

Roberts observes that in deliberately evoking common Euro-American notions, they do not perceive themselves to be “playing God” but rather as being “God’s helpers.”

Rooted in anthropology, this book branches out in an informed and lively commentary on attitudes derived from the European Enlightenment to be found in mainstream (Euro-American) accounts of assisted conception. Among them is the kind of agency entailed in a nature/culture paradigm, whose starting point is that nature is a given; Andean approaches are more likely to have their roots in religious categories based on the pre-biological determinations of lineage that were precursors to the contemporary Ecuadorian concept of race. This is surely, really, a book of our times. It offers a skilful ethnography, a quite original cultural analysis, a contribution to science studies as well as medical anthropology, an engaging history of divergent religiosities, and a resource for anyone interested in diverse philosophies of personhood. It is also another chapter in the situatedness of knowledge and the specificity of race and gender relations. For all this, the narrative is not weighed down by the theoretical and conceptual forays—much of its life comes from the fine detail that gives it a human scale: from the aspirations of clinicians and clients, and from the stories patients tell of how they came to be where they are.

———Marilyn Strathern, University of Cambridge

James R. Brennan, *Taifa: Making Nation and Race in Urban Tanzania*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012, xi, 292 pp.

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*Taifa* is a work of urban social history that traces the intellectual and cultural evolution of the intertwined concepts of race and nation in the city of Dar es Salaam (capital of present-day Tanzania) from the establishment of the Tanganyika Territory in 1919 through the end of British colonial rule and the first decades of political independence. With a population of coastal and inland Africans, South Asians, and Europeans, colonial Dar es Salaam was a plural society that became a kind of laboratory not only for colonial urban policy but also for emerging popular notions of race, citizenship, and identity, particularly from the interwar years onward. *Taifa*, the modern-day Kiswahili word for “nation,” was foremost among those ideas.

Tracing the origin of race and nation, James Brennan offers a counterargument to what he characterizes as “instrumentalist” theories of colonial policy’s role in identity formation, which hold that “the sole agent of racial consciousness is the colonial state” (p. 119). He uses British colonial documents to show how makeshift government projects failed to keep pace with the complicated realities of urban life. For instance, British efforts to segregate Dar es Salaam’s Asian, European, and “native” populations—a continuation of

German colonial policy and initially justified as a sanitary measure—were undermined almost from the outset by city residents' energetic blurring of spatial demarcations in the 1930s and 1940s.

In Dar es Salaam, the politically charged categories of “indigene” and “outsider” arose during the same period. This process generated the figure of the non-integrating Indian urban resident as Africans' “constitutive Other,” and for Brennan the most significant colonial policy behind the hardening of “native” and “Indian” identity categories was not indirect rule (which was never applied in the city) but rather wartime rationing. Colonial authorities provided differential access to food, textiles, and housing according to urban subjects' membership in various ethnic and religious groups, which made a formerly implicit status hierarchy plain for all to see. Rationing also allowed colonial subjects to cement urban identities around claims to scarce resources. The government's pledge to provide minimal living standards to all urban residents fostered what Brennan calls “urban entitlement,” an idea that “served to racialize urban life far more than any interwar colonial policy” (87).

Brennan surveys “print debates” in English- and Kiswahili-language media in the decades before and after independence, and contends that African intellectuals, far more than colonial officials, shaped the popular political vocabulary pertaining to national and racial identity in urban Tanzania. Much of this discursive work ran counter to the inclusive official ideology of the dominant nationalist TANU party. In the end, a conscious nationalist strategy to reverse the injustices of colonial-era racial exploitation isolated Dar es Salaam's residents of Asian origin and cast them as outsiders by virtue of their racially marked bodies. In a compelling and highly nuanced way, *Taifa* shows how African colonial subjects conceived and articulated their own ideas about race and citizenship during the final decades of colonialism and the early years of self-rule.

———Bruce Whitehouse, Lehigh University