

fraud. Chapter 5 describes the evolving relationships and normative underpinnings of fraud between international buyers, middlemen and traders. Chapters 6 and 7 detail the reactions of traders to the evolving political and moral economy of business in Uganda. References to fraud and economic trickery abound; one such example is the ‘use of weighted scales to trick farmers’ (p. 122). Chapter 8 describes how different respondents view the state’s responsibility in these processes, particularly in relation to the injustices of economic exchanges. Chapter 9 provides an example of the Bugisu Cooperative Union as a possible source of resistance or ‘de-neoliberalisation’ (p. 299). The book concludes on a pessimistic note, highlighting the difficulty of resisting neoliberal moral economies in Uganda and elsewhere. Wiegratz argues that ruling elites find it difficult to ‘govern the moral order and daily life of a market society’ and are thus more concerned with ‘keeping people busy and [keeping] the show (neoliberalism) on the road’ (p. 343).

The book is persuasive in its ‘two-fold argument: that neoliberalism has produced moral change and that moral change is fraud-conducive’ (p. 333). Wiegratz demonstrates a strong understanding of Ugandan history and a familiarity with the agricultural sectors and locations he has studied. The details from interviews provide a wealth of information, yet it is rarely clear who has been interviewed. A clearer methodology section and better designations of respondents would have made the book more convincing. The book’s strengths are also limited by the writing style and sometimes muddled messages. Many chapters are not clearly structured, quotes are sloppily presented and some sections could easily have been shortened. There is also a large amount of repetition. Wiegratz could have sharpened his argument by justifying why some perspectives were highlighted over others. The book could also have benefited from copyediting, as there are numerous grammatical mistakes.

*Neoliberal Moral Economy* makes the case that increasing economic dishonesty and fraud are by-products of neoliberal market societies across the world, specifically focusing on how such practices have spread across Ugandan rural society since the 1990s. As a full-length manuscript, it has taken on a fresh challenge in describing how neoliberalism has shaped contestations over existing moral orders in an African country. The span and scale of fieldwork conducted in Uganda make it a compelling read. Despite weaknesses related to methodology and presentation, students of Uganda will learn a great deal while those interested in the study of the political economy of capitalism – particularly in reference to how it may affect changes in moral orders – will enjoy it.

*Pritish Behuria*

University of Manchester

[pritch.behuria@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:pritch.behuria@manchester.ac.uk)

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Paul Higate and Mats Utas (editors), *Private Security in Africa: from the global assemblage to the everyday*. London: Zed Books (pb £24.99 – 978 1 78699 025 9). 2017, 192 pp.

This timely book, edited by Paul Higate and Mats Utas, follows a scholarly trend of recent years and investigates the fascinating world of private security provision in African countries. It thus seeks to respond to the rapidly changing realities on the ground that saw private security venture far beyond the military realm and increasingly diversify, in terms of both territorial reach and the nature of available services. Academic discussions can, quite naturally, only ever trail these

developments. However, far from limiting itself to the confines of commercial security enterprises that operate across the continent, this volume rightfully embraces the malleability of what constitutes private security in the first place and thereby raises exigent questions about the entanglements between the public and private, the state and non-state, the global and local, as well as the systemic and everyday. It sets out to sketch what the editors call 'new geographies of power and security' (p. 1) in meticulous detail. The now well-established notion of 'security assemblages', popularized by Rita Abrahamsen and Michael Williams some eight years earlier (who also contribute the first empirical chapter), serves as a theoretical frame for subsequent chapters and affords the publication its coherent shape.

A concise book, it comprises ten judicious chapters by high-calibre authors in their field, most of whom offer engaging ethnographic detail on the idiosyncrasies of security arrangements in a plurality of settings, from a gold mine in Tanzania, secret societies in Sierra Leone, armed response officers in South Africa's Durban and the shadowy socio-political networks of Mungiki in Kenya to the abundance of private security operators in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), to mention only a few. This impressive geographical breadth is one of the volume's greatest strengths and its compelling credo can be heard throughout every single chapter: security landscapes in African countries can be understood only through their innate dynamism, their fluidity and the close interlocking of multi-scalar partisan interests that see *the global* interpenetrate *the everyday* in extraordinary ways. This line of argument is admittedly not new, but the skilful composition of the book makes it stick out as one of the most comprehensive efforts to date to explore private security explicitly across African countries. In doing so, it never fails to show a curious and sensitive eye for socio-historical particularity and to tell stories beyond crude stereotypes of mercenarism, but also to draw larger connections with developments in the global political economy.

One of the key contentions of the book is that the expansion of private security in African countries is not simply tantamount to a retreat of the state – as is concluded far too often – but rather that it is precisely the veneer of such a public/private binary that continues to obfuscate the complex hybridity of actually existing security arrangements. The book harnesses this eclectic and even unstable terrain to present readers with a remarkable cross-section of private security alliances spanning the continent. We hear about local vigilantes sponsored by global capital to safeguard the uninterrupted extraction of resources from Tanzania (Abrahamsen and Williams), clan-based militias-turned-companies that act as proxies for foreign donors in Somalia (William Reno), and Sierra Leonean ex-combatants who are being recruited as an expendable security labour force for British contractors in Iraq (Mynster Christensen). The elasticity of the assemblage approach allows for these varied yet evocative stories to be told in a nuanced fashion, without ever flattening the important differences between them.

Particularly praiseworthy in this book is the conscious focus on ethnography as perhaps the best-suited method for investigating the versatile mosaic of private security configurations on the African continent (and beyond). Most chapters fulfil this promise masterfully with a high degree of ethnographic acumen and the presentation of never less than captivating material that transports readers to everyday scenes where security relations are creatively (re-)assembled. Ethnography, it is argued, poses a counterbalance to much more low-resolution images of security politics by 'inserting understandings of everyday processes of emergence and becoming' (Jacob Rasmussen, p. 121). And, indeed, the copious

descriptive material presented is without doubt what remains with the reader the longest and most vividly. Notwithstanding the fact that the balance of some contributions is at times liberally tilted towards empirical panoply rather than theory, a number of authors *do* try to enrich the received wisdom of assemblage thinking with conceptually productive questions about racialization (Christensen), performances (Tessa Diphoorn) and political becoming (Rasmussen).

To readers familiar with the contributors' existing scholarly work, the book as a whole may promise little novelty, and, indeed, overall it is not as theoretically ambitious as one may wish. However, it represents an indispensable resource and springboard for those wishing to delve deeper into the maze of private security provision. Lastly, it is essential reading not only for everyone with a specialization in security in African countries but also for those with a keen interest in the inner workings of private security on a global scale.

Hanno Brankamp

University of Oxford

[hanno.brankamp@ouce.ox.ac.uk](mailto:hanno.brankamp@ouce.ox.ac.uk)

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Laura Routley, *Negotiating Corruption: NGOs, governance and hybridity in West Africa*. London: Routledge (hb £120 – 978 0 415 82526 9; pb £30.99 – 978 1 138 30843 5). 2016, xiii + 159 pp.

Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari was first elected with his compatriots' hopes that his new government would solve the country's terrible corruption. Just after his contentious re-election, their dreams of a better future appear at best to be deferred. In Nigeria today there is little consensus about what is going wrong with the president's anti-corruption war, but few would argue that it is being won. Today's frustration is nothing new, nor is the way it permeates Nigerian public life. Laura Routley's densely argued *Negotiating Corruption* provides new insight into the problem and, importantly, documents how Nigerians conduct their affairs despite their country's omnipresent corruption.

Routley makes two provocative moves. She engages with the vast literature on public corruption, particularly from within political science. She takes on a dominant strand that debates how and why African countries differ from European political norms, on the assumption that those norms tend to preclude officials' self-interested actions that might be glossed as 'corruption'. Routley appreciates the complexity of this literature, which encompasses models of a 'patrimonial' state that relies on affective ties rather than functional norms of office and celebrations of African political forms whose colonial-era disruption have led to today's dysfunctions. Routley demonstrates the inadequacy of such formulations, pointing to the semantic range of 'corruption' itself – the phenomena the word designates are too heterogeneous to admit one aetiology – and to the fundamentally negotiable nature both of corruption itself and of the governing practices from which it emerges. To the extent that corruption is objectively more prevalent in Nigeria or other African countries than elsewhere in the world – as opposed to being more visible or representing a larger proportion of GDP – this reality may result from the hybridity of the Nigerian government and national political life. For Routley, indeed, the inescapable characteristic of the Nigerian state is its hybrid, creole quality, bringing together diverse political and intellectual genealogies. Her use of 'hybridity' is indebted to but differs from Homi Bhabha's