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Youngstedt, Scott M. *Surviving with Dignity: Hausa Communities of Niamey, Niger*. United Kingdom: Lexington Books, 2013, xv + 226 pp.

Hausa scholarship has developed primarily around communities in Northern Nigeria and Eastern Niger. In *Surviving With Dignity*, anthropologist Scott M. Youngstedt shifts the focus to long-standing Hausa communities in Niamey. This book is the result of over twenty years of research in Niger, and Youngstedt effectively draws from his own friendships with Hausa men to inform his larger work. Bringing together personal Hausa narratives and proverbs with global economic policies, Youngstedt situates Niamey at the center of larger conversations on globalization and modernity.

The first half of Youngstedt's book frames Niamey within a global context. In his introduction, Youngstedt establishes the two concepts of suffering and dignity as essential to understanding how Hausa communities interact with shifting social and economic dynamics in Niamey. He links suffering to poverty and global structural violence, whereas dignity is found at the individual level and intimately tied to Hausa ideologies. After a brief history of Niamey's growth from an eighteenth century Zarma town to a present day cosmopolis, Youngstedt then analyzes how international organizations have had devastating effects on the Nigerien economy. In particular he points to the five Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the 1980s. The consequent lack of economic opportunity in Niger leads to Youngstedt's next topic, Niamey's global diaspora. Youngstedt contributes an interesting perspective in his analysis of internal migrations in which he places Niamey as a stepping-stone for Hausa men moving from rural to international destinations. He also examines how technological developments such as money transfers, internet usage, and cell phones help maintain global Hausa networks connected to their symbolic home in Niamey.

In the second half of his book, Youngstedt delves into his local case studies. His fourth chapter looks at how *hira*, Hausa men's conversation groups, serve as a grassroots institution in which Hausa communities negotiate local meaning amidst global societal changes. In his fifth chapter he considers three overlapping spheres through which Hausa experience modernity; Africanist-traditionalist, Muslim-Islamist, and Francophonist- globalist. Here he focuses primarily on modernity from an economic perspective, and the tension between local understandings of globalization and growing economic inequality. His sixth chapter, briefer than earlier ones, focuses on the economic struggles of male youth in Niamey with

examples highlighting the financial difficulties of marriage and the role of hip hop as a means of expression.

One of Youngstedt's strongest contributions in this book is his use of *hira* in the fourth chapter. His analysis focuses on both the structure of these groups and the role they serve in Hausa communities in Niamey. He looks at structural variances between unofficial *hira* and the more recently developed formal groups, *fada*. Ultimately it is the function of *hira* that fits very well into Youngstedt's framework. It is here that the encounter of suffering and dignity meet within a local cultural context; these conversation groups allow for an active negotiation of what modernity and globalization mean within the Hausa community. This is also where Youngstedt's own language skills and long-term friendships align most strongly with his methodological approach.

The limitations of this book are self-addressed by the author. Youngstedt notes that within Niamey there is ethnic flexibility, yet his work relies on Hausa as an exclusive category. His personal experiences add dimension throughout the book, but lead to one major limitation, the lack of Hausa women's voices. Youngstedt addresses this by highlighting the existing scholarship on Hausa women, but leaves room for the role of women and *foyande*, women's conversation groups, to be further explored. In addition, throughout the book Youngstedt's local case studies play a supporting role to an analysis that is often shaped around quantitative data from international organizations and surveys. The exception to this is his strongest chapter on *hira*, which highlights a point in the book where the author is able to use local understandings of modernity to shape his own analysis. The result is a glimpse of a more complex understanding of these concepts within a Hausa epistemological framework and an approach that Youngstedt could have developed further.

The strengths of Youngstedt's work outweigh these limitations. He successfully places Niamey at the forefront of the conversation on globalization, and highlights the growing work of Hausa scholarship in Niger. He does so in both an informative and compassionate way by offering the reader a history of Niamey, the global policies that have impacted its growth, and a glimpse into the lives of the Hausa men who are negotiating on a daily basis with living in a modern world that has created severe economic inequalities. Most importantly, Youngstedt points scholars to many promising directions, such as the roles of gender and ethnic flexibility, to continue the worthy scholarly *hira* he has initiated.

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