FFKM had no clear objectives and capacity to punish and reward the parties. The Southern African Development Community (SADC), a regional mediation team, had the ability to reward and punish the parties and was successful due to its neutrality and competent membership of people like Joaquim Chissano, an ex-president and accomplished diplomat. Also, the conflict fatigue among combatants and mediators facilitated SADC's work.

The book made four significant contributions worth stressing. First, it shows why it is dangerous for society if political actors would resolve conflicts outside the legal framework. In 2002 and 2009 Ravalomanana and Rajoelina respectively resorted to street protests to resolve their grievances that led to regime changes unconstitutionally. Second, it affirms the inherent contradictions of semi-democracies (they are partly free and repressive and therefore susceptible to instability). Third, imposing mediation teams on combatants and using mediation teams that do not have the power to reward obedience and punish default is futile. Fourth, it shows how factors that escalate a conflict to a crisis stage may also cause its de-escalation. The author argued that this happens "if one party succeeds in overwhelming the other and the other yields" (p. 77), it de-escalates the conflict and that explains why Ravalomanana's deployment of mercenaries to massacre the protesters when confronted with the CAPSAT mutineers who supported the opposition did not escalate to civil war.

My main criticism of the book concerns its explanation of how SADC was successful in comparison with FFKM. The explanation is contradictory. First, it argues that FFKM was successful in resolving the 2001-2002 political conflicts between Ravalomanana and Ratsiraka. During that mediation, Ravalomanana was in control and had special relationship with FFKM, which was created in 1979 to protect Christians against Ratsiraka's dictatorship (p.94). Therefore, it could be argued that FFKM provided victor's justice in 2001-2002 because of its support for Ravalomanana. The same can be said about the SADC which mediated the 2009-2011 conflict where under the September 2011 Roadmap, Rajoelina



remained the only president of the transition (p. 108). Moreover, the SADC mediated similar conflict in Zimbabwe and had failed (p. 121). Also, the international sanctions imposed on Madagascar had no effects on Rajoelina (p. 109). Despite these reservations the book nonetheless is a must read for conflict-analysts and Africanists.

Samuel Kofi Darkwa, *West Virginia University*

**Rachel Sullivan Robinson. 2017. *Intimate Interventions in Global Health: Family Planning and HIV Prevention in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 279 pp.**

In 1968 Stanford ecologist Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* startled Western audiences, highlighting the ecological impact of overpopulation and making somber predictions regarding upcoming global catastrophe.<sup>1</sup> Rapidly expanding populations in the Global South were targeted as a particular cause for concern. Within a decade, *The Population Bomb* had sold over three million copies.

It was in this intellectual environment that Western donors began to promote family planning initiatives, the first of the "intimate interventions" explored in Rachel Sullivan Robinson's excellent new study. The uptake of population policies and the acceptance of NGOs concerned with family planning were neither immediate nor universal. Some governments were resistant to international pressure or sceptical about the place of contraception in the traditional African family. Some nations lacked the infrastructure and personnel to distribute contraception or to promote effective campaigns around its use. While early uptake was sporadic, family planning initiatives were widely implemented throughout the 1980s, with economic recession and growing demands for universal education providing greater political incentive. At the same time, the World Bank began to tie fertility control to the economic assistance provided under its Structural Adjustment Programs. It was also in the 1980s that the HIV/AIDS epidemic began in earnest and that HIV prevention, Robinson's second intimate intervention, became a growing concern for donor-funded and government health programs.

Focusing primarily on the 1980s and 1990s, this study offers a measured and thorough exploration of the relationship between family planning and later approaches to HIV prevention. Throughout the book, Robinson's main argument is that, because of significant similarities between pregnancy prevention and HIV prevention, historical variations in family planning provision offer insight into the relative success of HIV prevention during the first decades of its spread. HIV and unwanted pregnancy certainly both weigh heavily on African health. Unwanted pregnancy can undermine maternal health and the health of the wider family. HIV, when untreated, leads to AIDS. HIV and unwanted pregnancy also both share heterosexual sex as the primary causative mechanism. Since family planning initiatives and HIV prevention programs both ultimately seek to regulate the same sensitive behaviors, nations with family planning policies and NGOs established prior to the onset of the HIV epidemic were best primed to share the resources, discourses and strategies which had been developed to limit unwanted pregnancy. National and international HIV prevention programs found that they were able to utilize and modify the systems and donor bases, which had grown up after years of hard-won progress in family planning.

To make this argument, Robinson begins with detailed surveys of the relationship between family planning and HIV prevention globally, as well as in Africa specifically. The

bulk of the study, however, rests on the individual histories of Malawi, Senegal, and Nigeria, each chosen for their distinct approaches to population management and the subsequent epidemiology of their individual HIV crises. Through these case studies Robinson also stakes out the complex transnational, political, sociocultural, and economic factors which first shaped family planning policy and then HIV prevention. Unlike Malawi, which suffered an extremely high incidence of HIV, Senegal and Nigeria were both early adopters of population policies and housed family-planning NGOs prior to the onset of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Senegal and Nigeria also both have high levels of male circumcision, an important bio-cultural determinant of HIV prevention, as well as histories of technocratic leadership, strong civil societies, and a relative openness to international discourses regarding health policy. Malawi's initial response to both population growth and HIV was, by contrast, shaped by the socially conservative and anti-intellectualist dictatorship of Hastings Banda. Other factors, such as religious and ethnic fractionalization, also help to explain the relative success of both interventions.

This is a thoughtful and nondramatic account of health programming in Africa, setting itself as a valuable counterpoint to more political or polemical studies of population control such as Matthew Connelly's *Fatal Misconception*.<sup>2</sup> It is, moreover, an excellent piece of medical history and should become essential reading for anyone interesting in the history of HIV in Africa. As evidence of path dependency and policy feedback in national responses to health crises, we can also only hope that it finds a readership in public health circles as well.

#### Notes:

1 Paul R Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1968).

2 Matthew James Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008).

John Nott, *Maastricht University*

**Lorelle Semley. 2017. *To Be Free and French: Citizenship in France's Atlantic Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 382 pp.**

With the exception of the Haitian Revolution, scholars have written sparingly about the history of France's Atlantic empire. In *To Be Free and French*, Lorelle Semley extends the historical narrative of the region geographically and chronologically by investigating how women and men of color navigated status, identity, and citizenship in French Atlantic urban areas from the late eighteenth to the late twentieth centuries. Semley draws on a variety of sources—ranging from artwork to oral data and petitions to performance—to weave together vivid tales of “trans-African” migrants and exiles whose claims of French citizenship revealed how “to be black and French was not a paradox” (p. 13). Semley engages with important themes such as gender and processes of transnational identity formation and argues that women and men of color “suggested they could be French and something more at the same time, redefining the meanings of citizenship in relation to their circumstances and a wider world” (p. 14). Furthermore, her study shows how women and men of color triggered anxieties within colonial spheres as they negotiated and shaped the

discourse on citizenship throughout a post-revolutionary French Atlantic world, thereby exposing the fragile nature of imperial foundations.

Semley divides the book into three interconnected parts: revolutionary foundations, colonial constructions, and planning after empire. She explores in detail how people of color lived in and moved between urban areas throughout a French Atlantic world “as they transitioned between slavery, colonization, and citizenship” (p. xv). The approach results in a seamless chronological tale that begins in late eighteenth century Le Cap, Sainte-Domingue prior to the French and Haitian revolutions and traverses the Atlantic by examining debates about citizenship in Gorée, Senegal; Saint-Pierre, Martinique; Porto-Novo, Benin; and Paris, France. Rather than portraying these urban spaces as lying at the margins of empire, Semley situates them as multilayered imperial centers where engaged women and men, free and enslaved, demonstrated “a multi-sided sense of self” (p. 150). Semley’s depictions of individual actors and descriptions of events in the cities lends a pulse to historical places historians often have difficulty capturing in their studies. Readers will find themselves transformed to these spaces, imagining the sights, sounds, and scents of the past.

Urban sites serve as important complimentary textual foundations for the chapters, with each otherwise focusing on a core legal document, interrelated correspondences, or specific revolutionary and political moments. Semley breaks ever so briefly from this approach in the final chapter, where she investigates the roles Antillean and African women and men played in shaping debates about citizenship in the Fourth Republic following World War II. She closes the book, however, with an epilogue that examines the 1966 First World Festival of the Negro Arts in Dakar, where participants and patrons realized that “the art of citizenship—and the challenge—has always been a striking balance between multiple communities of belonging and getting the world to recognize and respect that feat” (p. 301).

This is an important book that will stand out as a major contribution to Atlantic World, imperial, and diaspora histories for many years. There is so much to like about it. Scholars will appreciate how Semley compels us to rethink the periodization of Atlantic World history. Historians often frame an Atlantic past in terms of an early modern era, with transatlantic slavery and abolition serving as the main thematic anchors. Semley breaks through this temporal boundary with force. She also shifts the emphasis of scholarly debates away from the violence often associated with revolutionary activities. Her investigations of historical actors moving within and out of the urban areas at the center of her study demonstrates how a fluid discourse on citizenship and belonging “between Africans, European, and women and men of color ranged from profound violence to detached indifference to intimacy, sometimes simultaneously” (p. 17). Her concept of trans-African mobility is among the more important contributions, insofar as it attributes a stronger sense of agency and shows how individuals who hailed from or lived in Africa and participated in debates about citizenship remade an Atlantic World.

The biographical sketches Semley sews into the broader narrative fabric add much to the book and allow her to connect times and places in new and refreshing ways. Although she does not discuss the discourse on the biographical turn in Atlantic World studies specifically, it makes an Atlantic past seen far less abstract. Semley also includes personal thoughts and experiences, which enlivens the study and should appeal to broader audiences interested in the region. Put simply, this is a tremendous book.

Marcus B. Filippello, *University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*

**Landry Signé. 2017. *Innovating Development Strategies in Africa: The Role of International, Regional and National Actors*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 208 pp.**

Many development strategies have been implemented in African states since the independence period. The main reason behind these strategies is to introduce administrative, sectoral, and structural reforms. Signé conceptualizes innovation by focusing not only on content but also on processes. According to author, “innovations do not necessarily imply an immediate and radical change of earlier institutions. They can also occur through the addition of new institutions and policies that may imply great changes or broader innovations” (p. 3). He illuminates how African governments choose and the institutional means by which they chose them.

The book has six chapters in addition to an introduction and a conclusion. Chapter one presents a literature review and examines their ability to explain innovation in development strategies in Africa. In chapter two, the author uses the neo-institutionalism approach by paying particular attention to the four key variables—ideas, interest, institutions, and time—in explaining change from the point of view of political and institutional innovation. The author also analyzes dimensions of innovation at three levels—international, regional and national levels.

Chapter three attempts to answer the question “what is the role of temporal and contextual factors in emergence, configuration and trajectory of political and institutional innovation in Sub-Saharan Africa’s development strategy” (p. 49). In this chapter the author identifies how, where, when, and why temporal, contextual and historical factors affect innovation in Africa. According to Signé, major innovations emerge when there is a conjunction between international and regional/national crises or between favorable contexts at the international and national/regional levels.

Chapter four analyze the dynamic of ideas for analyzing actor’s interests and strategies, since ideas are considered as constitutive of interests. Signé points out that the relationship between ideas and innovation, change or stability, depends on how ideas are defined and understood to influence political actions. The author also demonstrate the divergence between the ideas of international and national actors by examining historical context and principal orientations of national strategies and structural adjustment programs (SAPs) of selected African countries by dividing the sample countries on the basis of their type of economy, either socialist- leaning or liberal/mixed.

Signé in chapter five analyzes the process by which poverty reduction strategies (PRSPs) emerged and the role national and international actors played in their process. The author discusses the convergence and divergence of interests and strategies between national, regional and international actors according to period and goals of economic development strategies in this chapter. He found that interest play a dominant role in the process of policy innovation in Africa. Chapter six is about the conclusions drawn from earlier chapters. Signé identifies that ideas, interest, institutions, and temporal contexts explain each innovation by specifying the role played by national, regional and international actors. The conclusion of the book emphasize the contribution it makes to advancing the understanding of change, especially of political and institutional innovation in Africa

through the use of an universal perspective that includes the public administration and policy, comparative policies and international relations.

The strength of Signé book is the depth of its historical excavation and the synchronization of relevant literature on innovation in Africa. This book is an interesting scholarly piece which attempts to fill the gap that scholars have rarely had theoretical and heuristic goals to improve understanding of the processes by which development strategies in Africa have emerged and developed as well as the relationship between international, regional, and national actors in the emergence and evaluation of development institution and public policies in Africa. His approach challenges other scholars to think analytically about the procedure of policy innovation on the continent and to take seriously the ways in which national governments and regional organizations are reshaping the outlines of development strategy. Signé has succeeded in applying accurate, original thinking to one of the most important development issues of our time—that is rapid economic and political changes occurring in Africa.

Priya Dahiya, *University of Delhi*

**Erin E. Stiles and Katrina Daly Thompson (eds.). 2015. *Gendered Lives in the Western Indian Ocean: Islam, Marriage, and Sexuality on the Swahili Coast*. Ohio: Ohio University Press. 406 pp.**

Being a good Muslim includes the knowledge of what counts as “authentic” and “appropriate” (p. 2). This is the concern of all Muslim communities. *Gendered Lives in the Western Indian Ocean* addresses this concern by focusing on women, gender, and sexuality since little research in the Indian Ocean has been done from this perspective. A few commentators have disagreed with the title of the book, suggesting the subtitle *Islam, Marriage, and Sexuality in the Swahili Coast* to be the main title because of the book’s content. I disagree with these commentators because the book intends to show how gender influences one’s conceptualization of marriage and sexuality and being a good Muslim. Engendered lives play a crucial role in forming distinct subjectivities and lived experiences. The cover image of a married woman’s hand decorated with *henna* and bangles clearly depict the study’s project to analyze the centrality of gender in understanding the normative constructs of sexuality, femininity, etc. that ought to be “performed, negotiated, or rejected within and outside marriage” (p. 2). However, the study is geographically limited to a few areas, mainly Zanzibar, and doesn’t broadly cover the western Indian Ocean as it claims. Yet, its contribution to mark the presence of women in Indian Ocean studies literature and bring the *private* sphere (consisting of marriage, sexuality, and motherhood) to the mainstream cannot be overlooked.

The book is divided into three parts. The first, “Historical Transformations of Gender, Sexuality, and Marriage,” consists of three chapters. Each of these chapters reflects the difference in the perception of gender, sexuality, and marriage in terms of the following: (1) Girl and Woman, (2) Transition from slave to ex-slave, (3) from twentieth to the twenty-first century. The first chapter, “Schoolgirls and Women Teachers” by Corrie Decker, discusses the transition from girl to woman in Zanzibar tradition as marked by a ritual *ukungwi* where an elder female instructor taught a girl about sexuality (including the mechanics of sex) when she attained puberty. Elisabeth McMahan, in chapter 2, “The Value of a Marriage,” explores “the history of marriage among slaves and ex-slaves on Pemba Island and the

different approaches men and women took to marriage over time” (p. 60). While freed men saw marriage as an opportunity to “recreate patriarchal households of their former owners” (p. 61), women ex-slaves saw it as an opportunity to gain social respectability. In the third chapter, Pat Caplan traces the changes in women’s perception about marriage, sexuality, and Islam since 1960s by studying two cases (one in 1960 and the other in 2003) closely. Interestingly, in 2003, the perception is shaped more by essentialist Islam as compared to 1960.

Part two explores contemporary expressions of coastal femininity and womanhood. Chapters 4 thru 7 delve into the understanding of discourses about sex as closely being bound up with “ideas of what it means to be a morally good person and a good Muslim” (p. 119). While both men and women are taught “techniques to enhance sexual pleasure” (p. 117) through rituals like *singo*, the instructions have become more private—initiated only before wedding—due to the growing threat of HIV and AIDS. Brides-to-be are trained through “gender socialization” and “language socialization” (p. 171) so that they learn about sacred and profane speech while developing their identity as a “Muslim wife and adult woman” (p. 169). Throughout this section, the friction between Swahili culture and rituals, and Islam is brought about.

The third part logically moves to the discussion on masculinity. The broad theme covered in the last four chapters is regarding the definition of masculinity in ritual and marriage. It discusses various pre-marriage and post-marriage customs that the groom undergoes. It also lays out the intentions of a man for polygyny, if he can afford to take care of all the family members (as stipulated in the Qur’an). They view it as “both a symbol of success and an Islamic virtue” (p. 350), considering it as an attribute of a good Muslim man. However, the first wife of a man can initiate a divorce if he intends to marry another woman. Failure to satisfy one’s wife sexually can also be the grounds on which a woman can initiate a divorce.

*Gendered Lives in the Western Indian Ocean* presents an inter-disciplinary approach to depict women’s sexual agency, acknowledging their pious commitments, through well-contextualized examples. It goads one to rethink gender relations and marriage, and the role of institutions such as schools in shaping those relations.

Muhamed Riyaz Chengenakkattil, *Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi*

**Jennifer Tappan. 2017. *The Riddle of Malnutrition: The Long Arc of Biomedical and Public Health Interventions in Uganda*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press. xx, 218 pp.**

Hunger and starvation persist in many places, though their intolerability and obscenity have propelled much humanitarian action in the past decades. Without going into the complicated aetiologies of hunger, the historian Jennifer Tappan’s absorbing *The Riddle of Malnutrition* examines the history of nutrition research and anti-hunger measures in Uganda. She proposes one explanation for the inefficacy of such programs—what she identifies as a failure of the aid industry to institute mechanisms to learn from past experiences and build on local successes. This stands in marked contrast to common Ugandans’ memories, where she suggests that the effects of long past medical experiments had sedimented. The riddle Tappan unpacks is how a highly successful, locally embedded

and innovative nutrition rehabilitation program in Uganda could fall into oblivion after being on the forefront of global nutrition research in the 1940s and 1950s. With compelling details and drawing on the personal papers of doctors working at Kampala's Mulago hospital, she shows what turned the Mwanamugimu pediatric nutrition ward into a huge success and model for other African countries. This was its local ownership, which it pushed beyond the narrow confines of biomedicine, and mixed treatment and preventive measures. Tappan foregrounds the story of charismatic expat and later Ugandan doctors who devised this program and in post-independent Uganda held a faltering infrastructure together through their own efforts, expertise, their ingenious ability to stretch scarce resources and their devotion to helping fellow Ugandans. A surprising finding is that Mwanamugimu was able to expand its services throughout the dark years of Obote (I and II) and Amin, whereas the 1980s neoliberal reforms caused significant service cuts in the national health system and the unit's demise. Critical of quick fixes delivered by donors that have filled this gap left by crumbling national budgets, like many medical anthropologists before her, Tappan argues convincingly for the value of long-term and sustained investments in national public health systems that seem to have little place in today's economized aid landscape that ticks according to the clock of short-term projects. Nonetheless, in the absence of a discussion of dynamics driving hunger, I took her to be disproportionately damning of the aid industry at times, dismissing important ongoing efforts to tackle severe undernutrition.

While offering a critique of the downsides of short-term and targeted interventions so prevalent in global health today, the book could have benefited from connecting the Ugandan case more firmly to changing paradigms in global nutrition and public health. For example, her critique of the medicalization of nutrition could have been bolstered by the fact that more recent thinking in public health nutrition highlights the need for networked, ecological, and holistic approaches to nutrition, ideas that indeed were prevalent early in Uganda as she so lucidly shows. Or, Tappan suggests that interest in nutrition has waned (p. 5), when the UN general assembly has just declared the "Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025)" ([http://www.who.int/nutrition/decade-of-action/information\\_flyer/en/](http://www.who.int/nutrition/decade-of-action/information_flyer/en/), accessed 15.1.2018). She may, however, be referring to severe acute malnutrition (SAM) only, where most progress was made over the past decades and from where the funding focus has shifted away towards to all forms of malnutrition (including being overweight, obesity etc.; see <http://www.fao.org/state-of-food-security-nutrition/en/>, accessed 15.1.2018).

The difference she teases out between the institutional forgetfulness of medical pasts and local Ugandan remembrance is captivating. Still, I sometimes wondered whether she could have extended her research more into the present. Whereas Tappan's story suggests a gradual demise of Mwanamugimu since the 1980s, it remains unclear in what ways the program has frazzled; particularly as it is still operative today. The epilogue speculates that the use of ready-to-use-therapeutic food (RUTF), a peanut paste distributed to children with severe acute malnutrition, as medicalized quick fix may displace the long-term programs and compete with the so-called *kitobero*, a nutritious dish cooked with traditional cooking methods. However, a closer engagement with the current staff at Mwanamugimu could have revealed that RUTF plays a role in rehabilitation as one item in a portfolio of treatment options and is administered before children are sent home and are instructed to consume the *kitobero*.

These are minor shortcomings. Overall this is an intriguing book that tells a forgotten history of African-based research, a book that highlights African agency and creativity, and

a story that reminds of the critical importance of adapting globally circulating models, technologies and programs to local circumstances for them to be successful.

Sandra Calkins, *Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology*

**Samuel Totten (ed.) 2017. *Sudan's Nuba Mountains People Under Siege: Accounts By Humanitarians in the Battle Zone*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co. 263 pp.**

The context of this edited volume is the situation of a land-locked area at the southern border of Sudan, the Nuba Mountains, which has been a battleground between the Sudan People's Liberation Army-North and the Government of Sudan since June 2011. This violent conflict is part of a long struggle over the region's position in Sudan's unsettled state building and was in a previous war (1983-2005) part of the same fights that led to separation of South Sudan but no comparable "clarity" for the Nuba Mountains. When this renewed war broke out, shortly before the South's independence, the Government of Sudan (GoS) imposed a similar policy it had followed during that previous war: no humanitarian access was granted, despite all diplomatic and advocacy efforts.

This book contains mostly autobiographical texts by people who did not wait for GoS permission to deliver medical and food aid and to document the ongoing atrocities. It gives insights into the way these individuals perceive the war and their role in it, their political thinking, their reconstruction of own motivations and acts in front of a global audience, often also including an open call out to this audience. The texts often remained unedited, factual errors uncorrected, and claims on unwitnessed events without references, which makes them rather highly personal oral history material than studies of the ongoing conflicts. But some of the texts succeed in bringing about the level of ongoing suffering in heart-wrenching and deeply touching ways, much so Tom Catena's text, not so much just because of the gruesome details, but because of the pervading sense of moral duty, occasional frustration, and honest concern to fail, enunciated by somebody constantly in the midst of it.

Most contributions have been written by short-term visitors, whose accounts are interesting, from a regional studies point of view, most of all for details of coming to and moving in the Nuba Mountains, as they give glimpses not just into how SPLM-N and other entities stayed connected outside their areas and—especially in Totten's paper—organized humanitarian efforts, but also into the functioning of the young South Sudanese state, partly before it exploded into violent conflict. At the same time, several of them carry familiar stereotypical notions of Africa—this "rough and wild part of the world" (p. 104); Tomo Križnar most of all presents a paternalistic and romanticizing view of "the natives," culminating in the proposal to establish a natural park for their protection, "as enjoyed now by gorillas in Virunga National Park in the Congo" (p. 36).

While the book provides only a very rudimentary analysis of the conflicts, it portrays very well the biographical and intellectual background of those who actually engage on the ground in the Nuba Mountains nowadays. The authors' position and convictions inevitably create their own blind spots, among which the unquestioned support of Christianization is probably one of the first to be picked up by a less than sympathetic reader, as it contradicts the concomitant evocation of a pure and/or ancestral Nuba identity and culture, which



seems to be challenged here only by Muslim-Arab influences and often unquestionably violent policies, but not by a strongly missionary Christian presence that, historically seen, is much younger in the area and has several issues with practices that were seen as normal just one generation ago and others that have come up recently.

Another blind spot is that a differentiated look at the Sudanese political landscape is made impossible by the overshadowing figure of the Islamist dictatorship represented by Umar al-Bashir. Under this figure, political alliances, splits in movements, relatives fighting on opposite sides for different reasons, defections, deals and agreements disappear. There is also a strong focus on armed resistance against marginalization, which is by far not the only way Nuba have resisted their systematic discrimination. This has much to do with contextualization of *why* this violence happens, which is often—not always—fit here in the narrative of a one-man project of genocidal attacks of Arabs Muslims on Black African Christians. Much can be, and has been, said about this narrative, but the aspect sticking out here is how it interlinks with how “the Nuba” are reduced to those residing in the war areas and how SPLA-N’s legitimacy is generalized in a way that wouldn’t work in any other political analysis: in fact, there is a spectrum between arduous support via indifference to hostility as elsewhere, especially if one looks outside the areas under their control. In fact, the experience of and struggle against discrimination and marginalization is *not* limited to these—or even just the southern—areas in Sudan or to Nuba; a recognition of this shines sometimes through, especially in Ryan Boyette’s piece, but is not what informs most of these pages.

However, as Tom Catena, and others in other ways, stated self-reflectively, “to maintain some sort of perspective is a challenge” when surrounded by mutilated victims of cluster bombs, and none of these critical qualifications devalues what witnessing the last years in these areas of the Nuba Mountains means, for now and even more for the future. The mayhem caused by the government’s armed forces in the region over six years has been documented extensively and was committed in such an obvious way among non-combatants that refutation is about cynical denial, not lack of evidence.

Overall the book confronts with the pain-staking question how to balance between an emphatic account of ongoing suffering and accurate contextualization, which requires distance and a certain detachment that comes with it. Neither alone can be fully claimed to “do justice” to what goes on, which makes both indispensable for representation. Where to lean more to seems political in its implications, and it is likely safe to say that those involved in this volume rather lean to the former and are, righteously so, comfortable with it, as it means for them also to lean towards remedial action. Therein lies both the documentary and, more importantly, human value of the book and, as the book authors ultimately argue, a moral imperative.

Enrico Ille, *LOST Research Network*

**Olivier J. Walther and William F.S. Miles (eds.). 2018. *African Border Disorders: Addressing Transnational Extremist Organizations*. New York: Routledge. 209 pp.**

This collection of papers demonstrates the utility of combining network analysis and geographic analysis methods to understand cross-border conflicts and transborder organized crime in Sub-Saharan Africa. Even for those unfamiliar with these methods, the volume provides plenty to learn from the focus on both current and historical conflicts in

Central and West Africa. This edited book includes a Preface and Conclusion by the book's editors and nine chapters authored by fifteen academics.

*African Border Disorders* grew, as the Preface/Forward acknowledges, out of a conversation following a DASTI-funded workshop at the division of Global Affairs at Rutgers University. The volume's strengths and weaknesses reflect its origins. All are experts in social network analysis and new quantitative security analysis methods, and all but two of the authors are male. Despite writing on transnational security challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa, there is not a single author from the region. This distribution reflects the narrow interest and expertise in these methodologies at this time, and the particular genesis of the volume itself.

Divided into three sections, the reader can jump to the section that most closely matches their interest: the first uses GIS and network analysis to analyze armed group behavior; the second uses similar methods to approach the spread of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad basin; the third examines violent extremist groups' understandings of operating across state boundaries and the responses from states and civil society in the region.

The specific audience for the volume is clear throughout, as many, though not all, of the chapters are more proofs of concept than contributions to the field of African security studies. Eager to show their practical applications, the authors tout the possibility of their use in prediction of attack locations, splintering within groups, and fighting among non-state armed groups (NSAGs). As the editors describe in the introduction, "Thus far, the *social* networks underlying political and religious movements in the region and the *spatial* patterns of attacks have often been considered separately" (p. 5). While these approaches have been considered together in other parts of the world, the authors aimed to fill the gap in the literature in Central and West Africa and the Maghreb. These methods are introduced as a complement to existing analytical methods, especially for predictive analysis.

*African Border Disorders* is most appropriate for the researcher or policymaker already steeped in the politics and conflicts in the region. It may be of particular interest for those whose research focuses on ethnography or case studies, as these methodologies provide interesting opportunities for complementary partnerships. For researchers already employing these methods or similar methods, the proof-of-concept nature of the volume may prove less useful.

Despite its set up as a calling card for the authors with potential funders and adopters of these methodologies, individual chapters provide useful insight for those interested in non-state armed groups (NSAG) dynamics in Africa. Many of the authors have used familiar data sources (e.g. ACLED) for novel reflections on ongoing conflicts and to examine historical patterns. For researchers and policymakers following Boko Haram, Catriona Dowd and Nikolas Emmanuel both provide worthwhile chapters that appropriately place both the spread and response to Boko Haram in a regional context. Without a strong background in the region, and an independent understanding of conflict dynamics, drivers, and group behavior, researchers have a model disconnected from reality and are unable to readjust assumptions to reflect reality on the ground. As the various authors acknowledge, all models must be reviewed and adapted based on researcher knowledge of the conflicts. Overall, the authors make a convincing case for policymakers to adopt these methodologies,

and for qualitatively-focused peers to consider adding these methodologies to their analysis for greater depth and predictive capacity.

Emily Cole, *United States Institute of Peace*

**Anne Wolf. 2017. *Political Islam in Tunisia: The History of Ennahda*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 269 pp.**

Here controversy starts with the title, since there is more to *Political Islam in Tunisia* than the contemporary party Ennahda. But, whatever reservations one might raise, this volume presents a coherent (if by design limited) narrative and includes a wealth of new source material. The book can be seen as a kind of companion piece to Kenneth Perkins' *A History of Modern Tunisia* (2014) to which Ms. Wolf refers. Among the new source materials presented are translations from the Arabic of several Ennahda party congress documents (including an April 2001 party history), as well as portions of interviews with Rachid Ghannouchi and other party leaders. Even a few cables from the U.S. embassy in Tunis appear (courtesy of Wikileaks)—though the judgements expressed therein are only occasionally on-target and make no contribution to Wolf's narration of the party history. Ms. Wolf has done painstaking research, and if Ennahda leaders have at times been reticent, held their cards close to their chests, or disagree with each other, that doesn't diminish her achievement.

There are many shoals to be navigated in Tunisia's current political environment: to what extent to cooperate with centrist and moderate parties, how to balance the needs of rural areas with those of the urban population (see for example Intissar Kherigi's October 2017 article in [www.middleeasteye.net](http://www.middleeasteye.net)), to what extent persons associated with the pre-2011 regime might be rehabilitated—but the buried headlines in this story are the facts that: a) the majority of the Tunisian electorate has repeatedly voted either with the centrists and moderates, or negatively against Islamist platforms, and b) over the past twenty years Ennahda has steadily moved to the center. Looking past the alarmism of the European and North American press, election results tell the tale: in the constituent assembly elections of October 2011—and this was the high-tide of Ennahda's popularity—the party received 37 percent of the vote, not a majority. A coalition called the troika was then formed with centrist elements and alliances. The October 2014 assembly elections are even clearer: the big tent centrist coalition Nidaa Tounes won 38 percent of the vote, Ennahda 28 percent and left, right and Arab Nationalist groups another 13 percent. So what really emerges in Ms. Wolf's work is Ennahda's reinvention. Today the party leadership endorses the principle of multi-party governance, acknowledges the contributions of women in contemporary society, and has even been heard to call itself merely another Tunisian party (Ghannouchi, July 2013). In the May 2016 party congress members resolved to embrace "Muslim democracy," leaving behind "political Islam." The latter banner the party had found increasingly problematic in light of Muslim Brotherhood missteps in Egypt, the ensuing fall of Morsi, and the tumultuous fortunes of ISIS. Just as national leader Habib Bourguiba did in an earlier age, Ennahda leaders have kept a watchful eye on developments in the rest of the Arab world.

The post-2011 failures of the party fall into two areas: national security and economic planning. In the first area, Ennahda repeatedly underestimated the danger from extreme Islamist groups such as the Salafists, the Battalion of 'Uqba Ibn Nafi (note the martial echoes;

the name of an Arab conqueror), and others. While since the 2011 revolution secular and leftist forces have been frequently inchoate, opponents on the right, though fewer in number, have often been deadly: the Salafists were legalized then proscribed again, and violence flared repeatedly with the assassination of Democratic Patriots Movement leader Chokri Belaid (February 2013), People's Movement founder Mohammad Brahmi (July 2013), the attack on the Bardo Museum (March 2015), on a resort in Sousse (June 2015), etc. In 2013 it was estimated Tunisia had perhaps two thousand young people fighting in Syria and another fifteen hundred associated with extremist groups in Libya. Those youths need to return to a country that can provide jobs and hope for the future, which leads to the second point: the economy. Ben Ali's fall had more to do with economic stagnation and unremitting high unemployment (especially among the youth) than any tension between a secular line and the need to respect Islamic tradition. Both Nidaa Tounes and Ennahda lack a robust vision to deal with economic challenges. If the two parties separately or working together cannot make progress on this front, the times ahead will be increasingly dangerous.

Politics is a messy business, but to paraphrase Churchill: "Tunisia has made the least progress of any of the post-Arab Spring regimes—except for all the rest." This work is very timely.

Kenneth Meyer, *Western Washington University*