BOOK REVIEWS

ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY

Peter D. Little. ***Economic and Political Reform in Africa: Anthropological Perspectives.*** Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014. 258 pp. Photographs. Map. Bibliography. Index. Cloth. $75.00. Paper. $25.00. E-book $21.99. ISBN: 978-0-253-01084-1.

Peter Little, director of the Program in Development Studies at Emory University, is an anthropologist who has worked extensively in rural Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, and elsewhere in Africa for the past thirty years. As both a researcher and consultant with international development organizations, Little has a developed critique of international development efforts in rural Africa; indeed a more accurate title for this book would be "Neoliberalism in Africa: The Effects from Below." The book's seven chapters explore issues of contract farming in Gambia and Ghana; the informal economy in periurban Mozambique; conservation, multiparty elections, and pastoralist poverty assessments in Kenya; food aid dependencies in rural Ethiopia; and transactional livestock trade in Somalia, all areas he has researched directly.

The major theme of this book is that the neoliberal agenda of international donors, including the World Bank and USAID, has led to a variety of development projects aimed at rural farmers and herders in Africa that have produced profoundly negative effects. These projects replaced state-sponsored development efforts and "privileged nonstate groups, free trade, and market-led development," with an ideological conviction that "the market was 'in' and the state was 'out' . . ." (2). These programs did not lead to a reduction of poverty or improvement of the lives of millions of rural producers; rather, they overshadowed and ignored local knowledge and productive strategies while they were eagerly embraced by national governments receiving the aid. Little writes, "most low income Africans still experience heighted hardship and risk even when demonstrating phenomenal ingenuity and resilience" (9).

Little's book illustrates this theme through specific case studies of a variety of local situations. While it focuses mainly on pastoral and agro-pastoral societies that the author knows so well, it also includes several examples from West African farmers and southern African urban areas.

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Chapter 1, "They Think We Can Manufacture Crops," looks at an example of a World Bank project in Gambia and Ghana that promoted "non-traditional commodities," including French beans and pineapples for export to Europe, ostensibly to provide market-based incomes to replace traditional export crops such as cocoa, whose prices plummeted with free trade. While smallholders were attracted to the new "niche crops," they were unable, without former government subsidies in fertilizers now lost to structural adjustment programs, to compete with larger agribusinesses, often foreign owned, which now proliferate throughout Africa. Chapter 2, "Everybody Is a Petty Trader," looks at the informal economy of traders in peri-urban Maputo, many of whom were driven out of farming due to neoliberal market reforms similar to those in Ghana and Gambia. Petty commodity trade emerges as a strategy to escape poverty and uncertainty, particularly as inexpensive goods from China and other Asian countries flood African markets. Chapter 3, "We Now Milk Elephants," traces community-based conservation efforts in Kenya, where USAID and international conservation organizations, including the World Wildlife Fund, attempt to involve local Maasai pastoralists in the protection of wildlife parks, ostensibly to include them in the revenue sharing of the profitable tourism industry. But whereas five international conservation organizations received 70 percent of the money from USAID's U.S.$300 million project in the 1990s, local Maasai saw very little, which was captured by local elites and politicians in an all-too-familiar story. Chapter 4, "They Are Beating Us Over the Head with Democracy," focuses on the effects of multiparty elections in Kenya, which were demanded by international donors after 1992 as a way to combat corruption and promote the accountability necessary for free trade. President Moi skillfully manipulated ethnic alliances to stay in power until 2002, but he left a pattern of shifting ethnic alliances which have characterized Kenyan elections ever since, often associated (as in 2007) with violence. Little focuses on the particular case of the LChamus community in central Kenya, a small and disempowered agropastoral group which, through its own initiatives, has managed to achieve political representation in a region dominated by larger ethnic powers.

Little continues his focus on northeastern African pastoral and agropastoral societies in chapter 5, "The Government Is Always Telling Us What to Think." This chapter looks at narratives of food aid dependence in rural Ethiopia, where the current government (in power since 1991 following the overthrow of Mengistu's Soviet-backed regime) sought to chart its own path toward food sufficiency following several decades of devastating famines. Decrying dependence on donated food from the West, the government implemented the Productive Safety Net Programme, which compelled rural farmers to work on national projects, including government-owned estates and road works, in exchange for minuscule payments (U.S.$.30–$.60 a day) or food. USAID supported the idea of safety nets, but it was a flawed system at best, lacking transparency and not free of corruption. Little discusses government policies of resettlement (used since Mengistu's time) in

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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.

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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 Manya-speaking people of Macenta Préfecture, beginning in the late 1990s, which led him to consider "the complexities of iconoclasm at the