

efforts to modernize agriculture and reduce impoverished rural communities; still Ethiopia, Africa's second largest country (with over 90 million people) continues to have one of the highest poverty rates in the world. Chapter 6, "Counting the Poor," examines how donors such as USAID "determine poverty," and argues convincingly that the multilaterals and the national governments greatly undervalue rural labor and production. This is particularly true in pastoral regions where livestock makes up the main economy but where pastoralists are often considered the poorest of the poor, owing to few cash reserves. Yet pastoralists are rich in livestock and produce much of these countries' exports; moreover, they have an impressive ability to survive drought and economic dislocation by means of adaptive strategies often ignored by USAID and the governments it funds. The final chapter, chapter 7 ("A Sort of Free Business"), reviews livestock trading in the Somali "economy without a state" (as Little titled his previous award-winning book), constituting a very viable network of producers and sellers of camels, cattle, and small stock in a trade that crosses international borders of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Saudi Arabia.

Political and Economic Reform in Africa is a sharp and insightful book, offering the reader firsthand knowledge of the effects of neoliberal policies and donor-initiated development on rural farming and herding populations on the ground. The book's examples are rich and detailed, and would well serve university courses in development and rural economy, but also in agencies carrying out development. Little offers a perspective not listened to enough in the offices of the World Bank and USAID, but it is a voice that those engaged in rural African development need to hear.

Elliot Fratkin

Smith College

Northampton, Massachusetts

efratkin@smith.edu

doi:10.1017/asr.2015.46

Mike McGovern. *Unmasking the State: Making Guinea Modern.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2013. xvi + 293 pp. Maps. Photographs. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$87.00 Cloth. \$29.00 Paper. Also E-book. ISBN: 978-0226925103.

The Demystification Program conducted by the government of Sékou Touré in Guinea's Forest region in the early years of independence has been attracting scholarly attention at least since the early 1970s. Mike McGovern's contribution to our understanding of its brutality and iconoclasm is especially valuable, however—both as an example of careful interdisciplinary scholarship and as a source for it.

The core of McGovern's work is anthropological fieldwork among the Loma and Many-speaking people of Macenta Préfecture, beginning in the late 1990s, which led him to consider "the complexities of iconoclasm at the

everyday level of village life” (8). He makes the case that the urge by some in the region to erase details of their own biographies—shared with and readily verifiable by neighbors in the village—amounts to “a form of iconoclasm at the individual level” (7). To explain this puzzling and alienating behavior in the present day, McGovern delves into the past. He illuminates a centuries-old pattern of the migration of northern Mande-speakers into the southern Forest region to trace how and why patterns of interaction with Loma-speakers have changed over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He finds a “deep reservoir of iconoclastic practice” from which Sékou Touré could draw (123): the political renewal movements of El Hajj Umar Tal and Samory Touré, which mixed universalism (in the form of Islam) with political objectives (imperial extension, which the postcolonial state has chosen to remember as resistance to French imperialism); and then, linked with the demise of France’s West African empire, the incursions of Wahhabiyya and of Islamic revival and iconoclasm in the Baga-speaking region of coastal Guinea. Carefully, McGovern points out that while French penetration, conquest, and administration of the region were “crucial catalysts” of religio-political ferment in all these cases, it was “by no means determinative of the strategies and objectives” deployed (132).

Touré’s postcolonial government drank deep from this well, but for a purpose that was deeply rooted in the national and international imperatives of Touré’s own time. The Demystification Program, initiated in 1959 and carried on, despite regular proclamations of successful completion, into the 1970s, gained momentum from a combination of two factors: “the will of the authoritarian high modernist state . . . to refashion social relations of every kind, and the somewhat manic energy invested in the construction of a stereotype of Forestiers as a savage foil to the modern national subject” (168). The Touré government, not content to destroy the artifacts associated with initiation rituals of the Loma-speakers and others in the Forest region, then sought to appropriate the masks and dances associated with these secrets as a central part of the new “national” culture it sought to create in the postcolonial nation-state.

McGovern’s use of James Scott’s term to characterize Touré’s postcolonial government leads me to my only quibble with this fascinating and valuable book. Though what he describes is certainly an “authoritarian high modernist state,” as Scott named its type in *Seeking Like a State* (1998), I am less comfortable with the book’s identification of Touré’s government with socialism. Certainly Touré expressed himself in Marxist idioms, implemented some collectivist measures among his many, often contradictory, efforts to salvage his new state’s economy, and counted the Soviet Union (most of the time), the People’s Republic of China and, especially after 1970, the German Democratic Republic among the state’s stalwart supporters. It is also true that in retrospect, the United States has glossed its own complex—but even more consistent—relationship with Guinea’s First Republic as one that cooled once and for all when Touré began to show

“communist” tendencies. But the term both oversimplifies and vilifies the international and domestic politics of Touré’s government. Touré himself frequently replied to Western journalists’ queries about Guinea’s Cold War allegiances by denying that Africa could ever be truly communist—not just because of the absence of a proletariat in most parts of the continent, but, more crucially and centrally to McGovern’s own research, because of the prevalence and importance of religious belief in African societies.

Terminological disputes aside, though, McGovern succeeds brilliantly in exploring the past of the present with his sensitive examination of how the historical record helps decode contemporary social and cultural practices. In seeking to “give some new critical purchase to the broader discussion of iconoclasm as practice and ideology” (8), McGovern also stimulates informed thought about the salience of the “present of the past” in the postcolonial state.

Mairi S. MacDonald
University of Toronto
Toronto, Canada

doi:10.1017/asr.2015.47

mairi.macdonald@utoronto.ca

Mustafa Mirzeler. *Remembering Nayeche and the Gray Bull Engiro: African Storytellers of the Karamoja Plateau and the Plains of Turkana.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014. xxi + 365 pp. Maps. Photographs. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$34.95. Paper. ISBN: 978-1442626317.

Mustafa Mirzeler’s book is an ethnography of an origin myth, the story of Nayeche and the Gray Bull Engiro which is shared by the Jie and Turkana peoples of East Africa. According to its basic outline, the Gray Bull Engiro was captured along the banks of the Longiro River by Orwakol, the founder of the Jie polity, several hundred years ago. Engiro became the progenitor of all Jie cattle, but during a very hot dry season he went missing. Nayeche, the daughter of Orwakol, followed Engiro’s tracks to the headwaters of the Tarash River. Here she found the water that had attracted Engiro, and also such abundant wild fruit on the nearby hillside that she decided to stay. When Jie men later found her while searching for pasture, they were impressed by the quality of the land and returned to tell the Jie about Nayeche’s discovery. This inspired a number of families to migrate to the area with their families and emaciated cattle. Thanks to Engiro, their cattle prospered, and when Nayeche died, they buried her at the foot of the hill now called Moru a Nayeche and named themselves the Turkana.

Based on the author’s extensive fieldwork and linguistic study between 1996 and 1997 (along with several shorter return journeys), and based partly on the historical knowledge acquired during his period of apprenticeship to Jie storytellers in Karamoja, this monograph represents the culmination of years of research. The book is organized into four parts.