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## JORA: Complete Volume 3, Issue 1

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## JORA: Complete Volume 3, Issue 1

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This journal has continued to enjoy the commitment of its editorial staff who worked tirelessly to ensure timely release of its issues. With their support, JORA will continue to meet the expectations of its authors and readers. I am greatly indebted to JORA's graduate assistant, Alexandra Szarabajko, who is graduating this fall for her two years of exemplary and professional devotion to the journal. We wish her well in all her endeavors. I am also immensely appreciative for the unwavering support of the Berkeley Electronic Press, ECU's College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences, Libraries, and the African & African-American Studies program. Many thanks to the manuscript reviewers whose valuable comments enriched the quality of the essays. Finally, I thank our authors and book reviewers for trusting us with their manuscripts. We will continue to count on them in the years and decades ahead.

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# JOURNAL OF RETRACING AFRICA (JORA)

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## Editor's Preface

The *Journal of Retracing Africa* (JORA) is pleased to release its third volume. This volume builds on the foundation of excellence and intellectual rigor evident in the two previous volumes. JORA has remained committed to its mission to deconstruct misconceived, mistaken, and missing narratives on Africa and Africans by providing a holistic appreciation of the African experience. The articles and book reviews published in this volume honor that commitment. They highlight the often overlooked or misunderstood social and economic issues surrounding colonial and contemporary Africa. The implications and ramifications of Africa's encounters with the West, especially since the 19<sup>th</sup> century will continue to engage the attention of Africanists. By focusing on the exploitation of child labor for profit in colonial Kenya, the corporatization of the Nigerian railway to satisfy mostly British selfish economic interests, and the powerful corporate financial interest undermining meaningful regulation of tobacco usage in Nigeria, our authors provide a lens to better understand the roots of some of the challenges facing the continent.

In ““God Was With Us”: Child Labor in Colonial Kenya, 1922–1950s,”” Samson Ndanyi examines one of the saddest chapters in European colonial enterprise in Africa—the exploitation of child labor for profit.<sup>1</sup> Broadening the definition of a child to include those who were mentally disabled or incapable of living independent of their parents, and engaging rich primary sources mostly from the Kenya National Archives (Nairobi) and the National Archives (Kew, United Kingdom), the author reconstructs the often ignored labor practices in colonial Kenya. Ndanyi shows that labor employers and recruiters, often with the tacit support or silence of colonial authorities and against the consent of the parents, exploited loopholes in labor laws to recruit, underpay, and exploit underage children using different dubious standards. The author employs documented cases of multiple kidnapping of Kenyan children for labor to challenge the Eurocentric theory that African families freely sent their children to work due to their poor conditions. As Ndanyi argues, the “frequent changes in labor laws made it easier for labor recruiters and employers to manipulate the system by recruiting younger children for work thus drawing them into the orbit of an alien labor force that often interfered with their childhood.”<sup>2</sup> By showing how Kenyan colonial children were exposed to unimaginable risks without providing adequate wages, housing, and feeding, this articles provides a glimpse into the unending story of colonial abuses

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<sup>1</sup>Samson K. Ndanyi, ““God Was With Us”: Child Labor in Colonial Kenya, 1922-1950s,” *Journal of Retracing Africa* 3, no. 1 (Fall 2016): 1-20.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 1.

and the symbiotic relationship between the state and the business class in colonial Africa.

The politics of infrastructural development in colonial Africa continues to attract scholarly consideration. In "Prelude to the Establishment of the Nigerian Railway Corporation, 1949-1955," Tokunbo Ayoola uses archival records to show how colonial self-seeking economic interests dictated the post-war railway reform in colonial Nigeria.<sup>3</sup> Eager to recover from the devastating economic effects of the Second World War, the British colonial government sought to invest in social and economic projects in Africa as an instrument of consolidating colonial control and continued exploitation of their colonies. The author shows that although "Nigerian political leaders, railway workers, colonial and imperial officials, and European merchants in West Africa" resolved to reorganize the Nigerian Railway (NR) into a corporation, "NR's transformation was geared towards serving Britain's overall economic interest."<sup>4</sup> Through thoughtful analysis of vast primary sources on the subject, the author argues that "the primary reasons why the British colonial government established the corporation was to assist foreign interests in Nigeria by distancing itself from the direct management of labor relations between the Nigerian colonial state and the militant trade unions in the Nigerian Railway and other commercially oriented government departments."<sup>5</sup> As the author insists, "by placing the day-to-day management of these departments beyond the immediate reach of ambitious Nigerian nationalists who were anxious to quickly take over the control of the colonial state, the colonial government undermined the ability of local elite to build their weak economic base."<sup>6</sup> This article therefore provides an insight into the intricate power contestation between the colonial administrators and educated African nationalists in Nigeria.

Tobacco usage has remained a public health concern to governments around the world. Efforts to regulate its use have remained challenging. Benjamin Anaemene addresses the politics dictating official regulation of tobacco use in Nigeria in his article titled "From Inaction to Action: The World Health Organisation and Tobacco Control Policies in Nigeria Since 1970."<sup>7</sup> Engaging various sources including those produced by the World Health Organization, the author shows that although there was a movement from a period of inaction in the 1970s to one

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<sup>3</sup>Tokunbo A. Ayoola, "Prelude to the Establishment of the Nigerian Railway Corporation, 1949-1955," *Journal of Retracing Africa* 3, no. 1 (Fall 2016): 21-42.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 42.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>7</sup>Benjamin Uchenna Anaemene, "From Inaction to Action: The World Health Organisation and Tobacco Control Policies in Nigeria Since 1970," *Journal of Retracing Africa* 3, no. 1 (Fall 2016): 43-58.

of increased attention to the problem since the 1990s with well-meaning strategies adopted by the Nigerian government, no meaningful progress has been made to combat the menace of tobacco use in Nigeria. Part of the reason for the slow progress in regulating tobacco in Nigeria, according to the author, is that “the political economy of tobacco poses difficult regulatory and governance challenges due to several factors notably: the liberalization of global trade rules; the powerful influence of and enormous wealth of tobacco multinationals as shown in their aggressive marketing strategies in developing countries including Nigeria; the economic dependence of some developing world economies on tobacco farming; and the complexity of harmonizing cigarette taxes, policies, and advertisements within domestic jurisdiction and multilaterally.”<sup>8</sup>

In this volume, the book reviewers brought their expertise to assess fifteen books with fascinating themes that widen our readers' understanding of the complexities of African peoples and societies during the colonial and post-colonial period. They cover themes such sexuality in colonial Nigeria, Africa's future prospects, food and water security, the politics of colonial education in Senegal and South Africa, African environment, slave port, party politics in Africa, the Chinese in Africa, modern healthcare policies in Africa, oil in Africa, Hollywood in Africa, power and decolonization in Africa, urbanization in Africa, and Belgium colonialism in Congo. The book reviews, together with the articles, will no doubt expand your understanding on some of the often ignored issues in the unfinished African story.

This journal has continued to enjoy the commitment of its editorial staff who worked tirelessly to ensure timely release of its issues. With their support, JORA will continue to meet the expectations of its authors and readers. I am greatly indebted to JORA's graduate assistant, Alexandra Szarabajko, who is graduating this fall for her two years of exemplary and professional devotion to the journal. We wish her well in all her endeavors. I am also immensely appreciative for the unwavering support of the Berkeley Electronic Press, ECU's College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences, Libraries, and the African & African-American Studies program. Many thanks to the manuscript reviewers whose valuable comments enriched the quality of the essays. Finally, I thank our authors and book reviewers for trusting us with their manuscripts. We will continue to count on them in the years and decades ahead.

Ogechi E. Anyanwu  
Editor-in-Chief.

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 58.

# “God Was With Us:” Child Labor in Colonial Kenya, 1922–1950s

Samson K. Ndanyi  
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**Abstract:** Contentious debates about the allowable minimum age of child laborers informed the discourse of child labor in colonial Kenya between 1922 and the 1950s. Beginning with the Harry Thuku Uprising of 1922 that instigated the discussion over labor policy concerning juvenile wage laborers and heightened the tension between the British colonial administration and African adult workers, the British government in Kenya struggled to forge coherent labor policies concerning the ages of African child workers. Frequent changes in labor laws made it easier for labor recruiters and employers to manipulate the system by recruiting younger children for work thus drawing them into the orbit of an alien labor force that often interfered with their childhood. The uncertainty surrounding the minimum age engendered acrimonious debate between white employers and anti-child labor advocates over who among them had the moral authority to speak for the children and act as their moral guardians and avuncular figures. This article discusses child labor in colonial Kenya. Focusing almost exclusively on African boys as actors in child labor, the article analyzes labor history that highlights changes in the meaning of minimum age in an economic system that promised African children prosperity. It frames age as a category of analysis that explains the intersection of colonial labor laws and juvenile workers. The close analysis of African children and their labor situation also reveals a mosaic of everyday life in colonial Kenya that brings children into an acknowledged circulation of imperial ideas and imagination.

**Keywords:** Child Labor, Kenya, History, Africa

## Introduction

“What do you advise me to fix as the minimum monthly rate of pay (in addition to rations and housing) for [juveniles between twelve and eighteen years]?” wrote the District Commissioner (DC), Turkana, to J. Ian Husband, the Labor Commissioner (LC) in Kenya, in September 1955.<sup>1</sup> Husband advised the DC to pay children between twelve and fourteen years old a minimum monthly rate of ten shillings, fourteen shillings to children between fourteen and sixteen years,

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<sup>1</sup>DC, Turkana, to J. Ian Husband, “Minimum Wages,” 7 Sep. 1955, Minimum Wages-General ABK/1/36 Kenya National Archives (KNA), Nairobi (NRB).

and sixteen shillings to children between sixteen and eighteen years.<sup>2</sup> “Totos [children] of good physique,” Husband added, “often do quite as much manual work as an adult, when the work is not sustained for long hours.”<sup>3</sup> Confident of the “precocious strength” of an African child to perform manual labor, but aware of the loafing behaviors African adult workers exhibited, Husband urged the DC to raise these rates by ten percent in case adults refused to work more than six hours per day. Hoping that children would work on average between four and six hours per day, Husband wished they would surpass this mark,<sup>4</sup> a rather misguided wish that would have violated the law that required “no person” to “employ or require to work any juvenile for a total period of more than six hours in any one day.”<sup>5</sup>

Based on the logic of precocious strength, Husband expressed the view that minor workers consumed more food than their adult counterparts, and he suggested that if the rations were such that a laborer needed to buy supplementary items, “then the youth wages must be sufficient to ensure that extra food is bought.”<sup>6</sup> He hoped that DCs in the colony would ensure the recruitment and retention of minor workers, payment of children on time, protection of children from unscrupulous employers who delayed their wages, and discouragement of children from emulating their parent’s loafing behaviors. As this article demonstrates, the reality of the matter made Husband’s view look like a complete joke. Two registers come through the conversation between Husband and the DC. First, the conversation reveals the colonialists’ official thinking about wage labor and child laborers, three decades after Harry Thuku (discussed below) complained against the tendency to exploit juveniles for economic gains. Second, it suggests that child labor informed the colonial officials’ everyday discourse; however, extant scholarship on labor during the period tends to focus on the labor relations between African adult workers and

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<sup>2</sup>Husband to DC, Turkana, “Juvenile Wages,” 20th Oct. 1955. Minimum Wages-General ABK/1/36 KNA, NRB.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Husband to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education Labor and Lands, “Employment of African Women and Children on European Farms,” May 22, 1958, Minimum Wages ABK/1/36 KNA, NRB. But Archdeacon W.E. Owen of Kavirondo pointed out that children were expected to work “for a seven-to eight-hour day.” Owen, “Child Labor in East Africa,” *The Spectator*, January 6, 1939.

<sup>5</sup>C.H Hartwell, Member for Labor, “The Employment of Juveniles (Hours of Work and Welfare Rules, 1952),” June 4, 1952, Employment of women and children- Kenya CO859/302, TNA.

<sup>6</sup>Husband to DC. Turkana, Minimum Wages-General ABK/1/36 KNA, NRB.

European employers.<sup>7</sup>

Several writers have proposed competing definitions of what constituted a “child” in colonial Africa. Luis F. López-Calva writes that the term “child” is easy to recognize, but it holds “varying definitions.”<sup>8</sup> This concept does not render itself to cavalier definition, particularly during the colonialists’ heyday in the mid-twentieth century. In *Invisible Hands: Child Labor and the State in Colonial Zimbabwe* and “Child Labor and Africanist Scholarship: A Critical Overview,” Beverly Grier defines “child” as prepubescent boy or girl. Grier is aware that this definition is problematic and is “not without its fault,”<sup>9</sup> but she quickly adds that the stages of puberty vary and are not uniformly attained. Wiseman Chijere Chirwa expands this definition to include three broad criteria: chronological age as outlined by law, institutional affiliation and collective behavioral pattern, and social and cultural factors.<sup>10</sup> Even then, Chirwa confines his study to unmarried persons below the age of fourteen and between fourteen and eighteen, but still part of their parents’ or guardians’ family units. This definition is consistent with the views expressed in Kaushik Basu and Pham Hoang Van’s oft-quoted study, “The Economics of Child Labor,” in which child workers appear to be “persons below the age of 15 years.”<sup>11</sup> According to Basu and Van, historically, child labor was not the preserve of third world countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, but the “bulk of child laborers” found on these continents “belong to the 10-to-14-year age category.”<sup>12</sup> Whereas Basu and Van suggest ten years as the minimum age, Sudharshan Canagarajah and Helena Skyt Nielsen have lowered that age to include persons between “age 7 to 14.”<sup>13</sup>

The extant scholarship has tended to assume the standard Western definition

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<sup>7</sup>Examples include Frederick Cooper’s *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa*, a comparative study that focuses on “working class” and “African workers”; Kaletso E. Atkins’s *The Moon is Dead! Give us our Money!: The Cultural Origins of an African Work Ethic, Natal, South Africa, 1843–1900* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1993), which highlights the plight of “black working [Zulu] men” who forged “African work ethic” in nineteenth-century South Africa; and Iris Berger’s *Threads of Solidarity: Women in South African Industry, 1900–1980* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), which focuses on white and black working-class women “hidden from [labor] history” in South Africa between 1900 and 1980.

<sup>8</sup>Luis F. López-Calva, “Child Labor: Myths, Theories and Facts,” *Journal of International Affairs* 55, no. 1 (2001): 60.

<sup>9</sup>Beverly Grier, *Invisible Hands: Child Labor and the State in Colonial Zimbabwe* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2006), 26.

<sup>10</sup>Wiseman Chijere Chirwa, “Child and Youth Labour on the Nyasaland Plantations, 1890-1953,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 19, no. 4 (1993): 662-680.

<sup>11</sup>Kaushik Basu and Pham Hoang Van, “The Economics of Child Labor,” *The American Economic Review* 88, no. 3 (1998):414.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 414.

<sup>13</sup>Sudharshan Canagarajah and Helena Skyt Nielsen, “Child Labor in Africa: A Comparative Study,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 575 (2001): 73.



of child, which defines children rather narrowly. For the most part, European colonialists in Africa considered a child as any person between seven and eighteen years old. This definition excludes from consideration the labor contribution of five and six-year-old workers, who often worked in settlers' plantations, homes, and on factory floors. Other studies have pointed out that the "universal agreement" puts the "legal age of maturity [at] 18."<sup>14</sup> The so-called universal agreements often exclude the opinions of the Africans, South Americans, and Asians. Needless to say, universal agreements are Western constructs that tend to consider nineteen-year-old African workers as adult laborers. It is precisely for these reasons that Osita Agbu argues that the "legal definition of the child as seen from [international] legal documents is not wholly acceptable in the African context, even in today's world."<sup>15</sup>

Building on the views of scholars who suggest that "it's not certain who should really be considered a child,"<sup>16</sup> this article broadens the working definition of a child to include unmarried persons with mental or physical disability requiring parental or guardians' consent in matters that effectively altered the trajectories of their lives, such as initiation or wage labor. The expanded definition considers children who might have depended on their parents or guardians long after their eighteenth birthdays. As archival sources at the Kenya National Archives reveal, children with disability in Kenya also worked for wages and were taken to work miles away from their homes. In any case, in most African societies, until marriage, children remained dependents of their parents, who exercised authority and control over them in many ways.<sup>17</sup>

The unstable age definition of childhood in colonial Africa was related to capital accumulation in the form of wage labor, where colonial governments in Africa responded at some level to the nineteenth and twentieth-century economic changes taking place in Western Europe. As European colonialists in Africa increasingly drew African children into the labor market, evidence suggests that in Britain and the United States, child labor declined in the second half of the 19th century.<sup>18</sup> As it turned out, black bodies were to be used for labor. Prior to the concept of Western wage labor in Africa, African children engaged in domestic labor (e.g. household chores, tilling, and herding), much like what they did in

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<sup>14</sup>Anne Kielland and Maurizia Tovo, *Children at Work: Child Labor Practices in Africa* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2006), 1.

<sup>15</sup>Osita Agbu, "Child Labor in Contemporary Africa: Issues and Challenges," in *Children and Youth in the Labor Process in Africa*, ed. Osita Agbu (Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA, 2009), 12.

<sup>16</sup>Kielland and Tovo, 1.

<sup>17</sup>Hamilton Siphon Simelane, "Landlords, The State, and Child Labor in Colonial Swaziland, 1914-1947," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 31, no. 3 (1998): 575.

<sup>18</sup>López-Calva, 64.



European households and farms; the only difference being that work in the pre-colonial era was light and had no monetary reward.<sup>19</sup> Employing African children in agriculture and domestic chores was not a creation of the colonial economy, but it gained notoriety during the colonial era.<sup>20</sup> Child labor in colonial Africa drew children into the ambit of capitalism with a promise of material gains and upward mobility as long as they exchanged their labor for wages on factory floors and settlers' farms and households.

### **The Harry Thuku Factor**

Ian Husband's vision of African children workers was logical in theory but unattainable in practice. The subject of child labor in colonial Kenya involved more than simplistic expressions of "good physique" and "precocious strength," phrases that informed the thinking of most officials in the colony,<sup>21</sup> especially after 1922, when Harry Thuku, commonly regarded as the doyen of African nationalism, prodded the government to reform repressive labor laws that "forced" women and children to work for free.<sup>22</sup> "I saw a large number of young girls and women cutting reeds under the supervision of tribal police," Thuku complained in March 1922 while on a political tour in Central Kenya to popularize the East African Association (EAA), a political association he and his "friends" from other "tribes" founded the previous year.<sup>23</sup> Thuku insisted that the colonial administration forced women and young girls to cut enough reeds to thatch the police station in Nyeri, the administrative seat of the colonial government in Central Province. Citing Winston

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<sup>19</sup>Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 14-15; Atkins informs us that "very commonly youngsters were kept busy every day with light work around the homestead. Little boys from about the age of five or seven, would go out to herd small livestock such as goats, valves, and sheep." See Atkins, 58. She also adds that children who were hired for paid labor received their payment in the form of cloths, blankets, knives, hatchets or a lump of iron currency; see page 95.

<sup>20</sup>Chirwa, 664.

<sup>21</sup>P.B.E. Thompson, Divisional Engineer's Office, Coast Province, to Fred, "Wages-Male Employee Under 21 Years of Age," April 12, 1961, Minimum Wages ABK/1/36 KNA, NRB. Referring to the output of African casual laborers between the ages of 18-20, Thompson informed Fred that "in fact, their youth and strength ensures that their output is as high."

<sup>22</sup>Before Thuku's Uprising, however, in 1914 and 1915 the Giriama people of coastal hinterland, under the charismatic leadership of Mekatilili, a woman, rose up in arms against taxations, wage-labor, and land alienation. Mekatilili hoped to prevent Giriama men from laboring for the British and to support the revival of traditional Giriama way of life. See Cynthia Brantley's *The Giriama and Colonial Resistance in Kenya, 1800-1920* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981). Today the Giriama's participation in wage-labor is minimal. The community relies on agriculture and grain production. Critics of early resistances in Africa dismissed them as "romantic reactionaries" and "premature nationalists." See Bruce Vandervort, *Wars of Imperial Conquest in Africa, 1830-1914* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998). For counter-argument, see Terrence O. Ranger, "Connexions between 'Primary Resistance' Movements and Modern Mass Nationalism in East and Central Africa," *The Journal of African History* 9, no. 3 (1968): 437-453.

<sup>23</sup>Harry Thuku, *An Autobiography* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1970), 32.

Churchill's order of 1921 to the Governor of Kenya to stop coercive labor, Thuku asked the tribal policeman supervising the women to dismiss them, and he vowed to stick around until everyone "had gone back home."<sup>24</sup> By forcing women and young girls to work for free, the tribal policeman was, in Thuku's mind, "acting illegally."

Thuku's roadside drama in Nyeri angered the government. Eager to stop him from "poisoning" other Africans, on March 14<sup>th</sup>, officials arrested him in a pre-dawn police raid at a friend's house in Nairobi. Concerned that detaining him for long in Nairobi would exacerbate tension and further promote disturbances, officials deported Thuku to Kismayu in the Jubaland Province later in March 1922 without the benefit of a trial. Three years later, Thuku was transferred to Marsabit in the Northern Frontier Province.<sup>25</sup> In 1929, Thuku was still languishing in detention.<sup>26</sup>

It is beyond the scope of this essay to explore the merits of Thuku's lengthy deportation, but two notable aspects of his short political life are worth considering. First, Thuku was a polarizing individual in colonial Kenya. People who admired him did so with passion, so much so that they believed in his causes and risked their lives to defend them. His detractors, however, loathed him and conspired for his downfall. "Chiefs and missionaries," Thuku wrote in his oft-quoted autobiography, "had been collecting affidavits against me."<sup>27</sup> Secondly, whether or not Thuku was

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>The circumstances in which Thuku was deported from the Kikuyu Reserve to the coast are set out fully in the Command Paper 1691 published in May 1922.

<sup>26</sup>Thuku's prolonged detention without trial embarrassed officials in Britain, who often bragged about the superiority of the British judicial system known for its fairness. Incensed Labor Members in the House asked the Undersecretary of State for the Colonies to try or forthwith release Thuku. The House heard from the Secretary that the Colonial Office was in consultation with the Governor of Kenya on the subject of the arrest and deportation. Calls to release or try him intensified in 1930. Unable to justify the lengthy detention without trial, the Colonial Office in London, which had previously insisted that only three African protestors died in March 1922, asked Henry Monck-Mason Moore, the acting Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, to allow Thuku to leave Marsabit to reside within his reserve on condition that he maintain peace and order. Moore released Thuku, but warned him of re-arrest and re-deportation to Marsabit if he violated the terms of his release, which included, among other things, displaying good behavior and loyalty to government. Judging from Thuku's retreat from active politics soon after his release—for instance, he opposed the Mau Mau war, refused to support African nationalists, and boycotted independence day celebrations in 1963—one must ask whether Moore's threats disrupted his inner foundation, or whether the British system of penal transportation and detention without trial worked as an effective instrument against African agitators. See The Command Paper 1691 published in May 1922. *The Nation* newspaper put the number of dead Africans at twenty-five. See *The East African Standard*, "Colonial Office Dispatch to Kenya Governor," December 21, 1929; *The Nation*, "The Man They Call A 'Black European,'" January 31, 1960; Henry Monck-Mason Moore to the District Commissioner, Marsabit, December 4, 1930, Political Prisoner—Harry Thuku DC/MBT/7/8/1 KNA, NRB. Also see "Precis of Interview given by His Excellency the Governor to Harry Thuku at Marsabit on March 11, 1928 in a "Confidential" dispatch, Political Prisoner—Harry Thuku DC/MBT/7/8/1 KNA, NRB.

<sup>27</sup>Thuku, *An Autobiography*, 32.

an agitator or champion, he set in motion the processes that led to labor reforms in Kenya, especially reforms involving child labor in the 1920s and thereafter.

Neither Thuku nor those who agitated against juvenile labor (e.g. Jomo Kenyatta writing from Britain)<sup>28</sup> disclosed the children's ages, but their persistent agitation brought the subject of child labor to the public's attention in Kenya and Britain. In 1924, for example, the government, in a circular to provincial and district heads, acted by stating that laws and regulations governing the compulsion of native labor were "imperfectly understood." To put the matter straight, the government outlined that the compulsion of labor was restricted to able-bodied African men. Women and children, the circular read, "must not be ordered or compelled" to work on public roads and government stations.<sup>29</sup> Although by 1927 women and children were unpaid and unfed, the government attempted to end forced labor.<sup>30</sup> Moving expeditiously to reassure their critics at home and in London, officials in Nairobi defended themselves by pointing out that the government did "not countenance" the employment of women and children for work on public roads, and did not call out such labor at any time.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Jomo Kenyatta, the future president of post-colonial Kenya, was one of the many voices that campaigned against child labor. While in London to complain about the Crown Land Ordinance of 1915, which nullified the right of native ownership of land and made the Kikuyu mere tenants of the Crown, Kenyatta submitted short protest articles to the press in Britain simplifying the on-going labor dispute in Kenya to the British public. Kenyatta linked Thuku's arrest to his opposition of "forced labor and other repressive measures." He reminded the readers of *Times and Tide* that the lengthy detention without trial defied the British system of "fair play and justice." To the readers of the *Daily Worker*, Kenyatta assured them that Thuku was not a monster. "All the people followed Thuku and saw that what he said was right," Kenyatta wrote, and maintained that Thuku agitated "against the forced labor of girls and also against the taxes." Because of Thuku's efforts, Kenyatta concluded: the Government had to *abolish the forced labor of girls*, and to reduce the poll and hut taxes again from sixteen shillings to twelve. Therefore, Thuku was still more popular, and the *girls* and *young men* made songs about him and sang them in the villages [emphasis added]. See, Jomo Kenyatta, "East Africa," *Times and Tide*, December 13, 1929; Kenyatta, "An African People Rise in Revolt," *Daily Worker*, January, 20, 1930.

<sup>29</sup>G.V. Maxwell, Chief Native Commissioner, Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, Native Affairs Department, "Compulsory Labor," Circular No. 33, September 4, 1924. Employment of Natives on Roads, CO533/748, TNA.

<sup>30</sup>Female Labor in Kenya, November 15, 1927 Employment of Natives on Roads, CO533/748, TNA. In 1927, an unidentified settler who planned to start a campaign against forced and unpaid labor in colonial Kenya wrote to the colonial office in London to complain about compulsory labor practices. According to the settler, "about 80 women [and children]" worked in Government stations under the supervision of Tribal Retainers. "These women," the settler added, "were neither paid nor fed." See Settler Comment Upon Native Labor Conditions in Kenya—in 1927 (July 5, 1927), Employment of Natives on Roads, CO533/748, TNA.

<sup>31</sup>Acting Governor to Secretary of States for the Colonies, July 31, 1927, Employment of Natives on Roads, CO533/748, TNA.

## Minimum Age

Long before Harry Thuku exposed “problems” in the child labor policy, the colonial government in Kenya was content with exploiting African children. An examination of labor ordinances before 1922 suggests that the government hardly considered child labor an immediate problem worthy of consideration.<sup>32</sup> But things changed after the consequential confrontation. Beginning with The Master and Servant (Amendment) Ordinance, 1924, the government outlined its labor policies and guidelines. Although this particular Ordinance ignored children and child labor, children worked on colonial farms and in homes as domestic servants. In 1926, the government, for the first time, in The Custody of Children Ordinance, defined “child” as a person appearing to be under the age of sixteen years.<sup>33</sup> But this definition would not be the last; it changed in subsequent years. For example, in 1934, the Juvenile Ordinance defined a child as anyone below fourteen years, a change in policy that allowed employers to recruit younger children without the fear of repercussions.<sup>34</sup> Much to dissenters’ objections, four years later the government revised the minimum age. Under Section 28 (3) (b) of Ordinance No. II of 1938, the minimum age was reduced to ten years. “No juvenile who appears to be below the age of ten years,” the Ordinance declared, “shall be allowed to enter into a contract of service.”<sup>35</sup> It was clear that in 1938 and beyond there had been a very considerable progress in discussing the practicability of fixing a minimum age for industrial and non-industrial employment involving children. A generation later, the Prevention of Cruelty to and Neglect of Children Ordinance, 1955, left the definition of “actual or apparent age” to the courts, but it defined a child as a person under the age of sixteen years.<sup>36</sup>

The failure to definitively set a minimal age for wage work persisted throughout the colonial period. In 1956, less than seven years before the end of colonialism, a company manager responsible for recruiting was unaware of any ordinance that prevented his company from recruiting juveniles.<sup>37</sup> Frequent changes in labor policy created such unnecessary confusion and made the work of labor

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<sup>32</sup> The first ordinance to address labor related concerns in colonial Kenya was the East African Protectorate: Ordinances and Regulations, Vol. IV. January 1st to December 31st 1902, which only considered “employer” and “servant.”

<sup>33</sup> The Custody of Children Ordinance, 1926, KNA, NRB; The Custody of Children Ordinance, 1926, CO533/700, TNA.

<sup>34</sup> The Juveniles Ordinance, 1934, KNA, NRB.

<sup>35</sup> The Employment of Servants Ordinance, 1938, KNA, NRB.

<sup>36</sup> Children and Young Person Legislation in Kenya CO859/574, TNA.

<sup>37</sup> K. Archer, Manager, Eastern Produce & Estates, to DC, Kakamega (August 18, 1956) Labor Policy DC/KMG/2/12/13 KNA, NRB.

officers who tried to enforce the law difficult,<sup>38</sup> yet the government expected them to “thoroughly understand the Labor Laws and have a good working knowledge of criminal law.”<sup>39</sup> As the conversation between the DC, Turkana, and Husband reveals, officials lagged behind and expected the Labor Commissioner in Nairobi to guide them.

The prohibition against employing underage children came into sharp focus in 1938. As outlined in the Employment of Servants Ordinance, 1938, no juveniles were to be employed as porters, fuel cutters, trolley or rickshaw boys, or in any other class of labor for which, in the opinion of a Government medical officer, they were physically unsuitable.<sup>40</sup> In addition, the Ordinance forbade professional recruiters from recruiting juveniles under sixteen years of age. According to official thinking, the forms of employment normally open to juveniles were domestic service, commerce and offices, institutions, local authority, grass-cutting, cleaning or gardening, and agriculture.<sup>41</sup> Contrary to these provisions, however, and, as figure 1 illustrates, children worked odd jobs.

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<sup>38</sup>For instance, Ordinance No. 35 of 1950 amended the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Ordinance. Without defining “young person” or setting the minimum age, the new law prohibited labor officers from employing them as trimmers or stokers in any ship. See The Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children (Amendment) Ordinances, 1950.

<sup>39</sup>Memorandum for Guidance of Officers of the Labor Department, Prosecution by Labor Officers Under Various Ordinances ABK/1/4, KNA, NRB.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Colin S. Owen, Principal Probation Officer and Chief Inspector of Approved Schools, “Memorandum on the Employment of Juveniles,” Employment of Juvenile Africans and Others BZ/14/1 KNA, NRB.





Fig. 1. Three African children at work on one of the oscillating tables from which the alluvial concentrates passed to a smaller table. Although we cannot independently verify their ages, the children's tiny bodies suggests that they were too young for this kind of physical labor. Source: *East African Standard*, "Alluvial Working in Kakamega," March 2, 1935. Photo: L Pemberton.

The child labor law of 1938 underscored the significance of recruitment certificates, and it forbade labor agents and professional recruiters from recruiting juveniles without first obtaining a certificate from a District Officer stating that "the permission of the father or guardian of such juvenile has been obtained."<sup>42</sup> Children who obtained certificates of employment were permitted to enter into a contract of service, but it was up to them to comprehend the contract's terms. In other words, the law did not completely forbid children from entering the labor force. Rather, it encouraged unscrupulous recruiters to take advantage of the "permission" loophole to beat the system. Most recruiters and employers ignored the section of the law that required them to appear in person with the juvenile and the juvenile's father (or if his father was dead, his legal guardian) before a District Officer prior to obtaining a permit to recruit.<sup>43</sup>

The manipulation of employment loopholes by recruiters and employers came

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<sup>42</sup> Employment of Servants Ordinance, 1938, KNA, NRB.

<sup>43</sup>H. de Warrenne Waller, DC, Kitui, to Township Plholders and all employees of labor, July 17, 1953, Labor Employment of Juveniles MV/10/16, KNA, NRB.

to light in the case involving Suleiman Said, a recruiter and employer. On July 8, 1945, Said recruited fifteen boys for work in the Manoni Sugar Factory (Eastern Province). According to one of Said's recruits, Said promised to pay "each of us Shs. 6/- per month, plus posho. Nothing was said about housing."<sup>44</sup> Together with his Swahili driver, Said "put" the boys in a lorry and left Kitui that morning. Along the way, the two pulled over at a house in Mazi, where they consumed alcohol and *nyama choma* (grilled goat meat). The boys were never fed. After four hours, Said and his driver emerged from the house "very drunk." In the boy's own words, on their way to Kibwezi:

The lorry was swerving all over the road because the driver was drunk. We cried out and were very afraid. . . the lorry was driven so badly that the lorry left the road and crashed through some sisal and finally turned over on its side throwing us out. Two persons were killed when the lorry overturned. One was a man to whom we had given a lift from Hawi and the other was a juvenile aged about 8 or 9 years. His name was Kilanyi Njeru of Kitui. We seven were all hurt slightly and suffered from shock. Seven others were injured and taken to hospital at Voi. The driver was not hurt. Suleiman was injured slightly.<sup>45</sup>

The matter came to the attention of colonial officials because the lorry carrying the children was involved in an accident. According to the government's version of the incident, all the children escaped with their lives.<sup>46</sup> Said was charged on fifteen counts, one of which was later withdrawn. Citing Section 28 (1) of Ordinance II of 1938, which forbade private and professional recruiters from recruiting children unless such juveniles had obtained a certificate from a DO, the Magistrate fined Said twenty shillings, "I.D. three days imprisonment," and ordered him to pay to the Labor Department the cost incurred in repatriating the recruited juveniles.<sup>47</sup>

The incident involving Said was not an isolated one. In South Kavirondo, a clerk in the Labor Office stopped five "children all under 10 years old . . . on the

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<sup>44</sup>Recorded Statement of Kilanda Kiondu, July 16, 1945, Labor Employment of Juveniles MV/10/16, KNA, NRB.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>DC, Voi, to Labor Commissioner, Nairobi, July 14, 1945, Labor Employment of Juveniles MV/10/16, KNA, NRB.

<sup>47</sup>1st Class Magistrate, November 24, 1945, Labor Employment of Juveniles MV/10/16, KNA, NRB.

Railway Station . . . when they were about to embark for Taveta,”<sup>48</sup> about 675 miles away. One boy, Mlando, was “deaf and dumb,” and it is unclear whether or not the recruiter explained to him the object of the trip and the nature of the work. What was clear, though, was that the DC repatriated the boys and vowed to act against the recruiter who had already left for Taveta with other children.

In another incidence, Lokonyi Asala, a recruiter in Bushimuli, Idakho location, recruited Romanus Okal, a juvenile under twelve years of age and a pupil of Standard Four at Eregi Primary School, for labor on the estate of the Septum Tea Company of Songhor (Kisumu) without his parents’ knowledge and against their wishes.<sup>49</sup> Unlike the recruits involved in Said and Matonye’s botched missions, Okal arrived at Septum Tea Company and reported for duty before his mother asked “that her son be returned to her as soon as possible.”<sup>50</sup> Company officials agreed to repatriate Okal after the DC of North Nyanza intervened.

Incidences such as the aforementioned occurred frequently, and the three examples illustrate in the words of Sir Granville Orde Browne that “the provision of the law which insist[ed] upon the children being accompanied by a parent or guardian [was] too often observed with a considerable measure of laxity.”<sup>51</sup> Despite Browne’s observation, the government did not act quickly to punish offenders. Its rate of prosecution was dismal. For example, in 1955 and 1956 only 48 and 46 employers respectively were prosecuted for the illegal employment of juveniles.<sup>52</sup> The dismal figures emboldened recruiters to break the law with

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<sup>48</sup>DC, South Kavirondo, “Child Labor,” June 30, 1938, Labor Agents Permits DC/KSM/1/17/66 KNA, NRB. It was not uncommon for children to walk long distances away from home. Archdeacon noted in 1939 that “some children may have to go as far as 500 miles from home” for work. Owen, “Child Labor,” *East African Standard*, January 20, 1939. Also see Owen “Child Labor in East Africa,” *The Spectator*, January 6, 1939; Owen, “Child Labor,” *East African Standard*, January 20, 1939. In 1947, “four totos [children]” were said to have walked “from Taveta to Voi [sixty-eight miles] having been recruited by an Assistant Recruiter. The DC, Voi, gave them subsistence allowance and repatriated them under escort. DC, Voi, to DC, Kitui, “Juveniles—Labor,” June 20, 1947. Labor Employment of Juveniles MV/10/16 KNA, NRB. In addition, C. Campbell, DC, Machakos, complained to the PC (3), Southern Area about the view that children Machakos who go to Nairobi (forty miles) were not “young criminals.” Campbell to PC, “Wakamba Juveniles,” February 9, 1956. Labor Employment of Juveniles MV/10/16 KNA, NRB. Leeds, Labor Officer, Thika, complained to DC, Kitui that children were leaving Kitui for Thika (eighty-one miles) to work at Messrs Bobs Narries Ltd. Leeds to DC, “Employment of Children,” December, 20, 1958. Labor Employment of Juveniles MV/10/16 KNA, NRB.

<sup>49</sup>L.T. Ross, Principal, St. Augustine’s T.T. Centre, to DO, Kakamega, “Tea Estate Labor: Romanus Okal s/o Bukachi,” May 28, 1957, Labor Policy DC/KMG/2/12/13 KNA, NBR.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Sir Granville Orde Browne’s Report to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on Labor Conditions in East Africa. November 22, 1945, Labor Employment of Juveniles, MV/10/16/ KNA, NRB.

<sup>52</sup>Colin S. Owen, Principal Probation Officer and Chief Inspector of Approved Schools, June 21, 1958, “Memorandum on the Employment of Juveniles,” Employment of Juveniles Africans and Others BZ/14/1 KNA, NRB.



impunity. Moreover, they treated official complains with contempt. Henry Oyuwa, a driver/recruiter for Chemoni Tea Estate, told off the DC after the latter inspected his bus and discovered that a minor worker was inside. Appearing to be “under the influence of drink,” Oyuwa dismissed the DC and told him “that this was no concern of his as the fellow was an employee of long standing.”<sup>53</sup>

The drama surrounding the ages of child workers vexed officials throughout the colonial period in Kenya. Key actors in the labor industry such as DOs, employers, and recruiters hardly understood what constituted minor workers or their minimum ages. Indeed, Husband seemed confused on this subject. Three years after he instructed the DC in Turkana that the child workers’ ages should be between twelve and eighteen years, Husband advised the Permanent Secretary (PS) in the Ministry of Education, Labor and Lands to consider juveniles as “males and females under the age of 16 years.”<sup>54</sup> In other words, those between sixteen and eighteen were to be considered adults. Yet, in making this critical guideline, Husband did not refer to any ordinance, an oversight suggesting that the recommendation was his personal view.

The inability to resolve the question of minimum age engendered serious problems throughout the colony. First, most company managers ignored age and turned to height as the criteria for recruitment. Writing to the DC in Kakamega to ask him to issue recruitment permits to his company recruiters, K. Archer, Manager, Eastern Produce & Estates, also requested he be “allowed to recruit juveniles over 4’ 11 high.”<sup>55</sup> By turning to height, Archer probably thought that tall boys, although young in age, were physically ready for manual labor. He was least concerned with the psychological effects of height that people, especially persons of short stature, deal with every day. Needless to say, the use of height as a measure of success often undermined the pride and self-esteem of short people.<sup>56</sup>

Secondly, unwilling to go through the tedious process of applying for recruitment permits for their recruiters, some company managers kidnapped children and forced them to work on their estates. In 1952, for example, the Mombasa branch of the Kikuyu General Union (KGU) wrote to Fenner Brockway, a British Member of Parliament and member of the League against Imperialism, to complain about Major C.E.V. Buxton, a European farmer in Limuru, who kidnapped fourteen juveniles from Limuru and took them to Vipingoni Estates

<sup>53</sup>District Commissioner, North Nyanza, to Messrs. Chemoni Tea Estate, “Recruiting of Labor,” May 11, 1957, Labor Policy DC/KMG/2/12/13 KNA, NRB.

<sup>54</sup>Husband to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education Labor and Lands, “Employment of African Women and Children on European Farms,” May 22, 1958, Minimum Wages, ABK/1/36 KNA, NRB.

<sup>55</sup>K. Archer to DC, Kakamega, June 30, 1965 Labor Policy DC/KMG/2/12/13 KNA, NRB.

<sup>56</sup>Kate Gilbert Phifer, *Tall and Small: A Book About Height* (New York, NY: Walker and Co. 1987).

in Kilifi District (about 346 miles away).<sup>57</sup> Led by Wilson Maina Macharia, KGU officials informed Brockway that Buxton treated the children “as slaves.” They accused him of compelling the children to work “from 6 a.m. until 6 p.m. without giving them food for [the] whole day.”<sup>58</sup> Pointing out that the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and the Attorney’s General Office were aware of the matter but had so far failed to act, KGU members observed that Britain had outlawed the slave trade, yet the slave trade was “still going on in Kenya by underground movements, and this [was] carried on by settlers.”<sup>59</sup> Macharia stated that KGU’s members “rescued” the fourteen boys and brought them back to Nairobi before sending them to their respective homes in Kiabu, Muranga, Machakos, and Kitui districts. On the boy’s behalf, KGU sued Buxton, and the court fined him Ksh. 600.<sup>60</sup>

Increased incidences of mistreatment of children, especially minor workers, prompted the passage of the “Prevention of Cruelty to and Neglect of Children Ordinance 1955,” popularly known as “The Children’s Charter,” which was based largely on the United Kingdom’s principles and practices. This Ordinance was ineffective due to staffing problems that undermined its execution. Seeking to strengthen the Ordinance and perhaps lessen cruelty to children, the Cabinet Office proposed the appointment of Probation Officers in Nairobi, Mombasa, and Nakuru. If the proposal proved impossible to implement, the Office advised the Treasury to set aside finances to enable the hiring of civilian employees.<sup>61</sup>

### Self-Appointed Uncles

The “large and increasing number of boys under Registration age employed in towns in Kenya” caught the attention of the Church of Scotland Mission in the country.<sup>62</sup> Indeed, the employment of young boys was a subject of discussion during the Annual General Meeting of the Kenya Missionary Council, an arm of the Church

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<sup>57</sup>Letter from Kikuyu General Union (Mombasa Branch) to Hon. F. Brockway, November 4, 1952 (Lord Leslie Hale Papers) Reel LLH/1/81 KNA, NRB.

<sup>58</sup>The Kikuyu General Union, Mombasa Branch, to Attorney General, “Complaint Against Major C.E.V. Buxton For Kidnapping,” July 18, 1952 (Lord Leslie Hale Papers) Reel LLH/1/81 KNA, NRB.

<sup>59</sup>Letter from Kikuyu General Union to Hon. F. Brockway, November 4, 1952 (Lord Leslie Hale Papers) Reel LLH/1/81 KNA, NRB. For a similar discussion about the kidnap of children in South Africa for slave-like labor, see Atkins, 16.

<sup>60</sup>Wilson Maina Macharia interview with Samson K. Ndanyi, June 22, 2016, at KNA. Kidnapping in colonial Africa occurred frequently. See for example Beverly Grier, “Child Labor and Africanist Scholarship: A Critical Overview,” *African Studies Review* 47, no. 2 (Sep., 2004): 5-6

<sup>61</sup>Cabinet Office, Nairobi, March 27, 1956 Children and Young Person Legislation in Kenya CO859/574, TNA.

<sup>62</sup>A.R. Barlow, Hon. Secretary, Church of Scotland Mission, Kikuyu, to Chief Native Commissioner, March 29, 1927, Alliance High School, 1923–1930 MSS/3/619 KNA, NRB.

of Scotland Mission, in February 1927. The Council deplored child labor and asked the government to stop the practice as it contributed to the degradation of a minor's moral and physical well-being.<sup>63</sup> What bothered Council members the most was the section of the law that required children who sought employment, but did not reside with their parents, only to acquire permits from Labor Officers. According to Council members, the prevailing conditions in the Native quarters in big towns threatened to erode the moral behaviors of unaccompanied minors. "When children under Registration age are employed away from home," the Council informed the Chief Native Commissioner in Nairobi, "special arrangements should be made to conserve their moral and physical well-being."<sup>64</sup>

Council members did not reveal the "special arrangements" they had had in mind, nor did they provide the data that supported the argument of moral decline. Quietly, though, the Council's Executive Committee asked its Secretary to ask missionary "friends" to monitor "the possible deleterious effect of the employment of young African children on farms and in towns."<sup>65</sup> The Council hoped that missionaries would "observe" the effects of employment on young children "during the period of their employment or subsequent to their return to the Reserve" and report their "opinions" to the Secretary. The Secretary wrote to a "dear friend" (perhaps a missionary) asking for the missionary's testimony "as to whether employment of young children away from home ha[d] any obvious evil effects or not."<sup>66</sup>

Archdeacon W. E. Owen of Kavirondo was perhaps the sharpest critic of underage child labor. In 1939, Owen questioned the existing policy on child labor by pointing out that the "exploitation of child labor [was] probably the meanest policy in our African Empire."<sup>67</sup> He began by censuring Section 28 of the Employment of Servants Ordinance, 1938 (discussed above), which exempted children under ten years from employment. Owen then turned to the dismal pay and the "cheap food" given to the children. He then questioned the lack of workmen's compensation legislation to protect the children except in the mining industry. Pointing out that employers took no responsibility for the children's safety and failed to pay those who became sick,<sup>68</sup> Owen blamed them for failing to ensure that "children

<sup>63</sup>Barlow to Chief Native Commissioner, March 29, 1927, Alliance High School, 1923–1930 MSS/3/619 KNA, NRB.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Barlow to "Dear Friend," January 17, 1927, Alliance High School, 1923–1930 MSS/3/619 KNA, NRB.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>Archdeacon Owen, "Child Labor," *East African Standard*, January 20, 1939.

<sup>68</sup>Archdeacon Owen, "Child Labor in East Africa," *The Spectator*, January 6, 1939; Owen, "Child Labor."

reach[ed] home after their term of employment.”<sup>69</sup> Short on evidential data, Owen complained that the employers’ lack of responsibility resulted in “lost” children who “wander[ed] from employment to employment.”<sup>70</sup>

Owen was not done. More than anyone else, the venerable Archdeacon linked child labor to the “heavy taxation” the government imposed. He characterized the tactics used to collect taxes as “harsh” and argued that these were the “forces” that compelled many African parents to allow their children to go into wage labor. On the subject of moral problems, Owen, like the Missionary Council before him, argued that labor centers were dens of “sexual immorality,” where Europeans cohabited with African women. As was often the case, Owen, without revealing the source of his evidence, claimed that venereal diseases were on the rise in labor lines, where “many children [found] themselves employed.”<sup>71</sup> But Owen did not disclose whether children in these centers carried venereal diseases, which would have meant that children’s bodies were diseased instruments of colonial labor. According to Owen, children working away from parental supervision were often found “to be rolling about drunk.”<sup>72</sup> Owen characterized the recruitment of underage children as a “scandal,” and he added that “there was not the care for the welfare of the child outside of working hours which was necessary if the child’s character were not to be exposed unnecessary to moral perils beyond its power to resist [sic].”<sup>73</sup> He concluded by reminding the British public that the responsibility for colonial policies rested with them. In a tone bordering on paternalism, Owen insisted that “the very least *we* can do to protect those who cannot protect themselves is to see to it that no children under 14 years be taken to employment distant from their homes.”<sup>74</sup> Because of Britain’s self-appointment as trustee of African children, Owen urged his fellow countrymen to “be worthy of [their] trust.”<sup>75</sup>

Owen’s criticism echoed throughout the world and in the settler community in Kenya, where it unnerved White employers.<sup>76</sup> To Denis N. Neylan, a settler in Nakuru, Owen was nothing but an “old crank” who made “libelous statements.”<sup>77</sup> Neylan dismissed Owen’s views and questioned the deafening silence of “his brother clergy, who [were] supposed to stand for absolute truth and honesty. . . in

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<sup>69</sup>Owen, “Child Labor.”

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

<sup>71</sup>Owen, “Child Labor in East Africa.”

<sup>72</sup>*The Chicago Defender*, “Churchman Exposes Child Labor in British Colony,” January 11, 1938.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>Owen, “Child Labor in East Africa.”

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>The criticism also drew the attention of *The Chicago Defender’s* editors, who wrote about it under the banner of “Churchman Exposes Child Labor in British Colony” on June 11, 1938.

<sup>77</sup>Denis N. Neylan, “Juvenile Labor,” *East African Standard*, January 6, 1939.

respect of juvenile labor.”<sup>78</sup> Explaining the “absolute truth” from a settler’s frame of reference, Neylan argued that juvenile labor was “entirely voluntary,” and that minor laborers came and went “at their own sweet will.” Neylan concluded by stating that white employers “cared for juveniles.”<sup>79</sup>

Similarly, M. Mallet, a settler from Ruaraka, rebuked Owen for most of his concerns. With a certain bravado, Mallet waxed enthusiastically about the “12 and 14 juveniles” who worked for him. At the end of his five-year farming career in Kenya, Mallet boasted how he had between “50 and 60 happy totos [children].”<sup>80</sup> He also boasted of his care, even suggesting that it was far better than what the children received from their parents. To Mallet, Owen was a “pet theorist” who held on to a “frail” straw so long as it helped him advance his pet theory. Against Owen’s view that heavy taxation compelled parents to allow their children to engage in wage labor, Mallet agreed with Neylan’s view of voluntary labor, and added that parents were “very pleased” to see their children employed. “There was no need of coercion,” he wrote, adding that “they came in little flocks and for everyone I took on I refused three, much to their disappointment.”<sup>81</sup> Echoing Neylan’s view, Mallet noted that his juvenile workers—mostly males who worked as kitchen boys, chicken boys, horse boys, farm boys, dog boys, errand boys, and numerous other occupations that he could not recall—came and went “as they pleased.”<sup>82</sup> He did not disclose how he arranged for their housing, but he insisted that he fed them “plenty of food,” provided them with “good housing,” and attended to “even the smallest scratch.”<sup>83</sup>

Colonial settlers and missionaries held themselves as altruistic avuncular figures and moral guardians of the African child. They argued that they stood on the side of the African child, but, as an informant suggested, “God,” not missionaries or settlers, “was with us.”<sup>84</sup> Throughout the colonial period in Africa, missionaries and settlers constituted the thread that held together the rugged fabric of colonialism. As part of the colonial apparatus, they promoted an alien culture,

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> M. Mallet, “Child Labor in Kenya,” *East African Standard*, January 13, 1939.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Mallet, “Child Labor in Kenya.”

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. Caroline Allan, another settler from Kericho, invited Owen to meet settlers who harbored the welfare of Kenya at heart. In Allan’s view, Owen grossly “underestimated” Kenya’s settlers,” but the community had forgiven him for the “folly he no doubt unwittingly committed.” Unlike Neylan and Mallet, who countered Owen on the merits of his arguments, Allan’s letter to the editors of the *East African Standard* missed the gist of Owen’s main concerns. Instead, Allan focused on the willingness of the settler community to invite Owen to “a debate” that would “guide” and “put him right” so that he might not be “a waste of good material.” See *East African Standard*, January 6, 1939.

<sup>84</sup> J.K. Mũtua, personal interview, June 28, 2016, Nairobi, Kenya.

patriotic motivations, and commercial interests.<sup>85</sup> Although they tended to claim that their core mission in Africa was to “cultivate” Africans to embrace new forms of physical hygiene, moral soundness, and spiritual attainment,<sup>86</sup> for the most part, missionaries often sided with secular governments to effect the colonial administrators’ policies. As John and Jean Comaroff put it, the two worked hand-in-hand to colonize the “consciousness” of the African people and to institute and enforce the “consciousness of colonization” in Africa.<sup>87</sup>

As the debate between the church and colonial settlers over who qualified to speak for African children played out in public, the government created a committee to study the controversial issue and offer recommendations in 1939. In particular, the committee focused on Section 28 of the Employment of Servants Ordinance, 1938, with the goal of establishing whether or not the child workers’ minimum age should be raised from ten years. To the delight of the law’s critics, the committee recommended that the “age for agricultural and domestic employment be raised from ten to twelve [and] in industrial occupations from twelve to fourteen.”<sup>88</sup> Although frequent changes in minimum age created anxiety in the colony, the government propagated the notion that “the African youth is the future laborer and that, unless adequate steps are taken to integrate him into the economy . . . his own future, as well as that of the Colony itself will be imperiled.”<sup>89</sup>

## Conclusion

This article has attempted to demonstrate that juvenile wage labor interlaced African children into the fabric of a Western form of capitalism in Africa. Although the process was not an easy undertaking, the challenges exposed the colonizers’ inability to harmonize their conceptual view of an African child, and the frequent definitions and shifts in the meaning of age often undermined the harmonization process. Consequently, key labor actors employed multiple criteria (e.g. height, sturdiness, and age) through which they imagined African children. By all measures, colonialists failed to grasp the logic separating children and wage labor. By 1919, children and wage labor hardly proceeded in tandem, and the two were never considered in the international arena as two sides of the same coin. This

<sup>85</sup>V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988), 45.

<sup>86</sup>Timothy Burke, *Lifeboy Men, Lux Women: Commodification, Consumption, and Cleanliness in Modern Zimbabwe* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996); John and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution* vol. 1 & 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1991& 1997).

<sup>87</sup>Comaroff, 309–314.

<sup>88</sup>Owen, “Child Labor.”

<sup>89</sup>Report of the Labor Department of Kenya, April 6, 1950. Employment of Children, Women and Young Persons, in Industry and Other Occupations—Kenya, CO859/191/10, TNA.



universally recognized logic is enshrined in the International Labor Organization's constitution (1919), but it meant little to Britain's "men on the spot," even when the evidence suggest that they understood ILO's spirit.<sup>90</sup> Contrary to ILO's Convention, which Kenya observed, and contrary to Kenya's own law, children worked without the prior parental consent. As such, the disconnection between government and international and domestic laws complicated the definition of an African child throughout the colonial era.

This article challenges the theory that links child labor to poverty in African households. At its core, the theory postulates that African families, poor in material wealth, willingly sent their children to work. This theory shifts the blame to African parents and excuses labor recruiters and employers who forced children into the labor industry. Ignoring multiple incidences of kidnapping of African children for labor, the theory fails to hold accountable the kidnappers, mainly labor recruiters acting on the behest of colonial settlers and employers. Two incidences discussed in this article are of particular interest. First, the forceful employment of Okal at the Septum Tea Company against his mother's knowledge and objection, who asked he be returned to her immediately. Secondly, the KGU's agitation against Buxton's kidnap of fourteen children from Limuru to Vipingoni Estates in Kilifi District. These incidences illustrate the African opposition to the colonial labor recruitment regime.

Finally, this article has implicitly exposed a gender binary that informed labor practices in colonial Kenya. Officials often employed child labor as a means to construct masculinity and separate genders. By recruiting mostly boys in large numbers to work on settler farms and in homes, factories, and mining, for example, they created a gender binary and defined masculinity based on the boys' physical makeup and ability to work. The "reconstruction of African childhood was and is a gendered process."<sup>91</sup> Girls in colonial Zimbabwe, Nyasaland, and Swaziland, for example, had less freedom of mobility and very limited employment prospects in sprawling towns across the country.<sup>92</sup> For the most part during the period under review, women generally had less access than men to the colonial economy and labor. Frederick Cooper sums up the disparity this way: "industrial man, in officials' eyes, was indeed a male."<sup>93</sup>

The constructed categories were key to controlling black male bodies at critical stages of growth. As Dior Konate informs us in reference to the control

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<sup>90</sup>S.A. Ogilvie's letter, January 24, 1952, Employment of women and children- Kenya CO859/302, TNA.

<sup>91</sup>Grier, 17.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid.; Chirwa, 665; Simelane, 572.

<sup>93</sup>Cooper, 2; Also see López-Calva, 66.

of young female delinquents in colonial Senegal, “the definition of a legal age for children reveals the colonial authorities’ willingness to take on a greater role in the control of African youth.”<sup>94</sup> For the control to take hold, however, public institutions supporting this idealized thinking were established. Throughout colonial Africa, Approved Schools and Juvenile Courts suddenly emerged to institutionalize the control and make it permanent. In Kenya, with regard to the age group thought to be most prone to delinquency (fourteen to sixteen years of age), a figure from the Juvenile Court in Nairobi shows that between 1954 and 1957, “1579 children under 13 years, 4273 children between 14 and 16, and 792 children between 16 and 18 appeared before the Court” charged with multiple juvenile offenses that included withholding their labor by evading responsibilities, loitering at street corners, and truancy.<sup>95</sup> Generally, Approved Schools admitted those children the administrations believed could easily be rehabilitated before rejoining the labor force. Therefore, individuals and private and public institutions—like Owen, white employers, and the Church of Scotland Mission—that pretended to speak on the behest of African children while condoning colonialism in all its manifestation were more interested in taking part in the already elaborate control system.

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### **Note on Contributor**

Samson K. Ndanyi is a doctoral candidate in the history department at Indiana University, Bloomington. Broadly, he focuses on socio-cultural and political themes in pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial Africa. Specifically, he pays close attention to children, cinema, and child labor in colonial Kenya.

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<sup>94</sup>Dior Konate, “On Colonial Laws and the Treatment of Young Female Delinquents in Senegal: The Case of Léonie Guèye,” *Stichproben Wiener Zeitschrift für kritische Afrikastudien* 7, no. 12 (2007): 39.

<sup>95</sup>Colin S. Owen, Principal Probation Officer and Chief Inspector of Approved Schools, “Central Probation Committee: Employment of Juveniles Sub-Committee’s Report,” (August 3, 1957). Employment of Juveniles Africans and Others BZ/14/1 KNA, NRB.



# Prelude to the Establishment of the Nigerian Railway Corporation, 1949-1955

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**Abstract:** Making use of previously unused Colonial Office records at the National Archives in Kew, including newspaper reports, interviews with staff of the Nigerian Railway, and debates in the Federal House of Representatives, this study examines the forces that dictated the establishment of the Nigerian Railway Corporation. It argues that the primary reason why the British colonial government established the corporation was to assist foreign interests in Nigeria by distancing itself from the direct management of labor relations between the Nigerian colonial state and the militant trade unions in the Nigerian Railway and other commercially oriented government departments. By placing the day-to-day management of these departments beyond the immediate reach of ambitious Nigerian nationalists who were anxious to quickly take over the control of the colonial state, the colonial government undermined the ability of local elite to build their weak economic base.

**Key words:** Nigeria, Railway, Ports, Labor Unions, Public, Corporations, and Management.

## Introduction

During and after the Second World War, Britain, holder of many colonies in Africa, was in a serious economic crisis.<sup>1</sup> In the last quarter of 1945, it owed more than £18,000 million,<sup>2</sup> and from 1947 to the early 1950s, it experienced a deteriorating financial crisis.<sup>3</sup> In order to solve these problems, Britain introduced a tight regime of import restrictions and a stringent dollar conversion program at home and in its colonies. Consequently, Britain's multi-dimensional socio-economic problems would later determine imperial and colonial economic policies from the late 1940s to the mid-1950s.<sup>4</sup> Within this period, the consensus of opinion in Whitehall was

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<sup>1</sup>Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extreme, 1914-1991* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1994), 169-170.

<sup>2</sup>William. Roger Louis and R. Robinson, "The Imperialism of Decolonization," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 22, no. 3 (September 1994): 464-465; Alan Milward, *War, Economy and Society 1939-45* (Berkeley: University of California, 1977), 71.

<sup>3</sup>Asher E. Hinds, "Sterling and Imperial Policy, 1945-1951," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* XV, no. 2 (Jan. 1987): 148-149.

<sup>4</sup>Michael Havinden and David Meredith, eds., *Colonialism and Development: Britain and its Tropical Colonies, 1850-1960* (London: Routledge, 1993), 228.

that the resources of British colonies should be exploited to their maximum potential for the benefit of the empire. The tone of the new imperial economic policy was set by Sir Stafford Cripps, the Minister for Economic Affairs. Addressing the African Governors' Conference in November 1947, he stated:

The whole future of sterling group and its ability to survive depends in my view, on a quick and extensive development of our African resources. It is the urgency of the present situation and the need for sterling group...to maintain their economic independence that makes it so essential that we should increase...the tempo of African economic development and force the pace so that within the next 2 - 5 years we can get a really marked increase of production in coal, minerals, timber, raw materials of all kinds and foodstuffs and anything else that will save dollars or we will sell in a dollar market.<sup>5</sup>

One particularly important commodity Britain desired was groundnuts (peanuts), which was an important source of oils and fats for post-war Britain.<sup>6</sup> However, by early 1946, the world supply of oil and fats had become dangerously low, especially for Britain. In response, British Prime Minister, Clement Atlee, was forced to set up a ministerial committee on World Food Supply (WFS) under his chairmanship.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, due to food and raw materials shortages, Britain was plunged into a currency-convertibility-to-dollar crisis in August 1947. Consequently, Cripps formulated the above-mentioned policy. And to implement it, the government established two corporations: the Overseas Food Corporation (OFC) and the Colonial Development Corporation (CDC).<sup>8</sup> Whereas the CDC was "to promote schemes either to earn dollars through exports to the United States or to save dollars by producing raw materials for Britain," the OFC was to coordinate food production and increase supplies to consumers in Britain.<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile Britain had not only suffered as a result of the war, but its

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<sup>5</sup>See National Archives, Kew, England (hereafter NA) CO852/989/3 Speech by the Right Honourable Sir Stafford Cripps, KC, MP, Minister for Economic Affairs to the African Governors' Conference on 12 November 1947.

<sup>6</sup>For instance, its production in Nigeria increased from the pre-war figure of 200,000 tons to more than 322,000 tons in 1946. See NA Prem 8/733 "Economic development in the colonies:" note by Mr. Creech Jones for Mr. Atlee Appendix I, February 5, 1948.

<sup>7</sup>NA Prem. 8/202 "WFS Lord President Mission to United States and Canada."

<sup>8</sup>See the Overseas Resources Development Act of 1948.

<sup>9</sup>NA CO 852/867/1: CEDC (47)7 "Note by the Chairman on the formation of a Colonial Development Corporation.

colonies had as well. Most of their socio-economic infrastructure was neglected during the conflict and was in need of restoration and modernization. Furthermore, there were shortages of essential capital goods. Yet, in order to provide the necessary raw materials for Britain, the infrastructure of the colonies required serious rehabilitation. In the particular case of Nigeria, there were still delays in the transportation of goods even when railway operations had been fully restored, especially the transportation of peanuts from Northern Nigeria to the southern ports. This development prompted the Colonial Office (CO) officials to wonder if Nigerian Railway's (NR) problems were not far more fundamental than the lack of essential equipment. This dilemma in turn caused officials to begin toying with the idea of the complete reorganization of NR.

## Literature Review

The construction, development, and the management of the Nigerian Railway (NR), which was started in 1895, constituted one of the cornerstones of British imperialism in Africa and in colonial Nigeria's political economy. Starting from that time and well into the postcolonial period, the NR was the largest employer of labor in the colony; and by the mid-1970s it had more than 30,000 staff.<sup>10</sup> But for the construction and development of the NR system, it would have been virtually impossible to bring together the many and different ethnic groups that now constitute Nigeria. Thus, the story of the NR is also that of Nigeria; without one the other would not have been possible.<sup>11</sup>

In view of these crucial roles of the NR in the development of Nigeria and the expansion of the British Empire, there is a considerable volume of historical literature on its pre-war and post-war periods. Completely missing from this literature, however, is the analysis of the background to the transformation of the NR into a public corporation. There is, therefore, a gap in the existing literature on the NR and Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC). This present study therefore seeks to fill this gap. First, it is appropriate to review the extant literature on the NR and NRC to contextualize the study. To date, the two most prolific historians of

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<sup>10</sup>Nigerian Railway Corporation, *Report and Accounts for the Year Ended 31st March 1965* (Ebute-Metta: Nigerian Railway Corporation), 35.

<sup>11</sup>Tekena N. Tamuno, "Genesis of the Nigerian Railway II," *Nigeria Magazine* 84 (1965), 84; Francis G. I. Omiunu, "The Role of Transport in Nation Building: the Case of Nigerian Railways," *Nigerian Magazine* 137 (1981), 7.

the NR and NRC are Olasiji Oshin<sup>12</sup> and Wale Oyemakinde.<sup>13</sup> Whereas Oshin has focused primarily on the political history of the railway institution, Oyemakinde has concentrated on its labor history. Other prominent historians of the organization include Tekena Tamuno,<sup>14</sup> Olufemi Omosini,<sup>15</sup> John M. Carland,<sup>16</sup> Lisa Lindsay,<sup>17</sup> and Francis Jaekel.<sup>18</sup> The first set of historical narratives on the NR was undertaken by the organization's officials. The first historical analysis was published in 1951 and was by J. Stocker, an official in the NR's publicity department. It was an overview of the development, achievements, and failures of the organization in its first fifty years of existence.<sup>19</sup> The next was also by the NR itself and was published in 1960, the year of Nigeria's independence. It was also a general overview of the historical development of the NR and its major milestones.<sup>20</sup>

The first broad and academic study of the NR, however, is the two-part article by Tekena Tamuno,<sup>21</sup> who traced the "genesis" of the NR and identified the major epochs in its development from the late nineteenth century to the 1960s. Tamuno's analysis, though academic, was in line with the official accounts of the NR; and

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<sup>12</sup>See Victor. O. Oshin, "The Development of Railway Transport in Nigeria, 1880-1945," (Ph.D. Thesis, Obafemi Awolowo University, 1987); "Nigerian Railway under Stress, 1912-1945: a study in Colonial Planning and Management," *Odu: a Journal of West African Studies* (1990): 11-36; and "Road Transport and the Declining Fortunes of the Nigerian Railway, 1901-1950," *Journal of Transport History* 12, no.1 (March, 1991): 11-36.

<sup>13</sup>See J. O. Oyemakinde, "A History of Indigenous Labour on the Nigerian Railway, 1895-1945," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Ibadan, 1970; "Michael Imoudu and the Emergence of Militant Trade Unionism in Nigeria, 1940-1942," *JHSN [Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria]* 7(1974): 541-561; "The Nigerian General Strike of 1945," *JHSN* 7 (1975): 693-710; and "The Railway Workers and Modernization in Colonial Nigeria," *JHSN* 10 (1979): 113-124.

<sup>14</sup>Tekena N. Tamuno, "Genesis of the Nigerian Railway I," *Nigeria Magazine* 83, December 1964, 279-292; "Genesis of the Nigerian Railway II," *Nigeria Magazine* 84, March 1965, 31-43.

<sup>15</sup>Olufemi Omosini, "Railway Projects and British Attitude towards the Development of West Africa, 1872-1903," *Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria* V, no. 4 (June, 1971): 491-507.

<sup>16</sup>John. M. Carland, *Colonial Office and Nigeria, 1898-1914* (London: Macmillan, 1985), especially 13-14, 135-165, and 166-183.

<sup>17</sup>Lisa Lindsay, "Putting the Family on Track: Gender and Domestic Life on the Colonial Nigerian Railway" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Michigan, 1996); "Domesticity and Difference: Male Breadwinners, Working Women, and Colonial Citizenship in the 1945 Nigerian General Strike," *American Historical Review* 104, no. 3 (1999): 783-812; and "'No Need...to Think of Home'? Masculinity and Domestic Life on the Nigerian Railway, c.1940-61," *Journal of African History* 39 (1998): 439-466.

<sup>18</sup>Francis. Jaekel, *The History of the Nigerian Railway*, 3 Volumes (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited, 1997).

<sup>19</sup>John Stocker, *Nigerian Railway Jubilee, 1901-51* (Ebute-Metta: Nigerian Railway Printer, 1951).

<sup>20</sup>*The Nigerian Railway Corporation, A Brief History of the Nigerian Railway Corporation* (Ebute-Metta: Nigerian Railway Corporation, 1960).

<sup>21</sup>Tamuno N. Tamuno, "Genesis of the Nigerian Railway II," *Nigeria Magazine* 84 (1965), 84

even those by Omosini, Carland, and Jaekel.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, Omosini disagrees with Tamuno's analysis that had traced the origins of railway developments in Nigeria to the time between 1889 and 1890. To Omosini, the origins of railway developments in West Africa should start from the 1870s,<sup>23</sup> when many interest groups in West Africa and Britain began to lobby the imperial government to grant them investment and loan guarantee, and approval to construct railway lines in the British West African colonies.<sup>24</sup>

Also writing on the political history of the NR, Carland, discusses the crucial role played by the officials of the Colonial Office in London, particularly that of the Secretary of State for Colonies, Joseph Chamberlain, in formulating and implementing policies and programs for the NR; and factors – financial and bureaucratic – that facilitated or constrained the construction and development of the first railway lines in Nigeria.<sup>25</sup> In later studies, Oshin and Jaekel extended the discourse on the political history of the NR much further. Whereas Oshin's studies on the planning, development, and the management of the NR focus on the period 1880 to the early 1950s, Jaekel's is a comprehensive survey of the first one hundred years of the institution; from 1899 to 1999. Jaekel's three-volume book is a disjointed discussion by a former colonial railway employee reminiscing on the "good old days" of colonial and postcolonial railway development and management in Nigeria.<sup>26</sup>

In contrast to the studies on the political history of the NR are those on its social and labor history, including those by Oyemakinde, Freund, and Lindsay.<sup>27</sup> Oyemakinde focuses primarily on the many related aspects of the history of indigenous labor throughout the NR system, from 1895 to the late 1945. He argues that the recruitment and management of indigenous Nigerian laborers were very crucial to the development of the NR; and that due to their discipline, skills, experience, organizational ability, and location in the economy, they were able to mobilize themselves and other workers in other sectors of the economy, to challenge the colonial authorities on many labor issues. On the other hand, Freund analyses the related issue of labor migration from the railway construction projects

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<sup>22</sup>See Carland, 13-14, 135-165, and 166-183; Lisa Lindsay, "Putting the Family on Track: Gender and Domestic Life on the Colonial Nigerian Railway" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Michigan, 1996); Omosini, 146 and 491

<sup>23</sup>Omosini, 146 and 491.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Carland, 166-183.

<sup>26</sup>Jaekel,

<sup>27</sup>See Tamuno, "Genesis of the Nigerian Railway I" 279-292; Tamuno, "Genesis of the Nigerian Railway II," 31-43; Omosini, 146 and 491; Elizabeth Wrangham, "An African Road Revolution: the Gold Coast in the Period of the Great War," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*. 32, no. 1 (January 2004): 1-5.

in Northern Nigeria into the tin mines of the Plateau area of Jos.<sup>28</sup> Lindsay has complemented the works of other labor historians by specifically studying “the varying and contested masculinity and domesticity...within workers’ communities [and] between family life and industrial relations” in the south-western part of Nigeria.<sup>29</sup>

As can be detected from the literature reviewed above, none of them has discussed the background to and the formation of the Nigerian Railway Corporation, a very critical development, which since 1955 has come to define the character, nature, and trajectory of post-war railway industry in Nigeria. This article argues that the main reasons for the conversion of the NR into a public statutory corporation was for the self-serving economic benefits of British imperialism and Western merchant capital in Nigeria, to enable British merchants have some control and influence over the management of the NR in the postcolonial period, and to ensure that the colonial government would be far removed from direct negotiations with the stubborn post-war railway workers.

The paper is divided into the following parts: development of the NR from the late nineteenth century to 1945; examination of the role of the NR in the management of Nigerian ports up to the early 1950s; identification and critical examination of the various interest groups ranged against the NR vis-à-vis its management of the ports and the factors responsible for the removal of them from the NR’s control; and the, discussion of the important role played by European merchant capital, railway workers, British colonial and imperial officials, and Nigerian politicians in the creation of the (NRC).

### **Development of Nigerian Railway**

In 1898, the British and Nigerian colonial governments began construction of Nigeria’s rail transport network. This was part and parcel of European “railway imperialism” of late nineteenth century Africa.<sup>30</sup> The first phase of Nigeria’s railway network, the Lagos Railway, started in 1898. The railway extended from Lagos (Iddo) on the south coast to Abeokuta and later Ibadan in 1901, a distance of about

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<sup>28</sup>William. M. Freund, “Labour Migration to the Northern Nigeria Tin Mines, 1903-1945,” *Journal of African History* 22 (1981): 73-84.

<sup>29</sup>Lindsay, “‘No need ... to think of home?’”, 439.

<sup>30</sup>Daniel. R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire. Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981); C. B. Davis and K. E. Wilburn Jr, eds. *Railway Imperialism* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991); and Colin Divall, “Railway Imperialisms, Railway Nationalisms” in M. Burri, K. T. Elsasser and D. Gugerli, eds. *Die Internationalität der Eisenbahn 1850 - 1970*, (Zurich: Chronos, 2003), 195-209.

120 miles.<sup>31</sup> From Ibadan, the line was extended to Jebba. In 1911, the Baro-Kano line in the northern part of the colony was completed and a year later joined with the Lagos Railway line at Minna. In 1915, the construction of Jebba Bridge across River Niger was completed, and necessitated the extension of southern railway to Kano in the north. In eastern Nigeria, the Port Harcourt line was constructed to Enugu in 1916 to assist in the transportation of coal from the Udi Hills, near Enugu, to other parts of the country.

Due to the completion of the Markudi Bridge, the Eastern Line finally reached Kaduna in 1932, which facilitated the crossing of River Benue. Further railway constructions were undertaken in phases, and by 1945 the rapidly developing rail network had reached Kaura Namoda in northwest Nigeria, and to Nguru, near Bornu, in the northeast (see Figure 1).

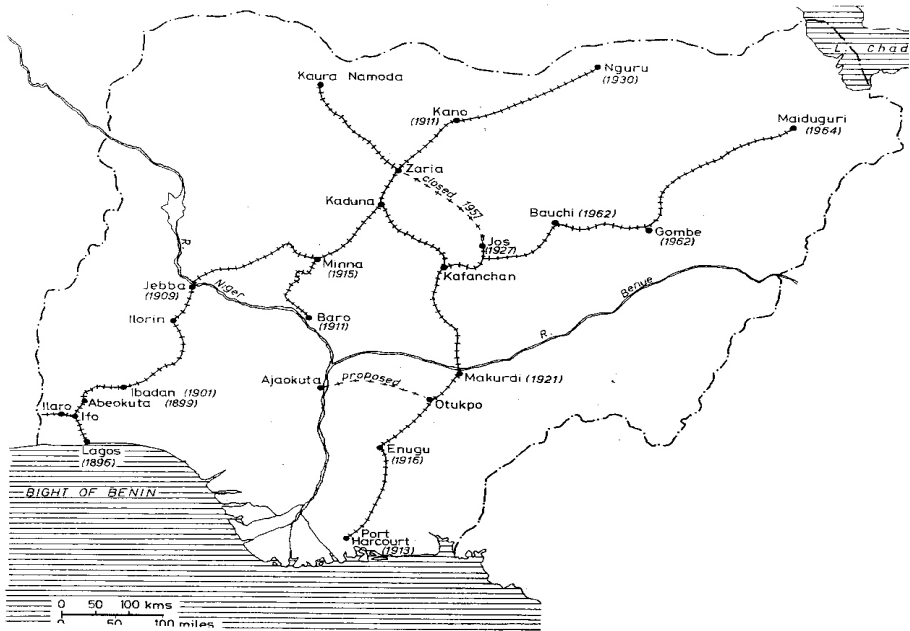


Figure 1: Map of Nigerian Railway network.

<sup>31</sup>Tokunbo A. Ayoola, "Political Economy of Rail Transportation in Nigeria, 1945-1985" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Manchester, 2004), 47.



From the late nineteenth century to 1955, the NR was owned and managed by the Nigerian colonial government and its day-to-day affairs were managed by the Nigerian Railway Department. Originally designed to carry up to 1.5 million tons of goods annually, on the eve of the Second World War, it was carrying a little more than 1.2 million tons, and by late 1945, it was carrying in excess of its installed capacity. For example in the 1944/45 financial year, it carried a total of about 1.7 million tons of goods.<sup>32</sup> Right from the first decade of the twentieth century to the early 1960s, when road transport overtook its rail counterpart in importance in Nigeria, railway was the backbone of the British colonial government-run economy, which was primarily based on import and export trade. In fact, rail routes were first constructed and well developed before modern road network in West Africa.<sup>33</sup>

Although the operation and management of the NR industry from 1901 to 1960, when Nigeria gained its independence, cannot be described as a great commercial success, the Nigerian Railway Department nonetheless recorded modest operating surpluses for several years. The highest of these before 1960 was in the 1958/9 financial year, when revenue reached £15.75 million, and a working surplus of £2,030,606 was achieved.<sup>34</sup> This good performance was followed a year later in 1960/1, by poor financial results; with a net operating deficit of £988,000.<sup>35</sup> However, in 1963/4 the Corporation achieved its best financial performance to date: revenue of about £16.30 million and a working surplus of about £2 million.<sup>36</sup> Thereafter the NRC's fortune began to decline rapidly from which it never recovered.<sup>37</sup>

### **Change of Government in Britain and NR**

Coupled with the poor state of railway fixed assets, NR's problems included a lack of locomotives, coaches, rolling stock, spare parts, and skilled and experienced European supervisory staff. Other thorny issues included ill-equipped workshops and poor management of labor relations.<sup>38</sup> All of these problems, which were not hidden from the Nigerian colonial government and its imperial counterpart in

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<sup>32</sup>*Report of Mission Appointed to Enquire into Production and Transport of Vegetable Oils and Oil Seeds Produced in West Africa Colonies*, Colonial No 211 of 1947.

<sup>33</sup>Wrangham, 1 - 5.

<sup>34</sup>Nigerian Railway Corporation, *Annual Report 1964/1965*. The amounts were in British pounds sterling.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>I. Ifedi, "Development Strategies for Nigerian Railway" <http://www.thisdayonline.com/archive/2002/06/21/20020621let01.html>

<sup>38</sup>For detailed discussions of these issues, see Ayoola, "Political Economy of Rail Transportation," 64-101.

London, proved insurmountable to the British Labour government in power from 1945 to 1951.<sup>39</sup>

This was not the case with the Conservative Government elected in October 1951. The regime was determined to proffer solutions to the “...poor planning and bad management”<sup>40</sup> in the NR. Its resolve further solidified when it discovered that at the beginning of the 1952/3 harvest season, about 150,000 tons of peanuts could not be transported from Kano to the coast.<sup>41</sup> Consequently, the Conservative Government began debating the idea of transforming NR into a commercially viable organization.

To fully comprehend the nature of NR’s problems, Oliver Lyttleton, the new Secretary of State for Colonies, paid an official visit to Nigeria in May 1952. The degrading NR he discovered convinced him that drastic steps must be taken.<sup>42</sup> Back in London, he convinced CO officials that two fundamental changes were necessary.<sup>43</sup> First, it was essential that NR’s organizational structure should be changed from a department of Nigerian civil service to a public corporation. Secondly, there was an urgent need to replace the seemingly incompetent and sluggish General Manager of NR, D. C. Woodward.<sup>44</sup>

However, the very idea of converting not only NR, but other commercially-oriented government departments into public corporations did not originate from London. The idea was first suggested by the Fitzgerald Commission.<sup>45</sup> Following the massacre of 21 coal miners by the Nigerian colonial police at the Iva Valley coal mines of the Enugu Colliery, the commission was set up by the Colonial Office(CO) in conjunction with the Nigerian government and headed by Sir William J. Fitzgerald, a former Chief Justice of Palestine and the Attorney-General of Northern Rhodesia. As part of its findings and recommendations, the commission blamed the management of the Colliery and the colonial state for the inefficient control of the labor disputes at Enugu. Foreseeing similar problems in other government departments, the Commission recommended that they also be converted into statutory public corporations.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>NA CO 554/355 Movement of Nigerian Groundnut Crop. *Report for the Prime Minister by the Secretary of State*, 14 July 1952.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>David J. Morgan, *The Official History of Colonial Development Vol.2 Developing British Colonial Resources, 1945-1951* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 201.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>NA CO 554/611 Secretary of State for Colonies to Lord Leathers (Secretary of State for the Coordination of Transport, Fuel and Power), 4 July 1952.

<sup>45</sup>NA CO 537/5796 *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Disorders in the Eastern Provinces of Nigeria, November 1949*, 47

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

## **Management of Nigerian Port by NR before 1954**

The need to convert NR into a corporation was further underscored by two developments in the late 1940s. In 1949, another commission of enquiry was set up to look into NR's operational problems.<sup>47</sup> Headed by H.F. Pallant, the Assistant Divisional Superintendent of the British Railways in York, this commission painted a picture of Nigerian rail transport maladministration in its 64-page "meaty" report. Furthermore, it recommended that fundamental changes be made to NR's organizational structure and procedures.<sup>48</sup>

The second development was the formation of the Strong Commission, which was asked to look into the functions of the Marine Department and the management of harbors in Nigeria, sectors where NR was a major player. Also, the Commission was mandated to make recommendations that would assist in setting up "a more or less autonomous body for example on the 'Port Trust'<sup>49</sup> model, which is found in the Port of London or Liverpool."<sup>50</sup> Prior to the setting up of the Strong Commission, the management and control of the two major ports of Nigeria, Lagos, and Port Harcourt, both of which handled more than fifty percent of Nigerian import and export trade, was without proper coordination.<sup>51</sup> For example, there were no less than five separate bodies in charge of the operational aspects of Lagos port in 1941. These included NR, Customs Department, Marine Department, Port Department, and Public Works Department.<sup>52</sup> Each was not only involved in revenue collection, but port maintenance as well. In addition to these organizations, there were several foreign commercial and shipping interests operating at the ports. The implication of this development was that it bred petty jealous and stiff competition among the various organizations, as they sought to outdo one another.

Although there were many bodies operating at the Lagos Port, the most powerful was NR, which foreign commercial and shipping groups believed was manipulating its management of Nigerian ports for its own selfish interests at the expense of "genuine" port interests.<sup>53</sup> Hence, foreign interests led by the United

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<sup>47</sup> *Report on the Operating Problems of the Nigerian Railway 1949* (Enugu: Government Printer 1950).

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, 31-36.

<sup>49</sup> In practical term, this is a semi-autonomous port managed by a Board of Management, but whose overall control is under the central government.

<sup>50</sup> NA CO 583/301/8 A.N. Strong assisted by A.W. Flere, *Report on Ports of Nigeria* (Lagos, 1949). A. N. Strong, the former chairman of the Colombo Port Commission and the Ragoon Port Trust, headed the commission.

<sup>51</sup> Ayodeji Olukoju, "Background to the Establishment of the Nigerian Ports Authority: the Politics of Port Administration in Nigeria, c.1920-1954," *International Journal of Maritime History*, IV, no. 2 (December 1992): 170-171.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, 173.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, 162.

African Company (UAC), began criticizing NR's inefficiency at the ports.<sup>54</sup>

It was largely due to such criticisms and the apparent lack of direction at the two major ports that the government decided to set up the Strong Commission to examine the situation and offer solutions. The Commission found that the administration of the port was indeed inefficient, and criticized the NR for not making a sufficient number of railway wagons available to transport imported goods out of the ports into the hinterland.<sup>55</sup>

Based on these problems, the Strong Commission recommended that there should be unified control of all port operations under a Board of Management, a Port Trust, whose executive functions should be carried out by the Nigerian Marine Department.<sup>56</sup> Following the recommendations of the Strong Report, four alternative proposals on NR and ports administration emerged.<sup>57</sup> They were:

1. there should be a single corporation to manage and control the NR, all the ports in the colony, and to carry out all the duties hitherto performed by the Marine Department;
2. there should be a single corporation, but made up of two statutory sub-committees, each of which would run Port Harcourt and the Lagos Port;
3. there should be separate port authorities for Lagos and Port Harcourt, and British companies in Nigeria, should manage the smaller ports; and
4. there should be two separate corporations – one responsible for the ports and inland waterways, while the other would manage the NR. However, coordination between the two would be effected through cross membership of their boards of management.<sup>58</sup>

The possibility of removing NR's hegemony at the Ports was too hard for Woodward to accept. He therefore sought to defend his organization's indictment

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<sup>54</sup>UAC was the largest European commercial conglomerate in West Africa at the time. A subsidiary of Lever Brothers Limited, it was established in 1929 after the amalgamation of many other European firms operating in West Africa.

<sup>55</sup>NA CO583/301/8 *Report on Ports of Nigeria*, 2-3.

<sup>56</sup>NA CO583/301/8 A.N. Strong assisted by A.W. Flere, *Report on Ports of Nigeria* (London: HMSO, 1949) Section 27. Under the new arrangement, all ports in Nigeria, including the smaller ones like Forcados, Warri, Burutu, Koko, and Calabar, which the big British commercial businesses were using exclusively, were now to be unified under one single Board of Management.

<sup>57</sup> NA CO 583/301/8 "Minutes of a meeting in the Development Secretary's Office on the 23rd of August 1950 to discuss the form of port authority to be set up following the recommendations of the Strong Report" enclosed in Acting Governor of Nigeria to Secretary of State for Colonies, Savingram No 2528 of 11 October 1950.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

by the Strong Report.<sup>59</sup> While not disagreeing with the recommendation that multiplicity of control at the ports should be removed, he was opposed to the establishment of a rival authority to NR to manage them. Thus, to prevent a drastic reduction in NR's influence, he put forward new proposals.<sup>60</sup> Since NR was desirous of controlling and managing Lagos Port and Port Harcourt, Woodward did not object to the recommendation that both ports should be joined together with other minor ports and managed by a single port authority, provided NR would control the new authority. This position contradicted its original submission to the Strong Commission, which was that an autonomous Port Trust should not be established.<sup>61</sup>

On the other hand, expatriate European firms in Nigeria organized together as an interest and pressure group, the Association of West African Merchants (AWAM),<sup>62</sup> and opposed NR's proposal on the new port authority.<sup>63</sup> Consequently, the colonial government was caught in a dilemma, and initially seemed unsure how to implement Strong Report's recommendations. Whatever course of action, both the Nigerian and British imperial governments were going to implement the report. They could not afford to ignore the interests and opinions of European merchant capital embodied in AWAM, which was certainly not a run-of-the-mill group of politically weak European firms in Africa.

During the post-war period, AWAM members were not only well entrenched in West African economy, they were well funded.<sup>64</sup> In fact, some half a dozen AWAM members controlled not less than seventy-five percent of the sub-region's

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<sup>59</sup>NA CO 583/301/8 "Minutes of a Meeting held at Government House on the 1st September, 1950, to discuss the form of Port Authority to be set up following the recommendations of the Strong Report." Enclosed in Memorandum on *Report on Ports of Nigeria* by Strong and Flere' sent to the Colonial Office, 11 October 1950.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>AWAM was established during the First World War as a pressure group of British and French companies in West Africa. In its first incarnation, its main goal was to assist the European companies in coordinating policies and influencing colonial governments. This was for the purpose of gaining advantage over their African and Levantine competitors. Some of its members included United African Company (UAC), John Holt and Company (Liverpool) Ltd., Shell Company of West Africa, British Bata Shoe Company, Nigerian Hardwoods Ltd., Taylor Woodrow Ltd., Elder Dempster Lines, CFAO, and SCOA. See Anthony G. Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa* (London: Longman Group Ltd), 259; David K. Fieldhouse, *Merchant Capital and Economic Decolonization: The United Africa Company 1929-1987* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 127, 236; Josephine F. Milburn, *British Business and Ghanaian Independence* (London: C. Hurst, 1977), 5.

<sup>63</sup>This was not a new objective of the European firms in 1950. From the late 1930s, they had wanted to achieve this, but the exigency of the war made such call a diversion.

<sup>64</sup>Robert L. Tignor, *Capitalism and Nationalism at the End of Empire: State and Business in Decolonizing Egypt, Nigeria, and Kenya, 1945-63* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998), 199.

imports and exports valued at between £300 to 400 million in the 1940s. Of this considerable volume of trade, UAC, a predominant player in Nigeria, had the largest share. Not only this, by the late 1940s, it had invested about £4 million pounds in the Nigerian trading sector. For most of AWAM, the total equity capital of its members operating in Nigeria was more than £20 million during the climax of the war.<sup>65</sup>

Economic muscle brought AWAM members many political privileges. For instance, they were represented on the executive and legislative councils in Nigeria and enjoyed tax exemptions that were not available to them in Europe and other colonies.<sup>66</sup> In addition, UAC's General Manager was not only a member of the Nigerian legislative council, but also had free access to the Governor of Nigeria.<sup>67</sup> Patronage of railway services by AWAM members in Nigeria was also very crucial to the economic well-being of NR in the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>68</sup> The NR's freight services enabled the companies to transport agricultural and mineral goods to the coast for export to Europe and imported manufactured goods into Nigeria's hinterland. These transactions provided substantial profits for Western capital in Nigeria.<sup>69</sup>

Aware of the economic muscle and the strategic position of AWAM members, a meeting was called on August 23, 1950 between Nigeria's Acting Development Secretary, H. R. E. Browne, and AWAM delegation comprised of G. Cotgreave (John Holt & Company (Liverpool) Ltd.), N. Kay and L. Passage (United Africa Co., Ltd), G. H. Neville (Elder Dempster Lines Ltd.), and R. C. Irving (Lagos Chamber of Commerce) "in order to ascertain their views on the various alternatives which had been put forward" for the reorganization of NR and the ports.<sup>70</sup> No single indigenous Nigerian political leader was, however, invited to take part in this meeting at which the final decision on the conversion of the NR into a statutory corporation was to be taken. At the end of the meeting, the consensus of opinion was that the NR and the ports should be reorganized into two separate statutory public corporations.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>Ibid, 200.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>Fieldhouse, 27.

<sup>68</sup> Lauren van de Laan, "Modern Inland Transport and the European Trading Firms in Colonial West Africa," *Cahiers d'etudes Africaines* 21, no 4 (1981): 566.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>NA CO 583/301/8 "Minutes of a meeting in the Development Secretary's Office on the 23rd of August 1950 to discuss the form of port authority to be set up following the recommendations of the Strong Report." Enclosed in Acting Governor of Nigeria to Secretary of State for Colonies, Savingram No 2528 of 11 October 1950.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.



## **Creation of the Nigerian Ports Authority and the Nigerian Railway Corporation**

Eventually, the four proposals on the management of Nigerian ports and NR were discussed in the Council of Ministers and it was decided that two separate corporations should be established: one for managing all the ports, including the minor ports, and the second for NR. Although the decision to set up the two corporations was taken in 1950, the formal establishment of the Nigerian Ports Authority did not happen until 1954.<sup>72</sup> The restructure of the Nigerian Railway Corporation was completed in 1955.<sup>73</sup> On April 9, 1953, Ralf Emerson, an experienced British engineer, was appointed the General Manager/Chairman Board of Directors Designate of the proposed Nigerian Railway Corporation.

On 18 June 1953, Emerson left the United Kingdom for Nigeria to assume his new position. Pending the formation of the corporation, his primary duty was to serve as the technical adviser to the Nigerian Government on the establishment of the railway corporation in addition to serving as the General Manager of the existing NR. In this capacity, Emerson developed the policy proposals which formed the basis of the Nigerian Railway Corporation Parliamentary Bill that subsequently became the Nigerian Railway Corporation Ordinance.<sup>74</sup>

In a twist of irony, Emerson had the unique fortune of writing his own job descriptions while already in office. He did not shy away from fortifying the position of the Executive Chairman with considerable powers. Shortly after the formation of NRC, he assumed the exalted position of Executive Chairman of Board of the Corporation, as well as its General Manager. In fact, the Nigerian parliamentarians who debated and passed the NRC bill into law characterized the chairmanship as a “railway dictator.”<sup>75</sup>

On October 1, 1955, the ownership of the Nigerian Railway was formally transferred from the Nigerian Government to the new Nigerian Railway Corporation.<sup>76</sup> Under the Railway Ordinance, NRC was given monopoly power and responsibility to carry out railway activities in Nigeria and manage and provide reasonable facilities for the carriage of passengers and goods.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, it was to control its expenditure in a practical manner where

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<sup>72</sup>NA CO 554/468 “Nigeria: Creation of a Port Authority,” 1951-53.

<sup>73</sup>NA CO 583/301/9 “Note on the Present Situation of the Nigerian Railway” prepared by the West African Department, Colonial Office, 2 February 1951.

<sup>74</sup>*Statement of the Policy Proposed by the Government for the Establishment of a Nigerian Railway Corporation* (Lagos: Government Printer, 1954), 3.

<sup>75</sup>Federal House of Representatives Debates, Session 1954/55 col. 864.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Nigerian Railway Corporation Headquarters’ Library Nigerian Railway Ordinance 1955 Section 15C.



annual revenues would be sufficient to meet all expenditures properly chargeable to revenue, and to direct the expansion of the railway system.<sup>78</sup>

### **Justifications for a Railway Corporation**

Although it was widely accepted from 1945 onwards that NR was in urgent need of reorganization and modernization, Nigerian political leaders were not given the opportunity – as seen above by their non-participation in the meeting – to be part of this very important process. This disproves the argument by Nigerian colonial government officials that public corporations set up in Nigeria beginning from early 1950s were solely for the economic well-being of Nigerians.<sup>79</sup> Rather, Britain's economic interests and those of Western capital were more paramount in deciding the nature, character, and purpose of public corporations in Africa in the late colonial period. It was in view of this situation that Mofutou Laleye, a Policy Analyst, argued that public corporations in Africa were indeed children of political expediency and crisis of confidence between European colonialists and colonial peoples.<sup>80</sup> This was unlike the rationale behind the nationalization of major industries in Britain, from where the public enterprise management model was copied. There, in the late 1940s to the 1950s, the Labour Government used its nationalization programs to reformulate new industrial policies.<sup>81</sup>

Eventually, Nigerian political leaders, who initially were not consulted on the matter and were opposed to the recruitment of Europeans to head the new organization, were won over by colonial officials. However, Nigerian support was predicated on the hope that the transformation of NR would curb its manifest inefficiency. To buttress this point, in April 1952, while NR annual financial

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>See the Chief Secretary's address to the Legislative Council in March 1949, *Legislative Council Debates, March 1949*, 568. See also the speech of the Development Secretary when introducing the bill for the establishment of the first public corporation in Nigeria, the Electricity Corporation in Nigeria, *Legislative Council Debates, March-April 1950* (Lagos: Government Printer, 1950), 40. Some other writers also shared this view on the reasons for the setting up public corporations in Nigeria. For instance, A.H. Hanson, "Public Enterprise in Nigeria I Federal Utilities" *Public Administration*, 36 (Winter, 1958): 366-367; Ojetunji Aboyade, "Nigerian Public Enterprises as an Organizational Dilemma" in *Administration for Development in Nigeria*, ed. Paul Collins (Lagos: African Education, 1980), 83-98; and Sesan Ayodele, "Privatization of Public Utilities in Nigeria: an Economic Analysis of the Guided Privatization Policy," Nigerian Institute of Economic Research NISER Monograph Series No. 3, 2000 (Ibadan, 2000), 1-35.

<sup>80</sup>Moufoutou Laleye, "Public Enterprises as an Instrument of Crisis Management: its Particular Relevance to Underdeveloped Countries" in *Public Administration in Periods of Uncertainty*, ed. A.O Sanda (Lagos: Fact Finders International, 1992), 145-147.

<sup>81</sup>Robert Millward, "State Enterprise in Britain in the 20th Century," 8 unpublished paper; R. Kelf-Cohen, *Nationalisation in Britain The End of Dogma*, Second Edition (London: Macmillan, 1961), 14-24; N. Chester, *The Nationalisation of British Industry, 1945-1951* (London: HMSO, 1975), 1-8; and A. H. Hanson, ed., *Nationalisation: A Book of Readings* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1963), 12, 22-63.

estimates were being debated in the House of Representatives, the Minister of Transport, a Nigerian, Chief Bode Thomas of the Action Group Party, not only informed members with new thinking on NR - that is to turn it into a public corporation - but also that it would be alive to its responsibilities from that point forward. Many legislators heartily welcomed the new development.<sup>82</sup>

At another meeting of the House of Representatives on August 21, 1952, the Minister of Transport, Thomas, while reacting to the various comments of House members that centered primarily on NR's inefficiency and shoddy services on one hand and the need to construct more railway lines to members' constituencies on the other, stated that the Central government had decided in principle to establish an autonomous statutory corporation in place of the NR.<sup>83</sup> Thomas went further to state that:

I can assure Honourable Members... that the proposal [to set up a railway corporation] is already being fully examined by Government and is receiving serious considerations.<sup>84</sup>

Later he poignantly underscored the urgency and necessity of change in status for NR by arguing that: "If Nigeria does not determine the fate of the railway [NR]... then the railway will determine the fate of Nigeria."<sup>85</sup> Thomas merely stated the obvious: NR was still a very important backbone of the Nigerian import and export economy at the time. The initial consensus achieved on the part of Nigerian leaders vis-à-vis the issue of a new railway corporation would later break down during the peak of the decolonization process from 1954 to 1960. This was followed by increasingly scathing criticisms against the colonial government and foreign commercial interests. The latter were referred to as "dictators and usurpers" and advised to remove their stranglehold on the Nigerian economy and institutions,

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<sup>82</sup>This unqualified support cut across the three Nigerian regions and the three dominant political parties representing them in the Central Legislature. See Nigeria House of Representatives debates, First Sessions 14th-22nd August 1952, 336-340.

<sup>83</sup>For instance, Jaja Wachukwu, a member of the House of Representatives from the Eastern Region complained that only old and dilapidated coaches were being sent to his region. While supporting this assertion, other Eastern Regional members, including prominent politicians like E. Eyo, equally complained that food served to passengers on the eastern line was inferior. See *West Africa* of 12 April 1952. See also Nigeria House of Representatives Debates First Sessions 14th- 22nd August 1952, 336.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>*West Africa*, 4 October 1952, 913.

including the NR, so they could be managed by Nigerians.<sup>86</sup>

However, there were many factors in Nigeria that were responsible for the transformation of the NR into a public enterprise. First, by the late 1940s, the colonial government was itself overburdened by its excessive centralization and bureaucratization of government service, of which the NR was an important component. Reflecting on the prospect of establishing a railway corporation, the Secretary of State for the Colonies stated "...it will also grant much needed relief to the Central Government machine in Nigeria from the great burden of work which is concentrated on it as present."<sup>87</sup> Due to centralization and sluggishness of the civil service bureaucracy, it was often difficult to make quick decisions on the NR, especially in the area of capital development. Thus, it was necessary to have a new organization that could operate outside the ambiance of the main civil service. Linked to this is that from the start of the Second World War to the mid-1950s, despite carrying more freight than its installed capacity, NR was not recording adequate net surpluses as can be seen in Table 1.

*Table 1: Nigerian Railway: Financial Results, 1939 – 1946 (£ Sterling)*

Year	Gross Receipts	Total Working Expenditure	Operating Surplus	Interest on Capital	Renewals	Surplus
1938-39	2,076,168	1,320,282	756,914	755,314	430,000	- 473,875
1939-40	2,024,741	1,221,967	806,572	766,275	430,000	- 326,471
1940-41	2,409,976	1,183,689	1,234,613	721,273	300,000	+ 223,230
1941-42	3,145,915	1,368,796	1,775,853	919,396	300,000	+774,750
1942-43	3,583,118	1,627,394	1,960,183	945,520	430,000	+ 869,412
1943-44	4,091,818	1,889,550	2,212,324	949,520	430,000	+ 147,650
1944-45	3,961,405	2,042,422	1,919,670	949,547	430,000	+ 661,716
1945-46	3,022,838	2,110,103	1,511,937	949,547	430,000	+ 409,973

Sources: *Nigeria Railway Annual Reports 1939-1946*.

In fact, most of its operating surpluses were used in paying debts or put into the

<sup>86</sup>Remi A. Fani-Kayode, Member of the House of Representatives representing Ife Division, during the debates on the Second Reading of the Nigerian Railway Corporation Ordinance, 1955, 4 April 1955. Federal House of Representatives Debates, Session 1954/55 columns 873; and Tignor, 236-239.

<sup>87</sup>NA CO583/301/8 Secretary of State for Colonies to Officer Administering the Government of Nigeria, Priority Saving No. 3815 of 24 November 1950.

“Renewal Fund,” which was set up for renewing the NR’s fixed capital or assets. In view of this financial performance, there was a need to keep down operational costs, especially labor costs. As many strikes, negotiations, and concessions to workers were escalating, to understand the management’s perspective, it is here noted that by 1952, the NR’s workforce was more than 30,000.<sup>88</sup> Hence, a corporation model of management would cut unnecessary bureaucracy and ensure that NR was run on a strict commercial basis.

Second, corporation-type organization relieved the colonial state of the burden of being the direct employers of railway workers while escaping from direct conflicts it was having with railway labor unions since the end of the war. Such was the nature and frequencies of these industrial conflicts that the operations and survival of the NR as a corporate organization was adversely affected. For instance in 1947 the Nigerian government was forced to concede in public that:

productive efficiency and power of movement of the Railway continues to be hampered by political and industrial unrest and much valuable time has had to be given to these matters by Administrative and Supervisory staff of employees when their attention was most desirable elsewhere; consequently the services of employees have been diverted from the efficient performance of their tasks to the detriment of production.<sup>89</sup>

The workers’ grievances included: lack of promotion, the domination of NR’s management by Europeans, racial discrimination, poor salaries and wages, non-implementation of agreements between railway unions and management, overwork, high-handedness by supervisors, and slow pace of the implementation of the “Nigerianisation” policy on staffing of NR.<sup>90</sup>

As a result of incessant railway workers’ strikes after 1945, the colonial government set up a commission of inquiry in 1949 to investigate and make recommendations on the labor situations in NR. Headed by a retired British judge, Justice Neville John Brookes, the commission found both the management and workers were intransigent in their relationship with one another. It noted that several of those interviewed spoke of “deterioration in industrial relations is not

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<sup>88</sup> *Annual Report on the Government Railway for the Financial Year 1952-1953* (Ebute Metta, Lagos: Railway Printer, 1953), 36.

<sup>89</sup> *Nigeria: Annual Report on the Government Railway for the Financial Year 1946-1947* (Ebute-Metta: Railway Press, 1947), 8.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

recent [phenomenon] but has continued progressively over several years.”<sup>91</sup> In view of such revelations, the Commission recommended a complete review of the existing machinery designed to resolve trade disputes and eliminate grievances.<sup>92</sup>

A few months after the commission submitted its report to the government, the workers again went on an organization-wide strike.<sup>93</sup> Against this backdrop, the government decided that the best way to solve the perennial NR’s labor crises “once and for all” was to turn it into a corporation. This way, the new body would be able to hire and fire its staff more easily than the civil service rules and regulations had allowed.

The Chief Secretary to the Nigerian Government underscored this point when he stated “...there were strong political reasons for establishing corporations to take over Government’s quasi-commercial activities. It was easier for such Corporations to handle labour disputes than it was for Government...”<sup>94</sup> The labor unions accurately read the mind and Machiavellian disposition of both the NR management and government. The workers openly opposed the proposed conversion for two reasons. First, the workers were very reluctant to transfer their services from the Nigerian Railway Department to a new, autonomous organization that, in a manner of speaking, was an uncharted territory.<sup>95</sup> Secondly, they were apprehensive that the new corporation might not give them the same kind of privileges, stability of tenure, and perks they were enjoying in the current NR.<sup>96</sup> The workers’ open attacks to the government’s plan for the NR troubled the former. In fact, Thomas, the Transport Minister characterized the workers’ criticisms as being “unfair” and their behaviour as “exceedingly astounding.”<sup>97</sup>

However, realizing the need for the new corporation to have some stability and industrial peace in the transition period, the government entered into negotiations with the workers. The government went into talks with the two largest unions, the Nigerian Union of Railwaymen (NUR) and Railway and Port Workers Union (RPWU). The purpose of the arbitration was to assure the workers that they would not lose anything in the new corporation. After weeks of debate, it was agreed by

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<sup>91</sup> See *Report of the Commission appointed by His Excellency the Governor to investigate and make recommendations regarding the labour situation on the Nigerian Railway* (Lagos: Government Press 1949); and *West Africa*, 25 November 1952, 1080-1082.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> *Annual Report of on the Nigerian Government Railway, 1950/1951*, Lagos: Government Press), 36.

<sup>94</sup> NA CO 583/301/8 “Minutes of a Meeting held at Government House on the 1st September, 1950, to discuss the form of Port Authority to be set up ... enclosed in ‘Memorandum on Report on Ports of Nigeria by Strong and Flere.’”

<sup>95</sup> See *Daily Times*, March 3, 1953 and March 19, 1953, 3.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Nigeria House of Representatives Debates Second Session 3rd to 31st March and 1st April 1953. See particularly the debates of 3rd to 18th March 1953, 18.

both parties that the conditions of service of the workers in the new corporation would not be less than what they had enjoyed in the Railway Department. Having been assured of their status, the workers agreed that the new corporation should be formed.<sup>98</sup>

Another reason why statutory corporations were established in West Africa, according to CO and Nigerian Secretariat officials, was to ensure that “trusted” Nigerians could be carefully recruited into and entrusted with the joint management of sensitive organs of the colonial state.<sup>99</sup> This had been the thinking of government in 1950 when the Chief Secretary to the Nigerian Government justified the need for establishing public corporations when he stated:

and it [will] also enabled [sic] Nigerians to share in the management. This was a consideration that would become even more important when the changes proposed under the New Constitution came into effect, because it would mean that Departments responsible for the Corporations would not be accountable to Ministers.<sup>100</sup>

In fact, a year earlier, in March 1949, while addressing the Legislative Council, the Chief Secretary articulated the need for public corporations by saying: “I myself feel that almost the greatest advantage to this country in this new conception of public corporation ... is the advantage of Nigerian participation.”<sup>101</sup>

Finally, AWAM members specifically requested the Nigerian colonial government to develop social and economic infrastructure for the efficient exploitation of Nigerian resources. To achieve this, institutions, such as NR, should be reorganized into semi-autonomous corporate organizations. This call seems to have become imperative when Nigerians were demanding complete Nigerianisation of government and public service. Within this context, AWAM members concluded that their interests would not be well represented if Nigerians controlled the entire service. Thus, the establishment of corporations would provide the right opportunities for their representatives to sit as board members of

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<sup>98</sup>British Library - Nigerian Railway, *Report on the Government Railway for the Period 1st April-30th September 1955* (Lagos: Government Press), 24.

<sup>99</sup>See NA CO 583/301/8 “Minutes of a Meeting held at Government House on the 1st of September, 1950, to discuss the form of Port Authority to be set up.”

<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>British Library: Nigerian Legislative Council debates, March 1949, 568.

the proposed statutory corporations.<sup>102</sup>

## Conclusion

This paper examined the crises that confronted British economy at the end of the Second World War and the decision by Whitehall that Britain's economy would be rebuilt through the exploitation of the economic resources of its colonies. This policy defined post-war economic development of the metropolis and colonies. To give practical effects to it in the colonies, efforts were made to rebuild social and economic infrastructure damaged or neglected during the war. A case in point was the Nigerian Railway, which after the war started receiving rolling stocks, but was still inefficient in the transportation of goods and passengers. Thus, it became imperative that the NR should be reorganized for efficiency and effectiveness.

After initial hesitations, all stakeholders involved with the NR-Nigerian political leaders, railway workers, colonial and imperial officials, and European merchants in West Africa - agreed that the organization should become a corporation. In the end, two crucial questions engaged the minds of the stakeholders: How would the NR be reorganized? Who would receive the benefit? In answering these questions, each of the actors was propelled by their own economic calculations. Although both the imperial and Nigerian colonial government officials openly declared that the transformation of the NR into a public corporation was mainly for the benefit of Nigerians, the truth is there were other self-serving reasons on the part of the colonial government and Western merchant capital. To begin with, the merchants wanted to exercise some direct control and influence over the management of these strategic organizations. Also, for the colonial government, the reorganization was not so much that the NRC would make profit, but as Cowen proves: "criteria for establishing colonial enterprise [were] neither of corporate profitability nor of colonial social welfare, but of vaguely defined propensities for dollar savings according to [the] British nation."<sup>103</sup> Thus, NR's transformation was geared towards serving Britain's overall economic interests. Furthermore, the government set up a corporation so that it would be able to distance itself from direct negotiation with "recalcitrant" railway workers and to simplify the hiring

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<sup>102</sup>The foreign business community stated this point when it was making its position known on the *Strong Report*. Suggesting how the boards of the transport corporations should be constituted, the shipping firms stated: "[t]he persons most concerned with the operation of the port are ship-owners. We proposed that there should be 3 representatives of the ship owners, to be nominated by the West African Lines Conference. We further suggest that the Importers and Exporters and Traders should be represented by 4 members who should be nominated having regard to their business activities only." See NA CO 583/301/8 Memorandum on the *Strong's Report* on the Ports of Nigeria prepared by the Elder Dempster Lines Limited, John Holt Line Limited and Palm Limited, 22 February 1950.

<sup>103</sup>Mike Cowen, "Early Years of the Colonial Development Corporation: British State Enterprise Overseas During Late Colonialism" *African Affairs* (1984): 64



and firing process for railway workers in the colony. Thus, overall performance of the Nigerian Railway Corporation between 1955 and 1960, when Nigeria first gained its independence, was not different from the pre-1955 period. Additionally, rather than labor crises getting reduced in the NR, they increased in number and complexity in the late colonial period, a situation that eventually forced the “Railway Dictator,” Sir Ralf Emerson, and other European officers out of the corporation in the first half of the 1960s.

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# From Inaction to Action: The World Health Organisation and Tobacco Control Policies in Nigeria Since 1970

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**Abstract:** The need to regulate tobacco usage became internationalized in 1970 following the adoption of a resolution by the World Health Assembly calling on member states to take action in view of its damaging effects. Arising from this, two periods are discernible in the fight against the use of tobacco. The first period is from 1970 to 1995 that was characterized by weak laws which were inconsequential. The second period is from 1996 to date that was marked by multilateral cooperation and effective action at the global level. A glaring manifestation during of the second period is the adoption of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), which has the potential to significantly advance national and international efforts to curb the use of tobacco. This article explores these changing patterns within the context of the Nigerian State. It argues that the progress in tobacco control in Nigeria since the adoption of FCTC has been marred by weak human and institutional capacity in legislation, economics and advocacy, and lack of political will. Although it took Nigeria ten years to domesticate the treaty, only a comprehensive legal framework like the Tobacco Control Act can address the issue of tobacco smoking in Nigeria. There are difficult regulatory and governance challenges ahead but with a sustained political will, adequate resources, and strong institutions, Nigeria will overcome the entirely man-made public health problem.

**Keywords:** Tobacco, World Health Organisation, Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, Nigeria, Globalization, Policy

## Introduction

Since the 1990s, tobacco has been an important subject in academic discourse in terms of its implication for health, environmental, and economic concerns. It was generally agreed that tobacco use is a major public health disasters. There are about 1.3 billion smokers in the world.<sup>1</sup> Tobacco smoking is also the second major cause of death of one in ten adults in the world. It was predicted that if the

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<sup>1</sup>J. Baptiste, "Framework Convention on Tobacco Control: A Significant Response to Non Communicable Disease Prevention and Control," *African Health Monitor* (January-June, 2008): 20-23.

smoking patterns continue, they will cause about 10 million deaths each year by 2025.<sup>2</sup> In Africa, available data shows a rising consumption trend. For instance, the total cigarette consumption in Africa rose from 131,181 million sticks in 1995 to 212,788 million in 2000, an increase of 38.4 percent.<sup>3</sup> The Africa Tobacco Situation Analysis report on Nigeria shows that the prevalence rates for cigarette use are greater than 15 percent.<sup>4</sup> About 93 million sticks are produced yearly by two major tobacco companies in Nigeria (the British American Tobacco Nigeria and the International Tobacco Company), and all these cigarettes are consumed in the country. While the potential benefits of WHO resolutions and legal instruments to curb the global tobacco epidemic has been recognized by scholars and policy makers, case studies documenting its impact at the country level remain limited.<sup>5</sup> It is with this rather neglected aspect that this article is chiefly concerned.

Tobacco is a green leafy plant usually grown in warm climates. It is smoked as cigarettes, cigars, or in a pipe, snuffed through the nose or chewed as smokeless tobacco.<sup>6</sup> It is generally believed that tobacco has a stimulating effect. The consumers of tobacco feel energized and the body tends to demand for more to keep the energy high. The stimulation effect has different uses for different groups. For some, it is an effective means to relax the nerves. To others, it is a temporary means to generate happiness to address anxiety and psychological trauma, or as a means of suppressing hunger.<sup>7</sup> Some religious organizations believe that the leaf has the power to take one to the supernatural world through meditation. The tobacco leaf is also considered medicinal for the treatment of certain diseases such as toothache, or for causing witches to confess their diabolical activities to the public.<sup>8</sup>

The economic contributions from the cultivation and sales of tobacco products in tobacco producing economies are well known. Tobacco growing and sales

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Nigeria, accessed November 10, 2011, <http://www.africatobaccocontrol.org/enfindindex.phpresources-library/cou>.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>See D. Bettcher, D. Yach, and G. Guidon, "Global Trade and Health: Key Linkages and Future Challenges," *Bulletin of the World Health Organisation* 78, 7, (2000): 521-534; A. Taylor and D Bettcher, "WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control: A Global Good for Public Health," *Bulletin of the World Health Organisation*, 78, no. 7 (2000): 920-928; D. Yach, "The Origin, Development, Effects, and Future of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control: A Personal Perspective," *Lancet* (2014): 1-9; Obijiofor Aginam, "Moving Health Sovereignty: An African Perspective," in *Moving Health Sovereignty in Africa: Disease, Governance and Climate Change*, eds. John Kirton, Andrew Cooper, Franklyn Lisk and Hany Besada (Farnham-Surrey: Ashgate, 2014), 15-26.

<sup>6</sup>E. Brenya, "An Overview of Regionalist Approach to Tobacco Control in Africa," *Africa Development*, xxxvii, no 1 & 2 (2013): 107-132.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

provide jobs and income for farmers and other workers. Many governments also obtain tax revenues and foreign earnings from the export and foreign investment in some cases. These social, cultural, and economic benefits have caused the cultivation, sale, and consumption to continue despite its negative effect on human health. For example, smoking has been associated with an increased risk of not only several different cancers, including lung and bladder cancer, but also ischemic heart disease, bronchitis and emphysema, and increased antenatal and perinatal mortality.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the negative health effects of tobacco consumption have strong public links because forced or passive smoking presents health risks to non-smokers as well.<sup>10</sup>

The issue of tobacco control became internationalized in 1970 following the adoption of a resolution by the WHO Executive Board at its 55<sup>th</sup> Session regarding the damaging effects of tobacco.<sup>11</sup> Between 1970 and 1996, the WHO in particular worked so hard to get states to control tobacco but outcomes were far from optimal. However, the tide altered when the WHO changed tack in 1996 by resorting to its legal instruments to regulate tobacco.<sup>12</sup> The series of negotiations that began in 2000 eventually culminated in the adoption of the World Health Assembly's (WHA) first ever treaty: The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in May 2003. The Convention reflects agreements among WHO member states on minimum standards for the regulation of tobacco use and tobacco trade. It is against this background that this paper examines the potential role of WHO/FCTC in halting and reversing the tobacco epidemic, particularly in Nigeria.

### **Tobacco Control Efforts in Nigeria Before 1970**

The origin and spread of tobacco in Africa dates back to the pre-colonial period. John Edward Phillips has argued that tobacco was probably introduced to West Africa, including Nigeria, about 1600AD from Eastern North America.<sup>13</sup> In other words, tobacco is known to have been spread by European sailors around the world within a century of the interaction between Europeans and Native Americans. It is widely believed that the aboriginal peoples of the Americas, that is, Native Americans, were the first set of people to cultivate and use tobacco and it was

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<sup>9</sup>D. Bettcher, D. Yach, and G. Guidon, "Global Trade and Health: Key Linkages and Future Challenges." *Bulletin of the World Health Organisation* 78, 7, (2000): 521-534.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>WHO, *WHO Executive Board Resolution EB45.R9* (Geneva: World Health Organisation, 1970).

<sup>12</sup>The decision to adopt its legal instrument is in line with WHO Constitution. Article 2k of the constitution of WHO provides for three types of legal instruments namely, conventions and agreements, regulations and recommendations. Prior to 1996 the Organisation had addressed the issue of tobacco smoking through its World Health Assembly (WHA) resolutions which were not backed by effective action.

<sup>13</sup>Edward Phillips, "African Smoking and Pipes," *Journal of African History*, 24 (1983): 303-320.

from them that the Portuguese and Spaniards in their worldwide travels in the sixteenth century spread the cultivation and usage of tobacco. The use of tobacco had certainly spread to almost all parts of Africa by the beginning of colonialism on the continent.<sup>14</sup>

The efforts to control tobacco in Nigeria began during the colonial period. However, tobacco control before 1970 was based on cultural, religious and economic grounds.<sup>15</sup> Culturally, tobacco smoking was perceived as an alien behaviour to the practices of many societies in Nigeria and consumers were looked down upon and disrespected. In fact, tobacco smokers and consumers were treated as social deviants and, therefore, ostracized.<sup>16</sup> The story was not different among Christians and Muslims that treated tobacco smokers with disdain. Smoking and chewing of tobacco was seen as a travesty of their religious beliefs and practices. Therefore, tobacco consumers were isolated from society for cultural and religious reasons for a long time. However, tobacco smokers reacted by associating smoking with the movement from primitiveness to modernity and affluence, as a means of offering a different image to smoking. The smokers associated smoking pipes, local cigars and/or chewing tobacco with primitiveness. As a result, smoking was prevalent mostly in cities and urban areas in Nigeria, where people felt they were away from their relatives and the heavy influence of culture often experienced in the rural areas.

There was no conscious attempt by the colonial authorities to control tobacco smoking. Instead, the British colonial government encouraged the production and consumption of tobacco to achieve their colonial economic interest. However, the only form of control on tobacco and its usage was the enactment of the Tobacco (Licences and Returns) Ordinance of 1954.<sup>17</sup> This Ordinance has fourteen sections but was essentially designed to make provisions for the licensing of tobacco and payment of duties on such importation. In other words, the Ordinance only made inferential provisions for tobacco usage by placing restrictions on its importation without license. Therefore, in an economic culture where the colonial state and its successors were supportive of manufactured imported goods, the tobacco smokers emerged victorious.

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<sup>14</sup>During the second half of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese and Spaniards shipped tobacco to East Africa from where it spread to Central and West Africa. There was also the use of tobacco in Northern Africa during the same period. The European settlers in South Africa grew tobacco and used it as a form of currency during the last quarter of the seventeenth century.

<sup>15</sup>Brenya.

<sup>16</sup>From personal experience most Nigerians attacked tobacco use as morally irresponsible and a habit of people with base conditions. For further details see J. Best, "Economic Interest and the Vindication of Deviance in Seventeenth Century Europe," *Sociological Quarterly*, 20 (1979): 172-182.

<sup>17</sup>Y. Alli, *Tobacco Usage and Nigerian Laws*, accessed June 2, 2015, [http://www.yusufali.net/articles/Tobacco\\_usage\\_And\\_NigerianLaws.pdf](http://www.yusufali.net/articles/Tobacco_usage_And_NigerianLaws.pdf).

However, since the tobacco issue was internationalized in the 1970s, tobacco control became a widespread measure adopted in different forms by almost every country, including Nigeria.<sup>18</sup> While the initial effort at controlling tobacco was due to cultural and religious practices and economic interest, the recent attempts at control of the growing, sales, and consumption of tobacco products are motivated by health, environmental, and economic concerns.

### **Internationalization of Tobacco Control, 1970 – 1996: The Era of Inaction**

The origin of the work of WHO with tobacco control as a health issue began with the resolution of the Executive Board at its 55th Session in 1970. The Executive Board's resolution was influenced by the resolutions on the control of cigarette smoking passed by the Directing Council of Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) and the Regional Committee of Europe at their sessions in 1969. The Executive Board expressed the view that no organization devoted to the promotion of health can be neutral on this matter. In the same year, the World Health Assembly (WHA) also declared itself conscious of the serious effects of smoking on promoting the development of pulmonary and cardiac diseases, including pulmonary cancer, chronic bronchitis, emphysema and ischemic heart disease. This is suggestive that as early as 1970, the world community had reached an agreement on the damaging effects of tobacco smoking to health. Between 1970 and 1995, the WHA adopted several resolutions in favor of tobacco control measures. Perhaps the most significant WHA resolution relating to tobacco smoking was "Tobacco on Health" adopted by 39th WHA in 1986. Section (1) of the resolution affirms "that tobacco smoking and the use of tobacco in all its forms is incompatible with the attainment of health for all the year 2000."<sup>19</sup> In addition, the resolution urged member states to implement smoking control strategies. The WHA also adopted a resolution, which proclaimed April 7, 1988 a world no smoking day. In 1989, the WHA resolved that May 31st of every year should be marked as World No Tobacco Day.<sup>20</sup>

Despite these resolutions and repeated calls on member states to take action, the actions were far from optimal. Available evidence shows that by 2000, about 95 countries including Nigeria had legislations regulating tobacco but most states had weak laws. The measures commonly adopted include ban on sales to minors, vague health warnings on tobacco packs or restriction on smoking in health facilities. For

<sup>18</sup>P. Cairney, Mamudu Hadu, and Donley Studler, *Global Tobacco Control Policy, Power, Policy, Governance and Transfer* (London: Palgrave, 2012), 80.

<sup>19</sup>WHO, *Official Records of the World Health Resolutions and Decisions. Resolution WHA30.38* (Geneva: World Health Organisation, 1977).

<sup>20</sup>WHO, *Official Records of the World Health Resolutions and Decisions, Geneva Resolution WHA42.19*, World Health Organisation, 1989.

the most part, such laws were inconsequential; they neither seriously threatened the market nor affected the profitability of tobacco. On the contrary, a handful of countries such as Australia, Canada, Norway, and Singapore with comprehensive policies succeeded in reducing tobacco consumption rapidly and significantly. Nevertheless, by 1990 with the rapid and widespread influence of globalization, tobacco became a globalized epidemic. Consequently, the WHO changed tack in 1996 by electing to use its treaty-making process to regulate tobacco.

### **The Globalization of the Tobacco Epidemic and the Call for Action**

Undoubtedly, the tobacco epidemic was spread and reinforced by a complex mix of factors, including trade liberalization, global marketing and communications, and direct foreign investment. A few of many possible examples will suffice to illustrate the globalization of the tobacco epidemic. A distinctive feature of the globalization of the tobacco epidemic is the role of multinational corporations. Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a few major corporations took over the control of a larger chunk of the world's cigarette market. The influence of these multinationals largely from America, Britain, and Japan was not only felt in the Western nations but also in the developing world.<sup>21</sup> Powerful and influential tobacco companies targeted growing markets in Latin America in the 1960s, the newly industrializing economies of Asia (Japan, the Republic of Korea, China (Province of Taiwan), and Thailand in the 1980s, and women and young persons in Africa in the 1990s.<sup>22</sup> The successful effort of the tobacco industry to expand their global trade as well as achieve market penetration in developing countries and transitional market economies has been a major contributory factor to the risk of tobacco related diseases worldwide.<sup>23</sup>

This development was further enhanced by the wave of international trade liberalization, which included for the first time the liberalization of unmanufactured tobacco.<sup>24</sup> The Uruguay Round, which was concluded in 1994, gave birth to the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The establishment of WTO brought about the overhaul of the international trade regime culminating in the adoption of an array of multilateral agreements addressing contemporary trade issues including tobacco. These new WTO agreements facilitated the expansion of trade in tobacco products through significant reduction in tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade.

<sup>21</sup>A. Taylor and D. Bettcher. "WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control: A Global Good for Public Health." *Bulletin of the World Health Organisation*, 78, no. 7 (2000): 920-928.

<sup>22</sup>G. N. Connolly, "Worldwide Expansion of the Transnational Tobacco Industry," *Journal of the National Cancer Institute Monographs*, 12 (1992): 29-35.

<sup>23</sup>Bettcher, Yach and Guidon, 528.

<sup>24</sup>A. Taylor, "Trade Policy and Tobacco Control," in *Tobacco Control in Developing Countries*, eds. P. Jha and F. Chaloupka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 20-35.



Moreover, the regional trade agreements and associations, such as American Free Trade Agreement, the European Union, the Common Market for East and Southern Africa, and the Common Market for West African States, among others, have acted in concert with the global level by further mandating trade liberalization in goods and services including tobacco at the regional level.

In addition to trade liberalization, the transnational tobacco industry also took advantage of direct forms of market penetration in cash – hungry governments of poor countries via direct foreign investment, by either licensing with a domestic monopoly in joint venture or other strategic partnering with domestic companies.<sup>25</sup> The point being made is that trade liberalization and market penetration contributed largely to a greater risk of increased tobacco consumption, particularly in low and medium income countries. As the challenges of tobacco control transcend national boundaries, stemming the growth of the tobacco pandemic requires global agreements and action. The globalization of the tobacco epidemic restricts the capacity of countries to control tobacco unilaterally within their sovereign borders.<sup>26</sup> All transnational tobacco issues, such as trade, smuggling, advertising and sponsorship, prices and taxes, control of toxic substances, and tobacco package design and labelling require multilateral cooperation and effective action at the global level. Transnational tobacco control gained support of countries such as Australia, Canada, Finland, Norway, and Singapore, with effective policies that recognized that their progress could be undermined by cross border advertising and illicit trade, resulting in the rapid expansion of tobacco use in resource poor countries. This support found expression at the 1993 All Africa Tobacco Conference in Zimbabwe and 1994 World Conference on Tobacco Control in Paris, where calls for action were issued.<sup>27</sup> In addition, the WHO worked assiduously to disengage the sports community from its close relations with the tobacco industry. To this end, it hosted in 2002 a high level meeting that included the Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and Gro Harlem Brundtland, WHO Director-General, during the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics in the United States. In the same year, the South Korean government – supported by WHO – declared the FIFA World Cup in South Korea and Japan smoke-free.<sup>28</sup> This ended both tobacco sponsorship and smoking in the stadium. The emergence

<sup>25</sup>World Tobacco File, *World Tobacco File*. (London: London International Trade Publication File, 1998)

<sup>26</sup>Allyn Taylor, “An International Regulatory Strategy to Global Tobacco Control,” *Yale Journal of International Law* 21, no. 2 (1996): 257-304.

<sup>27</sup>S. Chapman, D. Yach, Y Saloojee, and D. Simpson, “All African Conference on Tobacco Control.” *British Medical Journal*, 308 (1994): 189-191.

<sup>28</sup>WHO, Tobacco Free Initiative, *Tobacco Free Olympics 2002*, accessed on July 30, 2015, [www.who.int/tobacco/free\\_sports/olympics/en/](http://www.who.int/tobacco/free_sports/olympics/en/).

of new leaders also gave serious impetus to tobacco control initiatives. Prominent among them was Brundtland who was elected WHO Director-General in 1998. Her commitment to evidence-based policies and awareness of international political strategy played a part in her decision to advance tobacco control within the global health agenda. In this direction, the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control adopted in 2003 provided the platform with the potential to significantly advance national and international efforts to curb the growth of tobacco use.

### **The WHO and the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control**

In accordance with Article 19 of the Constitution, the World Health Assembly has the authority to adopt conventions and agreements with respect to any matter within the competence of the Organisation. Article 19 stipulates that:

The Health Assembly shall have authority to adopt conventions or agreements with respect to any matter within the competence of the organisation. A two-thirds vote of the Health Assembly shall be required for the adoption such conventions or agreements, which shall come into force for each member when accepted by it in accordance with its constitutional process.<sup>29</sup>

WHO did not adopt any convention from its inception to 2003. The organization has historically neglected international law in its work by underutilising its enormous constitutional powers. Aginam has attributed this neglect to the professional training of bureaucrats in the organization which largely blocks instead of helps the promotion of new norms.<sup>30</sup> However, the World Health Organisation had been granted before then several supervisory and advisory functions under several conventions adopted under the auspices of the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The World Health Organisation inherited the supervisory role of the League of Nations regarding the 1931 Convention for limiting the manufacture and regulating the distribution of Narcotic Drugs.<sup>31</sup> It was also granted a similar function under the provisions

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<sup>29</sup>WHO, *Constitution of the World Health Organisation* (Geneva: WHO, 1948).

<sup>30</sup>O. Aginam, "Mission (Im)possible? The WHO as a Norm Entrepreneur in Global Health Governance," in *Law and Global Health: Current Legal Issues*, by M. Freeman, S Hawkes and B Bennett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 559 – 573.

<sup>31</sup>WHO, *Official Records of the World Health Resolutions and Decisions. Resolution WHA7.7* (Geneva: WHO, 1954).

of the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances.<sup>32</sup> In addition, the World Health Assembly in 1988, requested the Director General to make the necessary arrangements for the accession of the WHO to the IAEA convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the IAEA Convention on Assistance in the event of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency.<sup>33</sup> This accession provided a role for the WHO to act as the directing and coordinating authority in health work in matters covered by these conventions. Furthermore, in 1990 the World Health Assembly urged the member states to accede and ratify the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their disposal.<sup>34</sup>

The move towards the negotiation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control started in 1996 when the World Health Assembly adopted the resolution for the development of a WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco and Related Protocols.<sup>35</sup> As a follow up, the WHA adopted a resolution in 1999, which established a working group to analyse potential elements to be included in the tobacco treaty and an intergovernmental negotiating body to draft and negotiate a proposed WHO Framework Convention.<sup>36</sup> The Tobacco Free Initiative of the WHO prepared the background documents for the working groups, enumerated possible elements to be covered by the Framework Convention and other elements of subsequent protocols. The negotiation process also galvanized Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs). Global NGO Coalitions – the Framework Convention Alliance and the Network for Accountability of Tobacco Transnationals – emerged incorporating health, consumer, environmental, and legal groups from north and south. The NGOs provided technical support, supplied detailed analysis of the draft texts, and advocated key policy positions.<sup>37</sup> The Intergovernmental Negotiating Body on WHO finalized its work in February, 2003. The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) was adopted by the 56<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly in May, 2003. The Convention entered into force in 2005. This was the first treaty adopted by the WHO.

The adoption of FCTC is significant because it represents the first international legal instrument designed to promote multilateral cooperation and national action

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<sup>32</sup>WHO, *Official Records of the World Health Resolutions and Decisions. Resolution WHA7.7* (Geneva: WHO, 1971).

<sup>33</sup>WHO, *WHO Document WHA 41/1988/REC/1.P.76* (Geneva: WHO, 1988).

<sup>34</sup>WHO, *Official Records of the World Health Resolutions and Decisions. Resolution WHA43.25* (Geneva: WHO, 1990).

<sup>35</sup>WHO, *Official Records of the World Health Resolutions and Decisions. Resolution WHA44.26*, (Geneva: WHO, 1996).

<sup>36</sup>WHO, *Official Records of the World Health Resolutions and Decisions. Resolution WHA52.18* (Geneva: WHO, 1999).

<sup>37</sup>Global Health Watch 2, *An Alternative World Health Report* (London: Zed Books, 2008).

to reduce the growth and global use of tobacco. Derek Yach has described it as “a cornerstone of policy development aimed at reducing the burden of disease attributable to tobacco.”<sup>38</sup> The policy has been remarkably successful in view of its wide acceptance by WHO member states. The provisions of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control include measures to encourage state parties to impose bans or restrictions on tobacco advertising, sponsorship and promotion, establish new packaging and labelling of tobacco products, establish indoor air controls, and strengthen legislation to combat tobacco smuggling.<sup>39</sup>

Specifically, the treaty mandated the state parties to undertake a comprehensive ban on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship as far as their constitutions permit. The treaty also obliges state parties to adopt and implement large clear visible legible and rotating health warnings and messages on tobacco products and its outside packaging occupying at least 30 percent of the principal display areas. The treaty urged the state parties to adopt and implement or promote effective measures providing for protection from exposure of tobacco smoke in indoor workplaces, public transport, indoor public places, and all other public places.

The FCTC also addressed supply reduction measures. It urged the elimination of illicit trade in tobacco products, banning of tobacco sales to and by minors, agricultural diversification, and the promotion of alternatives of livelihood. Furthermore, it urged the state parties to adopt and implement effective measures to eliminate illicit trade, illicit manufacturing, and counterfeiting of tobacco products. The WHO FCTC also states that the state parties must take steps to mark all tobacco packages for tracing purposes and to indicate their country of destination. Finally, it called for enactment and implementation of tax laws and price policies on tobacco products as a way of reducing tobacco consumption, particularly among children.

The development of FCTC led to enhanced national, non-governmental, and political commitment to tobacco control worldwide. For instance, the WHO chaired United Nations Ad Hoc Taskforce on Tobacco Control championed a greater sense of policy coherence among the various sectorial heads that make up the United Nations. The Food and Agriculture Organisation was committed to defining where and when demand reduction will harm populations and develop policies to prevent or reduce the impact. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund worked closely with the WHO to implement excise tax policies. United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United

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<sup>38</sup>D. Yach, “The Origin, Development, Effects, and Future of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control: A Personal Perspective,” *Lancet* (2014): 1-9.

<sup>39</sup>WHO, WHO Framawork Convention on Tobacco Control. Adopted by the Fifty Sixth World Health Assembly 21 May, 2003 A56/8.

Nations AIDS Programme (UNAIDS) and the WHO also developed common approaches to working with youth so the complex mix of risk behaviour is dealt with in a comprehensive manner and that healthy alternatives to tobacco, alcohol, illicit drugs, and unsafe sex and violence are developed. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) also worked with the WHO to ensure that women play a stronger leadership role in tobacco control. The WHO FCTC authorized the Conference of Parties (COP) to adopt protocols to the Convention. After four years of negotiations, the first Protocol to WHO-FCTC – Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products – was adopted by the parties to the FCTC at the fifth session of the COP on November 12, 2012.

### **WHO and Tobacco Control Policies in Nigeria**

National tobacco control is the foundation for public protection against tobacco. It is an incontrovertible fact that Nigeria's health policies, especially tobacco control policies, had been influenced by various WHO resolutions. Prior to the adoption of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in 2003, Nigeria had promulgated laws regulating tobacco smoking. One of such laws was the Tobacco Smoking (Control) Act of 1990.<sup>40</sup> This Act was promulgated during General Babangida's regime and was championed by the former Minister of Health, Professor Olikoye Ransom Kuti. The Tobacco Smoking (Control) Act of 1990 provided for the control of smoking in certain places and advertisement of tobacco in Nigeria. It was introduced as part of the general strategy towards the attainment of Health for All by the year 2000 as well as a faithful commitment to various WHO resolutions, especially the World Health Assembly resolution "Tobacco and Health" in 1986. Other policies influenced by WHO were the Code of Advertising Practice 1993 and the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) resolution at its 89<sup>th</sup> meeting held on July 11, 2001. The APCON gave a directive which banned all sorts of advertisement sponsorship, promotion, testimonial, and brand stretching of tobacco products across the country.<sup>41</sup> The battle between tobacco companies and the tobacco control advocates took two forms. Initially, it started with public enlightenment. Secondly, it took the form of litigations in an effort to checkmate the tobacco industry excesses. Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Nigeria (ERA/FoEN) with the collaboration of other groups like Nigerian Heart Foundation and Educare Trust, Nigerian Cancer Society (NCS), Journalist Action on Tobacco Health, and All Nigerian Consumer Movement Union (ANCOMU)

<sup>40</sup>Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Tobacco (Smoking) Control Act of 1990, CAP T6, Laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Vol 8* (Abuja: Federal Ministry of Justice, 2004).

<sup>41</sup>"The Health, Economic and Social Menace of Smoking: Time for Concerted Action," accessed March 4, 2012, <http://www.codewit.com/diet-and-nutrition/131-Nigeria>.

formed a formidable opposition against the tobacco companies.

One incident that generated serious criticism was the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Nigeria and the British Tobacco Company (BAT) in London in September 2001 to establish a \$150 million modern cigarette manufacturing company. According to the agreement, BAT was expected to source for raw materials in Nigeria, employ Nigerian workers, manufacture, and sell cigarettes to Nigerians and other countries in West Coast of Africa. The agreement also granted the Tobacco Company a high tax concession and waiver. BAT had in 2000 taken over the shares in the moribund Nigerian Tobacco Company (NTC) and, as a result, controlled the cigarette market in Nigeria. Other tobacco companies like Phillip Morris from the United States also joined in the scramble for a portion of International Tobacco Company located in Ilorin, Kwara State.

This action by the Federal Government was seen as a betrayal of public health in Nigeria. It was totally rejected by the civil society groups, such as the Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Nigeria (ERA/FoEN). In 2007, the Federal Government in conjunction with the civil society group of Environmental Rights Action/FoEN filed a suit against three major tobacco companies, British American Tobacco Company, Phillip Morris International, and the International Tobacco Company. The suit was for \$44 billion in compensatory damages.<sup>42</sup> It also alleged that cigarettes caused more harm to Nigerians. Other states, Lagos, Kano, Gombe, and Oyo also filed suits against tobacco companies. The Lagos State Government in collaboration with ERA/FOEN, on April 30, 2007 sued five tobacco companies (British America Tobacco Limited, International Tobacco Limited, British American Tobacco, Plc, British American Tobacco (investment), and Phillip Morris International). Lagos State, in particular, sued these companies against the backdrop of cases of tobacco related diseases, which stood at 9,000 in its hospitals in 2006. Lagos state also stated that it spent 2.7 million naira in treating these cases for one year only. It filed this suit to recoup its money.

In observance of the WHO-FCTC, the Federal Government instituted an anti-smoking campaign that was featured in the media. Today, cigarette packs in Nigeria contain text-only warnings: “The Federal Ministry of Health warns that smokers are liable to die young,” which covers approximately thirty percent of the front and forty percent of the back. This is in line with the belief that domestication of Article 11 of the WHO-FCTC regarding pictorial warning labels may result in a reduced prevalence of youth smoking in Nigeria. Pictorial warnings, when used appropriately, evoke negative emotive feelings of fear and disgust and are readily understood by a diverse audience regardless of age or secular education. Another

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<sup>42</sup>“Corrupt Nigerian Government Wants \$44 Billion from Multinational Tobacco Companies,” *Nigerian Times*, 8, November, 2007.



strategy used for tobacco control is cigarette pricing. In fact, the price of the lowest priced twenty cigarette pack in Nigeria is ₦50 while premium cigarettes were sold for about ₦200. Increasing retail cigarette prices in Nigeria is likely to decrease smoking related disease particularly among youths who are price sensitive. There is clear evidence that among currently known interventions, excise tax increases above inflation have the greatest simple impact on youth smoking, particularly because youth are more price sensitive and less addicted than adults.<sup>43</sup> Bans on all forms of promotion and advertisement and marketing benefit both youth and adults.

Despite all these measures, the tobacco companies continued to explore areas not covered by the APCON directive or existing laws to advertise the products. Those areas include delivery vans, point of sale, traffic signs, and umbrellas. It also continued to associate tobacco with arts, music, and fashion, among others. They also color-coded all their brands in Nigeria. Apparently, these measures were adopted in the absence of a comprehensive law to regulate the manufacturing, distribution, and consumption of tobacco products in Nigeria. The treaty was not domesticated in the country until 2015, ten years after the FCTC entered into force. Nigeria was one of the signatories to the treaty having signed and ratified the treaty in 2004 and 2005 respectively. As a party, Nigeria is obligated to domesticate the treaty and this has come in the form of the Nigerian Tobacco Bill. Nigeria used the Convention as an umbrella to fashion the new Tobacco Bill to bring them into line with the treaty. The Bill was passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives in 2011 but unfortunately was not signed into law by the President. In April 2014, the Bill was repacked by the Federal Ministry of Health and submitted to the Federal Executive Council, which gave its nod to it. The Tobacco Control Act 2015 was finally signed into law by President Goodluck Jonathan on May 27, 2015. The Tobacco Control Act regulates the manufacturing, advertising and distribution of tobacco products in Nigeria. The major provisions include: prohibition of smoking in public places to include bars and restaurants; no smoking on public transportation, in schools and hospitals, among others; a ban on all forms of direct and indirect advertising; prohibition of sales of cigarettes within a 1,000 meter radius of areas designated as non-smoking; mass awareness about the danger of smoking and the formation of a committee that will guide the government on the issue of tobacco control in the country. Prior to 2015, several states had enacted laws prohibiting smoking in public places. They include, Osun, Cross River, and the Federal Capital Territory. It is not surprising that the delay in the passage of the bill suits the tobacco industry, which supports weak legislation or no legislation

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<sup>43</sup>D. Yach, "Tobacco Control," in *Critical Issues in Global Health*, eds. E Koop, C Pearson and Scharz (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2002), 162-170.



at all. BATN has always argued against increased taxes on tobacco products, a recommendation which the FCTC puts forward as a key to cutting back on the number of people who buy cigarettes.<sup>44</sup>

It has been argued by critics that these measures against the tobacco companies were a breach of the memorandum of understanding between the Federal Government and the tobacco companies, particularly the British American Tobacco Company.<sup>45</sup> They opined that the BATN, for example, contributed to the economic development of the country through sustainable agricultural development projects, sustainable water projects, sustainable environmental projects, and poverty reduction and economic empowerment. In the area of agriculture, the BATN Foundation, conceived and developed agricultural programs to empower subsistence farmers to adopt modern farming techniques. This program involved the establishment of model farms for the cultivation of cassava, maize, watermelon, and rice. To enhance farmers' income, the Foundation built cassava and palm oil processing cottage industries in Nigeria. Some of the communities that benefitted from its Agricultural Development Initiatives were Tede and Ago-Are in Oyo State, Jima in Niger State, Amaokwe-Item in Abia State, Afia-Nsit Uda-Nko in Akwa Ibom State, Odosimadegun in Ogun State, and Akpap-Otoyong in Cross River State. In addition, the BATN foundation embarked on direct empowerment of farmers through establishment of cooperative groups. It assisted the groups with financial take-off to serve as revolving loan.

The foregoing suggests that the people whose livelihoods depend on tobacco are contributing to the economy. This includes the farmers that grow it, the extension workers that assist the farmers, the tobacco companies that employ thousands of workers, and those who work in factories where machinery for those factories are manufactured. It is also contended that the national revenue is assisted by the various taxes derived from tobacco-related activities. Some even argue that to place restriction on the right of the individual as to what he consumes is an infringement of his fundamental right to the dignity of his person and freedom to choose what he thinks is best for him.<sup>46</sup>

Nevertheless, several studies have examined the potential economic impact of the complete elimination of tobacco use and production.<sup>47</sup> The evidence shows that elimination of tobacco will not affect the economy because tobacco use has

<sup>44</sup>"10 Years of Tobacco Control: Nigeria Fails Domestication Hurdles," *The Nation*, March 8, 2015.

<sup>45</sup>"Corrupt Nigerian Government Wants \$44 from Multinational Tobacco Companies," *Nigerian Times*, 8 November, 2007

<sup>46</sup>Y. Alli, *Tobacco Usage and Nigerian Laws*. [http://www.yusufali.net/articles/Tobacco\\_usage\\_And\\_NigerianLaws.pdf](http://www.yusufali.net/articles/Tobacco_usage_And_NigerianLaws.pdf). Accessed June 2, 2015.

<sup>47</sup>Mayo Clinic. "Economic Impact of Tobacco Use on Employees," accessed August 13, 2011, <http://www.mayoclinichealthsolution.com/products/Tobacco-quitline-economicimpact.cf>.

many externalized costs not paid for by the smokers or tobacco manufacturers. This involves healthcare costs incurred by government while taking care of smoking-related diseases. When people no longer spend their money on tobacco, they will spend their money on other things.<sup>48</sup> This alternative spending will stimulate other sectors of the economy. Conversely, if the money is saved rather than spent, the increased savings will have stimulatory macroeconomic effects. The World Bank's review of the economics of tobacco use also debunked many of the myths about job and revenue losses that effective tobacco ban was purported to cause.<sup>49</sup> The World Bank demonstrated that policies reducing tobacco demand, such as the increase in tobacco taxes, will neither cause long term job losses nor will it reduce tax revenues. Rather, it will bring unprecedented health benefits without harming economies.

## Conclusion

This article has examined the role of the WHO in tobacco control, particularly in Nigeria. The paper further discussed the potential role of WHO-FCTC in halting and reversing the tobacco epidemic in Nigeria. It also argues that although the issue of tobacco control was internationalized in 1970, the period between 1970 and 1996 could be described as the era of inaction as far as the issue of tobacco control was concerned. The period was marked by weak legislations. However, the tide changed following the decision of the WHO in 1996 to make use of one of its legal instruments for tobacco control. This resulted in the adoption of the WHO-FCTC. In Nigeria, progress in tobacco control has been slow for two fundamental reasons: weak human and institutional capacity in legislation economics, and advocacy and lack of political will. Although it took Nigeria ten years to domesticate the treaty, it is only a comprehensive legal framework like the Tobacco Control Act that can address the issue of tobacco smoking in Nigeria. Effective implementation of the Tobacco Law is definitely the way to go and this actually depends on public support. For this reason, media advocacy and communications that frame the tobacco debate in public health terms and encourage vigorous public debate about tobacco control options are essential.

In the light of the availability of verifiable facts against tobacco, governments in the West have adopted strong strategies, which are driving down smoking rates as well as the deaths, diseases, social, and environmental costs linked to tobacco consumption. Nigeria needs to draw lessons from those countries that

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<sup>48</sup>Ontario Tobacco Unit, "The Fiscal Impact of a Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programme in Ontario," Ontario Tobacco Research Unit, Department of Public Health Sciences, University of Toronto, 2003.

<sup>49</sup> World Bank, *Curbing the Epidemic: Governments and the Economics of Tobacco Control* (Washington DC: World Bank, 1999).

have recorded positive results in this important public health challenge. But there are considerable challenges ahead. This is because the political economy of tobacco poses difficult regulatory and governance challenges due to several factors notably: the liberalization of global trade rules; the powerful influence of and enormous wealth of tobacco multinationals as shown in their aggressive marketing strategies in developing countries including Nigeria; the economic dependence of some developing world economies on tobacco farming; and the complexity of harmonizing cigarette taxes, policies, and advertisements within domestic jurisdiction and multilaterally.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, with sustained political will, adequate resources, and strong institutions, Nigeria will overcome the entirely man-made epidemic.

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### **Notes on Contributor**

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<sup>50</sup>Aginam, 559 -573.

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Aderinto, Saheed.** *When Sex Threatened the State: Illicit Sexuality, Nationalism, and Politics in Colonial Nigeria, 1900-1958.* University of Illinois Press, 2015, 264pp.

*When Sex Threatened the State*, the first book-length history of prostitution in colonial Nigeria by Saheed Aderinto, examines the contestations over the control of illicit sexuality in Africa's most populous country. Aderinto renders an impressive interpretation of diverse primary and secondary sources to explain the significance of sex and sexuality in Nigeria during the first half of the twentieth century. The author makes three core arguments: First, he posits that sexuality cannot be understood in isolation from the broader history of a society. "The language of sex" he points out, is not just about such vague categories as "immorality" but also about contestation normally couched in the vocabulary of civilization. Second, he contends that the difference between adult and child sexualities was a significant factor that shaped sexual politics. Unlike existing works that pay overwhelming attention to adult prostitution, Aderinto shows that a comparative discussion of adult and child sexualities would expand the scope of scholarly research in a fruitful manner. Third, the intersection between sexuality and nationalism in Africa, the author argues, is far more complex than the present literature reveals. Throughout the colonial era, Nigerians espoused conflicting forms of nationalism as they interpreted sexual vice and its consequences from their prejudiced perspectives. One of Aderinto's methodological interventions is the idea of a "Total History of Sexuality." (pp 6) He contends that historical scholarship on sexuality has been over-compartmentalized. Thus he calls for a paradigm that combines many fields—economic, urban, social, gender, childhood, race, political, medical, military—in shedding light on the experiences of men and women who sold and patronized sexual services in the past.

*When Sex Threatened the State* has a total of seven chapters. In Chapter One, Aderinto lays the foundation of the work by examining the history of colonial Lagos within the context of social, gender, and racial relations. This intriguing chapter argues that the history of prostitution in colonial Lagos cannot be understood in isolation from the rapid social, political, and economic changes of the first half of the twentieth century. Indeed, illicit sexuality, Aderinto argues, was one of the numerous sites of struggle among diverse groups of people who defined "social" and "moral" respectability to conform to African and European notions of responsible use of time, leisure, and the body. He introduced the men and women (Nigerians and British) who shaped the politics of sexuality in Lagos, exposing the

internal and external factors, which informed their disposition.

Chapter Two then turns to the narrative of sex and vice with particular focus on adult prostitutes. This chapter allows Aderinto to articulate one of his main arguments that the difference between adult and child sexualities shaped the tenor of politics in Nigeria. Aderinto unveils the identities of women who sold sex, integrating their ethnic and social identities within the context of a modern colonial society. But unlike several existing works, which only discuss the experience of women who sold sex, Aderinto gives detailed insight about men who bought sexual favor. His analysis allows us to come to terms with the “inevitability” of sex work in the colonial society. All classes of Nigerian and European men patronized prostitutes. But if prostitution had remained a secret affair between adult men and women, the “moralists” of Lagos might not have contested it. Prostitution related activities such as street-walking supported the activities of young delinquent criminals who undermined the colonial ideals of public peace and decency.

The involvement of underage girls in prostitution was also a serious moral question in Lagos. In Chapter Three, Aderinto presents the history of child prostitution. He takes us through the underworld of girls who worked in Lagos brothels and the kinds of relationship that existed between them and other members of the prostitution subculture such as the *Boma* boys and the madams. One of the biggest questions about child prostitution was the relationship between age and psychosexual development. Child prostitution was morally unacceptable, not only because it involved sexual and financial exploitation of minors, but also because it endangered the medical and psychological health of girls who the Colony Welfare Office, the government establishment that policed child prostitution, and the leading Nigerian elites believed needed state paternalism. While the impact of prostitution on public order and the exploitation of children worried Nigerians and the British colonialists, the increase in the cases of venereal disease (VD) among the Nigeria Regiment of the colonial army, the Royal West African Frontier Force, placed the crisis of illicit sexuality at the center of colonial security. In Chapter Four, Aderinto explores the relationship between prostitution and the survival of the British colony of Nigeria during the WWII. The high incidence of VD in the colonial force became a major security issue, which needed to be addressed.

Chapter Five is about the laws passed to deal with the real and imagined consequences of prostitution. By dividing the anti-prostitution laws into “adult” and “child” related legislations, Aderinto is able to present interesting data about how the government conceived the criminal justice system as the main solution to the “problem” of prostitution. His engagement of VD laws also placed the war against sex work within the framework of medical and legal history. According to Aderinto, colonial laws on prostitution tended to homogenize children’s

experience by disregarding the diverse definitions of childhood across the hundreds of Nigerian ethnic groups. The author focuses on the reactions of Nigerian men to anti-prostitution laws in Chapter Six. His conviction is that men and women responded to anti-prostitution laws differently, because sex work affected them in diverse ways. Chapter Seven tackles the position of the Lagos elite women on the government's decision not to formally enlist their associations (the Women's Welfare Council and the Nigerian Women's Party) in the fight against prostitution. Aderinto notes that the government's decision was based on the well-established notion among British political officials that African women lacked the intellectual capacity to manage resources on behalf of the state. In the Epilogue, the author links the past with the present. He explores the changes and continuities in the politics of sexuality regulation between 1960 and 2014, and notes that the postcolonial government revised the colonial stance on prohibiting sex work by making it an "illegal but tolerated" offense.

My prediction is that *When Sex Threatened the State* will stand the test of time, not only for the quality of Aderinto's analyses, sources, and interpretations, but also for the ways he placed sexuality at the center of core structures of everyday life in colonial Nigeria. This is a major contribution to African studies and historical scholarship on Nigeria.

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**Ahlers, Theodore, Hiroshi Kato, Harinder Kohli, Callisto Madavo, and Anil Sood, eds. *Africa 2050: Realizing the Continent's Full Potential*. New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, 2014, xxvii + 489 pp.**

The thinking among scholars and other experts about Africa in the last few decades has coalesced around two separate but not necessarily opposing perspectives. There are the Afro-pessimists who see the proverbial glass as being half-empty. They point out the corruption, the poverty and rapid population growth, the violence and pandemics such as HIV/AIDs and more recently, Ebola in West Africa, as indicators of a rampant malaise out of which it may well be impossible for Africans to emerge completely. The best that can be hoped for is that through Western aid and largesse, the continent will have a bright future and that the glass does not become totally depleted. Then there are the Afro-optimists who see the glass as half full. They note the consistently impressive economic growth of many African countries during the past decade or so, the improvements in health care, the increase in liberal democratic principles throughout the continent and the emergence of a nascent and burgeoning middle class in a number of African countries.

Both the editors and the contributors to *Africa 2050: Realizing the Continent's Full Potential* are Afro-optimists. The essays in this book—the product of a study commissioned by the African Union, the UN Economic Commission for Africa, and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency—posit that by 2050, the African glass will be full and possibly brimming over. Bond and Fajgenbaum (324), two contributors to the volume, claim that by in 2050 “Africa could be the factory and granary to the world” or that at the very least, most African economies would have reached the level obtained at present by Chile, which has diversified its economy and become globally competitive in a number of sectors.

The authors assume that in general the world will be at peace with no major wars or calamities affecting a large portion of humanity. Second, they assume that the already apparent shift in the balance of the global economy from North America and Europe to emerging markets will also be a peaceful process. Third, the authors assume ongoing stability in global financial trading systems. Fourth, climate change will remain within the parameters set at present by the less negative members of the international scientific community. Fifth, improvements in technology will be similar to those of the last century with similar results leading to enhanced productivity and overall well-being. As I write this review, however, the Ebola outbreak is affecting lives and livelihoods in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea. Perhaps the authors should have added a sixth assumption about minimizing the likelihood of pandemic contagious disease severely disrupting, if not destroying



outright, African lives and potentials. Achieving this degree of African success will not be automatic. Aggressive African leadership and sustained and focused action are vital. The book outlines three possible outcomes.

The best case is effective African convergence with the global political economy with per capita incomes in Africa increasing by 4.6 % annually so that by 2050, per capita incomes throughout the continent average \$17,000 (higher than Russia, Malaysia, Mexico and Turkey today). The size of the middle class throughout the continent would increase from its current 12 % of the population to a hefty 68 percent. Then there is the business as usual scenario with per capita incomes rising 1.9 % annually so that by 2050, the continental average is \$6,000. The size of the middle class increases but only to about 27 % of the population. The worst possible outcome is the downside scenario that has African terms of trade deteriorating and conflict endemic so that per capita incomes grow by less than 1 percent and more than 680 million Africans remain mired in poverty.

Although the authors make no claims to comprehensiveness, the book is ambitious, sprawling, and cheerful. The scope and persistent “can do” attitude of the book’s contributors are key reasons, not only for the book’s charm, but for the book’s importance. It is not a book to be read at once cover to cover in one sitting, but a book to be savored, and it is a book that inspires faith and confidence in Africans and their abilities. Sixteen chapters cover critical issues, among them job creation and employment, demography, governance, equity and social inclusion, human capital, natural resources and agriculture, urbanization, climate change, and regional cooperation and continental integration. Each chapter outlines the context and history that has led to the current moment in African development and each chapter provides an Action Agenda that will help Africans realize the prosperity and affluence convergence scenario by 2050.

While I have reservations about some Action Agenda prescriptions—for example, a somewhat unfiltered faith in solutions such as biotechnology and GMOs as a way to increase crop yields; or unresolved tensions between the repeated calls in the book for African unity and the equally repeated recognition that diversity, culture, and geography call for many African countries to embrace individual and self-reliant trajectories—I have no doubt that Africans can achieve these *Africa 2050* goals. The authors stress African capabilities, agency, and choice. In this regard, I do have some questions. Among the questions that I ask are: Do Africans want to achieve this vision in the manner suggested? And is this book really about something bigger than Africa?

Here is where I see congruence in the perspectives of the Afro-pessimists and Afro-optimists. Both adhere to what I call the becoming “one of us” conditionality. “Us” in this case means the modern, developed, capitalist West with its economic,

political, and social institutions and practices. Becoming “one of us” provided considerable ideological justification for the colonizing project and continues in economic and political development programs for post-colonial Africa. Thus both pessimists and optimists see Africans’ becoming “one of us” as a consummation devoutly to be wished; they just exhibit opposing levels of confidence over what Africans can achieve. And as Francis Fukuyama assumed in his famous end of history piece, all of the essays in the book frame liberal democracy and free market capitalism as the inevitable, indeed, the only possible trajectory the world’s peoples can follow. There are no systematic alternatives to these Western, but now assumed to be universal, pathways.

But when one looks at how this trajectory is playing out in the United States, the most powerful exemplar of the Western way—and is being replicated in many of the BRICS (Brazil, India, and China)—I question the desirability, not the possibility of attaining, the vision promoted in *Africa 2050*. In the US, the middle class has remained stagnant or shrunk while a privileged affluent oligarchy controls the economy and politics. The quality of education in the US has declined drastically to the extent that US students lag severely behind many of their counterparts in developed countries in math and verbal skills. An increasingly privatized and free market health care system victimizes those who lack the means or insurance to cover health care costs. Environmentally, resource extraction practices such as hydraulic fracturing wreak havoc on the land and the health of the people inhabiting it. These are but a few of the policies and practices done in the name of increasing productivity, sustaining consistently higher levels of economic growth and enhancing the competitive position of the US globally. I recognize that there may be elements of caricature and hyperbole in my critique of the US, but I think *Africa 2050* would have been an even better book had the essayists been more reflective about alternatives to their vision and the array of decisions and choices Africans have to make between now and 2050.

It is the need to conceive of alternatives to seemingly universal models and practices that makes me see this book as one that transcends its African subject. The book is really asking what kind of world all of us as cosmopolitan citizens want to live in by 2050. And in what ways can Africans contribute to a more just, more economically and environmentally sustainable world? In short, while it would be useful for Africans to think about positive ways to become more like “us,” many of “us” have to be more open to exploring economic and social models not based primarily on the productivity and growth imperatives of neoliberal capitalism. The existential stakes are too high not to consider alternatives to the ones presented in this book. Africans, I believe, have much to offer us as we embark on this exploration so that we all can reach our full potential and live to tell about it.

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**Allan, Tony.** *Handbook of Land and Water Grabs in Africa: Foreign Direct Investment and Food and Water Security.* **New York: Routledge, 2013. 488.**

European colonization from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries was justified in part by *terra nullius* – a principle of international law that assumes land not defended by a sovereign nor owned according to the logic of exclusive property rights could be acquired in an effort to make the land productive. One consequence of *terra nullius* was the Scramble for Africa, which culminated in the Berlin Conference of 1884. During this conference European powers infamously consolidated previous acquisitions under colonial governments and erected borders that redefined communities and disrupted local political and economic relationships. These actions furthered the expropriation of land from locals by classifying them as occupants with limited ability to derive economic assets from their land. Although 20<sup>th</sup> century independence movements engendered political change, most states continue to benefit from land tenure systems that generate profit for the state rather than for those who live off the land. Consequently there is concern that new modes of appropriation will further marginalize citizens and thwart any societal transformation attempting to rectify past injustices and establish equitable land tenure systems. In the *Handbook of Land and Water Grabs in Africa: Foreign and Direct Investment and Food and Water Security*, editors Tony Allan, Martin Keulertz, Suvi Sojamo, and Jeroen Warner and their fellow contributors analyze large-scale land acquisitions (LSLAs) in an effort to understand the discrepancies between foreign demand and local need. Yet by characterizing these agreements as part of a “grab,” the contributors readily invoke Africa’s experience with European colonization and suggest that LSLAs are indicative of a neocolonial dynamic that is reminiscent of *terra nullius*. But do such agreements simply replicate colonialism or is there something more egregious underfoot?

Given that the handbook has thirty-two chapters, in this review I address the short- and long-term political, social, and economic consequences of LSLAs and analyze unique juxtapositions that emerge from an edited volume. In the introduction, Allan outlines new conditions that are engendering more LSLAs: a) global power relations are evolving faster than before; b) new powers (Gulf countries and the BRICS) are asserting themselves in land markets; and c) human rights and international law are greatly informing questions of land and justice (6). These conditions are examined throughout the entire collection, which is interested in determining whether such tectonic shifts within the global economy will translate into the long awaited Green Revolution in Africa. Such a revolution would generate greater agricultural output, reinvigorate tenure systems and the

rule of law, and facilitate infrastructure and technology transfers. The chapters are organized into five subsections: history of land grabs and contradictions of development; investors' profile and current investment trends; political economy of water and land grabs; environment; and livelihoods.

Given the complexities of LSLAs, it is best to focus on land's primary use and how that relates to the aforementioned subsections. The contributions in the first section explore the history of tenure systems and the various benefits from land – such as a home, sustenance, or livelihood. Colonial governments extended their dominion by taxing these gains, reclassifying inhabitants as occupants, and claiming land for settlers. It is this appropriation that created the contradictions of development. Even though land yielded tremendous resources that were necessary for the production of consumer products in Europe and the United States; profits were funneled to merchants and colonial officials, either as taxes or through the confiscation of commodities produced from the land. This decimated Africans ability to transform their wealth in land to assets that could provide a foundation for their community's financial stability. This appropriation also engendered the legal quandary between customary and civil land title; members of ethnic communities have title that is based on their historical claims and are likely poorly documented. Communities with undocumented or suspicious claims are the most susceptible to being kicked of the land for the creation of LSLAs. Consequently the primary legal issue today is what constitutes adequate compensation for those indigenous communities whose ancestors' land was appropriated by colonial states (see Hahn; Potts; Wily).

The second section addresses land that is primarily used for investment and the complexities that arise when foreign investors acquire agricultural lands for their domestic consumption. Unlike investments that reap monetary returns, investments in land are primarily meant to yield agricultural commodities and natural resources. Such investments allow foreign investors to displace the environmental costs associated with their land use; especially those countries feeling the negative effects of climate change (the Middle East) and population pressures (China and South Korea) (see Baumgartner; Bräutigam). While African countries have a comparative advantage in blue (groundwater) and green (rainfall) water now, these investments are starting to curtail citizens' access to water and small-scale farmers' ability to produce for their needs and local markets (see Allan, Chu, Kizito et. al, MacDonald et. al). The final three subsections address the political and social consequences of land dispossession from marginalized communities. Given that a majority of land holdings across the continent are still small-holders with customary title or dubious civil title, foreign investments often require governments to consolidate these holdings. But when governments consolidate

land into larger holdings and reap the economic benefits of renting land; they rarely transfer any assets to the communities where these acquisitions are located. Rather they hope that any knowledge transfers and jobs created by foreign investment will placate communities (see Anseeuw et. al; Greco). Contemporary LSLAs are more damaging than historical land appropriation because industrialization in the global north has generated environmental degradation that is now undermining the sustainability of future industrializations, especially food production and mineral extraction. Yet the primary comparative advantage developing countries have is land and its commodities; and in order to further attract investors states must downplay any environmental costs associated with LSLAs and compromise their environmental regulations. Thus contemporary African states are still undermining the development of assets as well as shouldering the environmental burdens of the global north.

The juxtaposition of these chapters makes clear that the historical inequities of international land markets have reemerged. Those who live off the land must shoulder a disproportional share of the environmental risks of investments, while investors' returns are agricultural commodities and essentially exclusive land rights. The shift in *who* invests in LSLAs has generated renewed interest in foreign investors, as there is hope that more equitable relationships will emerge. There is the possibility that China's experience with agricultural industrialization can provide important lessons and technology transfers. Yet China's record on human rights could negatively impact political and social relations. Whereas there is the potential for Gulf countries and their investments in Sudan and Egypt to draw on cultural and historical ties to generate investments that could be beneficial for all of the Middle East. But given the political and social turmoil in the region, it is unclear who benefits from foreign investments and whether they are sustainable. Such predictions about the short- and long-term effects are unclear as the politicization of these investments, especially from China, are based on real and manufactured fears associated with the decline of Anglo-American and European economic powers. However, as Bräutigam suggests, more often than not the effects of Chinese investments are based on media distortions that focus on the creation of such deals but rarely follow-up on their progress (44). While investors from outside of Africa receive more media attention, there are countries within Africa, especially Egypt and South Africa, investing in LSLAs. But such investments, especially from South Africa, are more about the displacement of South African landowners rather than the political interests of assisting regional neighbors (Warner et. al). Finally, there is also domestic investment in LSLAs as businessmen and government officials are interested in the opportunities LSLAs could generate for urban communities. But even these investments are plagued with problems of secure title and deteriorating

infrastructure, as Hilhorst and Nelen note. Projects spearheaded by outsiders, even if they are from a nearby city, promote the notion that outsiders are necessary for internal development. Consequently, such relationships discount local farming knowledge and undermine the future of farming communities as residents opt to move or pursue more lucrative careers (151). It is this insight on the relationship between insiders and outsiders that is an implicit problematic of any “foreign” (i.e. outsider) investment. The immediate concern being whether “outsiders” and the returns to the communities they promote – knowledge transfer, jobs, infrastructure build-up, and the rule of law – are actually beneficial or perpetuating the exploitation of African resources and labor.

It is easy to understand the trepidation associated with LSLAs, as they are often touted as a reliable solution to current food insecurity and African development. However, LSLAs are similar to historical models of agricultural industrialization that were based on large-scale farms and specialization in cash crops for export rather than staple crops for domestic consumption. The consolidation of small farms into larger farms seems reasonable; given that rural populations are dwindling and it is becoming easier for states to acquire land via eminent domain. However, such consolidations are more pernicious than historical grabs: first, states are promoting LSLAs as the most viable and only economic solution given their states’ comparative advantage in agricultural and mineral commodities. Second when foreign investors control both the land and the commodities produced, states are creating internal zones that are effectively alienating locals from communal lands and funneling profits and assets outside the country. Finally there are fewer opportunities for contestation now despite the discourse of liberal democracy and civil society; and there is incontrovertible evidence that environmental degradation is a direct consequence of industrialization. But even if outside investments in LSLAs were terminated for political reasons, it is clear that farmers and states cannot simply exit the market in hopes of pursuing an ethical model of growth that will resolve historical exploitation. There would still be pressing issues of food security and the development of African economies. Consequently there would be a shift of investments to regions that can capitalize on technical and tenure innovations in order to replace African agricultural commodities. If African states are to maximize their comparative advantage in land; the solution, as Riddell suggests, is to develop and resuscitate tenure arrangements that capitalize on different sizes of land holdings (160-163). This would allow individual and collective farmers to control the terms of the investment. By directly engaging with farmers there is also the potential to diversify crops and invest in commodities that will be needed by both domestic and global markets. The diversification of crops and tenure arrangements can empower farmers by transferring knowledge and building infrastructure. More



importantly it can help farmers develop assets rather than merely subsisting on such arrangements.

The breadth and complexity of land tenure across the continent could never be fully captured in a single volume; however, the editors have offered a valiant effort in bringing together an array of topics that highlight the key issues associated with foreign investments and LSLAs. The contributors make the economic issues accessible based on a thorough investigation of empirical evidence rather than rely on the political discourse of neocolonialism. While it is clear that historical colonization curtails contemporary political and economic development in Africa; there is a more equitable solution than African states mirroring European models of economic growth. The real solution, as the contributors make clear, is developing multiple modes of agricultural industrialization that are based on small and large scale holdings. Modes that are geared towards equitable political and social relationships that stem from the creation of local assets and economic growth.

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**Caminero-Santangelo, Byron.** *Different Shades of Green: African Literature, Environmental Justice and Political Ecology.* Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2014, Pp. x+ 214 pp.

There is no doubt today that the bulk of environmental damages on the African continent are by-products of western nations' continued assault on the continent's environment and natural resources in an effort to feed their burgeoning industrial complex. Nevertheless, western scholars continue to blame Africans for the problem. This perspective is anchored on the Eurocentric mindset, which suggests that Africans lacked the understanding of their natural environment, proper sensibility, and knowledge of how to take care of the nature, biodiversity and environment.

The book brings to the fore issues that resonated with African indigenous sustainability practices and awareness – environmental humanism. The strength of the book is its deeper connections to the African environmental sensibility and knowledge, anticolonial struggle, social justice, and environmentalism in Africa. Trumpeting the works of African environmental activists and writers like Ken Saro Wiwa, Wangai Maathai, Okot p'Bitek, Ngugi wa Thiongo, and earlier writings which may be 'characterised as pro-environmentalist. The book has four clearly defined objectives. The first objective questions the assumption that Africa has produced little environmental writing. The second part of the book is an exploration of how African literature can challenge the dominant western assumptions regarding African environments, and environmentalism as well as how it can offer powerful counter-narratives. The third part of the book interrogates the accepted definitions of environmental writing and the underlying construction of nature and conservation embedded in them. The final section of the book explores the tensions and contestations in global environmental justice, political ecology, and the African environmentalist writings by presenting literary text in manners which can create new understanding of effective environmental justice struggles.

On the strength of the aforementioned, the book also drew on a critical perspective informed by political ecology and theories of global environmental justice to discuss African environmental writings. As explained by the author, African environmental writings tend to prioritize social justice, the lived environment, livelihoods, and/ or the relationships and privilege. This statement set tone for the discourse in chapter one of the book entitled "The nature of Africa." In this chapter, the author linked environmentalism in Africa to the popular shaping of the continent as region by imperialism. To establish the linkage, the author framed his discourse on African environmentalists' action as one which is set to address social

conflict, environmental change, and resource extraction in Africa. The chapter also highlights why global environmental and political ecology can be a useful tool for framing the African environmental writings and conceptualization of resistance to imperialistic development on the continent. The chapter also presents varied views, perceptions, and portrayal of the African continent by western writers as irredeemable chaotic domain of diseases, violence, and poverty without explicitly connecting the degraded natural resource and environment as the consequences of the unsustainable anthropogenic development.

In chapter two, the discourse centred around the “The nature of African environmentalism.” The chapter drew its strength from the legacies of African environmental writing from East Africa by exploring the implications of anticolonial tropes and antipastoral themes for struggles against environmental injustice (5). The author focuses on Maathai’s pastoral discourse, anchored long history of environmental writing and rhetoric. The book also focuses on the writings of prominent African environmentalist authors including, Okot p’ Bitek, Nurudin Farah, Ngugi wa Thiongo and the relationships among these authors’ works was explored. For instance, Maathai, warned that, the typical kinds of attitudes towards traditional subsistence farming and the pursuit of monocrop agriculture and plantation farming have been ecologically and socially disastrous for poor African farmers thereby contributing to food insecurity and malnutrition as well as reduction of loss of local/indigenous biodiversity. The chapter also explores the relationship between the writings of Maathai and Thiongo, using anticolonial narrative. Both writers’ works enjoy some level similarities and differences and this can be seen from the interpretation, and presentation, and focus of their writings, which “represents an unambiguous or uncomplicated progression even in term of environmental discourse”(49). The chapter concludes with a discussion on the power of African environmental writings and their essence in the building of environmental consciousness.

Chapter three of the book, “The Nature of Justice,” opens with discourse on the beginning of the South African environmental justice movement and the challenge it poses to green imperialism. The chapter focuses on post-apartheid novels as well other works of fiction published before 1980 to examine the South African environmental justice writings. The author in this chapter pointed to the atrocious sufferings meted on black South Africans under the apartheid regime and how such injustice helped create a new movement. The focus of the new environmental justice movement includes issue of race or racism and questions of distribution, disproportionate impact, or marginalization that comes with racism and denials by linking environmental issues to broader development concerns as it affects other non-white races living in South Africa. To investigate environmental

justice in South Africa, the chapter explores the writings of post-apartheid writers like Alan Paton, Besie Heads, Zake Mda and Nadine Gordimer. All the writers variously echoed the growth of environmental justice as being responsible for the conceptualization of the environmental justice struggle in post 1990 South Africa.

Chapter four of the book, “The Nature of Violence,” focused on the writings of Ken Saro Wiwa as the opening dialogue into issues of oil violence in Nigeria and insidious environmental degradation as well its implications on the health of the people of the region. The author also delves into other literary works of writers such as Tanure Ojaide, Ogaga Ifowodo, as well as Chinua Achebe as the prism from which the struggle for environmental justice in Nigeria’s delta region and Africa can be imagined or viewed. In his writings, Ken Saro Wiwa questions the logic of petro development in Nigeria especially in terms of the contradictions of development and environmental ruins leftover in its wake. A common theme in this chapter is the connections found in these writers’ focus on ethnic identity and their ability to ground the accompanying environmental resistance narratives in relation to current conditions. Suffice to say that the works of the writers continue to echo in the daily sufferings of the people of the delta and their struggles.

Finally, the book’s concluding section presents a summary of the four chapters of the book. To conclude, Seminario-Santangelo raises the question of how to conceive the place in relation to the politics and conceptual challenges it poses to environmental injustice narratives. According to the author, the tradition of environmental writings discussed in the book “challenges hegemonic assumptions regarding development, conservation, and nature as well as the separation of ecological projects from socio-political relations” (186). In general, the book presents an opportunity into gaining an open and varied view into the environmental justice struggles in Africa, the unjust forms of imperialistic development and the consequences of extraction of natural resources and environment. This reasoning perhaps explains the title of the book as well as a highly informative source on the image of the African continent and the nature of struggles for continental environmental protection.

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**Candido, Mariana.** *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World: Benguela and Its Hinterland.* Cambridge University Press, 2013. xiii + 366 pp.

This volume is the first history of Benguela and its hinterland, located on the central coast of present-day Angola, to be published in English. It is a brilliant addition to a growing number of monographs devoted to various African ports and their involvement in the Atlantic slave trade.<sup>1</sup> Until now, this literature has focused exclusively on West Africa and the trade in the North Atlantic. This study shifts the historian's interest southward to Benguela, a major point of departure for enslaved Africans, most of whom were transported to Brazil. During the course of some two-hundred years, more than 700,000 slaves were boarded on ships at the Portuguese port of Benguela. Therefore, this book emphasizes the centrality of the South Atlantic in the slave trade by highlighting the direct Angolan connection to Brazil and the importance of Brazilian-born actors in the South-Atlantic world.

Divided into five chapters, the first two chapters of the book trace a chronological history of the Portuguese settlement at Benguela. Chapter 1 covers the first abortive attempt to gain a foothold in 1587, at what became known as Benguela Vehla (Old Benguela), to the establishment of the new colony at Benguela in 1617; then carries the history to 1710. Chapter 2 follows the development of the town as a major Atlantic slave port from 1710 to 1850, when the Portuguese outlawed the slave trade. To her credit, Candido at this point turns away from demographic analysis in the following chapters, seeking to write a social, political, and economic history of Benguela and the African societies that surrounded it. These societies were deeply transformed by the overwhelming importance of the slave trade and the continuous, endemic violence that it projected. Chapter 3 discusses the integration of Benguela and its hinterland into the international economy of the Atlantic world; and chapter 4 delves into the actual process and mechanisms of enslavement. Chapter 5 focuses on the political reconfiguration of the African states in the area of Benguela from 1600 to 1850.

This book is based on extensive research in Portuguese-language archives on four continents- in Angola, in Brazil, Portugal, and the United States. Looking at the region with a fresh perspective, Candido writes a revisionist history of the entire South Atlantic during the era of the slave trade. She takes issue, for example,

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<sup>1</sup> See also Ouidah Robin Law, *The Social History of a West African Slaving Port, 1727-1892* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004); Kristin Mann, *Slavery and the Birth of an African City: Lagos, 1760-1900* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007); Randy J. Sparks, *Where the Negroes Are Masters: An African Port in the Era of the Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014).

with Joseph Miller's thesis of an expanding slave frontier that moved slave raiding and the capture of African victims farther and farther from the coastal towns over time.<sup>2</sup> Using data from the various archives, she argues that the frontier of slave raiding did indeed expand, but that coastal populations continued to be subject to attack and enslavement—even including neighboring Portuguese vassals and allies. Candido also disputes John Thornton's assessment that the slave trade had little effect on the agricultural production and demographics of the population in Angola.<sup>3</sup>

Candido discusses cultural exchanges at length, noting that "creolization" went both ways. While most people living near and around Benguela "ignored Christianity" and were able to resist identifying with the Portuguese, a privileged class was able to claim Portuguese protection from enslavement through marriage, conversion, legal status, and so forth. A much wider segment of the population became accustomed to European luxuries, such as cloth, alcohol, and other products that were traded for slaves. At the same time, Portuguese agents adopted African political ideas and conventions, married African women without church sanction, spoke Umdunbu, adopted African healing practices, and often lived in areas under African rulers. Nevertheless, the author makes it clear that the Portuguese and their African descendents were in Angola for the purpose of slave raiding and slave trading, which was the primary source of personal wealth and of revenue for the Crown. She emphasizes both the violence of the slave trade and the direct involvement of Portuguese agents in every aspect of that trade. No one remained safe from enslavement, regardless of their wealth or status, especially during periods of high demand for slaves. Both free blacks and Luso-African traders were likely to be kidnapped and enslaved. Even mixed-race subjects of the Crown, in effect citizens of Portugal, *filhos da terra*, were not immune from becoming victims of the trade. Additionally, African rulers who were allies of the Portuguese could be attacked for any frivolous reason and their people carried off as commodities of the trade.

Candido also takes on the long-running scholarly debate over the identity of the *Jaga*.<sup>4</sup> Speculation has continued for decades over just who the *Jaga* were, or

<sup>2</sup>Joseph Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).

<sup>3</sup>John K. Thornton, "The Slave Trade in Eighteenth-Century Angola: Demographic Structures," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 14 (1980): 417-27.

<sup>4</sup>Joseph C. Miller, "Requiem for the 'Jaga' (Requiem pour les 'Jaga')," *Cahiers d'études africaines* (1973): 121-149; John K. Thornton, "A Resurrection for the Jaga (La résurrection des Jaga)," *Cahiers d'Etudes africaines* (1978): 223-227; Anne Hilton, "The Jaga Reconsidered," *The Journal of African History* 22, no. 02 (1981): 191-202; Beatrix Heintze, "The Extraordinary Journey of the Jaga Through the Centuries: Critical Approaches to Precolonial Angolan Historical Sources," *History in Africa* 34 (2007): 67-101.

were not, and whether they even existed. Using seventeenth-century documents Candido is able to demonstrate quite elegantly and convincingly that the Portuguese used the term *jaga* as a pejorative reference to any African polity with whom they were at war. The term, strongly associated with cannibalism, does not designate a particular ethnic group, but could be applied to any enemy of the Portuguese.

In her last chapter, entitled “Political Reconfiguration of the Benguela Hinterland, 1600-1850,” Candido makes an important attempt to construct a political and social history of the interior of Africa near Benguela that was touched by Portuguese intrusion. Here again, she emphasizes the violent and disruptive effects of the slave trade over this entire 250-year period, which she sees as centuries of political turmoil and economic instability. Slave raiding, she maintains, caused the collapse of existing states in the hinterland, the redirection of trade routes, the enrichment of new rulers, new patterns of African consumption, the transformation of local economies, the emergence of new ethnic identities, and profound changes in gender relations. This is an impressive and ambitious chapter which pioneers new territory in the history of West Central Africa. Most importantly, Candido offers a history of Caconda, a Portuguese fort built inland some 130 miles from Benguela, in an attempt to project Portuguese colonial power deep into the interior. Here, the author seems to overestimate Portuguese influence, however, since the Portuguese effort clearly failed, with the outpost always dependent on the protection of local rulers and sometimes overrun. In other words, the Portuguese at Caconda remained only one of many actors competing for dominance in the area. In fact, few whites ever lived at Caconda where the *donas*, African women who were wives and trading partners of Brazilian and Portuguese men, managed businesses of their own, owned slaves, and cultivated the land with non-slave dependents.

Candido should be praised for her sensitivity to the African subjects of her history whom she refuses to treat as statistics or as mere objects of study. She has advanced what Joseph Miller has termed the “biographical turn” in Black Atlantic history,<sup>5</sup> by refusing to focus solely on statistical and demographic analysis, and by seeking meaning and value in individual biographies. Indeed, many of the mini-biographies in the book are based on rich archival sources, deliberate attention, and historical imagination. For example, she discusses the life of Dona Lourenca Santos, who in 1797 was a forty-five-year-old woman living at Caconda and trading in slaves, in partnership with her husband who lived in Luanda. By this time, 347 people lived in her compound, most of them free. She owned slaves—four men, fifteen women, three boys, and five girls. Most of her dependents, however, were

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<sup>5</sup>Joseph C. Miller, “A Historical Appreciation of the Biographical Turn,” in Lisa A. Lindsay and John Wood Sweet, *Biography and the Black Atlantic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014) :19-47.



free women cultivators who worked her fields growing corn and sorghum for market. She was one of the wealthiest residents of Caconda.

Candido also recounts the story of Juliana, a young woman captured and enslaved in the interior of Benguela who was forced to walk to the fortress of Caconda, where she immediately drew the attention of José dos Santos Pereira, the captain-major and the highest-ranking Portuguese official in the area, who bought her at the public market in 1765. A few days after her purchase, José dos Santos Pereira was approached by Xancuri, an ambassador of the *soba* (king, ruler) of Kilengues, a local state, who offered him a ransom in order to take Juliana back to her relatives. Pereira agreed to sell her for the enormous sum of two *pecas da india*, that is, three or four male slaves over thirty-years-old and ten cows. The ambassador was able to deliver the cattle, but could only give Pereira one male slave. However, he promised to travel to Kilengues and return with more enslaved men. The captain-major agreed to the partial payment but stipulated that unless the ambassador could make full payment, Juliana would remain his slave for life. The ambassador never returned, probably because his village had been destroyed by a raid while he was in Caconda.

Although the ambassador's failure to return with full payment might have sealed Juliana's fate as a slave, for some reason, Pereira felt compelled to bring his new slave and four witnesses, all soldiers under his command, to the town's notary. There he drew up a letter of manumission which he gave to Juliana declaring that she would remain his slave unless her relatives could pay him the remaining slaves that were owed, but she would become free upon his death. However, when the governor of Angola in Luanda, Francisco Inocencio de Sousa Coutinho, was informed of these dealings he was outraged. He ordered that Juliana be freed immediately, insisting that manumission could not be granted with conditions. He ruled that Juliana could not be simultaneously a free woman and a slave, and that such a contradiction was "repugnant."

This eighteenth-century incident on the African continent, so rich in human drama, is valuable in its own right as a fragmentary biography of one enslaved African woman. Candido does not overlook that fact and brings it to life. But her historical imagination seems to be limited by her archival sources. Her narrative of Juliana's slavery and freedom attributes motives and agency to every actor in the incident except Juliana herself, who remains voiceless, invisible, and subaltern. Of course, this silence mirrors the silence of the Portuguese documents. Nonetheless, African historians must struggle to hear the voices of the subaltern, even when they are silent, as they most often are. These same Portuguese archival documents suggest that Juliana resisted her enslavement vigorously.

Since the *soba* of Kilengues sent his ambassador and was willing to pay a large ransom for Juliana's freedom, we should imagine that her family was extremely wealthy and probably a part of the kingdom's aristocratic elite, perhaps a member of the royal family. In any case, she would have been a woman who would not easily accept enslavement. Part of the captain-major's anxiety about his legal claim on Juliana, an anxiety which prompted his visit to the notary and the extraordinary letter of manumission given to his slave, may have been caused by Juliana's own loud protests against her bondage. Therefore, it would have been more satisfying for Candida to delve more thoroughly into her possible feelings and any actions that she may have taken to resist her enslavement. She may have played a role in her own emancipation.

Candido's local history of Benguela and its hinterland is well-written and is a pleasure to read. It is a rich and nuanced attempt to illumine the role of Brazil, Angola, and the South Atlantic in the history of the slave trade. The book engages and challenges the historiography of West Central Africa on the basis of firm documentary evidence and piercing argument. It advances the emphasis on biographies during the period, which is emerging as an important aspect of African history. This volume is a must read for all those interested in the history of the Atlantic slave trade.

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**Davie, Grace.** *Poverty Knowledge in South Africa: A Social History of Human Science, 1855-2005.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2015. 334 pp.

An underlying crux of modern civilization accounts from economic development, whereas the wherewithal to meet demands for modern development is a discerning feature of nation and state building. In South Africa, economic development maintains a grim present from a tragic history, lending to its characterization as an undisputedly unequal nation. A narrative from contemporary South African history finds state-building occurred as a result of *rapid* industrialization in the early nineteenth century, following colonialization by European settlers and English colonies. As a result, industrial expansion and economic prosperity benefitted colonizers, and social reforms were therein enacted to address a capitalistic need to buttress a robust labor market. In a historical analysis, Grace Davie explores these affects of modern economic policies from South Africa to conjure an argument for the endurance of poverty, despite centuries worth of social reform.

In a poignant assessment of South African liberal reformism, *Poverty Knowledge in South Africa* explores the trenches of economic development in South Africa from government centralization leading into the era of apartheid and beginning with the modern reign of the African National Congress. Davie's framework dually serves as a critical and didactic purpose in portraying pitfalls of social welfare policies meaning to address the endurance of poverty between industrialization and precipitated derelict standards of living among the working class. In an unabashed stance against positivist thinking, Davie begins by posing an unrelenting quest to understand the concept of poverty and the means through research taken to answer the poverty question. In explicating the foundation of poverty knowledge, Davie relies upon contextual histories around nation-state building and economic development. Wherein, Davie's investigation into public policy reveals the earliest history of poverty knowledge arose from tenuous and inapplicable measures, exempling GDP and standards to maintain "European standards" of living, rather than measures seeking to alleviate disenfranchised conditions. From the inception of a South African state, social hierarchies between colonizers and indigenous Africans arose from racist welfare policies to mitigate the "poor white problem" (21). Throughout *Poverty Knowledge*, Davie attempts to explain South Africa's social construction of poverty, and in doing so reveals a deeper historical context of racism and segregation among South African colonizers, indigenous people, and migrant labors.

Davie's main thesis begins with the simple premise around poverty's conceptualization to stem from a rich legacy characterized by specific struggles

over power. Pointedly argued, the concept of poverty originated in inception from a statist operation to protect capitalist expansion by favoring the demographic of white working class people. In divulging early notions of poverty as bolstered by government's racially biased social welfare policies, Davie accounts for the flaws in knowledge production and the fatal appropriation of applied and social scientific research for the interest of opportunistic pursuits in policymaking. Three major themes unfold within Davie's extensive biography to explain the historically flawed mechanism to answering the poverty question: (1) co-production; (2) limitation in research frameworks from the human sciences; and (3) epistemic mobility, or policymaking. With these themes taken altogether, poverty experts are implicated in line with a critical assessment of South Africa's welfare state for misusing the state as a vehicle to serve policymaking interests. Davie unpacks the thesis further to argue that poverty knowledge in post-colonial South Africa still maintains an enduring quality of recycled policies to address industry needs, as protected by an economic apparatus serviced by government motives with most conveniently the nation's wealth concentrated among a white minority, a demographic relic of colonial South Africa.

The most telling feature of *Poverty Knowledge* derives from Davie's conveyance of flawed policymaking and the extent economic interests served as an apparent priority to the welfare state. Davie's argument powerfully resonates with critical thinker Alice O'Connor<sup>1</sup> in directing point blank responsibility to creators of poverty knowledge in South Africa to unseal the "conscious and unconscious limitations of conceptual legacies" (22) dating from colonial South Africa and presented-day frameworks of macroeconomic policies and neoliberalism. Whereas, many of the complexities governed by co-production have risen from a lack of critical thinking towards *how* poverty knowledge is produced, rather than question complacency inherent in the liberal enterprise to addressing poverty.

Davie's judgments towards knowledge production serve as a cautionary provision for academics and intellectuals meaning well to tackle the perennial issue around poverty reduction and social welfare. Providing solely positivist baselines and standards to assess qualitative features of poverty undermines the tragic state of communities and societies faced in an everyday struggle to address realities of injustice. Thus, without critical assessment towards existing policies, poverty experts perpetuate an agenda of stratified economic interests to become the overseers of the liberal enterprise.

In providing a contrasted narrative to misguided policymaking, Davie's latter chapters focus on present-day social movements among wagedworkers to take back

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<sup>1A</sup> O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History* (New Jersey: Princeton University, 2001).

“peoples’ power” (244). These chapters serve to recount for social scientists a vast evidentiary corpus to base future policy research. Davie eloquently concludes that poverty knowledge could work towards the betterment of peoples’ struggles when it is addressed in isolation from economic policies. To do so, co-production of knowledge-based policies must then divorce interests from economic development in a capitalist context, and rather, and perhaps radically when poverty knowledge is generated in a bottom-up mechanism inclusive of grassroots research, and as reported by public witnesses privy to poverty’s inhumane conditions.

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**Elischer, Sebastian.** *Political Parties in Africa: Ethnicity and Party Formation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2013. 336 pp.

In his book *Political Parties in Africa: Ethnicity and Party Formation* Sebastian Elischer explores how ethnicity impacts political party formation in Sub-Saharan Africa. He is particularly curious about the role of ethnicity in political party formation and function in Ghana, Namibia, and Kenya. He also provides a brief overview of political party formation in Tanzania, Botswana, Senegal, Zambia, Malawi, Burkina Faso, and Benin. His research on African political party formation is the first of its kind of more than fifty years.

Elischer's fundamental view is that the comparative politics literature itself has a western bias. This shapes his research on the African political party landscape in that his goal is to turn over decades of political science scholarship. He determines that there are five major party types: the ethnic alliance, the mono-ethnic alliance, the catch-all, the programmatic, and the personalistic party. Even more importantly, he creates a new global typology that is relevant for Africa. Further he provides the reader with a sense that political party formation is highly divergent and developed in African nations and helps the reader to understand that the simple country or case studies of one African nation are no longer relevant to the political science discipline.

Elischer's study demonstrates that there is a correlation between country social structure and the party system type currently in place. Thus, countries with one core ethnic group and low ethnic fragmentation are prone to forming nonethnic parties. However, countries lacking a core ethnic group and exhibiting high ethnic fragmentation are prone to the formation of ethnic group parties. Although Elischer has a small number of countries that he is examining, he makes great strides in helping us understand African politics more fully. To provide insight into political party formation in nations with vastly different cultures, languages, histories and ethnicities is a remarkable contribution to many fields: political science, sociology, anthropology and history only to name a few.

Elischer also helps us understand in a practical, public policy sense that the bans on ethnic parties in place in many African nations today are not necessary. Rather, these bans are based on a basic misunderstanding about what leads to ethnic strife in African nations. According to Elischer, ethnic parties are not the problem, but societal ethnic fragmentation is. Ethnic parties are a symptom and not a cause. Ethnic parties, according to Elischer, do however create political polarization and can cause extreme pressure on voters to turn-out to vote, which can lead to a highly charged political atmosphere.

Importantly, Elischer helps us understand that Africa is more than a stereotype in which ethnic parties dominate. Perhaps this view has been pervasive for so long, because the intricate nature of African parties and politics has generally been hard for the western audience to understand. With so many languages and cultures, Africa has not been easy for news reporters, political scientists, sociologists, historians, or anthropologists to grasp in its entirety.

Unfortunately, in his attempts to refute western thinking, in some ways Elischer still falls into a trap: his African party conventions are too simple, case studies are too small, and the statistical questions he answers are far too few. African political parties cannot simply be boiled down to ethnic or nonethnic party types. More questions need to be answered: How do elites behave in nonethnic and ethnic party types? How do parties behave in legislative chambers? Do ethnic parties effectively form coalitional governments? How stable are Africa's nonethnic and ethnic parties? Do ethnic parties provide goods and services to nonethnic members effectively? Perhaps we must wait for a new generation of African scholars to help us truly understand the political parties of the African continent.

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**French, Howard W.** *China's Second Continent: How a Million Migrants are Building a New Empire in Africa.* **New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014, xi+285 pp.**

It is no secret that over the past two decades, China's presence in Africa has grown substantially, prompting many scholars, political analysts and observers alike, to ask about the underlying causal factors behind such a phenomenon. A response to both this inquiry and many other closely related issues can be found in the must-read book by Howard French provocatively titled *China's Second Continent: How a Million Migrants Are Building a New Empire in Africa*.

A veteran journalist, who for several years worked for various major newspapers, including prominently the *New York Times*, French, who on account of his work as a journalist lived for many years both in Africa and China, is in addition to his native English language, fluent in French, Spanish, Portuguese, as well as Chinese (Mandarin). This is all the more important as it makes him uniquely suited to tell the story behind China's recent aggressive push into Africa.

The book is organized into three sections, with a total of ten chapters, each of which purposely focuses on some of the fifteen sub-Saharan African countries that French visited as part of his research. In the book's opening chapter which centers on Mozambique, French traces the recent Chinese migration flow to Africa back to then Chinese President Jiang Zemin, who upon his return home from a groundbreaking visit in Africa in 1996 "explicitly directed the country's firms to "go out," meaning go overseas in search of business" (12). Needless to state, there has been an enthusiastic response to this unprecedented call to go global.

On the whole, Africa appears to have been for China, the place of predilection for the implementation and achievement of the aforesaid go out policy, as French conservatively estimates that in the space of a mere decade, over a million of private Chinese citizens have settled on the continent (13; 26). This assertion is indeed, one of the key revelations of the book. On the matter though, while in its initial phase, the observed massive Chinese migration to Africa occurred as a result of the Chinese state policy, French cautions against viewing it broadly as a state-driven phenomenon. He found no empirical evidence supporting such an approach in the countries he visited. Rather, he stressed that "[t]he historic movement of Chinese to Africa is itself largely driven by word of mouth, by news passed back and forth about a continent that many ordinary Chinese people, even those who reside deep in the hinterland of their country, nowadays speak of in near awe as a place of almost unlimited opportunity" (7).

While the impetus behind the large-scale movement of Chinese in Africa is mainly the desire of ordinary Chinese individuals to go to faraway places to

better themselves economically, there are also other forces at play that motivate their exodus. French makes this point stating that “contributing to the decision for many to take a great leap into the unknown and move to Africa was weariness with omnipresent official corruption back home, fear of the impact of a badly polluted environment on their health, and a variety of constraints on freedoms, including religion and speech” (14). As such, the estimated millions of Chinese immigrants who now call Africa home are not homogeneous but instead, they are made up of a broad spectrum of groups and individuals. It is the stories of these individuals, as told by themselves and from their own unique perspectives, using sometimes their own crude words that French reports verbatim to preserve the authenticity of the narrative, that make up the bulk of the book, its strength and its originality.

*China's Second Empire* departs from other books on the shared topic of China-Africa engagement or partnership in one crucial way. Instead of writing from an authoritative standpoint with broad statistical data discussed in a pedantic academic language more likely to confuse rather than inform the reader, French adopted a different approach. Using a loose combination of direct observation and unstructured interviews, he was able to convey the experience of those Africans and Chinese who by their actions, the choices they make, the risks they take, in sum by their trials and tribulations, provide the framework by which to understand in its proper context the true nature and complexity of the burgeoning Sino-African relations. Looking at the issue from this perspective that fully integrates the voices of these main actors in the examination of the topic not only provide the missing human dimension to the discussion but it also helps French fill an acute vacuum in the literature.

By verbally engaging as he did with his various interlocutors in different settings as he travels across sub-Saharan Africa, French gathered a wealth of information that is quite revealing. Thus, through his narrative in the book, it becomes apparent that in their overwhelming majority, Chinese migrants in Africa nurture a feeling of superiority over their African counterparts or hosts, whom they incessantly refer to by the generic Chinese term of *hei ren* (the Blacks) (239). Their recurring contention is that they are different from Africans on one fundamental point, that is, “Chinese people can really *chi ku* [eat bitter]” (221). In other words, they can endure hardship or hard labor. As for Africans, according to the Chinese commercial attaché in Mozambique, they just “like to dance” (Ibid). Chen Jun, another Chinese also explained as follows his experience when he first arrived in Nampula, a provincial capital in northern Mozambique: “When I got here I couldn’t believe it. The Black people were so primitive, you know, the way they work. Not like us Chinese. We’re in a hurry” (228). He then added: “The Blacks don’t have any qualifications” (229). One Chinese in northern Namibia even went

as far as bluntly stating that “[n]inety percent of Africans are thieves” (248). Such a statement, in fact, reinforced the conception of the owner of a Chinese medical clinic in Liberia, who proudly stated to French that “he didn’t hire locals, because they were dirty and lazy and prone to stealing” (107).

French describes such examples which abound in the book as his “introduction to a kind of casual primary racism by Chinese newcomers toward Africans” (15). What in fact the above also reveals is that China-Africa relations unfolds against the backdrop of a severe culture clash, as the local African populations for their part, listed a litany of grievances against the Chinese, decrying their business practices and management styles. In particular, they level stark criticism at the Chinese for their constant labor abuses, the low wages they pay, as well as the opacity surrounding the negotiation of contracts. Likewise, they lament the fact that they are being confined to menial jobs, “reduced to the role of task boys” (124). French himself actually better sums up the situation stating the following: “There was mounting resentment over the way China was seen to be exporting its labor, dumping cheap goods, despoiling the environment, dispossessing powerless landholders or flouting local laws, fueling corruption, and most of all, empowering awful governments” (125).

The key objective of the book was to unravel the causal factors behind the recent upsurge of Chinese migration to Africa. With humor and a rich tapestry of interesting anecdotes that capture the essence of the topic, French was able to accomplish this goal. As for the future, whether the current Sino-African partnership will lead to yet another scramble for African resources, only time will tell. In the meantime, African leaders should know that natural resources are depletable assets, whereas the Chinese migrants and their government should also take the necessary steps to avoid that China ends up being perceived by Africans as an unfriendly country. In sum, it is largely incumbent upon all the various actors involved in this partnership to work together to live out the intended meaning of its official mantra and make it truly a *win-win* situation. In the process, the above discussed book can serve as a useful guide for all interested parties.

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**Gros, Jean-Germain.** *Healthcare Policy in Africa: Institutions and Politics from Colonialism to the Present.* Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, vii+283 pp.

Over the past several years, many African countries have made considerable strides toward improving their overall governance and their economy. Such an effort, first prominently underscored by the British-based *Economist* magazine which reported in its January 6, 2011 edition that over the past decade the continent it once dubbed “hopeless” had been home to six of the world’s top ten fastest growing economies, resulted in Africa being thrust at least for once into a more positive limelight. Since then, a narrative surrounding Africa’s rise or what many refer to as the “New Africa” has emerged. However, despite the optimism, Africa continues to face some daunting challenges, most notably in the area of healthcare, as evidenced by the recent outbreak of the Ebola virus disease in West Africa. It is in this context that the newly-published book titled *Healthcare Policy in Africa: Institutions and Politics from Colonialism to the Present* by Jean-Germain Gros, Professor of Political Science and Public Policy Administration at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, is timely and worth reading. It provides critical and analytical insight into the state of Africa’s healthcare and, in particular, sheds light on the actors and institutional factors involved in making the broad decisions aimed at addressing the healthcare needs of the African people. Moreover, it looks into the issues that impact or impede the successful achievement of intended healthcare goals in Africa and makes some policy suggestions for better outcomes.

Structured around seven chapters, the book is as one can infer from its title, both ambitious in scope and purpose. Gros explains in the preface that it was borne out of his long-held interest in healthcare. With its narrative though focused on the key issue of healthcare policy in Africa, a topic which represents an area of research that has hitherto received only scant, if any, scholarly attention, Gros also intends with this book, to fill a vacuum in African studies. Thus, after an extensive and critical assessment of previous scholarly works in African studies showing that they have been somehow lacking because of their overall tendencies towards state or market-centric analyses, Gros advocates the imperative necessity to “bring public policy back in” to social science scholarship on Africa. As he even more emphatically states, “[p]olicy has to be made the black box rather than the black hole of African studies”(8). In sum, for Gros, a focus on policy is essential if one has to adequately understand the causal factors behind the occurrence of the various phenomena under examination in African studies and this book which looks at the issue of healthcare in Africa from a public policy perspective subscribes to the logic of this core belief.

Gros explains the current state of the African healthcare system and policy by tracing them back to the colonial era, thus using path dependency as an analytical framework. He does so though while steering away from the pitfall of historical determinism that could have weakened his analysis. He argues that the introduction in Africa of (Western) biomedicine, that is, “individualized curative care based on biology and physiology provided in controlled settings such as hospitals” stems from various factors (56): It served among other things as an important ideological tool used by the colonial officials to “discredit traditional African medicine” and propagate their ‘civilizing’ mission (57). Though the success of this discrediting effort was, as Gros notes, only partial, biomedicine nevertheless became the dominant medical paradigm in Africa because Africans “choose what works, and biomedicine worked in colonial Africa, not always, but often enough to gain credibility among Africans (60).” A factor that likewise significantly accounts for biomedicine’s enduring hegemonic position within Africa’s healthcare system is human (elite) agency, as it pertains particularly to the purposive actions (or lack thereof) of African healthcare professionals who greatly benefited from maintaining the status quo (76). Also worth noting is the fact that, as Gros further states, many of the African elites who would later become national policy makers in their respective countries, began their careers in the medical field, where they were trained in institutions that propagate the culture of biomedicine (as in the case with Felix Houphouët-Boigny of Côte d’Ivoire, Samora Machel of Mozambique).

Having outlined the above preliminary points, Gros then makes the case for his central argument, stressing that healthcare policy in post-colonial Africa, which he describes as a legacy of colonialism, occurs not in a monolithic but in a complex, dynamic multi-actors setting in which various institutions (domestic and international) compete for prominence in shaping the healthcare policy process and ultimately determining its outcome. At the domestic or local level, these institutions include the economy, the political system, the state, and technology (119). As for the external forces, they are comprised mostly of nongovernmental organizations, or NGOs, which Gros refers to as “humanitarian organizations” and which he differentiates using a taxonomy based on the extent to which these organizations are embedded “in the institutions of the societies in which they operate, including the healthcare system, and beyond”(158). Such an approach led him to coin the terms conditionally embedded humanitarian organization (CEHO); deeply embedded humanitarian organization ((DEHO); globally embedded and multifaceted humanitarian organization (GEMHO); and indirectly embedded humanitarian organization (IEHO). Depending on their embeddedness as alluded to above, some of the aforementioned organizations exert more impact on policy than others and likewise, some have more influence than others on the different

stages or key areas of the policy cycle. Beyond these facts though, the key point to ponder here is that the presence of these humanitarian organizations along with the adoption by African countries of externally rooted policy initiatives create the framework for what Gros posits to be the “internationalization of healthcare policy in post-colonial Africa.”

African countries without a doubt face a daunting set of healthcare challenges. The suggestion by Gros, therefore, that they should emulate the Cuban healthcare system or partner with Cuba to build their healthcare capacity is quite to the point. With its pro-active approach and heavy emphasis on primary and preventive care, the Cuban healthcare system has been lauded not only as economically efficient but also highly effective. Cuba thus demonstrates that access to basic healthcare does not need to be the preserve of the rich or that, as Gros put it, “poor countries do not have to wait until they become rich to develop healthcare systems that provide quality care to their citizens with good results (258).” *Healthcare Policy in Africa* is a well-researched and an analytically well-structured piece of scholarly work. Though throughout the book Gros uses a combination of multi-level (local and global), multi-theoretical frameworks, including case study, comparative analysis, time-series cross-sectional (or multiple) regression analysis, he does not, however, allow the methodological requirements of the research to befog the important issues he examines. In fact, the book is reader-focused, informative and should prove valuable not only to African healthcare policy makers or healthcare providers but to a broad spectrum of scholars, students or general readers interested in African affairs.

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**Hicks, Celeste.** *Africa's New Oil: Power, Pipelines and Future Fortunes.* London: Zed, 2015, xiv +239 pp.

Celeste Hicks' *Africa's New Oil* is a comparative case study of five countries fairly new to oil production: Chad, Niger, Ghana, Kenya, and Uganda. Through her comparative approach, Hicks aims to show how countries have adopted a variety of approaches to combat the resource curse. The book's primary argument is that "the fundamental issues in all of the countries profiled are those of governance and the ability of citizens and civil society...to influence leaders towards transparent and beneficial ways of using natural resource revenues" (pg. 15). Drawing on interviews in the profiled countries and her review of the relevant academic literature, Hicks presents a balanced account of the countries' early successes and struggles with oil production.

In Chapter 1, Hicks discusses the creation and ultimate demise of the CCDP, a joint plan between the World Bank and international oil companies to finance the development of Chad's oil fields. Hicks suggests that the Chadian government's ending of its agreement with the World Bank was not the result of negotiating in bad faith, but rather the result of the World Bank's lack of flexibility toward the government's spending of oil revenues in the face of severe security threats from rebel forces. Hicks presents the aftermath of the CCDP in Chapter 2 along six key themes: "the contracting process; transparency with regard to the receipt of money from oil; effective revenue management; civil society engagement; environmental management; and the impact on the local economy" (39). Hicks' assessment here is nuanced. On the one hand, there remains a suboptimal level of transparency, high expenditures on infrastructure projects without the concomitant investment in human capital, and other serious problems. On the other hand, some important measures have been retained, such as environmental protection remaining a key focus and civil society continuing to monitor revenues. Even the Chadian government's use of oil revenues for military spending may be somewhat justified; Hicks suggests such military expenditure is at least partially responsible for keeping rebels from toppling the government and thereby avoiding destructive instability (75). She concludes the chapter by arguing that whether Chad turns out to be resource-cursed will depend on if it continues down its current path or moves toward wiser investments in development, education, and health.

China's involvement in Chad's oil industry is the subject of Chapter 3. Hicks' account begins in 2006 and continues to late 2014. It starts with Chad breaking its diplomatic relations with Taiwan in order to begin a relationship with China. Much of her account draws on a visit to a Chinese company's oilfield and refinery in 2013, though she also incorporates scholarly and journalistic sources. Although the



transparency of its agreements with China's CNPCIC and the fact that many of the oil company's workers are Chinese expats leave much to be desired, the Chadian government's willingness and ability to stand up to it to enforce environmental rules "gives some cause for optimism about the health, safety and environmental standards of any future expansion in the industry" (102). However, the future remains uncertain; Hicks notes the relationship turned sour in 2013 over issues like environmental damage and increasing prices for refined petroleum products.

Chapter 4 examines Niger's oil industry, with a particular emphasis on resource nationalism. Hicks frames the oil discussion background information on Niger's uranium exports to France. She also addresses the role of China's CNPC, as well as civil society and transparency. She concludes that progress is mixed: there is no stabilization fund to deal with fluctuating prices, a significant portion of revenues are being used for military spending, and there is "nothing in the constitution to suggest the setting up of an official civil society monitoring group" (121). Nevertheless, she notes "the kernel of transparency and accountability has been sown," as evidenced by such things as its compliance with the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (125). This initiative, as well as the efforts of the group Publish What You Pay, are frequently invoked by Hicks in evaluating the five countries.

In Chapter 5, Hicks discusses Ghana's oil industry with an emphasis on the role of civil society. The country's civil society is more empowered in dealing with oil than either Chad's or Niger's. The greatest issue confronting Ghana seems to be its oil sector developing rapidly before the finalization of important legislation, such as the Petroleum Exploration and Production Bill (155). The spending of oil revenues is also a concern, as expenditures are occurring outside the four areas intended to promote social development. Overall, while Ghana also has issues in its oil sector, they appear less severe in Hicks' account than either Chad's or Niger's.

Chapter 6 examines Uganda and Kenya's approaches to oil development. The recency of the process in these countries means the chapter is primarily focused on legislation and the debate over future development rather than their experiences in production. Kenya seemed to be moving faster, but Hicks suggests "Uganda's go-slow approach...may begin to be seen as a better way of ensuring the country is ready to make oil wealth work for the benefit of all" (194). She also discusses women's involvement in the oil industry, noting that it is more extensive in East Africa than in the other countries she visited. While earlier chapters mostly examined individual countries, Hicks provides more direct comparisons in the conclusion using five dimensions: (1) "exploration and production rights and contract transparency," (2) "revenue management," (3) "local content," (4)

“environmental and social protection,” and (5) “transparency and accountability” (pg. 198-201). She ends on a positive note, suggesting there has been significant progress in the past decade in regards to the resource curse as civil society and government in the profiled countries are actively debating how best to prevent it and harness their natural resources for long-term benefit.

Hicks’ journalistic approach and evocative writing make for a readable introduction to the topic. Hicks includes a variety of stakeholders, from government officials to civil society monitors and from corporate representatives to typical community members. Her interviews with these varied stakeholders present a balanced account, yet they have their limits. At times the level of detail feels more akin to an extended newspaper or magazine article rather than an academic publication. While Hicks occasionally references the literature on the resource curse, it is not discussed as extensively as one might hope given the book’s topic; this is possibly due to the “African Arguments” series, as noted in the book’s front matter, being intended for “students and general readers who want to know more about the African continent.” Unfortunately, the chapters on all countries except Chad seem short—even shallow—compared to Hicks’ extensive and nuanced discussion of that country’s development. This is perhaps best explained by Hicks’ having worked there as a BBC correspondent and her argument that the Chadian experience played an important role in shaping the other countries’ subsequent approaches to oil. Despite this unevenness, *Africa’s New Oil* is a well-written journalistic introduction to the continent’s new oil producers and its case studies can offer something of value to academic and lay readers alike.

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**Higgins, Maryellen.** *Hollywood's Africa after 1994*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2013.

In *Hollywood's Africa After 1994*, editor Mary Ellen Higgs and her contributors have expertly critiqued films featuring this ethnically, linguistically, and politically diverse continent of Africa in all of its allure, mystery, and excitement. Africa takes center stage as the authors debate, dissect, and deliver the goods about the images that Hollywood creates and perpetuates about Africa. *Last King of Scotland*, *District 9*, *Catch a Fire*, *Red Dust*, *Blood Diamond*, *Invictus*, *King Kong*, *Constant Gardener*, *Shake Hands with the Devil*, *Hotel Rwanda*, *The Devil Came on Horseback*, *Ezra*, *Tears of the Sun*, *Lord of War*, and *Bye Bye Africa*, appear on the pages of the book's silver screen. All of the contributors explain how Africa's representation is comprised by antiquated depictions of its history, its contemporary state, and its spirit. The age-old notion of Africa as a continent ravaged by war, gets revisited with "*Lords of War*," "*Blood Diamond*," and "*Hotel Rwanda*." Africa emerges as a war-ravaged, ethnic-on-ethnic violent space. Its landscape also transcends from the mineral-endowed landscape to the new O. K. Corral. By analyzing these diverse films featuring, an ANC activist (*Catch a Fire*), a hotel manager (*Hotel Rwanda*) and a pharmaceutical activist (*Constant Gardener*), among others reviewed, Earl Conteh-Morgan, Bennetta Jules-Rosette, J. R. Osborne, Lea Marie Ruiz-Ade, and Iyunolu Osagie become directors as they interrogate and immortalize Africa on the silver screen.

Divided into fifteen chapters, contributors sort through the "evidence of the eyes," to discuss the book's overriding theme, humanitarianism, and the problems associated with this type of filmography. The authors explore how these latest films represent the new "Scramble for Africa." In this new version, directors, their cameramen, and their shouts of action replace Dr. David Livingstone and other missionary explorers who traveled to Africa seeking geographical and scientific knowledge. But these directors are predators like their early European predecessors because they yearn to capitalize monetarily on their African prey. By doing this, directors, as Harry Garuba and Natasha Himmelman among others convey, race to set the parameters of colonization in the twenty-first century, Hollywood style.

As audience members and serious interpreters of film, these scholars interrogate more than the story lines; they also discuss the films' lighting, casting, and their messages. Through the prism of darkness and light, Joyce B. Ashuntantang portrayed how Africa gets othered, and depicted derogatorily (60). While famed African American actor Don Cheadle brings to life the courageous Paul Rusesabagina, who risked his life, and that of his family, to shelter Hutus and Tutsis during the height of Rwanda's 1994 genocide in *Hotel Rwanda*, he

participates in the director's recolonization. In fact, Cheadle comes off as the epic hero, while his counterpart, Forrest Whitaker who portrayed Ugandan dictator Idi Amin in *Last King of Scotland*, is flawed on multiple levels, as are the films. Margaret R. Higonnet, Ethel R. Higonnet, and Ricardo Guthrie, essentially put Kevin MacDonald's *Last King of Scotland* on cinematographic trial.

In this loosely executed biopic, the Academy Award winning Whitaker fully immerses himself into Amin's character. He not only assumes his persona, he also allows makeup to darken his caramel-coated skin. Whitaker is not the only one who becomes blackened (116-118). Scottish physician Nicholas Garrigan also blackens himself in a sense after he allows a spinning globe to determine that he, in this next phase of colonization, will go to Uganda. When Garrigan first arrives in the East African nation, he observes the country merely from a tourist or safari perspective. He asks questions about the animals, to which his intended respondent, replies, "They are monkeys," to which he shares, and "They would be fried in Scotland" (23-24). This idea of Africa as a land of savage beasts to be proselytized and pillaged is evidenced further by Garrigan's journey that he interrupts to have a sexual encounter with an African woman. This sexual act stamped Europe's foothold on Uganda as the union between the two reenacted the Berlin Conference, a two-month long, political affair held at the behest of Chancellor Otto von Bismarck from 1884-1885. Fourteen European nations attended. Following the conference, European powers, without the attendance and input of Africans, drew up a treaty to divide the African continent. When Garrigan betrays "his father" as Whitaker taunts, he escapes death and seeks the security from the wilds of Africa to sanity of Europe. He becomes blackened yet again, and seeks to reenter the world of whiteness where his skills, and his story will matter. Not only does he transcend the racial binary, Garrigan also emerges as the next humanitarian (Joyce Ashuntantang) because his very survival will disclose the brutality of East Africa's butchering Amin. *Catch a Fire* about African National Congress (ANC) activist Patrick Chamusso, also shows how the powerful represses. Set in South Africa, this film goes against the grain by making an African, a hero and a humanitarian.

Director Philip Noyce recounts Chamusso's story, showing the evolution of his political affiliation from a committed foreman, and football coach to an exile and activist. In 1980, following the explosion at the fuel refinery where he worked, the police falsely accused Chamusso of detonating the plant. Authorities torture his family, and when a false confession fails to drive the police off, Chamusso heads to Mozambique where he joins *Umkhonto weSizwe*, (MK) the armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC). Following political and military training, Chamusso returns to South Africa under an alias. He attempts to blow up the same refinery, but a suspicious police officer foils his mission, and finds the bomb in the

nick of time.

Chamusso's story, like that of others told through film, piece together a fragmented history of Africa that still portrays it, as a place bereft of humanity. This freedom fighter defied that image, as he sacrificed the love of his wife and children, for the greater good. Even this depiction has flaws. While he is not western, the film portrays him as a swashbuckling cowboy riding into South Africa to save it from the throes of apartheid. While the thriller is not a traditional Western, it does as Mary Ellen Higgins argues about films that fit that genre, ". . . [conjure] up . . . an evaluation through the characters' glorification and imitation of mythic western outlaw heroes" (70). Chamusso is an outlaw, living on the peripheries of South Africa's borders. But unlike many fugitives, prison spares his life. His return to South Africa's mainland and his meeting at the pier with his former wife Precious following his release from Robben Island, provides the happy ending that personify most American films.

While Mary Ellen Higgins discusses how recent film productions turn the gaze onto the Western agent of humanitarianism, she also analyzes how these movies force Africans to call into question their own agency. With so many of the storylines having partners as typified by Don Cheadle and Nick Nolte, or Bruce Willis and his counterpart in *Tears in the Sun* Africa, even on the screen, cannot stand on its own (69). Higgins' work, therefore challenges directors to examine Africa not as a cause to be championed, but as an equal partner in a past and present that was written long before the arrival of Europeans. By doing that, they can get away from the "rough justice" that the West still metes out. Africa is not a myth, and this volume debunks that theory.

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**Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Sabelo.** *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa: Myths of Decolonization.* **Dakar: CODESRIA, 2013, vii + 290 pp.**

Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, a Professor and Head of the Achir Mafeje Research Institute at the University of South Africa, examines the legacy of colonialism in Africa in *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa: Myths of Decolonization*. Ndlovu-Gatsheni's book is "concerned with the invisible entanglement and entrapment of the African continent within the complex colonial matrices of power in which full African decolonization remains a myth and African freedom is reduced to an illusion" (xi). He argues that African nations only politically decolonized, and that Africans are still mentally, economically, culturally, and socially stunted by continued Western domination. Ndlovu-Gatsheni demonstrates an encyclopedic knowledge of post-colonial and colonial theory in his evaluation of current African problems. Utilizing case studies in Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa, he shows how African ideas of modernity are borrowed directly from Western concepts of modernity and that Africans must fully decolonize or continue to be ranked at the bottom of world rankings.

He describes a "postcolonial neocolonized world" as a useful term "to capture the structural, systemic, cultural, discursive, and epistemological pattern of domination and exploitation that has engulfed Africa since the Conquest" (3). This dominance did not end with decolonization, but instead continues through today. Ndlovu-Gatsheni is particularly concerned with the impact of continued colonization on African universities and scholars. Discussions of the future of Africa and Africans still rely on Western notions of modernity and progress, which do not necessarily reflect African realities. He calls on Africans to adopt an African mindset to tackle African problems as Western ideals exacerbate the problems that colonialism created.

*Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa* discusses "three main African problems, namely: the grammar of decolonization, including the question of what is and who is an African; the operational mode of coloniality that sustains Western global dominance and explanations of the entanglement of the 'postcolonial' and 'neocolonial' in present-day Africa" (31). These themes are well developed and argued, but Ndlovu-Gatsheni has a difficult task of providing solutions to the problems he raises. While African borders are a construct of colonialism, as he ably demonstrates in his case studies on Zimbabwe and South Africa, these are the borders we are forced to deal with when discussing Africa and its future. Despots such as Joseph Kony, Charles Taylor, and Robert Mugabe that he discusses are not direct results of colonialism, but rather products of the failure of post-colonial

states. Botswana, Namibia, and Zambia have had relatively stable transitions to independence and have been able to avoid the genocides and violence that have plagued other African nations. Robert Mugabe, who Ndlovu-Gatsheni focuses on as both an African problem as well a symptom of Western intervention in postcolonial Africa, went from being a darling of the West in the late 1960s to an international pariah. Concerns over his rule began during the genocides of the 1980s, not as a result of land seizures in 2000. The strategic interests of Europe and the US often drive Western sanctions, but arguing that the West's interest in humanitarianism and human rights only coincides with strategic interests is too simple of an explanation. Sanctions on Mugabe and his henchman do not benefit the West or the people of Zimbabwe, yet sanctions were still placed on Mugabe.

The book ends with a discussion of various theories on how Africa can fully decolonize. Ndlovu-Gatsheni argues that “another world cannot be possible as long as the continent and its people are not fully decolonized and the snares of the postcolonial neocolonized world are not broken. This will require an epistemic rebellion that enables the formerly colonized people to gain self-confidence, enabling them to re-imagine another world free from Western tutelage” (263-264). However, he fails to adequately explain how Africa can break free from Western constraints. For better or worse, the world is dominated by Western initiated constraints such as the IMF and World Bank, in addition to the enduring cultural legacies of colonialism. While the rise of the BRIC countries (Brazil, India, and China) has increased South-South investments and interactions reorienting Africa towards the BRICs, however, such a development merely replaces one foreign ideology/power for another.

Paradoxically, one of the strengths of the book is also one of its greatest weaknesses. Ndlovu-Gatsheni clearly has an amazing grasp of social science theory, but the theory often disrupts the narrative and discussion in the book. He continually backtracks to explain theoretical positions in order to make his points, which often only serves to needlessly complicate the argument. Nevertheless anyone interested in the impact of colonialism, particularly on African epistemology, will benefit from his discussion of the still colonized African mind. His examples also come mainly from southern Africa, and with the diversity of Africa it is hard to buy the argument that all Africans remain colonized in the same way. Focusing on the former settler colonies of Zimbabwe and South Africa also skews the evidence as Africans living under white settler rule lived vastly different lives than Libyans under Italian rule or in Cameroon under French rule. All told, though, *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa* raises interesting ideas about what it means to be African and the lingering effects of colonialism on the continent.



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**Parnell, Susan and Edgar Pieterse, eds. *Africa's Urban Revolution*. London: Zed Books, 2014, x + 309 pp.**

This volume is derived from a series of conferences and discussions at the African Centre for Cities at the University of Cape Town, beginning in 2008. The authors interrogate the paradox that although the African continent is roughly forty percent urbanized, comprising over 400 million inhabitants, Africa is still primarily viewed as rural. The editors, Susan Parnell and Edgar Pieterse, assembled fifteen essays from geographers, urban planners, historians, and policy experts from South Africa, Sweden, Canada, and the United Kingdom to elaborate on the policy implications of Africa's urban revolution. The volume's overarching argument is that African urbanization and its societal effects are not given sufficient attention by researchers and policy makers. This text provides an excellent contextual complement to Pieterse and AbdouMaliq Simone's more theoretical volume, *Rogue Urbanism*, which was also released by the African Centre for Cities.

Pieterse and Parnell's introduction identifies some of the major challenges of urbanization on the African continent: inequalities, peri-urban growth, under-employment, outdated colonial urban management schemes, and competing sources of power in urban settlements. They make clear, however, that "Africa's future is, opportunely, urban" (6) insisting that the stakes are too high to ignore the complexity and importance of African cities of all sizes. Jo Beall and Tom Goodfellow continue with an analysis of post-conflict urban growth, identifying causes and consequences of this urbanization. Cities are often a place of refuge during rural conflict, adding to urban growth rates and potentially rekindling tensions. The authors also dismiss the "myth of the temporary city" where post-conflict urban migrants are normally permanent.

In the third essay, Parnell and Ruwani Walawege show that although urban growth rates would continue with or without environmental push factors, global environmental change adds another element into an already unstable mixture. Jonathan Crush and Bruce Frayne complement, arguing that in order to meet food security demands in urban areas, industrial and commercial agriculture must begin to replace smallholder production. Gordon Pirie adds to this, showing that urbanization rates have revealed outdated and backlogged transport infrastructure. Comparing South Africa's "Gautrain" with the growing minibus taxi industry in African urban areas, he shows that existing mass transit has only increased transport inequalities (137).

An important issue that this volume tackles is whether urbanization is tied to GDP growth and employment. Ivan Turok and others argue that this relationship is not straightforward; shortcomings in urban services can offset what economic

benefits urban agglomeration could provide (76). Simone adds to Turok's discussion by calling for better transnational and regional urban connectivity. Parnell and David Simon offer a different view, arguing for larger central government role in urban economic planning in order to offset global marginalization and inadequate 1980s decentralization policies. These government initiatives must be neither neoliberal *laissez faire* policies nor high modernist planning initiatives; urban governments must take into account "the profound fluidity and dynamism of the urbanization process" (254).

The volume makes a valuable contribution to the study of urban planning and planning education on the African continent. Stephen Berrisford shows that urban "planning law has the effect of being no more than an irritant to developers but an oppressive force for the poor" (167). He also points out that more government attention is paid to poor peoples' legal violations rather than evasion by large-scale developers. James Duminy, Nancy Odendaal, and Vanessa Watson add to the discussion of urban planning by arguing for planners to "leave their offices" and adopt a more contextual, case study oriented education and training (196).

Overall, this edited volume provides an excellent review of the challenges facing African cities. Urbanization is growing and will continue to grow even if "push factors" are reduced; internal urban growth is large enough. This is the subject of Sean Fox's essay on urbanization as a global historical process. He presents a Malthusian argument that urban growth on the African continent stemmed from colonial era medical technologies that reduced mortality rates and food insecurity. For this reason, he argues that the only feasible way to cease urban growth is to take on an aggressive family planning agenda (275).

The authors agree that the stakes are too high to ignore the implications of African urban growth and continue to focus solely on rural dilemmas; they attempt to tackle urban issues with concrete, policy-oriented arguments. Particularly commendable are the charts, graphs, and photos scattered throughout the book, adding context and visual flair. Critiques of the book are small. It would have been useful to elaborate on rural-urban connections and dependency; Carole Radoki does allude to this in her study of urban religious organizations, but a full chapter would have added context and content. Nevertheless, *Africa's Urban Revolution* is a good read for anyone interested in urban studies, contemporary African issues, or demographics. It is accessible for mid-level undergraduates and above.

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**Stanard, Matthew.** *Selling the Congo: A History of European Pro-Empire Propaganda and the Making of Belgian Imperialism.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011, xiv + 387 pp.

Matthew Stanard's *Selling the Congo* focuses on the development of Belgian pro-empire propaganda and how the construction and dissemination of such materials and ideas influenced understandings of empire in the metropole. In order to achieve this, Stanard focuses on five critical spaces of propaganda: expositions, museums, the education system, monuments, and colonial cinema (4). Stanard swiftly defines the value of these spaces in the construction of pro-empire propaganda in the metropole by emphasizing the complementary ways in which they reached the Belgian masses in their daily lives. Yet, Stanard shies away from discussing *bandes dessinées* (comics) within his analysis in his discussion of pro-empire propaganda because he dismisses such productions as "pure fiction" rather than a "tool to promote the colony or imperialism." (5). This is problematic because *bandes dessinées* were important spaces for promoting not only a Belgian civilizing mission, but also carefully constructed caricatures of blackness that bolstered imaginings of African otherness. By narrowly defining propaganda to exclude *bandes dessinées*, Stanard misses a critical opportunity to engage with Nancy Rose Hunt's work on *Tintin au Congo* and grapple with the meanings of truth, fiction, intent, colonial imaginings, and consumption through one of Belgium's most popular artistic mediums.

One of Stanard's greatest battles in *Selling the Congo* is fighting against the image of a Belgian population ambivalent to empire. Thus, he consistently pushes for a heightened understanding of colonial culture in Belgium. The two chapters on expositions and museums worked well together, as Stanard sought to explore temporary expositions and permanent museums as complementary agents in reinforcing understandings of Belgian imperialism. Pairing small and large colonial museums with twentieth century expositions that boasted a paternalistic image of Belgium's role in the Congo, economic growth, and the power of the nation, offers a complex and illuminating glimpse at the interconnected web of missionary groups, private interests, and the state in the forging of public opinion.

Stanard's chapter on monuments delves into the invention of "a national tradition of imperialism that not only celebrated the imperial project but also ennobled and legitimized it by founding contemporaneous rule on the heroic era... during which Belgians fought and died in the service of civilization in Africa" (202). While such monuments certainly changed the physical landscape of Belgium, it is uncertain whether such structures were actually capable of transforming metropolitan understandings of empire. Nuance is key in this area; as such, a

transformation was possible, as evidenced by the reimagining of King Leopold II. However, monuments alone could not rewrite history and ignite a population behind empire. Yet, Stanard's goal is not to present an image of Belgian masses vying to flock to Leopoldville to witness the miracles of Belgian colonialism in the Congo. Rather, Stanard presents a Belgian population that is somewhere between acceptance and fervor, because, as he states, "some people became aware that their livelihood or those of family members were dependent upon colonial commerce. Others became conscious of the empire in multiple forms, consented to it, and in many cases actively supported it" (6). In such a context, entertainment through a temporary exposition, an outing to a colonial museum, or an engagement with the Ministry of Colonies created not only leisure and educational opportunities, but also an environment of consent and affirmation through the pervasiveness of propagandized knowledge of the Congo. Furthermore, these spaces (and their creators) worked together to build a powerful imagining that could bolster pro-empire sentiments. Thus, the chapters on expositions and museums work well together as a way of emphasizing complementarity in the overarching mission, but Stanard could have made a greater effort to pull together the later chapters to stress the intersections of these spaces.

*Selling the Congo* is an important work in the larger historiography of Belgian colonialism because its multifaceted approach emphasizes a powerful and complex propagandizing mission that united multiple forces in the larger goal of marketing Belgium's role in the Congo. Furthermore, Stanard pushes beyond the 1908 transfer of the colony to Belgium, which is imperative because this is an area that requires greater attention from scholars. African voices are few and far between, but this is to be expected because Stanard clearly states in the introduction "Congolese perceptions and reactions remain secondary in this story of how metropolitan propaganda shaped perceptions of Africans and colonialism" (18). Stanard's monograph is simply not African history. Rather, it is a history of European imperialism that seeks to push beyond French and British dominated discussions of "colonial cultures in Europe" (21). Stanard's mention of decolonization was problematic at times, largely due to the dismissive statement that "Congolese leaders wrested their independence from Belgium without much of a fight (comparatively speaking) in 1960..." (14). This assessment minimizes the struggle of Congolese nationalists in the mid-twentieth century. Nevertheless, the text is a useful read for scholars and students interested in leisure, consumption, propaganda, knowledge production, imperialism, modern Europe, and Belgian colonialism.

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