

Anglophone and Francophone Africa.

The review of the literature by Niamir-Fuller and Turner succinctly covers the ecological and social literature. The authors discuss the emerging theoretical framework of the “mobility paradigm.” The goal is to develop “a more unified, multi-disciplinary rationale for livestock mobility in arid and semi-arid lands” (19), and as a result the chapter emphasizes extensive rather than intensive strategies in pastoral development. In each section of the review—dealing with the topics of resource base, resource users, adaptive strategies, and common property regimes—the authors provide text boxes with key terms, which they argue are not simply fashionable but connote truly new ideas and concepts that have immediate practical applications. But are concepts like reciprocity or social capital really new or even practical?

Overall, I find this is a very useful and interesting volume. It sketches new roadmaps for research on pastoral systems in Africa (and elsewhere) and offers many interesting suggestions for pastoral development. But although there have been interesting globalizing developments in the field of pastoral development, I cannot help fearing that implementation of the practical solutions will not succeed in protecting pastoral mobility against the tendency of states and development agencies to transform any management system into inflexible, hierarchical institutions. In the end, the fundamental principles of states may simply be incompatible with those underlying pastoral mobility.

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**Christopher B. Barrett and Daniel G. Maxwell. *Food Aid after Fifty Years: Recasting Its Role*.** London: Routledge, 2005. 314 pp. Illustrations. Glossary. Notes. Bibliography. Index. No price reported. Paper.

Although he died four years before the U.S. Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act initiated the modern era of international food aid, the French sociologist Marcel Mauss (1872–1950) could have foretold one of Barrett and Maxwell’s conclusions about the guiding forces behind the first fifty years of the U.S. food-assistance program. On the first page of his classic text *The Gift*, Mauss asserted that such aid, while “in theory voluntary, disinterested and spontaneous [is] in fact obligatory and interested.” While offered in the name of charity and humanitarianism, much of contemporary food aid is self-interested and self-serving not only for U.S. and other international government officials and policymakers in wealthy countries, but also for disparate actors ranging from nonprofit hunger-relief NGOs to profit-seeking agribusinesses and maritime companies.

Not that the inevitable, less-than-honorable motivations behind the

provisioning of food assistance detract from the fact that millions of lives have been enhanced or saved. International food assistance—while flawed—is certainly a good thing. Nor does this predictability in any way lessen Barrett and Maxwell’s accomplishment. Their book is an excellent read. The eleven chapters of *Food Aid after Fifty Years* comprehensively explore the history and the future of food assistance with breadth and clarity. The authors also use empirical evidence to disprove thirteen common myths about food aid, including the myth that it is primarily concerned with feeding the hungry (Myth #1), that it is an effective means of supporting U.S. farmers (Myth #2), and that it is a cause of food-aid dependency (Myth #12). On this often claimed last point, the authors explain that dependency assertions have the causal argument reversed. Food shocks (whether caused by drought, drastic price fluctuations, floods, civil war, or other events) do force people to modify their behavior in ways that may necessitate a variety of safety nets, including food aid. But the volume of food aid distributed even in severely stricken areas is usually too small to disrupt food self-sufficiency itself. The text also brings discussion of abstract international policies down to earth via abbreviated case studies in many “boxes” inserted throughout the book, including “War and Food Aid in Afghanistan,” “Food and Talk in North Korea,” and “Self-serving Food Aid to Russia.”

*Food Aid after Fifty Years* is at times repetitive. Yet because the topic is so enormous—encompassing issues pertaining not only to the various types of international actors and bureaucracies involved, but also to the types of food aid distributed, local subsistence strategies, food-consumption patterns, as well as agricultural, market, monetary, and transport policies—the authors must occasionally reiterate some of the basics to set the stage for a particular issue under discussion. While an index of authors cited would have augmented the text’s utility, overall the book is a very important contribution to the literature. It is a must-read for students, researchers, advocates, and (one would hope) policymakers with interests in international hunger, poverty, agricultural economics, and development studies.

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**Karen Coen Flynn. *Food, Culture, and Survival in an African City*.** New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. xvii + 211 pp. Figures. Tables. Photographs. Bibliography. Index. \$22.95. Paper.

Karen Coen Flynn’s study of day-to-day activities of food vendors, producers, and consumers in Mwanza, Tanzania, on the southern shore of Lake Victoria, is based on fieldwork conducted in the early to mid-1990s, after the Tanzanian government had moved away from a centrally controlled