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# African Studies Quarterly

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# Coal Sector Revitalization, Community Memory, and the Land Question in Nigeria: A Paradox of Economic Diversification?

IKECHUKWU UMEJESI

**Abstract:** In 1999, the Nigerian government unveiled new policies aimed at revitalizing the mining, agricultural, tourism, financial services, and manufacturing sectors in a broader effort to diversify the national economy. While this was a response to the reality of underdevelopment in the country, it was also a response to research that has attributed the country's developmental and governance failures to decades of over-dependence on its vast petroleum resources. The new plan has attracted unprecedented attention from foreign and local mining firms to previously under-exploited minerals such as coal, gold, tin, bitumen, talc, limestone, uranium, asbestos, limestone, and iron ore (known collectively in Nigerian government and business circles as "solid minerals").

Using the coal industry as a case study, this article looks beyond the "economic diversification" objectives of resource sector reforms and interrogates coal sector revitalization against narratives of entitlement, land dispossession, and repossession in the mining communities. The central question is: how does privatisation impact on the revitalization process, and what role does community memory and material interests in land, play in the emerging conflict between the mining communities and the Nigerian state? The analysis is based on ethnographic data obtained in the South-eastern Nigerian town of Enugu-Ngwo, the country's premier coal mining community. The article also draws lessons from the Nigerian petroleum sector.

## Economic Reforms and Grassroots Concerns

The return to democratic governance in Nigeria in 1999 after almost two decades of military rule coincided with a surge in grassroots militancy in the oil producing Niger Delta region, where local communities are engaged in violent contestations with the state and transnational oil companies over unsustainable socio-ecologic practices and what they see as "inadequate compensation" for land expropriated for oil exploitation.<sup>1</sup> The implication of this conflict on crude oil production—Nigeria's economic mainstay—has been a gross shortage in industry

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output, leading to Nigeria's loss to Angola in 2008 of its place as the highest producer of crude oil in Africa.<sup>2</sup>

The deficiency in production and low earning from crude oil implied that the government's major source of revenue has come under serious threat.<sup>3</sup> As a way of stemming the negative impacts of overdependence on single export product—crude oil—the Government of Nigeria in 1999 initiated its economic reform agenda through the passage of Public Enterprises (Privatisation and Commercialisation) Act, No. 28, in which the revitalisation and privatisation of the moribund solid minerals sector was targeted as one of the possible complements to the threatened oil sector.<sup>4</sup>

The stated goals of the Nigerian government in the reform program comprises: creation of new enterprises, market expansion, increased tax revenue, higher income, increased employment, efficient management of the enterprises, general entrepreneurial innovations, investment inflows, and poverty reduction.<sup>5</sup> The privatisation exercise was expected to be successful in the hope that the growing global demand for primary products, especially from Asia, would attract foreign investors and help accomplish government's economic reform objectives. The growth of the Asian market since the 1990s has led to an increased flow of foreign capital into Africa for the sourcing and control of primary products. The intense search for primary products in Africa by global markets has led to what scholars have *rightly* or *wrongly* likened to a "scramble for Africa."<sup>6</sup> In other words, an attempt by global economic powers to carve out spheres of economic hegemony in different parts of Africa reminiscent of the nineteenth and twentieth century pre-colonial and cold war era competition among European nations for the control of Africa.<sup>7</sup> While the earlier scrambles highlighted the political economy interplay among contending foreign powers, the primary aim of the post-independence scramble, is the control of Africa's only comparative advantage, its natural resource endowments. Some of the resources targeted in the continent include: crude oil, coal, tin, and uranium among others.

Although the nature of this "scramble" or heightened interests in Africa's natural resources is outside the purview of this article, it is re-enacting certain characteristics of earlier European political and economic relations with Africa. Issues such as an official disregard of grassroots concerns for their land ownership rights, exclusion of local people in the discussion of concessions, and issues regarding the fate of land acquired under colonial institutional provisions have also characterised the current economic reform agenda of the Government of Nigeria as well as other states in Africa. For advocates of privatisation, "Privatised enterprises are desirable because they yield revenues and the proceeds from the sale become available to finance new governmental programs."<sup>8</sup> While privatisation as an instrument of achieving corporate efficiency and realising the state's economic objectives has of late been de-emphasised even by its most ardent advocates, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), it has continued to be used as an instrument of economic reform in most developing countries. For instance, in 2003, the *Wall Street Journal* published the headline, "The World Bank as Privatisation Agnostic," in which it stated that World Bank officials "Have now decided it does not matter whether infrastructure is in public or private hands."<sup>9</sup> Bayliss and Kessler's study on privatization and commercialization as a tool in the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has identified different factors other than privatisation

that motivate efficient public sector management and profitability. These include citizenship equality in the workplace and an ability to deal with institutional problems and official corruption.<sup>10</sup>

In developing countries, the sense of urgency among state officials to privatise moribund or less profitable public enterprises and attract foreign capital inflow has often exposed their economies to the abuses of international capital.<sup>11</sup> This dilemma has in the new rush for Africa's natural resources, raised questions about the stake of local communities and their socio-ecologic concerns.<sup>12</sup> Fraser and Lungu noted in the case of the privatisation of Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM) that the desperation to remove the burden of ZCCM through concessioning to foreign firms, coupled with weak state institutions, gave international mining corporations undue advantages in their negotiations with the state that compromised national security, community health, and socio-ecologic wellbeing. According to them, "Some investors have taken advantage of the fact that Zambian state institutions are too weak to effectively regulate their behaviour. The state itself also seems to have developed political relationships with certain mining houses that mean health and safety, labour, immigration and environmental regulations can be ignored with impunity, causing significant [grassroots] resentment."<sup>13</sup>

Also writing on the privatisation of copper mines in Zambia and the effects of its compromised contractual "Developmental Agreements" (DAs), Rohit Negi notes: "Among other things, neoliberal cosmologies prescribe that the state enact and enforce mechanisms to make its territory attractive to capital."<sup>14</sup> Since these frameworks were primarily made to "attract" foreign investments, grassroots concerns are often bypassed. It is against this background that the privatisation process in Nigeria, as it relates to coal mines and a community's collective memory over its land acquired for colliery development in 1915 is interrogated. The article, therefore, poses the question of how has the privatisation exercise impacted or likely to impact on local discourses in communities where state-owned enterprises are located?

Discourses on natural resources in Nigeria often focus on community-based revolts in the Niger Delta against what local people see as state and corporate insensitivity to their ecology. Little or nothing is heard of evolving discourses of discontent in solid minerals producing communities such as Enugu-Ngwo, the country's premier coal producing community in Nigeria's South-east. The community's discontent is rooted in colonial era land acquisition for the establishment of the colliery. The community's aversion to the privatisation of its coal mines and agitation for the return of their land is based on its reliving colonial era land acquisition agreements, which stated that the mines were acquired for a "public purpose." In other words, the community questions the imperative of *selling* "their" mines to corporate firms when the land (on which the mines are located) was supposedly acquired for a public purpose in the first place.

The article examines the relationship between the state and local communities regarding land ownership rights from the colonial era. This relationship, as the article will show, has impacted postcolonial land-related conflicts. The analysis here illustrates how a state's macro-economic agenda could impact on community's collective memory, and how the community's

reaction to what they see as official neglect could forestall the economic objectives of the state. The analysis is based on archival and ethnographic data obtained between November 2007 and March 2008 from Enugu-Ngwo.<sup>15</sup>

### **Contesting for Land: the State and Communities**

Since the evolution of the modern nation-state in Africa, the identity of indigenous communities became subsumed in the state, although the local communities did not willingly give up their sovereignty during the formation of the supra state that has come to dominate them. The birthing of the “powerful” state over previously independent indigenous communities perhaps demonstrated parallels in the development and decline in influence between “the state” and “local communities” respectively. In other words, the growth of the state led to the decline of the influence the formerly independent communities wielded over their common property resources, especially their land. To explain this phenomenon, the Libertarian, Albert Jay Nock equated the rise of “State power” to the decline of individual and societal rights. He noted: “Every assumption of State power, whether by gift or seizure, leaves society with so much less power; there is never, nor can there be, any strengthening of State power without a corresponding...equivalent depletion of social power.<sup>16</sup> Also, Bertrand de Jouvenel stated that history “is the picture of a concentration of forces growing to...the state, which disposes, as it goes, of ever ampler resources, claims over the community ever wider rights, and tolerates less and less any authority existing outside itself.”<sup>17</sup>

The skewed relationship that exists between independent African states and local communities in relation to control and allocation of resources, in which the state is mirrored as a “leviathan” by the communities, gave rise to an attitude of hatred for the nation-state among local people. Whereas the state demands citizenship responsibilities from the local peoples, it is seen to give back little or nothing to the communities in terms of physical developments.<sup>18</sup> As a result of this, Davidson and Munslow stated: “They [local people] begin to see the nation-state as a curse.”<sup>19</sup> The perception generated by this relationship produces centrifugal feelings, and conflicts on the part of the local communities, whereby local people begin to question the relevance of the state to their communities.

The colonial economy depended primarily on commodities such as agricultural products and mineral resources. In order to grow its economy, the colonial government acquired indigenous land, hence resulting to conflicts with local people over ownership rights.<sup>20</sup> David Lea has noted the clash of what he termed “acquired rights” of the state/corporate bodies and “aboriginal rights” of local people.<sup>21</sup> In other words, the grassroots often opposes a situation whereby the state superimposes new a tenure system over indigenous tenure. This form of institutional framework developed during the colonial era in Nigeria when the colonial state took possession of land under the Crown Land regime.<sup>22</sup> Crown tenure implied that the state now owned any acquired land for public good on behalf of the people of Nigeria.<sup>23</sup>

The crown tenure system replicated what was applicable in England and in British imperial territories, not minding the effects of such imported tenure on the local people. Writing on the introduction of crown tenure in parts British empire, C.K. Meek noted: “The king [of England] had complete freedom of disposal of the crown lands, which were constantly being increased by

confiscation, escheat or forfeiture."<sup>24</sup> This manner of acquisition and control of land by a centralised authority was a novelty for indigenous communities in Southern Nigeria where land is more or less owned collectively. In Northern Nigeria, it was relatively adapted to the centuries old feudal institution established by the Muslim emirs.<sup>25</sup> L.S. Amery, a former dominion secretary in Britain, differed with the imperial idea of making the colonies look like England. To him, western values "tend to judge distant problems in the light of its own experience and to try to fit them into its own formulas, regardless of their relevance to local conditions."<sup>26</sup>

The development and the growth of the solid minerals sector during the colonial era witnessed the elaborate application of this new tenure in certain communities where mineral resources were discovered.<sup>27</sup> The local communities whose lands were acquired for public good seemed not to have understood the full implication of the acquisitions; they thought that the colonial state held their land in trust for their community.<sup>28</sup> In other words, local people did not understand that the colonial state had acquired such lands permanently. Hence, while the state treated crown lands as belonging to the state, the local people regarded these lands as part of their community, but held in trust for them.<sup>29</sup>

With the prospects of independence, the thinking among local communities in the emerging states was that their postcolonial governments would address the "injustices" of the colonial state, including land thought to have been wrongfully taken, unemployment, socio-economic inequalities, and lack of basic infrastructure in rural areas.<sup>30</sup> In Kenya and Zimbabwe for instance, where grassroots disenchantment with discriminatory land policies that favored European settlers had been entrenched for several decades, the expectation of sweeping reforms that would see local people repossessing their land from the state and settlers was high.<sup>31</sup> In his reminiscences and regrets of the decolonisation process, Chinua Achebe recounted the hopes ordinary people had for redressing perceived colonial injustices and "how passionate we felt and how good it was to be in the movement that would liberate us after centuries of denigration and deprivation."<sup>32</sup>

Incidentally, the postcolonial state was much more concerned with strengthening its authority over component parts than with returning indigenous land or relinquishing sovereignty to former independent kingdoms. Jefferey Herbst saw the failure of postcolonial African states to change the basic institutions of the colonial state that affected ordinary citizens as an endorsement of the colonial regime in post-independent Africa. He reasoned that, while the new states and their leaders still recognised and romanticised with the glorious names of past empires (e.g., Ghana, Mali, and Benin) they rejected any suggestion of restoring the old institutions.<sup>33</sup> In Kenya, Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Homecoming* captured the dashed hopes of Kenyans for postcolonial land redistribution this way: "What does independence mean? Independence has not given them back their land."<sup>34</sup> Kaniye Ebeku observed the same grassroots disappointment in Nigeria with the failure of the postcolonial government to reform the institutional and legal frameworks they had inherited: "It is therefore paradoxical that the same persons who had so resented colonial statutes on mineral oils moved to retain the essence of these laws after independence."<sup>35</sup>

Postcolonial Nigeria strengthened its hold on land with more stringent and far reaching laws. The passage of the Republican Constitution of 1963, the Petroleum Act of 1969, and the Land Use Decree of 1978 meant a steady decrease of the indigenous hold on land and the right of obtaining compensation when land was acquired. The official reason given for these laws, especially the Land Use Decree of 1978, touched on strengthening statutory accessibility to land whenever the need for land acquisition arose.<sup>36</sup> The implication of Land Use Decree of 1978 to the indigenous owner varied. It means first, the loss of his so-called “native rights” recognised in Southern Nigeria since the Native Land Act of 1916; second, the loss of the right to negotiate compensation for surface rights; third and perhaps the most intriguing of all, the loss of ownership status, whereby the indigenous owner becomes an “occupier.”<sup>37</sup> In other words, since ownership has been expropriated by the state, the indigenous “owners” become merely an occupier and also lose their right to negotiate compensation.<sup>38</sup> The effect of this provision on the communities is that the state in the exercise of its “powers of overriding interest” (or eminent domain) could allocate indigenous land to a corporate mining company without consulting the community that owns the land. Interestingly, other laws in Nigeria since the promulgation of the Land Use Decree in 1978 (such as the Nigerian Minerals And Mining Act, 2007 which is the substantive law in Nigeria that regulates activities in the solid minerals sector), have followed this pattern in which statutory authority over land and natural resources is given primacy over the rights of the local people.

It is perhaps this same thinking that the state is applying in relation to the privatisation of its moribund enterprises located in local communities. Although the state might justify its actions based on statutory provisions that allows it to exercise powers of overriding interest on such establishments, in the case of Enugu-Ngwo, the exercise has thrown up grassroots discourses around colonial era agreements that seem to question the legitimacy of privatisation of coal mines.

## Research Methods

### *The Study Community*

This study was conducted in Enugu-Ngwo community, Enugu State, in South-eastern Nigeria. Although in 1928 the colonial government separated Enugu, the town, from Ngwo, the village, this study uses the indigenous compound name “Enugu-Ngwo” to refer to the land and people whose ancestral land were ceded in the agreements of 1915 and 1917 for the development of the colliery and the town.<sup>39</sup> It was discovered during the field research in 2007/2008 that local people, as well as recent court cases refer to the town and the village as Enugu-Ngwo.

Prior to British colonialism, much of the local populace lived at the foot of the Milliken Hills where the city (or town) of Enugu later developed.<sup>40</sup> However, colonialism and the discovery of coal in Enugu-Ngwo altered the settlement pattern and location of the people.<sup>41</sup> With the state acquisition of 16,700 acres of farmland in 1915 and the subsequent demographic shift that ensued, some of their villages, including Ajaagu-Agangwu, Uwani farmlands, and parts of other Enugu-Ngwo settlements, were acquired for mining, the rail station, and urbanisation.<sup>42</sup> The implication of this demographic dislocation resulted in the development of cluster villages on the hilltops overlooking Enugu city and the valleys.

### *Study Techniques*

Ethnography and in-depth interviews constituted the main methods of primary data collection. During field research (from November 2007 to March 2008), field observations, in-depth interviewing, and focus group discussions were conducted with a wide array of respondents. They included chiefs, political leaders, youth and student leaders, ordinary citizens, women leaders, and former miners. A focus group discussion was held with six retired coal miners aged above 60 years. The respondents were purposively selected, based on their knowledge of state-community relations regarding the colliery. Some of the issues addressed by the respondents include land acquisitions made by the colonial government, privatisation of the colliery, and the availability of land for indigenous uses.

The National Archives and National Museum provided documented historical accounts of the evolution of the colliery, land acquisition agreements between the indigenous rulers and the colonial authority, and local reactions to these acquisitions. These documents and photographic displays of the colliery from its earliest times provided good accounts of colliery history and some insights that the Enugu-Ngwo community and the Nigerian Coal Corporation did not provide.

### *Background to the Coal Industry in Nigeria*

Coal is said to have been discovered unexpectedly in Enugu-Ngwo in 1909 by Albert Ernst Kitson, a colonial British mining engineer attached to the Mineral Survey of Southern Nigeria.<sup>43</sup> He was seated on the head carriage of carriers when suddenly he spotted a sub-bituminous coal outcrop.<sup>44</sup> After this initial discovery, there arose the need to acquire land for the exploitation of this new find.

Prior to commencing of mining, the colonial government in 1915 acquired from the indigenous owners 16,700 acres containing the coal deposit by means of an "Agreement."<sup>45</sup> The Agreement reads in part:

We, the undersigned chiefs of Udi division of the Southern Provinces of Nigeria, fully appreciating the benefits which will be derived by us and by our people by the opening of a government colliery at Enugu-Ngwo in the said Udi division do hereby grant without charge, free and voluntarily unto the government of Nigeria all such lands as may be required by the said government for the purposes of a [rail] station and colliery, for the working of all coal and other minerals, all and any other purposes for which the said government may think fit to use the said lands; *the said lands so required having been clearly marked by beacons on the ground and pointed out to us as delineated and shown on the plan...* And we do hereby acknowledge the receipt of the sums set forth in the schedule attached to this agreement in full payment of all compensation due to us, our towns and our people, and to all persons residing on or having an interest in the said lands for damage done to all houses, crops and trees and other property on the said lands" (emphasis added).

These acquisitions (or crown land) were made in perpetuity—a framework that does not seem to be fully understood by the local people (see the emphasis above). In other words, the community lost ownership of the land to the state, permanently.<sup>46</sup> The “permanency” of the crown acquisitions, perhaps, differentiates it from the acquisitions in the oil-rich Niger Delta, where land owners are allowed limited rights to “negotiate” their compensation. Land owners are also paid periodic rents every ten years by the international oil companies.<sup>47</sup>

It might be pertinent to know if local signatories understood the implications of the cession to their community. To show that the indigenes of Enugu-Ngwo community may not have understood the content of the agreement of cession with the colonial officials, local people continued to “intrude” into the “ceded land” for farming and other activities.<sup>48</sup> A petition written by the Enugu-Ngwo community in 1938 to the “Colonial Enquiry” into a land dispute between the Nike and Enugu-Ngwo communities also suggests that the community may not have been properly informed of the implications of the cession. The petition reads in part: “Do you believe that a man can sell his land and sell up to his dwelling place (reference to their land acquired in the Crown cession), we beg most respectfully to say that we and our Chiefs (those who thumb-printed the said agreements) did not know anything about it.”<sup>49</sup>

In relation to the 1915 and 1917 agreements between the Enugu-Ngwo chiefs and the colonial officials, Onoh observed as follows:

[T]he so-called chiefs were not as the British then thought, autocratic rulers who could dispense communal land as they wished; they were not empowered to grant any land; the villagers had no idea that their land was being disposed of and it is very likely that many of the chiefs were no nearer grasping the real situation as they have not seen a coalfield before, and would not have appreciated the “benefits” accruable from coal production.<sup>50</sup>

By this acquisition, the area fell under crown land administration. In other words, the acquired land had become state-owned land, a development local people had never experienced. It contravened indigenous tenure by concentrating decisions on alienation and administration in the colonial system and denied the people participation in land management. This aberration was a failure on the part of colonial officers who did not understand indigenous land use practices in the region.

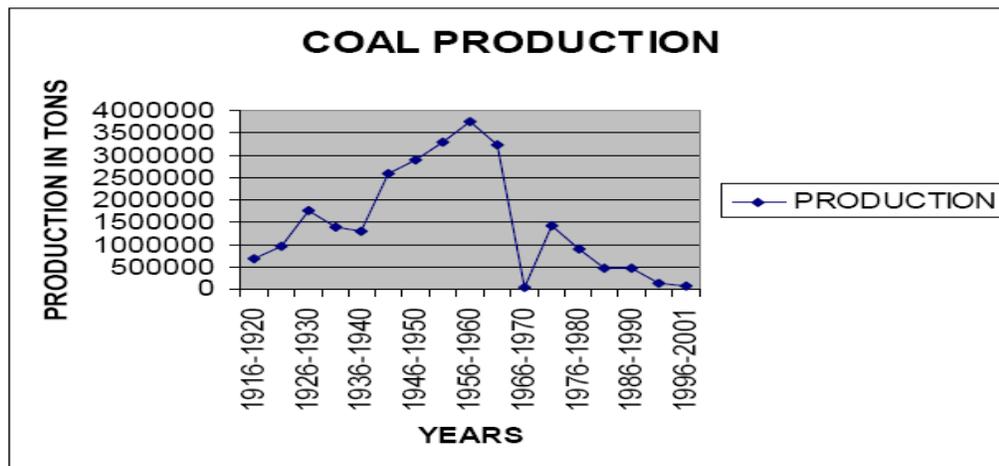
Indigenous societies in Eastern Nigeria were not hierarchical. Decisions, especially on matters related to land, originated with the people through their representatives. Since there was no strongly institutionalised authority in these communities, decisions on common property resources revolved around the people.<sup>51</sup> The new tenure system alienated the local communities and benefited the colonial state. Commenting on how the British colonial system of land administration alienated indigenous Australians, Val Plumwood noted that the system was one in which the “interests of the dominant party were disguised as universal and mutual, but in which the colonizer actually prospered at the expense of the colonized.”<sup>52</sup> Independent Nigeria did not dispense with the crown land system. It christened such land “government land” and increased its reach with more stringent land use laws such as the Land Use Decree of 1978, even though local people continue to see the land as their own. Local discourses on the persistent intersection of ownership claims between the state and local people in Enugu-Ngwo since the privatisation exercise is detailed below in the “Findings” section.

### *The Corporatisation of the Colliery: Collapse and Privatisation*

The Nigerian Coal Corporation (NCC) was established in 1950 by the Coal Ordinance Act No. 20, which gave it a full monopoly for coal exploration and exploitation in Nigeria.<sup>53</sup> The Corporation's monopoly lasted from inception until 1999 when the Nigerian government deregulated coal mining and opened up the industry to private participation. With dwindling output and rising costs of production, NCC divested completely from the sector in 2001 when production dropped to a low of 2, 712 tons.<sup>54</sup>

Prior to its divestment, NCC was the sole supplier of energy fuel to the then Electric Corporation of Nigeria (ECN), as most of Nigeria's power stations were then coal-fired. The corporation also supplied the fuel needs of the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) and much of the pre and immediate post- independence heavy industries in Nigeria. It also exported coal to other West African countries. Production peaked, from 583,487 tons to 905,397 tons between 1950 and 1959.<sup>55</sup> However, mainly due to official neglect this growth rate could not be sustained in the 1960s and 1970s post-independence era. Many reasons have been given for the remote and immediate causes of the collapse of the Nigerian coal industry. These include dieselisation of the country's railway system, the impact of the Nigerian civil war, the introduction of gas-powered electric turbines by the defunct National Electric Power Authority (NEPA), the closure of certain industries that patronised the NCC (such as cement factories and steel plants), official neglect of the coal sector as a result of oil price boom in the 1970s, and an alleged installation of "inappropriate" mining equipment in the mines by Polish partners among others.<sup>56</sup>

**Figure 1: Coal Production in Nigeria, from 1916 – 2001**



(Source: MSMD: Information Memorandum on Onyeama Coal Concessions)

1999 saw the launch of privatisation and commercialisation of different government corporations declared moribund or non-profitable by the civilian government. This initiated the process of concessioning the Onyeama and Okpara mines in Enugu-Ngwo (the two most productive mines in Nigeria), which were closed in 2001 when production slumped to bottom

levels (see Figure 1). In May 2007, the coal mines in Enugu-Ngwo were concessioned to Global Infrastructure Incorporated of India, although the community had in 2004 obtained a substantive court injunction restraining the privatisation of the mines. The community had argued that based on the Agreement of 1915 the mines were established primarily for public purpose and not for private ownership.<sup>57</sup> In other words, the community views privatisation of the mines as a breach of the Agreement of Cession. The local people also contended that private ownership of the mines presented some socio-ecologic uncertainties for their community. To the majority of the respondents in our survey, privatisation implies dispossession of their common property resource (i.e., land) without a renegotiation of the terms of acquisition.<sup>58</sup> The next section presents local narratives of land deprivation and also the role of communal memory in the evolving discourses.

## Field Findings

### *Beyond the Benefits of Privatisation: Land as a "Social Agent"*

Beyond the economic benefits expected to accrue to the Enugu-Ngwo community from privatising the mines, one interesting area of the privatisation discourse is the perception that years of coal production constitute defilement of the land. A local chief saw it as "stripping mother earth naked" and noted that land in Eastern Nigeria is not just a "factor of production" to its owners but is also regarded as a source of life, hence the popular adage that "land is life."<sup>59</sup> The connectedness between the living and the dead that the land signifies is often expressed in proverbs and idioms. In an interview, the chief quoted above somewhat regretted the years of mining in his community. Although he acknowledged what he said was "the good side of NCC" (he meant infrastructural development and scholarships awarded to his people), he noted that: "To us in Ngwo, land is life. In Igbo tradition, land is our mother that gives us life. However, our mother [the earth] is now naked and she is dying of thirst. Her throat is parched from a century of coal mining. Her fertility prowess has gone away from her and she cannot yield again."<sup>60</sup>

A similar sense of cultural reminiscence was shared by a retired school teacher, now a shop owner.<sup>61</sup> To him:

Although I am a communicant in the Catholic Church here in Ngwo, I have not lost knowledge of what our land means to our spirituality. I believe that our land needs rest from much troubles [he meant coal mining]. For example, we swear by the land to show it is a god with the power of life and death. So it needs respect. If they sell the mines and the land surrounding them to any buyer, be assured that we may not survive the wrath that will come out of that.

The implication of such views is that while it is obvious that certain benefits of privatisation, such as employment opportunities and the growth of small scale businesses that may accrue to the community, these benefits do not convince all sections of the community. An evolving discourse on earth spirituality and its essence to the survival of the community is the concern of these cultural protagonists in the population. While they oppose privatisation, they do so based

on the need to respect the sanctity of the land, not necessarily on the need to redistribute the land as the mainstream opponents of the privatisation exercise suggest.

### *Coal Sector Privatisation and Community Memory*

The struggle for land repossession is seen as a response to the government's privatisation program, which those opposed to it believe breaches the 1915 and 1917 state-community agreements. Their major contention is that communal land was acquired for public good. The privatisation program thus evoked collective memory of what is to them the spirit of the agreements of 1915 and 1917—that their land was not sold, but held by the state in trust for public good. Privatisation of the mines without renegotiation of terms of acquisition, hence, became for the community, a breach of agreements between their forefathers and the colonial state. For the local people, land related negotiations must be based on the recognition that their land must be held as a trust by the state or returned to the pre 1915 status. As a youth leader complained:

Land has left us since the so-called 1915 agreement with colonial officials. The city developers have bought the few lands that were left by the colonial officers and we are just boxed tight between the high hills and steep valleys of Ngwo. We are living on the edge as far as land is concerned. Now the opportunity provided for us by the divestment of the Federal Government [of Nigeria] to regain our land is being denied us by the Indians (the concessionaire is an Indian company).<sup>62</sup>

Although the community obtained a court injunction from the Federal High Court in Enugu in 2004 restraining the Federal Government of Nigeria from carrying out the privatisation, the state did not appeal this judgment. In May 2007, an Indian company, Global Infrastructures, Inc, emerged as the winner of the concession. The state's action or what a school headmistress and women leader saw as the "state's lawlessness" generated a sense of frustration in the community. According to her:

You are free to read the agreements of 1915 and 1917. These agreements said the land is ours and that it was not sold. Our fathers gave the British the land to mine coal. When NCC failed and the mines closed, I had expected the government to hand over our property to us. I think it is not just privatisation alone; I see state lawlessness in it, especially after Enugu High Court in 2004 defended us and restored our land to us... How can I support the sale of mines, where do you expect us to farm? Alienation is a soft word. We are raped by the system we found ourselves in. Anytime I drive across those contentious areas, I feel like a raped woman, my pride is taken away. My grandfather told me that his mother planted pepper and okra on some parts of this land. Some of the areas have been fallow over the decades, some are built up; but the corporation is dead and gone because of corruption. We want to live like humans. If we have the land we can share it among the various families.<sup>63</sup>

There is a note of injustice in the narratives of the indigenes who questioned the legality of the privatisation exercise in which they claim the community was not consulted before the government privatised the mines. Hence, to the respondents, the government's top-down approach to privatisation and disregard for the judicial process is an insult. These respondents, who believed that the state's policies regarding the colliery lacked grassroots support, pointed to the violent contestation in the Niger Delta as a likely scenario to emerge in their community once the concessionaire assumes control of the mines. This view, expressed by a traditional title holder in the community, touches on the opinions expressed by other respondents who oppose the sale of the mines:

We do not have enough land in this community to farm or build our houses. We live on the mountaintops since our lands were taken over by the colonial masters when coal was discovered in this community. I believe it was on the premise that the mines will be a commonwealth of the country that our fathers surrendered the land free of charge. These people [Enugu-Ngwo chiefs] were not paid for their land; they were only given £273 for their trees and crops on the land. Privatising the mines when they did not buy its land is very unfair and we reject it. Why did they do this? We are against the procedure the federal government [of Nigeria] adopted. We were never consulted; they did not refer to the process and content of the acquisition agreements. This community can mobilise enough resources to buy back the land, I mean all the investments made on the land. We are capable.<sup>64</sup>

### *A Community Polarised*

Apart from the allegation of unfair official treatment levelled by a section of the community, one significant dimension of the controversy dividing the community is the disagreement between different groups on what should be done with the mines and the land. While the popular voice expresses an anti-privatisation sentiment, a minority (mostly ex-miners) supports privatisation. The pro-privatisation group is referred to as "For India," which is a derogatory reference to their supporting a foreign interest in the mines against what the dominant group see as "communal interest."<sup>65</sup> The opponents of privatisation identify themselves as "For community." They sound a patriotic note with this tag. Although the "anti-privatisation" group seemed to have more grassroots support because of its land reacquisition and distribution agenda, some respondents, especially among the ex-miners did not see anything wrong with privatising the mines if that will ensure the mines are revitalised. A student leader from the Hilltop village accused this group of working against the community's goal of retaking its indigenous land from the government, because, they believe that government-mediated privatisation would safeguard the future of their pensions:

You see, I do not know why a few people should be working against the desire of the entire Enugu-Ngwo. I understand their frustration, they want their pensions, good; but what of the future of their children? I think they should not support those who rob Peter to pay Paul. I mean the government who wants to please Indians at our expense.<sup>66</sup>

While he called their agitation the “desire of the entire Enugu-Ngwo,” the focus group discussion with former miners revealed that although the opposition to privatisation cuts across different segments of the community (the youth, women, local rulers), privatisation nevertheless has strong support among the former miners.<sup>67</sup> On the allegation of their indifference to what has been described as the “community’s position,” the ex-miners acknowledged their community’s need for land and the prevalence of anti-privatisation opinion. However, they accused their opponents of intolerance to other views relating to the future of the mines. To one of them, community opinion leaders use the debate on the mine privatisation to “incite the youth and whip up community sentiments against any differing group.” One discussant, who reflected the position of those who support the privatisation, put it this way:

I think these boys [the youth] and their leaders are misinformed. The problem started when the corporation [NCC] collapsed as a result of mismanagement and corruption. Is it not a wise decision to get the foreigners [Indians] or any private company to revive the mines? I was an underground miner for 26 years and anytime I pass through Onyeama mine area, I often cry. The mine is now flooded and overgrown with bushes. The workshops and the conveyor machines have been stolen by vandals. If the mines are given to us [the community], can we revive them? I assure you that those who want the mines only want to sell them to whoever they wanted. They are selfish. I worked there for 26 years and now I am not receiving any pension...If the mines are revived, they might restart the payment of pension.<sup>68</sup>

Although the groups differ on their approaches towards the privatisation exercise, one issue that unites them is the community’s dire need for land. None of the respondents disagreed with this issue. My research assistant, an indigene of the community, led me to the Hilltop terrace farm land overlooking the Coal Camp (a section of the city) where he showed me family farms. The land has been overused and gradually eroded by fast running water from the sloping hills. My assistant also noted how youth migration from the community has affected the socio-economic life of the Hilltop dwellers. According to him: “Over 60 percent of those who live on the hilltop settlement are the elderly because the youths have no future in the community as a result of shortage of land to farm or build homes. This has become a colony for the elderly; life is no longer vibrant here.”<sup>69</sup>

There is overwhelming although not universal support to retake the land. Against the backdrop of the community’s understanding of the 1915 and 1917 agreements, one wonders if recovering the land is an attainable goal, especially in light of the passage of certain land and mineral laws such as the Mineral Oils Ordinances of 1945 and 1953, the Petroleum Act of 1969, the Land Use Decree of 1978, and the Minerals and Mining Act of 2007.<sup>70</sup> These laws have one thing in common, the strengthening of state powers to expropriate communal and individual properties for the so-called public use and the corresponding decrease of communal and individual rights to their land.

## Conclusion

This article has sought to demonstrate firstly, that land related controversies between the state and local communities has been entrenched since the evolution of the Nigerian nation-state with the introduction of crown tenure; secondly, the privatisation of the coal mines shows a parallel understanding of land ownership rights between the state and the study community. In other words, the state and the community had different conceptions of public good. While the state did not limit “public good” to running the colliery as a state-owned enterprise, the overwhelming view in the community is that public good does not extend to privatising the coal mines. The community believes that the colliery must remain state-owned; for them anything to the contrary becomes a breach of the agreement of acquisition.

An examination of the framework in state-community land use relations in Nigeria reveals that the introduction of crown land tenure in the colonial era (1900-1960) alienated local people from their land by shifting indigenous land rights to the state. It was based on the crown framework that other laws were enacted in postcolonial Nigeria which consolidated the official hold on expropriated land. This continued hold on land by the state against the will of local people has led to agitations for the recovery of what local people see as a lost right. In exercising the powers of eminent domain, the state determines what it considers as public good even when such interests conflict with that of indigenous landowners. Since the state owns the subsurface mineral rights and could in addition dispossess the surface owners of their rights, it implies therefore that the state could transfer ownership of privatised mines to any foreign or local firm that emerges the winner of a bid process. It does not seem to matter to the state whether the community’s immediate environment will be under the threat from the mining company. Consideration is often given to the profitability of the investment rather than any other issues.<sup>71</sup> The exercise of eminent domain on community or private properties has been found to be prone to state abuse. The Cato Institute, a Washington DC based policy think-tank, described the abuse of eminent domain as taking “property from one owner, often small and powerless, and transferring it to another, often large and politically more connected, all in the name of public good.”<sup>72</sup> For Anthony Gregory, the state is likened to a “supreme lordship” in the way it abuses eminent domain.<sup>73</sup>

In the coal producing community of Enugu-Ngwo, privatisation of the coal mines has awakened collective memory of a near century-old colonial pact in which conditions for the acquisition of their land were stated. For local people, land-related negotiations must be based on the recognition that land either belonged to the community or was held in trust by the state for public good. It could not be ceded to private interests without the community’s consent. A common sentiment in Enugu-Ngwo is that the state either takes direct control of the mines for the public good or returns the land to the communities. Mines in private hands could never meet the definition of the common good. The 2007 privatisation of the coal mines was based on the understanding that the state owns all land in Nigeria and that coal development, whether undertaken directly by the state or by private companies, was for the common good.<sup>74</sup> This, to the communities is eminent domain abuse; robbing communities of “their” land and handing it over to private companies.

Although the coal mines in Enugu-Ngwo are statutorily owned by the state (based on legislative appropriations such as the Land Use Decree of 1978 and the Nigerian Mining And

Minerals Act of 2007), experience in state-community resource-related conflict in Nigeria has shown that the legality of ownership of resources is not usually enough to ensure a safe atmosphere for resource exploitation. This is demonstrated by the oil-rich Niger Delta where sustained grassroots agitation against the state and oil multinational companies has affected crude oil production. The success of the Niger Delta militants in affecting crude oil production has bolstered restiveness among other mineral-rich communities. Emphasis on communal goodwill (community licence) rather than much emphasis on economic considerations or legality of ownership might help the state achieve its economic reform agenda especially in the privatisation of coal mines and other resources in the solid minerals sector.

## Notes

- 1 Obi 2008a.
- 2 *Guardian* 2008.
- 3 Nigeria earns about 95 percent of its foreign exchange from crude oil production (Shell, 2006). Its oil industry production capacity of 3.2 million barrels per day was reduced to 1.8 million barrels per day in 2008 through the activities of Niger Delta militants.
- 4 The Solid Minerals Sector in Nigeria comprises all non-oil and gas mineral resources.
- 5 [www.bpeng.org](http://www.bpeng.org).
- 6 Ghazvinian 2007.
- 7 Obi 2008b.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 1.
- 9 See Hall and Lobina 2004, p. 2 (see also, IMF, 2004).
- 10 Bayliss and Kessler 2006.
- 11 Negi 2011, p. 10.
- 12 Fraser and Lungu 2007.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- 14 Negi, p. 36.
- 15 The fieldwork was done between November 2007 and March 2008.
- 16 Nock 1935.
- 17 Cited in Woltermann 1992, p. 1.
- 18 Zolberg 1968, p. 72-76.
- 19 Davidson and Munslow 1990.
- 20 The local communities practised an agrarian economy. They also had mystical understanding of land as the abode of ancestors and a trust for the unborn generation (Shipton 1994).
- 21 Lea 1993.
- 22 Although the Crown tenure was first introduced in Northern Nigeria in the first decade of 1900s, it was used expediently in the South to acquire land where the colonial state discovered mineral resource deposits.

- 23 Meek 1946.
- 24 Ibid p.87-88.
- 25 Mabogunje 1979, p. 21. Feudal system of land ownership had preceded colonial rule in parts of Northern Nigeria. It was part of the Islamic institution that was introduced in Northern Nigeria in the 14th century. This system lasted till the period of Crown acquisitions.
- 26 Amery 1953, p. 181.
- 27 NAE: OP/2917/1948.
- 28 Onoh 1997.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Zolberg 1968.
- 31 Betts 2006.
- 32 Achebe 2009, p. 1.
- 33 Herbst 1997.
- 34 Thiong'o 1972, p. 56.
- 35 Ebeku 2001, p. 3.
- 36 Adedipe et al 1997. The Land Use Decree of 1978 is often regarded as the most drastic land use law in Nigeria.
- 37 Ibid.; see also Land Use Decree 1978 in Allott 1978.
- 38 See Section 2(2C) of Land Use Decree 1978 in Allott 1978.
- 39 Ikejiofor 2004.
- 40 JCR 2001.
- 41 Onoh 1997.
- 42 Hair 1954.
- 43 NMM Presentation 2006.
- 44 Carriers were local men who knew the geography of their neighborhood well enough. They were used as "beast of burden" by the colonial authorities and missionaries to ferry their white officials to their destinations under very harsh service conditions comparable to slavery. They used wooden planks as carriages. NMM Presentation 2006.
- 45 Agreement of Cession 1915, p. 1. Another agreement was signed by chiefs in 1917 which recognized Nike community as part owner of a section of the land used for the development of the railway and the town (Hair, 1954). This part of the land has remained contentious between Enugu-Ngwo and Nike communities. The new agreement also contained the signature of Chief Onyeama, a prominent Enugu-Ngwo Warrant chief missing in the first agreement (Onoh 1997).
- 46 See Shell D'Arcy 1957; SPDC Rent Receipts 1997.
- 47 Ibid.
- 48 During the wars of conquest and pacification in the first quarter of 20th Century, colonial officials drafted the terms of these so-called "agreements" without inputs from the local people and their rulers. The indigenous rulers were usually coerced into accepting to abide

- by the terms of the agreement to avoid reprisals from the colonial authorities (see NAE OP1867 1938; Hair 1954; Isichei 1976).
- 49 Cited in Onoh 1990, p. 5.
- 50 Onoh 1997, p. 4.
- 51 Isichei 1976; see also Brown 1996.
- 52 Plumwood in Adams and Mulligan, eds. 2003, p. 51.
- 53 MSMD 2006.
- 54 SFCD 2008.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 MSMD op cit. The civil war was fought between Nigeria and the breakaway Republic of Biafra from 1967-1970, the coal mines are located in the heartland of the war zone.
- 57 See Court file: FHC/EN/CS/216/2004.
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 John Okeke. 2008. Personal interview<sup>3w</sup>, Coal Camp Enugu City, Nigeria. 8 February 2008 (transcripts in author's possession).
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 Ekene Ugwu. 2008. Personal interview, Hilltop community, Enugu-Ngwo, Nigeria. 1 March 2008 (transcripts in author's possession).
- 62 Peter Nwodo. 2007. Personal interview, Ogbette Market in Central Enugu City, Nigeria. 11 December 2007 (transcripts in author's possession). He said he was arrested in 2004 for protesting the privatisation of the colliery.
- 63 Agnes Ugwu. 2008. Personal interview, Hilltop Village Enugu-Ngwo, Nigeria. 6 February 2008. (transcripts in author's possession). The court did not "restore" the land to the indigenes. It only restricted the government from privatizing the mines.
- 64 John Okeke. 2008. Personal interview, Coal Camp Enugu City, Nigeria. 8 February 2008 (transcripts in author's possession).
- 65 The company that bought the mines is an Indian owned company. This group consists of mostly ex-miners. They want the colliery privatized not because of what the community will benefit but for the chances of getting paid their pension arrears. A few of them expressed feelings of deep attachment to an industry they spent much of their youthful age working for. They refer the agitation against privatization as "youth affair," although the opposition to privatization cuts across all segments.
- 66 Interview with a student leader from Hilltop Enugu-Ngwo (aged 26 years). Hilltop village is one of the villages of Enugu-Ngwo community. As the name indicates, it is situated on top of the Milliken Hill. It is believed that the inhabitants of this community ran up hill as a result of displacement when the exploitation of coal began in 1915.
- 67 A Focus Group Discussion was held with six ex-miners in Enugu. All of the participants are from Enugu-Ngwo. Their age ranged from 63 to 75 years. The discussion was held at Ogbette Enugu on the 19th February 2008.

- 68 A retired miner, petty shop owner at Ngwo market. Interviewed at his shop on the 18th of February 2008.
- 69 My research assistant was an undergraduate of Electrical/Electronic Engineering at the Enugu State University. I engaged him because of his knowledge of what local people refer to as: "Coal politics." He has also lived all his life in Enugu-Ngwo (aged 28 years).
- 70 Although the mines and the issue of land seem to affect the entire community, yet I found some in the community who showed apathy to discuss the state-community face-off.
- 71 Fraser and Lungu 2006.
- 72 Cato Institute in Akpan 2005, p.135
- 73 Gregory 2006, p.1
- 74 See Nigerian Land Use Decree of 1978 in Allot (1978).

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# Oil Extraction and the Potential for Domestic Instability in Uganda

JACOB KATHMAN & MEGAN SHANNON

**Abstract:** The exportation of oil offers tremendous opportunities for Uganda. It also poses several risks to Uganda's domestic security. Drawing on field research in Uganda, as well as archival research, this paper identifies three potential sources of domestic instability stemming from oil exportation: increased urbanization, unpredictability in tax revenue collection, and the formation of rebel groups. The paper concludes that government transparency is crucial in avoiding most of the pitfalls associated with oil extraction and makes several recommendations for improving transparency in Uganda.

## Introduction

This article explores the potential risks associated with oil development and exportation in Uganda. It is based on field research conducted in July 2009 as well as on archival research and simulations using established sources of data. This paper assesses the influence of oil extraction on Uganda's domestic security, noting the potential for a resource curse associated with oil exportation. The paper then identifies and discusses in detail three sources of domestic volatility that may arise as a result of oil development. The first factor is declining competitiveness of non-oil exporting sectors of the economy, and the increased urbanization associated with the decline of these sectors. The second factor is the potential for oil exportation to foster increased presidential power and a declining ability to collect tax revenues. The final factor is the susceptibility of oil to the formation of rebel groups. All three factors may encourage civil unrest and strife in Uganda if the negative externalities of oil extraction are not properly managed. The paper concludes that government transparency is crucial for avoiding the many potential pitfalls of Uganda's oil exploitation and offers recommendations for increasing transparency.

## Background: Oil Exploration, Discovery, and Exploitation in Uganda

Uganda confirmed the presence of significant oil reserves for commercial extraction in 2006. One billion barrels of oil in reserve have been confirmed.<sup>1</sup> Representatives from the UK oil and gas company, Tullow Oil (Tullow), believe that between one and two billion barrels exist in Uganda.<sup>2</sup> If extracted, those resources would put Uganda among the top fifty oil producers in

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<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v12/v12i3a2.pdf>

the world.<sup>3</sup> Exporting oil could be quite a boon to Uganda's economy – potentially doubling or tripling its current export earnings of two billion dollars a year.<sup>4</sup>

Oil reserves are predominantly located in the Lake Albertine Graben region between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The Lake Albert region is an ecologically sensitive area with an enormous amount of biodiversity. It is also a politically sensitive area that lies between two countries with a history of violent conflict and border disputes.

Plans are somewhat formative, but Uganda intends to build a refinery to process its crude oil, and Tullow has said it anticipates production to begin in early 2012. The refined crude is intended for both domestic and export use, as the East African Community has announced plans to build an oil pipeline linking Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi.<sup>5</sup>

### **Theory: Oil Development, the “Resource Curse,” and the Potential for Instability in Uganda**

While there are many benefits that could accrue to Uganda, oil exploitation also poses a multitude of threats to the country's security. Oil deposits straddle the border between Uganda and the DRC, increasing the value of their riparian boundary. This has increased tensions between the states, provoking conflict between the Ugandan Peoples' Defense Forces (UPDF) and the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC). Moreover, oil deposits are located near and within wildlife protection areas and environmentally sensitive regions. If not properly managed, environmental degradation could lead to local strife.

While these issues are important to the overall stability of the region, the primary security threat posed to Uganda lies in the domestic effects of large-scale oil exploitation. In many cases, sizeable petroleum reserves in less developed countries have not improved overall national economic performance. Indeed, for many petroleum-rich, underdeveloped states, exploitation has reduced the competitiveness of previously productive economic sectors, leading to declining wealth, social and political unrest, increasingly disaffected populations, emergence of rebel organizations, government corruption, and destabilized domestic security.<sup>6</sup> While not a deterministic relationship, access to such a valuable resource has pitfalls for less developed states lacking the capacity to properly develop the resource. In the following sections, we describe a phenomenon known as the “resource curse,” discuss how it may apply to Uganda, and highlight opportunities for avoiding the plight of so many other oil-rich developing countries.

The empirical connection between a state's petroleum endowment and its tendency toward poor economic performance and domestic unrest is well established.<sup>7</sup> This relationship has led some to claim that access to petroleum reserves is a “curse” for the endowed state. While there is nothing inherently destabilizing about access to large oil reserves, petroleum lends itself to mismanagement, yielding unfortunate economic and security consequences for the extractive state. As Uganda advances toward export capacity in the next several years, it faces many of the same hurdles as current export countries in avoiding the pitfalls of exploiting valuable resources.

President Yoweri Museveni's government claims to recognize the dangers inherent in the process, noting that Uganda intends to avoid the track taken by countries like Nigeria. Nigeria, after discovering and tapping enormous oil reserves in the 1950s, has been wracked by civil

war, economic stagnation, and petro-political terrorism. As a stark example, in the time that Nigeria has been exporting oil, its per capita income has remained stagnant, changing very little from its value of four decades ago.<sup>8</sup> Uganda hopes to avoid Nigeria's experience, and President Museveni has at least paid lip service to avoiding such misfortunes. Ideally, Uganda hopes to benefit from a more stable and sustainable economic development model, similar to Norway's. Norway's success in petroleum development has been the result of successfully depoliticizing the management of oil profits, making publicly transparent the process of the resource's exploitation, and structuring oil revenue investments to avoid many of the economic hazards that have befallen other large oil exporting countries.<sup>9</sup> Emmanuel Mutebile, Governor of the Bank of Uganda, who has worked closely with Museveni, highlighted the importance of responsibly managing the oil sector, stating "We must be Africa's Norway. We must manage our oil resources in the stellar manner in which Botswana has managed its wealth from diamonds."<sup>10</sup> However, the proper management of the resource is not easy. It is therefore worth outlining the issues that hold the greatest potential for causing domestic instability over time.

Conventionally speaking, the "resource curse" is a phenomenon in which macroeconomic forces create pressures for over-reliance on the oil sector, leaving other domestic economic sectors to deteriorate. Over-reliance then increases the state's economic susceptibility to dramatic swings in the global price of petroleum. Recent discourse on the resource curse highlights a number of political and sociological processes that lend petroleum extraction to increased civil unrest. Below, we discuss several of these issues as they relate to the current state of affairs in Uganda.

### *Declining Competitiveness of the Economy and Increased Urbanization*

While oil exportation can bring a great deal of revenue to the state, a massive inflow of oil revenue also puts undue strain on other productive sectors of the export nation's economy. This is especially true for less developed countries where nascent economic systems are too fragile to absorb large economic shocks. On its face, increased oil revenues and wealth brought to the export country are positive developments. However, as the demand for oil from foreign markets grows, so too does the demand for the export country's currency, pushing the exchange rate upward. As a result, the other export-oriented sectors of the oil-rich country's economy become less competitive.<sup>11</sup> To date, President Museveni has not provided a plan that clearly details how the government will attempt to manipulate these macroeconomic processes, although his public statements indicate his acknowledgement of such dangers. For example, referring to potential macroeconomic exchange rate pitfalls, Museveni recently stated, "Nigeria had this problem...it caused their exchange rate to appreciate. Uganda will not allow this."<sup>12</sup>

To remain competitive, states must invest heavily in improving the efficiency of other export sectors so that non-petroleum products sold in foreign markets can remain competitive. In most cases, this requires states to redistribute a substantial portion of oil revenues. States often have difficulty committing to this, as it is tempting to invest oil revenues back into the oil sector, especially when high prices promise large returns on continued investment.<sup>13</sup> Previously productive sectors are all too often ignored and therefore begin to deteriorate in efficiency, productive capacity, and profitability.

Like most African countries, agriculture composes a significant portion of Uganda's economy. In 2009, agriculture accounted for 25 percent of Uganda's gross domestic product with primary exports including coffee and tea. Considered in light of the fact that the global average of agricultural production as a percentage of GDP was less than 3 percent, it is clear that a critical portion of Uganda's GDP is reliant on agricultural output.<sup>14</sup> For its agricultural sector to remain competitive, Uganda must invest oil revenues to improve efficiency and increase crop yields. Like many Sub-Saharan African nations, Uganda is deficient in sophisticated irrigation systems, relying upon weather patterns and routine rainfall. With improved irrigation systems, reliance upon seasonal weather patterns should decrease, crop yields should increase, and agriculture should remain competitive in foreign markets, even as increased demand for oil exports pushes the country's exchange rate upward. According to the Ugandan Investment Authority (UIA), an investment institution which is semiautonomous from the Ugandan government, a portion of oil revenues will be invested in improving Uganda's irrigation systems in the hopes of improving the productive capacity of the national agricultural system.<sup>15</sup> However, the level of investment necessary to modernize agricultural practices is unclear, as this has not been publicly addressed by Ugandan government ministries. It is also not apparent what portion of the oil revenues will be made available to such programs.

In theory, investing in productive agricultural sectors is a positive mechanism that helps maintain the sector's competitiveness. However, there are potential detrimental consequences of such investment. For one, improving irrigation systems and beginning the process of commercializing agriculture will significantly reduce the manpower necessary to manage farmland. Should the Ugandan government invest heavily in this transition, a short-term result may be the reduction of necessary employment in the agricultural sector, raising the issue of how to compensate farm workers in need of transitioning to other occupations. UIA officials were questioned by the authors about this issue and responded simply that former farmers would be welcomed to move to the cities where they would be able to find other work.<sup>16</sup> Indeed this is a process that has played itself out in other nations as advances are made in agricultural productivity.

Increasing technological advancement of the agricultural sector may attenuate already rapid migration to urban areas in Uganda. Urbanization is often associated with domestic unrest and civil war, and such societal changes can be disruptive if not managed well. The movement of people to metropolitan centers increases the stress on fragile urban infrastructures.<sup>17</sup> This is especially true when population movements happen relatively quickly, as is already occurring in Uganda. As of 2009, 13 percent of Uganda's population lived in urban areas. The average annual growth rate of the urban population between 2000 and 2009 was 4.2 percent, compared to less than 3 percent worldwide. The growth rate in Uganda's urban population has been steady over the past four decades, averaging 5.7 percent between 1970 and 1990 and 4.1 percent between 1990 and 2000.<sup>18</sup> It is also one of the highest rates of urbanization in Africa. Between 1992 and 2003, the urban population in Uganda grew at a rate of 4%, compared to the rural population's growth rate of 2.7 percent.<sup>19</sup> Uganda's birth rate is currently the third highest in the world, and its urbanization rate is more than twice the global average.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to an increasingly urban population, Uganda has a young population. The median age in Uganda is a mere fifteen years old, the lowest in the world according to the

United States Central Intelligence Agency. Research has found that poor and disaffected youths are the most likely to turn to violence in order to redress socio-political grievances.<sup>21</sup> A young, growing, and increasingly urban population indicates the potential for civil strife in Uganda. The added stress of urban migration associated with oil production may only exacerbate the dynamics behind civil strife.

Updating and securing quality public systems in urban areas are important for cushioning the stress of urban migration and demographic changes.<sup>22</sup> Employment, shelter, road networks, sewage and electrical systems, access to clean water, communication systems, education programs, and other infrastructure systems are required to accommodate rising urban populations. Achieving this, however, requires a large investment of resources in public works that may not have been necessary without the discovery and exploitation of oil. Should the government fail to soften this societal transition, unrest and violence can result as people concentrate in Uganda's urban power centers. While emigration to Kampala, Kira, Gulu, and Lira has dramatically increased in the past decades, such population movements to Uganda's most populous cities should be expected to continue, potentially at much higher rates. Unfortunately, the National Oil and Gas Policy (NOGP) for Uganda has little explanation for how it will manage these indirect consequences of oil exploitation.<sup>23</sup>

### ***Increased Presidential Power and Instability in Tax Revenue Collection***

Under normal circumstances, governments are dependent upon tax revenues for funding their continued operation. In other words, the government is beholden to the public in order to maintain its hold on power. This is not to say that regimes are then required to provide quality governance in return for taxes collected. However, in all but the most strictly dictatorial regimes where power is highly concentrated, the reliance of the government on tax revenue creates a principal-agent condition in which a minimal return on the public's tax contributions is expected in the form of government programs and public works projects.

Yet, governments that have routine, and sometimes massive, access to oil revenue do not require as much in the way of tax revenue to fund their operations. Increasingly oil-rich regimes often become less dependent upon the people for their hold on power. This is especially the case when a government is a strong presidential system that is less reliant upon the cooperation between the president and the legislature, as is the case in Uganda. Power is becoming increasingly centralized and concentrated in President Museveni's hands, particularly because of the declining ability of local governments to levy and collect taxes.<sup>24</sup> Power plays by President Museveni have included the extension of constitutionally mandated term limits on his stay in office and the arrest of political opponents prior to elections. If Museveni gains access to substantial oil revenue, the combination of considerable oil funds and strong presidential powers could increase the ability of his government to remain in power indefinitely.<sup>25</sup>

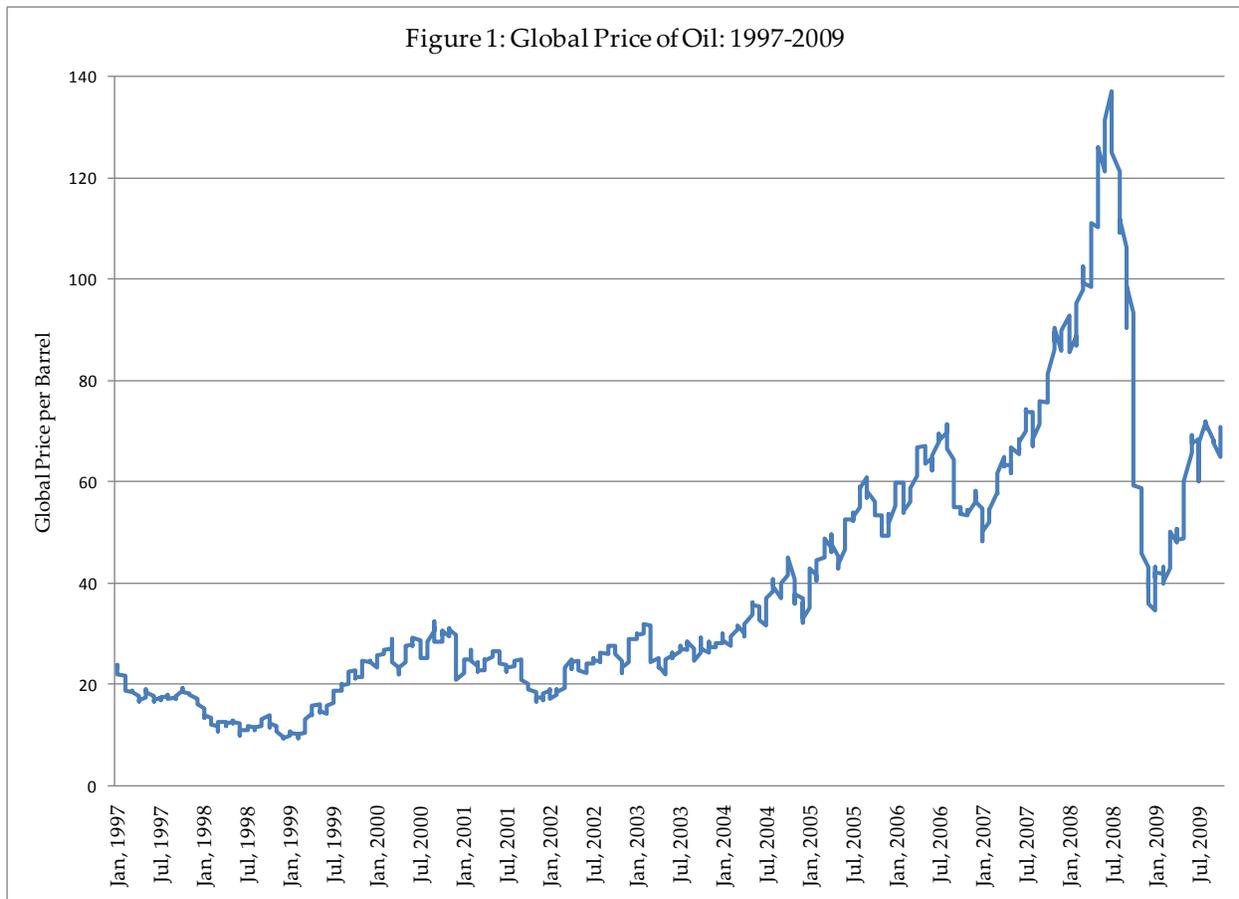
The fact that President Museveni has recently proclaimed that he sees no potential replacement to his role as president within his own party, the National Resistance Movement (NRM), leads one to believe that he has no plans to abdicate his position in the near future.<sup>26</sup> As the Ugandan news source, *The Daily Monitor*, reported, "[Museveni] told the NRM parliamentary caucus that he does not see an able successor from his own party to take over

from him as president. Mr. Museveni, who will have spent 25 years in power when his current term ends in 2011, told the MPs that whereas he would be happy to hand over power, he does not see anybody ready to assume the daunting task of leading this country."<sup>27</sup> Further, *The New Vision* indicated President Museveni's belief that naming a successor would be destabilizing to democracy in Uganda, reporting that "Museveni said grooming a successor was undemocratic and was tantamount to hijacking the democratic process of the NRM."<sup>28</sup> Some observers fear that access to massive oil revenues could solidify Museveni's hold on power. "Indeed, the oil curse could already be creeping into Uganda, as observed in...President Museveni's inference that, 'I discovered the oil and must ensure that it benefits all before I leave power.' Such a ploy of securing a life presidency could only be sustained through a very expensive patron-client system. In order to keep his sycophants happy, Museveni will have to handsomely dish out expensive goodies or allow them to indulge in corrupt practices."<sup>29</sup> Increases in corrupt behavior would essentially require secrecy in government dealings. A reduction in government transparency in oil and tax revenue management would then incentivize Museveni's government to become increasingly autocratic in its relationship with the public and political opponents, as has so often been the pattern in other oil producing states.

Additionally, if the Ugandan government turns too fully toward petroleum financing of its operations, spending projects may become overly sensitive to price fluctuations in the global market for oil. Oil is especially susceptible to price volatility, and the potential for dramatic changes in the price of oil over short periods of time, as is evident in Figure 1, can make it rather difficult to accurately forecast future government revenues. Inexact forecasts and volatile revenue flows detrimentally affect the ability of the government to fulfill its missions. Plummeting prices could force the Ugandan government to cease financing existing public works projects unless the government engaged in significant deficit spending. Incurring substantial debts is a risky practice given increased uncertainty surrounding the government's revenue streams and its ability to finance debts appropriately. The presence of a stabilization fund to draw upon in such times of declining oil revenues is an important measure to institutionalize. Yet, the government's NOGP makes little mention of future plans for a fiscal policy that includes such a fund.<sup>30</sup>

### *Susceptibility of Extraction to Rebel Activity*

Unlike other primary commodities such as gemstones, narcotics, timber, and some agricultural products, petroleum does not easily lend itself to the financing of rebel organizations. For example, diamonds and opium are easily extractable and sold on the black market, allowing rebel groups to flourish.<sup>31</sup> Oil, on the other hand, requires a complex national extractive infrastructure, production system, and access to international markets. Such capacity is not easily attainable for rebel groups.<sup>32</sup>



Source: United States Department of Energy ([www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov))

This is not to say, however, that rebels are unable to take advantage of petroleum extraction and distribution systems. The geographic location of Uganda's oil reserves is proximate to or directly overlaps areas of the country that have previously seen significant rebel activity. The activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) have taken place in the northwestern territories of the country, nearest to the exploration block licensed to Neptune Petroleum Ltd., a subsidiary of London-based Tower Resources. The LRA's bloody tactics and atrocious behavior toward the civilian populations is a potentially destabilizing element. The LRA has become known for killing and raping innocent civilians, abducting children for the purposes of serving as child soldiers, and maiming the bodies of noncombatants. Uganda and the DRC have engaged in cooperative attempts to combat the LRA, including the late 2008 joint operation code named "Lighting Thunder."<sup>33</sup> However, these joint military engagements have failed to destroy the LRA and have led to reprisals in the form of violence against civilians.<sup>34</sup> The group's continuing presence in the region and its unwillingness to end peacefully its war with the Ugandan government has continued the unrest in the northern Uganda-DRC border region.<sup>35</sup> While the LRA has been recently weakened by the Ugandan People's Defense Force (UPDF) attacks, its continued ability to persist and terrorize the northwestern Ugandan population remains a real threat to the region's stability and to Uganda's continued stable access to oil.<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore, the oil-rich region on the Ugandan side of Lake Albert was also the site of rebel activity that resulted in a great deal of insecurity in the 1990s. The Allied Democratic Forces, a rebel organization whose rationale for insurgency is somewhat unclear, engaged in violence against civilians. The group was vaguely organized along the puritanical Tabliq Muslim ideology and claimed that they had been discriminated against by the Ugandan government. While the fighting was rather limited, the violence perpetuated by the group caused approximately 160,000 civilians to flee their homes.<sup>37</sup> Still, the instability in the regions proximate to or directly overlapping with Uganda's oil reserves could be obstacles to the government's successful exploitation of the resource.

While oil is not easily exploited by rebel organizations to finance their operations, the extractive and distributive systems constructed by oil-rich states offer an attractive target for rebel violence and sabotage. Given that the regimes governing oil rich states often become increasingly dependent upon the continued development of the resource, rebel efforts to destabilize the government's extractive systems or cut off its distribution network can be fruitful efforts toward weakening the government's hold on power. Oil pipelines, refineries, pump stations, and other fixed emplacements offer easy targets for rebel attacks that hold the potential for significantly hampering the productivity of a regime's oil network. The Niger Delta offers an example of this. Recent attacks by the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) rebel group are the latest in a long history of rebel attacks on the Nigerian oil network.<sup>38</sup> Another example is found in Colombia where the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN) rebel organizations have engaged in bomb attacks on Colombia's oil pipelines, kidnappings of oil company employees for extortion, and civilian killings as part of their resistance campaigns.<sup>39</sup>

With the recent weakening of the LRA, there may not be significant rebel activity in the region currently. However, there is indeed a great potential for rejuvenated rebel groups to reconstitute themselves, or even for new rebel organizations to form around the petroleum exploitation issue. In fact, there are indications that social unrest could be on the rise in the region. First, as news of the oil deposits has spread, large numbers of people from outside the region have begun to move into areas that they expect to be rich in oil. The goal of such "squatters" is to obtain future oil rents from the government.<sup>40</sup> The presence of squatters generates animosities among the Banyoro people who are the longstanding inhabitants of the region on the Ugandan side of Lake Albert.<sup>41</sup> The arrival of Bafuruki, or "migrants," has increased fears that migration will eventually lead to a loss of jobs and political clout for the Banyoro. Recent reports of unrest have led the government to invest more heavily in establishing a stronger police presence in the oil-rich regions, in part to protect oil assets in the region from any potential social unrest.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, given that the oil reserves have been discovered under what is largely Bunyoro land, the Bunyoro kingdom has called for a greater share of oil revenues as compensation for hosting the oil extraction infrastructure.<sup>43</sup> Yet, such an agreement would likely promote migration to oil rich regions, and the government hopes to avoid the unrest the produced by such migration. Recognizing this, the NOGP states that:

Experience from some countries shows that oil and gas producing regions may attract labour and threaten other sources of productivity thus leading to the abandonment and collapse of other sectors of the economy. It is therefore

possible that large numbers of people may move to the Albertine Graben where oil and gas activities are likely to be concentrated...this policy recognizes the need to guide population movements and settlements triggered by oil and gas activities. Local industries supplying the oil and gas activities should, as far as possible, be spread throughout the country to avoid concentration around typically oil and gas centres of activity. This policy will support enforcement of regulations restricting population movements...<sup>44</sup>

However, the process by which these decisions will be made and the mechanisms to implement them are rather unclear. Further, the NOGP is short on specifics for how revenues will be distributed across the various provinces within Uganda. Public perceptions of favoritism toward some regions over others could generate discord, especially given Bunyoro calls for a greater share of the resource distribution.<sup>45</sup> If, for example, oil revenues are shared equitably between Uganda's provinces, then Bunyoro grievances with the Museveni government should increase, because their land will be developed and exploited for the purposes of extraction. On the other hand, if it is determined that a preferential share of the revenue should be allocated to those in the oil-rich provinces as payment for the obligation of housing the oil extraction infrastructure, publics in other less privileged provinces may begin to decry the lack of equitability. Further, the continued arrival of increasingly large numbers of Bafurki in the Bunyoro territories could very well increase the level of strife in Uganda's oil rich provinces if the oil-rich territories receive a preferential share of the profits. Each of these situations could significantly increase the level of civil strife in the country. Yet, the NGOP has no developed mechanism for dealing with these likely outcomes of any future government revenue distribution practices. At the very least, the seeds of disaffection exist, which could undermine the Museveni government's ability to successfully extract oil without stoking further civil unrest.

Thus, Museveni must not only strike a balance in revenue distribution, but his government must also prepare its administrative capacity for managing the type of civil strife that could arise like those situations described above. Yet states with easy access to petroleum revenues feel less beholden to investing in the administrative organization of state territory, much like the tendency of states to avoid reinvesting oil revenues in their productive economic sectors.<sup>46</sup> Conversely, potential rebel organizations recognize the value of obtaining control of the government given the wealth generated from oil exploitation. Rebels are therefore more motivated to challenge the existing regime's hold on power. As Fearon notes:

States with high oil revenues have less incentive to develop administrative competence and control throughout their territory. So while oil revenues help a state against insurgents by providing more financial resources, compared to other countries with the same per capita income they should tend to have markedly less administrative and bureaucratic capacity. Furthermore, easy riches from oil make the state a more tempting prize (for rebels) relative to working in the regular economy.<sup>47</sup>

In essence, then, the presence of a profitable oil extractive system makes the overthrow of the government a more lucrative and attractive goal for potential rebel groups. Yet, at the same

time, governments have fewer incentives to counteract the proliferation of rebel groups by investing heavily in the administrative institutions that would help to maintain peace throughout the country. The combination of these two factors can make for a rather destabilizing situation in Uganda.

### **A Statistical Simulation of Uganda's Oil Production and the Likelihood of Civil Strife**

The above discussion strongly suggests that Uganda's future holds significant potential for civil strife. As an individual case, many of the notable factors that are associated with the resource curse are present in the country. These factors have been uncovered in countless qualitative case studies and increasingly in quantitative statistical research. One of the benefits of quantitative research on this issue is that it offers a powerful means of comparing Uganda's social, economic, and political realities with those of all other states that have experienced an oil boon. Indeed, recent quantitative studies have noted a statistically significant relationship between rising oil production and the likelihood of substantial civil unrest.

While we will not engage in a full statistical analysis here, previously conducted work offers an opportunity to extrapolate about Uganda's oil production future and its likelihood of unrest. One of the most recently published quantitative studies was conducted by Fjelde in 2009. She finds support for much of the conventional wisdom in the literature in terms of the factors that are significantly associated with civil unrest.<sup>48</sup> In her work, civil unrest is defined narrowly in order to capture rather high levels of domestic instability. The definition requires that a rebel group be formally constituted, it must have stated political grievances against the government, and it must choose to pursue those grievances in a violent manner for which there are at least twenty-five fatalities caused by clashes between rebel soldiers and the government's armed forces in a given year.

One of the clear benefits of Fjelde's research is that it uses as its basis Fearon and Laitin's (2001) statistical research on the independent predictors of civil war, which is one of the most well-regarded and widely cited articles on the topic. Furthermore, Fjelde's statistical results are largely consistent with those of previous work in the literature.<sup>49</sup> The advantage of her work is that she includes in her analysis an accounting of every sovereign state's level of oil production per capita and the level of government corruption in each state. The oil production and corruption variables in her analyses are consistently statistically significant and positively related to unrest. This means that her findings lend support to the "resource curse" argument: as a state's oil production per capita increases, its likelihood of experiencing the onset of serious civil unrest also increases. This pattern also holds for increasing corruption levels. Furthermore, Fjelde finds that civil wars are less likely to occur in established democracies and more likely under autocratic regimes.

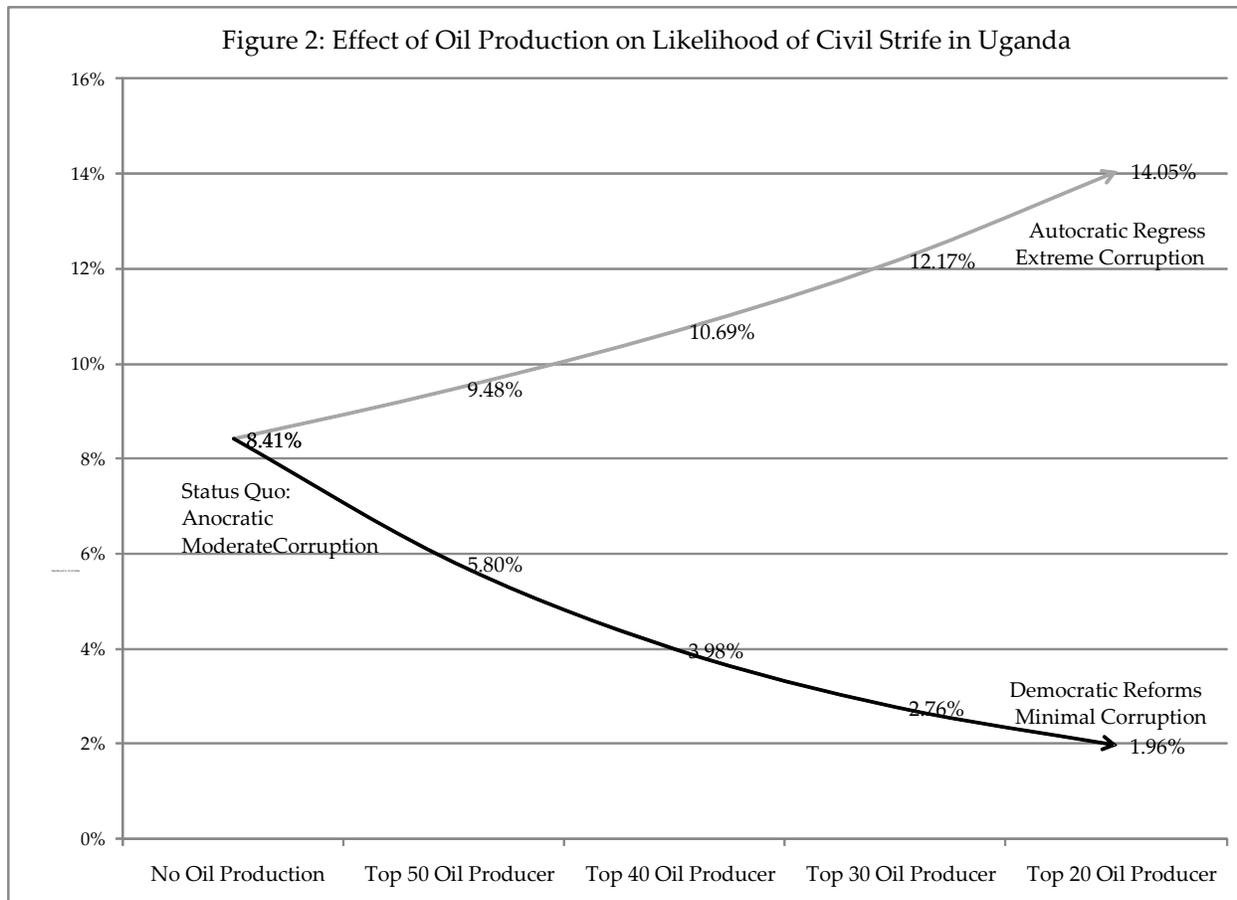
By using Fjelde's statistical model as a basis, we conduct simulations for Uganda's various "future realities" that include increasing levels of oil production and changes in Uganda's form and quality of governance. The benefit of this process is that a statistical simulation essentially judges the effect of the "resource curse" on Uganda by comparing Uganda's susceptibility to civil strife based on the experiences of all other countries in the world in the time period

analyzed. In this sense, a statistical simulation is a strong comparative tool that is not reliant upon the vagaries of single case comparisons.

Figure 2 below reports the results of our simulation. First, we hold all of the independent variables in Fjelde's model at their Ugandan equivalents. At the current point in time, this status quo situation includes zero oil production. Therefore, the oil production per capita variable takes a value of zero.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, the Museveni government is currently considered to be an anocracy in that the country has neither a fully democratic nor a fully autocratic government and rather has elements of both democracies and autocracies.<sup>51</sup> In addition, Museveni's government is considered by most corruption ratings and risk assessment scales as being moderately corrupt.<sup>52</sup> Armed with this Uganda-specific data, we can say that compared to all other countries, Uganda's current status quo likelihood of experiencing a new onset of substantial civil unrest is approximately 8.41 percent, as is reflected in Figure 2.

As stated previously, the resource curse theory indicates, and Fjelde's statistical results corroborate, that increasing oil production has the effect of increasing the likelihood of civil unrest. However, this is not the full story. From the discussion above, we note that rising oil production also often causes regimes to engage in increasingly corrupt behavior and to retreat from democratic governance toward more authoritarian forms of rule. For Uganda, we are able to graph the effect of these theoretical tendencies on the nation's empirical likelihood of civil strife. Estimates of Uganda's oil reserves indicate somewhere between two and 2.5 billion barrels available for extraction. Yet, Uganda's productive capacity will be dependent upon the rate at which the Museveni government decides to extract the resource. Estimates of Uganda's production levels are harder to substantiate given their speculative nature. Still, Uganda's reserves should easily put it in the global top fifty producers. With increased rates of extraction, its global oil production rank may rise substantially.

The grey line graphed in Figure 2 indicates the expected effect on Uganda's likelihood of civil unrest by increasing its rate of oil production from the status quo to ever higher productive amounts that are consistent with the top fifty, forty, thirty, and twenty oil producing countries in the world. At the same time, the trajectory of this line is determined by equivalently increasing Uganda's hypothetical level of political corruption and authoritarianism to reflect the transformative process indicated by the resource curse theory.<sup>53</sup> The grey line clearly indicates the detrimental consequences of expanding oil production and degrading governance. If Uganda follows the pattern of other "resource cursed" nations, and Museveni's administration becomes increasingly closed, non-transparent, authoritarian, and corrupt, the result would be a significant increase in the likelihood of severe civil strife. Specifically, if Uganda transitions from its status quo position and increases its petroleum production capacity to levels consistent with the top twenty global producers, reaches high levels of political corruption, and continually concentrates power in Museveni's hands, the consequence is an increase in the likelihood of a new civil conflict onset from 8.41 percent to 14.05 percent. This is an astounding 67.1 percent increase in the probability of civil conflict.



As the gray line in Figure 2 indicates, however, growing oil production is not deterministically associated with an increased potential for civil conflict. The conflict-inducing effect of greater oil production is not only muted by beneficial governance reforms. Rather, if reforms are implemented that make the political system increasingly transparent, fight corruption, and facilitate a transition to open, competitive, and representative democracy, the likelihood of civil conflict drops dramatically from status quo levels to 1.96 percent.<sup>54</sup> This is a reduction of 76.7 percent in the probability of civil conflict in Uganda. These simulations thus indicate the importance of political reform in Uganda for managing the resource curse effect of increasing oil production.

### Policy Recommendations: Pursuing Government Transparency to Avoid Instability

Given the theoretical and empirical discussion of Uganda's susceptibility to the oil curse, we argue that the key to sustainable oil extraction and domestic stability in Uganda is government transparency. If Museveni's government makes its decisions public and is held accountable, it is more likely to choose anti-corruption policies that are favorable to the public interest. Government responsibility and accountability flow directly from the transparency of government activities to interested parties.<sup>55</sup> When important information is kept secret, the public, civil society, nongovernmental organizations, and even entire branches of government are unable to determine what monies are being channeled to the government and how fairly

and effectively those funds are being allocated. Important information that governments have often kept secret include oil company contracts, revenue shares taken by both oil companies and the government, and spending on government programs made available by access to oil revenues. When this information is not made publicly available, there is no way to make certain that potentially corrupt government officials are not exploiting their access to resource funds for personal gain. Transparency can go a long way toward softening the detrimental effects of oil extraction on other domestic industries, avoiding aggressive policies toward Uganda's neighbors, implementing environmentally sound mechanisms of resource extraction, and avoiding the resource curse.

Currently, the public perception of transparency in Uganda is quite low. However, the Ugandan government publicly acknowledges the importance of transparency. Its National Oil and Gas Policy purports that:

This policy shall therefore promote high standards of transparency and accountability in licensing, procurement, exploration, development and production operations as well as management of revenues from oil and gas. The policy will also support disclosure of payments and revenues from oil and gas using simple and understood principles in line with accepted national and international financial reporting standards.<sup>56</sup>

Other pieces of legislation in Uganda also provide for transparency in public offices. The 2005 Access to Information Act outlines a process by which Ugandans can acquire government information. Schwarte calls the act "one of the very few of its kind in Africa," but acknowledges the act is "diminished by a lack of clarity in drafting, the envisaged scope of application, and insufficient procedural guarantees."<sup>57</sup>

Despite legislative provisions for transparency, Museveni's government has kept much of its oil policy secret, specifically by failing to widely disclose revenue sharing agreements between the oil companies and the government. The revenue sharing agreement details what percentage the government will take once companies begin pumping and selling oil. Although it has reportedly released some details of the revenue sharing plan to members of Parliament on the National Resource Committee, it has not made the agreement available to Parliament as a whole or to the public.<sup>58</sup> Conflicting reports abound in the media as to the terms of the agreement. Tullow Oil founder Aiden Heavey recently stated that Uganda's take of oil revenue would be 80 percent, a deal quite favorable to the government.<sup>59</sup> But a British environmental watchdog organization, Platform, disputes those figures, claiming that internal figures within the government put its revenue share at 67 percent to 74 percent. Platform's own figures are even lower, arguing that based on external influences such as the price of oil and developmental costs, the government will receive 47.4 percent to 79.5 percent. Without such information about the revenue sharing agreement, independent experts and the public are unable to determine if the government is getting a good, or even fair, deal with the oil companies. Civil society is also unable to hold the government accountable for investing oil revenues into public goods if it does not know the government's share.

Although the NOGP expresses Uganda's intent to sign the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), it has not yet signed, nor is it even listed as a candidate on EITI's website. The EITI is a British initiative that has become a standard-bearer for good governance

in the realm of extractive resources. It assesses countries' compliance with various criteria, including widespread dissemination of information regarding revenues collected by governments from oil companies. It also provides for civil society and peer reviews of governments' oil policies. Before countries become candidates for EITI, they publish a work plan outlining how they intend to comply with EITI's provisions. Uganda has not published such a plan.<sup>60</sup> Government officials have not formally begun the process of joining EITI, claiming that it does not make sense to start proceedings until the framework on managing oil revenue is updated. Also, no oil company exploring in Uganda has signed EITI, although Tullow has expressed interest in doing so. Furthermore, the NOGP itself cannot fully ensure transparency, as it is more a statement of principles than a guide to good governance.<sup>61</sup> Uganda must take bold, specific measures if it is to credibly communicate its commitment to transparency and a sustainable oil policy, such as joining and implementing the policies outlined by EITI.

Transparency is particularly important to communities local to the extraction sites. The *Independent* reports that "according to the Mining Act, eighty percent of oil revenue goes to the national government, seventeen percent goes to local governments, and three percent goes to landlords." However, communities within the Bunyoro Kingdom are asking that anywhere from 15 percent to 50 percent share of the revenues be distributed to locals.<sup>62</sup> The Bunyoro Kingdom's traditional territory covers the Lake Albert area, and therefore local communities in the kingdom argue that they deserve a larger share of oil revenues. In fact, many respondents in districts surrounding the oil said that they should be given a greater share of revenue, according to survey by the NGO International Alert. Naturally, members of parliament have made statements about the distribution of benefits according to whether their districts are located inside or outside the regions where exploration is occurring. MPs from districts outside the Lake Albert area claim that oil should be thought of as a national, not local, resource, and revenues should be distributed accordingly. Until more specific legislation is passed and the government announces the revenue sharing agreement, identity-based tension persists over how oil profits will affect local communities versus Uganda as a whole.

Not all relevant experts interviewed for this manuscript believe the government is maliciously secretive about its oil extraction policies, especially regarding the production sharing agreements. Daniel Rutabingwa of the African Development Bank expressed that failure to disclose revenue sharing information is an effort by the government to protect the industry. Other individuals noted that Uganda is new to oil exploration and that the government is not yet fully equipped to produce a transparent policy. Still, to obtain compliance with the principles of EITI, Uganda will eventually need to offer more information about the production sharing agreements.

Ugandan policy has a chance to implement increased transparency in the near future, as the government plans to develop additional legislation to manage oil activities and revenues. The Minister of Energy and Mineral Development has reported that such legislation will be passed in the near future.<sup>63</sup> The legislation provides an opportunity to inject transparency into the current policy. To date, however, no such legislation has been enacted. The Minister of Finance claims that signing and implementing the principles of EITI is not appropriate until legislation

regarding oil management is passed. Once this pending legislation is adopted, the government will go a long way in building public confidence if it takes measures to implement EITI.

Even if the government becomes more transparent in its decision-making, however, it does not necessarily follow that the Ugandan public will be able to hold the government accountable. There exist a number of challenges in keeping the public informed about policies and the influence of oil extraction. Current Ugandan law may overestimate the ability of the public to acquire information, and civil society organizations frequently argue that the public “lacked the basic competencies and knowledge to get meaningfully involved in the decision-making processes that affect their lives.”<sup>64</sup> Uganda lacks much of the infrastructure necessary to communicate information and improve accountability. Most of the public facilities do not have internet or other telecommunication systems. The rural areas surrounding the oil extraction sites are especially deficient in this regard. Much public legislation, written in English, is only accessible to a small number of Ugandans, as the government acknowledges. Overall, the ability of the public to obtain specific information about the petroleum policies is quite limited. If the public is unable to acquire knowledge of oil companies’ practices, they cannot demand that the government implement policies to improve public works. Government frustrations that stem from these inherent deficiencies may then make the secretive backroom dealings a more attractive means of doing business. However, as the statistical results above indicated, such corrupt and autocratic tendencies can only make costly civil conflict more likely.

## Conclusion

The extraction of oil has the potential to provide tremendous economic benefits for Uganda. It also poses extraordinary challenges to Uganda’s domestic security. Oil exportation may increase the value of Uganda’s currency, rendering other sectors of the economy less competitive. If the government does not reinvest revenues into public works to soften the blow of economic change, domestic instability may ensue. Uganda must be aware and plan for increased urbanization and demographic changes resulting from the economic transformation that may accompany oil exportation. It should also be wary of the potential for rebel groups to form and target oil infrastructure.

The Ugandan government can take a number of measures to mitigate the risks associated with oil extraction. Transparency is crucial to mitigating much of the potential domestic instability arising from oil exploitation. The government should make known its planned responses to increased urban migration and the need for new jobs for newly arriving rural migrants. In addition to transparency is the political will and capacity to implement good policy to cushion the social impact of oil exploration. Uganda should engage in and publicize welfare programs to ease social changes resulting from the substantial shock to the economy from a productive oil sector. It should also implement fiscal policies to reinvest oil revenues into competitive sectors of the economy.

There should be provisions made for an increased role of civil society in monitoring the government’s policies. International Alert, a global non-governmental organization operating in Uganda, calls for a resource and information office to be set up in the Ministry of Energy to disseminate information in more languages and through various media.<sup>65</sup> Uganda would also be well-served in the realm of transparency to become a candidate for EITI. Pursuing these

policy recommendations will prove beneficial to Uganda in avoiding the experience of so many other developing nations that have been blessed with access to abundant petroleum reserves and seemingly cursed with the inability to manage the riches that oil can provide.

## Notes

- 1 Wakabi 2011.
- 2 Meijers and Demetriou 2009.
- 3 Kasita and Temmerman 2009.
- 4 International Alert 2009.
- 5 Denge 2011.
- 6 See Fearon 2005, Karl 1997, Humphreys 2005, Humphreys et. al. 2007, Ross 1999, 2001, 2004a, 2004b, 2007, 2008.
- 7 Fearon 2005, Karl 1997, Ross 1999, Sachs and Warner 2001.
- 8 For global data on national economic measures for the post-World War II era including gross domestic product (GDP), GDP per capita, and import and export volumes, see Gleditsch 2002.
- 9 Velculescu 2008, Wigglesworth and Kennedy 2007.
- 10 Muhumuza 2010.
- 11 Ebrahim-zadeh 2003, Ross 2001.
- 12 Muhumuza 2010.
- 13 Sachs and Warner 2001.
- 14 World Bank 2011.
- 15 Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development 2008, Mutende 2009.
- 16 Mutende 2009.
- 17 Cincotta, Engelman, and Anastasion 2003.
- 18 United Nations Population Division.
- 19 Grant 2005.
- 20 CIA 2011.
- 21 Cincotta, Engelman, and Anastasion 2003.
- 22 Such public works projects would include improving the country's transit system, especially its roads, the availability of clean water and electricity, and improved security systems in the metropolitan areas. If significant migration to metropolitan areas occurs, these programs will help to ease the transition.
- 23 Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development 2008.
- 24 Manyak and Katono 2010.
- 25 Uganda's political system is not strictly autocratic nor is it fully democratic and is more usefully described as an anocracy, which is a regime type that displays both authoritarian and democratic characteristics (Marshall and Jagers 2002). These characteristics are sometimes contradictory and have been shown to be the regime type most closely associated with instability (Hegre et. al. 2001). Anocracies also tend to be highly

personalistic, relying on the leadership of the executive to function effectively. However, such personalistic, anocratic systems are prone to corruption and bribery for the executive to maintain his or her hold on power. Under such conditions, access to enormous oil revenues, like those expected in Uganda, could be highly susceptible to government mismanagement.

26 Wanyama 2009.

27 Ibid.

28 Mukasa 2008.

29 Okumu 2010.

30 The importance of creating a stabilization fund is apparent in an example provided by Chad. With assistance from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, Chad agreed to create a stabilization fund in which excess revenues would be set aside as reserves for future use during economic downturns or budget shortfalls, and Chad would receive a loan from the World Bank to produce a pipeline that would allow it to export its crude through Cameroon to the Atlantic Ocean (Carrington and Milverton 2006; New Vision 2009). However, while several oversight and regulatory bodies were created to effectively manage the oil network and the stabilization fund, these steps have not been able to avoid wasteful uses of revenues to corruption and conflict.

31 See Lujala et. al. 2005; Snyder and Bhavnani 2005. The literature connecting petroleum endowments to civil unrest is a subset of a broader literature on the relationship between national economies dependent upon primary commodities and their tendency to produce civil war. For examples see Collier and Hoeffler 2004, Humphreys 2005, Humphreys, Sachs, and Stiglitz 2007, Ross 2004a, 2004b, 2008, and Fearon 2005 among many others.

32 One way in which rebels have been able to profit directly from stealing oil has been through the process of oil bunkering in which oil is siphoned from pipelines and sold on the black market. Rebels in Nigeria have used oil bunkering in taking advantage of the state's existing oil network. For descriptions of this process, see Walker 2008. Still, the process of oil bunkering is complex and requires significantly greater capacity than is available to most rebel organizations.

33 Gettleman and Schmit 2009.

34 Rice 2009.

35 Gettleman and Okeowo 2008, Johnson 2009.

36 Johnson 2009.

37 Hovil and Werker 2005.

38 CNN 2009.

39 Hanson 2009.

40 Kajwenge 2009.

41 In addition, the lack of clarity in Uganda's clan-based property rights system coupled with unclear, legally recognized divisions between separately owned land holdings has made the increased presence of squatters a rising problem for regional security.

42 Izama 2009.

- 43 Bariyo 2010, Kajwenge 2009.
- 44 Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development 2008.
- 45 Bariyo 2010.
- 46 Fearon 2005, Humphreys 2005, Humphreys et. al. 2007, Karl 1997, Ross 2004a, 2004b.
- 47 Fearon 2005, 487.
- 48 For instance, Fjelde accounts for economic factors such as per capita wealth, political factors like the democratic or autocratic nature of state governments, ethnic and religious compositions of countries, and many other variables.
- 49 For readers interested in technical issues regarding the statistical model, the approach used by Fjelde is standard in the literature. Her dependent variable is dichotomous, coding the onset of civil unrest as defined above for every sovereign state in the world for every year during the 1985 to 1999 time period. The analysis includes standard independent control variables, and the models specifications remedy common concerns for reverse causality, autocorrelation across observations, and she includes several alternative specifications in order to be certain that her results are robust. For further information about the statistical model used for the simulations conducted herein, see Fjelde 2009, Table 1, model 2.
- 50 The data for the oil production variable used by Fjelde is provided by Humphreys 2005 and records the average barrels of oil produced per day per capita.
- 51 The regime type data are taken from the Polity IV dataset (Marshall and Jaggers 2002) which codes regime types on a +10 to -10 scale for which the most democratic nations take a value of +10. This number becomes lower as states become less democratic, sliding to the extreme of -10 in the most fully autocratic nations. The Polity IV dataset codes its values based on a number of factors including the relative openness of executive recruitment, the level of constraints on executive authority, and the vitality of political competition.
- 52 The scale used by Fjelde is the International Country Risk Guide which is published by the Political Risk Services Group. This guide measures government corruption based on the assessments of country experts and takes into account the prevalence of patronage, bribery, nepotism, non-transparency in government funding allocations, and extraordinarily close ties between political leaders and businesses. While other corruption indices are available, the rating scales across indices are very similar to one another in terms of Uganda's overall corruption rating.
- 53 Functionally, Uganda's status quo corruption level takes a value of four out of a maximum of six. Its status quo autocracy level is zero on a dichotomous scale from 0 to 1. Thus, this graph reports corruption increases from 4 to 4.5, 5, 5.5, and 6 to reflect an increase from moderate levels of corruption at the status quo to maximal amounts of corruption in Uganda. Furthermore, the autocracy values are increased from 0 to .25, .5, .75, and 1 to reflect a transition from anocratic government to increasingly high levels of authoritarianism. These incremental increases in corruption and autocracy comport directly to the respective oil production values reported on the x-axis.
- 54 Functionally, this line reports corruption decreases from 4 to 3, 2, 1, and 0 to reflect a decrease from moderate levels of corruption at the status quo to minimal amounts.

Furthermore, the democracy values are increased from 0 to .25, .5, .75, and 1 to reflect a transition from anocratic government to increasingly high levels of democracy. These incremental changes once again comport directly to the respective oil production values reported on the x-axis.

- 55 While we focus here on issues of transparency, we do not wish to diminish the importance of policy reforms that could increase government accountability. Rather, we simply posit that the first and most important step in this process is opening access to vital information. Without increased transparency, reforms that focus on government accountability and responsibility become less meaningful.
- 55 Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development 2008, Section 5.1.3.
- 56 Schwarte 2005.
- 57 International Alert 2009.
- 58 Kasita and Temmerman 2009.
- 59 Allen 2008.
- 60 International Alert 2009.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Ibid., 26.
- 63 Schwarte 2008, 11.
- 64 International Alert 2009, 79.

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# Environmental Legacies of Major Events: Solid Waste Management and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Uganda

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**Abstract:** Important political, cultural, or sports events can accelerate improvements in environmental policy and performance. This study investigates whether environmental improvements—and especially those related to solid waste—materialized during the 2007 Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM) in Kampala, Uganda, and whether these improvements lasted well after that event. A quantitative survey was used to investigate the state of solid waste management before, during, and after CHOGM, measured through the perceptions of urban residents. Interviews and documents were used to interpret survey results. The study concludes that additional resources and institutional changes in solid waste management in the lead up to CHOGM, resulted in considerable improvements. Some of these effects on solid waste management lasted up to at least one year after hosting the CHOGM event. In addition, CHOGM lifted the differences in perceptions of solid waste management between the city center and peripheral divisions.

## Introduction

In November 2007, Kampala hosted the biannual Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM). All fifty-three heads of government of the Commonwealth nations grouped together for one week (November 23 to 30), to discuss matters of common interest. In preparation for this CHOGM meeting, Kampala was upgraded: roads were repaired and improved (sometimes at the costs of small shops adjacent to the roads), graffiti was removed, buildings were upgraded, and solid waste management was improved. The national Uganda government as well as the Kampala City Council (KCC) spent significant resources in this urban upgrading. And this is not unlike what other large cities hosting similar major events have experienced, whether it be political meetings of heads-of-states (such as Earth summits, UN conferences), major sports events (such as Olympic Games, World Cups), or large cultural festivals (such as World Expos). But do such urban upgrading and improvement efforts have an impact, and if so does the impact last beyond these events?

This study investigates whether environmental improvements – and especially those related to solid waste – that materialized during the 2007 CHOGM meeting in Kampala

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<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v12/v12i3a3.pdf>

continued, and whether they lasted until at least one year after that event. As with many sub-Saharan African cities, for a long time Kampala has experienced many problems related to solid waste management.<sup>1</sup> These problems are related but not limited to lack of access to solid waste services, especially by poor communities, a reluctance to create partnerships with major actors such as community-based organizations (CBOs) and informal enterprises, and disorganized, unregulated and not sufficiently supervised solid waste management (SWM) operations, resulting in heaps of garbage on the streets.<sup>2</sup> It was hoped that the CHOGM would be more than a temporary improvement of solid waste collection and treatment; that the improvements in solid waste management would become institutionalized, such that Kampala would not fall back to the old, pre-CHOGM, situation. So, the central research question that motivated this study is whether and to what extent there are environmental legacies (of at least one year) related to solid waste management from hosting the 2007 CHOGM. Or, in other words, to what extent have CHOGM-induced environmental reforms become institutionalized in solid waste management in Kampala city?

After providing an overview of the literature on the major events and their legacies, the paper reports on empirical survey research carried out in Kampala on solid waste perceptions, investigating temporal and spatial differences of solid waste management following the CHOGM event.

## Major Events and Their Environmental Legacies

### *Mega and Major Events*

Hallmark or mega-events are short-term events of fixed duration. The British sociologist Maurice Roche has laid out the critical characteristics that define mega-events:

Mega-events (...) are short term events with long-term consequences for the cities that stage them. They are associated with the creation of infrastructure and event facilities often carrying long-term debts and always requiring long-term use programming. In addition, if successful, they project a new (or renewed) and perhaps persistent and positive image and identity for the host city through national and international media, particularly TV, coverage. This is usually assumed to have long-term consequences in terms of tourism, industrial relocation, and inward investments.<sup>3</sup>

What defines certain events as “mega” is that they are “discontinuous,” out of the ordinary, international, and simply big in composition. They have the ability to transmit promotional messages to billions of people via television and other developments in telecommunications. Mega-events attract large international audiences and have an international composition.<sup>4</sup> Defined as events that achieve sufficient size and scope to affect whole economies and receive sustained global media attention, “mega-events” include World Fairs; World Cups in soccer, rugby and cricket; the larger regional sports gatherings (e.g. European championships, Asian Games, Pan-American Games); and the Olympic Games.<sup>5</sup> But mega-events can also have a more economic or political character, such as United Nations conferences, Earth Summits, special World Trade Organization meetings, and other political gatherings where a considerable number of heads of state and government gather together and draw large scale media attention. Often, these mega events are organized in more

wealthy locations, as – once awarded – primary responsibility for financing and organizing the event then rests with the host. But also the African continent has hosted mega-events: the 1995 Rugby World Cup, the 2002 Earth Summit in Johannesburg (also known as Rio +10), the 2003 Cricket World Cup, and the recently held World Soccer Cup 2010, all in South Africa.

South Africa is the first African nation to host an event of such magnitude as the Football World Cup, prompting former South African President Thabo Mbeki to pronounce that this was not a South African event but an African one.<sup>6</sup> South Africa, with a per capita income of about USD 5,570, is economically richer than most developing nations, especially on the African continent, and has the capabilities to host such mega events.<sup>7</sup> It is often characterized as one of the most developed among the developing countries. For example, approximately USD 52 billion was spent on preparations to host the 2010 soccer World Cup, especially on infrastructure development. But more often significant events in the African region are what we would call major events, rather than mega-events, having a less dramatic budget and a less global audience. These include African football championships, African Union (AU) meetings, and other important summits. In Uganda approximately UGX 300 billion (USD 100 million; almost the equivalent to one tenth of the annual revenue collections in the 2006/2007 fiscal year) was spent on CHOGM preparations.<sup>8</sup> With a GDP of about \$42 billion it is unlikely that Uganda—or any other African nation with a similar size of its economy—can host mega events of the magnitude of the soccer World Cup, but it can host something major as the CHOGM.

In December 2003, the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Abuja, Nigeria decided that Uganda would host the 2007 CHOGM. This decision was reaffirmed at the 2005 CHOGM in Malta. CHOGM have been held before on the African continent: in Zambia (1979), in Zimbabwe (1991) in South Africa (1999) and in Nigeria (2003). Beginning in 2003, Uganda started preparing for a meeting that would bring fifty three Commonwealth heads of government together to consult, share experiences, and deliberate on issues of pan-Commonwealth and international significance. Her Majesty the Queen of England attended, Prince Charles visited and participated in a number of civil society events, and the CHOGM was preceded by two weeks of activities. There was a Business Forum attended by more than two hundred young people from forty-five countries, a peoples forum attended by fifteen hundred delegates from fifty-nine countries (including non-Commonwealth members), and the Foreign Ministers Forum meeting. Uganda had not previously hosted a major international meeting of the magnitude of CHOGM. Although considerably smaller in participants, (media) audience, and budget than mega-events, it shared with mega-events the international character and media coverage, the still considerable investments (for Uganda), and national self-confidence and civic pride.

### *Major events and the environment*

As the range of festivals and major events has grown over the years, their impacts have increasingly come under scrutiny. Various evaluations and more in-depth studies have found that large scale events have a variety of potential impacts, including economic, social, cultural, political, physical, and environmental ones.<sup>9</sup> The high-profile nature of such events generates the analysis of their favorable consequences, such as increases in tourism, economic performance, urban infrastructural improvements, or the more intangible benefits of civic pride, “boosterism,” and international image building.<sup>10</sup> There is, however, growing

skepticism over the extent to which hosting such events results in significant developmental impacts.<sup>11</sup> The argument of these skeptics is that while there are some positive legacy impacts, they may be intangible and ambiguous.<sup>12</sup> The argument is that “such events are often seen as no more than public relations ventures far removed from the realities of urban problems and challenges.”<sup>13</sup> Once a city has been chosen as the site for a major event, the event begins to take on a life of its own. The hosting of an international event triggers city beautification measures and clearance exercises.<sup>14</sup> The urgency and goal orientation of the project within tight timelines may require that normal procedures be set aside. Sometimes, the urgency overrides the traditional participatory planning processes.<sup>15</sup> Concerns over (construction) deadlines and external requirements, as well as the desire to maximize international impact, means that event preparation and operation become an absolute national priority. Furthermore, for the sake of a successful event, people are urged to pull together and to minimize criticism in the face of the need for cooperation.

Research and analysis on most major events is piecemeal and fragmentary, with a strong focus on (i) western, industrialized countries/cities where most major events take place; (ii) the favorable economic, infrastructural and tourism effects.<sup>16</sup> There is surprisingly little scholarship on the role of major events in developing countries; on the impact of event-related developments on low-income communities, either in wealthy or developing countries; and on the short and longer term environmental consequences and legacies of major events, especially in relation to the above-mentioned two points.<sup>17</sup>

The environmental legacies of major events and the sustained improvement in the quality of life for local/city communities have recently become more popular themes for research.<sup>18</sup> However, the evidence for sustained environmental improvements following major events remains limited, anecdotal, and restricted to sports events such as the Olympics. Constructing positive environmental legacies, instead of only capturing the economic rewards, involves the inclusion of event (re)constructions (both physical and institutional) into long term sustainable development strategies, as happened with the Sydney and Beijing Olympics.<sup>19</sup> Key to constructing environmental legacies is the institutionalization of environmental upgrading activities and strategies, so that these last well beyond the event. For example, it can be hypothesized that city authorities work more efficiently and effectively after hosting a major event, that physical infrastructure is improved, and that people have increased expectations and demands after having experienced how good it is to live in a clean city. But such hypotheses have hardly been tested with empirical research, especially not with respect to developing countries and non-sporting events.

### **Solid Waste Management in Uganda: Preparing for CHOGM**

For long, Kampala experienced many problems of solid waste management.<sup>20</sup> For example, Kampala failed to have regular city-wide collection of waste, resulting in the accumulation of solid waste in drainage channels and along roads, especially in poor neighborhoods. Irregular collection was also caused by irregular payment for the collection of solid waste by citizens. Lack of capacity of the Kampala City Council (KCC) and private contractors increased the amount of small scale informal solid waste service providers. Unfortunately, these many small players were not registered, supervised, or regulated by authorities, resulting in confusion, animosity, and differentiated charges. Disorganized, unregulated, and not sufficiently supervised solid waste collection and transportation by (private) solid

waste collectors led also to illegal dumping.<sup>21</sup> Solid waste transportation trucks were not covered as they ferried solid waste through the city. Light solid waste was often blown by winds and spread along the way while inconveniencing other road users or, in extreme cases, causing road accidents. Mesh nets when used, were often burnt by fire in the solid waste. KCC and private contractors used old vehicles, and a lot of money was spent on repair and maintenance of this fleet.

Though the Kampala City Council (KCC) has contracted solid waste collection and treatment to private firms since the late 1990s, KCC still is in business of collecting and transporting part of the city garbage to the disposal site. As a result, private contractors are unmotivated as there is hidden, and sometimes unequal, competition between the private contractors and the public sector. KCC's main formal tasks are to supervise, contract out, enforce the law, and sensitize the population regarding solid waste. But there were no instituted monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the performance of the new privatized solid waste management system. It is against this background of relatively poor solid waste management that CHOGM was held in Kampala city in 2007, and improvements were made to upgrade the solid waste management infrastructure.

### *Preparing for CHOGM*

As a host country, the Uganda government was mandated to put in place facilities that meet requirements of the Commonwealth Secretariat and were in accordance with the specifications contained in the guidelines and the budget on the organization of the CHOGM. To fulfill that objective, the government through the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development provided around UGX 300 billion (USD 100 million) for hosting the CHOGM.<sup>22</sup> The Ministry of Local Government was assigned the responsibility for the beautification of the Kampala-Entebbe road corridor. The purpose was to improve the road corridor reserve and the general ambience of Kampala city and Entebbe municipality. Effective interventions started in June 2007. The total amount of money that was allocated and released to the Ministry of Local Government to cater for the beautification of Kampala amounted to UGX 6,327,568,145 (approximately USD 3 million). Part of this included extra funds for, among others things, upgrading waste management services. Other activities in line with the beautification of Kampala included installing security lights, repairing roads and pedestrian walkways, working on pavements and drainages, beautification of parks and open spaces, landscaping and greening the road reserves, removal of kiosks, planting trees and grass, and removal of signage and unsightly structures.

As already highlighted, SWM was a key component of the beautification of Kampala. In fact, the KCC received budget support from the National CHOGM Preparatory Fund through the Ministry of Local Government for solid waste management. Contracts worth US\$ 193,964,521 (approximately USD 100,000) were made with four garages for the repair of refuse trucks in an attempt to boost the garbage collection exercise ahead of the CHOGM meeting.<sup>23</sup> These additional funds were related, but not limited, to: refuse collection from generation and storage points and transportation to the disposal site; implementation of acceptable standards; provision and maintenance of personnel, vehicles, containers and other equipment for solid waste management service; design and implementation of a billing and revenue collection system (for all categories of clients); ensuring adequate cost recovery and sustainability of the service; publicity, sensitization, and marketing of the service; and assistance in enforcement and compliance with the solid waste ordinance.

The city's five divisions also received UGX 6,000,000 (approximately USD 3000) per month from June 2007 to December 2007.<sup>24</sup> In total about UGX 400 million (USD 200,000) was spent on SWM related services for the CHOGM preparations. This amount was in addition to the KCC annual budget for SWM of around UGX 1.4 billion (USD 600,000).<sup>25</sup> Before CHOGM, neither KCC nor the central government released any money to the districts for solid waste management. KCC (the employer) on behalf of the five Kampala divisions also initiated sealed bids from eligible bidders for the execution of solid waste management services around CHOGM. For these so-called CHOGM contracts, the bidding document was prepared, based on the government of Uganda's Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act, 2003. The method of procurement was by National Competitive Bidding (NCB). The invitation for bids was open to eligible bidders from eligible countries. An invitation for bids was advertised in the main national newspapers.

According to the Public procurement and Disposal Compliance Check Report, the Ministry of Local Government and the Ministry of Works and Transport handled CHOGM procurements in the areas of beautification, roads, drainage, street lighting, and toilets, of which solid waste management was a key component.<sup>26</sup> KCC took part in the evaluation process of the solid waste tenders. The companies contracted to manage solid waste collection and transportation in the two investigated divisions were: Nabugabo, TERP Group and ESCOM joint venture in Kampala Central division, and Hilltop Enterprises and NOREMA in Kawempe division. The providers were directly paid by the Ministry of Local Government for these CHOGM contracts, which ran from June 2007 to November 2007.

As already noted above, as part of the beautification of Kampala, KCC advanced extra funds for fuel and the Ministry of Local Government for repairing of KCC trucks. Fuel, a key ingredient in solid waste management, was sufficiently available during CHOGM to transport garbage to the dump site, while it was often not sufficiently available before CHOGM. After CHOGM, the amount of fuel allocated to KCC refuse trucks again became scarce. On average 990 liters of diesel was allocated monthly for KCC refuse trucks after CHOGM, compared to approximately 4500 liters which was claimed KCC needed, resulting in underutilization of both the trucks and workers.

Efforts were made to involve as many public and private stakeholders as possible in solid waste management around CHOGM. The central and local government worked together harmoniously, unlike before CHOGM. In addition, community-based organizations (CBOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other private sector organizations were actively involved. A formal contract was negotiated between the Ministry of Local Government and the private sector through the KCC. Several meetings with private sector stakeholders resulted in the formation of the Kampala Solid Waste Management Association, whose objectives were to cooperate with government to improve solid waste management practices such as carrying out sensitization and publicity with respect to keeping Kampala clean. It remains to be seen whether these improvements lasted well after the event.

### **Data and Methods of Investigation**

To investigate whether major political events in developing countries construct positive environmental legacies, we analyzed solid waste management improvements during and after the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM) in Kampala. Through a quantitative survey, urban citizens of Kampala were asked about their satisfaction with the

way solid waste collection and transportation was organized and implemented. Several studies existed where the level of satisfaction enjoyed by residents on the various attributes of urban services were determined through such ratings.<sup>27</sup> Purposive sampling was used because we had to verify that the respondent met the criteria for being in the sample. To be selected for the study, a respondent should have stayed in Kampala city and in the same place of residence since the beginning of 2006 until one year after CHOOGM. Respondents were selected from two (out of five) pre-selected Kampala divisions: Kawempe Division and Kampala Central Division. Kampala Central Division is the major business district, is at the center of Kampala, also has poor slum areas, and was the location of most of the CHOOGM events. Kawempe Division is at some distance from the city center, has a mixed population and was less central as a location for CHOOGM events.

Data collection took place through a (mostly) structured and self-completion questionnaire, using a five-point Likert scale for the closed questions. Self-completion of the questionnaire was meant to make sure that we interviewed the right people who have lived in Kampala since 2006 and therefore were knowledgeable about the (changing) state of solid waste management in the city over the years. But self-completion of the questionnaire also made sure that the respondents understood the questions and that no bias occurred in terms of illiteracy or education level.

Survey interviews were carried out in two rounds. The first round was carried out in March 2008 (only four months after CHOOGM), and the second round of interviewing was carried out in October 2008 (one year after CHOOGM). During the first round of interviewing, questions were asked on the perceived solid waste management situation before CHOOGM (early 2006), during CHOOGM (November 2007), and four months after CHOOGM (March 2008). During the second round of interviewing, respondents were asked how they felt about the solid waste management situation in early 2006, November 2007, March 2008, and October 2008 (one year after CHOOGM). A total of 500 respondents were randomly selected in the first round (March 2008), of which 454 respondents answered the questionnaire. In the second round (October 2008), 447 respondents were randomly selected and 410 questionnaires were returned. To ensure representativeness, we followed a stratified random sampling strategy, in which random sampling of respondents in the parishes selected involved targeting all income groups (neighborhoods) and areas near and far away from where the CHOOGM event was held. If the sampled respondent was not available or not interested or not part of the target group (those who had not come to Kampala two years before the CHOOGM event), we would move to the next random sampled respondent in that cluster.

In addition to the survey, monthly data were collected of recorded solid waste mass brought to the central Mpererwe Sanitary Landfill during 2006–2008 and also for 2009 and early 2010. Formal and informal in-depth face-to-face interviews were held with five KCC officials, ten division officials, and fifteen licensed service providers. Other techniques of data collection included document review, especially official letters, policy documents, and correspondence. This material was later used to interpret survey results.

Data analysis centered around the assessment of the (temporal/semi-permanent) effects of CHOOGM on solid waste management, measured through the perceptions of urban residents. In addition, geographical differences were analyzed between the Central Division and Kawempe Division, in relation to the distance from the CHOOGM event. The data were analyzed using percentages and non-parametric tests: Wilcoxon signed rank test and Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test. The test was used to determine whether there is a significant

difference in median littering and illegal piles of solid waste, nuisance from solid waste transfer points, smell of solid waste, solid waste collection from enterprises, and street sweeping before CHOGM, during CHOGM, and after CHOGM.

Before moving to the results, we first report on a test whether results are affected by recall bias or by time differences between the first and second surveys. We checked whether the respondents of the first survey in March value the quality of the environment four months after CHOGM the same as the respondents of the second survey in October value the quality of the environment four months after CHOGM. For this the Wilcoxon signed rank test was used. The low Z values and p-values  $> 0.05$  in Table 1 below show that the first survey respondents' value of the solid waste management situation four months after CHOGM is not statistically different from how the second survey respondents value the solid waste management situation four months after CHOGM. This implies that questionnaire results have not been affected by a recall bias or by time differences.

**Table 1: Recall bias between first and second survey for solid waste management four months after CHOGM, using Wilcoxon signed rank test**

	Z-value	P-value
Littering & illegal piles of waste	0.059	0.953
Nuisance from solid waste transfer points	-0.234	0.815
Smell of solid waste	-0.228	0.820
Solid waste collection from households	0.053	0.958
Solid waste collection from enterprises	-0.084	0.933
Street sweeping	0.645	0.519

Since respondents of the first survey value the quality of the environment the same as the respondents in the second survey, we analyzed them together. Both Kawempe and Central divisions are put together. In other words we pool across locations and across surveys.

## Research Findings

The information collected from the above research methodology is discussed under the various sub-headings below.

### *Perceptions of Solid Waste Management Practices and Environmental Effects Before, During, and After CHOGM*

The questionnaire that was administered addressed solid waste management practices and environmental effects before, during, and after CHOGM. Six indicators were used, measured by the perceptions of residents: littering and illegal piles of solid waste, nuisance of solid waste transfer points, smell of solid waste, solid waste collection from households, solid waste collection from enterprises, and street sweeping.

The perceptions of all respondents in the two Kampala divisions are compared between, before, and during CHOGM on six solid waste items, using the Wilcoxon signed rank test. The results indicate that the median value of the six variables for the period before CHOGM are statistically significantly ( $P < 0.001$ ) different from those during CHOGM.  $Z$  is a measure of the magnitude of the effect; the larger  $Z$  the larger the difference of the values between “before” and “during” CHOGM. Hence, for all variables solid waste management during CHOGM was better than solid waste management before CHOGM, according to the respondents (see Table 2 below).

We also compared perceptions of solid waste management during CHOGM with solid waste management four months after CHOGM. The results indicate that the median value of all six variables during CHOGM are statistically significantly ( $p < 0.001$ ) different from those after CHOGM (see Table 2 below). This means that there was significantly better solid waste collection and less related environmental nuisance during CHOGM, compared to solid waste collection and solid waste nuisance four months after CHOGM. The considerable amount of money and resources advanced to KCC for the cleanup of Kampala, referred to as the “rescue garbage collection operation,” did give positive solid waste management and environmental effects during CHOGM.

To analyze solid waste management legacies of CHOGM we compared the solid waste management situation before CHOGM with the solid waste management situation after CHOGM. Without any lasting environmental legacy the situation before and after CHOGM would be similar in terms of perceived solid waste management. The results indicate that the median value for the six solid waste variables for before and four month after CHOGM are statistically ( $p < 0.001$ ) different. In other words, the state of solid waste management before and four months after CHOGM is statistically different, with better functioning solid waste management and less environmental effects four months after CHOGM than before. This first indication of a solid waste management legacy of the 2007 CHOGM major event is further strengthened by taking a larger time span of one year for investigating post-CHOGM effects. The median values of the six solid waste management variables for the period before CHOGM are statistically significantly ( $p < 0.001$ ) different from those one year after CHOGM (see Table 2). This implies that one year after CHOGM solid waste management was still significantly better than before CHOGM. Or to put it differently: solid waste management improvements achieved during (and because of) CHOGM did become institutionalized to some extent and lasted well beyond this major event.

**Table 2: Results of Wilcoxon signed rank test for before CHOGM, during CHOGM and after CHOGM**

Variables	A		B		C		D	
	N	Z	N	Z	N	Z	N	Z
Littering and illegal piles of waste	858	25.264***	860	-22.596***	857	22.198***	409	7.899***
Nuisance from solid waste transfer points	857	24.740***	858	-21.610***	856	22.472***	410	5.377***
Smell of solid waste before privatization	857	24.894***	856	-22.042***	853	21.622***	408	6.849***
Solid waste collection from households	852	18.729***	850	-13.039***	848	15.627***	447	6.006***
Solid waste collection from enterprises	851	17.202***	855	-12.274***	851	14.536***	402	4.102***
Quality of street sweeping	847	16.616***	848	-12.753***	844	13.283***	406	4.305***

\*\*\* All the Z – values were significant at 5% level of significance

### *Assessment of Environmental Legacy Institutionalization*

Is this environmental legacy fully institutionalized and thus constant over time? In order to measure whether the positive CHOGM effect wears down or stays constant over time the Z values (a measure of the magnitude of the effect) of “before CHOGM–four month after CHOGM” need to be compared with the Z values of “before CHOGM–one year after CHOGM.” Table 3 below shows that the Z values “before CHOGM–one year after CHOGM” are lower than those of “before CHOGM–four month after CHOGM.” Since the Z values here represent the degree of disparity between before and after CHOGM it can be concluded that solid waste management practices four months after CHOGM were better than those one year after CHOGM. The fact that over time Z values are declining for all variables implies some erosion of the CHOGM-effect. Obviously, CHOGM-induced improvements have not been fully institutionalized in solid waste management. However, still, one year after CHOGM, solid waste management remained significantly better than before CHOGM. These findings are consistent with collected solid waste data recorded at the Mpererwe Sanitary Landfill. During January–October 2006 the average monthly amount of solid waste brought to the landfill was 13,817 tons. In the ten months directly preceding CHOGM (January–October 2007) this average monthly amount increased to 18,961 tons of solid waste, to decrease to an average monthly amount of 16,685 tons of solid waste for the

months January–October 2008 (after CHOGM). The amount of solid waste recorded at the Mpererwe Sanitary Landfill increased slightly to an average monthly 17,113 for the months November 2008–September 2009. It increased further to an average monthly 19,154 for the months of October 2009–March 2010.

**Table 3: Comparing the Z values from the Wilcoxon signed rank test ‘for before – four month after CHOGM’, and ‘before CHOGM – one year after CHOGM’ (N=410, 2<sup>nd</sup> survey)**

	Z-values* (2 <sup>nd</sup> survey)	
	Before and four months after CHOGM	Before and one year after CHOGM
Littering & illegal piles of waste	14.059	7.899
Nuisance from solid waste transfer points	12.370	5.377
Smell of solid waste	12.679	6.849
Solid waste collection from households	9.868	6.006
Solid waste collection from enterprises	8.255	4.102
Street sweeping	9.974	4.305

\* All the z-values were significant at 5% level of significance

How to explain this environmental legacy of CHOGM and the watering down of that legacy? In our in-depth interviews we came across three reasons that contribute to an explanation for this legacy. First, the office of the solid waste engineer was institutionalized in all divisions in Kampala to handle the day to day business of solid waste collection. Before CHOGM, solid waste management was handled by health inspectors at the division level, and even then the posts were vacant in most of KCC divisions. The medical department did not give solid waste management much priority due to the urgent and highly demanding health care responsibilities of the divisions.<sup>28</sup> The fact that separate solid waste management offices were created formed a good start for institutionalizing solid waste management at the division level, while it was formerly only articulated as such at the city level by KCC. Division solid waste management engineers, for example, began to streamline activities to ensure that CHOGM standards were maintained. The fact that some divisions are copying best practices learnt from CHOGM, such as transparent procurement processes and zoning of divisions, is related to the establishment of the division solid waste management offices. But there is also constant (political) opposition. A case in point is Kawempe Division, where a solid waste management committee was established to manage private contractors around and after CHOGM. This effort was frustrated by politicians engaged with the NOREMA and Hilltop private companies, which both had signed a memorandum of understanding with Kawempe Division to collect and transport waste without any competition from other service providers.

Second, relations between KCC and the five divisions have been improving. The evidence here is that KCC supplements the divisions’ finances to improve the collection and

transportation of garbage, a process that started with CHOGM. After CHOGM, KCC disbursed a sum of UGX seven to twelve million (USD 4000 to 6500) per month to the four divisions (except the Central Division which is perceived to be richer in resources by KCC) for solid waste collection and transportation. Although, money transfer is sometimes delayed, with substantial consequences for solid waste management, this delegation of solid waste management resources and authority to the division works better than the centralized process before CHOGM.

Third, the new equipment and vehicles acquired especially by the private sector contractors in the months leading to CHOGM (in anticipation of money from the National CHOGM Preparatory Fund) enlarged their capacity and improved service, also in areas further away from the city. Compactor trucks, though allegedly disadvantageous, were purchased by NOREMA and Nabugabo Updeal Joint Venture for serving Kawempe Division and were still in operation one year after CHOGM. Residents have also noted an improvement in the way garbage is transported to the dump site. KCC vehicles that were not functioning before CHOGM were repaired and this boosted the garbage collection exercise after CHOGM. These material improvements, caused by additional CHOGM budgets, contributed to positive environmental legacies well after CHOGM.

But there were also institutional discontinuities after CHOGM. For instance, the Kampala Solid Waste Management Association, formed just before CHOGM, became inactive four months after CHOGM and never met to put into practice what they had agreed to achieve, according to members of the association. Public and private sector sensitization and publicity with respect to keeping Kampala clean subsided a bit. And most importantly, the central government provided less attention and resources to solid waste management after CHOGM. The KCC and its divisions have taken full responsibility for solid waste management again with little central government support, quite comparable to the situation before CHOGM. Most of the so-called CHOGM contracts with private waste collectors were not continued under the same (favorable) conditions after CHOGM.

### *Geographical Differentiation of Environmental Legacies*

As mentioned earlier, the two Kampala divisions were selected especially due to the geographical differences between them vis-à-vis the CHOGM location. To examine whether CHOGM impacts on solid waste management in the Central Division differed significantly from those in Kawempe Division, the Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test was used. The results show that differences between people's perception of solid waste management between the two divisions are only statistically significant before CHOGM. Only for one variable (smell of solid waste) can a difference be noted during CHOGM and one year after CHOGM ( $p < 0.05$ ). This means that significant differences in the status of solid waste management between the divisions existed before CHOGM. But, during and up until one year after CHOGM overall significant differences between them are not observable. This implies that CHOGM had a leveling effect. While originally the differences were big, CHOGM leveled that difference.

### *Impact on Geographical Distance with Respect to CHOGM Location*

To determine the impact of geographical distance with respect to CHOGM, divisions are not a very precise categorization. There are areas in Kampala Central that are far away from the

city center (and from the CHOGM events), and there are areas in Kawempe Division, such as Makerere University and Wandegaya, that are near to the CHOGM site. In order to determine more precisely the effect of distance, the respondents of both divisions were re-categorized as those living close to where CHOGM events took place and those living far away from CHOGM events. Again, a Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test was used to compare both categories of respondents.

The results show that for before CHOGM, during CHOGM, and one year after CHOGM there are statistically significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) between people's perception of solid waste management between areas close to the CHOGM event location and areas far away from it (see table 4 below). This means that solid waste management differs between areas close to CHOGM and areas far away from CHOGM. However, some striking differences are observed between the three points in time. For example, the Z values before CHOGM are higher than those during CHOGM in all the six variables of waste management. This implies that before CHOGM there was a large disparity between areas close to and far away from CHOGM as far as solid waste management is concerned. This disparity substantially diminished during CHOGM. However, one year after CHOGM the disparity is gaining momentum again as depicted by the increasing Z-values for all solid waste management variables (except solid waste collection from enterprises; see Table 4 below). It can also be noted that in some aspects of solid waste management, the disparity has increased to levels higher than it was before CHOGM (e.g. street sweeping). Overall if we compare parishes close to CHOGM with those located far away from CHOGM, the leveling effect of CHOGM seems to fade away one year after CHOGM. According to KCC officials, this might be explained by the fact that due to a growing scarcity of government funding, private companies concentrate on areas that are densely populated and rich (those closer to the CHOGM areas). The richer parishes pay more, and contractors enjoy economies of scale in densely populated areas as compared to areas far away from the CHOGM location, which have scattered homesteads.

**Table 4a and 4b: Results of the Two-sample Wilcoxon rank sum test depicting the differences in solid waste management between Central division and Kawempe division around CHOGM & also between areas close to and areas far away from CHOGM**

**Table 4a:**

Variables	A		
	Two-sample Wilcoxon rank sum test depicting the differences in solid waste management between Central division and Kawempe division around CHOGM		
	Before CHOGM	During CHOGM	One year after CHOGM
Littering and illegal piles of waste	4.031 (0.000)	1.499 (0.134)	1.556 (0.120)
Nuisance from solid waste transfer points	5.113 (0.000)	0.468 (0.640)	1.215 (0.224)
Smell of solid waste before privatization	3.665 (0.000)	3.665 (0.000)	2.350 (0.019)
Solid waste collection from households	5.168 (0.000)	-0.261 (0.794)	2.405 (0.016)
Solid waste collection from enterprises	2.742 (0.006)	-0.560 (0.576)	0.349 (0.727)
Quality of street sweeping	3.849 (0.000)	-1.432 (0.152)	1.527 (0.127)

**Table 4b:**

Variables	B		
	Two-sample Wilcoxon rank sum test depicting the differences in solid waste management between areas close to and areas far away from CHOGM		
	Before CHOGM	during CHOGM	One year after CHOGM
Littering and illegal piles of waste	9.488 (0.000)	2.206 (0.027)	4.400 (0.000)
Nuisance from solid waste transfer points	10.011 (0.000)	1.712 (0.087)	7.852 (0.000)
Smell of solid waste before privatization	8.951 (0.000)	2.248 (0.025)	4.841 (0.000)
Solid waste collection from households	11.510 (0.000)	1.709 (0.000)	12.624 (0.000)
Solid waste collection from enterprises	9.779 (0.000)	8.325 (0.000)	3.438 (0.000)
Quality of street sweeping	10.910 (0.000)	7.839 (0.000)	13.446 (0.000)

A - (Z values; p values between brackets; 2<sup>nd</sup> survey, N=410); B - (Z values; p values between brackets; 2<sup>nd</sup> survey, N=410)

It can be concluded that CHOGM, as a major event, had a leveling effect between Kawempe and Central Divisions that lasted for at least a year. The leveling effect of CHOGM lasted shorter between areas nearby and areas far away from the CHOGM locations. This suggests that innovations of CHOGM or new standards to some extent spread across Kampala city. This might be explained by the sensitization campaigns through various media during CHOGM. Poorer areas seemed to have learned how to better manage their garbage, even when KCC and the private collectors do not reach them. From interviews conducted and through observations, it was revealed that most people living in areas far away from the CHOGM locations have learned to burn the garbage and some have now their own “incinerators.” In places like Katanga in Kawempe Division, near Makerere University, the community started to become self-organized in cleaning the area, and it appears to be working well. This community initiative started immediately after CHOGM and remained very popular according to interviews with the locals and opinion leaders in the area. It is also worth noting that the new equipment of private collectors enabled them to reach areas that were formerly poorly or not served and that transportation capacity was still large one year after CHOGM. For example private contractors, notably NOREMA and Nabugabo Updeal Joint Venture, acquired compactor trucks that are able to load more garbage than the tipper trucks that they were previously using.

## Conclusions

Although CHOGM was not a mega-event (in terms of massive infrastructure construction, masses of people attending, and intense global media coverage), for Uganda and Kampala it was a major event with international visibility. Hence, significant efforts were made by the Uganda and Kampala authorities to invest in the city on the road toward CHOGM 2007. Solid waste management was one of the main areas that received additional resources and faced institutional changes. This resulted in considerable improvements in solid waste management practices and effects during CHOGM, as could be expected. But there are still clear positive solid waste management legacies one year after hosting a major event like CHOGM, related to, among others, new institutional arrangements and material improvements.

As solid waste management often differs throughout metropolitan cities in developing countries and major events are not equally spread over these cities, one can expect that environmental legacies are unequally distributed over the city. Following CHOGM, we found that there are no longer significantly different perceptions in solid waste management between Central and Kawempe Divisions. Both are perceived as equally clean (or equally dirty), suggesting that solid waste management innovations are gradually spreading across divisions. In a more fine-tuned comparison between citizens living close to places where the CHOGM events took place and locations more peripheral to CHOGM, the distinction in solid waste management started to fade somewhat during CHOGM, but there are signs of a reemerging distinction, indicating the erosion of leveling effects. This does not, however, dispute the fact that one year after CHOGM, solid waste management was perceived to be still significantly better than before CHOGM. Hosting cities, including those in developing countries, can secure positive future environmental effects of major events up until at least one year after the event concludes. What happens after one year needs further study. One could speculate that at least some of the institutional innovations that were installed through CHOGM will continue to contribute to positive environmental legacies. Compared to mega-

events such as the 2010 soccer World Cup, however, major events such as CHOGM lack major infrastructural works and a truly global audience, thus limiting their environmental legacies in the further future.

## Notes

- 1 See Owusu, et al., 2010; Baudouin et al., 2010; Kaseva, et al., 2005; Karanja, 2005; Awortwi, 2004; Spaargaren, et al., 2005; Golooba-Mutebi, 2003; Tukahirwa et al., 2011; Okot-Okumu et al., 2011.
- 2 Obirih-Opareh et al., 2002; Post et al., 2003; Tukahirwa et al., 2011; Baud, 2004; Tukahirwa, et al., 2010; Baudouin, et al., 2010; Karanja, 2005; Tukahirwa et al., 2010.
- 3 Roche, 1994, p. 1.
- 4 Horne & Manzenreiter, 2006.
- 5 Gold & Gold, 2008.
- 6 Pillay et al., 2008.
- 7 World Bank, 2009.
- 8 Auditor General, 2008.
- 9 Impacts 08 – Langen & Garcia, 2009.
- 10 See Hall, 1992; Hiller, 1998.
- 11 Pillay et al., 2008; Andranovich et al., 2001; Lenskyj, 2000.
- 12 Pillay et al., 2008.
- 13 Hiller et al., 2000, p. 440.
- 14 Lindell, 2010
- 15 Pillay et. al, 2009.
- 16 e.g., Hiller 1998, 2000; Teigland, 1999; Moragas Spa, Kennett and Puig, 2003; Roche, 2006; Cratton et al., 2006; Impacts 08 – Langen & Garcia, 2009.
- 17 Schimmel, 2006; Mason & Beaumont-Kerridge, 2004; Hayes and Karamichas, 2006.
- 18 Karamichas, 2007; Close, Askew and Xin, 2007; Collins et al., 2009; Raj and Musgrave, 2009; Mol, 2010.
- 19 Mol, 2010.
- 20 KCC, 2006.
- 21 Tukahirwa et al., 2010.
- 22 Auditor General, 2008.
- 23 Auditor General, 2008.
- 24 Auditor General,2008.
- 25 KCC, 2006.
- 26 KCC, 2007.
- 27 Afon, 2007; Anand, 1999.
- 28 KCC, 2002.

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# Women's Resistance in Cameroon's Western Grassfields: The Power of Symbols, Organization, and Leadership, 1957-1961

HENRY KAM KAH

**Abstract:** The contribution of women in the Bamenda western Grassfields of Cameroon to the struggle for liberation from colonial rule manifested itself in many diverse forms, including mass mobilization, petitions, boycotts, and engagement in overtly hostile acts. The women's revolt in this region was well thought-out and their activities in the different *fondoms* carefully synchronized. This organization was also the upshot of an authoritative and menacing use of symbols that startled men's institutions like *kuiifuai* or *kwifoyn* which outrightly or tacitly supported the colonial subjugation of women. These were forced into lassitude, and the result was the sovereignty of British Southern Cameroons through reunification with the Republic of Cameroon on 1 October 1961, with the territory renamed the West Cameroon State.<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

The women of the western Grassfields of Cameroon played a cutting edge role in the liberation struggle against colonial rule, as did women throughout the continent. The role of women, however, has unfortunately not achieved the same attention as that of men. The works of Awasom (2002, 2006), Shanklin (1990), Nkwi (1976, 1985), and Diduk (1989, 2004) though focused on women's role have not placed women as a central factor in the liberation struggle in the western Grassfields of Cameroon. Nkwi and Nkwain (1963) have, however, examined some aspects of organization but the focus of the literature on the liberation struggle in Africa has been on the role of male elites.<sup>2</sup> This paper seeks to elevate the role of women from the footnotes of history to which they have been relegated in the official narratives and restore them to their rightful place in securing the reunification of British Southern Cameroons with the Republic of Cameroon.

In the colonial era the western Grassfields (see Map 1) formed part of the mandate of the League of Nations (1922 to 1945) and then a trust territory of the United Nations (1946-1961) and was governed on behalf of these international organizations by the British as Southern Cameroons (see Map 2), which they administered through Nigeria but not as part of that colony. It was and remains largely a high northern rural grassland plateau and was initially governed as the Bamenda Division.<sup>3</sup> In 1949, the territory was transformed into the Bamenda

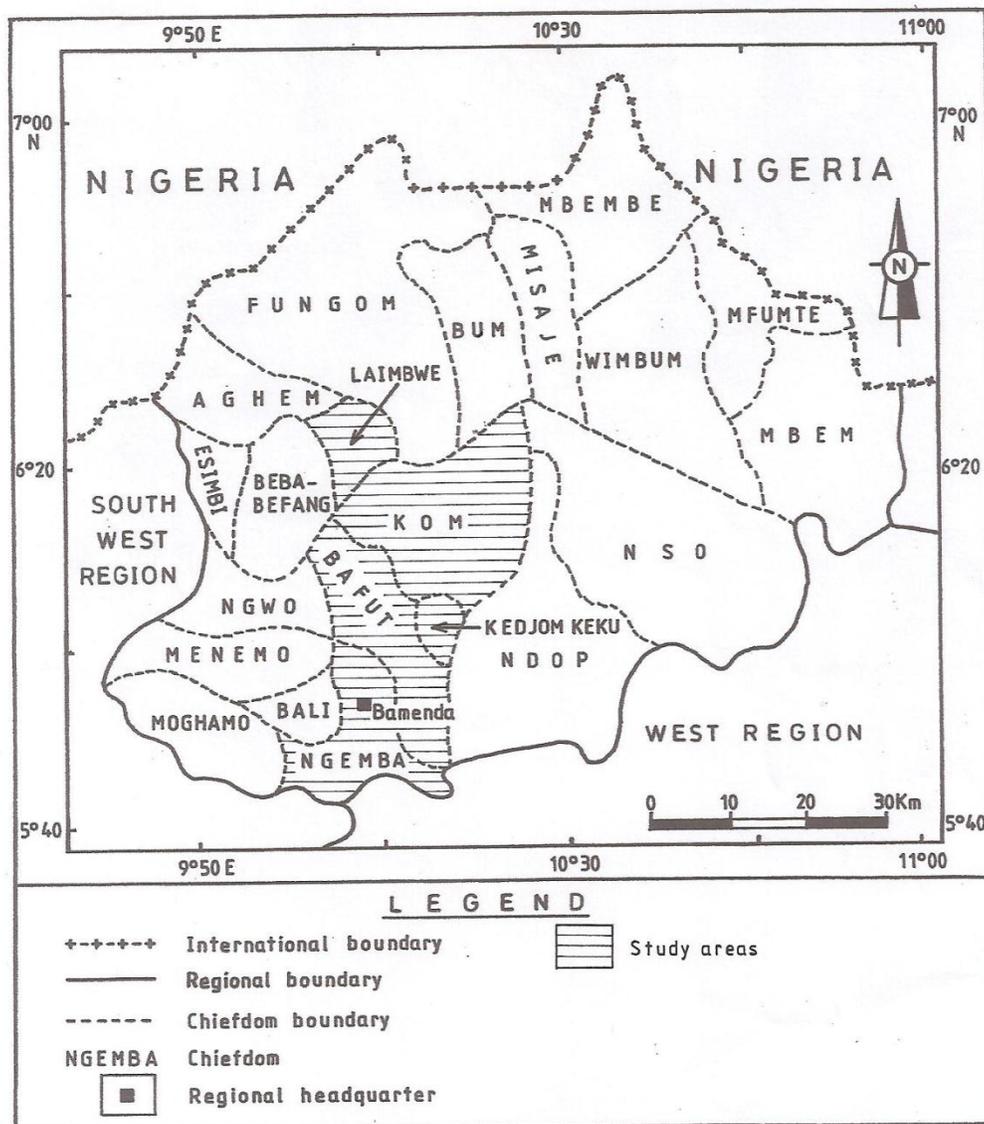
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<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v12/v12i3a4.pdf>

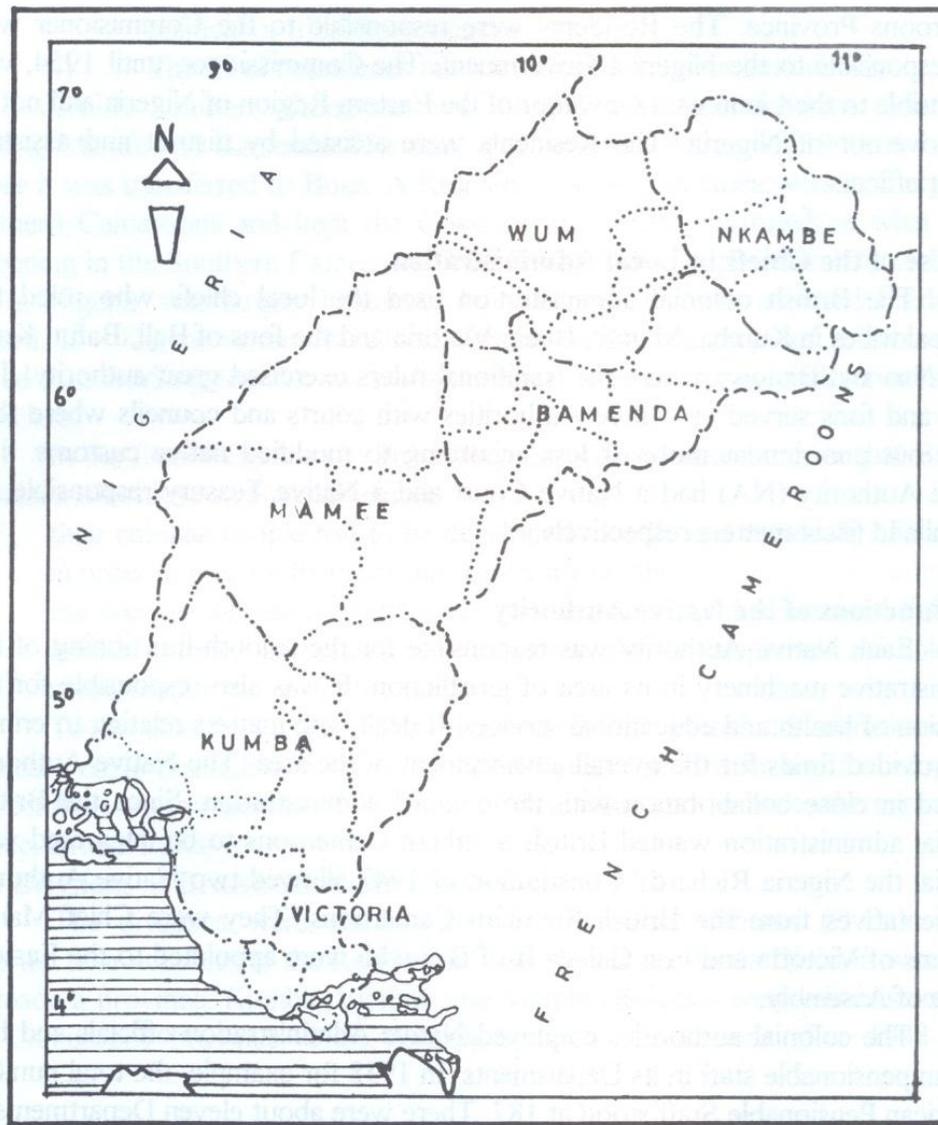
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Province, one of two provinces of Southern Cameroons (the other being the Cameroons Province with Buea—formerly Victoria—as its capital). The province consisted of the Bamenda, Wum, and Nkambe Divisions. Upon the independence and reunification of the Cameroons on 1 October 1961, the territory was renamed the North West Province and then re-baptized the North West Region on 12 November 2008 through a presidential decree. It is one of the ten regions of Cameroon and consists of seven divisions, namely Boyo, Bui, Donga Mantung, Menchum, Mezam, Momo, and Ngo Ketunja. The region is one of the country's most thickly populated regions. According to estimates of 1987, its population of 1,237,348, with a density of 69 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>, ranked second in the country. Its surface area is 17,812 km<sup>2</sup>. According to the 2010 census, the estimated population is 1,804,695 people.<sup>4</sup>

**Map 1 Ethnic Map of the Bamenda (Western) Grassfields**



Map 2 British Southern Cameroons



Maps 1 and 2 prepared for author by Forba Cletus, Ph.D. Candidate, University of Buea

In British Southern Cameroons, elite individuals such as Dr. E.M.L. Endeley, John Ngu Foncha, and Nerius Namaso Mbile, as well as chiefs formed parties or otherwise acted militantly to advance the cause of independence.<sup>5</sup> Political pressure groups and tribal associations from the late 1930s created a political consciousness in British Southern Cameroons as well as French Cameroon through the creation of organizations such as the Cameroons Welfare Union (CWU), Cameroons Youth League (CYL), Cameroons National Federation (CNF), Kamerun United National Congress (KUNC), the Kamerun Society, Bakweri Land Committee (BLC), and French Cameroons Welfare Union (FCWU) in the Southern Cameroons and the *Union Camerounaise* (UC), *Jeunesse Camerounaise Francaise* (Jeucafra), and the *Union*

*Camerounaise Francaise* (Unicafra) in French Cameroon.<sup>6</sup> The politicians of Southern Cameroons went through their apprenticeship in these pressure groups, which prepared them to challenge colonial rule and push for self-government and independence. This was and has remained the case in other parts of Africa.<sup>7</sup>

Accounts of the liberation struggle have not accorded African women the same attention as their male counterparts. In some cases, they are lumped with small shopkeepers and petty traders who did not have the opportunity for wage employment within the colonial enterprise as did their male counterparts.<sup>8</sup> It has been noted that women played a significant role in the women's wings of political parties but after independence, they were underrepresented in the parliaments. There is no gainsaying, however, that women played a cutting edge role in the liberation struggle in the continent. From north to south and east to west they held their own in many different ways against earlier and, eventually, colonial subjugation.<sup>9</sup> This was because colonialism presented African sexuality as demeaning and intimidated people regarding the exploitation of the continent.<sup>10</sup> The colonizers tried to and/or dismantled African social, political, and economic structures and created a European persona out of the African (fe)male.<sup>11</sup> The description of society through the works of ethnographers, male and female, argues Chapman reinforce maleness. This dominance has been described by Chapman as a problem in human history that no revolt has succeeded in undoing.<sup>12</sup>

Women's groups like other voluntary associations in the colonial era served as vehicles for new ideas and a proving ground for political leaders, thus refuting the official narratives that have relegated them to the "footnotes of history." This can be seen, for example, in the 1929 women's uprising in Eastern Nigeria.<sup>13</sup>

Cameroonian women as elsewhere on the continent acted in such a way that they thumb printed their names in the sands of time.<sup>14</sup> Women petty traders from British Southern Cameroons boycotted the Douala market in protest against the imposition of price restrictions by the French colonial administrators.<sup>15</sup> In the Bamenda western Grassfields region, the *anlu* and *kelu* women's organizations became more political and served as the basis for the uprising that was based on women's grievances against suppression and exploitation.<sup>16</sup> During the colonial period, women's contribution to the emancipation of their people, region, and country was substantial. The successful contribution of women as a group poses a challenge to Amadiume's argument that women have greater freedom and choices as individuals but a weaker collective power.<sup>17</sup> The women of the western Grassfields of Cameroon during the last decade of the independence struggle were more militant in their demand for independence as a well-coordinated group from different fondoms including Kom, Kedjom Keku, Baisso, Mughom, Teitengem, Mbengkas, and Bu than as individuals. Although women made individual choices with regards to freedom in their lineages or families, they enjoyed and exercised greater freedom and power when they came together in organized groups. This was facilitated by an adept leadership that successfully opposed and weakened the forces of division epitomized in the British colonial system of administration.

Many examples of contributions have been recorded among various ethnic groups of the western Grassfields region, including the Kom, Kedjom Keku, Aghem, and Laimbwe.<sup>18</sup> Table 1 below shows the Laimbwe fondoms and their satellite settlements as well as the neighboring and some related Tikar fondoms. Other cases include the market women's resistance to border

restrictions between British and French Cameroons and the women's protest in Douala in 1930 against French colonial policies. Such mass mobilization when joined with other forces yielded fruit. The ultimate result was the independence of Southern Cameroons in 1961 and reunification with the Republic of Cameroon, which had obtained its own independence from the French on January 1, 1960.

**Table 1 Showing the Laimbwe Fondoms, Satellite Settlements and some Tikar Fondoms**

Laimbwe Fondoms	Satellite Settlements	Neighboring and Related Fondoms
Bu	Aguli (Kekuli)	Aghem
Mbengkas	Mughom, Teitengem, Mbueni	Kom
Baisso		Kedjom Keku

Source: Compiled by Author from Field Interviews

In spite of visible signs of women's resistance in the Cameroons, they have not formed a fundamental part of the existing literature on the contribution of women and subalterns to the same extent as for Nigeria and Ghana.<sup>19</sup> While this study focuses on the contribution of women in the western Grassfields during the colonial era, there is need to acknowledge the contribution of women in other parts of Cameroon and for further investigation to enrich the existing literature on Cameroon and more decisively the literature that addresses the liberation struggle mounted by women all over Africa to free their territory from colonial subjugation. The existing literature on the role of women in liberating the western Grassfields from the grip of colonial rule is drawn from different disciplines that include anthropology, sociology, history, literature, and ethnography.<sup>20</sup> This literature has intensely focused on the activities of the women in the different fondoms that are under study. The omitted link is the near absence and/or mediocre examination of the nature and nourishment of cooperation among their movements against continued British rule of Southern Cameroons.

Several scholars who have written about women's revolts in the western Grassfields have focused but on other issues. Nkwain (1963) and Nkwi (1976 and 1985) have examined the origins, organization and activities of *anlu* in the Kom Fondom while Chilver and Kaberry (1967) argue that the *anlu* women's revolt was targeted against Dr E.M.L. Endeley's government in British Southern Cameroons. Writing also about the *anlu* women's revolt in Kom, Konde (1990), O'Neil (1991), Shanklin (1990) and Milne (1999) argue that the revolt exploited the womenfolk to empower men, impacted on the Catholic Mission in Njinikom Kom and also weakened the powers of the Fon of Kom respectively. With regards to the *fuenbwen* (*fuembuen*), *takembeng*, and *kelu* women's organizations, Diduk (1989, 2004) examines the importance of symbolism in the *fuenbwen* women's revolt in the fondom of Kedjom Keku but handles it superficially. Jua (1993) discusses *anlu* and *takembeng* (*takembeng*) as a major force for political change in Cameroon and Awasom (2006) examines the forces behind and results of the *fuenbwen* women's mobilization. The common missing link in these works is the failure to

discuss coordination, organised and efficient leadership as well as symbolism playing crucial roles in the women revolts in the western Grassfields of Cameroon.

Our field investigation has shown that in many instances there were conscious efforts to mobilize women across ethnic groups under a recognized and well-coordinated leadership from the base to the top by means of the effective use of local and other symbols to convey messages that were tacitly assimilated by the local people but not always correctly or rightly interpreted by the colonial officials. The results were often embarrassing to the administration, and it occasionally submitted to the will of the people. Such measures were instrumental in bringing about decolonization in British Cameroons as a whole.<sup>21</sup> In addition, the study surmises that proper organization was an important contributory factor to the success of the women's revolt in the western Grassfields during the evening years of British colonial administration.

### **Method and Importance of Study**

In this study we have combined a number of methods from different disciplines including history, ethnography, linguistics, sociology and anthropology. We conducted interviews in the field with participants in the liberation movement. In the event of the death of some of the key participants, we discussed the uprising against the colonial administration with their contemporaries, family members, and children. We also employed systematic content analysis of some of the published works on women's mobilization efforts in the different fondoms, among them Kom, Kedjom Keku, Aghem, Befang, and the Laimbwe fondoms of Bu, Mbengkas, and Baisso and their satellite chiefdoms of Mughom, Teitengem, and Mbongkesso. Among these fondoms however, only Kom and Kedjom Keku, including the Ngemba-speaking fondoms, have received a consistent scholarly consideration, with the latter for the most part due to the re-introduction of multiparty politics in the 1990s. Most of the other ethnic groups have either only recently received scholarly attention or none at all. Many of them are still *terra incognita* as far as women's resistance is concerned.

This study also elucidates symbols and other secret messages within their cultural perspective and how these were helpful in mobilizing women against colonial exploitation and also startling some imposing male notables into acquiescence. To achieve this, we consulted works that have examined symbols in different societies and how these shaped civic estimation of newsworthy activities within these societies. Since bodily symbols were an essential weapon of resistance in the fondoms under examination, we also employed literature on the allegory of the body. This literature facilitated our understanding of symbolic action with regards to sexuality when used correctly and/or otherwise depending on a number of variables, which include age group and intent.

From a closer examination and interpretation of these symbols and symbolic acts within colonial history, we have tried to situate the power of symbols in the liberation struggle in this part of Cameroon and Africa more broadly. The very nature of the structure and organization of the women's movements have been interrogated to establish the link between these and the success of the rural women "to pull the rock" from under the colonial officials and some supporting male institutions or individuals of eminence and stature. Leadership within and between ethnic groups was effective and also well-coordinated to the extent that the

combination of symbols and other factors made a serious impact on loosening the attitude of the British towards independence for the British Cameroons.

### Framework of Investigation

This study focuses on symbolism to explain how women organized and carefully led the struggle to liberate the Bamenda western Grassfields of Cameroon. Symbols enable people to communicate with one another on issues that embarrass, terrorize, or make it difficult for them to deal with unutterable and other invisible entities.<sup>22</sup> Utilizing the insights of Bernault's study of the symbols of body, power, and sacrifice in Equatorial Africa, the present study argues that symbols were powerful instruments of protest and change among the Laimbwe women of Cameroon and other ethnic regions of the country.<sup>23</sup> Bernault contends that the symbols of body, power, and sacrifice in Equatorial Africa from the 1880s onwards made Europeans and Africans associate them with fetishism that ably manipulates sacred power.<sup>24</sup> It is for this reason that she described bodily configurations as being able to defy criminal acts.<sup>25</sup> Bernault's reflection on the body and power clearly revealed the European hegemonic visions and power tactics which met with African grassroots confrontations, especially their use by women in different parts of Equatorial Africa to harass over-zealous colonial officials into compliance.

Symbolism or symbolic actions allow people to communicate with one another on issues that embarrass, terrorize, or make it knotty for them to deal with unutterable and other invisible entities.<sup>26</sup> In different cultures, the body is the symbol of power through the choreography of authority.<sup>27</sup> Dress is associated with the body, and among the Kuba (Congo), Turkana (Kenya), Igbo (Nigeria), and Frafra (Ghana) dress is used as a form of shared views and experience.<sup>28</sup> In fact, it is important to note that bodies are used for self-expression. People use bodies to become who they would like to be.<sup>29</sup> The female body has proven to be the site of women's "subversive" practices and struggles for self-determination and empowerment.<sup>30</sup>

Sharing his views on the symbolism of the body, Frank contends that it is the "constant in a rapidly changing world and has remained the source of fundamental truths about who people are and how society is organized."<sup>31</sup> The body of the African woman was used in response to civic participation in the democratization of the continent. The display of the nakedness of the African woman was and remains her expression of utter anger and outrage at both public injustice and private male viciousness.<sup>32</sup> There is therefore no gainsaying that the women subjected their bodies to various frightful and disturbing acts as a direct affront to debasement from the British colonial "lords" and to challenge indigenous collaborators of colonial exploitation.

In addition, dress is a powerful language that is only comparable to the potency of the spoken word of the most skillful orator and the written word of the most compelling propagandist. It has the power to unify, differentiate, challenge, contest and dominate.<sup>33</sup> Aware of the power of dress, women of the Western Grassfields used it as a potent weapon against the colonial system and the limitation of women's political space. Women wore male dress in a particularly frightful way. The result was very positive because they were able to push the colonial system into reconsidering some of its reforms that affected rural women like the Agricultural Law of 1955. Men were not only flabbergasted by this but acceded to the women's

demands. Sooner rather than later the British colonial officials yielded to pressure, and it quickened the decolonization process in the territory.

In a similar vein, Veit-Wild and Naguschewski describe women's bodies to argue that these are gifted in a variety of ways and arouse great "pleasure, passion, and power. Yet it is at the same time in danger of being hurt, invaded or violated."<sup>34</sup> Such extraordinary use of the body results in the invasion of male space to renegotiate power relations in the society. During the colonial period it was also used to invade the space of colonial leadership to renegotiate or impose a pattern of behavior in the Bamenda western Grassfields. Women would probably have appealed more to the body as a weapon for resistance because in this part of the country the body is also symbolized through the power of the chiefs.<sup>35</sup> It was thus an invasion of this male space to renegotiate power relations not only between the genders but more so to challenge the Victorian philosophy of male dominance which had long defined power relations in English history.

## The Women's Revolt

### *Avenues of Mobilization*

The Bamenda western Grassfields of Cameroon has historically witnessed women's mobilization for diverse reasons. In the different fondoms there were/are still found women's societies of reverence, graciousness, and pre-eminence. They often met on Sundays, following the death of one of their husbands or when an emergency demanded tactful handling to forestall a catastrophe or embarrassment within the fondom. These and other avenues facilitated the dissemination of information to other women and the wider community.

In some areas, such as among the Laimbwe people of Wum Division (today Menchum and Boyo Divisions), effective diffusion of messages was the collective responsibility of the women's regulatory society, the *kefa'a*, and its male counterpart, the *kuiifuai*.<sup>36</sup> Other women used their traditional rotating associations to assist one another in the cultivation of crops and other forms of material assistance before the introduction of the money economy in the colonial period. Many other clubs served the purpose of amusement but also helped rally women from different social backgrounds and lineages to have fun together while discussing the problems of their communities on a lighter note.

When a very critical issue was to be deliberated upon, the Queen Mother, known as *nafoyn*, *zhehfuai*, or *mafo* in the Kom, Laimbwe, and Bamileke ethnic groups respectively, would summon the women elders of the different quarters and families to a meeting. During this meeting, they examined the issue and made suggestions for correction or improvement. Following on the heels of the meeting of these women elders there was a general assembly of women to discuss the practical implementation of decisions taken by the elders. Other appropriate channels were used to disseminate information to women in the wards of the villages and lineages or families. Women were generally mobilized from the level of the compound, lineage, quarter, and village to carry out certain projects such as the cleaning of footpaths leading to farms, different quarters, and neighboring villages.

The advent of colonialism and its incapacitating effects transformed many of these women's groups into political associations through which grievances were expressed in various

forms against the ruling authorities. This was the case with the *anlu* of Kom, which initially was meant to sanction the exiling of people who became an irritation to the community. In the Laimbwe fondoms of Bu, Mbengkas, and Baisso, the *kelu* served a similar purpose of banishment of culprits but came to play a revolutionary role when it became clear that the policies of the Southern Cameroons government were becoming doubtful to some people.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, among the Kedjom Keku and Ngemba people, the *fuenbwen* (also spelt *fuembuen*) and *takembeng* (also spelt *takumbeng*) took on a more radical political role and were easily used to mobilize women both during the colonial and post-independence periods for political reasons.<sup>38</sup> The *anlu* was easily mobilized by the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) and the *fuenbwen* and *takembeng* by the Social Democratic Front (SDF) after the re-introduction of multiparty politics in 1990s Cameroon.

### *The Use of Symbols*

In a general sense, symbols have been used in history to serve different purposes and occasions. Different people for different reasons give varying interpretations to symbols and in some cases symbolic actions take place but are not fully understood by a majority of onlookers. In the different fondoms of the western Grassfields of Cameroon, women made use of bodily symbols and other environmentally related symbols to control an overzealous colonial administration. The results were positive because it undermined men's power, and the revolt took on a religio-magical dimension never known in the history of colonial rule in this part of the African continent. It was also well coordinated by the leaders.

The symbols women used in their struggle for the liberation of the Grassfields region were not only symbolically powerful but also greatly impacted the people in such a way that it enabled them to achieve victory. Although the British seemed/pretended not to have understood the message through women's symbolic actions, it spoke as powerfully as the greatest word written by a propagandist.<sup>39</sup> Among the different women symbolic actions were those surrounding the power of the body when used correctly to address an anxiously expectant audience. Others included music, dress, and other material of traditional significance like the dry banana leaves and a garden-like egg called *funya* in the Kom and Laimbwe fondoms. Many of these symbols could only be fully appreciated within the socio-cultural cosmological and aesthetic environment of the people.

The Kom and Laimbwe women made use of their bodies as a weapon of revolt against colonial rule. They would threaten to strip naked when men challenged their authority to champion the struggle for political space and the liberation of the territory. The sight of the vagina was an ill omen, and no one was willing to see women display their vaginas in public because the vagina is meant for the private and not public space. No Kom or Laimbwe man in the right frame of mind would stand the sight of the women stripped naked and exposing their vaginas. The symbolic power of the vagina in very difficult circumstances was used by the women of the *takembeng* traditional organization to frighten gun toting military men in Bamenda into submission in the early 1990s following the reintroduction of multiparty politics in Cameroon.<sup>40</sup> These women not only stripped naked but used their breasts as guns of war. Many of the over-zealous military men could not stand the sight of these women and simply fled for their lives.

Other bodily actions signifying revolt included uttering a shrill high pitched sound at interrupted intervals with four fingers placed on the lips.<sup>41</sup> This was a call to mobilization and war against tyrants and other oppressive forces. The use of the whistle among the Laimbwe women complemented the production of sounds which were indicative of preparation for war. Besides the fear created among the people by such actions, they also thought and believed that it had a miraculous effect of healing its sick members.<sup>42</sup> Women's ululations were followed by dancing, which created an emotional response from the women against acts of the administration considered to be unpardonable. Among these acts were the restricted exploitation of resources in the Kom/Wum Forest Reserve by the indigenous population and the enforcement of cross contour cultivation that challenged the traditional methods of crop cultivation by the rural women. This included the rationale for cultivation along mountain slopes that revolved around the child, bush meat, and an abundance of food. According to the Laimbwe people, the importance of life and the provision of food for the people are linked to a trinity which is symbolized by child, bush meat and abundance of food. The need to work farms is to feed the child with abundance of food and also increase his/her protein intake by giving this child bush meat. This philosophy of life is represented in the drawing of three marks on important shrines to represent the trinity of a child as a gift of God, bush meat and abundance of food as what the parents need to do in order to feed this child and give him/her the necessary care. This bush meat and food can only be obtained in large quantities from the forest and fertile soils. The intermittent ululations successfully mobilized women into a formidable bulwark against what they considered retrogressive forces.

Women also used their bodies to dance and to gather and desecrate compounds of trouble makers in the Laimbwe and Kom territories. Through indiscriminate urination and defecation women rendered such compounds desolate. Those who resisted the women or supported the colonial administration were ostracized from their compounds and prevented from returning to these compounds. The urine in their compounds from women vaginas added to their fears of returning home until a traditional cleansing ritual was performed by leaders of the community. The compound ritual usually set men on their heels in Bu village.<sup>43</sup> In this way, the women's liberation struggle gained currency day by day.

The wearing of regalia of torn male dresses, shirts, trousers, dry banana leaves, fresh creeping plants, and the painting of faces with charcoal and wood ash were all intended to send a message of liberation, although some people saw this as a mere humorous act. One of the reasons for the body adornment and the wearing of dresses of this nature was to ward off men from subjugating women to their whims and caprices during the period of the revolt. The Babanki women consciously disguised themselves in old clothing intentionally mixing bright and often garish colors, necklaces of old bottle tops or wild seeds, and sometimes wearing dried grass tied knots.<sup>44</sup> The combination of different material was not fun but a manifestation of disagreement with the colonial and other negative forces. The women would "go mad" and cause untold harm if their message fell on deaf ears. Their adoption of male dress was a challenge to masculinity epitomized by the male-centered colonial dispensation. Dry banana leaves and fresh creeping plants represented two sides of a coin. Dryness was a protest against British exploitation of their economy, and fresh creeping plants were an indication of renewal and rebirth once the colonialists vacated the territory. The invasion of male space through juju

performance was a call for the renegotiation of gender during the colonial period for mutual benefit of all in the societies that were in revolt.

In Kom, women organized mock burials of leaders of the Kamerun National Congress (KNC) such as Joseph Ndong Nkwain.<sup>45</sup> The women did this because as the local leader of the KNC party, he supported the implementation of new farming rules which the women opposed. Secondly, he defied their instructions to close down the St Anthony's Catholic School at Nijinkom which was ordered by the leadership of *anlu*. Whenever this act was performed in traditional Kom society, it was a mark of seriousness of a resistance or protest against someone or something. The act of mock burial before one dies in the tradition of the western Grassfields region usually sends shock waves down the spine of the victim, family members, and his/her followers and sympathizers. It was partly because of this that the then leading party in British Southern Cameroons, the KNC, lost elections and its platform of integration with Nigeria failed to materialize. The Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) took over and steered the ship of state towards separation from Nigeria and reunification with the Republic of Cameroon through a plebiscite organized and sponsored by the United Nations.

The contest between the KNC and KNDP influenced *anlu* in the sense that Augustine Ngom Jua, one of the leaders of the KNDP from Njinikom-Kom, used the grievances of the women against a KNC-led government to mobilize the Kom women to rise against the party and new farming rules. Besides, political parties with a Southern-based leadership, like the KNC led by Dr Emmanuel Mbella Liffafe Endeley and the Kamerun Peoples' Party (KPP) led by Nerius Namaso Mbile, closed ranks in the build up to the general elections in British Southern Cameroons in 1959. These elections were to determine the destiny of Southern Cameroons following the political polarization in the territory. The KNDP reacted to this KNC-KPP marriage of convenience by creating an alliance with the One Kamerun (OK) party whose leaders, Ndeh Ntumazah and Albert Mukong, were also from the Grassfields region as was John Ngu Foncha of the KNDP. In the face of this dichotomy between politicians of the different regions, some leaders of the KNDP rallied women to support them. These included Josepha Mua, Patrick Mua, Augustine Ngom Jua, Etchi Kinni of Wum Division.

The rift between political parties with a forestland-based leadership like the KNC/KPP (later reunited in May 1960 to form the Cameroon Peoples' National Convention (CPNC)) and those with a leadership from the western Grassfields namely the KNDP and the OK was based on a number of outstanding differences. After the German annexation of Cameroon on July 1884 and the eventual control of British Southern Cameroons by Britain after the defeat of Germany in the First World War, many people were forced to migrate to the coastal region for employment in the plantations set up by German planters. Their continuous influx eventually led to conflict with the receiving ethnic groups of the forest region to the extent that they were derogatorily referred to as *graffi* people, a corrupted word for Grassfields. Even after the independence of Cameroon and the re-introduction of multiparty politics in Cameroon in the 1990s, regional sentiments ran high, and people from the present day North West Region (formerly western Grassfields) were given all kinds of names such as *come-no-goes*.<sup>46</sup> (Rubin 1971: 71-88; Ngoh 2001: 122-144; Kah 2003: 103-125; and Kah Forthcoming). This appellation was a form of criticizing people from the western Grassfields as not willing to return to their region of origin. When John Ngu Foncha and Augustine Ngom Jua left the KNC which was formed in

1953 and formed the KNDP in 1955, and coming from the western Grassfields region, some of the leaders of the KNC argued that the KNDP was a western Grassfields party. This explains the tension that existed between the leaders and their parties during elections.

The differences among the leaders of the political parties were exploited by the KNDP party in 1957 and 1958 when the *anlu* women of Kom rose against the implementation of an agricultural law passed in the Southern Cameroon's House of Assembly in 1955 and enforced in 1957 in Wum Division by the Wum Divisional Native Authority Council (WDNAC). This was at a time that the political parties of Southern Cameroons were gearing up for general elections in January 1959. The KNDP at the time was in the opposition and wanted to win the impending elections of the following year. The party carefully mobilized the women of Kom through Augustine Ngom Jua, one of the founding fathers of the KNDP and Etchi Kinni a local leader of the KNDP party. The visit of Dr E.M.L. Endeley to Wum Division and especially to Njinikom was frustrated by a mass boycott at a critical time that the out-going Premier was out to convince the people to renew their confidence in him. The failure of the KNC to remain a dominant political force in Wum Division after the 1958 uprising was partly due to the "faces behind the mask" of a women revolt in Kom. These faces were Augustine Ngom Jua and Etchi Kinni.

The use of music in the struggle for liberation was a successful weapon. Singing in general represents many things and includes anger, hatred, sorrow and anxiety.<sup>47</sup> Besides, music serves different purposes and includes rituals, healing, group identity and battle.<sup>48</sup> Women used song compositions to express sorrow and anger over the wanton exploitation of their resources, to express disenchantment with local collaborators of the colonial administration, and to press for the liberation of their territory from alien domination. One such song went:

Ndonyam collaborates with foreigners  
to stop the people from using their God given resources in the forest. He has  
even colluded with the British administration  
to sell the people's land so that their children may grow up to suffer. We pray  
that he dies a bad death.<sup>49</sup>

Ndonyam, otherwise known as Joseph Ndong Nkwain, was the local KNC leader in Kom at the time of the outbreak of the women revolts in the western Grassfields in the late 1950s. Since many women of Kom, including those of the Laimbwe villages of Bu, Mbengkas, and Baisso had turned their backs to the KNC government in favor of the KNDP leadership, they did not support any one who did you join them and Joseph Ndong Nkwain was one of them. Although Kom was a distance from Bu, the other fondoms of Mbengkas and Baisso had a direct relationship with Kom because they were under the sphere of influence of Kom. A good portion of the Kom/Wum Forest Reserve is under Kom. When the colonial authorities demarcated farmland from the reserve restricting farming activities in the reserve, the women accused Ndonyam and other KNC collaborators for a conspiracy against them. Through the propaganda of the KNDP they even thought that land was sold to the Igbos, considered rightly and/or wrongly as ruthless to Cameroonians in their business dealings.

Folksongs were very satirical toward the oppressive system and were also intended to ridicule individuals who set a bad example in the society.<sup>50</sup> Music was used to speak to women

inwardly and also to outwardly manifest a dislike for that which was debasing of women and their communities, namely separation and exploitation of their forest resources.

### *Coordination/Organization of Activities, and Leadership*

The nature, level, and coordination of the women's revolt from bottom to top, top to bottom, village to village, and one geographical region to another and within the same ethnic group contributed immensely to the success of the women's mobilization and criticism of the colonial administration. In many instances, the coordinated activities were either under-estimated or never fully recognized and understood by the colonial authorities. Before long, the activities of these women destabilized the colonial administrative machinery and many of them were disempowered economically.<sup>51</sup> For a better appreciation of a coordinated women's mobilization, we have chosen for analysis two ethnic groups, namely Kom and Laimbwe. The success of coordination in these two ethnic groups produced results that ended with the independence of the British Southern Cameroons—first as a self-governing region within the Federation of Nigeria and then through a UN-organized plebiscite to reunite with the Republic of Cameroon in 1961. Although different terminologies were used to describe the levels of coordination and leadership in these fondoms, both served similar purposes and produced a similar result namely, the independence of the territory from foreign domination.

The efficient mobilization of Kom and Laimbwe women was due to several socio-economic factors. In both territories, especially in Kom, women had started organizing protests from the 1940s against the destruction of food crops from the cattle of Fulani herders.<sup>52</sup> These protests increased with time and forced the women to occasionally stage open demonstrations to publicize their plight. Such were the humble beginnings of an efficient organization strategy in the last four years of British colonial rule in the area. Other long term factors were rumors of the seizure of indigenous land by the Igbos of Nigeria at a time that Southern Cameroons formed an integral part of the Federation of Nigeria.<sup>53</sup> The British establishment of the Kom/Wum Forest Reserve in 1951 and restrictions on the exploitation of resources therein as well as the cultivation of food crops within the reserve were some of the most vexing issues to the Laimbwe people located around and within the Forest Reserve.

Still other factors such as the Christian doctrine and other social changes orchestrated by the western-educated elite; contributed to the 1957-1961 revolt in the Bamenda western Grassfields of Cameroon. These changes came with social segregation and attacks on tradition and customs. In addition, the recruitment of labor for the commercial plantations, many of them from Wum Division, was socially destabilizing and gender insensitive. Then came the enforcement of a law enacted in 1955 on cross contour rather than slope wise cultivation in 1957 that acted as a spark to the women's uprising. The women were so embittered beyond control and formed themselves into groups to torpedo the efforts of the colonial officials at introducing new farming rules. The organization of the women's movements was basically at two broad levels, namely internal and external mobilization and coordination. At the level of the fondom, coordination was further streamlined to avoid the conflict of functions. At the inter-ethnic level it took on family-directed mobilization as well as the willingness of women in one region to join forces with those of another region to have their case better presented to the recalcitrant colonial administration for a greater impact. In the Laimbwe and Kom ethnic groups were lineages like

Ejelesong, Ekai and Itinala that were conduits of the dissemination of revolutionary ideas from fondom to fondom.

In the Laimbwe villages of Baisso, Bu, and Mbengkas as in the Kom fondom, the *zhehfuai* (Queen Mother) for the Laimbwe villages, or *nafoyn* in Kom was the titular head trying to oversee everything as a stationary field commander. Next to her in command and hierarchy in the Laimbwe polities were the *Utuotekpwei* (leaders of the others). In Kom this leader was called the *Na-anlu* (mother of *anlu*). The function of these coordinators was to regulate the activities of all the other women. These leaders were ably assisted by spies called *ugwesii* in Kom and *tekpwei* in Laimbwe. These were usually women of standing and chosen from among noble families or on the basis of their skills in mobilization. Some of the outstanding women in Bu and Mbengkas came from such noble lineages as the Ehzem, Eselemei, Ukwosuuh and Nduokang. They were at the implementation end of the decisions of the women's movement and were assisted by other officials in Laimbwe called the *basinjas* (also *balinjas*). In all, these layers of coordination were strictly respected and those who disobeyed their instructions were severely punished. The flow of information vertically and horizontally was one of the strongest uniting forces in the women's movement in these fondoms. They reported difficulties encountered in the field to their superiors, and field assistants were deployed or redeployed to sustain the revolt. Other people served as court jesters, creating fun and enlivening the spirit of those who were at the forefront of the struggle for liberation.

At the inter-chiefdom level, the Queen Mothers and other influential noble women were the main crusaders. They contacted their counterparts and family members in neighboring fondoms through special emissaries to convince them to join in the struggle for political space and liberation of their people from colonial subjugation. In the Laimbwe and Kom fondoms, top ranking officers communicated with their counterparts in the other villages. They also systematically sent people to assist their neighbors. The women of Mbengkas for example assisted their Bu counterparts of *kelu* materially (eggs, beans, groundnuts, and meat) and vice versa. In all, the three Laimbwe villages made donations of groundnuts, eggs, maize, and other material items, which were sent to Kom to assist the struggle for independence.

Similarly, the Kom women used their family links with the Kedjom people as well as their very strong sense of organization assisted by a local politician, Augustine Ngom Jua, to pull their Kedjom Keku kindred into the streets. The kedjem lineage is found in both Kom and Kedjom Keku and members of this lineage through kin-group networks mobilized their members towards the opposition to colonial policies. This became visible during the march of the women to Bamenda from Kom which could be likened to the march of the women to Versailles in the 1789 French Revolution. Other Kom villages mobilized and sent material assistance to the women's revolt at Wombong which was the linchpin of the *anlu* women revolt in Kom. In the case of the Laimbwe women, neighboring villages housed those who went to Bamenda to secure the release of their leaders who were arrested in 1959. Such organized mobilization and coordination went a long way to encourage the women to fight on. It is therefore not surprising that during the consultations leading to the independence of Southern Cameroons, these grievances contributed in no small way as the leaders of the women's revolt continued to press for freedom.

### *Leadership of the Women's Resistance*

In as much as a revolt is the collective effort of every participant, it is also a result of a carefully chosen, empowered, and coordinated leadership. For every community, there was a recognized local leader who worked closely with her subordinates. This local leader also worked very closely with other selected leaders from the different wards or quarters of the village and solicited at all times the support of other leaders in neighboring communities. In Mbengkas and Bu fondoms of the Laimbwe ethnic group, these leaders included Njughekai, Esa-ah Fueh Induum, Kebwei Mbonghelesam, and Ngem Ibo-oh of Mbengkas and Kebwei Zei, Fuehlejeh, Musso Mbong, Futele Chou, Sangah Buh, Naiisi, and Ngwo Ndai of Bu.<sup>54</sup> Put together, these local leaders were each responsible to a central leadership and gave an account of their stewardship to a commanding officer at the center. In Bu fondom, the commanding leader to whom others reported was the Queen Mother at the time, Kebwei Zei. The interesting thing to note here is that these bold and enterprising women leaders have not received any scholarly attention in the historiography of the western Grassfields of Cameroon.

In the villages and quarters of Kom and Laimbwe, women leaders provided inspiring leadership for all women to emulate. Their selection often followed a meeting of the women leaders and their field supervisors with the Queen Mother about their activities. This was carefully done, and their commitment to the cause for which they stood and to providing accounts of their stewardship became a source of reinvigorated strength for those women who wanted fairness and justice to be the watchwords of the colonial administration. The meeting of these leaders at regular intervals and the assistance provided by each and every one of them greatly strengthened the women's cause.

Leadership was also in the form of inter-village meetings. Through these meetings, the different delegations were briefed on the developments that unfolded and whether this had an impact on them or not. A glaring example of this was the journey undertaken by the Mbengkas women to Bu in 1957 to officially put in place the same sort of revolutionary *kelu* in the Laimbwe community. The group of three who were led by women of the caliber of Njughekai, Kebwe Mbonghelesam, and Esa-ah Fueh Induum played a momentous role in the spread of the women's revolutionary spirit in the Laimbwe community and by extension the satellites villages of Teitengem, Mughom, and other neighboring villages like Befang. This single act of the Mbengkas women changed the phase of the women's revolutionary activities in Cameroon's western Grassfields, at least in the Laimbwe and related ethnic groups.

The leadership qualities and steadfastness of Fuam and Muana of Kom were also recognized as inspiring other women leaders. These women rose to the pinnacle of the *anlu* women's movement in Kom, and they commanded respect and admiration of other women far afield. On a regular basis, the Laimbwe women leaders of Baisso, Bu, and Mbengkas travelled to Kom, listened to these leaders and implemented some of their suggestions in a bid to sustain the uprising. Upon return, some of these Laimbwe women leaders deified Fuam and made their collaborators believe that she possessed extraordinary powers. The supposed invincibility and invisibility of Fuam was used by the Laimbwe leaders to frighten recalcitrant fellows into submission. Such mobilization using a myth associated with Fuam reached its apogee when the District Officer for Wum Division, Ken Shaddock, visited Bu fondom in 1958. During the visit at the Fon's compound, the women succeeded in presenting themselves as leaders of the

community by threatening to beat him up. Upon returning to the divisional headquarters, he cabled the hierarchy about the seriousness of the matter before police were sent to pick up the ringleaders. The synchronized inter-chiefdom leadership using personalities and mysticism has yet to form part of the literature so far written on this women's movement in the Cameroon's western Grassfields.

The importance of leadership was also seen during the march of women from different chiefdoms to Bamenda to secure the release of their leaders and to make their case to the Resident against the British colonial administration. When the women leaders were picked up and locked up at the German Fort in Bamenda, their subordinates mobilized the rest of the women and trekked to Bamenda to ensure their release. Their presence created panic and caused some elite and traditional rulers such as Jeremiah Chi Kangsen, Thomas Ngong Amaazee, Nyooch Wei Induum, and Chief Ndzeghi of the Aghem, Bu, and Mbengkas respectively to provide bail to secure their release.

## Conclusion

This study has shown that three main factors contributed to the liberation of the western Grassfields of Cameroon, namely symbols, a well-coordinated leadership, and the force of its character and charisma. At the end of this paper we have achieved a number of things, namely a new direction in the research on the women's revolt in the Grassfields which has caught the attention of scholars since the 1960s. This new direction was what Awasom, Shanklin, and Diduk superficially talked about but was not as a central factor in their scholarly published papers. Others like Nkwi and Nkwain have mentioned aspects of organization, but the force of a clearly focused leadership has been overlooked by most of the other authors who have written about the women's movement.<sup>55</sup>

This study points out areas of research that should be focused on for a better understanding of the complex implications of the women's revolt in Cameroon's Western Grassfields. It is therefore a new direction for the re-evaluation of the research that has so far been carried out on the women's revolt of the western Grassfields. It also supports the argument that symbols are an unspoken but forceful way of liberating a people from captivity. If the women's revolt eventually gave way it is not that it failed to achieve something. Rather, through their revolt the women proved that they were more organized than it had been thought and that their leadership was grounded in grassroots support and coordination. New directions of research will include an examination of the "faces behind the mask" of women's mobilization in the liberation struggle in the Western Grassfields of Cameroon.

## Notes

1. This paper was first presented at a Symposium on "Colonial Enterprise and the Liberation Struggles in Africa" held at Algiers, Algeria, 13-16 July 2009. I am grateful to organizers of the symposium who made it possible for this paper to be presented on my behalf by my colleague Walter Gam Nkwi (who also read through the paper) and the participants who

- offered valuable criticisms towards its improvement in its present form. I am particularly grateful to the internal and external reviewers of *African Studies Quarterly* for their review comments because they contributed towards the improvement of the content of this paper.
- 2 Nkwain 1958; Nkwi 1976, 1985; Shanklin 1990; Awasom 2002; Gam Nkwi 2003; Diduk 2004.
  - 3 Ardener 1967, p. 290.
  - 4 <http://www.statemaster.com/encyclopedia/Northwest-Province,-Cameroon>; Doh and Binde 2010.
  - 5 Chiabi 1990, pp. 24-41; Chiabi 1989, pp. 170-99; Fo Angwafo 2009, pp. 23-28; Mbile 2000, pp. 47-153.
  - 6 Ngoh 2004; Goodridge 2004, pp. 18-25.
  - 7 Abimbola 2003; Yet, women's groups like others served as vehicles for new ideas and a proving ground for political leaders. This could be seen, for example, in the 1929 women's uprising in Eastern Nigeria. While many other examples could be cited, women to a large extent still unrecognized and in the dust bin of history because official narratives have relegated them to the "footnotes of history." The description of society through the works of ethnographers, male and female, reinforces maleness. Yet many heroines and rural women in different African countries during the colonial period "thumb printed their names in the sands of time."
  - 8 Tordoff 1997, pp. 49, 58, 62-63.
  - 9 Ifeka-Moller 1975, pp. 127-57; Akosua 1977, pp. 1-14; Sweetman 1984; Kanogo 1987; Bohannan and Curtin 1988, pp. 373-74; Chiabi 1989, pp. 170-99; Chiabi 1990, pp. 24-41; Iliffe 1995, p. 212, 229-33; Falola 1995; van Allen 1997; Milne 1999, pp. 379-82; Geiger 1999, p. 331; Sheldon et al 2002, p. 158; Mwangola 2006, pp. 6-7; Odotei 2006, p. 81; Boahen 2008, p. 28.
  - 10 Carton 2006, p. 85.
  - 11 Kisiang'ani 2006, p. 12.
  - 12 Chapman 1989, pp. 187-88.
  - 13 Ifeka-Moller 1975, pp. 127-57; Kanogo 1987; van Allen 1997 and Mahamane 2008.
  - 14 Nkwain 1958; Ritzenthaler 1960; Nkwi 1985; Shanklin 1990; Konde 1990; Jua 1993; Awasom 2002; Gam Nkwi 2003; Kah 2004a; Diduk 2004.
  - 15 Kah 2004b, p. 125.
  - 16 Jua 1993; Kah 2004a and 2008; Gam Nkwi 2003; Diduk 2004.
  - 17 Amadiume 2006, p. 26.
  - 18 Nkwain 1958; Diduk 1989, 2004; Nkwi 1976, 1985; Kah 2004a, 2008; Gam Nkwi 2003; Westerman.
  - 19 Ifeka-Moller 1975, pp. 127-57; AKosua 1977, pp. 1-14; Oduyoye 1979, pp. 9-14; Manuh, pp. 50-66; Boaten 1992, pp. 90-100; van Allen 1997; Bastian 2002, pp. 260-81; Odotei 2006; Fayorsey 2006, pp. 651-62.

- 20 Nkwain 1958; Ritzenthaler 1960; Nkwi 1976, 1985; Diduk 1989, 2004; Shanklin 1990; Konde 1990; Chilver 1992; Jua 1993; Awasom 2002, 2006; Westerman; Gam Nkwi 2003; Kah 2004a, 2008, forthcoming.
- 21 It is worth noting that German Kamerun was divided unequally between Britain and France after the defeat of Germany during the First World War. Approximately one-fifth of German Kamerun was taken over by Britain and was administered within the British colony of Nigeria as separate administrative units. While British Northern Cameroons was governed from Northern Nigeria, British Southern Cameroons was administered from Southern and subsequently Eastern Nigeria. Following the UN organized plebiscite of 11 February 1961, the northern portion voted for integration with Nigeria and the southern portion for reunification with the French sphere which had obtained its independence on 1 January 1960 to form the Federal Republic of Cameroon.
- 22 Roberts 1997, p. 195.
- 23 Bernault 2006, p. 210.
- 24 Bernault 2006, p. 210.
- 25 Bernault 2006, p. 217.
- 26 Roberts 1997, p. 195.
- 27 Connerton 1989, p. 74.
- 28 Smith 1997, pp. 184-86.
- 29 Crawford 1984, p. 80; Bordo, 1993; Davis 1997, p. 2.
- 30 Davis 1997, p. 7.
- 31 Frank 1990, p. 133.
- 32 Fatton 1995, p. 86.
- 33 Allman 2004, p. 2.
- 34 Veit-Wild and Naguschewski 2005, pp. xiii-xiv.
- 35 Warnier 1993, pp. 306-07.
- 36 Personal Communication, January 12, 2009.
- 37 Personal Communication, January 8, 2009.
- 38 Chilver 1992; Awasom 2002, 2006; Diduk 2004.
- 39 Allman 2004, p. 2.
- 40 Awasom 2002, p. 2. Bamenda occupies an important place in the history of Cameroon. It developed as a trade center and evolved to become the administrative headquarters of the North West Region. It is one of the largest towns in Cameroon. During the colonial period, it became an important town for the party politics that challenged the policy of integration of British Southern Cameroons with Nigeria. In 1985, the ruling Cameroon Peoples Democratic Movement (CPDM) was born on the ashes of the defunct Cameroon National Union (CNU). Co-incidentally, Bamenda is also the birth place of the opposition Social Democratic Front (SDF), which was launched May 26, 1990. Since the re-introduction of

multiparty politics in the 1990s, Bamenda has remained the hotbed of the political opposition, with the *takembeng* women organization playing an important role.

- 41 Gam Nkwi 2003, pp. 158-59; Kah 2008, p. 15.
- 42 Personal Communication, January 3, 2009.
- 43 Personal Communication, March 1, 1997.
- 44 Diduk 2004, pp. 32-34.
- 45 Gam Nkwi 2003, p. 163.
- 46 Rubin 1971: 71-88; Ngoh 2001: 122-44; Kah 2003: 103-25; and Kah forthcoming.
- 47 Gam Nkwi 2006, p. 65.
- 48 Olusoji 2007, p. 63.
- 49 Discussion with Kaifetai, Bu Village, 22 December 2000.
- 50 Mbunda 2008, p. 23.
- 51 Through oral interviews in the field, the people argue that if the women revolt lasted that long, it was because the colonial authorities undermined their influence.
- 52 Awasom 2002, p. 4.
- 53 Gam Nkwi 2003; Kah 2003.
- 54 Kah 2004, p. 32.
- 55 Nkwain 1958; Gam Nkwi, 2003.

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# Nigeria's Fourth Republic and the Challenge of a Faltering Democratization

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**Abstract:** Nigeria's present democratization, which culminated in the country's Fourth Republic on May 29, 1999, started amidst great hope and expectations. Although the military regime that mid-wived the process could not significantly convince the generality of the citizens on its success, a huge section of the populace still believed it could herald the dawn of good governance in the country. Disturbingly, twelve years after the commencement of democratization in Nigeria the political landscape is yet to show clear evidences of good governance. The rule of law is merely pronounced, elections and electoral processes are subverted, and political parties and other important public institutions are manipulated in favor of the privileged few. This essay critically examines the probable sources and dimensions of the impediments confronting the democratic desires of Nigeria and its people who often proclaim their preference for democracy. The research methodology is both descriptive and analytical, while the framework of analysis is eclectic. It combines the explanations offered in Max Weber's (1975) concept of patrimonialism with such others as Ekeh's "two publics" (1975), the prebendalist perspective of Joseph (1991) and the World Bank's "state capture" (2000). In conclusion, it suggests that the state and its institutions in Nigeria need to be strengthened for democracy to thrive in this country. In the light of this, it is noted that although the role of leaders or "who" is in charge cannot be underestimated, the "how" should be emphasized more.

## Introduction

Nigeria's Fourth Republic, which has witnessed four general elections (1999, 2003, 2007, and 2011), is yet to show profound evidence of a growing democracy. All of these elections were marked with controversies, just as their processes and end products encountered credibility and legitimacy crises. Obviously, all of these account for the lack of appropriate policy formulation and effective implementation that are needed for the improvement of the standard of living of the people and development of the country as a whole. The net effect is that the ordinary citizens seem to have gradually lost hope in the system that replaced the military regime, while the rulers and supposed representatives of the people— who live in opulence that does not conform to the current economic realities in the country— seem less bothered. Apparently, it

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may take some time to feel the full impact of the slight improvement recorded in the conduct of the 2011 general elections.

Can Nigeria's presently faltering democratization facilitate true democracy in the country? What led to the gradual squandering of the initial hope and expectations that accompanied the process in the late 1990s? Can the process be remedied? What significant roles can the present political institutions and the individual beneficiaries play? Can civil society groups and other non-governmental organizations re-enact their activities that contributed to the fall of past military regimes? These are some of the questions that this paper sets out to answer. In addition to these introductory remarks, the paper has four sections: conceptual clarifications, the Nigerian state and politics in theoretical perspective, the experience of the Fourth Republic, and concluding remarks.

### Conceptual Clarifications

The concept of democratization, which is our main focus in this paper, is well covered in the extant literature. Apparently most of these existing works, especially since the mid-80s in southern Europe and Latin America, and from the 1990s onward for the African continent, emphasize a common trend in the sense that democratization is a process that implies a series of continuous actions and changes. Remarkably, these are geared toward the replacement of an existing order or system of authoritarian and undemocratic rule with one that is participatory and democratic in nature.

More explicitly, Gunther *et al.* (1995) contend that the democratization process has three phases: the fall of the authoritarian regime, consolidation, and enduring democracy. Obviously, the foregoing opinion and similar others do not specify a time frame for the actualization of the three highlighted phases. It, therefore, means that the peculiarities in each system would play a profound role in the process of actualization. In the case of Nigeria, the slow pace of the process raises doubt in the minds of the generality of the people who, for instance, are confounded as to why such basic aspects of democracy as elections and legislative duties still lack significant purposiveness, ten years after the Fourth Republic commenced. Additionally, the executive arms at different levels of government have also performed so abysmally that discerning minds now wonder how long it will take democracy to flourish in the country. Indeed, the observation as to whether the democratization process in Africa is "merely political liberalization, or genuinely a democratic transition" seems to aptly capture the Nigerian situation at the moment.<sup>1</sup>

Political liberalization is, undoubtedly, part of the democratization process, but it is susceptible to dangerous reverses.<sup>2</sup> Even as the present process in Nigeria is yet to manifest any strong evidence of relapse, it is worrisome that the democratic space is not expanding or deepening as rapidly as expected. Some of the areas where the democratic ethos is visibly lacking include the scant regard for the rule of law or constitutional rule; stifling of critics and opposition, especially from other political parties, thus hindering effective multipartyism; controversial and fraudulent elections; and political corruption. Although the effects of the foregoing factors vary, their combination, in positive terms, vitalizes democracy. For instance, while the existence of a viable opposition makes an alternative choice possible, sacrosanct

elections serve the purpose of the driving force for the actualization of alternative choice. They, just like other factors, are the linchpins of democracy. For now, the slow pace of democratization in Nigeria, in spite of the profound pro-democracy activism in the aftermath of the 1993 annulment and the conduct of four general elections in 1999, 2003, 2007, and 2011, clearly exposes a process that probably commenced with great deformities. In this sense, the entire process, regardless of the amount of efforts, might produce insignificant positive results. It is, perhaps, another example of "a long journey with a small miracle."<sup>3</sup> For a better understanding of the peculiarities of the challenges confronting Nigeria's democratization, we need to examine critically the nature of the Nigerian state and its politics.

### **The Nigerian State and its Politics in Theoretical Perspective**

The roots of Nigeria's politics are well entrenched in its colonial history. The main elements in the country's socio-economic and political fortune and misfortune, as argued in several scholarly works, have helped to establish that the probability of Nigeria's existence, in its present form, is quite low if not for the superior fire power and diplomacy of the colonialists. This, they attributed to the existence of diverse ethnic nationalities, which were forcefully amalgamated in 1914. In essence, the colonial state and its successor had no legitimating ideals. It was, therefore, not surprising that authoritarianism became its major defining character. On the other hand, it also helped in raising ethnic consciousness and the salience of the ethnic factor, but mostly in negative perspectives. Scholarly works that have sufficiently discussed all of these include Coleman (1958), Crowder (1962), Schwarz (1965), Lewis (1965), Sklar (1966), and Dudley (1973) among others. Similarly, Ekeh (1975), in his seminal essay on the concept of the two publics, crystallized the negative effects of colonialism and primordialism on the socio-political development of Nigeria.

Weber (1948) had much earlier adopted patrimonialism for the explanation of similar challenges, albeit on a larger scale. The patrimonial perspective has also been adopted variously as decentralized patrimonialism, neo-patrimonialism, and the patrimonial administrative state by such scholars as Theobald (1982), Callaghy (1987) and Ikpe (2000) for explanations on Nigeria's predicament. In another vein, Joseph (1991) also adapted the prebendalist perspective to further explain the dynamics of socio-political behaviour in Nigeria's public life. In all, the dangers associated with the political tendencies that these scholars highlighted include clientelism, godfatherism, nepotism, administrative inefficiency, political corruption, poverty, and political instability.

Hope was once again raised with the euphoric reintroduction of civilian rule in 1999. This was expected to serve as a new beginning and as an end to the long period of military rule and its characteristics such as intimidation, personalization, egoism, debauchery, sycophancy, and poverty. Amazingly, the situation has not significantly changed. In our own opinion, this can partly be linked to the "pacted nature of the process which mid-wived the present democratization in the country."<sup>4</sup> Invariably, most of the conceptualizations by these scholars point to the incapacitation of the state in Nigeria by the officials in charge of various public institutions and their sponsors, the godfathers. For a better understanding, we may situate all

these explanations within the context of such relatively more recent conceptualizations as the social closure and state capture. According to Parkin, social closure is:

The process by which social collective seeks to maximize rewards by restricting access to resources and opportunities to a limited circle of eligibles. This entails the singling out of certain physical attributes as the justificatory basis of exclusion. Virtually, all group attributes – race, language, social origin, religion – may be seized upon provided it can be used for the monopolization of specific, usually economic, opportunities.... Its purpose is always the closure of social and economic opportunities to outsiders.<sup>5</sup>

In contemporary Nigeria, this practice of social closure is carried on with little or no restriction because the actors have, more than ever before, seized the machinery of the state for their own interest. It is in this sense that the explanations in the concept of state capture can be adopted. According to the World Bank, state capture stands for:

The actions of individuals, groups or firms both in public and private sectors to influence the formation of laws, regulations, decrees and other government policies to their own advantage as a result of the illicit and non-transparent provision of private benefits to public officials.<sup>6</sup>

While such institutions as the legislature, executive, judiciary, and regulatory agencies represent the structures that are seized or captured, the captors are private firms, political leaders, political parties, and other narrow interest groups.

The main thesis in the foregoing explanations on the nature of the Nigerian state and its politics can be summarized in two parts. First, “ethnic consciousness and, by extension, ethnic politics is mostly exploited by the modern day Nigerian political class for its own selfish interest.”<sup>7</sup> In the second place, these activities of transactional and predatory political and economic leaders are possible largely because of the weak nature of the state, especially exemplified by its rapidly eroded autonomy and functionality. Furthermore, the second point explains why the “beneficiaries of the state’s loss of its moderating role” may never willingly work for its restoration, as the weakening effects of their activities on the democratization process clearly show.<sup>8</sup>

### **The Experience of the Fourth Republic**

A key aspect of the eclectic framework of analysis that is adopted in this study is its emphasis on certain exclusionary tendencies that ensure that the entire public policy process functions largely in the interest of the privileged few. The Abubakar transition program that gave birth to the Fourth Republic, not surprisingly, exhibited these traits in many ways. In the first major assignment of the transition program, for example, the draft of the constitution was considered and approved by the military populated Provisional Ruling Council (PRC). It should be noted that neither the membership nor the professional skill of this body qualified it to perform such a sensitive democratic exercise. Thereafter, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the body saddled with the responsibility of supervising the entire electoral process, was put in place. Obviously, the formation of this body was also faulty, mainly because its members

were chosen not necessarily on merit but, most probably, based on political connections or expediencies. Similarly, the registration of the first three political parties, the People's Democratic Party (PDP), All People's Party (APP), and Alliance for Democracy (AD), that was INEC's first major assignment was widely criticized for its restrictive, selective, and discriminatory character. Nonetheless, it should be noted that PDP and APP appeared to have sufficiently satisfied the electoral requirement of physical presence in the thirty-six states of the federation. It should be noted that such radical political associations as Gani Fawehinmi's National Conscience Party (NCP), Balarabe Musa's People's Redemption Party (PRP), and some others were not registered until 2003, when the political landscape was further liberalized by a judicial pronouncement on the registration of political parties.

Apparently, the first three political parties lacked significant ideological differences just as they did not have sufficiently convincing manifestos. It is in the light of this that Obi noted that they were probably registered to merely pursue an unwritten agenda between the various factions of the hegemonic elite, which was "to repossess power from the military, and a geopolitical power shift from the North to the South."<sup>9</sup> In fact, the logic of this assertion can further be established by referring to the fact that the AD, the only southwestern Nigerian dominated party at that time, was hurriedly approved for registration on the last day of the exercise. Certainly, all of these were in line with the need to launder the military's battered image and, probably, redeem Nigeria's identity as a pariah nation as at that time. The self-inflicted image problem of the military was, however, different from another interest of its political arm. Essentially, this had to do with the protection of the fortunes acquired by many retired army generals, especially those who were in government or indirectly connected to government between 1985 and 1999, when participation in the governance of the country provided huge opportunities for illicit wealth.

In the light of all of these, the Abubakar regime, after the well-publicized strategic meeting of all former military heads of state (except Olusegun Obasanjo and Muhammadu Buhari), retired army generals, and ex-police chiefs that it convened on October 3, 1998, embarked on a search for a candidate with "national credentials." Perhaps it was no coincidence that General Obasanjo, the only southerner out of the two former heads of state absent at the strategic meeting, eventually emerged as the presidential candidate of the winning PDP in 1999. It was not surprising that the initial opposition from the Group of 34 (G34), the originators of PDP, was not formidable enough to stop the choice of Obasanjo. Undoubtedly, it did not surprise any discerning mind to see the domination of the list of PDP's financiers by such retired generals as Lt. General T.Y. Danjuma, Major General Alli Mohammed Gusau, Lt. General I. Wushishi, General I.B. Babangida, and several others.<sup>10</sup>

With everything seemingly in place, it looked set for Obasanjo's electoral victory as well as for other PDP candidates at other electoral levels across the country. There were slight differences in other areas outside the presidency, however, particularly where the APP and AD had greater influence. Remarkably, this setting further fuelled skepticism and attracted criticisms from different sections of the society. In fact, an election monitor in 1999 observed that: "No one had any illusion that anything but high-stakes bargaining would determine the structures of powers in the civilian government. Elections would influence this process to the extent that the crowd influences a soccer match."<sup>11</sup>

More than a decade after this assertion, Nigeria's democratization that has since witnessed four general elections and several others at different levels has not shown any remarkable improvement. Rather, elections have over the years become more controversial, public institutions increasingly manipulated, and the generality of the citizens impoverished. We shall discuss all of these by concentrating on three key areas that should assist in understanding the persistent threats confronting the Fourth Republics faltering democratization. These are:

- Institutions, which pretend to be democratic but lack the basic ingredients of democracy. They include INEC, political parties, the legislature, and so forth.
- Political elites who can no longer empathize with the electorate because they "are too far removed from the realities of their environment and have total disregard for those they are supposed to serve."<sup>12</sup>
- A despondent electorate that is increasingly forced into sycophancy and higher criminalities because of poverty and intolerable standards of living.

It should be noted that the first key area on our list is central to the development of any society in the contemporary world, while the second and third should assist us in understanding how the reciprocal exchanges between leaders and followers can catalyze development in a country like Nigeria with her failing public institutions.

Perhaps the most important institution in Nigeria's present democratization in terms of electoral administration is the INEC. This is mainly because of its sensitive assignment, which includes the registration of political parties and the monitoring of their financial activities but more importantly the conduct of elections for various political offices. These include the supervision of party primaries and the actual conduct of general elections. The INEC's performance in all of these functions since 1999 has been abysmal. It should be noted that the INEC did not appropriately sanction any of the political parties for their primaries that were most of the time scarcely democratic in nature. It is not surprising that most of these political parties that suffered from a lack of internal democracy have been unable to imbibe a democratic ethos at higher levels. In addition, most of these parties do not publish their financial activities, including campaign and elections funding, as regularly as required by the electoral laws. Incidentally, elections and campaign finance has been discovered to be one of the greatest sources of abuse and impunity in the country's Fourth Republic.<sup>13</sup> In this connection, it is appropriate to recall some of the activities of political godfathers and election financiers especially in the PDP whose electoral slates, for obvious reasons, are the most attractive. While the governorship tickets of the party in Edo and Ekiti States were, for instance, given to those who did not win the primaries before the 2007 elections, the candidacy for the same office in Rivers State was awarded to a candidate who did not participate in the exercise. In the latter case, Honourable Rotimi Amaechi, who was illegally prevented from contesting in the 2007 exercise, was declared the governor by the elections tribunal about a year after. Similarly, Senator Ifeanyi Araraume from Anambra State was also allowed to contest the senatorial elections, in 2007, only after the court intervention that returned his ticket, which he had earlier won in the PDP primaries.

None of these activities, however, exposed the INEC's abysmal performance as much as the conduct of general elections since 1999. In the controversial 2007 general elections that were followed by the court ordered re-run exercises in such states as Kogi, Adamawa, Osun, and

Ekiti, the electoral body displayed incompetence and, sometimes outright bias. Perhaps there is no better evidence for this than the open cases of ballot box snatching, falsification of results and other forms of electoral malpractices, many of which were confirmed in places like Edo and Ondo States where the initial governorship results were overturned in favor of Adams Oshiomhole and Olusegun Mimiko respectively in 2009. Similarly, the results of the governorship elections in Ekiti and Osun States were later overturned in 2010 in favor of Dr. Kayode Fayemi and Rauf Aregbesola respectively. It should also be noted that in all of these, the police as an institution is also constantly indicted for its ineffective role that compounded whatever challenges the INEC probably encountered from the exploitative acts of the political class.

In a similar vein, the open declaration by President Yar'Adua, shortly after the inauguration of his administration in 2007, that the process of his election was faulty and the establishment of the Uwais Electoral Reforms Commission before Yar'Adua's death also helped to confirm that the INEC did not sufficiently perform its role. In another related matter, several of the reports and comments of election observers from within and outside the country supported the shoddy and controversial nature of most of these exercises. While the European Union (EU) criticized the INEC for "usurping the role of Nigerians in determining the legitimacy of the outcome of the election," others noted that the whole exercise "fell far short of basic international standards."<sup>14</sup> In view of the bloody violence and rigging of monumental proportions, the *Vanguard* newspaper concluded in part that "given the lack of transparency and evidence of fraud, particularly in the result collation process, there can be no confidence in the result of these elections."<sup>15</sup> Obviously, all of these and the unending squabbles over the verdicts of the various election tribunals across the country constitute great challenges for Nigeria's democratization as well as threats to national cohesion and stability.

The legislature is another weak public institution whose lackluster performance over the last decade has been a source of worry. In view of its central role, particularly being the most distinctive feature that differentiates democracy in Nigeria from other forms of government that the country has had, we shall critically examine two key aspects of its activities since 1999: policy formulation and oversight duties. In terms of policy formulation, it should be noted that the quality of life and standard of living of the entire citizenry can easily be traced to the type of policies formulated by the legislature, while the oversight functions of this same body requires it to monitor and ensure that the executive arm implements the policies efficiently and effectively. It may be appropriate to evaluate the effectiveness of policies in Nigeria by closely looking at the conditions of physical infrastructure and social services in the country in the last decade. The obvious decay in the health sector; collapse of education; deplorable conditions of road networks; increasing insecurity from robbery, abduction, and other polymorphous violence; scarcity of potable water; and the collapse of the remnant manufacturing sector among others are evidence of the rapidly deteriorating living conditions of ordinary Nigerians. Although a school of thought is of the opinion that the ailing economy bequeathed by the military to civilians in 1999 requires a lot of corrective measures to facilitate the resuscitation of decrepit physical infrastructure and social amenities, many aspects of the activities of the legislators and other political elites do not portray them as the change agents. We can cite several instances to support this assertion.

First, the legislative arms at different governmental levels have since 1999 been frequently engaged with the executive in squabbles over their sitting allowances and other such mundane issues. It is on record that at the national and regional levels the demands by legislators are too often completely out of tune with the country's economic realities. It should, for instance, be noted that legislative duties at the National Assembly were suspended for several weeks in 1999 before it was resolved that each legislator could have between 14,000 and 21,000 naira (\$156 to \$234) as a daily accommodation allowance.<sup>16</sup> The "furniture allowance palaver" in which the legislators demanded to equip their new official quarters by awarding the contracts by themselves also erupted before the end of their first year in office. This was subdued by the huge negative public opinion and subtle "blackmail" from the executive. More than ten years later, there are still strong evidences of unrealistic and unreasonable demands from lawmakers. For example, in May 2010, a majority of the legislators in the lower chamber of the National Assembly demanded a new quarterly allocation of N42 million (\$277,000) each. This is apart from their monthly salary of about N1.3 million (\$8,600) each. Obviously, the request of the upper chamber of the same Assembly should be higher and thus more provocative in a country where the vast majority of ordinary citizens earn less than \$2 or N300 per day! Incidentally, in view of the fact that such allowances were not considered in the 2010 budget of the National Assembly, the most probable way to accommodate this may be to collapse the capital vote of the chambers. In other words, no capital project shall be executed by the legislative arm in the year.<sup>17</sup> Surprisingly, all of these seem not enough to discourage lawmakers from various forms of malpractice such as contract scams, bribery in connection with oversight functions, and sundry activities that have led to the removal of most of the principal officers in the various legislative chambers across the country between 1999 and 2010. In a similar vein, it should be noted that although prosecution is still ongoing, Dimeji Bankole, the immediate past Speaker of the House of Representatives was arrested in June 2011, shortly after the expiration of his tenure, over serious allegations of abuse of office and financial mismanagement.

Secondly, it is most disturbing that the annual budget, both at the national and regional levels, is unnecessarily delayed by the legislators during the statutory process of approval. Right from the days of President Obasanjo up to the time of the late President Yar'Adua, no national budget was approved before the end of March in any particular year that such budget was meant for. Incidentally, most of these delays were caused by the legislators' regular requests for upward review of allocations directly affecting their allowances and other privileges. At the regional level, the case of Anambra State may serve a useful purpose for illustration. In 2008, Governor Peter Obi presented a budget proposal of N84.2 billion (\$706 million) to the states House of Assembly, but this was slashed to N57.6 billion (\$483 million) by the latter's Committee on Finance and Appropriation.<sup>18</sup> In other societies, such a reduction could be for altruistic purposes; but in this case, just as in some other states since 1999, it seemed not. It should, for instance, be noted that while the reduction affected recurrent expenditure that was cut down from N24.2 billion (\$203 million) to N21.9 billion (\$184 million), and capital expenditure from N60 billion (\$503 million) to N35.7 billion (\$299 million), it curiously increased the allocation to the State House of Assembly by more than fourfold, from N284 million (\$2.4 million) to N1.235 billion (\$10.4 million) without cogent reasons. The legislature is, however, not alone in such acts of insensitivity. The governors, ministers, and

local government chairmen constantly evoke the negative memories of military rule when the executive, with its huge vote to disburse, was the most attractive arm of government. Up till now, the president and governors still have access to certain unspecified amounts of money that they refer to as security votes, which they often spend without giving an account.

In fact, at one point in 2009, then President Yar'Adua called for a cut in the salaries and allowances of political office holders. From all indications, even as this call was not implemented during Yar'Adua lifetime, it confirmed that the huge salaries and allowances collected by the political class were absurd. In a like manner, the executive can also be faulted for the non-implementation or poor implementation of the national budget. In 2008, for instance, the Federal Ministry of Health was in the news over the N400 million (\$2.7 million) unspent budget allocation scandal. Having ended the year 2007 without fully implementing the budget, the then minister, Professor Adenike Grange, and some other top ministry officials with the connivance of the Senate Committee on Health, were alleged to have shared the unspent allocation. Investigations into the matter are yet to be concluded more than three years after.

More disturbingly, the legislators have over the years also exploited the constitutional provision on the impeachment of an erring chief executive, just as their counterparts in the executive do with the immunity clause in the 1999 Constitution. In the case of the legislative arm, it is confounding that both Presidents Obasanjo and Yar'Adua were severally threatened with impeachment over the poor implementation of constituency projects, probably because this could negatively affect the image of the legislature, while the latter overlooked a more serious constitutional violation by Yar'Adua between 2009 and 2010. The violation was in connection with the vacuum created in the presidency when President Yar'Adua travelled out of the country in November 2009 for medical attention without appropriately informing the National Assembly or handing over to the then Vice President Goodluck Jonathan. The crisis was eventually resolved through political intrigues, which included the adoption of an interview in Saudi Arabia granted by the then ailing president instead of the letter of notification as required by the constitution. It also included the invocation of the doctrine of necessity to proclaim Goodluck Jonathan as acting president in February 2010. Even then, the ailing president was brought back into the country and kept incommunicado by relations and close aides until his death in May 2010. Yet, it appeared not to be any serious problem or threat to Nigeria's democratization in the face of the ruling PDP. To the party and its important stakeholders, it seemed all of this was merely a party or "family" affair which the PDP-dominated National Assembly would be able to resolve to the party's best interest.

In another vein, the seeming unwillingness of the National Assembly to adopt the recommendations of the Justice Muhammadu Uwais Electoral Reforms Panel constituted a serious threat to the country's preparation for fresh elections in 2011. The adoption of the recommendations could have significantly helped to put in place the necessary framework to resolve all issues concerning election petitions before a candidate is sworn into office. By this, the practice whereby an illegitimate occupant is allowed to remain in office for up to three out of the four-year tenure, in some instances, shall be resolved. It should be noted that the present arrangement, which allows a beneficiary of a fraudulent election to have access to state resources that he deploys to defend such a "stolen" mandate, portends great dangers to the democratic process. This is because it indirectly encourages every contestant to adopt all

means, fair or foul, to gain access to office. Similarly, the adoption of the Panel's recommendations would most probably further insulate the judiciary against total descent into the murky water of politics and the corruptive influence of the highly monetized political landscape to which the long drawn out legal battles on election petitions expose the judiciary. So far, the judicial arm of government has won accolades for its role in sustaining a modicum of hope in Nigeria's democratization. Apart from the several election related cases that have been overwhelmingly applauded, the judiciary has also helped in resolving many inter and intra-governmental conflicts. These included the case between the Federal Government and Lagos State over the latter's withheld allocations under Governor Bola Tinubu; the issue of minimum wage; the illegal termination of the appointment of some lecturers at the University of Ilorin; and several others. The judiciary, with the support of the National Judicial Council (NJC), has also appropriately dealt with erring judges and other judicial officers by dismissing or prematurely retiring such individuals who threatened the democratization process. In this connection, we can cite the case of Justices Wilson Egbo-Egbo, Stanley Nnaji and Chris Selong who were dismissed for official corruption in 2006.<sup>19</sup> Others, such as Justice Naaron and his team that initially looked into the petitions from the 2007 general elections in Osun State, are still being investigated.

We can now return to the list of parameters from an earlier part of this section by linking our explanations on the abysmal performances of the key organs of government in a democracy with the attitude of most officials in charge of these institutions. It should be noted, for instance, that the ostentatious and provocative lifestyles of many of the country's political elites and other categories of public officials portray them as being too far removed from the realities of their environment. In simple terms, it clearly shows that most of these people in the privileged class can no longer empathize with the electorate that they are supposedly representing. Undoubtedly, the abysmal performance of the democratization process, in terms of the economic well being of the large population of ordinary citizens, confirms the nexus between wealth creation and good governance, especially in a democratic system. It also negates the more "solidaristic" character of past civilian administrations in the country and the general communal nature of African traditional societies.

It is, therefore, not surprising that many ordinary Nigerians over the last decade or so have been pilloried into sycophancy, while some others are engaged in armed robbery, abduction, kidnapping, electoral violence, oil bunkering, and illicit drug trafficking among other criminal activities that have risen phenomenally over the course of the decade. Undoubtedly, all of these can also be linked to different reports on the national economy and the general living conditions of Nigerians. The Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), for example, reported that 820 companies either closed shop or suspended production between 2000 and 2008. About twelve months later, 37 additional companies joined the list.<sup>20</sup> In a similar vein, UNICEF reported in 2009 that ten million Nigerian children were out of school, while the United Nations Human Development Report in 2009 ranked Nigeria 158<sup>th</sup> out of 182 countries surveyed. The global agency used such parameters as life expectancy, education, and income and purchasing power.

In a nutshell, Nigeria's twelve-year democratization is yet significantly to fulfill the hope and aspirations of the generality of the citizens. In fact, it seems to have created more anxieties in such areas as security of life and property, electoral violence, and the national economy.

Remarkably, the evidently slow pace of preparations for the 2011 general elections by the INEC, the ruling PDP's controversial zoning arrangement, bomb blasts, abductions, assassinations and even the apocalyptic prediction by American Ambassador John Campbell that Nigeria may disintegrate before 2015 for political reasons, combined to constitute another "acid test" for Nigeria's democratization process. Even with the evident improvement in the outcome of the 2011 general elections, which local and international observers applauded and which, unlike previous exercises in the country's relatively recent past, did not attract too many petitions, the election backlash, particularly in some parts of Northern Nigeria, still constitutes an imminent danger to the democratization process. Until all of these are effectively addressed, Nigeria's democratization and developmental processes and, indeed, governance in general remain threatened.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The main thesis in this paper is that Nigeria's twelve-year old democratization is faltering. Rather than maturing with time, the country's fourth democratic experience has continuously shown evidences of a possible relapse into its immediate past autocratic experience. Although the most recent electoral exercise in the country, the April/May 2011 general elections, showed elements of improvement and possibly restoration of hope in the democratization process, other aspects of public life such as political violence and corruption still constitute great threats. Obviously, the initial high hopes and expectations could have been sustained and probably have led to democratic consolidation if the autonomy and functionality of the modern state and its agencies had been strengthened in contemporary Nigeria. Troublingly, not only is democracy threatened in the country, but Nigeria's corporate existence is also endangered by the activities of many influential public officials who seem to be above the law. Just as many of these well-connected, elected, and appointed public officials as well as their associates escape reproach for different offenses, many of the ordinary citizens who increasingly perpetrate other forms of crime that further incapacitate the state also escape from the law. Incidentally, this has over the years also become very weak in Nigeria. In order to address effectively these negative impacts on Nigeria's fragile state and public institutions on democracy, civil society groups and other professional bodies that actively participated in the termination of military rule in the country should rise up again. Similarly, the role of transformational leaders who, preferably, should be identified at the local community levels cannot be overemphasized in Nigeria's democratization and developmental processes.

### **Notes**

- 1 Diouf 1998, p. 1.
- 2 Ibrahim 2003, p. 1.
- 3 Friedman 1994.
- 4 Yagboyaju 2008a, p. 44.

- 5 Parkin 1982, p. 175.
- 6 World Bank 2000, p. xv.
- 7 Egwu, 2006, p. 14.
- 8 Yagboyaju 2008b, p. 5.
- 9 Obi 2000, p. 76.
- 10 Adekanye 2005, p. 12.
- 11 Kew 1999, p. 33.
- 12 Abiola 2006, p. 2.
- 13 Yagboyaju 2009.
- 14 Okunade 2008, p. 11.
- 15 *Vanguard* August 23, 2007.
- 16 Naira have been converted into dollars for the years indicated for specific naira amounts, using the currency convertor at <http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>.
- 17 *The Punch* May 24, 2010, p. 6.
- 18 *The Punch* April 21, 2008, p. 14.
- 19 *The Punch* June 21, 2006, p. 14.
- 20 *Sunday Punch* May 30, 2010, p. 10.

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*Sunday Punch*. 30 May 2010: 10.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**Tosha Grantham. 2009. *Darkroom: Photography and New Media in South Africa since 1950*. Richmond: Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. 150 pp.**

**Erin Haney. 2010. *Photography and Africa*. London: Reaktion Books. 192 pp.**

These two works, each by independent curators, attempt a synthesis of the studies of photography – of, by, and for Africans – which have primarily emerged over the past twenty years. While quite different in their scope – *Darkroom* is an extended museum catalog; *Photography and Africa* contains several lengthy treatments of specific subthemes – they both provide essential substance for readers to understand why Enwezor and Zaya concluded, “No media has been more instrumental in creating a great deal of visual fictions of the African continent than photography” (Haney, p. 8). At the same time, both works illustrate how photographers purposefully created visual images that challenged a variety of cultural and political “fictions.”

*Darkroom* begins with several curatorial essays, each equipping the reader in differing ways for the images to follow. Tosha Grantham, the primary force behind this exhibition at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, begins with a brief examination of the various exhibit sections and the logic(s) for their selection. Grouped into eight thematic sections and chronologically ordered (although frequently overlapping), the exhibit features what could be considered three “generations” of photographers working in South Africa: those born in the 30s-40s whose work featured prominently in publications such as *Drum* magazine; those born in the 50s-60s whose work brought the political realities of high *apartheid* to international attention; and those born in the 70s who have expanded the realm of photography to include a variety of video installation art and computer/digital techniques.

Isolde Brielmaier’s essay “Africa and Photography: Then, Now, and Next” comprises a useful introduction to the central trends since 1990 in the exhibition of African photography, including significant installations in Johannesburg, Miami, New York, Paris, and Washington, DC. But she also highlights the important tension between approaches that treat photography as art, with the resultant canonical tendency, and those approaches more driven by anthropological enquiry. The first presents photography “as a contemporary technology used by Africans to create new subjectivities and contest stereotypes...,” while the second focuses on “the ways in which photography is practiced and consumed locally...” (Grantham, pp. 11-12).

Tumelo Mosaka’s “South Africa in Focus” briefly covers the roles of photography in South Africa over the past century: the ethnographic work of A.M Duggan-Cronin and documentary style of Leon Levson and Ernest Cole; the photojournalism of *Drum* magazine and the Bang Bang Club; and finally to the photographic and video art of Thando Mama and Robin Rhode. Mosaka also highlights an important aspect of the apartheid era work that dominates the first half of the catalog: namely, that the later photojournalist penchant for capturing the continual

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/pdfs/v12i3aBR.pdf>

violence of apartheid “did as much to deaden the conscience as to arouse it” (Grantham, p. 18). The shots of daily life included in *Darkroom* – e.g. by Ian Berry, David Goldblatt, Alf Kumalo, Santu Mofokeng, and Jürgen Schadeberg - remind us that resistance to oppression does not only occur through irregular protest or violence but also happens almost continuously through various forms of everyday practice.

Haney’s volume also contains a substantial section on South Africa’s activist documentary photography, which she convincingly pairs with turn of the twentieth century images illustrating Belgian atrocities in the Congo Free State. The 1904 photo by missionary Alice Harris, “Nsala of Wala with severed hand and foot of his five year old daughter murdered by ABIR militia,” quietly resonates as powerfully as any of the charged Soweto uprising images produced by Peter Magubane over seventy years later. Despite a connecting thread across many decades, Haney maintains that early images of oppression in the Congo did not produce a local mode of resistance through photography when compared to South Africa, where “photographers worked actively to subvert, document, and upend...” (Haney, p. 91).

*Photography and Africa* begins, however, by tracing the earliest inroads of photography to the coastal entrepôts that predated colonial rule. Recent evidence has challenged the long-held assumption that foreigners comprised all early photographers in these fascinatingly cosmopolitan urban centers, with locally-run studios emerging alongside their European counterparts in West Africa by the 1850s. These early studios maintained a wide range of clientele and adapted their techniques accordingly. So it should come as no surprise that the archival corpus of traveller, missionary, and colonial official photographs differ significantly in subject and composition from those more recently emerging in local family collections.

While the earliest consumers of African studio work remained urban elites – of local and foreign origin – the steady growth of portrait photography over the latter part of the nineteenth century resulted in an eventual “democratization of photography” (Haney, p. 55) of the sort evidenced in South Africa by Santu Mofokeng’s *Black Photo Album/Look at Me* (Grantham, pp. 93, 100). Such portraiture production presents a continuum of control between photographer and subject. On one side, the portraits-turned-postcards so widely circulated in the early twentieth century – e.g. the depiction by “Honest Martha and her Sister” of mission Christianity’s impact in South Africa – “suggest overt power struggles between the subjects and the photographer” (Haney, p. 70). On the other side, later photographers such as Seydou Keita and Malick Sedibé worked with clients to understand desired outcomes, arranging patrons “to their best, most distinct, and idealized effect” (Haney, p. 79).

Both Haney and Grantham conclude their works with sections that introduce and interrogate recent developments of photography in Africa, from changing subject matter to manipulations of new technologies/techniques. For Haney, the trajectory of this process begins quite early, with the influence of photography on drawing, painting, and printmaking in the colonial period. The most durable and widely dispersed evidence of this process surely stems from a single 1913 photo of Sheikh Amadou Bamba which “has spawned a pervasive visual culture of devotion” (Haney, p. 139). Photography also played an influential role in the transformation of commemorative arts in Ghana, Nigeria, and elsewhere. The definitions of

documentary and activist photography have also been challenged by recent works, to the extent that today “there are few relevant distinctions between photographs as art and as socially useful intervention” (Haney, p. 173).

Readers seeking comprehensive treatments of photography in South Africa or the continent more broadly will still need to look beyond these volumes. *Darkroom* is necessarily limited by its essential purpose as an exhibition-specific catalog aimed at a mixture of specialist and general audiences, while the selected key themes of *Photography and Africa* leave some important topics on the margins. Scholars who already possess a richer expertise in the visual anthropology of Africa might find these volumes somewhat lacking in theoretical depth, yet may wish to see them in their collections for the high quality production and numerous beautiful plates. However, those with a serious interest in photography as a global medium who wish to extend their knowledge to Africa will not be disappointed.

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**Sefi Atta. *News from Home*. Northampton, Massachusetts: Interlink Publishing Group, Incorporation, 2010. 293 pp.**

Sefi Atta is a master storyteller and griot. The short story collection *News from Home* is the commencement of a new genre of storytelling which does not adhere to the traditional British canon. There is the distinct genre of the African novel, and now there is the distinct genre of the African short story. Sefi Atta abides in two worlds. The stories of the women in her works relate the conflicting experiences and roles of African women at home and in America. This may result from the fact that the author, Atta, is Bi-Continental in the truest sense of the term. She has a physical residence in Mississippi, but she retains her psychological residency in Nigeria.

*News from Home* beckons you to become immersed in the worlds of different Nigerian women. Some characters are dependent. Other characters are self-reliant. All of the women face challenges which are universally indigenous to women. In the selection “Hailstones on Zamfara,” an abused and battered wife is charged with adultery. The punishment for such a crime is stoning. The wife is physically and spiritually deaf. She has become numbed to silence, unable to respond to the many atrocities that she has suffered over the years. Symbolic is her malady too. She is ‘deaf’ to feeling the pain. Impregnated by an ‘invisible’ lover, this is her single act of defiance. It is an act that may lead to her death, but she is invigorated by her act of rebellion. This selection resonates Atta’s ability to illuminate the plight of the many women, African women included, muffled by chauvinistic traditions. However, the defining difference in the manner of Atta’s characterization is to be found in her ability to assume the full persona of her characters. Thus, she is able to communicate from “within” to the audience “without.” The reader, in return, is thoroughly enthralled and involved in the perils of her female protagonists.

Atta shifts to a male persona in “The Miracle Worker” selection. Makinde, a panel beater is married to a deeply religious Bisi. She tithes faithfully. And she has a prayer request for her husband to attend church service with her. He is adamant; he does not wish to attend church.

Suddenly, a miracle vision is declared. It is cited on Makinde's property. He sees this as an opportunity to make money from the pilgrims that flock to his grounds. With few illusions about faith, religion, or God, he seizes this time as a chance to make money. He extracts money from those who possess blind faith coming to his plot. Fate, however, renders Makinde a lesson regarding his greed. As a result, he must concede and grant his wife's desire that he attend church service. The prayerful, faithful wife comes to the rescue and maintains the balance of the family. In developing this resolution, Atta provides a balanced illustration here of the role of the dutiful wife. She is not always a weak victim that is abused and maligned. She can be savvy and orchestrate positive change in an unwilling subject. Such is the nature of the dutiful, traditional African wife.

The tragic heroines of the stories "The Miracle Worker" and "Hailstones on Zamfara" haunt the reader long after you progress to another selection. Are these women too vulnerable? Are we contributors to their vulnerability because we are idle and seek only to preoccupy ourselves with the trivialities of our safe, Western existence? "Madness in the Family" is a story which prompts you to question the nature your own aspirations. Unbridled ambition can be a dangerous thing. And the simple, short expressions in the selection "Green" illuminates the dual nature that the African permanent resident assumes (involuntarily or voluntarily) to survive in the culture "American." The full cost of such an association (through the eyes of a young girl) is well chronicled within nine pages. Atta resides in America and may know too well the cost of her residency. The selection sheds light upon the crisis and conflict that the African immigrant must face.

Sefi Atta's *News from Home* displays the writer's constant growth and ability to advance to the next perimeter of storytelling. This text will serve as a body or the stories can be communicated within singular units to audiences for pedagogical purposes. One knows that all of the works of this writer (thus far) have all been thoroughly engaging. And if the past is an indicator of the future....the best of Sefi Atta is yet to come.

Rosetta Codling, *Independent Scholar*

**Ivan Bargna. *Africa*. Translated by Rosanna M. Giammanco. Book series "Dictionaries of Civilization Series." N° 6. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008. 385 pp.**

Not really a dictionary in the common A-Z sense, this impressive cultural guide is the English translation of a book initially published in Italy in 2007 (under the title *Africa Nera*). Professor Ivan Bargna aptly presents an overview of the sub-Saharan heritage, arts, and material cultures. This excludes North African countries like Egypt, which is dedicated a whole volume in the same book series ("Dictionaries of Civilization Series").

Unlike most dictionaries, the author avoided the usual alphabetical, chronological, or "country-by-country" approaches; he adopted a thematic presentation of six core sections: (1) some of the peoples or nations from Africa (from the Volta populations to Madagascar); (2) power and society in various African kingdoms and chiefless societies; (3) the divinities and

various examples of African religions; (4) ancestor worship; (5) everyday life; and finally (6) the human habitats. The first section presenting individually the peoples of sub-Saharan Africa is the most detailed, with a thematic presentation, a brief chronology, some examples of their traditions and heritage, and the geographical locations for each ethnic group (pp. 11-111). For instance, a schematic figure presents the worldview and cosmology of the Kongo people (in Central Africa), with a description of "this world" which comprises "God," "Noon," "North," and "Maleness," while "the other world" includes "The Dead," "Midnight," "South," and "Femaleness" (p. 44).

The number of sub-themes and angles in this book are impressive (more than one hundred) and their descriptions are vivid, focusing on ethnic groups, traditions, and mainly the artefacts' social meanings rather than dates, conflicts, aesthetics, or artistic value. Therefore, symbols and emblems are the essential dimensions discussed here in various African manifestations and ceremonies, from body art to the selection of colours in craftworks (p. 77). In fact, the term "Symbol" itself reappears in countless places (pp. 21, 53, 57, 77, 105, 106, 110, 192, 206, 210, 227, 256, 287, 341). Among many examples, the author mentions the case of the Maasai people in Kenya and Eastern Africa, who consider the red color as being "associated with youth and the blood's vital force," but also "the color with which the bodies of the brides and the young initiated are painted" (p. 77). All these accounts and remarks related to symbols and their meanings in specific contexts are the most interesting dimensions of this book. For example, in Nigeria, "Palm-tree nuts symbolize the tie that binds human beings to the god Ifa" (p. 211). Elsewhere, explaining the social significance of food, the author argues that according to the Ivory Coast tradition, "while the mask is the symbol of male power, the spoon is a female insignia" (p. 266).

Texts are concise and clear; images abound, with detailed captions. Color photographs are generally recent; art works are mostly taken from various museum collections (from the Musée du Quai Branly to the British Museum). Among many topics discussed here, one can find "Slavery" (pp. 162-66), signs of "colonialism" (pp. 167-70), "post-colonialism" (pp. 171-74), "images of power" (pp. 175-77), but also griots (bards), clothes, dance, literature, and big cities. This book, however, is not just a testimony of the past and a mourning about some lost traditions: many images and texts related to contemporary visual arts, filmmaking, body art, traditional music, and contemporary music in Africa are to be found here. There are neither a conclusion nor endnotes.

I have three minor quibbles about the publisher's work, even though I consider the University of California Press as the most dynamic academic press in the USA. First, the small size of this pocket book can be frustrating because the images are so fascinating and well selected, but also so small. Perhaps one should understand this reduced format is the condition in order to obtain such a reasonable price for a very rich book. Secondly, the book's title is much too short and does not indicate much about its contents. A subtitle (something like "peoples, arts, and civilizations") would have brought more precision to potential readers and to librarians who try to search for this specific title in an ocean of publications with similar titles. Lastly, the one-page index does not include enough terms, dimensions, names, and entries for such a reference book; in its actual form, this index does not allow the reader to search for a

given country and find all the occurrences in the book. As a consequence, many important themes and keywords are missing in the index. However, the chronology, the bibliography and the list of museums are informative; these addendums bring an international perspective (including sources in various languages). The translation from Italian made by Dr. Rosanna Giammanco is excellent and fluid.

These quibbles apart, Ivan Bargna's *Africa* is clearly a valuable resource for a general audience with an interest for African heritage and cultures. It depicts the richness, pride, diversity, and deepness of the art and material culture in various African regions, avoiding to embrace this whole continent as a monolith or as "an exotic place" with peculiar individuals. Allusions to poverty and diseases are minimal. Undergraduates in search of a possible theme for a dissertation may find here a variety of ideas and topics in a lavish presentation. But its readership should not be limited only to future anthropologists and students in "Primitive Art"; college students and casual readers will find here an excellent introduction to African Studies and ethnology. Public libraries will benefit from it.

Yves Laberge, *Université Laval, Québec, Canada*

**Ama Biney and Adebayo Olukoshi. *Speaking Truth to Power: Selected Pan-African Postcards*. Cape Town: Pambazuka Press, 2010. ix, 248 pp.**

*Speaking Truth to Power: Selected Pan-African Postcards* pays homage to the work and life of Dr. Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem. The book is a collection of Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem's writings. He wrote regularly for Pambazuka news, a progressive Pan-African publisher. The editors have selected articles or "postcards" that reflect Tajudeen's politics and message about the progress of Africa. Tajudeen's source of inspiration and his experience to write about contemporary African issues comes from many sources, among them his commitment to and involvement in a number of international non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations. The book is divided into ten themes, among them "Taking a stand for gender and equality and justice"; "Transforming cultural thought and values"; "Building democratic institutions in Africa"; "Speaking truth to power"; and "Africa and the World". The editors have taken care to organize Tajudeen's writings to represent his legacy and to create a cohesive message on a variety of broad themes including gender issues, leadership, Pan-Africanism, and the appreciation of African culture and language, all with an eye toward advancing the continent today. The preface is written by Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, the former prime minister of Tanzania. He contextualizes Tajudeen's legacy and recounts how Tajudeen's life, through many important positions, made him an important contribution to Africa as a whole and, more specifically, to the Pan-African movement.

This book is not an academic study; rather, it is a compilation of essays and commentary written by an international leader, activist, and scholar. The book has been compiled in such a way as to create a theme, capture the essence of critical issues, and maintain the salience and integrity of each issue discussed. He engages the reader to think about current challenges and conundrums. Each postcard speaks to larger political, social, and economic issues, and

challenges are front and center on the continent. Tajudeen's ideas are democratic and progressive and reflect the present moment of post-colonial Africa during the first decade of the millennium. Tajudeen's body of work is inspiring and motivational, yet critical of Africa's challenges. He is not afraid to challenge traditional social ideas or critique poor leadership. Thus, Tajudeen's work touches sensitive areas of society including language and dressing customs, gender violence, and patriarchal leaders, and his writing and opinions are hard hitting. Contemporary and persistent issues such as the enforcement of laws; the relationship of women and the peasantry to big men; corruption; and the effectiveness of the International Criminal Court are a few examples where Tajudeen is both thoughtful and critical.

As a Pan-Africanist, Tajudeen is comparative in his approach to recognizing issues, similarities, and modeling solutions from other countries. He writes on leadership in Venezuela, the approach to curbing corruption in Asia, and about hurricane Katrina in the United States as a Pan-African issue. Tajudeen's writing engages topics such as democracy both theoretically and practically. Although he is supportive of democracy and human rights, he is observant of the issues and social phenomena that make the practice of democracy and function poorly. Writing on political parties, he asks quite simply "how do political parties contribute to deepening or hindering democracy? ...How do they hinder or enhance the full participation of marginalized groups, be they women, youth, ethnic/religious, or other political minorities? Is democracy better served by national parties or could a case be made for decentralized party organization that may address the political interests of marginalized groups?" (p. 149) As a writer and an activist, Tajudeen stimulates the reader to think critically about Africa's contemporary issues.

The editors who compiled *Speaking Truth to Power* held true to the goal of honoring the legacy of Tajudeen by highlighting his writing, his causes, and his tireless work for unity and progress within Africa. This book is recommended for those seeking snapshots of contemporary African issues. The first decade of the millennium is nicely captured as a critical and political log from an active leader. Several decades from now, this book will still serve as a diary of Africa's birth into the millennium and the tireless work of leaders like Tajudeen. The Millennium Development Goals are discussed in the volume, and whether taking a contemporary look, or a look back several years from now, Tajudeen's evaluation and critique of the development landscape is a useful assessment and marker. The book might also be used as one of several supplements for instructors teaching about some of the major issues covered. The book is readable and accessible, yet stimulating and does not sell the intellectual abilities of the reader short.

Kelli N. Moore, *James Madison University*

**Barbara Bompani and Maria Frahm-Arp. *Development and Politics from Below: Exploring Religious Spaces in the African State*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. xiii, 257pp.**

Religion in Africa plays a central role in every aspect of people's lives. Using Western benchmarks to study African religious experiences has often produced results that do not do

justice to the African experience. The book's contributors seek to answer how different the African religious experience is and how it interplays with politics and development to impact various societies. The focus is on ordinary people who through religion have become agents of positive transformations, which recognized political structures seem to have failed. Professors from diverse disciplines in Europe, United States of America, and Africa shared their thoughts and research on religion, politics, and developmental issues in a 2008 conference with a title similar to that of the book.

The ten chapters are divided into three sections. In Part I, "Challenging the Secular: Religion and Public Spaces," Stephen Ellis is convinced that African states do not share Western concepts of separation between religion and state. Spiritual thoughts supersede the physical. Thus in a real sense, when African religious beliefs are placed beside the West's, the modernity principles that leave out religious roles do not work for Africa. Gerrie ter Haar uses Emmanuel Milingo, the Catholic Archbishop of Lusaka, as a case study to show how religion (Christianity) extract self-help programs to generate change in food production through the Mubliuli Economic Principle. Ter Haars seeks human dignity through self-improvement. Abdulkader Tayob also looks at dignity in religious traditions, spaces, and identities in South Africa by examining the *kramat* burial sites for Muslim saints. Dorothea Schulz accesses Muslim women of Bamako, Mali, and how foreign donors have helped to transformed them over the years. The underlining argument in this chapter is that change through religious activism emanates from self-recognition and mutual group support that does not require an 'other' to dictate the principles and pace.

Part II, "Religion between State and Society," reflects on the carved space of religion that exists between the state and the society and the relationship that accrues from this. Skinner surveys this religious space in Gambia, Ghana, and Sierra Leone in looking at the tremendous growth Islam has attained in exerting its influence into the social (education and health), political and economic public spaces, locally and internationally, thereby becoming more open to secular developments. Ernest Mallya continues with a study of the relationship between faith-based organizations (FBOs), NGOs, and the government in Tanzania and concludes that religious groups are at the mercy of the government, which is appropriating the resources of the FBOs and NGOs. Linda van de Kamp evaluates the Universal Church of Christ in Mozambique to expose the negativity in some religious activities. This church encourages its members to give money to the church, reminiscent of the early Catholic Church selling indulgences. The result is the continual poverty of the congregation while the "men of God" become rich. The emphasis of these chapters is on the religious groups filling the vacuum created by political institutions and helping to foster a new process of advancement for the people. In addition, they espouse that religious activism does sometimes have negative implications even though the intention may be noble.

In Part III, "Health Care Provision: Reflections on Religion," James Cochrane offers a theoretical framework for the study of religions to arrive at a public acceptance of the relationship between religion and politics. Elizabeth Graveling uses the village of Ndwumizili to elaborate on how people alternate between different religions to achieve life's satisfaction,

while Ezra Chitando assesses how the World Council of Churches is dealing with the HIV epidemic in Africa.

The selection of papers in this book all speak to the relationship between religion and development that most Western countries downplay. The contributors have all shown that religion can help bring about development and societal cohesion in instances where politics fail. Using salient information gleaned from books, journal articles, radio broadcasts, interviews, and internet sources, the authors in one voice reiterate the ordinary people's effort at effecting change in their society. The synthesis of all the papers have successfully interrogated and reflected on "the significance of the kinds of public action that manifest themselves in non-Western societies" (p. 3). This is an important contribution for policy makers, development agencies, and religious groups to acquaint themselves with formulating policies that will be beneficial to the people they are serving.

Lady Jane Acquah, *University of Texas at Austin*

**Babacar Camara. *Reason in History: Hegel and Social Changes in Africa*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011. 135 pp.**

"Hegel is dead! Long live Hegel! The ghost of Hegel dominates the hallways, institutions, syllabi, instructional practices, and journals of Euro-American philosophy." So said Nigerian philosopher Olufemi Taiwo in a scathing critique of Hegel's ageless *Geist*, which continues to pervade the American ethos. The above philosopher—who is not alone in his criticism of Hegel and other European philosophers' thoughts on the African historical and ontological condition—represents the standard critical argument leveled against western philosophical practices in general and G.W.F. Hegel specifically. Indeed, Hegel's blatant omission of Africa from world history in his *The Philosophy of History* has appeared so lucid to countless Africana philosophers that mentioning anything to the contrary would seem almost blasphemous and obstinate to the mission of the academy's "much vaunted commitment to liberal education" (p. 32).

Babaca Camara is quick to separate his scholarship from this trend, which he notes, "meant a lot at the time but now feels like grocery store labor" (p. xi). Camara's rhetoric is instead much more apologetic in nature, which gives the piece an air of vindication. Apologetic in the sense that Hegel represents the most appropriate theoretical background for analyzing change in Africa from a contemporary point of view. The vindication is noted in the author wishes for his readers to regard the aforementioned philosopher not as a racist but instead as a scholar whose work is best suited for an historical and political analysis of the African tradition. For the reader (this reader included) familiar with the anti-Hegelian Africanist literature, Camara's project offers a nuanced, if not radical new idea: what if we take, as a presupposition, the fact that Hegel was not racist and, moreover, agreed that his scholarship illuminates the inherent internal dialectic and dynamic reality of African societies? *Reason and History* attempts to tackle this bold thesis through Hegelian dialectical and Marxist historical materialist theory. In the end, however, the reader is left with the sentiment that his lofty goals far surpassed the

conceptual and empirical justifications presented in the text. This reader found this to be the case, ironically, through the authors own dialectical method.

Through a careful and thorough analysis of both Hegelian and Marxian political and historical philosophies, Camara exposes the weaknesses in Hegel's theses on Africa, namely Hegel's position that the historical and economic condition in (pre) colonial African was extremely static in nature. Appealing to both Hegel's methodological imperative and Africa's complex internal dialectical institutions and relationships, Camara concludes that when discussing the evolution of the modes of production, labor, exchange, and other social relations in Africa, they are all best understood as operating in a constant dialectical relationship with each other at both an internal (nation-state/Kingdom) level, but also on an external (European and Arab) level.

Camara's project reads like a text whose aim is to synthesize and explicate, in great detail, the history of scholarship from both European and African, as well as pioneer and contemporary scholars, on a wide range of issues that have spearheaded debates on the African social condition for the last sixty years. A monstrous task indeed, yet one that is handled in this project with both discretion and philosophical fervor. The author's belief in dialectical thinking, both as a methodology and interpretive tool was clearly demonstrated throughout the text. It is, however, this very concept—dialectical reasoning—that ultimately blinded him.

Hegel was a racist, and his universal philosophical system is a detriment to the African situation. This text proffers the contrary and instead relishes Hegel's universality with his desire for the "unity and originality" found in generality. Camara focuses this dialectical tool specifically in his chapters on African labor and cultural phenomena. I found these chapters full of value and importance. I could not, however, part with the idea that Camara was hypocritically static in his analysis of hitherto debates on Hegel and Africa. Would not a dialectical thinker posit that one could potentially be both critical of Hegel's purported racist tendencies while simultaneously embracing aspects of his philosophical system? Could not the Africanist philosopher acknowledge and interrogate the former while recognizing and perhaps adopting, in specific situations, the latter? It seemed that Camara was operating under the pretense that those scholars who base their critique of Hegel on racialist grounds have failed to properly see the necessity of the philosopher in many instances.

Marketing Hegel as anti-racist to Africana philosophers—whom I believe to be Camara's target audience—would indeed be a tough ticket to sell. Proclaiming that his philosophical system exposed the very internal dynamism of the African continent would seem near impossible! The purpose of dialectical thinking embraces the expression of movement, change, and development as well as locating unity in difference. Hegel's omission and justification of Africa in world history is, indeed, a racist overture. This I acknowledge from Taiwo's and others' arguments. I will also acknowledge that Hegel's philosophical system has had success in African and African American philosophical discourse. Hegel's system did not do Africa any favors, yet, as Camara informs us, his political philosophy can aid in our reinterpretation of economic and cultural changes in Africa. This I acknowledge to be Camara's finest contribution. Contrary to his earlier position, we must not be reluctant to remain on guard against the blatant

racism of Hegel; indeed such an investigation has been effectively justified. At the same time we must also remember that the aforementioned need not be a forgotten mode of analysis of Hegel's philosophical system on contemporary the African social and political environment. Robert Scholes once said of critique, "Plato's work can better be kept alive in our time by such irreverent critiques as that of Jacques Derrida, who takes Plato seriously as an opponent, which is to say, takes him dialectically." Indeed, "we must start with our most beloved icons" especially "those that really have the power to move and shake us." We ought to maintain this framework with Hegel, his racism, and his system.

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Robert Munro, *Michigan State University*

**Peter Cunliffe-Jones. *My Nigeria: Five Decades of Independence*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan Publishers, 2010. 238 pp.**

Nigeria has been getting its share of analysis from various writers who incessantly have asked over the years what precisely the trouble is that has kept this often acclaimed "Giant of Africa" from the desired development since independence. *My Nigeria*, by veteran journalist Peter Cunliffe-Jones, who is privileged to have seen Nigeria's recent tumultuous years, is a timely book that provides a valuable insight about this complex country with myriad issues. It comes at a time when Nigeria celebrated fifty years of independence.

The book directs us to the writer's family connection with Nigeria. His great-grandmother's cousin, Edward Burns, arrived in the country in search of a living, and subsequently the author's grandfather, Sir Hugo Marshall who came in when the British took control of the country. The author's sojourn many years later as part of his journalism career in Nigeria provides readers with many personal experiences he had while covering the news and events as they extend to what could be referred to the author's "Nigerian attachment." It is definitely reliable evidence and is why Cunliffe-Jones calls his book *My Nigeria*.

Not surprisingly, Cunliffe-Jones in the beginning describes the potentials of Nigeria and the ironic poverty, both of which could be seen even in Lagos—the modern buildings and the life of survival of the fittest in many parts of the city vividly occurring in the "slums," being the other side of Lagos where people troop daily to get their share of, in local parlance, the "national cake." Lagos, with its many ugly stories of crime, was where the author lived to gather his real understanding of Nigeria.

The author delves into Nigeria's years after colonial rule when the army played a substantial role and the effects of regional rivalry of the 1960s that ushered in the civil war, followed by later coups and counter coups, the murder of prominent politicians, and the cumulative years of neglect and lack of vision by successive governments. The return to civilian

rule in 1999 did not have much positive impact, as Cunliffe-Jones argues that it wasted the aspirations of Nigerians after more than twenty years of military misadventures. The insight the author provides is that “neither voters nor candidates had spelled out what else they meant by change” (p. 19). The results have been disastrous, for after more than a decade of democracy there is still no light at the end of the tunnel. What else do you expect when the very ingredients of promising democracy—intelligent voters and patriotic candidates—are absent or voters and candidates not knowing or “spelling out” what they mean or expect in the polity?

Cunliffe-Jones offers another crucial element in understanding Nigeria when he explores the “slave trade” and the period of colonization that amalgamated the southern and northern protectorates, which was when the colonialists set up “new borders of Africa.” The author provides honest criticism about the reality now Nigeria lives with, that of having different people with multiple backgrounds. But, this is not as bad an omen as Cunliffe-Jones wants readers to believe. It should be well understood in my opinion that the present “divisions” among Nigerians into reactionary groups is a new occurrence. The fact that Nigeria has multiple ethnic groups would have provided a way for the country to be prosperous through tapping the wisdom from millions of her resourceful and resilient citizens. But, alas, that has not been the case at least for now. Readers will agree with the authors view that underdevelopment in Nigeria is largely the creation of the colonialists (p. 73). Cunliffe-Jones, however, contends that Nigeria’s indigenous leaders also share the blame do to their their policy summersaults and the “failure” over the years “to do enough” (p. 112).

From a different perspective, Cunliffe-Jones compares Nigeria with Singapore. Here the author recounts his departure from Nigeria in 2002. He attempts to answer the question of why development seems to have eluded Nigeria. To the author, unlike Singapore there is too much “docility” in Nigeria despite the two countries having a similar colonial history and background. Cunliffe-Jones also takes the readers to the “politics of oil,” which is interwoven with the corruption that he sees as endemic. Other dimensions of the economy have been starved of proper attention, and the effect has been a “mono-economic policy,” a policy that unfortunately sees the politicization and control of the revenues from oil “institutionalized.”

In my assessment, this is an important book about Nigeria and how best it can move forward from horrible history toward greatness. Cunliffe-Jones presents sound options to get Nigeria out of the woods. One significant option is the need for Nigerians to be serious to see that they get the best Nigeria they have been dreaming of. To him it requires a change of “habit.” The business of changing the nation should be that of the people, which the author hopes will happen though not as soon as he might have hoped or envisioned. A revealing and insightful analysis, *My Nigeria* is useful as an added contribution to the discourse on the “Nigerian Question.” With its distinctive tone from a veteran journalist with “inside” experience it should be read by all those who sincerely are concerned with Nigeria’s problems, I should add, however, that Cunliffe-Jones is not yet done—he should get the book translated in various Nigerian languages so that it is read widely by the people at the grass roots.

Kawu Bala, *Attorney Generals Ministry, Belize*

**Irit Eguavoen.** *The Political Ecology of Household Water in Northern Ghana.* Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2008. xi, 309 pp.

*The Political Ecology of Household Water in Northern Ghana* is volume 10 in a University of Bonn Center for Development Research (ZEF) series that seeks to find solutions to global development issues. Volume 10 is part of a larger German project (GLOWA) that uses an interdisciplinary approach to understand six river basins in Europe, North and West Africa, and Southwest Asia. Typically volume 10 is quite similar to another title in the series, *Demand-oriented Community Water Supply in Ghana* (2006).

Although the book's title already suggests a relatively narrow focus, Eguavoen gives little sense of household water use across Northern Ghana, but mostly how it works in a handful of tiny villages in the far north, near the border with Burkina Faso. The author does not clearly explain the rationale behind her main study site of Sirigu at which she conducts surveys, interviews, and engages in participant observation; the villagers of Sirigu are mostly Nankane-speaking Catholics in a predominantly Muslim region, whereas the author has Hausa language skills and admits difficulties finding people literate in English and Nankane who could translate her lengthy questionnaires, partially because "Nankane is not taught at schools" (p. 39).

Concepts that are rather basic to experts on African development are often explained at length, especially in the introductory chapters, although it is unlikely that general readers would be attracted to the book. The author claims that a key value of the book is that it "argues for a rethinking of the current policy paradigm by applying a wider historical timeframe" (p. 1), but other than in a portion of chapter three, focuses much of her study on recent decades. The first map provided is a close up of the study area with no insert map to help the reader better understand where within northern Ghana Sirigu is located. Partial "big picture" information is provided in a somewhat blurry Map 3 on page 30 that depicts the entire river basin, and the best orientation to the area is provided in a crisp and well-labeled Map 5 on page 34. Although based on her doctoral dissertation work, at times the book lacks an academic tone; the author refers to herself in the first person and describes which of her findings she personally found "very interesting" (p. 35) or "most interesting" (p. 39).

Methodologically, the author uses a rather narrow definition of development as "local change, which is intentionally initiated by external actors" (p. 6), thereby excluding from "development" local self-help initiatives that are intentional and lead to positive change, unless they are tied to an externally-initiated project. Although Eguavoen notes that "Seasonal variation of water availability is a central issue for local livelihood" (p. 2), her ten months of field research were restricted to three periods of "dry seasons from 2004 to 2006" (p. 33); her work thus suffers from seasonal bias, one of six key development project biases described by Robert Chambers in his 1983 classic, *Rural Development: Putting the Last First*. The author indicates that political ecology, environmental history, and legal anthropology frame her study, but the use of these approaches is not clearly evident until well into chapter four. Furthermore, much of chapter four (on Nankane social organization), like the three introductory chapters, has surprisingly little mention of or direct connection to household water management.

The book's strength is in its latter chapters that focus on life in Sirigu and contain a wealth of site-specific ethnographic information on water management and use. Chapter five examines local knowledge and discourses on water as well as changes in water availability since the introduction of drilling and lifting technologies and describes some of the shortcomings of development projects that provide initial funds and infrastructure, but do not follow up to determine whether wells and boreholes they supported are operational years later. A key finding was that the improved availability of water during the dry season due to technology has meant that local people no longer perceive the dry season to be a water-short period.

Nonetheless, some local practices, including the maintenance of sacred groves, continue to have a water conservation effect, albeit a minor one, given that such groves can be quite small or even "a single standing tree" (p. 118). Chapter six examines typical water requirements and uses as they relate to rural livelihoods; chapters seven and eight focus on decision-making with regard to water allocation as well as changing household water rights in Sirigu. Chapter nine revisits the shortcomings of development projects aimed at improved water access and is followed by a very brief concluding chapter. Key findings in the final chapters include that governments often have water regulations that do not vary by region that differ substantially from one another, leaving local people unable or unwilling to fulfill them. In addition, an overall increase in the number of water pumps does not mean an increase in decision-making ability about water because users might be required to join pump groups or other entities that reduce their ability to choose water sources.

The book has a considerable number of tables, photographs, maps, and inserts. Geographers, anthropologists, environmental historians, development specialists, and others with advanced-level study and a combined interest in Africa, culture, and the environment, will appreciate Eguavoen's book.

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**Linda K. Fuller. *African Women's Unique Vulnerabilities to HIV/Aids: Communication Perspectives and Promises*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. iv, 309 pp.**

Although it is a highly publicized fact that the disheartening levels of new HIV/Aids infections as well as deaths in Africa are incomparable, a lesser-promulgated reality is that women are the ones disproportionately affected. Linda K. Fuller presents the factors that have created this reality using a holistic approach to demonstrate the biomedical, social, economic, political, and educational vulnerabilities that African women experience. As clearly outlined in her introduction, Fuller's main impetus is to motivate her readers, women in the developed world in particular, enough to take action upon learning of the plight of their "African sisters." Her main argument is that communication is the answer to creating the attitude, behavioral, and developmental changes that are necessary to eliminate the existence of these vulnerabilities. Fuller makes use of an abundant number of sources from varied disciplines ranging from scientific and medical publications to politics and economics to help her effectively frame the unique predicament of women with regards to HIV/Aids. Perhaps what is most appreciable

about this book is the fact that although topics like medicine and economics have their own and at times intimidating language, Fuller is prudent in ensuring that any esoteric jargon is clearly defined. Her straightforward and clear organization of each vulnerability issue contributes greatly to making the book accessible to the wide readership she strives for. The book is organized into sections each addressing the aforementioned issues and then concludes by discussing the potential for more utilization of diverse forms of communication in combating the pandemic on the continent.

The first chapter goes into biomedical vulnerabilities where the issues of contraception, fistula, and childbirth are examined to demonstrate how the unique physiology of women places them at a higher risk than men. This chapter brings to light the complexity of addressing issues like female genital mutilation and gum-tattooing that are rooted in cultural tradition and encourages readers to approach such topics with sensitivity. The lengthiest chapter explores sociocultural practices and traditions that place women in a place of unique risk. Fuller presents the many familial obligations and expectations that most African societies have for women and the aspects of these delegated roles that can contribute to the burdens of women. Because “African society” can be a nebulous term that varies from region to region, Fuller is careful in identifying the location of her examples of tradition and practices to underscore the importance of context. Through the discussion of gender-based violence, she is able to somberly illustrate the pervasive reality of rape on the continent and how greatly exacerbated it is by conflict. Furthermore, through the discussion of marriage, polygamy, religion, and traditional rituals, she exposes readers to the social dynamics and systems through which women navigate and construct behavioral responses as they relate to HIV/Aids.

The following two chapters on the economic, legal and political vulnerabilities present the structural hurdles that contribute to limiting women’s opportunities to play a more active role in personal decision-making. In the educational vulnerabilities section Fuller discusses the widespread gender imbalance that exists in African schools across various regions of the continent. She touches on what a sex education curriculum entails and how financial educational responsibilities sometimes lead young women to make risky choices to meet those expenses. The last two chapters present her argument for what she sees as the real solution to addressing the problem: communication. She clearly defines her usage of the term to include “interpersonal/intercultural communication, mass media (print, electronic, visual) and ICTs [information and communication technologies]” (p. 145). After introducing how African media is disseminated through various outlets (i.e., print, radio, and TV/film), she then discusses where opportunities exist for harnessing this power to change societal behaviors and attitudes towards HIV/Aids. Fuller welcomes and sees merit in utilizing many traditional communication methods that would help make HIV/Aids and sensitive topics surrounding HIV/Aids more approachable. Fuller includes the arts, music, song, dance, and even puppetry all as effective and valuable forms of instruction and dialogue.

Linda Fuller is successful in achieving her stated goal of presenting “what is happening today in Africa real and readable” (pg. 21). Her holistic approach contributes greatly to illustrating to the reader not only the structural, societal, and personal vulnerabilities but also helps demonstrate the complexity of the issue and the sensitivity it deserves. Research on

women's vulnerabilities in the midst of the epidemic is currently growing and what sets Fuller's book apart is the inclusion of her communication perspective. This book is highly recommended as a beginning resource to anyone interested in the issues of HIV/Aids, the role of communication in public health, and/or women's issues in general.

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**Sandra E. Greene. *West African Narratives of Slavery: Texts from Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Ghana*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011. ix, 300 pp.**

*West African Narratives of Slavery* analyzes five stories from what is today Ghana. As the author states at the outset, there are many things about the trade that have come to light in the past forty years thanks to the groundbreaking work of historians (and I would add, at the least, anthropologists and archeologists). However, there is still much that we do not know. "This is especially true with regard to the impact that slavery and the slave trade had on the individual" (p. 1).

Greene repeatedly states throughout the text that her purpose in undertaking the task of reading and analyzing these sometimes opaque narratives was "to expand the discussion of the slave trade and slavery on West Africa by highlighting how West Africans themselves, specifically those who never left the continent, thought about, remembered, and were prepared to discuss their lives in both slavery and freedom" (pp. 1-2). She also alerts the reader to her analytical framework, which she locates both within the Africanist and African-Americanist scholarly traditions. She draws upon African history methodology for checking the personal narrative against the historical record and looks to scholars of North American slavery—particularly those who study the slave narrative—for a sense of the mediation of texts under such conditions as slavery and post-emancipation. Even when people tell their own stories, the messages that come through are mediated by who is doing the telling, to whom, the economic, social and political conditions under which the stories are told, and to what end.

The book consists of four parts. The first is the narrative of Aaron Kuku, an evangelist whose story is told by an Ewe minister named Samuel Quist. The second part is composed of two biographies: one of a woman named Lydia Yawo; the other of a man named Yosef Famfantor. Ms. Yawo's biography was penned by a Bremen missionary named Johannes Mertz who did so specifically to encourage more European women to take up mission work in Africa. Mr. Famfantor's biography was written in Ewe by his neighbor, friend, and minister, Rev. G. K. Tsekpo after the former's death. The third part is based on the diary of Paul Sands, a man whose ancestors were slaves. Greene includes excerpts from Sands' multivolume work to illustrate his insecurities and concerns about his slave heritage and make sense of his life's trajectory given his history. Finally, the fourth part discusses a story from the oral tradition that was reinvigorated many years after the incident was rumored to have occurred. Greene's discussion of why the particular story is remembered and retold over others is particularly illuminating and builds upon work that historian Anne Bailey has done around the same story.

While Greene disagrees with some of the conclusions that Bailey comes to in her own reading of the story, the two analyses of the story are complementary.

Each part begins with the author's situating the stories in a historical, literary, and cultural context. This analysis is then followed by a short preface in which Greene discusses the subject of the story, giving personal background, and alerting the reader to interventions that she has made to the original text. The importance of her intervention as a scholar who is sensitive to the personal and political investments that descendants of sellers and sold have in the history of slavery is brought home in her prefaces. For example, in the preface to Paul Sands' diary Greene discusses her use of pseudonyms for a number of individuals that Mr. Sands mentions in order to protect him and his descendants, as the issue of slavery is still a fraught topic in Ghana.

The words of folklorist Harold Scheub seem most prescient to a reading of the narrative from Aaron Kuku through his amanuensis, Rev. Samuel Quist. Scheub writes: "Stories provide us with truth; they take the flotsam and jetsam of our lives and give those shards a sense of narrative, of form, and therefore of verity" (p. 3). In her preface to Mr. Kuku's narrative, Greene discusses the "flotsam and jetsam" that have gone into making the story that follows, mentioning how, in other incarnations of Mr. Kuku's story, certain important facts are left out of the narrative so that it would conform to the pietistic goal that it was written to serve.

What may seem like small omissions leaves gaps in the narrative that sometimes result in the reader having more questions than answers. Of course, the obvious response is that these silences are at the heart of Greene's project, and I agree. Furthermore, while Greene does not read the narratives for their literary value she seems to utilize a methodology posed by literary theorist Pierre Macherey in the project that she undertakes here. That is, she reads the silences in the texts, recognizing that they are just as important as what is included. However, the texts along with their silences are rich and can be read in a number of different ways. What may be missing in her reading of the narratives is attention to the *way* that things are said (and not just *what* is said) as integral to the meaning of both the oral and written texts.

Because of the way that Greene sets up her arguments, poses and reposes her questions and diligently contextualizes the stories that she analyzes, the text would be very useful to other historians as well as anthropologists who are interested in conducting similar research. The book is an important contribution as well to the fields of memory and trauma studies. I expect that others will seek out the narratives that Dr. Greene has introduced and continue uncovering, on multiple levels and from various disciplines the tales that these important voices from the past have to tell.

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**Larry Grubbs. *Secular Missionaries: Americans and African Development in the 1960's*. Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009. vii, 243 pp.**

The era of the decolonization of Africa which began in the 1950's opened up Africa to more non-European political, cultural, and economic influences, particularly that of the United States. This particular relationship between the United States and Africa during the decade that followed (the 1960's) is the subject of inquiry in Larry Grubbs' *Secular Missionaries*. Focusing on the economic and cultural dimensions of the relationship that was forged during the decade, Grubbs aims to convey "a history of representations of 'developing' or 'underdeveloped' Africa and the conceptual and practical problems that bedeviled American aid to Africa" (p. 4). Weaving together scholarship from political science, sociology, history, and anthropology while also bringing in the works of travel writers and journalists, Grubbs intends to impart the knowledge and images that shaped America's ideas about Africa during the 1960's. In outlining the theory and policies implemented to spur African development, Grubbs argues that the inclinations, assumptions, and beliefs that underlay Europe's colonization of Africa to a great degree also motivated America's attempt to "develop" it. Consequently, Grubbs chose the book's title to convey that proselytizing had not ended with decolonization. Rather, missionaries remained in great numbers, only this time they were preaching modernization.

For Americans in the 1960's, Africa was a place of the strange and offbeat. Changing these perceptions would require an effort to increase knowledge about the continent. Grubbs provides an analysis of the emerging sources of scholarship on Africa during the time. His discussion about the formation of African Studies as a field and the African Studies Association (ASA) does much to highlight the intellectual chasm between African-American scholars and those shaping African Studies at the time.

In the first quarter of the book, Grubbs also outlines the impetus and reasoning for America's great desire to forge a strong relationship with Africa during the 1960's. The book perceptively complicates the predominant narrative of American innocence by discussing how it ignored the treatment of African-Americans in the United States who were fighting for civil rights at that very moment. This discussion about the domestic challenges facing the U.S. provides needed context in understanding the ability of African-Americans to influence policy during the decade.

Grubbs moreover provides a discussion of the international challenges posed to the U.S. by the looming Cold War as one of the main motives behind this increased interest in Africa. According to Grubbs, fostering development in Africa via an American devised scheme would not only ensure a modernized Africa but an Americanized one at that. For as much concern the newly independent nations gave policymakers, Grubbs argues that they provided just as much if not more excitement. There were now many individuals eager to "modernize" the continent whereas before the desire was to "civilize" it. The next four chapters of the book detail the efforts of several individuals who shaped policy towards Africa during the decade and the outcome in key African countries that served as their testing grounds. Grubbs' discussion of how many of the main policy makers of the decade often switched between their roles as

academics obtaining funding from private foundations to holding government posts showed how findings in academia could have been politically motivated.

The book's major focus is the recommendation of these experts — that the newly devised modernization theory serve as the guide for policy towards Africa. Grubbs' approach in evaluating how America used modernization theory to shape its policies is where the book is most compelling. Although Grubbs does make mention of both the Soviet and economic factors, his desire to bring the cultural undertones of this endeavor to the forefront is quite fascinating. Grubbs demonstrates how many aspects of these "traditional" societies were considered impediments to modernization from culture, religion, and most especially what Americans termed "tribalism." Through his examination of the Peace Corps, Grubbs effectively demonstrates that to Americans at the time, the customs and traditions of African societies were seen as incompatible with development. Furthermore, to illustrate the US attempts at transformation, Grubbs details experiences in key countries to show how optimism quickly dissolved. By choosing countries with differing dynamics and leadership he was able insightfully to expose how there were fundamental flaws across the board with respect to the U.S. plans that contributed to a failure in each case. He also includes the criticisms of academics with respect to the development plans made by American officials.

In the closing chapters, Grubbs discusses the factors that contributed to the lack economic growth in countries where these aid and development programs were implemented. Most importantly, he focuses on the fact that for all the rhetoric about modernization and development, aid was difficult to access due to complicated and inconvenient USAID bureaucracy and how much of what was promised never arrived. Grubbs concludes with an analysis of how Americans viewed this failure and argues that the same stereotypes about Africans that were used as reasons for the necessity of development were once again cited to explain this failure.

Grubbs' book, while providing interesting analysis, adds more to scholarship about US foreign policy history than African history. Its greater focus on American academics and US government officials primarily yielded insights about how the US felt about the decade and its prospects, whereas African ideas about development were limited. The addition of the views of African-Americans about events during the decade, however, did add an interesting dimension. Furthermore, the book would have been better formatted had it included a bibliography rather than just a notes section.

Nevertheless, considering current debates about the efficacy and future of aid in Africa, this book provides a useful background on its early beginnings. *Secular Missionaries* does much to explain how modernization theory shaped aid policy and why its prospects looked grim even amidst the high optimism of the 1960's. This book is written and organized in a fashion that makes it highly accessible to a wide audience. The fact that it cuts across several disciplines from economics to anthropology allows it to provide an interesting and unique perspective on the issue of development. There are limited books on Africa's economic development during this decade, information and communication technologies and the insights of this book show that there is much more that should be explored.

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**John W. Harbeson and Donald Rothchild (eds.). *Africa in World Politics: Reforming Political Order*. Boulder: Westview Press, 2009. xvi, 408 pp.**

*Africa in World Politics*, a book devoted to one of Africa's leading international relations scholars, Donald Rothchild, is a contribution by reputable scholars on Africa. The book is an endeavor to construct an understanding of the place of Africa in world politics. With reference to informative literature on Africa, the authors make a convincing elucidation of various contemporary issues surrounding Africa's involvement in world politics. They articulate the significant issues of this involvement. The introduction illuminates the historical factors that have shaped relations between Africa and the outside world, largely espousing issues that have characterized African society. These issues center on aspects of state weakness, collapse, and reconstruction.

Part II analyzes the most important influence on the African state in its behavior in the international system. In essence, it does so by analyzing how colonialism shaped the African state in relation to other actors in the world system and how post independent states have inherited and reshaped institutions that interrelate with the outside world. Largely, their dealings with the outside world have been met with great limitations as a result of actions and reactions by major international actors. Policies and measures put into practice in Africa in its attempt deal with the great limitations were elaborated. Key issues regarding Africa's development were analyzed, and specifically these relate to structural adjustment, aid, and debt. How key players have implemented various policies to deal with emerging issues was clarified. One critical issue has been enunciating the historical issues that have affected African development discourse in the past, the present, and the future.

Part III is an examination of the most dominating and contentious issues in Africa's interaction with the outside world in the contemporary world political discourse. This relates to the issues of democracy, civil society, governance, and privatization. How Africa is going to materialize from dealing with these emerging issues becomes a key question. But what emerges from the contributions in this part of the book is that much will depend on how Africa's key actors are likely to respond appropriately to the issues under consideration and also with the propinquity that it requires.

Part IV is an analysis of the actions and reactions of global actors in relation to Africa regarding specific issues. How the changing world and specific issues that have shaped actions, reactions, and interactions between Africa and the international world were examined. The contributors are well intentioned in setting forth issues for global engagement from the point of view of the U.S, Europe, and China and the weakening of Africa concerning the understanding of sovereignty and the most accepted principles of international responsibility. The most current contribution did expose how terrorism in Africa as a subject of international concern becomes one subject that Africa keeps afoot with without realizing that the same subject can be used against it in the protection of international society. Whilst liberation from within sounds as the modest ideal to be pursued on all fronts limitations, exist to some extent in alienating societies from the goal as the total liberation of a human being exists at all levels of analysis without being subject to conditional change.

Overall, the subject matter addressed by the book is a pertinent issues in as far as it addresses the dominant international relations discourse. Those interested in Africa's interaction with the outside world will find the text very useful and informative. By way of conclusion, the remaining question on *Africa in World Politics* in as far as reforming the political order will be: What form and where will Africa's political power base come from to be able to maneuver its political standing in world politics. Are those maneuvers going to be acceptable to the international community as a whole and the great powers in particular? In essence, it seems that world politics dictate that the objectives for state's existence whether small or great remains the same, and is that of survival as reflected in the state's ability and capability to influence change in the society and the existing environment. What future works on Africa's relations with the outside world will largely have to dwell on will be to address the policy options for Africa in relation to the overwhelming challenges and limitations that structurally limit the achievement of its objectives. Also needed is an examination of policy options for the powerful actors to enable Africa to become an actor with equal intentions and aspirations in as far as interaction in the international system is concerned.

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**Kassim Mohammed Khamis. *Promoting the African Union*. Washington, DC: Lilian Barber Press, Inc., 2008. 421 pp.**

Since the transformation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) into the African Union (AU) in 2002, there has been an increasing scholarly interest in understanding African continental politics. Unfortunately, as of today, most of the academic writing on the African Union has taken an “outsider-perspective,” often from a policy-distant point of view. Against this background, Kassim Khamis’ book on a history of challenges of African continental projects marks a crucial exception and contributes valuably to a new reading of African unity.

Khamis, himself a Tanzanian diplomat, was a consultant to the OAU General Secretariat during the transformation period. Having thereby developed a clear assessment of the OAU’s weaknesses as well as insights into the difficulties of formulating and implementing real alternatives, Khamis’ aim is to “help readers understand why the African unity project has proceeded so slowly as against the intended establishment of the African Union” (p. xiv). The book impressively illustrates that many progressive ideas—the importance of strengthening supranational elements as well as the need to integrate political and economic cooperation among African states—were already formulated in the 1976 plan to establish an African Economic Community, whose implementation yet failed. The establishment of the AU was thus, according to Khamis, aimed at fulfilling this endeavor. Yet, instead of accomplishing the long-held vision of African unity, it was built upon the same shortcomings that once flawed its predecessor.

Comprising twelve chapters, *Promoting the African Union* is organized into four parts. Part one discusses the weaknesses of the OAU, where Khamis finds the absence of a well-defined goal, member states’ dissent over the preferred union, a lack of bureaucratic professionalism, as

well as an inadequate institutional and financial framework as the main reasons for the organization's inefficiency. The latter is illustrated by the OAU's efforts towards decolonization, the promotion of "Africanism" in the international arena as well as regional economic integration. It is the book's emphasis on the African Economic Community as well as the OAU Charter review process (pp. 29-65) that evidences the longevity of ideas to reform and enhance the continental organization that are usually only attributed to the reform processes of the 1990s. This marks a major refinement to hitherto dominant interpretations. The second part discusses the developments since the Sirte Summit in 1999 that culminated in the establishment of the African Union, including a very detailed comparison of the AU Constitutive Act with the OAU Charter and the Abuja Treaty, as well as an in-depth reconstruction of the transitional process from 2001 until 2005. The chapter coins a vivid testimony of the slow and stony negotiation process that preceded and followed the signing of the Constitutive Act and thereby contributes decisively to understanding the political aspects of forming an African Union.

Parts three and four finally discuss in great detail the many ways in which the implementation and institutional framework of the AU hinders the accomplishment of the Sirte Declaration's initial vision and suggest necessary future reforms. Khamis proposes to strengthen and re-integrate the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) into the continental project as well as to strengthen the Pan-African Parliament as democratic check to the Assembly of Heads of State. Those that have been following the continental discussions over the past years will recognize that *Promoting the African Union* is deeply rooted in those current debates on the future of the Union and the United States of Africa that have preoccupied the Union at least since 2005. It thus is not only a narrative *about* the African Union, but is itself a vivid contribution to the contested imagination of the most desirable continental order. Yet, the mindful reader may assume that any of the presented solutions—similar to the long list of previously formulated ones—will face strong opposition in the implementation phase. In fact, if there is one shortcoming to find in the book's argumentation, it would be that the political cleavages among AU member states that ultimately explain *why* decades of searching for continental solutions to Africa's socio-economic and political problems lacked producing a real effect, remain unreflected, although this was also not the stated aim of the author.

Khamis' reconstruction of a history of continental projects rests on a thorough and comprehensive analysis of over 250 primary official documents from the OAU/ AU Archives in Addis Ababa that have never been presented to an academic audience in such detail before. It therefore constitutes an invaluable resource particularly to those scholars without direct access to the Archives. The detailed analysis of primary documents enables the author not only to illustrate the thematic threads that have preoccupied the continental organization since the 1970s, but also to shed light on the history of internal processes of consecutive decision-making, re-negotiation, committee-building that are such fundamental aspect of continental politics even today.

The in-depth and sometimes repetitive reconstruction of bureaucratic processes may on the one hand unfortunately diminish the book's appeal to a wider audience without substantial interest in the workings of an international organization. Yet, on the other hand, *Promoting the*

*African Union* thereby offers in itself a solution to its main concern: the lack of an institutional memory that ultimately prevents decisions from being implemented. It is thus not only an important contribution to a field of knowledge that is otherwise dominated by Western, policy-distant academia, but also helps those engaged in continental politics to understand the *longue durée* of ideas as well as the “OAU heritage” of the African Union in a more comprehensive way and hopefully enable them to learn for the future.

In sum, *Promoting the African Union* is an empirically rich study on the history of African continental politics and thus a crucial contribution to understanding its past and current challenges. The book’s particular strength lies in its focus on an analysis of primary sources and its reflection of a long history of negotiating African unity that perfectly connects to current developments on the continental level.

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**Stephen J. King. *The New Authoritarianism in the Middle East and North Africa*.  
Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2009. 290 pp.**

Steven J. King’s *The New Authoritarianism in the Middle East and North Africa* is an excellent expansion of and follow-up to his previous book, *Liberalization against Democracy: The Local Politics of Economic Reform in Tunisia*, which details how economic liberalization fostered the expansion of authoritarianism in post-colonial Tunisia. King, Associate Professor of Government, Georgetown University, is a comparativist who focuses on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). He draws from a variety of sources and disciplines to complete a comparative analysis of authoritarian MENA regimes during the latter half of the twentieth century in this his second book. It is a timely addition to the body of knowledge to which scholars and policy-makers alike defer for help in understanding the present era of MENA revolutions, and to predict the impact of these revolutions on the political future of the region.

The book’s six chapters detail the transformation of MENA authoritarianism *vis-à-vis* economic liberalization following the mid-century independence movements in Egypt, Syria, Algeria, and Tunisia. King argues that authoritarian rule in this subset of Arab single-party republics persisted in spite of and, to some extent, as a result of patronage-based economic liberalization. The first two chapters outline the theoretical framework from which King approaches economic liberalization in MENA countries. He views the powerful revolutionary movements, their distaste for multi-party politics, and their reliance on patronage for legitimacy as driving factors behind the development of powerful single-party systems.

Chapter 3 presents “Old Authoritarianism” by demonstrating how the political institutions and national policies in the examined MENA states led to the development and legitimation of dominant political parties. Chapter 4 defines “New Authoritarianism.” Here, King argues that the façade of democracy, brought about by privatization and the imposition of *faux* multi-party (i.e., dominant-party) politics, ensured the persistence of a repackaged authoritarianism by allowing patronage to continue through the private institutions that were run by the same elites who had previously dominated the private sector under Old Authoritarianism. The book’s final

two chapters explain why democracy emerged from authoritarian regimes in Argentina, Brazil, and Spain, and how Egypt, Syria, Algeria, and Tunisia may overcome economic liberalization characterized by patronage and the legacy of single-party institutions to achieve true democratization.

The single drawback to this book is its failure to address wholly authoritarianism in the MENA region. Indeed, the title of the book is misleading, given its narrow focus on four countries that followed relatively similar post-colonial socio-political paths. Nevertheless, King's unique perspective on how some developing MENA economies progressed during the post-colonial era exposes seasoned scholars, who specialize in the development of the modern Arab state, to a realistic analysis of how economic liberalization is used to reinforce authoritarian regimes both domestically and internationally. Additionally, King's theoretical approach to authoritarianism can be applied to regions outside MENA, and may be of interest to scholars of economic development in sub-Saharan Africa, and Central Asia, where the haphazard application of economic liberalization will help shape political outcomes in both the near- and long-term.

Note: The views expressed in this article are the author's own, and do not necessarily represent those of the U.S. Department of State or the U.S. Government.

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**Herbert S. Klein. *The Atlantic Slave Trade*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. xx, 242 pp.**

Since the late 1960s scholars have been collecting data from unpublished sources on slave-trading voyages. Philip Curtin's *The Atlantic Slave Trade: a Census* (1969) was the first attempt to estimate, from available secondary literature, the volume of the trade. Herbert S. Klein, professor of history at Stanford University and research fellow at the Hoover Institution, was one of the pioneers in the field. In 1999, when information on over 27,000 slave-trading voyages had been collected, he published his well-regarded synthesis of the research, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*. In the ten years since the first edition the research has been uploaded to the online Transatlantic Slave Trade Database hosted by Emory University in Atlanta and now contains details of almost 35,000 voyages, including records of Portuguese and Spanish slaving expeditions. Hence, the appearance of a second edition of Klein's work, in which the author makes use of the new data, is most welcome. The book draws on the work of scholars in Africa, as well as in the Americas and Europe.

The study is organized around four themes addressed in the latest scholarship: the origins of the slave trade; its basic economic structure; the demographic, social, and economic impact of the trade; and, the causes and consequences of its abolition. These four themes are explored in eight chapters varying in length from seventeen to thirty-two pages: "Slavery in Western Development," "American Labor Demand," "Africa at the Time of the Atlantic Slave Trade," "European Organization of the Slave Trade," "African Organization of the Slave Trade," "The

Middle Passage," "Social and Cultural Impact of the Slave Trade on America," and "The End of the Slave Trade." Each chapter reveals evidence of the author's wide reading and meticulous scholarship. The new edition preserves the layout and structure of the original, while incorporating the new evidence to hone and deepen the careful analysis of the trade.

The book starts with an overview of slavery in Europe and Africa to the end of the fifteenth century. It notes the imperial Roman law definition of slaves as property, a definition that had a profound influence on the development of American slave societies. The plantation model for American slavery emerged in the mid- to late-fifteenth century with the use of African slaves as the principal work force on sugar estates on Atlantic islands, such as Madeira and the Canaries, recently occupied and settled by Portugal and Spain. As early as the 1450s, sugar was being sold on markets in London and other European trading centers. European demand for sugar increased after 1500 and was met with the creation of slave plantations in the Americas. Klein shows the demand for labor in the Americas as the key factor in creating the mass transportation of Africans across the Atlantic. Simultaneously, the rising prosperity of Western Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries discouraged migration of peasants and laborers to the Americas. The demographic disaster that befell the Indians in the first hundred and fifty years of European settlement left the transportation of Africans as an attractive and viable solution to the "problem" of labor.

A specialist in Latin American and comparative history, Klein makes excellent use of evidence and analysis from across the whole Atlantic slave trading world. The presentation and analysis of the active role played in the trade by African rulers and merchants is particularly well drawn. "European buyers were totally dependent on African sellers for the delivery of slaves" is the author's contention. Different social and economic circumstances and the varied impact of slave trading along the African coast are similarly well explored. What is most surprising to this reviewer is the wide variety of slave experiences in the Portuguese and Spanish colonies, which differ considerably from those in North America. For example, Brazil used slave sailors in international shipping and on Atlantic slave routes.

The text is supported by four maps of the African coast, figures, and tables that provide statistical details of the impact of the trade on Africa. The work is not footnoted; instead it concludes with a twelve-page bibliographical essay serving both as a guide to the literature and a means to further research.

In just over two hundred pages Klein has produced a superb work of synthesis, demonstrating an impressive mastery of the vast amount of material now available to scholars. Throughout, he highlights economic arguments and the dynamism and variety of the trade. On almost every page there is something to stimulate thought and challenge assumptions. The book is much recommended to students of the slave trade, and to scholars of Africa and the Atlantic World.

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**Kofi Oteng Kufuor. *The African Human Rights System: Origin and Evolution*. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010. vii. 182 pp.**

As Kofi O. Kufuor states, his *The African Human Rights System: Origin and Evolution* is “essentially a study of human rights law in Africa” (p. 3). However, it’s in his in-depth analysis of the African human rights system that the book moves beyond the study of law and contributes effectively to both the fields of political and social science. He challenges critics who claim the African human rights system is weak and problematic and offers a clear re-assessment of the system’s utility, combining international law and international relations theory. Kufuor sets a foundation for his study with a discussion of the history of the African human rights system, as recognized in the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR), and then skillfully applies traditional institutionalism (specifically, the rational choice, sociological, and historical strands) and regime theory to augment his analysis of the evolution of the system.

In addition to the Introduction, *The African Human Rights System* consists of six chapters, with the final one offering future issues in the evolution of Africa’s human rights system. According to the author, current conventional wisdom concerning the origins of the ACHPR’s includes four factors that are typically offered to explain the decision by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to adopt the ACHPR: US President Carter’s policy that US aid be linked to states’ human rights records; the impact of several tyrannical regimes; Tanzania’s invasion of Uganda; and the claim that OAU was the best forum for solving African disputes. In Chapter One, “The Origin of the African Human Rights System,” Kufuor argues against this orthodox view and contends that Africa’s human rights system emerged as a “response by African governments to developments that threatened their survival at the time” (p. 8). Given the dynamic legacies of Africa’s colonial and independence-era past, exploring and understanding the lineage of its human rights system is critical in analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the documents and institutions that make up the current system, specifically, the ACHPR itself and the African Commission it set up. Kufuor thus begins with an examination of the origins of the ACHPR in an effort to dispel previous assumptions and offer an alternative explanation that he hopes will “enrich scholarship” and assist in analyzing and identifying “key variables in the emergence and strengthening of human rights law in Africa” (p. 12).

The next three chapters present a thorough exploration of the African Commission. In chapter two, Kufuor analyzes what he considers the most serious issue facing the ACHPR, that of its clawback clauses—those clauses in the ACHPR that “allow states parties to take back the rights granted at the regional level if they collide with their domestic laws” (p. 38). In fact, Kufuor stalwartly highlights the hypocrisy and weakness of the system that makes the “protection of human rights subject to laws that were designed to suppress” them (p. 38). Chapters three and four look in depth at the Commission’s treatment of economic, social, and cultural rights, and the growth of its power through its *rules of procedure*, respectively. While the majority of the book examines the African Charter and the African Commission, Kufuor utilizes chapter five to analyze additional human rights instruments that make up the entire body of Africa’s human rights system; specifically, African Charter for Popular Participation in

Development and Transformation, the Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance in Africa and the OAU Grand Bay Declaration and Plan of Action. His explanation for this detour is that “it is the proliferation of these post-African Charter laws that amount to the start of what we call the fragmentation of the African human rights system” (p. 99).

*The African Human Rights System* provides academia a thorough examination of the origins and evolution of Africa’s human rights system. From a pragmatic perspective, however, Kufuor’s book excels in that he provides practitioners with issues for further direction such as dialogue on the right to sexual orientation and the friendly settlements of disputes for African citizens. While realistic in understanding that “institutional change is glacial,” he is more optimistic that “even in the absence of a hegemonic power, there will be the continued development of the human rights system” for Africa (pp. 145-46). It is this optimism that gives credence to the conventional wisdom of African solutions for African problems.

Eric M. Moody, *USAF Academy*

**John McAleer. *Representing Africa, Landscape, Exploration and Empire in Southern Africa, 1780-1870*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2010. 241 pp.**

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, guidebooks, handbooks, sketches, oil paintings, and maps, in addition to travelogues, increasingly provided an impressive insight into African landscape description to growing literate and culturally demanding British and European audiences. There developed a solid relationship between landscape representation, exploration, and imperial understanding and imaginings. The representations analyzed in the book were mainly produced, distributed, consumed, and interpreted at the imperial center. It was in the metropolis that they were constructed, made, and used because the market resided there and strategies meant to convey specific meaning of these landscapes to audiences were concocted there.

McAleer examines the changing trends of exploration and the developing British and European imperial preoccupations and how these impacted on British and European travelers’ engagement with the southern African landscape. In recording, diffusing, and picturing non-European landscapes in ways of all sorts, travelers and writers popularized the empire and made it accessible and visible to all at home. Landscapes were many and diverse, reflecting the geographical size, environmental wealth, and power of the empire and echoing the personal interests and perceptions of those who depicted them. Travelers, settlers, missionaries, officials, artists, and sporting tourists made the empire at the core of their landscape representations, which were nothing but a commentary on the changing economic, political, and domestic fortunes and priorities of the empire. In so doing, they invited their fellow citizens to fill in this vast empire fit for them and eager to be exploited, improved and appropriated, it seems. In the process, this unknown and unfamiliar landscape was domesticated.

British imaginative and aesthetic engagement with the southern African environment went through different stages, thus revealing how the empire, in this case southern Africa, was perceived. The “fairest Cape,” a victualling and recuperation station for travelers and explorers

on their way to the Indian and Pacific Oceans, a penal colony, a pleasant, abundant, and fertile land, a commercial asset and scientific laboratory, and a region awaiting the words of God and European civilization: southern Africa's landscapes were subject to British and European imperial conveniences. They were, in addition, determined by the viewers' subjective understanding and visions that is how they seem to tell us as much about the latter than about southern Africa's topography. These landscape representations were more built on impressions than on the realities encountered by their viewers, who insisted on their authenticity. Landscape depictions were partly made to impress and puzzle, to be published and sold, and to make reputations. Travel books, illustrated books, exhibitions, private, and museum collections, then, played the role of perpetuating them.

Southern Africa was both a vital and complex component in the British imperial puzzle: a region located at the tip of Africa, with coastlines on two oceans, a gateway to Asia, majestic landscapes and seascapes, a mix of peoples and cultures, and, following this, a prey to competing European imperial powers. This is why it moved up in Britain's political agenda towards the late eighteenth century. Southern Africa, the would-be imperial target could help Britain secure a route to India and its commercial potential, have access to a highly productive land, relocate a growing population in Britain, facilitate travel and missionary work, and help with developing exploration and scientific enquiry. Because of the unbridled competition among European imperial powers and changing British attitudes towards these landscapes, the British failed to "anglicize" these and the region more generally. Their engagement was, therefore, much broader than elsewhere.

British visions of southern Africa's landscape, overwhelmingly male constructed and oriented, included, excluded, filtrated, and selected their representations from a lavish reservoir of landscape and topographic resources to focus on a content evolving mostly around home, the empire, science, and religion. The four components were firmly intertwined and echoed British main preoccupations in the period under analysis. These preoccupations were shifting with British shifting imperial strategic, political, and socio-economic interests and priorities. This, of course, strongly suggests that British engagements with southern African landscapes show the extent to which the notion of empire depends on that of landscape as both controlled space and the means of responding to such control. Similarly, this focus on landscape has been put forward as a strategy, which downplays the antagonistic aspect of British and European encounters with indigenous people and serves to marginalize and dehumanize the indigenous presence within that landscape. This subsidiary status and almost concealed position allotted to the people of southern African within the landscapes hints to their lack of interest or capacity to engage with it and provides evidence in support of British and European exploration and colonial domination.

Lavishly illustrated, Mc Aleer's study is a useful reading to the student and scholar of the empire, art history, exploration history, and environmental studies.

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**Hassimi Oumarou Maïga. *Balancing Written History with Oral Tradition: The Legacy of the Songhoy People*. New York: Routledge, 2010. xi, 206 pp.**

Professor Hassimi Oumarou Maïga manages not only to balance written history with oral tradition to trace the origins and legacy of the Songhoy people, but he also succeeds in re-balancing history itself by offering readers an African world-view. The first half of the book chronicles the origins and development of the Songhoy people with their beginnings in east Africa and Yemen and the east-to-west migration, to the earliest formation of the ancient city of Koukya (Kukia). Maïga goes on to introduce the empires of Ghana and Mali with the decline of Axum (Ethiopia), Nubia (Sudan), and Kemet (Egypt) in east Africa to give a firm context to the development and flourishing of highly organized administrative, economic, political, and cultural structures in west Africa. Maïga dedicates Chapter 3 to the city of Gao in northern Mali as the cradle of the Songhoy Empire and the beginnings of the Koungorogossi Gariko Dynasty, the first Songhoy dynasty, while pointing to west Africa's links with Muslim Spain and north Africa (with the Moroccan, Fulanese and Tuareg invasions at the end of sixteenth century), through to the European invasions and domination in the 1880s.

Importantly, Maïga writes: "The complete chronological order of the Songhoy Chieftaincy, which begins with the Koungorogossi, has never been recorded in the annals of any formal history book in English (or before the earlier edition of this book was published in French in 2007). The history of this dynasty, which was also not known to European scholars, explorers, and colonists, has been preserved in the Songhoy oral tradition and recorded in a family manuscript. In contrast to the previously published scholarly record, this manuscript documents the existence of the Koungorogossi Gariko Dynasty nearly three centuries before the arrival in Gao of the Dia brothers from Yemen in 670 C.E." (p. 3). The text could have made greater use of visual diagrams and timelines to indicate the chronology of the Songhoy dynastic kingdoms and empires of Koungorogossi, Dias, Sonnis, and Askya between 670 A.D. to the Moroccan invasion of 1591 to further illustrate their significance.

The second half of the book is dedicated to looking more closely at Songhoy society, language, spirituality, and culture. Drawing on his intimate knowledge as the descendent of the legendary Askya Mohammed, Maïga provides a fascinating record of Songhoy oral traditions of story-telling (for transmitting values) and riddles to illustrate Songhoy concepts of knowledge, which Maïga proposes "are two forms of character education conveyed through a powerful tradition of oral cultural transmission" (p. 4), while presenting Songhoy writing traditions and in particular the original seven Songhoy names of the week, to illuminate Songhoy cosmology.

Maïga sets out the book's goals clearly in the introduction: "To systematically and concisely illuminate a vast historical and socio-cultural record that is little known in the New World" (p.1), and to highlight the historical links between Africa and Europe so as to challenge the euro-centric views of the African continent as essentially "dark." For as Maïga points out: "To some extent this concept of 'darkness' that has been associated with Africa is partially due to European unawareness of Africa's rich cultural heritage" (p. 2). While Maïga is in my view very successful in recording Songhoy history from both written and oral sources, my criticism lies in his over-ambition to include final chapters on the legacy of the Songhoy in the twentieth

century with movements against slavery, African contributions to the development of the New World and France, independence, and pan African and Diasporic shared heritage. These chapters, although interesting in themselves, are too short to be given full justice and remain sketches of a larger thesis that deserves further investigation and insight.

It is worth noting that this book is part of a Routledge series "African Studies: History, Politics, Economics and Culture," headed by Molefi Asante as general editor. It represents a truly multi-disciplinary collection of original research of which Hassimi Oumarou Maïga (a distinguished Professor of Education, University of Bamako, Mali) is a part.

Overall the book is a highly accessible read and useful reference book offering readers a fascinating and original multi-disciplinary view of Africa's rich history.

Helena Cantone, *School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*

**Cedric Mayson. *Why Africa Matters*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2010. 217 pp.**

*Why Africa Matters* is by the South African Methodist minister Cedric Mayson, who took part in the fight to end apartheid in South Africa in the early eighties. Mayson seeks to share his insights about why he believes the entire continent of Africa matters to the rest of the world. He attempts to reverse stereotypes and to shed light on what he perceives to be a "dark" and "ignorant" world outside of Africa. He argues that the knowledge that African people hold has the potential to save humankind from an "apocalypse" (p. 60). Indeed, the author's main objective is to show that the human race is spiraling downward into an eventual doom because of organized religion and self-serving greed borne out of "western civilization." In his opinion, the world must look to Africa and its spiritual ways to start a spiritual revolution. This book is meant for a western audience, despite the fact that it is very critical of western societies.

The book has ten chapters and a conclusion, of which eight focus on religion and the importance of spirituality. Very little attention is given to issues of economics, politics, and society, or to current affairs in Africa. There are no pictures, maps, or special features, and most of the author's citations come from theological texts. In the introduction the author begins with a dramatic and poetic presentation of his aim for writing this book. He claims that it is intended as a "contribution from Africa to a world seeking to rebirth itself!" (p. 4). Mayson contends that this book will have a transformative effect on its readers.

He divides chapter one into five sections with biblical references and subtitles such as the "the 5 horsemen" which he identifies as religion, economics, politics, science, and the media. In the following chapters, Mayson explains that like the biblical five horsemen these agents come to us disguised as bringers of peace and enlightenment, when in reality they are the bringers of destruction of civilization and the inevitable apocalypse. He uses the term "earthlings" instead of people to refer to all human beings and explains that he intentionally chose to do this throughout the book to remind the reader that we are all humble beings on this planet. Throughout the book he uses the African term *ubuntu*, meaning the collective love and allegiance for one another, to refer to an African way of life. He argues for a pure spiritual

oneness with the earth and with nature, one that is absent of war, violence, and greed known to the western man with the introduction of the five horsemen.

The author has an extreme view of the world, proclaiming that the entire world is “arrogant, infantile, and depraved” (p. 14). He believes that organized religion and the Christian church are one of the main reasons why the western world is ignorant and blind to reality. He wants the western world to look to Africa and its “primal” and “spiritual” ways of life for salvation. His reasoning for why Africa matters in today's world is because first, we all come from Africa, and second, unlike the rest of the “civilized” world Africans have kept in touch with the “primal” ways of their ancestors. He refers to all westerners as greedy people in desperate need to be saved. Although the author's attempt to cast all Africans as spiritual, happy, altruistic beings is positive in a sense, unfortunately his choice of words and extreme opinions isolate the reader and typecast all Africans in the same stereotypical ways as the former colonizers did. This book is more introspection than a work of scholarship, and is being advertised in various Christian venues.

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**Janet McIntosh. *The Edge of Islam: Power, Personhood, and Ethnoreligious Boundaries on the Kenya Coast*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009. xi, 325 pp.**

Studies on Islam in contemporary Kenya are a scarce commodity, hence making Janet McIntosh's *The Edge of Islam* a highly welcome contribution. This innovative and invigorating book provides invaluable insights to the highly complex interplay between religion and ethnicity, making it a significant contribution to our understanding of issues such as Islam, ethnic boundaries, and identity in African societies. Situated in the town of Malindi on the Kenyan coast, McIntosh tells the story of the Giriama and the Swahili and their complicated and ambivalent interrelations. While the Swahili are exclusively Muslim, the Giriama are divided between followers of Islam, Christianity, and what McIntosh calls Traditionalism. With a particular focus on religion (Islam), in conjunction with blood, lineage, and class, she claims that this is a major factor for the demarcation, accentuation, and maintenance of boundaries between the two. Her core argument is that while Islam ideally would be universal and open to newcomers, Giriama conversion to Islam and assimilation into Swahili is inhibited by increasingly clear-cut boundaries.

Applying the concept of *folk essentialism*, the author provides a nuanced reading of ethnicity and processes of boundary crossing, fluidity, and permeability. By surveying the political and socio-economic developments during the colonial and post-colonial periods (chapter 1), she convincingly argues that the current situation is characterized by ethnic absolutism—exacerbating the division between Giriama and Swahili. This is further elaborated through a discussion of spirit narratives as reflections of the current socio-economic discrepancies between the Swahili and Giriama (chapter 2) and spirit possessions summoning conversions to Islam (chapter 3), suggesting that this represents an embodiment of a hegemonic premise in

which Giriama is incompatible with Islam, while also reflecting an articulated ideology of resistance.

Chapter 4 details Giriama healing rituals, through which the practitioners draw simultaneously from spiritual forces located in Islam and in Traditionalism. Making some highly relevant remarks on the concept of syncretism, charged with being grounded on a Western premise of religions as integrated and consistent systems, she introduces the term *polyontologism* as a pertinent tool in construing how the actors deliberately move between and appropriates discrete supernatural ontologies drawn from the two traditions—yet without reconciling the two “into a new systemic whole” (p. 188). Discussing the linguistically loci of the these traditions and the issue of code switching, chapter 5 further elaborates the politics of language and provides vivid accounts of both Swahili and Giriama usage of Arabic in divination ceremonies. These accounts point to different and conflicting perceptions of Arabic, in which the Swahili underscores the semantic meaning of the texts, while the Giriama rely on the spiritual potency of the language, accessed through spirit possession.

McIntosh’s overall discussions is framed within the concepts of hegemony (and ideology) and personhood. The former is defined as meanings and values taken for granted—and largely shared by all social groups—while +ideology represents the articulation of what is taken for granted. Hegemony constitutes an accurate analytical tool for understanding the asymmetric relationship between Swahili and Giriama, in which notions of Islamic potency as belonging to the Swahili reinforces the intrinsic link between ethnicity and religion. Personhood is seen as a way of indexing culturally specific expectations and ideologies about people’s independence and interdependence, related to the intertwined notions of agency and interiority. Swahili and Giriama personhood is seen as qualitatively different, the former being more individualistic oriented, whereas Giriama valorize a more sociocentric model of the person, grounded in communal interdependency and customs.

Far from being caught in an essentializing trap, McIntosh’s rich ethnographic material contains detailed accounts of divergent opinions, sentiments, and perceptions of one’s own and the other’s personhood. What is left unanswered, though, is the basis for such diversity; being it gender, class, or religious affiliation. Further, as she informs us that a third of the Giriama are Christians, one is left with the question of how Protestant Christianity’s emphasis on interiority and personal choice/belief might have impacted Giriama personhood. The role of religion in defining Swahili personhood is duly recognized, in which McIntosh points to an influential Islamic reformist movement in conjunction with Swahili participation in the urban economic marketplace. As noted by several other scholars on contemporary Islam in Africa, this conflation has paved the way for a changing moral economy and a profiled “individualistic ethic”. While this remains integrated in the study, it would have benefited from a more elaborate discussion of Islamic reformism (instead of merely labeling it Wahhabism), some more details on its impacts on Swahili personhood, and effects on discourses on hegemony and power. This is not to say that the study has some critical deficits, but rather to point to possible areas for future research, generated from this highly stimulating read.

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**Augustine S. O. Okwu. *Igbo Culture and the Christian Missions: Conversion in Theory and Practice, 1857-1957*. New York: University Press of America, Inc., 2010. x, 336 pp.**

Augustine Okwu has served as a Roman Catholic missionary assistant, diplomat, and professor of history at the State University of New York. He has drawn from these experiences and training to produce *Igbo Culture and the Christian Missions*, a work which shows the interaction of political, religious, and cultural dynamics before and during Nigeria's colonial era.

Okwu describes how Western missionaries altered their strategies as a result of their encounter with the Igbo. Igbo culture—which Okwu broadly characterizes as "pragmatic," "utilitarian," "innovative," and "competitive"—caused missionaries to shift their focus from evangelization for religious conversion to providing services like hospitals and schools. Okwu rightly points out that missionary competition to establish schools in areas often arose from the requests of the local Igbo themselves, for fear of being exceeded or outwitted by neighboring Igbo communities. In this sense, the rapid expansion of Western missionary education resulted from Igbo demand, and Igbo towns and individuals utilized these institutions to their own advantage. This demand drove mission societies to devote a tremendous amount of time, personnel, and money to these institutions in order to maintain the appeal of Christianity to the Igbo. Thus, Igbo culture determined missionary policy as mission societies negotiated "conversion-effectiveness." "Igbo culture," however, is not explicitly defined (beyond broad descriptors) and is more illuminated through pericopes than by a focused explication of Igbo worldview(s).

The Igbo recede into the background as the book progresses. The text increasingly focuses upon the missionary dimensions of the encounter between the Igbo and Europeans, and Okwu excels at presenting a cogent narrative of this complex movement. While he repeatedly includes materials from Protestant mission societies (namely, the Church Missionary Society [CMS]), Roman Catholics receive the bulk of his attention (the Holy Ghost Fathers and *La Société des Missions Africaines*). This emphasis is welcome, as Catholic missions in Nigeria have received less attention than the CMS Okwu generally portrays Catholic missionaries in a more positive light than their Protestant counterparts. Catholic missionaries, he argues (despite his acknowledgment that Protestants learned local dialects and ordained Igbo priests more quickly), were more attuned to the educational wants of the Igbo, and were less paternalistic, judgmental, and iconoclastic toward African traditions (pp. 160 ff.). However, Okwu does not discuss why, given these distinctions, Anglicanism still spread more rapidly than Roman Catholicism.

Okwu does not attempt to redeem Western missionaries from imperialistic complicity. He shares many of E.A. Ayandele's critiques of missionary involvement in the European colonial project (*The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria* [1965]). Okwu's work is more nuanced, and his evaluation of missionary imperialism is generally limited to specific instances, avoiding Ayandele's broad generalizations (Okwu, pp. 131, 137-38, 155). Okwu's assessment of Christian missions is that they were unnecessarily destructive or dismissive of Igbo culture. They misunderstood its "social" practices (e.g., festival, political, and moral institutions) for "pagan" (e.g., religious) practices, condemning both indiscriminately. The "social" practices could

reasonably have remained with no threat to the orthodoxy of the Christian communities (pp. 109, 196 ff., and epilogue).

Curiously, Okwu does not present a theory of conversion (per the book's subtitle). The only discussion at any length about conversion is in the epilogue, with no interaction with other scholarship on conversion, such as Robin Horton's "intellectualist" model ("African Conversion" [1971]), or Okorocho's "salvationist" study of Igbo conversion to Christianity (*The Meaning of Religious Conversion in Africa* [1987]). What Okwu seems to mean by the subtitle to the book is that Christian missionaries, in theory, sought to convert individuals from "paganism" to Christianity. Instead, these missionaries had to contend with Igbo demands for education and their responsiveness to advancement within Western political and economic systems. Though Okwu notes the appeal of missionary services to the Igbo, their actual impact upon Igbo culture is vague in parts. For example, in one sentence Okwu mentions in passing that Catholic medical practices led to a diminishing of Igbo notions of causality regarding illness and health, without expounding upon the cultural ramifications of this shift (p. 232).

Okwu compiles a variety of sources to illuminate both the "Igbo" as well as the "missionary" sides of the religious encounter. Thus, he extensively uses the archival resources of multiple missionary societies, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, and government records. His use of "oral tradition" is more ambiguous. He does pepper the work with frequent references to local tradition or memory. These are predominantly autobiographical and anecdotal in nature (though they are frequently quite fascinating examples) (p. 172, 179). However, these references are not cited or based upon obvious field research.

*Igbo Culture and the Christian Missions* is more a study of the impact of Igbo culture on Western missionary societies' policies than of the changes that missionary presence effected within Igbo culture itself. Okwu accomplishes his task of demonstrating this relationship. His work provides an impressive history of Catholic missions in colonial Nigeria, and would certainly be of interest to scholars of the history of Christian missions, especially in the colonial era. It also shows that the introduction of European civilization and religion into southern Nigeria was a complex phenomenon in which both Europeans and Africans negotiated cultural ideals with colonial realities.

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**Tejumola Olaniyan and James Sweet. *The African Diaspora and the Disciplines*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010. viii, 363 pp.**

The relationship between the African homeland and its diaspora has increasingly become an object of study, particularly since the last decade of the twentieth century. However, there has also been a lack of conceptual frameworks that would best make sense of the phenomena being studied. Where scholarship has not been frozen in mildewed theory and anachronistic research methodology, interdisciplinary suspicion or animosity has put paid any real chances for meaningful dialogue between the competing and contending disciplines. It has been extremely rare to see scholarship that goes against the operation of disciplinary border police in an

attempt to unlock the essence of the African diaspora. Therefore, African diaspora studies, has, first off, been in dire need of an avenue for cross-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary dialogue and for the rethinking and reconfiguration of conceptual frameworks that would make scholarly investigations more meaningful and effective. Secondly, it has been in dire need of a platform where any number of disciplines can meet and dialogue freely and beneficially in a manner that is mutually intelligible.

Tejumola Olaniyan and James Sweet's edited volume could not have come at a better time. With a title fashioned after Robert Bates and V.Y. Mudimbe's *Africa and the Disciplines* (1993), this new text echoes the spirit but not the letter of its precursor. The earlier text is preoccupied with how Africa has contributed to various disciplines, whereas this new one focuses on strategies of studying the African diaspora from different disciplinary perspectives. Olaniyan and Sweet's text has the potential to reinvigorate African Diaspora Studies, itself a burgeoning field crying for more illuminating conceptual anchoring. The volume is a collection of a wide range of theoretical essays grounded in divergent fields of inquiry, which nonetheless converge in their quest to make sense of the mystique of the African diaspora. It is this diversity of disciplinary voices and stances that lends this volume its richness and profundity. But this is also greatly enhanced by the quality and divergent disciplinary biases of the essayists contributing to the volume. On the whole, the book adroitly brings together erudite voices from the humanities and social science as well as hard sciences such as genetics that have a bearing on African Diaspora Studies.

The book contains fifteen chapters divided into four distinct parts, covering history, the sciences, arts, and cultural studies. The bulk of the chapters are judicious selections from a conference on the African diaspora and the disciplines that was held at the University of Wisconsin-Madison under the sponsorship of The African Diaspora and Atlantic Research Circle in March 2006. The chapters deal with theorization of the African Diaspora Studies and initiating dialogue between and within various disciplines with respect to African Diaspora Studies. The volume emphasizes conceptual debates over primary research and analysis. And in developing their various conceptual arguments and analyses, the writers do not equivocate. The outcome is an edited volume that confronts and illuminates upon conceptual debates with authority, acuity, and clarity.

The text is remarkable in the way it privileges the overlap between disciplines in general but particularly between the humanities (history, philosophy, and musicology), the social sciences (geography, anthropology, archeology, and political science), and genetics (science). Fatimah L. C. Jackson and Latifa F. J. Borgelin's enlightening article "How Genetics Can Provide Detail to the Transatlantic African Diaspora," is an example of the magnitude of disciplinary diversity in the volume. In this article Jackson and Borgelin bring the science of genetics to bear on our understanding of the Transatlantic African diaspora in ways that are truly rewarding and refreshing. As they argue compellingly, the DNA or "genetic information can yield a more robust perspective on the migrations of African peoples" (p. 75). Their article not only shows the methods at work in the past and the present in assessing the African diaspora but also suggests new and innovative ways with which that could be done in future.

In his “African Diaspora and Anthropology,” Richard Price provides a survey of the trajectory of thought on continuities and disjuncture of aspects of the homeland in the cultural heritage of the African diaspora, particularly in North America. He is severely critical of scholars such as Michael Gomez, who insist on retention of African cultural practices in the diaspora. Instead, he maintains: “We must grant full agency to African Americans, making them the central actors in the construction of their cultures” (p. 66). In other words, in his view the diasporic African is responsible for his self-creation, his formulation of a uniquely diasporic identity, ethnicity, and culture. Evidently, Price is unlikely to have the last word on this debate, but what is important at this point is how his chapter like, others in this volume, not only articulates issues beyond disciplinary particularity, but also self-consciously engages other disciplines.

In brief *The African Diaspora and the Disciplines* is a luminous collection of essays, indeed a must read for anyone interested in diasporas in general and the African diaspora in particular. This book has the potential of becoming a touchstone for the field of diaspora studies.

Ken Walibora Waliaula, *University of Wisconsin-Madison*

**Brett L. Shadle.** *“Girl Cases:” Marriage and Colonialism in Gusiiland, Kenya, 1890-1970.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2006. x, 256 pp.

The title of this remarkable text, borrowed from a saying by a British official in the South Kavirondo District of colonial Kenya in the 1930s, refers to the gender and generational disputes over the meaning of marriage and its customs in the region of Gusiiland in the twentieth century. More specifically, “girl cases” referred to the phenomenon, beginning in the 1890s, of Kenyan women in Gusiiland being abducted, raped, or running off with lovers. Brett Shadle uses the events of “girl cases” to illuminate the changing notions (and conflicts) about marriage in twentieth century Gusiiland. Thus, the main aim of the book is to “describe from where the ‘girl cases’ emerged and what became of them . . . untangle the contentious struggles over marriage, and trace the trajectory of Gusii marriage from the turn of the century up through the 1960s” (p. xx).

Shadle’s significant arguments stem from the myriad reasons why “girl cases” occurred. He asserts that the era of innumerable “girl cases” —the 1940s through the early 1960s—was born of the union of two factors, one old and one new. First, was the nature of Gusii bridewealth. Gusii men’s primary source of bridewealth cattle was what they received from the marriage of a daughter or sister. A father had to ensure that what he received as bridewealth would be sufficient to give as bridewealth in return. However, when a man heard rumors of increased “going rates” for bridewealth, he had to abide by the current rates. Consequently, a Gusii man might be left without enough cattle to make a new marriage if he abided by the increased current rates for bridewealths. The second reason for “girl cases” was the colonial economy. Shadle emphasizes that unevenly distributed new wealth circulating in Gusiiland forced the bridewealth rate up to levels unseen for decades. Because the going rates for bridewealth dramatically increased, only a few men could afford a wife, let alone multiple wives. As

bridewealth climbed and wages stagnated in the colonial period, many young men found themselves without enough cattle to get married, and many young women found themselves without husbands. Therefore, “girl cases” culminated when young women were forced into marriages with undesirable but cattle rich men. Many of these women ran away and some went to new men. Other women avoided undesirable marriages by eloping with their lovers. The most desperate unmarried young men abducted and raped women; should an abductee become pregnant she and her father would be more likely to accept the “marriage.”

Shadle’s argument that women who ran away from undesirable marriages were not rejecting the institution of marriage is a noteworthy strength of this brilliantly researched book. The author articulates that the women of the “girl cases” did not run away to urban regions but stayed within the confines of their rural communities. It might be assumed that the women who ran away were rejecting marriage and flexing their feminist muscles. Shadle asserts, however, that Gusii women who remained in their rural homes neither left their homelands nor rejected the institution of marriage. He scholar clarifies that Gusii women’s ultimate goal was marriage, but on their *own* terms. Therefore, by running away from unwanted marriages, Gusii women were active agents in the making (and unmaking) of illicit unions.

Shadle’s emphasis on Gusii women and marriage positively diverges from the dominant focus on African women’s rural-urban migration. Much scholarship emphasizes how during colonialism, urban centers allowed rural African women to escape unhappy marriages or impending marriages. By highlighting Gusii women who remained in rural areas, Shadle’s work contributes greatly to the historiography of “run away” women who did not flee their rural communities and defended their ideologies about marriage at home.

This book is a monumental research achievement based on an astonishing array of archival sources. The author draws heavily on civil and criminal case records and transcripts from the three *ritongo* (court or tribunals) that served Gusiiland. These sources, such as the *ritongo* transcripts, are significant because they provide the history of Gusii local practice and understandings of marriage. What is also remarkable about the sources is that that most come from local and isolated African courts. The court cases fall under three types of criminal cases. One category highlights situations in which an unmarried girl was removed from the custody of her parents without their consent. Shadle’s excellent use of his primary sources are illuminated in chapter four when he scrutinizes the ways in which Gusii men and women entered the courts to hash out their disputes and offered up their ideas about what made a proper marriage. Shadle successfully argues in this chapter, through his analysis of transcripts, how it was in the *ritongo* that Gusii articulated their views of marriage.

A minor blemish in the text is the limited mention of the Mau Mau rebellion. More specifically, there is little contextualization of this historical event and how it may have influenced “girl cases.” This is astonishing because the event (1952-1960) was a critical period for many Kenyans and influenced the social, political, and cultural fabric of the lives of Kenyans. It is hard to believe that such an important event did not impact ideologies of marriage or influence marital actions. For instance, did fewer women run away from undesirable marriages during the Mau Mau rebellion? Answers to such questions would have

enhanced and contextualized the historical circumstances of “girl cases” in the late colonial period in Gusiiland.

Despite these concerns, however, Shadle’s book is a closely argued, well-written, and carefully researched study that raises crucial issues. The text persuasively explains how the economic, political, and social circumstances of bridewealth were connected to “girl cases.” In addition, the book successfully traces the changing gender and generational debates and tensions over Gusi marriages. This thoroughly researched book makes essential reading for any scholar or student of African history or gender studies. Those teaching in such courses should consider the book for adoption.

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**Elinami Veraeli Swai. *Beyond Women’s Empowerment in Africa: Exploring Dislocation and Agency*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2010. xv, 189 pp.**

Ever since the first women’s conference, held under the theme “Equality, Development and Peace,” was held in Mexico City in 1975 and followed by the declaration of 1975 as the International Year of Women, women empowerment issues have assumed pride of place in public discourse. The second (1980; Copenhagen), third (1985; Nairobi) and fourth (1995; Beijing) women’s conferences followed, together with the Millennium Summit in 2000, and, thereby, gave impetus to the women’s rights movement. Thus, any book, such as Swai’s, that addresses same is a welcome addition to the burgeoning literature on women’s empowerment issues. Particularly notable, the timing of the publication of the book is perfect given the fact that it came out a year before the centenary celebration of the International Women’s Day (IWD) on 8 March 2011 (IWD was first celebrated on 8 March 1911). Thus, as the world reflects on the hundred-year old odyssey on the women’s rights movement, Swai’s book, amongst others, helps us knowledgeably to audit women’s achievements and challenges since the first IWD was celebrated 100 years ago. In this connection, if women’s knowledge systems are trivialized and marginalized as Swai asserts in her book, at least in her case study, did Tanzanian women have reasons to celebrate the centennial IWD? It appears the answer is a qualified no.

The seven chapter book is organized as follows. The very elaborate introduction delineates the universe of the discourse whereby the author tells the reader that the book is primarily concerned with the subject of women’s knowledge systems in Africa. It makes the argument that this kind of knowledge, which is unacknowledged and given labels such as indigenous, local, informal, domestic, and private, sustains the African continent in a myriad ways. Furthermore, it lays the blame for the marginalization and trivialization of women’s knowledge systems at the door of the colonial and post-colonial governments. In this connection, Swai argues that education, which according to conventional wisdom is a liberating and empowerment tool, is used in “dislocating women and suppressing their creativity and agency in Africa” (p. 7). In addition, and very importantly, Swai attempts to distinguish her book from similar others on three grounds: (i) she rejects the notion that modern education, which she says is premised on Euro/American cultural hegemony, is a silver bullet and argues that its socializes

women into pre-determined goals without due regard to their peculiar circumstances; (ii) she argues that education for women is parochial and patronizing and, amongst others, blames it for denigrating their knowledge systems; and (iii) she dismisses the widely-held view that education for women is the only way to empower them to grapple with challenges of modern society and argues that empowerment needs many strategies and that “the institution of education for women needs to be critically assessed” (p. 8).

Following the introduction, chapter 1 refracts women’s dislocation through the post-structural, post-colonial and cultural-historical prisms. Although Swai blames modern education for women’s disempowerment, she, similarly, does not spare the quest for modernization, which does not acknowledge women’s traditional knowledge systems. Chapter 2 discusses the theory of the development of women’s knowledge systems and chapter 3 continues the debate by discussing ways in which women communicate through the medium of *khangas* (brightly colored pieces of cloth that many women in East Africa wear and sometimes use as head wraps). In this connection, the *khanga* is akin to human billboard, because all manner of communications are transmitted through it; for example, expressions as *hakuna kama mama* (there is none like mother) celebrate the important role that mothers (read women) play in society for “mother is considered to be the pillar of society” (p. 81). Importantly, *khangas* address diverse issues: for example, independence and the role that woman played in the fight for independence in Tanzania. Chapter 4 argues that Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) are scientific and rational and, therefore, takes the reader through a journey on the application of IKS in areas such as medicine (as instanced by the case of Mama Mona, a traditional healer, farming (e.g., animal husbandry) and development. Chapter 5 uses the case study method to discuss real lives of rural women in Tanzania; for example, the case of Doris Ngabanu. The author uses life examples to demonstrate how stereotyped images of woman negatively affect their self-image, belief systems and values. Chapter 6 discusses women and the development enterprise, and chapter 7 integrates all issues that are discussed in the book.

Overall, the book possesses many strengths. The key ones are: (i) short length; (ii) objectivity, honesty and depth that permeate the narrative; (iii) simplicity; although it addresses a subject that is not common place, it is jargon-free and, thus, the reader need not possess a passing knowledge of women’s empowerment literature to understand it. In addition, the author uses methodological triangulation; uses both primary and secondary data sources. Particularly, Swai goes “native” (interacting closely with her subjects) and, therefore, participant observation allowed her to live the experiences of her subjects. In a related sense, is she qualified to speak to the subject? On account of her professional training and work, she is and, thus, this favorably circumstances her to speak to the subject and, hence, strengthen book. However, there are some minor problems; e.g., Swai’s definition of IKS comes late (in the notes section) and there are some typographical errors.

To conclude, did the author achieve the primary purpose of the book? That is, to prove that African women possess knowledge systems that are often unacknowledged and trivialized and that if same is acknowledged and harnessed it can benefit society? Yes, through the use of some case studies, she demonstrates the veracity of her assertions. Importantly, even though the book

is about Tanzania, it is generalizable to the rest of Africa. In this connection, I see Botswana, my home country, in Swai's story.

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**United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. *African Governance Report II 2009*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. xii, 274 pp.**

Governance in Africa is popularly a knotty issue. In the past few decades, African states have been pressured to live up to good governance ideals as a strategy and culture for pursuing balanced development. *African Governance Report II 2009* is a scorecard on the governance situation in the thirty-five African countries it covers. This is an improvement on the previous report, *African Governance Report I*, which covered twenty-seven countries. It specifically presents a feedback from the monitoring and assessment of the progress African countries are making on democracy and governance from 2005 to 2009. The Report is not one of those usual compendia of bad news from Africa. Using the benchmarks of *African Governance Report I*, its main message is that "Africa has made modest progress in improving governance" (p. ix). It therefore identifies and promotes "better," "improved" (p. ix), and "good" (p. 17) practices on governance as a means of promoting new governance norms and culture in Africa. It identifies capacity gaps in governance institutions in Africa and contributes appropriate policy recommendations and ideas necessary for making interventions in improving governance on the continent.

The Report's methodological path is well explained and replicable. It utilizes a combination of expert panel, household and desk-top surveys as its research instruments. Covered governance themes include: political, economic, and public financial management; private sector development and cooperate governance; institutional checks and balances, effectiveness and accountability of the executive; human rights and the rule of law; corruption and capacity development. These themes form the Report's eight chapters. The main findings of the Report can be summarized as follows: multiparty systems flourish in Africa but with poor institutionalization; more incentives are being put in place to attract foreign direct investment but less is done for domestic investments; separation of powers is gradually taking root in the continent; there is still great need for deepening the culture of human rights in Africa; not much progress is being made in asset repatriation from Western countries.

This is one of the most impressive reports on governance in Africa. Even so, for a report that promises a timely intervention in understanding Africa's contemporary governance, readers may perceive one downside that is difficult to ignore. A major element of governance in Africa, *donor aid*, is not tackled in the report. It is difficult to gauge governance in Africa realistically without noting the influence donor aid may have on government policies, and then on governance. Considering that women and children make up nearly 80 percent of the Africa's population, some readers may be surprised to note that no major space is devoted to the core concerns of women and children. The reason, however, is probably too obvious. UNECA

published a separate report on women and children in Africa in the same year this report was published (see UNECA's *African Women's Report 2009*).

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa focuses its work on promoting regional integration and meeting special needs and emerging global challenges of Africa. Considering its country-wide network in Africa and its experience with research of this kind, it is surely difficult to argue that any other organization would have been in a better position to research and produce a more comprehensive Report on Africa. Overall, the Report is rich with genuine governance data on Africa. Its literature coverage is extensive. Also, considering the paucity of reliable research data about Africa, this report can serve as a useful source of data for future research on African governance issues. There is need to implement key policy recommendations made in this Report at the regional and country levels in Africa. This therefore calls for development experts, researchers, and government and non-government agencies to utilize the opportunities posed by its publication.

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**Michael Vickers. *A Nation Betrayed: Nigeria and the Minorities Commission of 1957*. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press. 2010. xxvii, 324 pp.**

As Nigeria approached independence, the minority groups in the country (three sets of ethnic groups that collectively formed the minority population in each of the country's three regions) made it clear at a constitutional conference in London in 1957 that independence on the existing three-regional structure would result in unrestrained domination of the minority groups in the country by the majority group in each of the three regions. With the consent of the country's three leading parties, the Colonial Secretary appointed a commission to "enquire into the fears of the minorities and to suggest ways of allaying them."

Before Michael Vickers' book, what was known about the commission's work was based on media reports and government publications. *A Nation Betrayed* is based principally on what its author called a "trunk of 'gold,'" a box containing confidential papers about the commission's work, papers that, before being used by Vickers while working for his PhD in the late 1960s, had not been used by any other scholar. Confidential files in the trunk of gold were supplemented by several other sources, including correspondence between the author and some of the members of the minorities' commission, and interviews in Nigeria and the United Kingdom. However, rich as the trunk was, Vickers chose to cite only the documentary sources relating to the Western Region (where there was a movement for the creation of a Mid-West state). The campaign for a Mid-Western State was the subject of Vickers' 2000 book, *Ethnicity and Sub-Nationalism in Nigeria: Movement for a Mid-West State*. The book's the sub-title makes clear that the focus is on the Mid-West. That focus is not reflected in the title of the book under review. Although Vickers says that the commission "approached its undertakings in the North and East regions in identical manner," although he used the Mid-West evidence to draw conclusions about the entire country, the concentration on Mid-West evidence should have been indicated in the book's sub-title.

In different chapters, Vickers explained why the minorities commission was appointed, and gave a rather detailed background of its members. He showed that the commission's terms of reference were "restrictive." He then argued, convincingly in my view, that the terms were made restrictive because the Colonial Office did not intend to create any new regions. A further decision taken by the commission to ensure that the British government's predetermined objective was realized was that it did not provide for "privilege" (guarantee of protection for witnesses, the lack of which, the author reasoned, prevented many witnesses with crucial evidence from testifying). Much of the book deals with the following: evidence and arguments presented at sittings of the commission in Benin and Warri by the Mid-West State Movement in support of its demand; contrary evidence and arguments by organizations within the area of the proposed state that opposed its creation; and contrary evidence and arguments presented the Western Regional government to prove that it had not been discriminating against the minority areas, as well as the government's modified proposals about the territorial and ethnic composition of the proposed state.

As the author observed, the evidence provided by the Mid-West Movement was weak. It did not prove beyond doubt that the Yoruba-led Western regional government had systematically been discriminating against the ethnic minority groups in the region. What was beyond doubt, however, was that there was, among the minority groups, a strong fear of domination by the region's Yoruba majority population. It was also clear that, since the minority groups were "minorities of a permanent nature" (as it was not conceivable that in the foreseeable future they would be equal in population with the Yoruba), the fear of domination could not be allayed by any other means than the creation of a new region. The evidence also showed that the Western regional government was opposed to the creation of a Mid-West State, and that the Action Group (the ruling party) used persecution and several dubious means to advance its electoral cause in the minority areas. Concerning the opposition of the Western regional government to a Mid-West state, Vickers noted that while the government officially supported the creation of the state, it hinged its support on conditions designed to prevent the objective from being realized. Vickers devoted a chapter to the report of the commission, and, among other things, detailed its recommendations for allaying the fears of the minorities. These included the establishment of a federal police force, constitutional provisions guaranteeing fundamental human rights, and the establishment of a special board for the development of the Niger Delta. Among his many remarks, Vickers asserted that the provisions made for allaying the fears of the minorities were inadequate. He condemned the commission and the Colonial Office for not taking seriously the fears of the minorities. Indeed, he blamed them for being more concerned to allay the fears of the majorities and secure British interests. In his view, the British, with the support of the regional governments in Nigeria, committed "honorable treason" against the Nigerian state. The consequences of the treason, he asserted, led to the civil war.

It is pertinent to comment on one point Vickers failed to make, and on one he made with much emphasis. Vickers failed to make the point that the persecution of opposition groups in the minority areas of the Western Region was not different in pattern and intensity from what

the ruling party did in the opposition areas in Yorubaland. The point should have been made that, like stubborn step children in relation to stern step mothers, the minorities viewed “normal” processes of dealing with opposition groups or areas in Nigeria as evidence of hatred or bias against non-Yoruba peoples. More importantly, Vickers declared repeatedly that the non-creation of new states led to the civil war. However, he did not bother to show how this happened. No reader that is not quite familiar with Nigerian history can work out the argument himself, which is that division into small states would have made the subordinate units weaker, such that no head of a state government could have been capable of using the machinery of government to drag an entire region out of the country. In the same vein, the creation of states in the East would have placed the oil resources of the region (one of the main interests of both sides to the war) under the control of the minorities who, as of then, did not feel big or united enough to seek to pull out of Nigeria. Moreover, it is pertinent to stress that, contrary to Vickers’ assertion, it was not inevitable that the three-regional structure of Nigeria (four-regional structure from 1963 when the Mid-Western Region was eventually created) would lead to civil war. The war was not only due to weaknesses in the structure of Nigeria. There were other variables at play, including the inability of the military officers who were at the helm at the time to make needed compromises.

Vickers blended his narrative with exposition and analysis. His book is intellectually sophisticated, with many profound arguments. But there are two main weaknesses in his overall approach. One is that many facts and arguments were stated repeatedly, making the book somewhat prolix. The other weakness is that Vickers did not write with scholarly detachment. He wrote with much passion, such that the book could well have been sub-titled: “A diatribe against the Minorities Commission and the Colonial Office.” On the whole, however, and largely because it is based on previously unused evidence, *A Nation Betrayed* is a most useful addition to the historiography of decolonization in Nigeria.

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**Cherryl Walker, Anna Bohlin, Ruth Hall, and Thembela Kepe (eds.). *Land, Memory, Reconstruction, and Justice: Perspectives on Land Claims in South Africa*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010. xiv, 335 pp.**

Black South Africans occasionally emphasized the importance of land to African existence and identity. Reverend Edward Tsewu, an important early twentieth century leader stated, in 1904: “Now the land question is a deep question among all men.” Dr. A.B. Xuma, presented the presidential address at the 1941 African National Congress Annual Conference and said: the “fundamental basis of all wealth and power is the ownership and acquisition of freehold title to land. From land, we derive our existence.” The expropriation of African rural land or the destruction of black urban areas and forced removal of populations during the apartheid years attacked this “fundamental basis.” Since 1994, land loss during the twentieth century is so vital an issue in South Africa that sections of the 1993 interim constitution and the 1996 constitution are devoted to the restitution of land rights. One example of the government effort to publicize widely the deadline for land claims was a tee shirt emblazoned with “Stake your Claim” across

the front of the shirt, together with the deadline, 31 December 1998, and a pencil in a fist between the two sets of words. On the back was written, "Know Your Land Rights." Thus, the land issue is still a "deep question" and Reverend Tsewu's statement resonates as loudly today as it did in 1904.

This background lends significance to *Land, Memory, Reconstruction, and Justice: Perspectives on Land Claims in South Africa*. The editors describe the book as a collection of articles which explore "the conflicted terrain of land claims and land restitution in post-apartheid South Africa" (p. 1). The introduction and seventeen chapters examine and evaluate the implementation of the restitution policy, mainly emphasizing examples from the Western and Eastern Cape and Limpopo provinces. The authors build on a growing literature about restitution in South Africa, especially apparent in the bibliographies accompanying each chapter. Final updates to chapters were made in mid-2009 (p. 13).

Section 25 (7) of the 1996 Constitution establishes a right: "A person or community dispossessed of property after 19 June 1913 as a result of past racially discriminatory laws or practices is entitled, to the extent provided by an Act of Parliament, either to restitution of that property or to equitable redress." Both Ruth Hall and Alan Dodson include discussions of this legal right in their chapters. Why the constitutional provision refers to 1913 is inadequately explained within this volume. The date is associated with the passage of the notorious Natives Land Act, which prohibited black South Africans from buying or leasing land outside of designated rural "scheduled areas." However, Section 1 (1) of the Land Act included an exception clause which allowed the Governor General to approve rural land purchases, something he did regularly between 1913 and 1936 (knowledge scholars rarely describe and omitted from this volume also). The Parliament's choice of 1913 is perplexing because the Land Act was not responsible for the loss of African owned land (only buying opportunities), and the South African government did not have the power to expropriate African owned so-called "black spots" until 1939. Also missing from this volume are data on how many of the claims for restitution concerned land loss between 1913 and 1948.

Based on the Constitution, restitution should have been focused only on ownership and dispossession, especially to "redress the legacy of apartheid rule." According to Ruth Hall, restitution "is a rights-based program in that the dispossessed or their descendants have an enforceable right, confirmed in the Constitution, to restoration of, or compensation for, property that was unfairly taken" (p. 21). In order to pursue its restitution policy, the government established a Commission on Restitution of Land Rights, which recognized 79,696 claims, and a Land Claims Court. However, within a short period of time, restitution came to include broader land reform aims. The four authors of Chapter 16 summed the aims up: "Although the main objective of South Africa's land restitution program has been restorative justice and reconciliation, its rural component has always had a recognized role within a broader rural development strategy" (p. 288). The editors also write about the "high hopes" that restitution would "redress the injustices" AND "contribute to the objectives of tenure security, land redistribution, and rural development" linked to the "land reform ambitions" (p. 1), and Hanri Mostert suggests that "restitution is popularly (even if mistakenly) often perceived as the

‘heartbeat’ of land reform” (p. 61). The restitution program became a program to correct injustice but also to overcome the “physical, emotional, and psychological loss suffered by those who were dispossessed” (p. 76).

A dominant theme that emerges from the essays is the very complicated nature of restitution and land reform in South Africa. Alan Dodson begins his essay by writing that “processing and adjudication of land claims is a complex task” (p. 273). The complexity is linked, first of all, to the wide range of stakeholders: claimants, usually former owners of the land or houses, but eventually also tenants, and, on occasion, claimant organizations; national government agencies, including the Commission of the Restitution of Land Rights and the Regional Land Claims Commissions, as well as the Department of Land Affairs and other bureaucracies; local government, such as the governments of Cape Town and Durban; non-governmental organizations; and different racial groups. Second, there were the urban claimants (over 70 percent) and rural claimants, about 28 percent, but accounting for far more people. Third, there was the matter of expectations: for the dispossessed, monetary compensation or restoration of their land? Oom John from Covie had an answer: “The land is more important than money. If you take money, after five months, it’s gone. With land, you have land to leave for your children” (p. 135). However, if the land was returned, questions arose among the new owners: for what purpose will we use the land—to meet housing needs, to farm on a small scale, to earn money from rental income, or to maintain a large commercial enterprise? As Chizuko Sato pointed out, restitution “meant different things to different landowners” (p. 228), and this absence of unanimity sometimes complicated restitution negotiations or created tensions after restitution. For governments, should the land be used for development and productive use or should restored land be part of a larger land reform process? Fourth, the location of the land could make a difference: prime real estate, as with Cape Town’s District Six, or commercial farms in Limpopo province, for example. Even in this volume, the many different examples showed a great range, including Cato Manor in Durban, District Six and Black River (now a part of Rondebosch) in Cape Town; Kalk Bay, a fishing community in the Western Cape, Knysna and Covie on the Garden Route, and Roosboom in Kwazulu-Natal. In addition, other case studies included the Makuleke on the western border of the Kruger Park and four other examples from Limpopo province, Shimange, Mavungeni, Munzhedzi, and people in the Levubu Valley. Various authors also point out that restitution claims may become entangled with other issues, such as political agendas, traditional leadership, gender, identity, and racial tensions. Time might play a role in claimant decision making because many of those who filed claims were elderly and, fearing that they would die before receiving their land, chose to accept monetary compensation instead. And, government priorities for selected properties sometimes changed, for example, from owners to tenants, particularly if the circumstances of the owners had improved substantially since the time of the dispossession, or from coloreds or Indians to Africans.

While some writers viewed their essays as an opportunity to explore new ways to implement restitution, to describe lessons learned or others recommended “future steps that could ensure the sustainable resettlement of restored land” (p. 274). Angela Conway and Tim Xipu believe that the example of Covie on the Garden route “shows innovative ways of meeting

the challenges of land restitution that could inspire others" (p. 140). Chizuko Sato points to the "importance of not isolating land restitution from regional political and restructuring processes," and recommends linkages to the "development strategy for the region" (p. 228). And, Alan Dodson lists six ideas to help create a "clear vision" for the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights, which include staffing improvements, changes in the Restitution Act, new legislation and realistic targets "for the resolution of complex urban and rural claims" (p. 284).

Several other points are worth mentioning. The authors are individuals with a wide range of training and experience. They are academics, attorneys and a former judge, dissertation researchers, members of NGOs, and an employee of a government department. The quality of the book is enhanced by the participation of Cherryl Walker, a former regional land claims commissioner for Kwazulu-Natal (1995-2000), as one of the editors and writer of an excellent chapter on Cato Manor, in which Walker draws on her experience as a commissioner. Several of the chapters were revisions of articles published earlier. By December, 2006, 73,433 were settled. Final updates to chapters were made in mid-2009 (p. 13).

The tone of at least half of the essays is critical of the land restitution process or of the participants involved in trying to settle claims, including claimants themselves. Some analysts regard restitution as a great success and point to the real achievement involving the "mass settlement of urban claims through cash payouts alongside a handful of alternative attempts to rebuild urban spaces" (p. 32). Cherryl Walker refers to "imperfections," and "significant ambiguities," and criticizes the agencies associated with land restitution for failing to take a more "imaginative approach" to the Cato Manor case. Marc Wegerif is particularly critical, exclaiming against a "failing land reform and land restitution program in South Africa, one that is neither returning sufficient amounts of land to people nor facilitating the effective use of the little land returned" (p. 100). Conway and Xipu complain that "the restitution process is long, laborious, and bureaucratic, often creating frustration and conflict" (p. 139), while Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie concludes her particularly enlightening and sensitive chapter by referring to Black River claimants who "know now that justice cannot be done" because of a restitution process that is "characterized by delays and limited financial settlements" (pp. 97-98). In a similar vein, Anna Bohlin writes about Knysna and Kalk Bay claimants whose "fragile" faith in the restitution process "diminished" to the point where their "waning confidence" affected their decisions (p. 128). But some of the blame may relate to the claimants themselves; M. Aliber, T. Maluleke, M. Thagwana and T. Manenzhe effectively describe Limpopo province "claimant communities generally riven by internal conflict" (p. 303).

For this reviewer, the picture that emerges about the very complicated effort to achieve the constitutional restitution mandate is most enlightening and makes *Land, Memory, Reconstruction, and Justice: Perspectives on Land Claims in South Africa* a useful addition to the literature. Equally important, restitution is not yet complete; consequently, the critiques and recommendations presented in this volume may still have an impact.

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