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AFRASIA: A Tale of Two Continents

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Wim J. M. van Binsbergen’s work, Before the Presocratics (2012), presents a kaleidoscopic appraisal of regional and global epistemological traditions and configurations before the advent of ancient Greek thought (see also 2011a–d; 2012b–f; 2013). He is concerned about interrogating worlds that relate to Afrocentricity, employing an impressive assemblage of specialists, namely, protohistory, archaeology, comparative ethnography, comparative mythology, comparative linguistics and genetics. His central thesis is that rather than viewing different regional epistemological formations as singular and distinct, it is more appropriate to understand them as being part of a global and historical continuum of knowledge traditions that are only subject to migration and transformation—in short, all the elements of transplantation and dispersal. In this light, the strict separation between regional and ethnic knowledge becomes misguided and often preposterous.

Convincing as van Binsbergen’s arguments are, the messy phenomenon of race can undermine their appeal within the context of the present-day subalternity. Racial violence is not merely the abuse and denigration of subject peoples. It means, more importantly, the total annihilation, and in most cases, transformation of consciousness, which of course touches on questions of the intellect. Racially abused peoples are never taken seriously intellectually. This is an angle completely absent from van Binsbergen’s work as much as he attempts to advance a supposedly Afrocentric perspective.

Van Binsbergen calls into question the widespread perception held by many important philosophers—such as Heidegger and Gadamer—that the Presocratic thinkers started what is considered Western philosophy and that Empedocles initiated ‘the system of four elements as immutable and irreducible parallel components of reality’, and that it continued... laid the foundation for Modern science and technology, and the Modern World System at Large’ (p. 31). Afrocentrists attempt to establish the primacy of the African continent and African cosmology, often in direct opposition to outright racist objection. Van Binsbergen’s project seeks to overcome this age-long ‘paradigm of oppositionality’ for a broader outlook of interconnectedness between human knowledge and epistemic traditions. Thus globalization:

transatlantic continuities of the past, and to overcome such divisiveness as hegemonic interests of earlier decades and centuries have imposed on our image of the world and of the cultural history of humankind, and to help free Africa from the isolated and peripheral position that has been attributed to that continent in present-day World System (p.32).

Van Binsbergen also reminds us that he has conducted ‘counter-hegemonic, transcontinental research for over twenty years now’ (ibid.). This places his Afrocentric credentials to the fore even while interrogating the radicality of those same credentials, merely because he has taken up a project whose theoretical composition includes a far-reaching incorporation of genetic science, archaeology, linguistics, comparative mythology, comparative ethnography, and empiricism, in short, a range of radical methodologies that could end up signalling a whole new academic genre.

On the Pelasgian Hypothesis

According to accepted paleoanthropological, archaic Homo sapiens evolved to anatomically modern human beings in sub-Saharan Africa as early as 200,000 years ago, and then dispersed to other continents. This view is termed the ‘Out-of-Africa’ (OOA) hypothesis or ‘recent single-origin hypothesis’ (RSOH), ‘replacement hypothesis’, or ‘recent African origin model’ (RAO) by experts in the field. There is also the ‘Back-to-Africa’ hypothesis, according to which human beings developed elsewhere, and then returned to Africa bearing new genes, religious and cultural practices, and new knowledge pertaining to science and technology. Van Binsbergen terms this migration back into Africa ‘Pandora’s Box’. He mentions some central hypotheses that he returns to frequently in his work, notably, the Borean hypothesis, as formulated by Harold C. Fleming (1987; 1991) and Sergei Starostin (1989; 1991), which, as described by van Binsbergen, holds:

1. all languages spoken today retain, in their constructed language forms, substantial traces of a hypothetical, reconstructed language arbitrarily termed ‘Borean’ and supposed to have been spoken in Central Asia, perhaps near Lake Baikal, in the Upper Palaeolithic, (c. 25 ka BP) (p. 34).
2. On the other hand, says Van Binsbergen, Stephen Oppenheimer (2001) argues, using the Sunda hypothesis, which posulates:

considerable demic effusion of cultural traits took place from South East Asia to Western Eurasia (and by implication to Africa) as the South Asian subcontinent was flooded (resulting in its present intra-continental nature) with the melting of polar ice at the onset of the Holocene (10 ka BP) (ibid.).

Van Binsbergen adds that to understand prehistorical and protohistorical philosophical thought, it is necessary to move beyond the philosophical enterprise conceived as a narrow academic discipline and instead take in the study of the language, culture, and the social context in which Presocratic thought evolved. Accordingly, this methodological imperative necessitates a multiplicity of disciplinary competencies. In relation to philosophy itself, he notes that he does not offer a clear-cut argument per se, but instead presents a ‘historical and transcontinental-comparative prolegomena to an ontological philosophical argument on cosmology and the structure of reality’ (ibid., 41).

Van Binsbergen labels his approach as ‘counter-paradigmatic inasmuch as it seeks to ‘chart intellectual terra incognita’ (p. 43).

While conventional Global Studies deal with specific cultures, van Binsbergen’s approach is very much concerned with entire continents and the concept of globality itself. Thus, he begins from the Upper Palaeolithic Age as a spatial construct while at the same time tracing ‘a particular intellectual-cultural complex characterized by such features as cyclicity, transformation and element cosmology’ (ibid.), thereby bypassing ‘the highly presentist and localist perspectives prevailing in social anthropology ever since the classic, fieldwork-centred tradition in that field was established in the 1930s–1940s’ (ibid.). In addition, he learned that, within a given social and cultural context, cultural meaning is not only produced by social, political, and economic factors alone—he considers this a largely reductionist perspective—but also by symbols capable of retaining meaning and relevance across several cultural and geographical divides.

Karl Jaspers had propounded the notion of Achsenzeit (Axial Age: the period from 800 to 200 BCE, during which, according to him, similar new ways of thinking appeared in Persia, India, the Sinosphere and the Western world; see Jaspers 2011). The notion, barring its overt Eurocentric connotations, as Van Binsbergen reminds us, is central for an understanding of the concept of transcontinental entanglements in human thought after the convergence of writing, the state, organized religion, and the monetary economy as key factors in the organization of society. Due to different waves of proto-globalization, these crucial intellectual societies found their way into different regions of the globe such as the Aeganean way of Iran and China via Northern India. Those transformative bursts of proto-globalization were powered by chariot, horse-back, and water transport.

Van Binsbergen argues that certain cultural traits from the Upper Palaeolithic Age found their way across the African continent. He first became aware of this when conducting fieldwork in Francis town, Botswana, where geomancy, a supposedly indigenous divination system, displayed strong similarities with ‘an Islamic astrologically-based divination system that was established in Iraq around 1000 CE that in the meantime spread not only to Southern Africa but also to the entire Indian Ocean region, West Africa, and even Medieval and Renaissance Europe’ (p. 44). Geomancy, and other similar diagnostic and therapeutic traditions all have a formal character that facilitates their transmission across some semantic boundaries. Similarly, it is possible to study the correlations between cultural features—such as animal symbolism (such as the leopard and its spotted pelts), myths, and games belonging to the mancala (a board-game) category, and even Medieval and Renaissance Europe; in Egyptology. In this regard, the work of American sinologist, Martin Bernal, is central—especially the thesis he elucidated in Black Athena (1987–2006).

Van Binsbergen then defines ‘strong Afrocentrism as a theory that considers Africa the origin of crucial phenomena of cultural history’ (p. 46). This aspect immediately connects with Dani W.Nabudere’s notion of Afrikology, which essentially regards Africa as ‘the Cradle of Humankind’, and Afrocentric theorists such as Molefi Kete Asante, whose notion of Afrocentricity quite a number of arresting subtleties quite distinct from the usual ethnocentric affirmation of Africa’s cultural primacy. Van Binsbergen is always anxious to affirm his Afrocentricity, one of the ways in which he accomplishes this is by attempting to debunk ‘the Eurocentric and hegemonic myth that philosophy started in Europe in historical times’ (p. 47).
In advancing what he terms the Pelasgian hypothesis, Van Binsbergen argues that as a result of the OOA exodus, Africans settled all over the world, bearing along with them specific sociocultural features such as agricultural and kinship systems, and divination practices. In addition, during this global dispersal, myths and other products of the collective subconscious from Africa found their way into the arts and upon the minds of others. Once out of Africa, these cultural manifestations became embedded in what he terms ‘Contexts of Intensified Transformation and Innovation’, which led to ‘new modes of production (both within and beyond the African continent)’ (ibid.) and of ‘new linguistic macrophylla’ (ibid., 49).

Contrary to the OOA hypothesis, the ‘Back-to-Africa’ hypothesis is claimed to have occurred ‘in the last 15 ka’ (ibid., 51), during which Asian peoples migrated to Africa carrying cultural attributes with them. These attributes pertained to kingship, ecstatic cults, divination, and linguistic elements. For example, Van Binsbergen claims that there are Austric similarities in Bantu. It is suggested that the return to Africa most likely happened through (1) North Africa, and (2) along the Indian Ocean from the Arabian peninsula or a more southern point of departure through the Swahili coast, Madagascar, or via the Cape of Good Hope through the Atlantic West coast ending up in the Bight of Benin and West Africa. As a result of this migration, an Indonesian, South East Asian influence (including East and South Asian) – otherwise termed as the Sunda influence – can be discerned at a transcontinental level that includes Africa. Van Binsbergen argues that it is possible to trace the emergence of mancala board games in Africa to Asia, with world religions such as Buddhism and Islam serving as platforms for their dissemination. As an example, he mentions a Chinese divination bowl or nautical instruments. The Sunda influence, he affirms, can be discerned in the Persian Gulf, the Mozambican-Angola corridor, the Bight of Benin, and the Austronesian population of Madagascar. On the other hand, when Africans surface in T’ang China, it is as slaves; so much so that the figure of the black trucker became a dominant literary trope. All of this would obviously mean ‘with the disapproval of Afrocentrists’.

Martin Bernal, who has gained the attention of Afrocentrists for mixed reasons, is viewed by van Binsbergen to be ‘wrong for the wrong reasons’ (p. 84). Bernal is also accused of imposing his subjective views as statements of fact in an attempt to get his hominids to fit his claims. In other words, van Binsbergen has much to fault about his work. EmilieDurckheim is another Western intellectual that van Binsbergen exposes for shoddy work. Durckheim in The Elementary Forms of Religious Life (1912) makes propositions regarding Australian Aboriginals and totemism without so much as a visit to the site of study. As such, he had theorized and hypothesized into an entire group of people without any personally organized ethnographic evidence and without any acceptable implementation of comparative analysis.

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in a (pseudo) triumphalist proposition, in which Africa is cast as the Cradle of Civilization. This agenda would, in van Binsbergen’s morally significant terms, be the replacement of one form of racial and cultural hegemony with another. But when Afrocentricity moves beyond such narrow conceptual objectives in order to grasp the haunting as well as transformative effects of the multiple horrors inflicted on the black race, that is, when it transcends its historic traumas while at the same time managing to enlarge its creative potentialities, then it succeeds in re-formulating the conceptual singularity of its mission and its moral validity.

Indeed, van Binsbergen intends (and largely succeeds) to establish a series of continuities across different continents, regions, races, and epochs. In other words, his project re-evaluates the conventional perceptions and assumptions regarding global history, in which unities rather than ruptures become significant. In Afrocentric terms, the project is likely to appear too general, depriving Afrocentricity of much-needed ammunition. Nonetheless, its overall academic deportation is admirable even when staunch Afrocentrists would tend to flinch from it.

The black subject in antiquity often constitutes an anomalous and marginal presence, be it in the form of the black Irish and similar instances in the Western extremity of Eurasia, or the Dafli, labelled ‘Untouchables’, in South Asia. So the black figure, contrary to Clyde Winters’ (1980) assertion that the Xia and Shang Yin dynasties were established by blacks, has repeatedly appeared as an intruder, an unwelcome presence, according to van Binsbergen’s findings and other similar archaeological and anthropological discoveries, that stand in opposition to dominant cultural, linguistic, and theoretical paradigms, thus making the ‘outsider’ designation fit a specific radicalized pattern of reception and perception.

The characteristics that define the black presence in the Bronze Age East Mediterranean include proto-Bantu-speaking features, elongated labia, round house architecture, spiked wheel trap, mancala board games, and the worship of a single supreme deity, all of which represent a counter-paradigmatic cultural and linguis-
tic presence.

In tracing transcontinental continuities encompassing board games, geoman-
tic practices and traditions, shamanic manifestations, linguistic revolutions, global migratory patterns, technological innovations, leopard-skin symbolism, astronomical schemas, divinatory sys-
tem, clan structures, and toponymical systems across millennia, van Binsbergen has attempted to construct a global intel-
lectual history of gargantuan proportions. Writing a global history of this nature cannot be a straightforward affair. This is especially the case if there are numerous earlier hypotheses to be either proved or debunked; theoretical models to be tested and cross-checked; paradigms to be re-
evaluated in accordance with historical specificities; schools of thought to be re-assessed; various contestations with lead-
ing authorities in different academic fields and disciplines; attempts at resolving the intractable dilemmas of one’s untested hypotheses; intellectual contradictions within one’s own traditions; open anxieties about, and obvious gaps in, aspects of the project; and myriad other concerns of both personal and professional dimen-
sions. All these problems and challenges are reflected in van Binsbergen’s work. Nonetheless, he has made a noteworthy attempt to advance a series of hypotheses that deserve painstaking at-
tention for their sheer boldness, breadth, and versatility.

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The Commodification of African Politics
Tobias Hagmann

The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa: Money, War and the Business of Power
by Alex de Waal

Can a book be both inspiring and disappointing? The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa might just fall into this rare category. Alex de Waal’s book is theoretically original and empirically rich, but it is also reductionist and, in the case of Ethiopia, biased. The book makes sense of the Horn of Africa’s complex contemporary politics through the prism of three elements. Firstly, de Waal proposes an innovative theory conceptually rich, but it is also reductionist and, in the case of Ethiopia, biased. This theory grasps the causal interactions between violence, political finance and big men politics in East Africa and elsewhere. The ‘political marketplace’ framework is arguably the book’s most important contribution and it speaks to political scientists and policy analysts. Secondly, as the title suggests, the book sets out to explain the Horn of Africa’s ‘real politics’, i.e. the actors, interests, practices and dynamics that dominate political life. In the chapters devoted to Darfur, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Somaliland, Eritrea, and Ethiopia, leaving only Djibouti out from the region. These chapters are characterized by a focus on business studies students and specialists who want to know more about the ins and outs of elite politics in the Horn of Africa. De Waal writes eloquently and with great wit, offering the reader many insights. Thirdly, The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa captures three decades of research and policy involvement in the Horn of Africa by the author. De Waal is among the few intellectuals who regularly leave the ivory tower to undertake human rights advocacy and policy work. Both the potentials and pitfalls of his involvement in policy and political issues are on full display in his book. On the one hand, De Waal’s observations of peace negotiations and other political events in the region produce some of the book’s most memorable insights. On the other hand, his personal approach to politics in the region at times clouds his judgment and analytical distance. This review will focus on de Waal’s political marketplace. ‘Real Politics’ in the Horn of Africa

The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa by Alex de Waal

The volume of political finance and budgets is determined by the ‘price of loyalty’ (p. 25) in a given marketplace. Market forces regulate how politicians allocate their resources, forcing entrepreneurs to secure a constant cash flow for payoffs. Political CEOs have an interest to ‘control the market’ (p. 25) in order to lower the price of loyalty. They do so by using ‘intimidation, divide-and-rule, and invoking popular solidarities by appeals to ethnicity, nationalism or religion’ (p. 25).

The second variable concerns the control over violence and whether that control is more centralized or more decentralized. In most marketplaces, sub-national military leaders, rebel commanders or tribal chiefs have the option of ‘thwarting or staging a rent-seeking rebellion’ (p. 26). National political entrepreneurs face the challenge of managing and appeasing these sub-national threats and extortionist manoeuvres without going bankrupt themselves. The third variable concerns the ‘rules, norms and mechanisms that regulate bargaining and dispute resolution’ (p. 26) in the marketplace. More or less formal regulations, better or worse information and communication, and greater or lesser congruence between elite bargains and the broader public explain why marketplaces vary. In the Horn of Africa, so runs de Waal’s argument, ‘the real political circuitry’ (p. 27) remains inaccessible to the public. The fourth and last variable concerns ‘the conditions of integration into the global marketplace’ (p. 28). Marketplace managers negotiate both revenue and spending with their financiers and clients. Whether financiers are domestic or foreign and whether they act in unison or in competition has a major impact on the marketplace’s main currency, i.e. the price of loyalty. In combination, these four variables produce ‘variant political systems’ (p. 29). Yet in the Horn of Africa the ‘militarized rentier political marketplace’ (p. 31 and elsewhere) represents the predominant model, de Waal suggests.

De Waal’s theory highlights the role of political entrepreneurs (or ‘politico-business managers’ or ‘national political CEOs’) that dominate the marketplace. Political entrepreneurs seek to increase revenue and to limit costs. They finance their activities ‘through debt, equity, revenue from operations, or rent’ (p. 21). ‘Political rents’ are of particular importance, deriving from ‘owning land or natural resources, from the privilege of being able to assert sovereignty, from external patronage, and from using or threatening violence’ (p. 21). Like any marketplace, the political marketplace reaps buyers and sellers as market operators sell their loyalties to high and lower level traders.

Political marketplace theory reflects a decided materialist and utilitarian conception of politics. An anthropologist by training, de Waal highlights the need to ‘focus on the material factors that drive change’ (p. 33). The author recognizes the merits of, but ultimately distances himself from, the literature on neo-patrimonialism, which he criticizes for being overly culturalist. In reality, de Waal’s political marketplace contains many ideas that are central to neo-patrimonialism. This is particularly the case of role of patronage, political entrepreneurs and clients (buyers/sellers) into reciprocal relationships.

Political marketplaces reflect historically evolving state-society relations. They signify a shift from a colonial and post-colonial era of state building that was accompanied by a public sphere to a more post-modern era of competitive and commodified politics, which produce public circuitry, but not a public sphere (p. 197). De Waal draws our attention to the structural changes of university education, the telecommunication relation and the internationalization of local and national elites in the past decades. In combination these trends changed information flows and multiplied interconnections, making it much easier for ‘lower-level political entrepreneurs’ (p. 199) to enter the political marketplace – to the detriment of national politics.

Two critiques can be levied against de Waal’s ‘political marketplace’. First, his theory is overly materialist. It reduces politics to financial transactions and violent cost-benefit calculations, leaving no room for ideology, identity – whether in the form of nationalism or ethnicity – or religion. The ‘political marketplace’ framework remains largely silent on the Horn of Africa’s long history of ethno-national and class conflict. Ignoring the role of political ideas in the Horn of Africa appears shortsighted, given the prominence and continued relevance of Marxist-Leninist-style revolutionary practice in Ethiopia and Eritrea as well as the importance of political Islam in Sudan and Somalia. This said, the ‘political marketplace’ framework provides important insights into the rationality of actors in contexts that are both strongly commoditized and violent. But like Collier and Hoefler’s ‘greed and grievance’ model, it runs the risk of becoming yet another paradigm reducing African politics to mere materialism devoid of political vision or ethics.

The second critique concerns the question as to whether political marketplaces are specific to or simply particularly prominent in the Horn of Africa. The author is ambivalent on this point. On the one hand, he states that the ‘political entrepreneurs and monetization of politics’ (p. 4) are not unique to the Horn of Africa. On the other hand, he sees the region’s political markets as particularly ‘advanced’ (p. 4) and ‘integrated horizontally (across borders) and vertically (with foreign sponsors)’ (p. 51). He argues that a ‘new rentierism’ emerged in the Horn of Africa after 2000. This rentierism has been driven by a commodities boom, illicit finance, aid rents, counter-terrorism rents and the ‘new peacekeeping’ by African troop contributing countries. De Waal criticizes, in particular, the African Union for succumbing to ‘the relentless political-commercial logic of the rentier marketplace’ by becoming a ‘subcontractor in the market of providing international security’ (p. 192) in the region. While this observation certainly holds true, the Horn of Africa is by far not the only region in the world where politics and money combine and where local actors do the bidding of external actors. In many ways the US remains the archetype of a thoroughly monetized political marketplace that has a long history of urban ‘machiavel politics’ in which political bosses bought and traded loyalty using patronage and corruption. There is thus no reason to assume that countries in the Horn of Africa evolve on the basis of a marketplace trajectory while others do not.

Real Politics’ in the Horn of Africa

The bulk of the book consists of country cases in which the author seeks to illustrate his argument. The chapter on Darfur provides a revealingly marginalized Western Sudan evolved into a complex regionalized conflict with global reverberations. De Waal describes Darfur as ‘perhaps the most efficient example of a non-state’ (p. 52) whose war increasingly followed ‘the logic of a rent-seeking rebellion’ (p. 57) after 2003, inviting new patrons and increased cash payments to local militias
and political leaders. Arab and non-Arab faction leaders started to bid their loyalty to Khartoum, respectively to Chad, Eritrea, Uganda and South Sudan. The Sudanese government’s main mistake was to essentially functioned as a ‘security pact aimed at regulating (and reducing) the price of loyalty’ (p. 62). The crucial insight from this chapter is that in a violent marketplace fuelled by external rents, political entrepreneurs pursue non-national interests, to the threat of war, but to ‘position themselves better for the next round of fighting’ (p. 67).

De Waal expounds Sudanese politics in the context of the government’s fluctuating political budgets and its longstanding policy of marginalizing and repressing the peripheries. Sudanese budgets are ‘works of wonder and sorcery’ (p. 70) that correlate with budgets are ‘works of wonder and sorcery’ that provide only a partial explanation for the rest of book both in tone and theoretical heights, he ignores that it is a government based on external rents’ (p. 117) dominated. The Union of Islamic Courts (UIC), which appeared in the early 2000s, was an exceptional attempt to regulate Mogadishu’s violent marketplace on the basis of Islamic principles. Yet militant Islamic groups like al-Shabab or al-Qaeda are not immune to the prevailing logic of buying and selling loyalties. International state builders had little success in attempting to ‘re-establish a government based on external rents’ (p. 110) in Somalia. De Waal pointedly characterizes the current Somali Federal Government as a ‘hybrid of protectorate and native administration’ resulting from ‘an internationally sponsored plan for a vertically integrated cartel to manage the Somali political marketplace’ (p. 124).

The Somaliland chapter draws on the existing literature and an unpublished interview. The core of this chapter is the question why the breakaway Republic managed to build a comparatively peaceful and democratic nation-state? De Waal provides only a partial explanation for Somaliland’s trajectory from ‘rent-seeking rebellions’, the hidden substance. De Waal makes extensive use of his multiple discussions with the former Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, to describe the ruling Ethiopian Peoples’ Revolutionary Democratic Front’s (EPRDF) philosophy, in particular its ‘democratic developmental state’ doctrine (pp. 163-172). De Waal presents Meles as a vigorous and theoretically well-informed intellectual who did his best to steer Ethiopia towards development and, according to the author, to democracy. Some of the insights into the EPRDF’s impact on the development of Somaliland and the need to confront ‘rent-seeking’ or internal policy discourse are interesting. But most of the chapter is a whitewash of Ethiopia’s ruling party that is painful to read for anyone familiar with Ethiopian politics. While De Waal was close to Meles – arguably the most influential shaper of post-1991 Ethiopia – he evidently lacks familiarity with the real politics of Ethiopia. A complete list of the nominations, contradictions and apologetic terms used in this chapter is outside the scope of this book review. Three of the author’s gravest misinterpretations deserve mentioning.

First, EPRDF’s changing policy discourse is self-serving and strategic as much as it is guided by principles. A more complete analysis of Ethiopian political developments after 1991 highlights this point. After toppling the Derg in 1991, Meles promised Ethiopians democracy, later ‘democratization’, once the constitution was debated. If people wanted to get rid of the EPRDF at the ballot box in 2005, he then – and only then – started propagating the ‘developmental state’. While De Waal elevates the developmental state to the theoretical heights, he ignores that it provides a political justification for the continuation of a repressive one-party state in the absence of democratization, EPRDF’s original promise. As another author pointed out, de Waal clearly is more enamoured with Meles’ ‘theory’ than his ‘practice’.

Second, De Waal highlights Meles’ commitment against ‘rent-seeking’ as well as EPRDF’s attempts to capture resources and rents in order to make them productive for the common good, party members alarmingly suggests that high-ranking EPRDF cadre and military commandants did not benefit economically from their positions. A good part of the Ethiopian economy is dominated by the army and the foreign state-building pro-government Saudi-Ethiopian business tycoon Sheikh Mohammed Hussein Al-Amoudi or to party, state and army affiliated enterprises. The anti-capitalist bashing against ‘rent-seekers’, which Meles propagated to discredit his political opposition, sounds hypocritical in light of Ethiopia’s real economy and the dominant role of government friendly companies. Third, de Waal maintains Ethiopia’s own political marketplace framework to Ethiopia. He doesn’t mention the gradual commodification of political loyalties in Ethiopia, for instance the fact that hundreds of thousands of civil servants became party members in order to advance their careers, or the privatization of violence, for example the outsourcing of counter-insurgency in Ethiopia’s Somali regional state to the fyu or special police. In sum, simply because Meles hasn’t mean he didn’t also run a tight political marketplace whose main aim is the survival of the EPRDF’s one-party state and whose real political mechanisms need to be properly analyzed, something this book doesn’t do.

Strong Book Despite Deficits

The strengths of Real Politics in the Horn of Africa’s considerable, but so are its weaknesses. On the positive side, de Waal impresses the reader with his wide knowledge of the region, his ability to generalize and theorize and his many critical insights into the nature of elite politics, regarding ‘rent-seeking rebellions’, the hidden transformation of intellectual life in the region. In many ways De Waal’s materialist interpretation provides a welcome alternative to identity-based explanations of politics and conflict in the Horn of Africa. In the end, one comes away feeling that de Waal clearly is stronger in theorizing than in applying his theory. In the case of the Horn of Africa, both the scope and empirical applicability of the political
Introduction

Is the Asian experience more relevant for African renaissance than it is generally assumed? I attempt to answer this question here. First, I focus on the lessons that could be drawn from a close examination of the transformation that had occurred in the twentieth century in Japan and China, and particularly in Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam. The answer, I argue, must be definitely yes. In each of these countries, positive economic change was preceded by a sustained and successful effort to raise the productivity and income of the majority of the population: the rural poor. In Africa, too, the vast majority of people live in the countryside. And yet agriculture has been a relatively neglected sector in Africa’s overall developmental strategy. When the sector received some attention, the specific policies in many African countries seemed to have been generally misguided. I argue that both of these trends should be corrected. What this also means is that the key for Africa’s economic modernization is to a large extent dependent on its leaders. Ultimately, in other words, the improvement of the African condition hinges on the intent of Africans, particularly its leaders.

China’s Role in Africa’s Agriculture: Myth and Reality

China’s role in Africa’s agriculture today is negligible. In 2012, less than 3 per cent of China’s FDI went to the agricultural sector in Africa, out of its overall FDI of $3 billion (Okolo and Akwu 2016:45). Deborah Brautigam (2016:153) has also observed that the land leased or owned by China in Africa at the end of 2014 was roughly twice the size of New York City. And yet the news about China’s land grabs in Africa continues to proliferate. As recently as March this year, the Italian newspaper La Stampa asserted: ‘the Ethiopian government sold the country’s best land to Chinese investors, who used it to produce grain for export’ (Caporale 2017). In fact, in 2015 for instance, agriculture grew only 3 per cent of the total Chinese development assistance to Ethiopia (Renne 2017).

In conclusion, the book offers valuable lessons and advice for its readers. If you are a ruler – or as the author would put it, a political marketplace operator – make sure not to underestimate the price of loyalty of your competitors and subordinates. Diplomats and development officials are reminded to act with care when providing security and aid rents that inflate political budgets and undermine state building. In the region, Mediators are advised not to fall into the trap of giving credence to or prolonging peace talks that serve the sole objective of maximizing participants’ personal benefits. Pessimists will be vindicated when de Waal writes that the proliferation of political marketplaces has led to a situation in which ‘the politics of ideas (…) will not return’ (p. 209). Optimists, this reviewer included, hope that he is wrong.

Notes

1. First presented in the lecture ‘Fixing the Political Marketplace: How can we make peace without involving state functions?” given at the Chr. Michelsen Institute in Bergen, Norway on 15 October 2009.


Notes
In Southeast Asia, it was the sustained pro-agriculture, pro-rural and pro-poor policies which led to mass poverty reduction and, subsequently, export-led growth. Policies were sometimes adopted in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa which were pro-agriculture without being pro-rural or pro-poor without being pro-pro-poor. With a focus on large-scale state farms, Ethiopia under Mengistu Haile Mariam between 1974 and 1991 pursued to some extent a pro-agricultural policy that was not necessarily pro-poor. Another lesson from Southeast Asia is that a sustained pro-agriculture, pro-pro-poor, pro-rural policy would yield a positive result only if there was also economic freedom. This, simply put, means that a farmer should be able to produce what he likes and sell his produce to whomever he wants. A related policy condition that was a prerequisite for sustained agricultural transformation in Southeast Asia was macro-economic stability. It is also suggested that agricultural transformation will be possible in Sub-Saharan Africa if the effort is primarily state-led (with the state setting the goal and supplying the technologies and investment), market-mediated (with trade in agricultural products remaining largely in private hands), and small-holder based. There is a broad consensus among the African Union member states, at least since 2003 (Maputo Declaration) on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa, that Africans should commit at least 10 per cent of their national budget to agriculture. The same goal was reaffirmed by the Malabo Declaration 10 years later. In light of what transpired in Southeast Asia, however, even 10 per cent might be lower than what is needed for a green revolution to take place in Africa. It may not be a coincidence that the countries in Africa with some of the fastest rate of economic growth today also happen to be those such as Ethiopia and Rwanda which allocated more than 10 per cent of their national budget to agriculture (Tafariyena 2016: 14, Harrison 2016: 360). According to Chakrabarty and Mishra (2029), Ethiopia’s GDP grew at a rate of 10.9 percent from 2003 to 2013 due to a remarkable growth in agricultural production from 2000 onwards. The compound annual growth rate of production of major crops such as maize, sorghum, wheat, and barley from 2000 to 2013 was 7.2 percent, 9.7 percent, 8.9 percent and 6.9 percent, respectively.

In other words, there was far less systematic effort in Sub-Saharan Africa to link up indigenous authenticity with universal rationalism (Mazrui and Kaba 2016: 10). Large-scale farming therefore took precedence over sufficient food security and subsistence farming; more attention was paid to wealthy and so-called progressive farmers than traditional and poor peasants; cash-crop production took precedence over self-sufficiency in food, and so forth. In short, the attempt was to overpass rather than modernize subsistence agriculture. A recent study by Matfess (2015: 192) about agriculture in Ethiopia described the problem thus: ‘...frustrated by small share-holder agriculture’s failure to produce sufficient surplus, the [Ethiopian] government began courting investors to fund larger-scale, often export-oriented, agriculture.’

But there is also another way of looking at the challenges of agricultural transformation in such African countries like Ethiopia? It can be argued that it is not enough to give an Ethiopian farmer a tractor and teach him how to repair it when it is broken; the farmer must also be motivated enough to make use of the tractor. If the farmer is not motivated enough it may be partly due to a belief in technological gradualism – a reluctance to undergo rapid technological change. No less significant, but easier to overlook as a relevant factor, is the prevailing ‘economic culture’ in the society – the incentives (or lack thereof) to work that a farmer lacks in Ethiopia. To some extent, this issue boils down, it seems to me, to the presence or absence of cultural values that encourage open-ended self-enrichment by an individual – an Ethiopian version of the Confucian or Protestant ethic.

Agricultural Development Led Industrialization in Africa: The Ethiopian Case

In assessing the scope of divergence between Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia, one question that must also be addressed head on is: why did Southeast Asians pursue the pro-agriculture, pro-rural and pro-pro-poor policies but Africans did not? We may get a clue from the second book under review, Arkebe Oqubay’s Made in Africa: Industrial Policy in Ethiopia (2015): ‘Policy independence is a prerequisite in many African countries.’ Some countries, despite independence from colonial rule, have little freedom to make their own policy choices or, at any rate, have not been highly effective in ‘using what freedom they have’ (p. 287).

A related question, which arises, is: why were many Sub-Saharan African leaders ineffective in using the freedom they have unlike their Southeast Asian counterparts? A partial explanation would pertain to what Ali Mazrui called the time-change paradox, the fact that cultures and values were disrupted much faster and more profoundly in Africa than in Asia in spite of the relative brevity of the colonial experience in the former (Mazrui and Adem 2013: 2). One of the effects of this phenomenon was that post-colonial Africa often sought to abolish aboriginal practices, or cut itself off from the past completely. In the end, in most cases, the old system was badly damaged or dismantled but the new system was also not in place. What David Henley (p. 207) calls ‘developmental dualism’, which is ‘a pervasive conviction that progress can only be achieved by means of a quantum leap from backwardness to modernity’, seems to approximate Mazrui’s notion of the time-change paradox.

In other words, this cognitive gap put an end to the idea that ‘manufacturing was the engine of growth’. It is indeed true that agriculture continues to be a core component of GTP (Matfess 2015: 192). Further, GTP emphasizes the linkages within the economy, primarily between manufacturing and agriculture, and the creation of a single economic space (Oqubay 2015:64). But the emphasis by Ethiopia’s policy-makers on industrialization is also unmistakable.

On balance, it can still be argued, Ethiopia today is on the right track in light of the experience of Southeast Asian countries. For one thing, agriculture enjoys a much higher priority in Ethiopia compared to what was the case during the previous regime and in other African countries. That this approach is working is also clear from the results achieved so far. The number of people living below the poverty line in Ethiopia decreased almost by half between 2003 and 2013 (Oqubay 2015: 65). According to David Henley, Southeast Asian economic success was driven by three principles: urgency, order, and expediency. Of the three, Ethiopia scores highly on the last two: urgency, which is the desire to become a middle-income economy by 2025 (Oqubay 2015: 65). Ex-pedienacy is the commitment, as Oqubay (pp. 295-296) put it, to learn by copying and by doing.

Oqubay’s approach to economic transformation in Africa, like David Henley’s, brings a breath of fresh air since both of these are, in their words, Occident-centered – they do not blame every economic ill in Africa on external factors, even as they also recognize and highlight the constraints imposed on Africa by the international division of labor. Just like Henley, Oqubay (pp.296) is unequivocal that ‘successful catching up has to rely fundamentally on internal changes and policies that push structural change, whatever the state of the external environment’. He (p.75) goes on to argue:

The [Ethiopian] government has emphasized the need for the activist state in the process of catching up, a role further neces- sitated by the strong determination and vision to develop Ethiopia. This developmental orientation is home-grown and based on specific, often unique conditions in Ethiopia, although emulating forerunners has also played a role (for instance, Ger- man’s technical and vocational education and training [TVET] and university system, Japan’s Kaizen production system, China’s indus- trial parks). Ethiopia’s rich history of independence and civilization
and its mimetic interest in finding East Asian role models have served as sources of inspiration.

What is remarkable about Oquay’s observation above is that the strategy the Ethiopian government has used creatively combines diversification, domestication, and indigenization—a proven formula of success not only in Southeast Asia but also in East Asia, especially in Japan (Adem 2015).

However, it is clear that the temptation is strong in Ethiopia’s policy circles for the strategies of export-led industrialization and import substitution industrialization (Oquay 2015:41). But the lesson we need to draw from Southeast Asia is that the necessity of agricultural transformation should not also be overlooked. Since agriculture is a major contributor to Ethiopia’s GDP and employment, employing nearly 85 per cent of the population, simple arithmetic also dictates that in order to improve the condition of a large majority of Ethiopians, the agricultural sector needs to be targeted. And if the condition of a large majority of Ethiopians improves through the enhancement of productivity and income, so will the Ethiopian condition itself.

Bringing China Back in

Where does China fit in the equation about agricultural transformation in Africa? First, China can help Africa achieve agriculture-led industrialization first by investing in modernizing the sector more than it had done so far. A positive role China can play in modernizing the sector is through the enhancement of productivity and income, so will the Ethiopian condition itself.

Thirdly, unlearning from China is also important, including from the spectacular failure it experienced from 1958 to 1960 when Mao sought to solve the riddle of economic modernization by organizing farmers in ‘peoples’ communes’. In this experiment, also known as the Great Leap Forward, tens of millions of Chinese died. And yet it is still the Southeast Asian experience, as Henley reminds us, which is more instructive for sub-Saharan Africa because, firstly, the countries in Southeast Asia are more akin to Sub-Saharan African countries in terms of their history, demography, geography and topography; and, secondly, the development divergence between the two at the present time is sharper than is the case if we compare Sub-Saharan African countries with China. On average, in the 1960s, Southeast Asians were poorer than sub-Saharan Africans; today they are more than two and half times richer.

Conclusion

Africa will most certainly benefit from its economic interactions with China, if China gradually shifts parts of its manufacturing to Africa. And for China to do so, the production cost, including wages, must be lower in African countries than in China and Southeast Asia. And production cost will be lower if food prices are lower. Food prices in Africa will be lower if pre-modern and traditional agriculture is transformed into a modern system of agriculture. This, of course, also means lifting the vast majority of the population out of poverty by raising their productivity and income. This is admittedly a formidable task, but it would be less so if Africa could draw lessons from the success stories in Southeast Asia. The path of Africa’s industrialization is thus through agricultural transformation.

Note

1. This review essay is based on a paper ‘Lessons for Africa from Southeast Asia: Is Agriculture the Answer?’ It was originally presented at the 3rd Africa’s Asian Options (AFRASO) Conference on the theme of ‘Afrasian Transformations: Beyond Grand Narratives?’ Goethe University Frankfurt, Frankfurt, Germany, September 28-30, 2016.

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Mobilities, ICTs and marginality in Africa

Comparative Perspectives

Edited by Francis Nyamnjoh & Ingrid Brudvig

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Mobility has become a prominent feature of many socially marginal populations on the African continent. In *Mobilities, ICTs and Marginality in Africa*, the authors investigate the diverse transformations brought about by new Information and Communication Technologies in these mobile communities. The book showcases populations that are both mobile and politically and economically marginal, yet actively engage in maintaining social networks across localities. *Mobilities, ICTs and Marginality in Africa* situates the cultural, social and, in some cases, transnational context of ICT appropriation and virtual connectivity so as to reposition Africans from a variety of countries and contexts as active agents of social change. In doing so, the book contributes to a better understanding of material cultures, particularly relationships between people, new media and social networking. It also furthers understanding of the social and spatial dynamics of communication, association and belonging across spaces, particularly physical borders, social boundaries and confines. The book is rich in theoretically informed case studies that lend themselves to comparative perspectives and to ethnographies from beyond Africa.
The book under review is a significant contribution to the study of political economy and culture in contemporary Africa. The book seeks to understand the impact of international development on aid, its role in governance, culture, politics and society in Tanzania. Drawing on scholarly traditions of critical discourse and ethnographical analysis, the book draws heavily on the author's anthropological research over a decade and his work as a development consultant in Tanzania to interrogate contemporary development idioms, imaginaries, institutions and practices. It focuses on explaining how inordinate dependence on foreign aid imposed by donor agencies and institutional choices of recipient states as well as the cultural orientations of the broad masses. Within a tightly packed 182 pages, it succeeds immensely in demonstrating how the institutionalization of participatory development methodologies were imaginatively exploited to serve the ulterior global capitalist agendas of reinforcing hierarchical distinctions in society and entrenching dependence relations between the development institutions of the global North and the targets of development interventions, namely, the aid recipient states and the under served rural communities in the global South. Similarly, it shows how asymmetrical encounters between relatively well-educated urban Tanzanians and aid agencies engendered illusory possibilities of accessing resources from development projects that might promote individual improvements; represented by easy access to funding, well-paid self-employment, social mobility, and, ultimately, achieving the much-sought after metropolitan life-styles.

After a relatively long introductory section on the political, economic and social history of Tanzania, the book is divided into nine chapters. The first chapter discusses the defining features of the concept of a ‘development state’ and elaborates why both the state and society in Tanzania enthusiastically embraced different donor-supported development strategies, institutions, norms and values. Unlike other chapters of the book, this chapter is more of a catalogue of tried, tested and failed development strategies in Tanzania. Africa’s development history is but a catalogue of tried, tested and failed development models that were promoted by various multilateral and aid donor agencies. In fact, the 2011 Economic Report of the of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa had earlier listed nine distinct development strategies, some of them overlapping chronologically, that were designed, financed, supported, and implemented on the incorrect supervision of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and Western aid agencies. These strategies, often overlapping, included: (i) commercialization through cash cropping under-subsistence up to 1979; (ii) community development; integrated rural development and participatory development (1955-1973); (iii) regional integration for industry and national self-sufficiency for food (1970-1979); (iv) basic human needs (1970-1979); (v) regional integration, food first [both strategies in the same period] (1973-1989); (vi) supply shifters in agriculture (1979); (vii) first-generation structural adjustment on demand management (1980-1984); (viii) second-generation structural adjustment on equity and growth; and (ix) sustainable development (1990 to the present). One is left slightly puzzled as to where the author of the work under review was when all these strategies were being tested, tried and debunked.

Chapter two discusses at length the contested meanings, practices and limitations of participatory approaches to planning and management of development interventions by multiple actors including donor agencies, central and local government, inter-governmental agencies, civil society organizations, communities and individual citizens. However, what the author fails to explore adequately is the standard ritual of assigning the praises and blames in the international aid industry. Almost invariably, the original authors, financiers and promoters of a development strategy tend to exculpate themselves of any responsibility in the event of poor performance. Ordinarily, the entire blame is inordinately placed on the shoulders of the victims, who are blamed either for personal laziness, misguided leadership, systemic corruption, flagrant violation of human rights, or even of decayed institutions. Chapter three is wholly devoted to describing various development paradigms, policies and programs that were adopted and implemented in Tanzania from colonial times to the post-colonial period. It is argued that regardless of the paradigm, all development policy interventions simply served as tools to perpetuate relations of inequality and dependency between the West and the rest. In Chapter Four, the book discusses how participatory development methodologies were adopted, institutionalized and practiced in Tanzania in order to guide development processes at every level and with every development undertaking, ranging from sensitizing individuals to their responsibilities within the sustainability paradigm to participatory poverty assessment analysis at the national level. Chapters five and six discuss the role of civil society in promoting donor-inspired ‘good governance’ and accountability practices and in serving as expert development entrepreneurs in the rural and urban areas. The book concludes with two chapters on anti-witchcraft services and the middle class culture, thereby departing from earlier otherwise closely related issues. These two chapters, on anthropological debates about the categories of tradition and modernity, seem to be way out of context.

With the benefit of hindsight, the book’s title, the ‘Development State’, sounds rather intellectually uncurious and extremely dicey to operationalize. In the first place, the title is almost everything but developmental. The notion of ‘development states’ presented in the reviewed book is unlike the authentic ‘developmental states’ – such as Japan in the 1950s to 1980s; South Korea and Taiwan in the 1960 to 1990s; and China since the 1980s – that were associated with fast economic growth, authoritarian allocation of investment and sectoral values, iron labour discipline, social transformation and extensive social repression in order to achieve effective capital accumulation. The notion of ‘development states’ presented in the reviewed book seems to be casually defined as those states which are materially and ideologically sustained by aid transfers to meet development budgets and whose institutional configurations are passively derived from developmental templates as well as policies and strategies distributed along with development assistance. Development states are, in this case, further defined by asymmetrical relationships with donor states of the global North that are presented as being able to determine the scale of government resources and national budgets. Above all, although not particularly predatory, ‘development states display weak track records of economic and social development. These broad indicators of the chosen concept can hardly be generalized to explain neat and discernible patterns of behaviours and complexities of countries at the same level of development and aid dependency.

Secondly, another weak point of the book is its casualness at interrogating the quality of foreign aid that is expressly provided to improve the quality of life and social well-being of the very poor in the global South. Although there are scattered reminders in the book about the asymmetrical nature of the international aid regime, the quality and socio-economic impact remain inadequately explored and explained. Incidentally, a recent study undertaken by the international NGO, Action Aid (2005), has shown that the official aid figures make the world’s richest countries appear more generous than they really are! Much of the recorded OECD aid is largely swallowed by transaction costs, double accounting of debt relief, tied aid, donor aid that is allocated on the basis of geopolitical and commercial priorities and spending for refugees in donor countries. In total, the Action Aid study estimates that more than half of all aid fails to directly target the poor. It aptly calls these kinds of self-interest-driven aid as ‘phantom aid’ – aid which is either poorly targeted, double counted as debt relief, overpriced and ineffective, tied to goods and services from the donor country, poorly coordinated with high transaction costs, too unpredictable to be useful to the recipient, spent on immigration in the donor country, and spent on excessive administrative costs. Moreover, these same studies demonstrably show how poorly targeted aid resources tend to stand in stark contrast to the ‘reversal resource flows’ – the flow of resources from poor countries to the rich world via mechanisms such as debt repayment, capital flight, unfair trade, and profit re-mittances. Who, then, is helping whom? The book remains conspicuously silent on this.

Thirdly, time and time again the book underscores the position that although one could legitimately argue that some aid resource transfers produced long-term positive developmental impacts – social services deliveries, institution strengthening, enhanced civic competence and/or improvements in the quality of life – other kinds of development interventions which were provided purely out of the donor’s commercial interests, national security interests, or even for the promotion of specific donor cultural values and ideological interests left behind unfortunate legacies of corrosive aid dependency, misguided policies, poorly grounded institutions of the state and society, and corrosively undermined the social capital of the citizenry. The negative legacies of aid resource transfers would have demanded a stand-alone chapter of its own in such a book.

Finally, although the book sought to explore the impact of foreign aid on culture, politics and society in Tanzania, it has failed to account for why such massive aid flows have made little dent on the chronic and gut-wrenching poverty of the rural masses. Nor could the book reflect seriously on what transformative institutional, policy and structural interventions would be necessary in order to achieve the donors’ professed ultimate development goals, namely, the reduction of inequalities and poverty as well as the promotion of participatory democracy and sustainable development. These few blemishes notwithstanding, the work remains a very important contribution to the growing literature on foreign aid as an instrument of big power politics in the global South.

References
Jessica Piombo’s edited collection, *The US Military in Africa: Enhancing Security and Development*, examines the US Department of Defense’s (DoD) shift from traditional to non-traditional role that blends security, governance and development in sub-Saharan Africa. The book shows this shift and examines the nexus in the context of the hegemonic discourse that the world will be a safe place if poor countries and fragile states got the opportunity to develop (Stern & Öjendal 2010). This nexus brought governance into the paradigm of securitization of development since attention to the multiple layers of security where security laws are made and brokered, is vital in the quest for development (Luckham and Kirk 2013). In this shift, the role of the United States (US) military goes beyond mere ‘training and equipping’ to include reconstruction and humanitarian activities (p. 213). The book provides a glimpse of the way the US tried to provide a multidimensional solution to the security problem of Africa with the conviction that it is grounded on the success of liberal ideals in other lands (Dexter 2008). It elucidates how the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) was formed in 2007 to integrate security and development and how it assumed the task of designing and enforcing the DoD programs in sub-Saharan African countries. The book also indicates how AFRICOM came to be in charge of those programs that were under US Pacific Command, US Central Command, and the US European Command. The creation of AFRICOM showed how the problem of governance and development in Africa became an indirect security threat to the US after the 9/11 attack.

The war on terror, which came after the 9/11 attack and has been formulated within the humanitarain narrative, is based on the rhetoric that the US’s national security relies on the triumph of liberal ideals in countries other than the US (Dexter 2008). It marks a change in the US’s role from traditional to non-traditional security activities where the military plays a significant role in security, humanitarian activities, reconstruction and development. This brought governance into the security-development nexus in Africa, adding governance to Anan’s dictum that development and security are two sides of the same coin (Annan in Stern & Öjendal 2010). While some are critical of this security-development discourse, arguing that it is reduced to the anti-terror operation and security program of the West without noticeably adjusting the significance of security to boosting development and decreasing poverty, others believe the opposite (Luckham 2009).

The editor and contributors to the volume agree that the deep-rooted economic and social insecurity, lack of good governance and poverty not only cause national security problems in fragile states but also in the US. Piombo, the editor and author of three chapters of this book, argues that AFRICOM security policies were linked to development and poverty reduction in the anti-terror operation worldwide (Stern & Öjendal 2010), argues that ‘efforts to address any single side of the triangle must take into account the others’ in the nexus of security, governance and development (p. 1). Secondly, the old ways of treating human security independently of state security are not enough. With the declining of interstate conflict and the rise of conflict within states (Dexter 2008, Kaldor 2013, Luckham 2009, Oberschall 2010), it is true that relying on the old ways of treating human security and addressing the challenges of a ‘new war’ may not be successful (Kaldor 2013). Furthermore, the DoD’s shift from traditional to non-traditional military activities is unnecessary.

Bringing governance to the nexus fills the gap in the securitization of development since it is important to know the way security arrangements are made at the global, regional and local levels, as well as their strengths and inconsistencies in the process of development (Luckham 2009). The editor and contributors to the book not only draw on the wider academic debates in the field but they have also used case studies, besides their analysis of policy and strategy documents of the DoD, USAID, AFRICOM and other state documents. The volume is an important contribution to the academic debate that transcends the security-governance-nexus and considers governance as one of the strands in the nexus, quite apart from the areas of future research that it opens up. A delicate treatment of such concepts as ‘fragile states’, ‘underdevelopment’, ‘liberal peace’, ‘governance’, ‘social movement’ and ‘humanitarian assistance’, among others, enhances the value of the volume.

Framing states as ‘fragile’ is making ways for intervention using the rhetoric of the responsibility to protect that has a role of sanctioning the intervention of the international communities in fragile or failing states in the Global South (Luckham 2009). Walther-Puri, one of the contributors, writes that ‘the most persistent and potentially dangerous threats come from fragile states that offers [sic] violent extremist organizations a safe haven to exist, plan and carry out attacks... threaten the security and prosperity of not only Africans across the continent but, Europe as well’ (p. 83). However, terrorists from the West can be invoked as a counterargument to invalidate this claim. It is also proof that development, which tends to be inherently regulatory (Duffield and Hewitt 2009), by itself cannot bring security. Cognizant of this, O’Gorman (2011) argues that instead of reducing conflict, development itself can be harmful. A result of discrimination that induces conflict. Unpacking the problem rather than repeating the narratives of the colonial past is important. Taking into account the current shift in the intervention discourse from failed state to fragile state (Duffield and Hewitt 2009), that discourse is founded on streamlining the tools of government to the prevailing social order (Duffield 2012). The discourse in this case is to make African countries fit the label ‘fragile’ to justify humanitarian intervention. Surprisingly, such interventionism embodies the prolongation of the governance articulated and by the European powers (Duffield and Hewitt 2009).

Portraying Africa as a place underdeveloped, full of failures and violence is perpetuating the same stereotype of the hegemonic colonial discourse. This is evident in the editor’s contributions (one of the contributors) generalization that ‘Africa demonstrates the wider problem of the link between underdevelopment, civil conflict, and failing states’ (p. 12). If the hegemonic colonial discourse of the past is implicit in the current development paradigm and, conversely, if the current development paradigm consists of the colonial discourse of the past, the comparison being made is precisely with the Western liberal model of colonial governance (Duffield and Hewitt 2009). This conception of Africa not only shows how the Global South has been shaped by the hegemonic colonial discourses of the West (Escobar 2012), but also puts various African countries in a single box, disregarding the ‘pockets’ of success stories. For post-development thinkers, development itself is considered not only as the cause but also as the custodian of the inequalities between individuals and nations instead of being a solution to them (Stern & Öjendal 2010).

Conflict is not always negative. The book misses the positive dimension of conflict. Violent conflict could play a positive role in development beyond being an impediment to it, with the capacity to bring about social and political change (Cramer in Luckham and Kirk 2013; O’Gorman et al. 2001). Moreover, making poverty a root cause is based on a simple assumption that poverty in Africa causes insecurity. Yet, this is not always the case. Poverty cannot always be viewed as a reason for violent conflict. In other words, ‘poor’ countries are not always fighting one another (O’Gorman 2011). Conversely, development in itself is not a guarantee for peace and security. Indeed, it might cause conflict in the so-called poor countries in the Global South (Hegre et al. 2001).

Emphasizing the US military’s role in peacebuilding, Piombo failed to consider the alternative ways of conflict resolution methods that are embedded in the cultures of African societies. AFRICOM, which is based on liberal peace ideals, may not fit the context of African societies. There is a tendency to impose liberal ideals which are grounded on a peacebuilding process based on a universalist top-down approach that promotes the involvement of the international community taking into account the local stakeholders and the indigenous conflict management mechanisms (Luckham and Kirk 2013). As the peace processes initiated by the liberal peace model sidelines local stakeholders, it does not work in African societies. Thus, it is difficult to accept Bouchet’s dictum that ‘the US military has the ability to not only establish security and stability on foreign soil, but to promote better governance and economic development’ (p.163). In foreign soil and culture, the US has found it difficult even to reduce insecurity, as can be seen from the experience of Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and Libya, let alone promoting good governance and economic development, since local participation, ownership, identity, norms, and historical systems of power, social organisation and peace-making are excluded by the liberal peace model which highlights the interests and priorities of the Occident (Richmond and Mac Ginty 2014).

The liberal peace model, which suppresses conflict rather than transforming it, is unsuited for African tribal societies, where alternative dispute resolution methods – adjudication, mediation, and negotiation – have been used for long. We can see these methods, which involve forgiveness and reconciliation, being effective in African societies. Thus, to bring genuine and sustainable peace, peacebuilding should be grounded in and led by local stakeholders instead of the international agencies (Richmond 2010). Peacebuilding relies on the social context and cultural values of specific communities (Luckham and Kirk 2013). In the liberal peace model, which uses force to suppress conflict, however, this forgiveness and reconciliation is totally missing. These alternative ways, which have a proactive approach, provide a positive peace that transcends the absence of violence and includes addressing the end of fundamental causes and dynamics of violence in order to avoid its recurrence and to establish a durable peace (O’Gorman 2011) while liberal peace, which promises, provides nothing more than negative peace, leaving the conflict to recur.

Although it is important to recognize the way different levels of security hierarchies are made, including their strengths and weaknesses, to succeed in the process of peacebuilding (Luckham...
2009), a narrow view of governance, which is limited to ‘accountability’, is used in the book (p. 65). Sharp, the author of the chapter that links accountability to governance, failed to see the US as one of the multilayered actors for the local to the supranational level in Africa. Governance – one of the strands of the nexus – is not treated adequately. This broad concept is reduced to accountability, as is seen in the statement that ‘accountability is an essential public good’ – one of the core strands in the rope – inextricably intertwined with both security and development (p. 78). This equation of governance with accountability implied a twofold limitation: failure to realize the structure of African states and the workings of global governance. A broader view of the concept that encompasses local and supranational levels is required since security is an essential public good at the local, national and international level (Luckham 2009). This broader view enables one to see ‘all actors’ in the perspective of the nexus, for security arrangements are often decided at various levels – local, national and international (Luckham and Kirk 2013). Furthermore, it also helps to understand whether the US can achieve its goal of examining the relationship between different actors – US and African countries on the one hand and US and other actors on the other hand. It helps to examine whether the post-American order and ‘the rise of the rest’ is imminent with the expansion of Africa-China relations (Hetme 2010).

The Social Movement approach, which has been suggested for the success of peace operations, is not sufficient as this theory emphasizes the micro level to the neglect of the macro. As Sharp writes, ‘central to these efforts will be “bottom-up” citizen-led initiative to pressure local governments and security sector institutions and actors for accountability and reform’ (p. 79). This is a rather one-dimensional perception of the issue. To be successful in security and peace operations at both levels – micro and macro – is indispensable. The social movement theory might enhance its one-sided perspective of regime social control with Kaldhor’s new war theory (Obreschol 2010).

The editor depoliticizes the already politicized humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian assistance is embedded in politics since development aid has been already subordinated to a politically induced humanitarian intervention (Hetme 2010). Despite the UN’s ‘responsibility to protect’, which brought a political and strategic shift from military intervention to humanitarian intervention, the new humanitarian assistance has been attuned to the interests of supranational organizations (Luckham 2009).

While it is true that aid is given to those countries that are ‘strategically important, rather than those merely “objectively” in need of development assistance’ (p. 39), Sharp sees the already politicized nature of humanitarian assistance. The already politicized humanitarian assistance is also noticeable in the international community’s reaction to the recent acts of extremism is militarized, which leads to Chomsky’s concept of ‘new military humanism’ (Dexter 2008).

Moreover, Duffield’s (2012) Risk Management and the Bunkering of the Aid Industry also shows the ‘militarised’ nature of humanitarian assistance.

Finally, the US should reconsider its dominant security narratives since such narratives not only disempower those who are affected but they are also based on the decisions and social forces that those who suffer the most cannot control (Luckham 2009). These narratives have been producing the radicalism, which is undermining the US and its allies on, their own soil (Dexter 2008). The US should change its ‘conflict attitude’ policy, which is inspired by Huntington’s concept of ‘the clash of civilizations’ – the thesis behind the war on terror after the 9/11 attack (Huntington in O’Gorman 2011) – towards what it calls ‘radicals’ (O’Gorman 2011).

Refusing individuals their desires and aspirations beyond the basic needs, preventing them from realizing their potential, and depriving them of the chances to fulfill their basic needs are themselves a kind of violence (O’Gorman 2011). Besides, the US and its liberal allies should make these people engage on equal terms by changing the power balance among various social groups in a way that promotes social peace (Duffield and Hewitt 2009). To succeed in ensuring peace and security, it is crucial to give due recognition to those who are affected by insecurity, violence and poverty and the various ways in which they try to stand up for their rights and engage the powers that be (Luckham 2009). Thus, a new policy and strategy should be devised to ensure that the US and Europe ensure security to their citizens. The new policy and strategy should recognize and acknowledge ‘everyone’ in his or her own right for security entails not only the right that citizens need to have as an entitlement to be protected from violence but it also presupposes their ability to fully practice this right (Luckham and Kirk 2013). Today, the US and Europe need to engage their Muslim communities in order to work together for a better future since through more inclusion it is possible to reduce and even cut off the already politicized members to extremist organizations (Duffield and Hewitt 2009). Failure to do this would incur a higher price than has been paid already.

These days, particularly when the Occident is in a state of war (Dexter 2008) and a significant number of radicals are emerging from its midst, the US and its allies need to devise a de-radicalization strategy rather than resorting to arms. We have witnessed such a resort to arms creating more hostility and duplicating terror threats in Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq and Libya, to cite just a few examples. The increase of the ‘new war’ that Kaldhor (2013) speaks about can only be managed with a governance system that acknowledges everyone despite his or her status. Considering that positive and sustainable peace can be realised and that everyone is duty bound to his or her fellow human to work for its fulfillment (Dower 2009), this review recommends a pacifist approach to peace and security, which in turn would enhance development.

References


Les réalités rurales au Congo face aux exigences (au défi) du développement

Samir Rebhai

Le développement rural en RD Congo, Quelles réalités possibles ?

Par Grégoire Ngalamulume Tshiebue

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Concrètement, le CARG est considéré comme une structure de concertation et de suivi du plan de développement agricole provincial. Il est composé de divers acteurs publics et privés : élus locaux, producteurs, agriculteurs, organismes de financement, experts, dé- érateurs économiques, ONG… Ce conseil analyse le contexte local et identifie les besoins et les priorités du territoire ; il examine les moyens et organise, entre autres, l’encadrement et la valorisation des terres juridiques pour garantir la sécurisation des acteurs dans le but de préserver les droits fonciers sur leurs terres.

Expert et consultant en politiques de développement, Ngalamulume Tshiebue propose à la fin de son étude des pistes d’actions pour un développement rural possible dans son pays. Ce genre de gouvernance proposé doit tenir compte de la diversité des acteurs, comme il doit aussi mettre en place des processus inclusifs. Une telle approche rentre dans le cadre de la gouvernance locale qui renforce davantage l’implication des différents acteurs à travers une politique de décentralisation. Néanmoins, dans le contextuel de la mondialisation favorisant l’économie néolibérale développant les flux financiers, l’apparition des grands groupes agroalimentaires qui s’accaparent de grandes exploitations ne peuvent permettre la réussite d’une telle politique. Quelle marge de manœuvre reste-t-il aux agriculteurs en Afrique ?
Le narrateur/personnage dans Petit Pays narre des moments privilégiés, tels que la randonnée avec son père à la découverte des pygmées, afin de rencontrer la splendeur des collines et le paysage éclatant des lacs, sans oublier le temps passé avec ses amis. Il relate un ordinaire paisible et une belle enfance. Soudainement, cette enfance éclate, tel un mouvement de crescendo : « Il y a des choses qu’on ne devrait jamais voir dans une vie », trois mois de folie meurtrière, la soif du sang pour éliminer : « les cafards tutsi ». La folie destructrice des hommes est le leitmotiv de l’histoire de Gaby. Il y relate cette barbarie qui a duré plus d’une décennie, il met l’accent aussi sur diverses histoires, celle du métissage, de l’épisode est inspiré d’une situation réelle. Le narrateur/personnage dit adieu à Yvonne, au génocide rwandais, à ce méprisable silence du gouvernant, le retour n’en est que plus incriminant et bouleversant. Le protagoniste, Gabriel, et l’auteur semble(nt) partager les mêmes origines, la même identité, c’est ce qui peut expliquer la présence du pronom personnel « Je ». Dans diverses interviews, l’auteur laisse entrevoir que l’histoire de son Afrique le rattrape : les guerres au Rwanda, ainsi que les massacres, ont donné un ton bien plus que révélateur au récit. « Je n’ai pas vécu ce que le personnage traverse. En revanche, je l’ai mis à l’intersection de mes propres origines. Je lui ai donné les interrogations qui moi-même m’ont traversé également et moi c’était surtout un exercice qui m’a permis de me replonger avec délectation dans cette époque bénie du temps bénin. »

Petit Pays est une somme de charge temporelle en termes d’injustice et de Révolution. Un fardeau qui finit par ne laisser aucune place à l’insouciance de l’enfant. La fabrique de l’Histoire s’est imposée, et a mis en confrontation le bouleversement politique au Rwanda : « La guerre, sans qu’on lui demande, se charge toujours de vous trouver un ennemi ». Vers la fin du récit, s’entremêle la voix du petit garçon à celle de l’homme en devenir. La voix de ce petit garçon/uteur s’exprime vingt ans plus tard en disant « Je pensais être exilé de mon pays. En revenant sur les traces de mon passé, j’ai compris que je l’étais de mon enfance. Ce qui me paraît bien plus cruel encore ». Gaël Faye a su s’imposer, avec ce premier roman, en grande partie autobiographique.

Notes
1. Faye Gaël, Petit Pays, Grasset, p.32.
2. Propos recueillis par Valérie Marin pour le Point.
3. Ibid interview.
5. Propos recueillis par le journaliste Michel Abescat. Le point.

Comprendre de l’intérieur le fonctionnement des prisons
Pour des politiques carcérales adaptées
Sylvain Landry Birane Faye

Si la prison a longtemps été envisagée comme un lieu de réformation et de restauration de l’humanité des détenus, la manière dont elle a fonctionné dans les pays africains a consacrée l’échec d’une telle ambition. Cet échec est illustré par l’ampleur des récriminations concernant les longues détentions préventives et les conditions de séjour précaires. Les réponses apportées par les autorités politiques sont certes appréciables (infrastructures, chambres correctionnelles, mise au travail). Mais elles ne peuvent avoir des effets avec un durcissement des politiques pénales. L’éthnographie des espaces carcéraux permet de comprendre qu’il est utile de mettre en œuvre des mécanismes pour la réforme et de réfléchir à l’éventualité d’une privatisation de certains secteurs de la gestion des prisons africaines.
Introduction

L’extermination des Tutsi par les Hutu qui les considéraient comme une menace pour reconquérir le pouvoir, était dans le prolongement des événements de 1959, 1963 et 1973 causant l’augmentation d’un nombre important de Tutsi qui ont revendiqué leur retour au pays par les armes a provoqué une guerre civile. En réaction à ces attitudes, les Hutu ont mené une double stratégie : le combat contre le front patriotique tutsi (FPR) et ensuite le massacre des Tutsi de l’intérieur du pays afin de dissoudre le FPR. Selon l’historien Jean-Pierre Chrétien et l’anthropologue André Guichawa, avant la colonisation allemande puis belge, Hutu, Tutsi et Twa ne constituaient pas des ethnies mais des catégories sociales structurées à partir de l’activité sociale exercée : les Twa (artisans et ouvriers) ont été les premiers à occuper ce territoire. Les Hutu, qui sont venus après, étaient des agriculteurs et chasseurs et enfin les Tutsi propriétaires de troupeau. Ainsi l’ethnisme au Rwanda apparait alors comme une évidence idéologique de racialiser la perception de la société et de la diviser de manière à servir par la suite de levier pour justifier les massacres.


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Les massacres (1959-1962) comme un début de cycle de violence qui va conduire au génocide de 1994. Un renversement politique appelé « révolution sociale » s’installe, entraînant la fin des Tutsi et la création de la première république du Rwanda. Le soutien de l’ex-colonisateur belge à la républi...
Le génocide : une notion de droit

Dans un premier temps, c’est l’institu-
tion juridique qui pour une première
tâche va répondre à ce besoin de justice.
Les travaux du tribunal Pénal Internatio-
ntonal pour le Rwanda (TPIR) constituent un élément historique singulier. Ils montrent qu’un cadre juridique international de jugement contre les crimes humanitaires ou génocides est possible. Les témoignages recueillis constituent un corpus de textes qui pourra intégrer la mémoire collective de l’humanité. Le Conseil de Sécurité décide, suite à la résolution 955 des Nations Unis du 8 novembre 1994, de créer à la demande reçue du gouverne-
ment rwandais (S/1994/1115) le Tribu-
nal Pénal International pour le Rwanda (TPIR) sur base du chapitre VII de
la charte des Nations Unis dont la mission fut le jugement des personnes accusées des massacres au Rwanda ou sur les territoires d’États voisins. Les atrocités commises en avril 1994 seront qualifiées de « crimes contre l’humanité », de « génocide » ou de « violation du droit international huma-
nitaire » ainsi que les violations de l’article 3 commun aux conventions de Genève et du 2e protocole additionnel.

Cette notion de crime contre l’humanité transcende aujourd’hui l’ordre juridi-
qne international. Ainsi, la création du TPIR répond à un devoir moral, de justice et de solidarité avec les victimes de ce drame. Elle implique une inscription des « crimes » commis contre le peuple rwandais dans l’ordre interna-
tional comme une infraction contre les droits universels de l’homme, contre les valeurs et contre la paix, une atteinte contre les intérêts de la communauté internationale. Nous retrouvons ici les trois niveaux de la théorie de recomma-
sance d’Alex Honneth.

Le TPIR est installé en Tanzanie à Arusha, composé de 16 juges per-
manents et 12 autres non permanents recrutés par l’Assemblée Générale des Nations Unis pour une période de 4 ans.

L’histoire de la notion du génocide remonte au XIXe siècle avec l’émergence du droit pénal international. Les conférences de la Haye (1899 et 1907) furent un début pour une première codification du droit international humanitaire fixant les lois et coutumes de la guerre (p. 141). Vient ensuite la phase après Shoua au lendemain de la fin de la Seconde Guerre mondiale (1945) où va apparaître une volonté pour juger les crimes distincts des crimes de guerre, sans pour autant arriver au but escompté. Il faut attendre les années 1990 pour voir apparaître une véritable justice autour des crimes contre l’humanité et contre le génocide en particulier.

Seulement, il faut rappeler que la convention du 9 décembre 1948, fondamentale pour le droit pénal in-
ternational, fut le premier texte qui définit juridiquement le génocide. Elle eut le mérite d’avoir initié cette discipline du droit et d’avoir posé le génocide comme crime à part en le distinguant des crimes contre l’humanité, mais qui est à mettre aussi en parallèle avec les crimes contre l’humanité. Ce terme génocide qui est issu des travaux du juriste polonais Raphael Lemkin entra rapidement dans la terminologie juridique. L’évolution des différents statuts cités dans le livre (Tribunal de Nuremberg, Tribunal pé-
nal international pour la Yougoslavie, le Tribunal pénal international pour le Rwanda, la Cour pénale internationale) montre la volonté avérée de la commu-
nauté internationale qui a permis l’application concrète du droit pénal international.

Il faut dire cependant que la justice pénale internationale se cherche en-
core. En 2000 commença à fonctionner la Cour pénale internationale, quatre ans après l’adoption du traité de Rome, et ce, malgré les obstacles telle la ques-
tion de souveraineté nationale qui fut surpassée par la notion d’humanité et les résistances de certains pays comme l’USA, la Chine et l’Inde. Les juge-
ments des violateurs des droits humains ont lieu. Les travaux sur le génocide et les crimes contre l’humanité se pour-
viennent dans le domaine de la justice internationale afin que plus jamais de telles anécdotes ne se reproduisent et que la lutte contre l’impunité reste néanmoins posée. La complexité de la problématique fait qu’on ne peut pas présenter un projet juridique achevé, mais on peut prétendre d’un point de vue historique, philosophique et juridique que le TPIR, comme une première étape d’une justice interna-
tionale, a réussi, en témoigne les cas de jugements de Jean-Paul Akayesu et de Joseph Seringuendo, tous deux impliqués dans les événements de 1994.

Conclusion

La théorie de Honneth au sujet de la reconnaissance fondée sur la justice so-
ciale n’est pas suffisante pour permettre la reconnaissance prôner par l’auteur. À cet effet, l’enjeu de la reconstruction est difficile et la réconciliation par le pardon est impossible. Il faut une reconnaissance qui va au-delà de cette justice sociale, c’est-à-dire vers un cadre normatif en vue d’une morale non fondée sur les percepts religieux (p. 197), nécessaire à la résilience sur le plan psychologique pour une éventuelle reconstruction de soi et de la société après de telles situations. Reconnaître cette barbarie innommable subie de 1994, c’est aussi pouvoir l’inter-
préter comme élément fondamental de lutte contre l’oublï et le négationnisme. Elle signifie aussi nommer ce qui s’est passé, donner le droit de crier, de mettre des mots sur ces horreurs et de dénoncer ceux qui ont commis ces cruautés, les plus récentes du siècle, dénoncer le refus à la vie sans n’importe quel prétexe.

Cette attitude constitue un devoir de mémoire pour des raisons éthiques et pour répondre aux besoins de l’histoire. Dans ce sens, le devoir de mémoire équivaut à la catharsis. Il s’agit d’un devoir sacré visant à accorder aux victimes la dignité et la valeur qu’ils ont en tant qu’acteurs de la communauté internationale, et à perpétuer et à honorer la mémoire de ces derniers, et enfin à transmettre cette mémoire de génération en génération. Dans l’objectif de répondre à ce devoir de mémoire, une politique publique de la mémoire du génocide émerge à un niveau local, avec le vote de la troisième constitution de la République rwandaise en 2003. En 2008 et avec la création de la Commis-
sion nationale de lutte contre le génocide, le Rwanda se dote d’une institution autonome en charge de la mémoire du génocide. En cette année, même la loi régissant le statut des lieux mémorials et cimetières du génocide a été voté. La réforme importante du 13 mars 2008 pour la désignation officielle des faits donne naissance à une nouvelle appellation au génocide (génocide commis contre les Tutsi). Le discours présidentiel du 7 avril 2013 marque un tournant dans la gestion de la mémoire nationale, dédié à la politisation de la mémoire du génocide et en instaurant un master en Génocide Studies, en plus de la création d’un centre de recherche. Également, l’introduc-
tion de l’enseignement de l’histoire du génocide dans le programme scolaire. En revanche, jusqu’à présent, le besoin de réparations et d’indemnisation n’a pas encore trouvé d’écho, ni au niveau national ni international.

Notes

4. Rémi Korman, « La politique de mémoire du génocide des Tutsi au Rwanda : enjeux et évolu-

Africa Review of Books / Revue africaine des Livres

Security Regimens in Africa

Isaac Olwale Albert

This policy brief takes a critical look at security regimens in Africa. Though most African conflicts start at the grassroots level, African governments prefer to manage them centrally using the coercive instruments of states. However, government forces in Africa are easily worsted by ‘rag tag armies’ in a manner that calls for foreign intervention in African crises. The integrity of some of these foreign interventions is questioned. Though the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa have their peculiar security regimens these lack requisite capacity. Policy recommendations are made on how to address the contending issues.


Le récit débute par la fin, par le retour au pays après la chute de Kadafi. Quoi de plus naturel qu’en veut faire le récit d’un retour, d’un départ que de choisir comme cadre de l’incitp de Kadhafi, avant de démissionner, une médecine qui a pu être instructif en partie. Hisham Matar a choisi le second. Il vient de Londres où il vit et rentre chez lui, en Libye, avec une escale en Égypte où il a aussis vissé ses années de lycée. « Tôt le matin, mars 2012. Ma mère, ma femme et moi étions assis sur une rangée de sièges vissés au sol carré d’une rue d’attente de l’aéroport international du Caire. Une voïx annonçait que le vol 835 à destination de Benghazi partirait à l’heure » (p. 6). C’était les premières phrases du livre. Ni Le Caire ni Benghazi ne sont des aéroports sûrs, nous annonce Matar pour nous préparer à un récit mouvementé.

L’auteur va nous faire ce récit aux moments où les événements sur- gissent dans son esprit, quand, oisif, il attend dans les salles d’embarque- ment un vol ou l’arrivée d’un proche. Ces attentes sont propices aux rêves et à l’introspection. Il profite de ces instants pour se constituer une bulle et nous faire revivre des pans entiers de sa vie et de celle des membres de sa famille, surtout son père dont il fait le personnage central du récit, même s’il est physiquement absent, mais omniprésent dans toutes les étapes de ce récit.

Le départ de Libye de Jaballa Matar était, comme déjà cité, pour des raisons professionnelles. Moin d’une année, après le coup d’État du mois d’août, il a emprunté un chemin arabe et ses conséquences désastreuses. Il nous dévoilera la dé- ception de ceux qui avaient nourri de grands espoirs pour ce pays meurtri et pris en otage pendant quarante-deux ans. Le récit de Hisham Matar est personnel, intime et très profond, il est poignant et émouvant, mais également sujet à critiques.

Dans son œuvre, H. Matar ne rapporte pas les événements d’une manière linéaire, il nous offre plutôt un récit concentré dont l’axe est la disparition de son père Jaballa. Il analyse les actes, porte des jugements sur les acteurs, suscite des émotions et arrive à atteindre ce tour de force de faire d’une série de chroniques une œuvre littéraire. L’absence de linéarité pour des événements historiques déroute quelque peu le lecteur, mais n’est point rédhibitoire, car les talents d’historien de l’auteur sont doublés d’une compétence narrative avérée. Il est vrai que le récit « historique » ignore généralement le « pourquoi » et le « parce que », l’auteur étant supposé dans une situation de juge, mais Hisham Matar est dans ce récit aussi partie. Cette double situation (juge et partie) l’oblige à une sorte de partialité dans les jugements de valeur qu’il porte sur les autres.

La terre qui nous sépare
du temps d’Abou Salim. Ils brisèrent les portes des cellules, et les hommes emprisonnés à l’intérieur de ces boîtes de béton sortirent peu à peu, errant sous
This book is about how extreme situations appearing to have a destructive potential can actually be understood through the analytical scrutiny of its role in the historical constitution of social relations.

It is an important analytical asset. The book claims that risk is a property of social action which can best be understood through the analytical scrutiny of its role in the historical constitution of social relations.

The book argues that this rejection has deprived the study of the human condition of an important analytical asset. The book is based on case-studies that draw from theoretical insights derived from the notion of risk to the study of technologically non-advanced societies. The book argues that this rejection has deprived the study of the human condition of an important analytical asset. The book claims that risk is a property of social action which can best be understood through the analytical scrutiny of its role in the historical constitution of social relations.
Chigozie Obioma, passage à l’acte, passage à l’écriture

Amaria Belkaid

Les Pêcheurs
Par Chigozie Obioma
Traduit de l’anglais par Serge Chauvin
Editions de l’Olivier, Paris (France), 2016, 298 pages,
ISBN : 978.2.8236.0536.5, 21.50 euros

De l’espace, entre les mots et les choses. Les liens familiaux sont ainsi traduits par les écarts de langue ».

Ces réflexions sur la langue et sa capacité de délaisson font aussi du roman une tragédie de la parole, d’autant que le drame vient peut-être, justement, de la compréhension "au pied de la lettre" de la formule prophétique lancée par Abulu à Ikenna. Il est important de garder à l’esprit que si l’auteur emprunte aux enfants ses référents esthétiques et stylistiques, force est de constater qu’il en détourné la finalité en laissant apparaître des bribes de sa propre trajectoire sociale. Cela se concrétise au travers des thèmes qu’il aborde dans ses récits.

Dans la littérature nigérienne contemporaine, ces thèmes affichent nettement leur dimension sociale et politique. Dans ce passage : « Quand mes frères Ikenna et Boja moururent, ce fut comme si on m’avait dépossédé du dais qui m’avait toujours abrité, mais quand Obemhê s’enfuit, je tombai dans le vide, comme une phalène aux ailes arrachées en plein vol, et je devins un être qui ne pouvait plus voler mais seulement ramper. Je n’avais jamais vécu sans mes frères » (p. 273). De l’indignation intériorisée, ce sont des trajectoires qui créent chez l’auteur l’incapacité de trouver une place dans l’espace social. Le lecteur est dérouté. La construction de l’image fraternelle chez Chigozie Obioma permet aux lecteurs d’avoir l’impression d’être à côté de lui, en train de l’écouter raconter son histoire. L’on pourrait ainsi considérer ce regard comme une invitation à voyager dans le temps. Ce roman rassemble l’art de la narration, le goût et la structure du récit oral, ce qui présente un texte où la poésie se déconstruit au gré du réel, où le magique se suffoque dans la psychologie des personnages et dans l’interprétation des événements de la vie publique.

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INDEX
(2004-2016)
Dans le roman, L’Envers du destin de Najib Redouane, Moumou-Machaël-Rachel, l’héroïne du roman, raconte à son destinataire (un « tu » anonyme et voix absente), dans un ordre chronologique, les conséquences de son expropriation du Maroc vers Israël. Juive sépharade, elle est originaire de Fès et fille d’un homme d’affaires fortuné. C’est dans la ferme familiale, à Sefrou, dans une proche localité de sa ville natale, qu’elle passe une enfance et une adolescence plus des plus heureuses et des plus insouciantes, choyée par son père avec lequel elle vit une relation fusionnelle. Pour elle, Séfrou est un « havre de paix où côtoie le bonheur ». C’était un lieu de brassage de cultures, de langues et de traditions. Il reflétait réellement l’esprit qui régnait à l’époque d’un Maroc pluriel, multiculturel et tolérant. On y parlait l’arabe, des dialectes berbères ainsi que l’hébreu » (p. 17). C’est dans ce village qu’elle rencontre Mohand, berzer et musulman, avec lequel elle partage un amour sincère et passionné. C’est déjà un début d’une série de défis, de la part de ses proches, de la société en général, de ses désirs et de ses désirs, de sa famille, de ses amis, de ses parents, de ses frères et sœurs, d’elle-même et de ses rêves, qui la mèneront à l’isolement. La terre natale ne s’efface à aucun moment du discours de la narratrice, elle est sanctifiée, mythifiée, reconstruite selon la vision d’un âge d’or révolu, et le récit est une redéfinition du pays des origines tout en dénonçant l’exclusion, le déracinement, la haine, les hostilités, les violence dont elle est victime en tant qu’héritière de la diaspora. 
Cependant, ce grand bonheur de la naissance est perturbé progressivement par le contexte historique conflictuel caractérisé par la guerre israélo-arabe de 1967 ; en effet, elle se rend compte de plus en plus que la communauté juive se livre à des tractions discrètes qui préparent son exode vers Israël, vers « la terre promise » (p. 27). Un débat contradictoire s’instaure à l’interieur, commettre un péché mortel, et de l’espace socioculturel et géographique. 
La narratrice parle avec ferveur du départ de son expatriation du Maroc vers Israël. « Ce pays est le nôtre, c’est là aussi la toute première mention de l’identité marocaine et ses années de transition, du pays des origines et du bonheur enfoui, d’un temps premier, à l’exclusion, le déracinement, la haine, les hostilités, les violence dont elle est victime en tant qu’héritière du mythe se traduit dans un récit mémoriel de l’écriture du trauma. 
C’est dans la ferme familiale, à Sefrou, et fille d’un homme d’affaires fortuné. 
La vie dans leur maison est calme, paisible. 
De l’extérieur, elle est une enfant insouciante, choyée par son père avec lequel elle vit une relation fusionnelle. 
"Je suis fassie, je le suis et le resterai pour la jeune sépharade, transgresser l’ordre social et religieux réduisant la femme à un être inférieur. « Je pleurais toutes larmes de mon corps. 
Sous la douche, je me tapais la tête et me griffais, criant que j’étais maudite, que j’étais meurtrie. » (p. 193). Une rupture totale l’entraîne dans la solitude et l’isolement après son divorce avec Mihai. Elle est complètement déséquilibrée psychologiquement et mentalement. Sa santé mentale se dégrade ; elle est atteinte de graves troubles du comportement tels les troubles obsessionnels compulsifs, le dédoublement de la personnalité, le déshonneur. 
"Le mythe est un système de communication, une parole, tout peut être mythe. » (p. 297). Pour M. Eliad, le mythe se justifie dans cette dimension historique de l’activité mémorielle d’un sujet dont la finalité est discursive. "Le mythe est un système de communication, c’est un message […] puisque le mythe est une parole, tout peut être mythe, qui est justificable d’un discours […]". Lointaine source de la psychanalyse, l’automatisme rhétorique, le mythe est un système de communication, une parole, tout peut être mythe, qui est justificable d’un discours […]’.
La particularité du discours, dans L’Envers du destin, est la redondance et la survalorisation du temps et de l’espace socioculturel et géographique qui s’affichent dans le contexte entre un passé heureux et un présent sombre. 
Elle s’opère dans l’enonciation d’une binarité entre un lieu euhorifique (espace des temps premiers) et un autre dysthorrifique (espace d’accueil).
Donc la question identitaire travaille en profondeur le texte de N. Redouane à travers un récit qui relate la tragédie de l’exil forcé. L’histoire douloureuse de l’exil de Moumou-Machaël-Rachel n’est que le prétexte pour aller chercher la mise en scène de la diaspora comme une terre de rencontre de toutes les communautés religieuses, de dialogues de toutes les ethnies, un espace de paix pour les hommes, quelles que soient la couleur religieuse de leurs croyances et la teneur de leurs convictions. Le récit est également le réceptacle de l’idée de tolérance, du vivre ensemble, de la fraternité humaine.
Le discours romanistique met en avant l’humanité dans l’acceptation de l’Autre, son semblable. Il ne serait pas faux de dire que le récit est paradoxe mettant en enjeu toutes ces valeurs humaines et humanistes.
L’Envers du destin s’insère dans la production littéraire de la diaspora installée en Amérique du Nord, dans cette littérature maghrébine qui semble émerger, ressurgir, croître dans le champ littéraire canadien. La critique littéraire actuelle au Québec parle de la « Mouvance littéraire maghrébine » et la particularité de cette caractéristique est faite de remises en question et de récits mémoirels : « Les écritures migrantes forment un micro-corpus d’œuvres littéraires produites par des sujets migrants : ces écritures sont celles du corps et de la mémoire ; elles sont pour l’essentiel travaillées par un élément massif, le pays perdu, ou perdu, le pays réel ou fantasmé constituant la matière première de la fiction, les écritures de la perte jamais achevées, de l’essai et de la défaite ».
Le roman de N. Redouane interpelle le lecteur sur ce qu’il a d’humain en lui : la communion possible avec l’Autre au-delà de tout avantage rédacteur ou les identités meurtrières ».

Notes
3. Ibid., p. 18.
Children’s Agency Development in African Societies

La capacité d’agir et le développement des enfants dans les sociétés africaines

Edited by / Sous la direction de
Yaw Ofosu-Kusi


This book focuses on African childhood and youth within the context of development and socialization where children are expected to be moulded in the image of adults. In many African societies children are generally held as passive bearers of the demands of adults, regardless of the fact that they are often exposed to a multitude of challenges that originate from the capriciousness of those adults. However, buoyed by international conventions and national legislations that offer them greater protection, and the ubiquitous internet that exposes them to childhood and youth experiences elsewhere, many of them are increasingly becoming assertive in homes, schools, and communities as well as re-invigorating their survival and self-preservation insticts. It is in this regard that this book, through the various chapters, engages with their competencies, skills and creativity to respond to experiential challenges as independent migrants or ones under coercion working in city streets and markets or cocoa farms or juggling work and schooling in pursuit of some education. Confronted with their parents’ and siblings’ health predicaments and the inadequacies of state and familial care, or urgent negotiation of their sexualities, they demonstrate incredible resilience. Similarly, their perceptiveness is demonstrated in a unique appreciation of politics and its actors and a capacity to assume responsibilities beyond their chronological age. Thus while highlighting some of the challenges confronting African children, the book provides gripping evidence of how they resiliently negotiate those challenges.

La gouvernance universitaire : une expérience africaine

Une expérience africaine

Abdou Salam Sall


A la lumière d’une expérience propre, cet ouvrage présente différentes problématiques de gouvernance universitaire en Afrique avec un accent spécifique sur les dynamiques en cours. Il permet de mieux comprendre les mutations aux niveaux des structures de gouvernance des établissements d’enseignement supérieur avec le nouveau management public et les périmètres de responsabilités des dirigeants tant sur le plan du financement, de la formation, que des modes et canaux de délivrance des enseignements et de l’organisation de la recherche. Ce livre propose un outil à la mesure des défis de l’Afrique : la Fondation Africaine pour la Recherche, l’Innovation et la Mobilité (FARIM) fondée dans une certaine mesure sur les orientations du développement durable. Il propose aussi un caneva pour l’élaboration d’un plan stratégique. Pour une meilleure internalisation de l’enseignement supérieur, une attention particulière est portée sur les valeurs ainsi que leur promotion et convoque à la communication. Cet ouvrage est recommandé à tous ceux qui désirent découvrir le trésor caché dans l’enseignement supérieur. C’est un bon outil pour tous, pour l’ensemble la communauté universitaire, notamment pour ceux qui veulent transformer l’Afrique dans ce contexte de l’économie du savoir, ceux qui dirigent ou veulent diriger les établissements d’enseignement supérieur car quand la résultante des forces en présence ne parvient pas à créer la dynamique, il est fait recours au leader pour indiquer le chemin et y mobiliser le plus grand nombre.

Industrial and Development Economics

An African Perspective

Stephen M. Kapunda

ISBN: 978-2-86978-715-5 244 pages

The aim of this book is to provide a comprehensive understanding of industrial economics and its applicability to African countries. It is expected to serve as an intellectual and pedagogical support for teaching material for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. The book is also useful for people with a keen interest in industrial and development economics because of the unique approach adopted by the author which emphasises an African perspective. Each chapter is arranged pedagogically, starting with introductory remarks, then content and finally conclusion. Numerous relevant examples, case studies and review questions are provided to aid learning.