

the work can be read with different objectives in mind and by a wide and diverse audience. The main story of the nature of Christianity is embedded in the political and social developments in Rwanda, at both the national and the local level. Such a combination of perspectives is hard to find in the works on both Rwanda and the phenomenon of genocide as such. *Christianity and Genocide* is a necessary piece of the puzzle for those interested in a range of topics: Rwandan history (and the genocide), genocide, Christianity and religion, civil society and wider socio-political developments in Central Africa.

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**Africa's Islamic Experience: history, culture, and politics** edited by A. A. MAZRUI, P. M. DIKIRR, R. OSTERGARD JR., M. TOLER and P. MACHARIA  
New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 2009. Pp. 269, £29.95 (hbk).  
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American perceptions of Islam in sub-Saharan Africa were dramatically altered as a result of 9/11, just as the attacks altered African perceptions of the Western world. Despite the fact that these issues have been widely discussed and debated, this book examines Africa's impact on Muslim history. The volume edited by Ali Mazrui among others focuses on how Africa has influenced directions of Muslim history instead of how Islam has impacted upon Africa.

If Islam was born out of Judaism and Christianity, was it therefore not born out of the Nile Valley? What particular role did Africa play in promoting and protecting the Islamic faith? These questions among others are addressed as part of this collection, offering perspectives that bring us closer to answering questions such as those put forward above. Published in 2009, the volume examines new patterns of intersecting relationships between Africa and the Arab World, interactions between Islam and Christianity, and so forth. The contributors come from a variety of backgrounds, from political scientists to anthropologists to researchers of Muslim societies, Islam and culture.

Thus, we learn (from Amadu Jacky Kaba) about the demographic distribution of Muslims and Christians and those practicing traditional religion in Africa. Goolam Vahed discusses the identities of Indian Muslims who have been a significant presence since they first arrived in South Africa, and for whom religion has been the dominant identity, often superseding ancestry, descent and language. Vahed is supportive of the need to understand these issues in the social and political context of African majority rule in South Africa, complete with the effects of globalisation and the increasing fearfulness of the Muslim community. The contribution of Ginobe Edwin regarding globalisation and its impact on Islam in Kenya is particularly important. The *Ummah* in Kenya has placed itself in a strategic position both inside government and outside government, so that it cannot be ignored in any meaningful balance of power in the future; this is a particularly important development at a time when Kenya's politics are turbulent.

These three cases are picked somewhat at random from an offering of thirteen, each one of which gives an insight into Muslim perceptions of identity and Muslim initiatives in the politicised field of religion in sub-Saharan Africa.

Overall, Ali Mazrui concludes that Africa has served Islam well, in that it is well on its way towards being the first continent in the world with a Muslim plurality. What one learns from a volume such as this is that Islam is a complex, context-specific force in the African landscape. As in the Middle East, Islam is not a unitary, monolithic force in Africa. Casting it as such is as dangerous as assuming 'the West' to be a single, unified entity: neither ever has been or ever will be. A final, cautionary note must be said about using 9/11 as a point of reference: in Africa and elsewhere, doing so conveniently obscures the details and nuances of the role of Islam, historically and presently. To understand fully the influence of Islam on politics in Africa, one must delve deeply into cases at particular times and in specific places. The historical study of Islam in Africa is the soundest basis from which to interpret the future of Islam and politics in Africa.

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**The Political Economy of Economic Growth in Africa 1960–2000** by B. J. NDULU, S. A. O'CONNEL, R. H. BATES, P. COLLIER and C. C. SOLUDO  
Cambridge University Press, 2008. Vol. I, p. 452; vol. II, pp. x + 719 + CD-ROM.  
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These volumes may give the impression of being a reference work, which is to a certain extent true for the second volume that contains chapters on the trajectories of economic development of particular countries. However, as reference works these books do not add much to what can already be found in the World Development Indicators. Nevertheless, they should be consulted by anybody interested in the study of economic life in Africa. The African Economic Research Consortium has brought together a large number of economists who show in these volumes a great capacity for inventive and elegant analysis.

The analysis starts from the viewpoint of opportunities and choices. The geographical perspective in the chapter 'Opportunities and choices' by Paul Collier and Stephen O'Connell represents the most stimulating analysis of opportunities. They distinguish three situations: coastal countries; resource-rich countries, often landlocked; and resource-poor landlocked countries. In the whole developing world, the growth performance of the last was least successful; in Africa, these countries were in gradual absolute decline; resource-rich countries did better, but their performance was disappointing in comparison with the performance of such countries in the developing world as a whole; the comparative performance of African coastal economies vis-à-vis others in the developing world was the worst.

The major perspective of choices is investigated through a classification of anti-growth syndromes resulting from the politics of particular countries. It is no wonder that collapsed and failed states performed worst, but apart from that the authors single out regulation and control as major anti-growth syndromes. Syndrome-free countries that avoided destructive internal conflict and allowed markets to operate freely functioned best. These examples only represent the most prominent of a plethora of themes to be found in these volumes. One can read about how various countries have dealt with commodity booms, or the influence of Fabianism on the first generation of African nationalist leaders.