

is a technique of staking a claim to the public sphere. Ruth Prince sketches the heated and complex field of public debates among traditionalists, Christians, and human rights activists regarding Luo culture in western Kenya. She examines how the discourses about widow inheritance, which has become a growing concern in relation to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, expressed in radio programmes and booklets, have historical precedents in mission Christianity. The diverse Christian idioms are often more compelling to women than human rights discourses. With a rare focus on Pentecostal female leaders, Damaris Parsitau considers how women's participation in Kenya's public culture is a complex mix of empowering and intolerant attitudes and outcomes.

I find Part III, 'A Plurality of Pentecostal Publics', where a variety of contradictory realities and views of the Pentecostal impact on public life in Africa are presented, to be the most intriguing and positively puzzling part of the book. Birgit Meyer's theoretical reflection of ethnographic and historical work on Ghana emphasizes how the very act of going public by Pentecostals is not neutral, as it is embedded in a historical legacy of a distinction between Christianity and traditional religion. Compared to other religious groups, Pentecostals have been able to gain a strong public position by embracing consumer items and mass media, thereby transforming the public sphere. While Meyer underscores the resulting tensions in the public sphere, Harri Englund stresses that Pentecostal mediation of spiritual warfare in Malawi shapes a form of spiritual kinship that advances peaceful public life and encourages democratic civility. The testimonies, Transworld Radio broadcasts, and the shared everyday lives of believers and non-believers in the townships demonstrate the importance of human relationships in proselytising. Yet, with the case of the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God in Durban, South Africa, Ilana van Wyk reveals how intimate relationships are discouraged and Pentecostals are encouraged to engage in one-off contracts with God through large monetary sacrifices that increase distrust in the church and pastors, and amongst church and family members. Next, Michael Perry Kweku Okyerefo argues that Pentecostalism contributes to socioeconomic and spiritual development in Ghana by launching social services – orphanages, schools, and medical clinics – resembling the pioneering missionary organisations and ensuring the Pentecostal presence in the communities. The challenge these divergent and inspiring chapters offer for the future study of Pentecostalism and Christianity at large is to further develop a sophisticated and alternative analytical framework to not only capture the public appeal of religion but also its limits, taking into account the indivisibility of the material and spiritual.

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## SCHOLARSHIP ON AFRICA IN A TROUBLED COMPARATIVE FRAME

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*Wissenschaft und Dekolonisation: Paradigmenwechsel und institutioneller Wandel in der akademischen Beschäftigung mit Afrika in Deutschland und Frankreich, 1930–1970.* By FELIX BRAHM. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010. Pp. 337. €49, hardback (ISBN 978-351-509-734-5).

KEY WORDS: Colonialism, decolonization, Western images of Africa.

As indicated in his title, Felix Brahm seeks to make a comparative study of scholarship on Africa in Germany and France from the inter-war era through the

first postcolonial decade, with specific attention to paradigm shifts and institutional change. The outcome is somewhat narrower than the goal: there is little on theoretical formulations beyond a general turn from colonial/eurocentric/racist perceptions of Africa towards more universalistic notions of 'development' or 'modernization'. The comparison between the German and French institutions is undermined by the author's far greater concern with Germany and by the radically different colonial histories of the two countries. Decolonization also enters the story rather late and, in the German case, plays second fiddle to the broader issues of Nazism and the Cold War. This book is mainly a history of specific institutions and of the politics and academic aspirations of individual scholars and administrators.

Brahm has undertaken a prodigious amount of research into academic archives to draw extensive lists of courses on Africa offered by the various institutions in question. A similarly quantitative approach to his book suggests that the author devoted about 20 per cent more attention to Germany than to France. The comparisons are rendered particularly problematic in the context of decolonization—for the period under consideration in the book (1930–70), Germany had no colonies and in general it had only a very brief colonial history. One academic outcome of this political difference that Brahm might have taken more systematically into account is that German scholarship on Africa (*Afrikanistik*) tended to follow the philological model of language and literature (in this case mainly language) rather than the social science direction of France, Britain, and the United States. Brahm does give great attention to the ideological issues of the Nazi era and the subsequent division of Germany into two states on opposite sides of the Iron Curtain. France never went through quite the same changes; nevertheless, the author misses opportunities for comparison by not paying more attention to Vichy fascism, to the prominent role of Marxists in French Africanist scholarship, and even to the New Left student uprisings of 1968 (which Brahm discusses only in the German context).

The institutional history of African studies in France and in Germany has been covered in a number of works which Brahm acknowledges in his extensive bibliography and notes. His most interesting effort at originality consists of choosing parallel sets of 'sites' (*Standesorten*), meaning clusters of institutions (both academic and extra-university) in the capital of each country (Paris, Berlin) and in port cities connected commercially to Africa (Bordeaux, Hamburg). However this doubly-comparative structure breaks down after the Second World War. Bordeaux becomes rather peripheral to French African studies in France. In East Germany a new Africanist center at Leipzig overshadows that of Berlin. In West Germany Cologne takes a major role because of its proximity to the Federal Republic capital of Bonn. In all these cases there are efforts (least successful in the more extensively discussed German cases) to create inter-disciplinary African/area studies centers on the American model.

Brahm has relatively little to say about the content of the scholarship produced in these various institutions other than to note elements of colonialism, racism, and collaboration (by several prominent German Africanists) with the Apartheid regime of South Africa. His most extensive engagement with theory concerns the structuralism of Claude Levi-Strauss, whose dubious relevance to African studies is never even discussed. There is a useful account of the struggles to found a new West German African Studies Association (*Vereinigung von Afrikanisten in Deutschland*) more in keeping with postcolonial scholarship, but no account of parallel developments in France.

The most engaging sections of the book involve the intersecting careers of German scholars, with their varying ties to the Nazi regime; all, even one involved in genocide against Sinti/Roma people, are ultimately exonerated. It is perhaps

significant that Brahm prefaces his introduction with a 1958 quote by Hamburg professor of 'Overseas History', Egmont Zechlin, in which he points to 'the emancipation of the colored world from the system of European domination' as a sign that the 'modern era has come to an end' (p. 9). Zechlin was a very ambiguous character who promoted post-Second World War African studies, but had previously not only supported the Nazis but also attempted to use the German occupation of Paris to seize thousands of books from French colonial libraries. Brahm dug Zechlin's unpublished pronouncement on global history out of the archives but like much else he has unearthed here, it is not clear what we are to make of it.

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## SOCIAL IMAGINATION AND YOUTH IN CAIRO

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*Connected in Cairo: Growing up Cosmopolitan in the Modern Middle East.* By MARK ALLEN PETERSON. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2011. Pp. xvii + 263. \$24.95, paperback (ISBN: 978-0-253-22311-1); \$70, hardback (ISBN: 978-0-253-35628-4).

KEY WORDS: Egypt, class, media, modernity.

Cairo's cityscape has changed rapidly since the mid-1990s. One of the most striking features of the revamped landscape has been the ubiquitous presence of, and importance attached to, foreign, First World goods, styles, and knowledge. *Connected in Cairo* by Mark Allen Peterson addresses this cosmopolitan face of Cairo in the years before the 2011 uprising, and investigates the social divisions it helped define and elaborate among Cairenes. Peterson explores the ways in which being connected had come to constitute and signify specific class positions. He correctly points to the importance of imaginations of place and connection, focusing on what he terms metadictic discourses, 'discourses that seek to interpret and make judgments about cultural artifacts and practices by connecting them with other places' (p. 15). In a globalizing context, transnational flows are localized, creating new distinctions between products, styles, and people construed as local, and their counterparts from elsewhere. Elite status but also desires for upward social mobility are expressed through cosmopolitan consumption and styles.

Peterson, who taught at the American University in Cairo (AUC) for five years, has made good use of his familiarity with Egypt's elite students to map out the balancing act involved in displaying cosmopolitan skills and styles without contravening what are construed as local or Arab cultural codes. The latter are mainly framed through recourse to gendered sexual norms. In the various chapters, Peterson explores how mostly elite children, students, and entrepreneurs socially position themselves by drawing on consumption practices, styles, and discourses that signify a familiarity and connection with the West. These different protagonists walk a tightrope of social positioning in a landscape in which class, culture, and forms of connectedness to the outside, particularly the West, are intimately related. In this context, cosmopolitanism can signify elite status but also inauthenticity, while the local can be read both as lack of sophistication and as authentic. Peterson admirably combines these explorations with accessible theoretical discussions of media and globalization.