

Nonetheless, Leach tackles the bigger questions of war and peace when he argues that in Sudan signatory parties remained disconnected from the formal democratic institutions that ought to help in implementing the agreed peace agreements and in driving change. The book thus provides an important launching pad from which to think about the complexities that continue to be at work in the realm between war, peace and political culture in Sudan and beyond, including the question of whether peace agreements are actually a crucial ingredient in transformative change.

MAREIKE SCHOMERUS
London School of Economics

Authority Stealing: Anti-Corruption War and Democratic Politics in Post-Military Nigeria by WALE ADEBANWI

Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2012. Pp. 450. \$55 (pbk)

doi:10.1017/S0022278X13000906

Wale Adebani has written an important and illuminating account of Nigeria's anti-corruption war during Nuhu Ribadu's courageous leadership of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). Ribadu's tenure coincided with Obasanjo's second term as president from 2003–7. The book also covers the Yar'Adua government's removal of Ribadu from the EFCC and its undermining of the anti-corruption struggle, from 2007–10. The title of the book, 'Authority Stealing', refers to the grand corruption of those in positions of authority in Nigeria. It comes from a song of the same title by the late Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, renowned Afro-beat musician and scathing critic of the corrupt Nigerian political establishment.

The EFCC, formed after the passing into law of the Financial Crimes Commission (Establishment) Act in 2002, set out to curtail corruption and fraud, and promote the rule of law in Nigerian public life. It has been successful in prosecuting a wide range of crooks, including kingpins of advance fee fraud, several state governors, a serving inspector general of police, a serving governor of the Bank of the North, and other top civil servants and businessmen. An observation in the book is that had the National Assembly known what would be unleashed by the EFCC, a majority would not have signed the Act establishing it. The EFCC's early success was largely due to the appointment of Nuhu Ribadu – an outstanding Assistant Commissioner of Police from Yola, Adamawa State (north-east Nigeria) – as Executive Chairman, and the assemblage of a talented and dedicated team within the commission. Crucially, reformists within the Obasanjo administration supported them. The EFCC also worked closely with civil society activists and progressives in the media and legal professions. The author had good access to Ribadu and the EFCC's supporters. The book has vivid portraits of these *dramatis personae*.

Adebani is good at navigating the thickets of conflicting information that emanated from each high-profile corruption case. The EFCC confronted some of the most powerful vested interests in Nigeria and this inevitably generated a ferocious counter-struggle by very influential elites. There was a steady flow of disinformation to the media as those under investigation or prosecution and their clients and supporters attempted to discredit the EFCC and its chairman.

The book cuts through and analyses these distortions and provides a vital chronicle of the EFCC's work and the struggle against corruption in the highest echelons of the Nigerian state. The narrative is multifaceted but it hinges on the travails of Nuhu Ribadu and gives fascinating insights into his steely character and background. As the late Chinua Achebe writes in the Foreword to the book, 'Adebanwi is particularly successful in drawing a sympathetic, humane portrait of Ribadu'.

The book is written in a journalistic style and quotes at length from press reports and commentary. This is not necessarily a problem in itself for a chronicle of this kind, but it is a long book and could have been more concise. There are many diversions, some of which are gripping and informative, but others are unnecessary and could have been cut. There are also repetitions in the narrative and typos that editors should have ironed out. At the sub-national level, the analysis is better informed on south-western politics than on northern politics, which at times were stereotyped (and neither Adamawa, where Ribadu is from, nor the main areas populated by the Fulani, are 'arid deserts' (p. 135)). Aside from these blips, the author explains the details of each case with clarity and shows the political and social contexts and ramifications of corruption.

Adebanwi addresses head-on the frequently made assertion that the EFCC was selective in its prosecutions and that it was doing the bidding of Obasanjo by targeting the president's enemies. The evidence shows that this notion, which has now almost become received wisdom in Nigeria, is misleading. While Ribadu and his operatives did seize the opportunity to investigate Atiku – Obasanjo's powerful vice-president who became his chief rival – and some of Atiku's associates, the charge of 'selective justice' that was levelled against the EFCC by its opponents does not fit with the general record of the commission. The EFCC under Ribadu also prosecuted many of President Obasanjo's allies, by taking the initiative and exposing them. Ribadu and the EFCC had to be politically savvy and at times compromise, but they were able to sustain their work largely because it gave the government a degree of international credibility and acceptance, which was much needed after nearly two decades of corrosive military rule. There were sometimes tensions with the presidency, but it would have been too politically costly for Obasanjo to truncate the EFCC, as his successor Yar'Adua did to much domestic and international opprobrium.

The author gives a searing indictment of the Yar'Adua administration – both of the late president himself and of the cabal that surrounded him. They orchestrated Ribadu's removal from the EFCC, after which he survived an assassination attempt and had to temporarily flee Nigeria. Ibrahim Lamorde, who had built up the EFCC with Ribadu, became Acting Chairman, but was then replaced with the ineffectual Farida Waziri. She lost her allies in government after Goodluck Jonathan became president in May 2010 and was sacked. Partly due to international pressure, Lamorde was reappointed as chairman and he is now reconstructing the EFCC.

Appropriately, Adebanwi concludes by arguing for the need to institutionalise anti-corruption practices if they are to be sustained and made more resistant to the vicissitudes of politics. The zeal and integrity of anti-graft officials like Ribadu and Lamorde is essential, and this book leaves no doubt that their achievements in fighting corruption in Nigeria, through legal means, are

unprecedented, recovering some US\$5 billion in looted assets. Nonetheless, high-level Nigerian corruption continues on a grand scale. The autonomy and capacity of the EFCC is still not on a secure footing and the judicial support needed in the anti-corruption struggle is often weak. Incumbent Nigerian state governors, some of whom control budgets larger than those of small African countries, are still immune from prosecution for corruption while they are in office. These are some of the reasons ‘authority stealing’ in Nigeria persists. For those wishing to understand the task at hand, there is no better place to start than with this insightful book.

ADAM HIGAZI

King’s College, Cambridge

State and Society in the Gambia since Independence, 1965–2012 edited by

ABDOULAYE SAINÉ, EBRIMA CEESAY and EBRIMA SALL

Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2013. Pp. 573. \$49.95 (pbk)

doi:10.1017/S0022278X13000918

For the last few decades Gambian Studies have been on a steady increase as more scholarly works are published in the form of both journal articles and books, out of which the *State and Society in the Gambia since Independence* so far seems to be the most ambitious project since Emeritus Professor David Hughes’ edited volume from 1991 (*The Gambia: Studies in Society and Politics*). Although being located ‘in the belly of Senegal’ (p. 218) and representing ‘an almost insignificant geopolitical value’ (p. ix) to many, the Gambia presents a unique case of African statehood and post-coloniality. Africa’s ‘smiling coast’ has always been a territory over which trade had been dominant – for centuries acting as one of the major transit points of triangular transatlantic slave trade – migration flows continuously happened, and various conflicts and wars were dominating the lives of its ethnic groups. The country’s vulnerable economy as a ‘peanut monoculture’ (p. 71) has been struggling with development for decades, and although election statistics also show that ‘Gambians do not see an alternative to [President] Jammeh’ (p. 174), the ‘seventeen years of quasi-military ‘liberalization’’ (p. 176) have not offered any way out of a permanent crisis.

This edited volume covers a wide range of topics from the historical roots of present-day Gambian society via political economy – and external relations – related issues to a number of socio-political questions such as education, gender roles and opportunities and community policing. Lamin Sanneh’s Foreword sets the scene in a neat manner, which is followed by a clear introduction about the rationale and structure of the book. Sixteen chapters written by 21 African, American and European academics and scholars then investigate their research questions in a disciplined and well-documented way – all of the authors fulfil the mandate they present in the abstract at the beginning of their respective chapters, which are coupled with consistently edited bibliographies.

Wright’s first chapter on the social and political settings of the Gambian colony under British rule between 1816 and 1965 contributes to a better understanding of the challenges the Gambia of today faces. Swindell’s second and Sallah’s third chapters elaborate on problems having afflicted agriculture