

THE AUSTRALASIAN REVIEW OF AFRICAN STUDIES
VOLUME 37 NUMBER 1 JUNE 2016

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EDITORIAL

African challenges and challenges to African Studies

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The articles in this issue of ARAS offer very unique views on a range of issues that are relevant to the countries of Africa - the legacies of sexualized violence in conflict; suggestions for preventing conflict; human development; sovereignty and the role of international political and economic imperatives; and the way we understand 'world music' in the age of globalization.

In the article *Sexual Violence in the Congo Free State: Archival Traces and Present Reconfigurations*, Charlotte Mertens presents her extensive archival research conducted in Belgium, and ethnographic research conducted in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Mertens brings to light the ghosts of the past, still haunting this central African nation. Her focus on sexual violence during King Leopold's Congo Free State, and more recently as a result of the ongoing conflict in the DRC, draws our attention to the ongoing legacies of sexualized violence, in particular against women. Mertens argues that this current violence is intricately connected to the colonial past, and is unfortunately enduring into the future.

Obinna Franklin Ifediora argues in his article *Preventive Arbitration: Towards Strengthening the African Union's Mediation Capacity for Human Protection*, that the African Union Commission could strengthen its conflict resolution and pacifying mechanisms through 'preventive arbitration', thus offering the many stakeholders, minority and opposition groups access to relevant and timely mediation, creating enduring peace and human security. Ifediora argues that the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) needs to be restructured to bring 'mediation' into the role of the African Governance Architecture,

BOOK REVIEWS

Richard Bourne. *Nigeria: A New History of a Turbulent Century*. Zed Books: London, 2015, 299pp, ISBN 9781780329062.

As Africa's most populous country and largest economy, Nigeria is the giant of Africa and one of the most influential African countries in the world. However, it also has a reputation for disorder, corruption and conflict. There has long been a need for a short accessible history of its emergence as a major modern state to inform diplomats, policy makers, investors, journalists and the general public. There have been efforts - Eghosa Osaghae's "Crippled Giant - Nigeria since Independence" and Karl Maier's "This House has Fallen - Nigeria in Crisis" come to mind, but they have either been too dense or polemical. Richard Bourne has now filled the gap with this excellent, balanced and readable new book.

What a ride it has been - as indicated in the subtitle's reference to a 'turbulent century'. The name Nigeria, the land of the Niger, or Black River, which runs through it to the sea was coined, as the author tells us, by Flora Shaw, the wife of its first Governor General, the great British Pro-Consul Lord Lugard long before it came into official existence on 1 January 1914 as part of the British Empire. This development was simply for British administrative convenience, bringing together the very different regions of the Colony of Lagos and the Southern and Northern Nigerian protectorates. It is worth noting that it followed on three other imperial amalgamations - Canada in 1867, Australia in 1901, and South Africa in 1910. Remarkably all four have survived and become important modern nations successfully facing major challenges along the way.

Nigeria perhaps faced more challenges than most in welding together the Northern Muslim Hausa Fulani with the Yoruba of the South West and the Igbo and Delta peoples of the South East, whose traditional beliefs and structures were heavily influenced by Western and Christian missionary engagement. Also unlike the federations in Canada and Australia - and to some extent South Africa - Nigerians were not consulted in this imperial amalgamation. The first half century of Nigeria's history - till independence on 1 October 1960 - was thus largely a struggle for recognition by Nigerians that their destiny should be in their own hands. This story Bourne tells well.

One method of telling the story - and taking it into the second half century - is through the prominent Lagos based Ransome Kuti family, members of whom were close friends of Bourne, a British journalist who has known Nigeria for several decades. The Rev. Ransome Kuti, a Nigerian Anglican clergyman and his formidable wife Funmilayo, both early activists for Nigerian civil and political rights, produced three particularly remarkable activist children - Fela Kuti the musician, Beko Ransome Kuti, the human rights leader, and Dr Olikuye Kuti, a politician and Health Minister. But there is so much more to say here and one can only hope that Bourne's next book might be about this remarkable family and their role in Nigeria's development.

Bourne records key events faithfully. However, the dispassionate focus on events does mean we miss some of the colour, atmosphere, tension and excitement in the extraordinary story of the succession of military coups which followed independence and the tragedy of the Biafra secessionist bid, perhaps the seminal event of modern Nigerian history. This is perhaps better understood through novelist Chinua Achebe's remarkable memoir *There was a Country - Personal History of Biafra*, or even Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, now also a major movie.

Inevitably the need to cover immense ground quickly also means the character of the Biafran leader, the extraordinarily charismatic but self-centred General Ojukwu, never really emerges. Nor does the character of a succession of scheming military leaders, including that of the seriously scary military dictator of the 1990s General Abacha who dispatched the prominent Ogoni activist Ken Saro-Wiwa with relish. The same could be said of another key Nigerian, the still living ex-President Olusegun Obasanjo, who is perhaps the most important figure of the second fifty years of Nigerian history. After coming to power in a military coup, he handed power to a short-lived civilian regime. He was later jailed then re-emerged in 1999 as an elected President. In that role he finally ended the run of coups which had bedeviled Nigeria's first forty years of independence and brought some order to a country he jovially described to this reviewer in 1998 as "impossible to govern" - before then proving he was equal to the task again. However, Bourne introduces us to them all, and hopefully will whet the reader's appetite to go further and put flesh on the bones of the story he tells.

The whole extraordinary span of Nigeria's first century is all well and succinctly laid out in Bourne's book, and this is its strength. It inevitably leaves many questions hanging. Why do Nigerians appear so

corrupt, and yet so energetic? Why is the nation so chaotic and poor, and yet Nigerians think of themselves as some of the happiest people in the world? What is also missing from this book is the colour and vibrancy of Nigeria - the impressive garments of Yoruba men, the medieval splendor of the Emir of Kano's durbar, the grimness of the jungle waterways of the Delta where criminal gangs wait to kidnap the unwary. The definitive history of Nigeria should address these issues and needs to be in technicolor, not the black and white of print. However, until such a book is written Richard Bourne's work is the best guide you will find. Everyone seeking to understand Nigeria - and it is a rapidly growing number - should read it.

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Andrew Walker. 'Eat the Heart of the Infidel' The Harrowing of Nigeria and the Rise of Boko Haram. London: Hurst & Company, 2016, 281pp, ISBN 9781849045582.

The study of Nigeria's infamous insurgency known as Boko Haram is relatively young, which makes any monograph on this group a potentially popular read. Combine that with a broader examination of Islam in Nigeria, particularly its northern parts, and you potentially have yourself a very interesting book. Notwithstanding its few weaknesses, this book exhibits many strengths and should constitute an important source for any future study of Boko Haram.

Andrew Walker is a journalist with experience of reporting from Nigeria; since 2006 both for the BBC, and Abuja's *Daily Trust*. As someone with direct access to events on the ground his insights are worth taking seriously, and his overall style of writing is compelling. One of the greatest strengths of this book is that it is empirically informed and full of interesting details, thus difficult to put down. The book, however revealing, has its problems, including minor grammatical and syntax errors and typos, which could have been polished with more editing. However, a major issue is that the first two thirds of the book are not really about Boko Haram. They do cover immensely important

background issues such as the spread of more confrontational and ‘militant’ interpretations of Islam in North Nigeria in the 19th century; Lord Lugard’s early 20th century rule over the North; and even the atrophy of the Nigerian state in the decades after independence. However, these sections are covered in a somewhat disjointed manner. The problem is that Walker does not explicitly tell the reader why the issues are connected, and the structure of the chapters does not necessarily lend itself to an easy understanding of their interconnectedness. Some episodes, such as the story of John Henry Dorogu appearing in the Preface, seems largely irrelevant to the overall narrative.

One could argue that these parts of the book are really about ‘the harrowing of Nigeria’ with the part on the ‘rise of Boko Haram’ yet to come, but this is one area where an attempt at greater integration of chapters would have paid dividends. The book is simply too slow to highlight to the reader why all those chapters are necessary and its luck lies in Walker’s writing style which keeps the reader turning pages regardless of the displeasure this may cause.

Walker zig-zags and punctuates his narratives with individual stories which are tied up with broader issues, before reminding the reader of the real human cost of Nigeria’s security and development problems, and Boko Haram’s activities. However, as with most journalistic writing this exposes the reader to at times too much detail and flair which detract from the bigger picture and a clear understanding of larger issues. Nevertheless, Walker does well to employ such literary tools as they produce a highly readable account which is overall informed by good sources.

By far the book’s greatest strength and value (at least from an academic viewpoint) is revealed in the last section. Chapters 8 and 9 offer a deep empirical source on Boko Haram’s rise and activities in the past few years, and can serve any serious analyst as a well of primary material. This is not to suggest that Walker could not have consulted more information on Boko Haram, but that his interviews, coupled with extensive secondary research have interesting and at times unheard of things to tell.

For this reviewer, the book’s best came last. In chapter 10 Walker reflects on the issues of sources and epistemology, questioning what can truly be known of Boko Haram in Nigeria’s context where ‘what’ is said is not as important as ‘who’ it is said by. As Walker makes clear, he has himself struggled with untangling the myriad of stories about Boko

Haram's origins and evolution, constantly coming back to the question of 'How do you know that?' (p. 204). It is rare for a journalist to reflect on this question at such great length and the whole chapter is a testament to the 'shifty' system of knowledge and information that permeates Nigeria's media and politics, in which secrets are rarely kept well, and yet no one truly knows what is going on. All of this is excellently highlighted by the story of the retired Western Australian Anglican clergyman Stephen Davis, and his attempt in 2014/15 to broker the release of the abducted Chibok girls.

As Davis emerged from his dealings with Boko Haram, which failed to secure the release of the abducted girls, he told a plausible story of high-level governmental support for Boko Haram and factionalism within the grouping which prohibited the deal following through. However, that account was severely criticized and other, also plausible alternatives were put forward explaining why Davis' attempt had failed. In the end, although perhaps feeling better informed, we are not necessarily much closer to understanding Boko Haram's rise and resilience.

Overall, it was a pleasure to read the book and notwithstanding its problems, it can be recommended as a serious and highly readable source on Boko Haram as well as Nigeria's capacity to respond to its threat.

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Chris Vaughan. *Darfur: Colonial violence, Sultanic legacies and local politics*. Suffolk: James Currey, 2015, 231pp, ISBN 9781847011114.

Back before the Darfur crisis, before the joint United Nations and African Union peacekeeping force, the terrors of the Janjaweed and other militia, before the crippling drought and famine of the 1980s, the heady days of Sudanese independence, before the Anglo-Egyptian condominium, there were a range of tribal groups living, working and travelling in the west of Sudan. Their mother tongues were many –

Arabic was a first language for some, a second or third or unknown to others. Most were Muslims, often practicing an Islam informed by local spiritual beliefs and customs. Some were farmers, some traders with Egypt, Chad and Libya, others roamed defined areas tending to their herds of camels or cattle, some raided further south for slaves. Some were led by sultans, others by local chiefs. Prominent among them was the western cattle-herding tribe called the Fur, for whom the *dar* (place) is named, but equally prominent were the Zaghawa, Mahriyya, Meidob and Bani Husayn in the north, the Berti in the north-east and Masalit in the west and south, the Misseriya, Fallata and Rizaygat in the south, to name just a few.

Into this region rode the British colonialists in the form of the Sudan Political Service – young British Arabic-speaking Oxford and Cambridge graduates raised on tales of the empire and with a taste for adventure. This is the period that Chris Vaughan covers in his book, the period of British rule in Darfur, western Sudan, between 1916 and Sudanese independence in 1956. His painstaking research has produced a ‘ripping yarn’ in the academic style that draws on the meticulous reportage and documentation of British civil servants of the time. Delving with relish into the dusty Sudan National Archives in Khartoum and the Sudan Political Service material preserved at Durham University in Britain, Vaughan discusses power and politics, peace-building and violence and the changing times and relationships between the local elite and the young British political officers (p.3). He demonstrates that the young colonial officials had power, but they could also be easily manipulated by Sudanese chiefs and power-brokers due to their limited knowledge of local affairs (p.69).

Vaughan engages with debates about the character of the colonial state in Africa, colonial violence, the authority of local chiefs, and the dynamics of African borderlands. He notes that violence ran throughout government in colonial Darfur, with torture and flogging seen as central to the character of chiefly authority in some areas, and continued by some, but by no means all, colonial leaders (pp.7-9). In Darfur, the state was seen as *both* the agent of order and disorder (p.10).

For his research, Vaughan accessed personal letters from colonial officers as well as official records. Detailed as these records may be, they present Darfur from one perspective, that of the British colonial officer – although it is evident that there were a range of opinions even among that august group. Vaughan acknowledges from the outset that the Sudanese voice is muted – literacy was poor and the colonial powers saw education

beyond primary or middle school as unnecessary for their subjects. For years, local dignitaries called in vain for their sons to be sent to Gordon College in Khartoum for further education (pp.175-6). Education in Khartoum and even Egypt, was achieved by some favoured sons as time wore on. Colonial attitudes changed as it became apparent that Sudan would need educated civil servants from all areas for future independence, and some officials encouraged local chiefs to imagine Darfur's future in an independent Sudan.

If the wider Sudanese voice is muted in colonial reports and memoirs, it is clear that the voice of women raises barely a whisper in those same dispatches. Vaughan has made a credible effort to include material about women wherever he can, but even so, there were barely 25 mentions of women in the 211 pages of text. Often, women or girls were discussed in court cases about marriage, divorce and adultery (pp.121-2). They are presented as commodities in talk about bride prices and the need for young men to save their money for dowries rather than spending it on tea – which was a relatively new commodity for nomads at the time (p.136). There are cases where women tell the court they have been beaten by their husbands and they look to community elders for support, with some success apparently (p.122). In other instances, there are clashes between local customs and the colonial officers, for example, the British slammed a localised Fur tradition that allowed a couple to sleep together first and marry later, forcing pregnant women to name the father of their child so they could be fined, flogged or even imprisoned (pp.104-5)

We do see women exercising power in innovative ways - in another mention, it was reported that local dignitaries had paid large sums to women praise-singers to ensure they would cease singing about the chief's stinginess (p.135). And there are tantalising glimpses of women as political activists. In 1938, a group of women rioted before a courthouse when the Governor-General visited, in a successful push to get a prison sentence commuted to a fine for a male relative. Their action was viewed as 'plucky' by one senior British official, who wrote that it reminded him of the "old suffragette days" (p.146). In 1939, the British announced they would build the first school for girls in Darfur, in the regional capital of El Fasher. The demand for places completely overwhelmed availability and the school board was almost mobbed by excited parents (p.186).

For colonial officers and Sudanese alike, the times were a-changing. What one British officer called "the septic germs of modernity" had seeped into Darfur and local groups discovered freedom (p.190). Vaughan has provided an interesting analysis of power in those pre-independence times,

how different groups made the most of the opportunities afforded to them, how colonial rules and regulations were often a mere overlay on local customs and traditions. The colourful anecdotes from colonial archives are the icing on the cake.

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Ali Mumin Ahad. *Somali Poetry and the Failed She-Camel State: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Deelley Poetry Debate (1979-1980)*. New York: Peter Lang, 2015, 306pp, ISBN 9781433125157.

This book deals with the 'chain' of 67 oral poems composed by c. 50 Somali poets in the period 1978-1980, just after Somalia's defeat in war by Soviet-supported Ethiopia. To this important set of poems (called "Deelley," that is to say poems alliterating in 'd') the book's author sets out to apply Norman Fairclough's respected method of critical discourse analysis. Unfortunately, the author fails to live up to the promise of his project.

First, this book so teems with grammatical mistakes (regarding sentence structure; word order, choice and meaning; verb forms and tenses; pronouns; punctuation, and so forth) that even the basic meaning of a sentence is often not clear (e.g. pp. 143, 285). This also severely affects the accuracy and intelligibility of the author's translations of excerpts from the poems (e.g. pp. 167, 186, 272). What should the reader, for example, make of the phrases "sovereignty is traced by the encampments" (p. 167) or "You'll recognize by the grub [which gobbles] ..." (p. 186)? The substandard quality of the English translations, exacerbated by the fact that the author rarely presents the Somali texts of the poetry excerpts he cites, is therefore a fundamental flaw of this book.

Second, the way in which the author frames the book proves to be almost completely irrelevant to his analysis of the poems. It consists of the claim (i) that Somali historiography in general and the Deelley poetry debate in particular have adopted a language and discourse in

which Somalis who farm and have a sedentary lifestyle are not represented and (ii) that this discursive exclusion is indicative of an exclusion from political power that has affected them throughout the post-independence era. Iconic for this exclusion, the author argues, is the prominent trope of the “she-camel Maandeeq,” which, in popular and political discourse about the nation (including the Deelley poetry debate) came to stand for Somalia, thus allegedly *a priori* excluding farmers from the national imaginary.

That the author feels so passionately about this discourse of exclusion undoubtedly is of social and political significance. As represented here, however, his analysis of it is flawed in more than one way. To begin with, the author identifies the excluded population in very imprecise geographical terms, referring to them interchangeably (and thus misleadingly) as the inhabitants of the whole of Southern Somalia, as the people of a part of the South, namely the inter-riverine area, and even as farmers in part of the latter. Moreover, the author’s interpretation ignores the fact that, outside of the towns, as elsewhere in Somalia, camels were and are numerous and omnipresent in the inter-riverine area and the South as a whole, and he fails to mention that the poet he himself credits with introducing the she-camel as the symbol of the nation (p. 111) was a man hailing from a farming area (in this case in the Northwest). Clearly there is more going on here than the issue of regional dialects and sets of metaphors. Although they remain undocumented and unanalyzed in this study and receive only casual mention (pp. 36, 286), the political grievances that underlie the author’s interpretation of post-independence Somali history – a view that presents Southern Somalis only as victims and never as active agents in that history – so much shape the author’s approach to the poetry under study that they undermine the focus and coherence of the analysis, and cause the book to derail.

The reason for this disjointedness is that there is nothing in the Deelley poetry debate that speaks to, or gives evidence of what the author calls the discursive and material discrimination of southern Somalis. The author appears to realize that he is grasping at straws, for, when, in the conclusion (p. 290), he argues that one of the southern poets of the Deelley poetry debate refers to “internal colonialism” exercised over the farming people of the south by a political elite of northern nomadic origins, he only gives a parenthetical reference to the number and lines of the poem (#23, 163-172); because the reader is not presented with the text (whether in the original Somali or English

translation), this allegedly crucial claim remains completely unsubstantiated. Moreover, when this reviewer checked the Somali text of the poem in another publication, she found no trace of a complaint about exploitation or marginalization of farmers or southerners; on the contrary, like the other poets of the Deelley, Xuseen Sheekh Axmed 'Kaddare' expresses himself in nationalist terms and he adopts a national, Pan-Somali framework when he expresses pain and indignation about *dalalkeenna weli maqan*, that is to say, the Somali territories that still remained outside the Somali nation-state. The mismatch between frame and body produces a study that is out of joint with itself.

In Chapters 4-7, the author analyzes important themes and metaphors of the Deelley poetry debate, with an emphasis on the subject also emphasized by the poets, namely tribalism as a cause of the crises of the nation-state under the military regime of M. S. Barre. These chapters suffer from poor organization and repetition, and lack clearly articulated overall conclusions. It is evident that Peter Lang publishing (which charges US\$92.95 for this book) has served this author poorly, for competent editing could have made a difference. As it stands this book is a sad indicator of how Somalia's civil war continues to affect the quality of Somali historiography.

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Cherry Leonardi. *Dealing with Government in South Sudan: Histories of Chiefship, Community and State*. Woodbridge: James Currey, 2015, 253 pp, ISBN 9781847010674.

Given South Sudan's ongoing violence, Cherry Leonardi's book *Dealing with Government in South Sudan: Histories of Chiefship, Community and State* provides a much needed local focus upon the historical development of the state in the world's newest country. It does this through the lens of the chiefship and the role this position has had in the simultaneous construction of both state and community. The book is divided into three parts, each focusing on different eras and processes of state formation. Part One is about southern Sudan's early entanglements with wider global processes of empire and state formation (c.1840-1920), and especially how these are understood and explained in the present. Part Two focuses on the shifting nature of chiefship in the years between the 1920s and 1950s and how the chiefship was formed through always contested negotiations with both the state and the communities in which it was embedded. Beginning in 1956, Part Three looks at the recent history and consequences of the increasing urbanisation and governance of South Sudanese life, relating these processes to the wider context of war and independence.

Through an emphasis on local understandings and articulations of both governance and resistance, Leonardi examines how chiefship has mediated and helped constitute both the state and community in southern Sudan since the mid-19th century. It demonstrates chiefship as constructed through local, rural south Sudanese' encounters with state-like power, and argues chiefship is a form of authority that directly references and articulates the state in both historical and contemporary Sudan. As the author argues, "the most consistent basis for chiefship has been to render the government more predictable" (p.3).

As well as the development of chiefship, the book emphasises simultaneous developments in the urban sphere, with towns rather than borders becoming the primary frontiers around which southern Sudanese states and communities became negotiated and formed. Urban courts are shown as central functions of chiefship's most significant role as mediator between state and community, especially among ongoing contests over state legitimacy, and these courts have become public arenas for deliberation about what it means to be government or people. In this way, both the chiefship and the courts are defined by their mediatory roles and functions and, importantly, the mediation of chiefs

has been fundamental to how processes of both state and community formation have taken place.

There is something wonderfully intuitive about Leonardi's argument that "the history of town and state formation should...be understood in terms of local relations and long-term political cultures...in which chiefship plays a mediating role" (p.7). Such an articulation perfectly mirrors my own work into public authority in rural Acholi South Sudan.

However, such intuitiveness should not detract from the complexity of analysis or the nuanced use of multiple methodologies: the ability to formulate such a clear thesis is formidable, and just one example of the analytical clarity the book bears. As well as this methodological mastery, the author displays a powerful command of both Sudanese and wider-African literature, using this literature to provide a wider comparative background to the book's arguments and allowing vivid demonstration of how power, government, and public authority always stem from the ongoing negotiation of diverse local realities. Well written and intellectually engaging, this book is a significant and timely piece of scholarship and a must-read for all scholars with an interest in any element of socio-political life in either of the Sudanese states, or even state formation in eastern or central Africa more widely.

Leonardi highlights the role of chiefs as mediators or brokers for different forms of social or political contract, with socio-political interdependence being formulated on the basis of "exchange and economic transaction[s] which established mutual obligation" (p.27). This is an important point, and one continuing to structure South Sudan's political marketplace today. However, a more nuanced interpretation of these interactions might have engaged more deeply with local notions of exchange and personhood and profited through sustained engagement with ideas of 'the gift' (Mauss 2002). Such an exercise might have demonstrated how the multiplicity of South Sudanese political, economic, and cultural forms are as much about local conceptualisations of what constitutes personhood as they are relations with or responses to authority. Indeed, a profitable line of analysis might have interrogated how state and community are co-constituted through things such as taxes or tributes which local peoples likely understood as exchanges of personhood. Although Leonardi does flirt with such issues (noting, for example, the importance of social and moral over commodity relations, pp. 27-28, 66, 76, 97), she ultimately privileges political-economy over indigenous sociality.

Nonetheless, the author rightly positions chiefship as a fundamentally ambiguous position between town and village, state and community, law and tradition, commodity and gift. In this respect, as with so much in the book, it is not only fundamentally innovative but powerfully simple and intellectually persuasive. Indeed, by positioning the urban frontier as the site of state formation over the *long duree*, the South Sudanese state is demonstrated to be a discourse about order narrated the language of law, governance, and power. Further, through highlighting historical process and problematizing standard dichotomies, this book demonstrates how both resistance of and engagement with state-like power has helped embed the problems and contradictions contained within the contemporary South Sudanese state. Chiefship has been central to this, standing as the one of the principal roots of South Sudanese political structures, and the primary means through which people can – and always have – made claims upon the state.

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D. M. Bondarenko, *The Shades of Black: Cultural Anthropological Aspects of Mutual Perspectives and relations between African-Americans and African Migrants in the U.S.A* (In Russian), Dom Publishers "YASK": Moscow, 2016. Pp. 216. ISBN: 9785990613331

From time immemorial, people have migrated to other lands in search of better opportunities and/or adventures. Compelled by circumstances, they have either migrated in search of water or more arable land to enhance their chances of survival. For example, the unfavourable circumstances which enforced such a migration is

widespread in the history of Africa. While we may, conceptually, regard such as a ‘forced’ migration, it does not compare to the forced migration of Africans, mainly from West Africa, to the colonies of Britain, France, Spain, and Portugal to North America and the Caribbean during the transatlantic slave trade era. Contemporary African-Americans – black Americans – are descendants of this transatlantic slave trade. On the other hand, Africans who had migrated to the United States of America (USA), in the post-slavery era, can be said to have done so voluntarily in quest of education and better opportunities. While the first group of Africans in this category eventually returned to Africa to render their services to their communities (e.g., Nnamdi Azikiwe and Kwame Nkrumah of Nigeria and Ghana, respectively), it can be argued that the second group of African migrants to the USA, in the post colonial period, were forced by circumstances in their respective countries, for example, civil wars, internal political repressions and poor governance, to seek refuge in the USA. It must be stressed, however, that this ‘forced’ migration cannot be compared with the brutality suffered by the ancestors of contemporary African-Americans.

The seminal study by Dmitri Bondarenko examines the relationships between this second group of African migrants from sub-Saharan Africa and African-Americans. Beginning from the 1980s, more sub-Saharan Africans migrated to the USA than the forced migration of the slave trade era. (p.10). Being of the same racial origin and sharing the same ancestors may be assumed to form a unity cord between African migrants in the USA and African-Americans. In fact, this thesis was central in the philosophy of leading Black scholars and social activists of the 19th and early 20th centuries, for example, W.E. Du Bois, George Padmore, and Marcus Gavey. In his study, based on extensive interviews with African migrants and African-Americans in several cities in the USA, Bondarenko analyzed the gulf separating these two groups from establishing the type of racial unity envisaged by Du Bois, Padmore, and Gavey. He brilliantly evaluates the contending perceptions of African migrants vis-à-vis African-Americans as both parties define themselves in the USA. For example, despite their regional differences, Bondarenko reminds us that African-Americans “constitute a single ethnic, cultural and language community” which makes them “see themselves as not struggling to find a niche in American society as a ‘diaspora’, but as one of its important original components” (p.25). Thus, unlike the great Pan-Africanists of the 19th - early/mid 20th centuries, contemporary African-Americans do not

consider themselves as living in a diaspora, or as “Africans in the diaspora”. On the other hand, African migrants in Bondarenko’s study view themselves as “Africans in the diaspora”. This distinction plays a pivotal role in the contending mutual perceptions between African migrants and African-Americans in the USA. While most African-Americans may be proud of their African ancestry, it would be more appropriate to classify them as Americans. As revealed by Bondarenko, “Some respondents tend to consider the relationship between African-Americans and African migrants in the United States...as a relationship between the autochthonous and migrants” (p.27). Even African migrants do not constitute a “new African diaspora” in the USA, but diasporas of several independent African countries, fragmented entities defined by ethnicity, religious affiliations, and socio-political beliefs (p.25).

Slave trade and slavery play an emotional role in how both groups perceive their bilateral relationships. Some respondents from sub-Saharan Africa in Bondarenko’s study reject the appellation “African-Americans” which they perceive as an “association with slavery and its history of forced migration to the United States”. They also argue that black Americans, that is African-Americans, treat them worse than white Americans (p.28).

A major contribution of Bondarenko’s study is his analysis of historical memory in influencing the consciousness of people. He expertly demonstrates the value of historical memory as a critical tool of social science inquiry vis-à-vis the slave trade and slavery. Historical consciousness is formed by a community’s memory of the past in their conceptualization of the form and content of their relations to other groups in the broader community. This historical consciousness helps to define and separate “us” from “them” in a “we” versus “you” interpretation of social relations (p.57). This “we” versus “you” dichotomy was observed during the 2008 US presidential campaign of Barack Obama, as several African-Americans grumbled about the qualifications of his candidacy as one of them. Even years after his re-election for a second term, this grumbling was still echoed by some African-Americans. For example, in February 2016, a Republican presidential candidate, Ben Carson, an African-American, declared that it was “a bit of a stretch” for Obama to “claim” to identify “with the experience of black Americans”, because he was “raised white” and spent much “of his formative years in Indonesia”. He stated that Obama “could not understand the African-American experience the way he could” (BBC 2016). Carson’s view, even though it was criticised by

some Americans, including African-Americans, cannot be extricated from the historical memory of the slave trade and slavery. The “African-American experience” that Carson declared Obama “could not understand” is rooted in the history of slavery experienced by African-Americans. Thus, African-Americans may perceive African migrants as representatives of those who sold their ancestors to European slave merchants and, by extension, allies of the latter.

While African migrants, including Obama’s father from Kenya, were welcomed to the USA, represented by the Statue of Liberty, it is instructive to note that the ancestors of African-Americans did not receive such a welcome. This historical experience helps to explain the contending perceptions of African migrants and African-Americans. Bondarenko vividly underlines this imperative in his analysis. His book is a valuable contribution to the body of knowledge on the subject.

Bibliography

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