

translators follow dominant trauma scripts as well as ideas about gender or culpability, which she debunks. In a context where human rights and free speech are also nationally constricted, ensuring the faithful testimony of survivors, and especially of women who do have the strength to speak, becomes crucial. This also means understanding that stories will change as people's circumstances change, and we should be open to this messiness, contradiction, criticism and being put on the spot.

The book ends with consequences for the ways in which we understand how to facilitate post-traumatic growth in clinical settings. It considers the therapeutic regimes that exist in Rwanda and how more culturally informed approaches could facilitate post-traumatic growth. The book is thus significant in several ways, in that it decolonizes the methods and theories that we use to do research, as well as debunking conventions about trauma that can act as gatekeeper tropes. The most important lesson is the need for cultural sensitivity, to listen and learn from survivors by empowering them to tell their stories in their own terms. However, this is also where the book falls short. We never get any insights about how the survivors themselves view Williamson Sinalo's gendered reading of post-traumatic growth or if they agree or disagree with it. In this way, survivors are potentially disempowered again. Another theoretical interpretation or co-witnessing is enforced, even if it claims to be culturally sensitive. It is not used and additionally does not rethink the way in which testimony is politically collected and who has overall ownership. Decolonization is not just about processes of translation but about questioning why translations are needed in the first place, and how the final say should belong with the survivors.

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Suad M. E. Musa, *Hawks and Doves in Sudan's Armed Conflict: al-Hakkamat Baggara women of Darfur*. Oxford and Rochester NY: James Currey (hb £60 – 978 1 84701 175 6; pb £25 – 978 1 84701 265 4). 2018, 237 pp.

Suad Musa's *Hawks and Doves in Sudan's Armed Conflict* is a welcome study of the institution of *al-Hakkamat* (plural of *al-Hakkamah*): gifted women from Sudan's Darfur and Kordofan regions who, by composing and reciting poetry in songs, articulate significant social and political commentary. *Al-Hakkamat* hold tremendous power and authority, given the value that their communities accord to wisdom, orality and spoken word. The author argues that this power, which is an extension of women's leadership in African systems of traditional authority, emanates from the involvement of *al-Hakkamat* 'in the political activities that the tribe pursues in order to secure its boundaries' (p. 70).

Based on field research in Nyala and al-Fasher, capitals of South and North Darfur respectively, the book complicates narratives that essentialize women and construct them as natural peacebuilders. Instead, Musa highlights the complex and at times contradictory roles of *al-Hakkamat*: as Hawks (mobilizers for war and violence) and to a lesser extent as Doves (voices for healing, peace and reconciliation). Musa also examines other roles that fall in between these two binaries.

Hawks and Doves is divided into nine chapters and a conclusion. The first two chapters introduce the reader to the geography and diverse population of Darfur. The chapters discuss Sudan's colonial and postcolonial histories, and the socio-

economic and political factors at the root of Sudan's conflicts. Musa argues that the elites who ruled Sudan after independence utilized ethnic differences and local conflict over economic resources in Darfur to advance their own narrow political and economic interests. A discussion of the gender dimensions of this history and its distinct impact on Darfuri women and men would have enriched the monograph, given Musa's goal of writing the narratives of al-Hakkamat into the historical record.

Chapter 3 is an ethnographic account of the institution of al-Hakkamat. Musa describes the process through which a talented girl develops her skills as a potential Hakkamah by building a reputation of strength and wisdom, and through accumulating wealth from payments from leaders she praises. Through their interaction with the military institution of *al-Ageed*, which is responsible for security of the group, al-Hakkamat eventually influence the dynamics of interethnic conflict in Darfur.

Musa argues that the National Congress Party government, which dominated Sudan between 1989 and 2019, co-opted al-Hakkamat and utilized their influence, especially during mobilizations against Darfuri armed opposition movements. The same government excluded al-Hakkamat from local reconciliation initiatives and from national peace processes, according to Musa. In a lecture she gave at the University of Massachusetts in autumn 2019, Musa used an image of doves imprisoned in a cage as an analogy for the exclusion of al-Hakkamat from peace processes. This exclusion undermined the potential role of al-Hakkamat as voices of peace and reconciliation, and undermined peace, given the influence of al-Hakkamat on male leaders, argues Musa.

Musa uses case studies and anecdotes to illustrate the influence of al-Hakkamat. For example, during an interethnic conflict between Ma'alia and Rizeigat tribes in 2006, the local commissioner in the area invited a religious teacher to address combatants. The religious teacher told the soldiers that murder, the burning of houses and rape were sinful acts (p. 84). The local commander in the area, however, instructed his fighters to listen to the combative voice of al-Hakkamat instead.

The author does not rule out the possibility of a positive role for al-Hakkamat in peacebuilding, however. She ends the book with a message of hope that change might occur as a result of better education for Darfuri women, and through transforming the role of al-Hakkamat and 'empowering them to take the lead in calling for an end to war and violence' (p. 165).

While much of the analysis in *Hawks and Doves* is insightful, the book is not without flaws. For example, in her commentary regarding the vast literature on Darfur, the author cites two studies about which she states that 'the portrayal of Darfuri rural women in these conflicts, however, has shown them all as mere victims'. The content of at least one of the studies the author cites does not support this argument (El-Battahani, 'Ideological expansionist movements versus historical indigenous rights in the Darfur Region of Sudan'). El-Battahani does not discuss the experiences of Darfuri women. The author briefly mentions intermarriage between different ethnic groups in Darfur on page 51. He lists rape as one of several factors that forced affected Darfuris out of their areas. He does not specify the gender of rape victims or survivors and does not portray these communities as victims. On the contrary, on page 61, El-Battahani writes that a group that identified itself as the 'Arab Gathering' articulated a 'supremacist ideology' that constructed Darfuris as 'lesser people' and thus enabled the killing, looting and rape of fellow Darfuris.

The second source – cited as Mohamed, 1998 – is not listed in the bibliography. Instead, the author included another reference (Mohamed [sic] 2003, 'Briefings'). The citation for this reference is not correct. Ironically, Mohammed ('Briefings') discusses both the subordination of women in Darfur – which she argues is not

exceptional – *and* the poetry and different roles of al-Hakkamat! Despite these shortcomings, which I hope the author would address in future editions of the book, *Hawks and Doves* sheds light on the contributions of an under-researched social group to conflict dynamics in Darfur.

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Mick Moore, Wilson Prichard and Odd-Helge Fjeldstad, *Taxing Africa: coercion, reform and development*. London: Zed Books (hb £70 – 978 1 78360 454 8; pb £16.99 – 978 1 78360 453 1). 2018, 288 pp.

This introductory text co-authored by three prominent scholars in the field provides a useful overview of some of the thorny questions that emerge on taxation and its relationship to the quality of governance on the continent. With actionable bullet points in each chapter, it targets policymakers in African countries, international aid agencies and activists. With these audiences in mind, the book is principally concerned with how African governments can raise additional revenue efficiently and, inasmuch as it is possible, equitably.

For instance, the authors assertively grapple with the potentially enormous tax receipts that could be obtained from multinational corporations and high net worth individuals on the continent. The latter include people whose ‘value’ is US\$1 million or more. Both types of taxpayers are known for their skill at shirking their fair tax responsibilities, which the text details. This is no small feat given the legal complexities of both entities, their strong embeddedness in the international system, and the myriad ways in which their considerable wealth can be hidden. The text also pays careful attention to clarifying tax jargon such as value added tax, ‘regressive’ taxes and so forth. And, where possible, the book also raises concerns about gender and tax.

But there are at least three interconnected gaps within the text, which loosely stem from the ways in which the authors breezily draw from or neglect historical literature. The first is the missed opportunity to identify or meaningfully illustrate how deeply intertwined multinational tax avoidance is to the political economy of many African states today. For instance, some contemporary multinational companies grew alongside – or, in the case of Rhodesia, reasonably constituted – the state in many African countries. In a pattern that eerily resembles the template for multinational tax avoidance on the continent today, colonial-era corporations, such as Unilever’s antecedent, were often granted privileged access in exchange for funnelling rents back to their European metropolises. In a sense, corporations might have co-produced Frederick Cooper’s ‘gatekeeper state’ phenomena in ways that persist, and future efforts to ‘fix’ how multinational corporations are taxed will likely need to grapple with this legacy if they are to be lasting.

Second, although the authors state that the legacy of European occupation of most of Africa remains alive for people on the continent, they fail to consider how colonial tax policies reworked local forms of public authority in ways that remain salient today. This includes Sierra Leone’s 1898 Hut Tax War, in which approximately 1,000 soldiers, traders and missionaries were killed in resistance to the imposition of a tax on people’s homes. The memory of this nine-month rebellion is, in the authors’ estimation, ‘a significant influence on how [Sierra Leoneans] understand the world today’. And yet one consequence of this uprising that the authors neglect was that chiefs ended up collecting these taxes on behalf of