

THE AUSTRALASIAN REVIEW OF AFRICAN STUDIES
VOLUME 36 NUMBER 1 JUNE 2015

CONTENTS

Editorial

- Denizens, Artists, and Terrorists - Disarmament, Development and
Diagnosis: Understanding Africa in Australasia and the Pacific.
Tanya Lyons, Jay Marlowe, David Mickler and Alec Thornton 3

Articles

- Marginality and Linguistic Cartographies of African Denizens as
Spheres of Possibility in Regional Australia
Finex Ndhlovu 7

- Public Artworks: Creative Spaces for Civic and Political Behaviour
in Kenya
Mokua Ombati 29

- Rethinking Islamism in Western Africa
Mohammed Sulemana and Govand Azeez 51

- Gendered Reintegration in Liberia: A Civilised '(Kwi)' Failure?
Christopher Hills 68

- Married to Freedom? The Importance of Marriage for African
Methodist Episcopal Missionary Women in South Africa, 1900 - 1940.
Claire Cooke 84

- Proposal for Compulsory Land Acquisition for Economic Investment in
Uganda
John Mugambwa 98

- The Introduction of Rapid Diagnostic Test for Malaria in Mozambique:
Local Appropriation and Complementary Therapeutics
Ana Rita Sequeira 114

Book Reviews

- Pádraig Carmody. *The Rise of the BRICS in Africa: The Geopolitics of South-South Relations*
Benjamin Day 129
- Suzanne Franks. *Reporting Disasters: Famine, Aid, Politics and the Media*
Laura Hammond 132
- Martine Guichard, Tilo Grätz and Youssouf Diallo (eds). *Friendship, Decent and Alliance in Africa*
Mats Utas 135
- Amrit Wilson. *The Threat of Liberation, Imperialism and Revolution in Zanzibar*
Stephen Okello 136
- Fantu Cheru and Renu Modi (Eds.). *Agricultural Development and Food Security in Africa. The Impact of Chinese, Indian and Brazilian Investments*
Anna Rabin 139
- Call for Papers – 2015 AFSAAP Conference** 141
- Call for Papers - ARAS** 142

BOOK REVIEWS

Pádraig Carmody. *The Rise of the BRICS in Africa: The Geopolitics of South-South Relations*. London / New York: Zed Books, 2013, 176 pp, ISBN 9781780326054.

In 2001, Goldman Sachs analyst Jim O'Neill coined the BRIC acronym to refer to Brazil, Russia, India and China, a group of four rapidly growing emerging economies (p. 2). By the time South Africa was added in 2010 to make five 'BRICS', the rapid diffusion of O'Neill's term had meant 'the BRICS' states were most readily conceptualised as a collective bloc rather than individual powers with individual interests (Rowlands, 2012). This discursive framing occurred despite the acronym moving from "being an easy marker to guide foreign investors interested in emerging markets" to becoming a catch-all explanation for why the global balance of power is shifting inexorably away from traditionally powerful states (Mielniczuk, 2013, p. 1075). For Western commentators and their audiences, apprehension about the impact of 'the BRICS juggernaut' reinforces the tendency to focus on where it the interests of the BRICS appeared to converge, such as in their engagement of Africa.

In the West, much of the impetus for understanding the behaviour of the BRICS is driven by a prior question - 'what does the changing global order mean for us?' It is through this conceptual lens that the impact of the rise of the BRICS has predominantly been viewed. For example, considerable scholarship has focused on examining how the collective rise of the BRICS might challenge traditional Western dominance in spheres such as, for example, global governance (Cooper & Flandes, 2013) and the provision of development assistance (Manning, 2006; Woods, 2008). A risk of this approach is that the discussion becomes polarised, with 'the West' and 'the BRICS' caricatured as competing blocs comprising members with uniform interests. It follows that much Western analysis is hyper-sensitive to signs of cooperation amongst the BRICS while prone to ignoring evidence of competition. For example, the annual BRICS Summits and the recent establishment of the BRICS bank (the New Development Bank) generate considerable media attention.

In his short volume, *The Rise of the BRICS in Africa: The Geopolitics of South-South Relations* Pádraig Carmody actively resists the reductionism that colours some scholarship and much punditry on

the behaviour of the BRICS. The purpose of his book is to show how “relations between the BRICS in Africa are marked by both competition and cooperation” (p. 10). While he readily agrees that “the rise of the BRICS is fundamentally reshaping global governance and geopolitics” (p. 5), Carmody’s dispassionate analysis challenges assumed wisdom by illuminating where, how and why the behaviour of the BRICS powers differ from one another while also highlighting the ways their actions and agendas align.

Five carefully and creatively designed case studies, which focus on each of the BRICS powers in turn, comprise the substantive content of the book. Each case illuminates how the different domestic imperatives of the BRICS powers drive their different globalization strategies (p. 22). Comparing how Chinese geo-governance operates in Zambia with the way India is investing in agricultural land in Ethiopia conveys just how differently these two rising powers are approaching Africa. Carmody’s treatment of South Africa is particularly interesting. He argues that South Africa is making use of its position as the key node for economic engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa to leverage Chinese influence on the continent for its own purposes (p. 70). Russia’s engagement in Africa, meanwhile, is considerably bound up in its desire to revive its great power status, while Brazil’s domestic class compromise helps determine its Janus-faced interactions with Africa (p. 131).

Time and again, Carmody points out where popular narratives are out of sync with reality. For example, it is often assumed that “China has come from ‘under the radar’ to become the most influential country in Africa” (p. 31). Carmody shows how Chinese roots in Zambia and indeed across the continent more broadly, stretch back a long way and that the groundwork for their current dominance was laid during the 1990s. Similarly, Carmody rejects the oft-repeated observation that “while China has an Africa strategy, Africa needs a China strategy”. Instead, he contends that “African political elites already have a China Strategy, which is to use it as a counterweight to Western conditionality...” (p. 37). While Carmody believes “the rise of the BRICS in Africa is a momentous event, he cautions that it is “replete with its own contradictions” (p. 134).

A particularly effective way Carmody succeeds in his effort to repeatedly “qualify the dominant view” (p. 45) is by providing new language with which to talk and think about the BRICS. For example, the shared ethos between the BRICS and their African partners underpins what Carmody calls a growing *South Space* - a “modified

mega-regional imagery” defined, in part, by a discourse which highlights “more equal, and less exploitative, social relations than those characteristic of North-South relations” (p. 11). To reinforce that “relations between the BRICS in Africa are marked by both competition and cooperation,” Carmody suggests employing the term *co-opetition* (p. 10). Carmody describes India as engaging in *globalization slipstreaming* behind China in Africa (p. 71). And the Chinese state in Africa operates a policy best understood as *flexigemony*; “working through existing institutions to achieve resource and market access rather than seeking to transform them” (p. 27).

For all their differences, the BRICS share one overwhelming objective; to “consolidate a multipolar world order” (p. 133). Africa’s recent growth may be helping it shed its ‘forgotten continent’ reputation but it is also ensuring it has returned, once again, to the front lines of geopolitics. However hypocritical it might be given the legacy of colonialism, there is a sense in the West that the BRICS’ engagement in Africa is primarily about exploitation. As Carmody makes clear, the search for new energy sources is a primary motivator for BRICS activities in Africa (p. 132). But perhaps most ominously, Carmody’s analysis suggests that the rise of the BRICS in Africa is locking in another form of exploitation – that perpetrated by Africa’s leaders on their own people. By providing a counterweight to the influence of the West, the rise of the BRICS lends African elites greater autonomy. Carmody warns that “the power of the incumbent elite is being strengthened” (p. 140), with the risk that “extant authoritarian regimes” will be bolstered (p. 134). So, while changing global order has clear implications for the West, it appears the stakes are even higher for Africa itself.

Bibliography

- Cooper, A. F., & Flesmes, D. (2013). Foreign Policy Strategies of Emerging Powers in a Multipolar World: an introductory review. *Third World Quarterly*, 34(6), 943–962.
- Manning, R. (2006). Will “Emerging Donors” Change the Face of International Co-operation? *Development Policy Review*, 24(4), 371–385.
- Mielniczuk, F. (2013). BRICS in the Contemporary World: changing identities, converging interests. *Third World Quarterly*, 34(6), 1075–1090.

- Rowlands, D. (2012). Individual BRICS or a collective bloc? Convergence and divergence amongst “emerging donor” nations. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 25(4), 629–649.
- Woods, N. (2008). Whose aid? Whose influence? China, emerging donors and the silent revolution in development assistance. *International Affairs*, 84(6), 1205–1221.

Benjamin Day
The Australian National University

Suzanne Franks. *Reporting Disasters: Famine, Aid, Politics and the Media.* London: Hurst Publishers, 2013, 248 pp, ISBN 9781849042888.

As the world commemorates the thirtieth anniversary of the tragic famine that affected the Horn of Africa in 1984-85, a flurry of analyses and lessons learned are emerging in academic and media circles. Questions are being asked: How was it possible for such a disaster to develop? Who bears responsibility for the deaths of up to 1 million people during that period? Could such a thing happen again?

Amongst these analyses, Suzanne Franks’ book *Reporting Disasters* provides a key contribution. Starting from the premise that the famine was the first such disaster to be witnessed in real time by huge audiences in remote and wealthy donor capitals through televised news coverage, Franks dissects the dynamics of the media campaign that brought the suffering to light and the advocacy and fund-raising campaigns that not only followed from it, but also helped to keep the emergency in the public eye over several months. Drawing on documentation from the BBC and other media outlet archives, as well as interviews with many of those involved in covering the disaster and framing the media and response activities, this provides an illuminating behind-the-scenes account of how the famine came to be publicized and then translated into a massive global fundraising campaign.

In many ways contemporary ‘celebrity activism’ emerged out of the media frenzy that accompanied the 1984-85 famine. When Bob Geldof, Bono and friends became involved in attempting to raise awareness and money to help the famine relief operation – releasing the *We Are the World* and *Do They Know It’s Christmas* singles as well as holding the Live Aid concerts in the US and UK which raised hundreds of millions

of dollars – they were creating a template which continues to be used by the famous and those who would like to be famous, using their access to media and position in the public eye to move to action people who might not otherwise know or care about suffering in a remote corner of the globe.

Franks' analysis sets the record straight on a common misperception, that media coverage of the famine had a significant impact on the willingness of donor governments to provide additional funding to Ethiopia. In fact, she reports that "Subsequent analysis of the funding of the relief operations demonstrated that despite the extreme generosity by the public and despite government pronouncements, hardly any new money was made available by the British government for what they considered a distasteful regime" (p. 61). Cold War politics, played out in Ethiopia as a proxy-state, were such that the donors shifted money from development to emergency relief budgets without making significant additional contributions. Where the famine publicity had the most impact, however, was in generating an outpouring of support from private individuals, most of whom had never given to an international charity or cause before. Some of this generosity was motivated by the heart-wrenching images being shown on the television. But Franks is also quick to point out that much of it was also down to the skilful presentation of the crisis through popular media, and developing the idea that people could, through buying a record, attending a rock concert, or buying a t-shirt, show that they cared and help save starving people.

Where Franks is most critical is in what she sees as the oversimplification and depoliticization of the crisis such that the causes of the famine were presented as being related to a failure of rain rather than a result of a brutal civil war that was being fought in the north. "Geldof's campaign was about a packaged disaster and a fast solution, not about engaging seriously with the ongoing problems of Africa", she writes (p. 85). The counterinsurgency that began in Eritrea in 1974 and in Tigray in 1975 had over a decade eroded the ability of poor farmers to cope. They had survived years of ground fighting, aerial bombardment, an economic stranglehold, and the forced resettlement of up to 600,000 people to remote areas of southwestern Ethiopia. Drought brought the last straw for many people, but was not in itself the main causes of the famine. There were many reasons for the depoliticisation of the causes of famine. Nongovernmental organisations were reluctant to draw attention to the political economy of the disaster lest they be sent packing from Ethiopia. They pointed to the bitter experience of

Médecins Sans Frontières who had done just that – issuing a report from the areas that people had been resettled out of which showed that rather than being drought affected, there was a relatively bountiful harvest, and that people were being relocated against their will. The NGO was promptly evicted from the country and only returned after 1991 when the Derg government was toppled by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which derived the bulk of its support from the northern Tigray region. Donor governments and the United Nations were also reluctant to talk about politics for fear of losing what access they had to the famine-affected populations.

Franks argues that the simplified media messages about the famine prevented people from really understanding what was happening, and may have ultimately prolonged the suffering. While this may be somewhat true, it may also be the case that a more nuanced media message about the causes of the famine may not have been as successful at mobilizing response. There is a delicate balance to be struck by media outlets between educating the masses and not overwhelming people with a level of detail that they will not engage with. Geldof and his mates understood that well, and in the intervening years they have steadfastly refused to get into the messy details of politics, preferring instead to deliver a simple, if sanitized, explanation for why people are hungry and poor. To be fair, they have in recent years taken up such issues as the inequities of so-called Third World Debt, but they are usually more willing to criticize wealthy donor governments than those in countries where emergencies are playing out.

Franks calls for a smarter discussion about famine by the media as well as organisations and individuals (the famous and the unknown) working in response. This message is well meant, but it may also deny that in addition to the very many who have taken simplified explanations of famine at face value, there are also a vocal few – like herself, but also like the many students who I have had the pleasure to teach over the past fifteen years – who have dug deeper into history to better understand these dynamics. Many of these individuals are now engaged as scholars and practitioners in trying to prevent and respond to famine and have been instrumental in bringing forward a critical understanding of the political economy of famine that has in fact been successful helping to avert repeats of the suffering seen in Ethiopia three decades ago.

Laura Hammond
University of London

Martine Guichard, Tilo Grätz and Youssouf Diallo (eds). *Friendship, Decent and Alliance in Africa*. New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2014, 211 pp, ISBN 9781782382867.

A friend from the small town where I grew up in countryside Sweden typically has 50 Facebook friends; a friend from the larger university town Uppsala where I reside has around 500; and a friend from Freetown, Sierra Leone, where I work, has about 5000 Facebook friends. I exaggerate slightly and generalize off course. Despite the fact that Facebook friends will also partly be kin, the huge amount of networked friends, across their country and in the larger world, of my Sierra Leonean friends give us a good hunch of the importance of friendships in an African country. And friendship relations are far from secondary, quite the contrary in Sierra Leonean and Liberian street corners where I have conducted research they are absolutely crucial for social mobility and everyday survival. Elsewhere in the two countries people get top jobs and create successful careers through contacts with friends they met at college, or elsewhere along their life paths. Possibilities are opened at least as often by friendship relations as by kinship. Still, as Martine Guichard writes in the first chapter of the edited volume *Friendship, Decent and Alliance in Africa*, in popular discourse there is “a great readiness to divide the world into ‘friendship-oriented’ versus ‘kinship-oriented’ societies” (p. 20) with most studies on friendship being conducted in the western world and kinship in the global elsewhere. Friendship is often erroneously, as all contributions in this book point out, seen as a luxury not affordable in Africa. As there are relatively few studies, and even fewer overviews, of friendship in Africa this book is an especially welcome contribution to African studies.

This book is to a large extent the work of Martine Guichard; the introduction is hers, as well as the important chapter 1 (and part of chapter 3). Together the introduction and chapter 1 form an excellent historic foundation for the study of friendship in relation and as extension to the study of kin - friendship, she observes, must not be studied apart from kinship. Here her work is an impressive study companion. Although certainly not the intention the author’s creation and discussions of friendship typologies throws the reader back to structuralism or functionalistic anthropology as the end-product somehow appear too categorical. Guichard writes that “friendship is a relationship founded on several contradictions” (p. 25) yet still she

describes institutionalized forms of friendships and classifications of for instance Eisenstadt and Cohen with great rigor in the introduction and lists factors influencing categorization in her own research rather than focusing on the misfits and mismatches of these categorizations. It's not wrong, but the balance could be much better if focusing more on the contradictions.

After having read the first chapters it is refreshing to read Tilo Grätz's contribution which constantly reminds us of overlapping social relationships; not formalizing, but keeping categories open; about not formally institutionalized forms of friendships etc. Grätz is writing about young gold miners in Benin. In addition to Grätz I value the two chapters on Mali are particularly interesting: Richard Warms combined work on merchants and war veterans in two different geographical locations and my old time favorite Georg Klute who writes about combinations of friendship and kinship in the 1990-96 Tuareg upheaval. The afterword by Stephen Reyna adds an interesting dimension to the book by comparing the cases of the volume's chapters with examples from the United States. It is nice to conclude that friendship across the world has many things in common.

All in all this volume is a good read for those interested in friendship and other social relations beyond mere kinship. Guichard's thorough review of the literature is important in itself and combined with the other chapters the book gives us a not just broad but also deep, as well as rare, contribution to the study of African friendship.

Mats Utas
Uppsala University

Amrit Wilson. *The Threat of Liberation, Imperialism and Revolution in Zanzibar.* London: Pluto Press, 2013, 192 pp, ISBN 9780745334073.

Amrit Wilson carefully scrutinizes the geopolitical position of Zanzibar, and how foreign forces have shaped its current political and economic situation. The challenge is that its political history is largely not recognized in dominant political narrative, as such the book brings it to bear by providing reflections on major political events including subversion and revolution, that have shaped the reality of Zanzibar as it is today in the context of anti-colonialism and foreign interventions.

The author suggests that the narrative about Zanzibar is packaged for adventure and tourism and as a result, it has been perceived as an exotic destination for several decades. This has undermined its geopolitical significance and political history: first as a battle ground for foreign forces seeking to expand continental spheres of influence on mainland Africa, and secondly as a historical global commercial hub for trade in slaves and spices. Zanzibar makes the accessibility of Africa easy. As such, the reality and political history of the Zanzibari is detached from critical political narrative of liberation struggles and interventions in Africa, and instead, more perceived for its beaches and cultural diversity.

It is claimed that Zanzibar is as a strategic location, and the interventions on the island are tied to the overall objective of interventions elsewhere in Africa, and that even though the players have changed, the political elements still remain the same. For instance, the author suggests that, “the United States saw it as part of a Central African belt which if controlled, would protect Southern Africa (with its western investments) from radical and socialist influences of countries like Algeria and Ghana”. Therefore, it implied that if Zanzibar were lost, the entire continent would follow, considering Zanzibar has been a commercial hub for 2000 years connecting trade routes between Asia, Africa and the Arabian peninsula (p. 11).

Zanzibar today is a product of many decades of interventions and like other colonized African States, ethnicity and class were a product of its experience with foreign forces, having faced incursions by Portuguese, Omanis, Germans, French and in 1890, the British (p. 12). More so, anti-colonialism originated in the revolt against British forces, first by undermining their authority and later through a quest for political representation. This pursuit was achieved through creation of political organisations whose visions and missions were shaped by anti-colonialism narratives and demand for political independence that had taken root in the rest of Africa (pp. 15-34).

However, like many other colonized states in Africa, political independence also ushered in various contradictions due to the nature of power transfer, to the extent that, the unification of Zanzibar to mainland Tanganyika (now Tanzania) was orchestrated in secrecy so as to create moderate, pro-western postcolonial leaders. Conservative and pro-communist aligned leaders such as Abdulrahman Mohamed Babu were carefully blocked out of the process (pp. 61-66). Furthermore, at independence, power was transferred to the Sultan who was given the power to negotiate critical aspects on the future of Zanzibar The

conditions and secrecy with which the union of Zanzibar and Tanganyika was achieved laid political and economic contradictions that impact the politics of the island up to date, with Zanzibar still attempting to achieve autonomy from mainland Tanzania. It is these contradictions that breed grievances due to forms of political marginalization.

The striking notion of this book is its ability to link historical events, sources and actors to the modern day Zanzibar's political predicament. It is suggested that the west feared Zanzibar would turn out to be like an 'African Cuba' from which revolution could spread to the rest of Africa thereby affecting western investments and influence on the continent. This level of fear is still present with the threat of religious inspired radicalization, thus making the island an important site in the fight against terrorism. It is in these geopolitical comparisons in interventions then and now that the author highlights as significant to the nature of politics in Zanzibar/Tanzania, and largely a product of foreign influence.

In doing so, the author implies that post-Cold War interventions are similar to Cold War interventions except that the players have changed. Interventions in Zanzibar/Tanzania during the Cold War were motivated by the need to contain Chinese expansion and influence but today it is a two pronged approach, aimed at checking Islamic radicalism especially the influence of 'Shia extremists'; and most recently nuclear proliferation - to check Iran's nuclear programme, which coincided with Tanzania's rotational presidency of the United Nations Security Council.

In this book, the author provides perspectives that are not usually applied to the analysis of Zanzibar and its significance to political interventions in mainland Africa and as such exposes its geopolitical importance far beyond its perception as a tourist destination.

Stephen Okello

*Former AFSAAP Postgraduate Representative
Uganda*

Fantu Cheru and Renu Modi (eds.). *Agricultural Development and Food Security in Africa. The Impact of Chinese, Indian and Brazilian Investments.* London: Zed Books, 2013, 280 pp, ISBN 9781780323725.

With media headlines focussing on large scale ‘land grabs’ occurring across Africa, *Agricultural Development and Food Security in Africa* provides a deeper analysis and commentary on the real impact of foreign investment in the agricultural sector. Undertaken in an academic style of writing, *Agricultural Development and Food Security in Africa* is a compilation of work by multiple authors, edited by Cheru and Modi. Although the style of writing – and areas of repetition at times – may not necessarily make this book a ‘page turner’, the deep and considered research and analysis is both topical, and at times, confronting. Focussing on agricultural investments from India, Brazil and China, South-South investment as opposed to investment from more traditional Western partners – Cheru and Modi’s work explores both the benefits, and potentially devastating impact, surrounding such cooperation. With a colonial legacy of fertile land being utilised for growing cash-crop exports, the need for investment in food security and the agricultural sector is undeniable – with an argument made that “Africa was a net food exporter during the 1960s but now imports 20 per cent of the cereals it consumes” (p. 45). The imperative to attain food security has seen many governments across the continent place agriculture at the forefront of policy making, with BRICS countries having noted that “one percentage growth in agriculture is at least two to three times more effective in reducing poverty than the same growth emanating from non-agriculture sectors” (p. 89). In spite of the potential benefits associated with agricultural development, the book highlights that Africa’s grain production has decreased over the past 30 years resulting in a situation where “Africa as a whole is currently the only continent with net food imports, even though it is made up of a majority of agricultural-based countries” (p. 195).

The book clearly addresses the possibility for significant improvements as a result of foreign investment in areas such as agricultural production, infrastructure, transfer of technology and poverty alleviation. However, it does note that investments by countries such as India, Brazil and China have brought mixed results to the continent. Issues such as land grabs, the need for large scale investments to benefit small scale farmers, labour conditions for local employees, the

controversial issue of utilising arable land for bio-fuel as opposed to cereal (especially in countries that are net importers of food) and the willingness – and at times encouragement –by some African governments to allow large areas of land to be leased to produce cereal predominantly for export are all examined. Through the work of Cheru, Modi and the contributing authors, these topics are meticulously evaluated in a general sense, and often highlighted with the use of case studies.

Although the book provides adequate historical context to understand the agricultural transformations that have taken place in India, Brazil and China – it perhaps does not provide enough context around the historical, ethnic and political implications of land rights within many African countries. The leasing of 1.3 million hectares of land to a South Korean investor in Madagascar, for example, was a catalyst for a coup and change of regime in 2009!

Overall however, through meticulous research, illustrative data and case study analysis, Cheru and Modi have compiled a detailed analysis of the benefits that can be brought to Africa as a result of *responsible* investment, on the part of both the investor and host country, in the continent's agricultural sector.

Anna Rabin
Dragoman Risk Consultancy