

BOOK REVIEWS

The real world of Somalia, the context of the Somali oral poetry discourse: Response to Lidwien Kapteijns' Book Review¹ of *Somali Oral Poetry and the Failed She-Camel Nation State: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Deelley Poetry Debate (1979-1980)*.

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Since independence in 1960 and during the functioning of the postcolonial state, the metaphorical she-camel (*Maandeeq*) was shown (by poets first and, by politicians after) as a symbol of the nation-state, a concept that should indicate a cultural homogeneity (ethnic, linguistic and religious) of the Somalis, which itself is the result of the motivated effort by the Somali nationalists. Consequently, the term nation-state is not an empty locution; it is significant as it represents a relationship between a politically dominant culture (which implicitly identifies the pastoralist section of the society with the nation) and the state institution. Therefore, the *failed she-camel* in the title indicates a concept which should not be confused with the other metaphor of the *she-camel* that is more often recurrent in the Deelley poems and which refers to the state as resources and power, whose possession is contended by many, like the camels in the pastoralist environment. Precisely, “the failed she-camel nation state” refers to the nation-state concept that conveniently defined the postcolonial unitary state in the Somali political experience, which has failed as shown by successive momentous events: the independence of Djibouti (1977), the Ogaden war (1977), the civil war and the choice of Somaliland to secede (1991) and the rebuilding of the State on a federal basis (with units that resemble tribal enclaves today).

The book *Somali Oral Poetry and the Failed She-Camel Nation State: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Deelley Poetry Debate (1979-1980)* (Ahad, 2015), is not an anthology of poetry nor a fictitious narrative. It is a critical discourse analysis of a corpus of Somali oral poems, that is, the

¹ APOLOGY: ARAS would like to apologise to the author Ali Mumin Ahad for incorrectly citing the book title in the original review of his book published in ARAS, Vol 37. No 1, June 2016. The correct title is cited here (Ahad, 2015).

exposure of both the ideology and the opacity within the discourse of the Deelley poetry which otherwise might remain imperceptible to the wider public, including non-Somali scholars. The system of knowledge within which the poetry texts are embedded, and which the texts transmit, is a highly ideological one. Indeed, discourse is the favoured vehicle of ideology and contributes to the reproduction of social structures (Fairclough 2001). It is through discourse that people legitimize or delegitimize particular power relations. Therefore, the Deelley is about society and politics, since (as the late Said Samatar taught) Somali poetry is all about a political message, hidden or overt. Contrary to the expressed opinion of Kapteijns (2016) on the application of Fairclough's approach of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), I think the latter would be proud to see such an application of his approach in the cultural context of an oral society in the way the author of this book undertook. As for the grammatical errors in the book, the author dismisses all Kapteijns' comments. The examples she uses in her ambiguous rhetorical question (about the poetry translation) are merely fragments from complex sentences in verse, otherwise clearly explained in the book. Her difficulty in understanding the meaning of the two separate lines she isolates from their stanzas (one line by Hadraawi in chapter four, and the other by Yasin Ahmed Nur, in chapter six), again shows that she did not carefully read the relative sections in the book where these lines are clearly examined in their context.

In her effort to decipher *Diiwaanka Maansadii Deelley*, the Somali volume and reference point edited by Professor A. Puglielli of Roma Tre University, in search of the word 'internal-colonialism' Kapteijns misses important clues, references and links to the idea of internal colonialism, revealing a limited knowledge not only of the Somali language, but also of its use in oral poetry. If she hoped to find in the poem to which the author refers the exact phrase 'internal-colonialism', she remains empty-handed. Whoever possesses a critical perspective can perceive the meaning of the words of the lines indicated by the author in connection with the lines spoken by other poets, before and after. In fact, intertextuality, together with extra-textual allusions, is an important element of the dialogue between the poetry texts in the Deelley. CDA is also to read between the lines, follow the exchange of jokes in verse among the poets to reveal the concealed, but to do this one should be equipped with background knowledge of the culture under examination. Kapteijns should have seen the internal dialogue among poets that could explain to her the reason for grievances and the internal colonialism, which the book reveals. The author of the book discloses the ideological dimension of the discourse of the

poems but also decodes it and interprets it, as he is equipped with “background knowledge” and “members’ resources”. Metaphors, veiled words, *sarbeeb*, subtext and proverbs are all important components and devices of the discourse in the Deelley poems, which not only deliver a message but also produce a system of meaning and social structures that the author scrutinizes. The field of discursivity of the Deelley poetry debate, the unsaid, the subtle irony of word meanings and their variability, are used by the author to explore and make use of the descriptive approach within Fairclough’s method of CDA. It is important not to confuse critical discourse analysis with language analysis.

One other thing that makes the depth of direct knowledge of Somalia by Kapteijns doubtful in this case, is her rhetorical remark about the presence of camels in the whole territory of the country as a basis for a hypothetical inconsistency of arguments in the book. There is no doubt about the fact that camels are everywhere in the Somali territory (and elsewhere) including the urban setting where the author of the book spent much of his life. The author considers the reviewer’s rhetorical phrase about the presence of camels in the inter-riverine areas to be completely irrelevant. Likewise, the statement that one North-Western poet of the she-camel-Maandeeq has an agricultural background is irrelevant to the discourse of the Deelley and the discursive practice of the Somali *gabay* (poem). One important observation is on the understanding of the reviewer who never realized the fact that the Deelley debate is a highly critical standpoint about power, resource allocation and discrimination, though often in tribal terms. Therefore, this rebuttal is only to respond in order to prevent any misunderstanding that a superficial and misleading review could create for any potential well-inclined reader of the book.

The Deelley polytext, is a corpus of poems and a discourse that has many characteristics that make it uniform, therefore, a specific text to which critical discourse analysis could be applied. In fact, the Polytext which is made up of individual texts by diverse authors, contains a representation of antagonistic sectors of Somali society and opposing views of tribalism and of national identity. The author applies the method of CDA (Norman Fairclough’s approach in particular, which is very appropriate for the sort of study the Deelley polytext requires). In fact, one possible application of CDA is the examination of national identity. The Polytext, which the author explores to reveal clues and hidden subtexts, is the product of a particular discursive practice in an oral culture such as Somalia’s, for which text is a means to convey ideas and preserve a particular way of life. Through that discursive practice, both tribal and

national identities are ideologically created, stimulated and recreated. Moreover, through discursive practice, a power struggle is in process. It is hegemony that transforms the ideological characteristics of the discursive practice into the commonsensical. Therefore, ideology, hegemony and power, naturalization and opacity in discourse constitute the main dimensions on which the critical discourse analysis of the Deelley poetry debate focuses.

The Deelley poetry debate is a contextualized discourse. A discourse cannot be fully understood without taking into consideration its social context. Aside from the immediate context of the debate, consider for a moment its broader social and historical context. It was a long time ago when Lewis (1969, 15) pointed out that, from a nationalist perspective, there is a new myth of genealogy that tends to fabricate a common ancestry of the Somali population. However, the hegemonic articulation of identity goes back to the 1960s, as it is traceable in an article by Mohamed Ibrahim Egal (1968) who tends to involve two distinct components in a shared common identity, resulting in one of the components losing its original identity. According to Egal, myths surrounding eminent Sheikhs from Arabia who came to Somalia to propagate Islam have developed and become engraved in the minds of the people who regarded them as being the actual ancestors of the different tribal groupings of the Somali people. Consequently, these myths and the belief in one common ancestor for each tribal group have set the pattern of Somali politics (Egal 1968). On the basis of the segmentary social system, every unit is a relatively homogeneous and organized group whose ambition is the exercise of a sort of hegemony over all other parallel units within the social structure. Such an articulation of identity is still ongoing and developing further in recent times as demonstrated by the following passage by a Somali scholar (Samatar 1991, 12):

Th[e] fervent sense of belonging to a distinct national community with a common heritage and a common destiny is rooted in a widespread Somali belief that all Somalis descend from a common founding father, the mythical *Samaale* to whom the overwhelming majority of Somalis trace their genealogical origin. Even those clan families, such as the Digil and Rahanwayn in southern Somalia, many members of whom do not trace their genealogy directly to *Samaale*, readily identify themselves as Somalis, thereby accepting, at least in symbolic sense, the primacy of *Samaale* as the forbearer of the Somali people (emphasis added).

The articulation of this myth (myth in the sense of a distorted representation of reality) is carried out by replacing the term *Sumaal* that derives from the Arabic, with the term *Samaale* that in Somali language indicates a well-doer (Ahad 2008). This particular articulation is mostly from the perspective of the pastoralist component of Somali society. On the other side, the non-pastoralist components who always had their own narrative, though it has not been propagated, challenge the narrative of the myth of common ancestry to emphasize a territorial-identity narrative in defining the social relations and identity. The emerging of one narrative, with respect to the other, is mainly due to two factors, first, the influence of outspoken personalities in politics who were supporting it; and, second, the spreading effect produced by the works of non-Somali scholars, such as Lewis, who had promoted and had given voice to the narrative, since the 1950s. Not only that, but in colonial times, the Italians dominating the predominantly agricultural region of southern Somalia, had every interest in not promoting their colonial subjects. On the contrary, the Italian colonial authority and scholars (with rare exceptions) had created the misleading conception that their agriculturalist subjects were historically enslaved (Ahad 1993).

According to Lewis and Mukhtar (1996), in fact, the non-pastoralist population of Somalia, despite its national economic importance as grain producers, and with its substantial size, has remained since colonial times largely marginal to the traditionally pastoralist sector of the Somali society which has sought to dominate it through its hegemonic articulation of Somali identity. In this regard, Kusow (2004) puts forward a situation of “contested narratives” in regard to the Somali national identity and nationalism. In other words, “a condition of a conflict of interpretation” between two major paradigms which occur simultaneously. On the one hand, a lineage narrative which delimits the national identity to pastoralists and to their clan lineages and, on the other, a territorial narrative which constructs such national identity on territorial and socio-economic priorities and values. The struggle between the two narratives is ideological: both paradigms, as Kusow argues, involve the relationship among people, place, and the history on which nationalism is predicated. Specifically, the contested ways in which the two paradigms (narratives) organize and structure social relations are typical of a hegemonic struggle for shaping the ‘real’ world. In describing the two paradigms, however, Kusow (2004, 1) stresses that unbiased State support goes to only one:

The first paradigm is based on the state-sponsored idealistic images and founding myths that have no practical application to

the everyday realities of the people. This paradigm constructs the social boundary of Somaliness on the basis of lineage priorities, or what Ahmed [Ali Jimale Ahmed] referred to as “imagery reflective of the pastoralist *modus vivendi*”, otherwise locally known as *Maandeeq*, and camouflaged as national symbols and values. ...The second paradigm (the territorial narrative) constructs the social boundary of Somaliness not on lineage/*Maandeeq* priorities, but rather on economic, moral, and territorial priorities.

Kusow argues that the lineage narrative, which links to the *she-camel* concept of *Maandeeq*, is none other than an articulation of values delimiting an exclusive Somali national identity, defined in a pastoralist perspective, in opposition to an inclusive counter-narrative of the sedentary perspective, based on territorial, socio-economic and moral priorities.

From these examples of antagonistic narratives and articulation of identity, one can see (if he/she has the will) how national identity is constructed discursively in the Somali society. Here, hegemony, ideology and articulation of identity are at stake. Hegemony is not only dominance but also a process of negotiation concerning meaning (Phillips and Jorgensen 2006). The detection of the hegemonic articulation of the discourse of identity in the Polytext (and in Somali *gabay* in general) by establishing the discursive formation, has as its purpose the rectification of a non-inclusive national identity, at the expense of important components of the national society. Therefore, it is in such a social context that both the hegemonic articulation of identity and the concept of the she-camel that symbolizes one particular articulation of the Somali national identity should be understood. CDA involves, “not just describing discursive practice, but also showing how it is shaped by relations of power and ideologies, and the constructive effects discourse has upon social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief, neither of which is normally apparent to discourse participants” (Fairclough, 2001, 12). And sometimes, to outsiders. In addition, this approach contributes to the rectification of injustice and inequality in society, part of which derives from external “misrepresentations” (Phillips & Jorgensen 2006, 77).

On one point this author agrees with Lidwien Kapteijns, that the “discourse of exclusion undoubtedly is of social and political significance” (Kapteijns, 2016, 126). Indeed, CDA cannot be understood as politically neutral, but as a critical approach which is politically committed and whose aim is to uncover the role of discursive practice in the maintenance of

unequal power relations within a society (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2006, 63-64). One last remark on Kapteijns' critical words about Somali historiography. This author is native to Somalia and is of the opinion that Somali historiography has to be reinstated, free from the encrustations left by colonial historiography. While contributions by every scholar must be appreciated and valued, one also learns the lessons and consequences of a history totally written by external scholars, to externally define the Somali self and identity. However, such a monopoly on culture and historiography can no longer be passively and uncritically accepted.

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Roger Southall. *The New Black Middle Class in South Africa*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: James Curry, 2016, 296 + xix pp, ISBN 9781847011435.

Coming at a time when South Africa appears to be caught between deepening economic stagnation and rising social unrest, Roger Southall has produced an important study of the changing situation of South Africa's black middle class. Although the voices of members of the new black middle class themselves are noticeably absent, the book makes up for this in the depth of its historical context and the soundness of its overall sociological framework. It offers a necessary foundation for scholars from across the social sciences to move forward with more targeted research to make sense of the lives of this growing but precarious segment of the South African population, which Southall shows to be intimately connected with the post-apartheid order. The book differentiates members of the 'new' black middle class, who had to largely 'start from scratch' after the dismantling of apartheid (p.165), from the 'old' black middle class, which emerged in a very limited way within the constraints of the colonial and apartheid systems. Focusing on this new middle class, Southall recognizes their 'extraordinary mobility (upwards in class terms, sideways in residential terms),' such that influential occupations and comfortable suburbs are no longer restricted to white South Africans (p.163). Focused on 'Black Africans,' and consisting of nine chapters, the book is roughly evenly divided between analysis of background literature on the class system in abidingly Euro-American sociology, class in South African history (and in Africa more broadly), and more in-depth analysis of the lives of the new black middle class. Above all, Southall emphasizes the role of the state in the formation of the new black middle class, more specifically the 'party-state' that the ANC has sought to build over the last two decades, as the party of liberation has become the country's largest employment agency (pp.70,130).

In emphasizing the role of the state, Southall's theoretical approach takes from Weberian sociology the idea of a class system constituted through a hierarchy of occupations, and takes from Marxian approaches an emphasis on class as a question of power, and power as a question of proximity to the state and private capital (p.236). The relationship between the state and private sectors is a recurring drama throughout the book, and fundamentally shapes the structure of the new black middle class. Indeed, Southall demonstrates that the creation of the new black middle class has been a 'necessary accompaniment' to the consolidation of the ANC's

political power (p.126). Noting that the state and private capital are ‘locked in a contradictory relationship’ (p.160), they depend upon each other but deeply mistrust and fundamentally misunderstand each other too. In discussing this relationship, Southall observes that upon gaining power in 1994, the ANC pursued ‘broadly social-democratic’ policies, but that 1996 saw the ‘introduction of the familiar neo-liberal mantras’ (p.86). However, I do not think Southall emphasizes enough how rhetorical these ‘mantras’ were. The term ‘neo-liberalism’ is ubiquitous in South African scholarly and political discourse, increasingly detached from anything resembling actual existing neo-liberalism anywhere on the planet. The great strength of this book is that it emphasizes the role of the ANC party-state so strongly, revealing how strange the idea of ‘neo-liberalism’ in South African actually is. For example, proposed privatizations were quickly abandoned, and outsourcing simply became an opportunity for extending the ruling party’s patronage practices (p.131).

The study recognizes that marketing researchers have been more interested in studying the new black middle class than academics, focusing on the consumer profile of a group labelled ‘black diamonds’ (p.xiv). A popular figure of both envy and ridicule in South African culture, this small but conspicuous upper segment of the black middle class is known for their ‘extravagant lifestyles, tasteless “bling”, lavish weddings and over-the-top celebrations and partying’ (p.163), which belies the fact that the typical member of the black middle class is an overworked and undertrained schoolteacher. As the analysis of ‘the black middle class at work’ (pp.125-62) makes clear, the lives of the new black middle class are rarely glamorous, Black professionals remain rare, but with the public service more than doubling since 1994, black semi-professionals abound (pp.157-61). The professional/semi-professional divide is briefly discussed (p.144), but the foundational importance of the self-regulation of the classic professions is understated. This is an important complicating factor in the comparative lack of racial transformation in the private sector, compounded by an attitude amongst job seekers that the public and private sectors are divided by race (pp.79-84). The ‘systematic’ inequalities in the education system also impede transformation of the professions (p.103), and the suggestion, that ‘the salience of race per se is beginning to fall away’, revealing deepening class and regional differences among blacks (p.119), is thought provoking given the multifaceted nature of ongoing student protests in the country.

Perhaps the most engaging section of the book is Chapter 7, ‘the social world of the black middle class,’ for it is here that the voices of the new

black middle class themselves come through. When Southall quotes a focus group participant discussing middle class identity in terms of values and aspirations (pp.168-9), it places earlier discussions of measuring the middle class in an interesting new light. The precarious lives of many of the black middle class are also well illustrated in the discussion on finance (pp.176-82), drawing in particular on the work of Deborah James (2015), and discussing the so-called 'black tax' (p.180), the expectation that members of the black middle class will financially support their extended family in the context of persistently high unemployment. Southall also discusses the high indebtedness of many miners at Marikana, the site of the notorious massacre in 2012 (pp.176-7), but could have connected these issues, as the 'black tax' is a significant contributing factor to miners' financial stress. Such concerns aside, and with the expectation that the general absence of the voices of the black middle class themselves will be addressed as scholars begin to make use of this book, this is a very important and timely study that will help make sense of perhaps the key social actors in contemporary South African society.

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Brian Galligan, Martina Boese and Melissa Phillips, *Becoming Australian: Migration, Settlement and Citizenship*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2014, pp. 246, ISBN 9780522866377.

The book explores how migrants and refugees meet the challenges of 'becoming Australian', simultaneously transforming Australia. This book is the culmination of an Australian Research Council Linkage project investigating the settlement experiences in regional Australia. It offers an engaging insight into migration, settlement and citizenship processes, within a wider historical and policy context.

The book is dedicated to Millsom Henry-Waring, a dynamic young scholar whose life and career were cut short before the completion of this

project. Millsom is missed by the community of migration and race scholars in Australia, and it is fitting that the book is dedicated to her.

The book's seven chapters are presented as a chronology, from pre-migration, through migration, settlement, employment and citizenship. Some are based on data from interviews with migrants and refugees, offering an insight into their lived experience. Two appendices offer background to the methodology.

The first chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the Australia's migration history, from issues around race in the constitution and early migration policies. This is recognised as being strongly influenced by Australia's political economy and the need for particular types of labour. Yet the insistence from the start that Australia should be 'one people', culturally and racially is also acknowledged.

The transition between this historical chapter and the next is clunky – rather than a general review of issues related to pre-migration (which is provided in chapter 3), the focus is immediately on the empirical evidence from the particular sample of migrants, many of whom are of refugee backgrounds and whose pre-migration experiences reflect this (over half the sample are humanitarian entrants). However, the chapter does demonstrate some of the challenges faced by migrants, particularly refugees, in the pre-migration process, and also critiques the psycho-social pathological approach of many studies. While the narrative does focus on those of refugee background, the chapter notes the massive differences in pre-migration experiences, depending mainly on visa category.

Chapter 3 provides a summary of migration categories and current intakes, including the more recent categories of temporary, employer sponsored, and regional skilled. This data-less chapter provides an excellent background for understanding the current migration and settlement situation.

Chapter 4 focusses on refugee settlement and services available, and is data driven, but this misleads readers unfamiliar with the fact that most settlement services are unavailable to most migrants. The chapter offers an insight into refugees' agency and perceptions of settlement challenges and opportunities. The data covers non-refugees as well, although specific similarities and differences are not teased out. The importance of voluntary, religious and civic groups is highlighted, as is the importance of relationships in the settlement process.

Chapter 5 focusses on employment, an indicator of successful settlement, and simultaneously a means to it. What is useful here is the insight into individuals' perceptions of their employment situation and

acceptance of the structural constraints. This is not to say there are not clear barriers to be overcome, including racism. Yet evidence is also provided of the ways in which employers often step up to fill some of the gaps left by lack of service infrastructure in regional areas, and genuinely assist migrants in a range of ways not necessarily related to employment.

Chapter 6 on citizenship returns to a more wide-ranging historical and theoretical style, offering an excellent discussion of historical changes in emphasis on the civic and cultural, as well as racial, aspects of citizenship. It does miss some recent literature on the implementation of the citizenship test. The empirical data shows how, for many, particularly refugees, 'being Australian' means being a citizen. However cultural proficiency, sense of belonging and acceptance are also important. The result is that many migrants continue to feel partly Australian, partly 'Other'.

At times the book appears to be making a case against the right of migrants to maintain their cultural differences, the 'strong project' of multiculturalism. Instead it is seen as a mechanism by which migrants integrate. Citizenship enables 'shared cultural norms and attributes that migrants and refugees formally embrace' ... to 'dwarf' aspects of cultural distinctiveness (p. 2). The concluding chapter, 'Australia and its people', is dedicated to demonstrating how integration has worked in practice, cementing the argument that Australia's 'benign' multiculturalism is 'transitional' and works because of its strongly nationalist framework. It argues the meaning of the term 'Australian people' remains open. It is to some extent critical of public discourses, particularly among government leaders and officials, around diversity and integration, yet it is also critical of the more extreme arguments around supporting diversity. The flow of this chapter is uneven, with a historical overview of 'national identity' appearing two thirds of the way through it.

The book has a particular focus on regional Australia and on visibility. These offer a useful remedy to the metropolitan focus of most studies, and recognises that settlement experiences are influenced by the extent to which one 'looks like' the majority of Australians and lives in a well-served area. Over a third of the sample are from African backgrounds, among the most 'visible' of Australia's recent migrants. But there is a tendency in the book to present their experiences and those of refugee backgrounds as representing the experience of the majority of migrants. The title of the book is somewhat misleading in this respect. However, it does provide a deep insight into their settlement experiences, both positive and negative.

A criticism would be that the two different approaches within the book generally do not 'talk' to each other – the analytical historical sections,

which are also more theoretical, do not obviously engage with the data provided, and vice versa. This is a hazard of jointly authored texts, but it is a shame, as there are interesting insights to be drawn from each. For example, how do migrants feel about the ways in which multiculturalism is talked about and enacted, and how does this impact their daily lives? Are they satisfied with the integrationist versions of multiculturalism and citizenship on offer? How does the historical context continue to resonate in their lived experiences? What evidence is there of the ways in which other Australians engage with migrants which can be explained by this socio-political context?

'Becoming Australian' is very easy to read, and for a relatively short book, it provides significant insights into the history of Australia's migration and citizenship programs, and the lived experience of migrants, and particularly refugees, in regional Australia.

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Tripp, Aili Mari (2015). *Women and Power in Postconflict Africa*. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 292. ISBN 9781107535879.

Aili Mari Tripp's latest book makes an important contribution to understanding the dynamics that can produce greater gender equality within certain countries. Tripp compares the nature and rate of gender regime change (incorporating changes in both gender roles and gender relations) in African countries that have experienced major conflict with those that have not. Her central thesis, strongly reiterated throughout the book, is that a confluence of intense and prolonged conflict, local women's activism and the exposure to progressive international women's rights norms have resulted in remarkable changes to the gender regime in a number of African nations. Tripp contends that all three of these elements need to be present in order for significant change to take place, which is why not all postconflict countries have made the same progress towards gender equity. According to Tripp, with very few exceptions, African countries that have not undergone profound conflict are lagging behind those that have in terms of gender regime transformation.

Tripp overturns common assumptions about conflict and the status of women. For example, that there will be a backlash against women after the

end of conflict, requiring them to give up positions they have held during wars. This does not take into account changes that have occurred in many countries, especially since the United Nations Conferences on Women in Nairobi in 1985 and Beijing in 1995, both actively participated in by African nations. Changing international gender norms have coincided with the revision of all but four national constitutions in Africa since 1995, resulting in increased provisions for women's representation in many (p. 171). Women's activism during the negotiation of peace agreements between 2000 and 2011 has also effected the inclusion of women's rights language in almost 80 per cent of the resulting agreements, more than in any other region of the world (p. 146). Tripp acknowledges that normative changes, such as constitutional and legislative measures can be aspirational and are not necessarily translated into tangible improvements in women's conditions, as fundamental progress can be slow. Nonetheless, she concludes that the world has changed in the following ways:

The fact that countries that once refused to acknowledge women's political representation now have large numbers of women in politics is a massive shift in awareness. Practices that used to be upheld such as wife beating, child marriage, and female genital cutting, or denying education for girls, are no longer considered acceptable to defend in public discourse in most countries discussed in this book. (p. 13)

Tripp commences her study in 1990, as this was when political liberalisation in Africa, as described above, created for the first time the conditions for gender regime change in post-conflict countries with strong autonomous women's movements.

Presenting case studies based on her fieldwork from Uganda, Liberia and Angola, Tripp grounds her theoretical argument on solid footing. She interviewed hundreds of key stakeholders in each of the case study countries, and was also able to draw on primary research she has done in other countries, such as Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Tripp explains that this book is built upon a quantitative cross-national study of the relationship between electoral institutions, democratization, and armed conflict that she did with Melanie Hughes (Hughes & Tripp 2015):

We discovered ... that postconflict African countries follow a trajectory of women's representation that is distinct from that of countries that have not gone through major conflict, and that major conflict becomes more important rather than less after

1995 in this correlation. We found that conflict had a significant and independent impact on women's political representation in sub-Saharan Africa and correlates strongly with the sharp increase in female legislative representation in sub-Saharan Africa, which tripled between 1990 and 2010. We also found that incremental changes in civil rights result in increases in women's legislative presence further down the road. (Tripp, 2015, p. 7)

The combination of extensive qualitative sources with quantitative data make this book extremely persuasive. Tripp argues that the process of negotiating peace agreements has been essential for enabling changes in gender norms, as when one party to a conflict has been decimated, there is less need for fundamental regime change. Thus, Angola did not experience the same level of change as Liberia and Uganda. Angola's oil-based economic independence from donor agencies also insulated it from the influences of changing global gender norms (p. 141).

It is however too early to conclude whether implementation matches lawmaking in the countries studied. Tripp advocates the use of electoral quotas for women as a way of accelerating change, stating that they are adopted to "sidestep cultural and religious objections to women's leadership" (p. 215). Given the emergent nature of the study of women's roles in post-conflict nations, she concludes the book with a call for further research with a special focus on women's own voices, women's role as peacemakers and the way in which women's movements have managed to bridge cultural divides in the struggle for peace. She states that:

One of the most interesting aspects of this study for me was to discover how women who were philosophically, politically, sometimes ethnically, or religiously at odds with one another transcended those differences to articulate a politics of strategic unity in a bid for peace (p. 243).

As this *strategic co-operation* on the part of women activists in postconflict countries was in marked contrast to the behaviour of men, whose peacemaking interests were found to focus primarily upon who would hold which positions of power (p. 145) - frequently resulting in new outbreaks of conflict - there would clearly be great benefit in further scholarship as suggested by Tripp. Her book provides an excellent foundation.

References

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Jesse Salah Ovadia, *The Petro-Developmental State in Africa. Making Oil Work in Angola, Nigeria and the Gulf of Guinea*, London: Hurst, pp. 246, ISBN 9781849044769.

This book examines some of the consequences of the substantial increases in the output of, and international demand for oil over recent decades, in Angola and Nigeria. Jesse Ovadia suggests different and distinct policy directions for governments which accrued major revenue streams from what became exceptional windfall gains. The author joins the examination and the policy proposals by drawing upon the burgeoning academic and official literature which fits within the rubric of the 'developmental state.' In this case, such a state would drive increases in forms of production necessary for the extraction and export of oil, through local content policies.

The problem which Ovadia raises is well-known. Where the location was the already industrialised western European Netherlands the effect of a major increase in oil exports and state revenues became known as the 'Dutch disease'. Subsequently the dilemma became the 'resource curse' for countries which were trying to industrialise or had large proportions of the population living in rural areas occupying small-holdings. Natural resources, oil, gas and minerals in demand internationally were discovered, extracted and exported in such quantities that the revenue streams produced for governments affected all areas of national political economies.

While Ovadia couples the idea of a resource curse with a political-ideological description of where Angola and Nigeria fit within international capitalism as instances of 'peripheral capitalism,' he does not accept that any solution to the dilemma could be found by leaving the oil untapped. Instead Ovadia urges for "an alternative in policies which would lead to real capitalist development instead of the further underdevelopment brought

about by peripheral capitalism” (p.11). This alternative is increased manufacturing and industrialisation of a particular limited variety driven by a developmental state.

Central to the form of the developmental state proposed by Ovadia is the localisation of areas of production involved in oil exploration, extraction, processing and marketing. Localisation should be extended to employment, in semi-skilled and skilled labour as well as managerial positions through firms owned by indigenes. State agencies will not only be central to the extension of localisation as well as have a continuing role in overseeing what occurs. Chapter 3 titled ‘The Promise and Pitfalls of Development through Local Content’ shows an awareness of some of the limits to a national strategy, including that it is subject to alliances between indigenous and international capitalists. Committed to a position within dependency thought, Ovadia locates and seeks to check the existence of a comprador indigenous class which has only personal wealth in focus, not national development.

For Ovadia the national developmental state in the cases he examines could make a major contribution where most social relations are ‘pre-capitalist’ or ‘peripheral capitalist’, for changes to something he idealizes as ‘real capitalism.’ This contribution, claims Ovadia, should further emphasise reforming policy to localize dimensions of oil production. While these have so far been in government policies for both countries, though with some distinctions between Angola and Nigeria, Ovadia claims they could be made even more developmental. The existing policies and their outcomes are summarised in the book’s introduction and major empirical chapters, which feature things that are, and could be done using revenues accrued through taxation and other measures to advance local employment, ownership, and production.

One of the major weaknesses of the book is Ovadia’s answer to how reforms will occur, that is who and what are the agents for change. While he indicates individuals and positions within the existing state machineries who are both his sources for information and in favour of local content policies, there is no answer to the question why major reforms have not occurred so far. In short, Ovadia’s argument for both countries should include a discussion of the existing state and class power but this is missing from the book. Pointing to the powerless (Chapter 6), and expressing the hope that in the future ‘civil society’ will have sufficient power to bring changes, merely indicates the lacunae in Ovadia’s account.

Indeed, the extent to which state power in both Nigeria and Angola is directed to other than what Ovadia regards as developmental ends has come

to the fore once again in major cases of corruption. ‘The great oil chase’ involving an investigation of how tens of billions of dollars went ‘missing’ from the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation is matched by a banking scandal in Angola involving senior MPLA personnel (See *Africa Confidential*, 58,7, March 30, 2017 for information on both cases).

There are two principal reasons why Ovardia cannot provide this discussion. The first is that he does not seem aware how deeply and for how long both countries political economies have been capitalist. He writes, especially regarding Nigeria, as if there have not been indigenous capitalists in agriculture, trade, transportation and other spheres of accumulation since at least the late nineteenth century. Oil is a recent development, only since the 1970s, and so any shift in state policy would have to deal with already entrenched layers of local capital. The position of the latter, including those with ambitions to be export oriented industrialists, has been already threatened by the effects of oil exports on the terms of trade. Imports cheaper and exports dearer invariably damages local agriculture and manufacturing for international and domestic markets. Did this occur without any continuing struggle? Hardly likely but Ovardia does not even raise the possibility of conflict between sections of the indigenous ruling class and its allies. When the existence of a local, indigenous capitalist class is not acknowledged, it is hardly surprising that Ovardia is unable to systematically explore the character of state power *as it exists* rather than as he wants it to be.

The second reason Ovardia does not deal with the class and state power of either country lies in his failure to situate conditions where the bulk of the population lives and produces its livelihood. Angola and Nigeria, though to differing extents, still have more than half the population living in rural areas on smallholdings. Oil exports exacerbate and impoverish rural lives: the resource curse is a rural curse in countries where this demographic feature is pre-eminent and preponderant. Unemployment in the countryside is joined with unemployment in towns. No amount of localising content for the form of production which drives immiseration in cities, towns and the countryside will change this situation to any substantial extent.

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