

of these structures – with the active connivance of liberation-generation commanders – are at the troubled heart of the crisis of the Zimbabwean state. However, further discussion of the complexities of ZANU (PF) would have been welcome: are these jostling factions ‘working towards Mugabe’? What have been individual cliques’ or groups’ agenda and place in the politics of security?

Underpinning the book’s analysis is the theme of a conflicted Zimbabwe (yet another legacy from the Rhodesian white settler state): the dichotomy between a romanticised – and also profoundly self-serving – version of involvement in the war of liberation as a measurement of entitlement for continued access to power, versus those who call for a demystification of a particular version of ‘patriotic blackness’, and that the generation and ideas of the liberation war have had their day. Inevitably, age and class factors are part of this contestation. This is a thoughtful and well-written book which deserves a wide readership. The author indicates that the likelihood is that even after Mugabe’s eventual demise, the unravelling of politics of security in Zimbabwe will ensure a continued bumpy ride.

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Out in Africa: LGBT Organizing in Namibia and South Africa by A. CURRIER
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This interesting and important study is particularly welcome because it focuses on the under-researched context of LGBT rights activism in Namibia, as well as the more prominent and long-standing history of activism in South Africa. This book develops our understanding of social movement activism in the global South and the broader interplay of visibility and invisibility in activism around LGBT rights. Currier draws from ethnographic observation, qualitative interview data and an extensive media analysis to survey LGBT activism and rights campaigns in the two countries between 1995 and 2006. As Currier explains, this was a significant moment in both countries’ new democracies and one in which LGBT rights groups had every reason to believe they would achieve full equality. These hopes were delivered in legal and political terms in South Africa, although in practice black LGBT South Africans and particularly black lesbians continue to be subject to homophobic violence. In Namibia, the existence of equality legislation has been undermined by the public and at times, virulent, homophobic statements by high-ranking politicians in the SWAPO-led government. The disregard for legal protection places Namibian LGBT rights activists in considerably more challenging, but not entirely unrelated, circumstances to their South African peers.

Currier devotes considerable attention to the contention deployed by opponents against LGBT rights that homosexuality is un-African, un-Christian and Western. It is a discourse that pervades socio-political discourses across Africa and as this study demonstrates, it is one that LGBT organisations must engage with and contest. Currier argues that although LGBT activists repudiated the notion that ‘homosexuality is un-African’, ‘they did not seem

to question how using Western identity categories affected how opponents viewed them' (p. 27). However, although the act and narrative of 'coming out' is perceived as Western, it forms an important aspect of LGBT activism and not only makes LGBT movements visible, but allow them to symbolically contest the claim that homosexuality is un-African. A more difficult aspect of this hostile discursive environment is the reality that South African and Namibian LGBT groups rely heavily on Northern donors. This material fact has resulted in charges that LGBT groups are 'gay for pay'. As Currier shows, South African LGBT groups, such as Behind the Mask, have acted as intermediaries for Northern donors and aided in assessments and training for other LGBT activist groups across Africa and have helped mitigate this charge and localise donor policies. The 'homosexuality as un-African' discourse is one that has been contested as a key element of campaigning, but one that clearly continues to pose challenges and restrict activism about LGBT rights in Africa.

A number of key campaigns and political controversies are explored in the book to highlight the dilemmas, debates and tactics of LGBT activists in southern Africa. The legal campaign for equal same-sex marriage rights in South Africa is explored and it is contrasted with the lack of an equivalent campaign in Namibia due to high-level political homophobia and internal disagreements, often predicated on activists' different racial and class identities. The rape trial of Jacob Zuma afforded an opportunity to lesbian activists to be visible and campaign on the issue of black lesbian rights and homophobic violence against lesbians in South Africa. Yet at other times lesbian rights groups had been invisible because of the threat of this violence. As in Namibia, invisibility could be forced by circumstance, rather than by choice, and could serve some purpose by allowing activists to regroup and remain safe. In 2006, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance in South Africa, directed by an individual activist, publicly broke the South African blood donation policy which prohibited gay men donating blood. The public act of gay men who had not disclosed their HIV status in a country with high HIV infection 'generated unwelcome visibility for the movement as a whole' (p. 100) and 'threatened to delegitimize [the demands of] LGBT activists' (p. 100) for citizenship rights, especially equal rights to marriage. Currier shows how the broader LGBT rights movement responded quickly and successfully by portraying the Gay and Lesbian Alliance's actions as extreme and not part of the broader movement, that was focused on legal reform by legal methods.

Out in Africa richly documents the reality of LGBT activists' lives and campaigns in South Africa and Namibia during a critical period in the negotiation of sexual rights and reveals the tensions and dilemmas of LGBT campaigning in what is often a deeply hostile and fraught socio-political context. Above all, Currier demonstrates how visibility and invisibility are crucial means by which we can evaluate social movements, critical points of contention in campaigning tactics and unintentionally and materially forced realities for LGBT activists in southern Africa.

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