

Mwanke – and the believed *éminence grise* of the regime (p. 189). However, he is less able to provide new analytical insights into these events other than establishing the facts.

It is to some frustration that Deibert presents ‘the Congolese people’ as a group of passive victims to the realpolitik in DRC and abroad. Indeed, the average citizen in the DRC does not hold much power to influence top politicians, as is not uncommon in most parts of the world. However, it is worth noting that it is the ‘Congolese people’ who have started several self-defence groups such as Mayi-Mayi alliances and the increasingly influential Raia Mutomboki groups in the eastern regions with various sympathy or frustration from unarmed civilians. In many cases, having protection provided by armed groups through local taxation is far better than relying on the arbitrary state army. Survival in the DRC relates largely to the ability to make your own living and create your own protection together with family, friends and enemies unrelated to the big events in Kinshasa and other central parts of the country. It is also incorrect to argue that it is only political and military elites that make money out of artisanal mining (pp. 109–10), as this attracts thousands of Congolese men, women and youth every year who earn more in this business relative to subsistent farming.

In conclusion, Deibert’s book provides both a good overview and a detailed account of some of the core political events in the recent history of the country. However, for more political analysis to these events, readers should turn to other sources such as the blog ‘Congo Siasa’ by Jason Stearns.

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**Criminal Resistance: The Politics of Kidnapping Oil Workers** by TEMITOPE ORIOLA.

Farnham: Ashgate, 2013. Pp. 243. £55.00 (hbk)

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*Criminal Resistance* is a curious book. On the one hand it claims to ‘investigate the phenomenon of kidnapping of oil workers in the Niger delta’ (p. 191), while on the other there is precious little about the composition, character or trends of kidnapping in the region and a great deal (most of the book in fact) on the rise and character of one non-state armed group, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), a complex, shadowy and heterogeneous insurgent group (or groups) that emerged from the western delta in and around the oil city of Warri in late 2005. One might have plausibly anticipated in a book on kidnapping an account of the numbers and composition of those kidnapped (the changing proportion of Nigerian and expatriate workers), the trends in kidnapping over time, the relation between kidnapping and such phenomena as electoral cycles, the price of oil and the proliferation of clearly criminal groups who see kidnapping as a lucrative business. But these issues are never raised. There is very little effort to theorise kidnapping and draw conceptually upon studies of other parts of the world (Somalia, Colombia) with, dare I say it, ‘traditions’ of kidnapping. Oriola does attempt to enrol Eric Hobsbawm’s notion of social banditry to provide

a sort of framing but it is clear that kidnapping is undertaken by a wide variety of groups for different purposes (media exposure, leverage with the companies, easy money and so on) not all of which fit easily into a banditry framework.

All of that said, there is much of interest in the book. There is now, of course, a vast literature on the Niger delta (some of which, like the important studies by the Center for Advanced Social Science in Port Harcourt, and the edited collection by Obi and Rustad and the path-breaking work by the likes of Sofiri Peterside and Ukoha Ukiwo, are not cited) and much of the ground covered by Oriola is quite familiar. Nevertheless he has some interesting new data on the role of women in the insurgency, the media strategies of MEND, how the struggle is framed by insurgent groups, and two short case studies of oil-producing communities. Oriola is clearly influenced by the work on social movements and Charles Tilly's notion of contentious politics; the question of discursive framing provides the overall architecture of the three core chapters of the book (Chapters 5, 6 and 7). It is entirely legitimate that the author selects this theoretical framing, but it is curious that there is so little engagement with other ways of conceptualising and explaining the MEND story: for example the work on African guerrillas (Christopher Clapham), on insurgent organisations (Jeremy Weinstein), on agrarian structures (Paul Richards) and the dynamics of civil wars (Stathis Kalyvas).

Oriola explores how particular strategies of irony and ridicule, for example – reminiscent of Subcommandante Marcos – provide a prognosis and a motivation for militants. (It needs to be said, however, that there are no survey data or systematic attempts to derive the ideas, rationales and motivations of the combatants themselves – something that Ukoha's work and the CASS studies address.) Oriola identifies what he calls master frames (justice, true democracy, minority rights and so on) that 'have created a war situation'. Yet much of this ground has been covered before and by the same token some key forces in the dynamics of oilfield conflicts (the corruption of chieftaincy, the porous nature of state-insurgent relations, the role of electoral violence and the Godfathers) are given very short shrift or not mentioned at all.

In the final chapter Oriola explores the repertoires of protest and focuses importantly on the role of Tom Polo as a charismatic and integrative leader capable of providing (for a time) a sort of cross-delta leadership. Across all of these chapters, however, Oriola is focusing on MEND and on, for want of a better word, the broad context of kidnapping without delving into the details of the analytical relations and causal chains linking MEND to the phenomena of kidnapping itself and how it is situated and understood in relation to a larger repertoire. In my view this is unfortunate, because Oriola clearly has a firm command of the case and there is much to learn from this book. As the author well knows, any account of kidnapping is much more than a MEND story and the social field of violence – encompassing many and quite different organisations, politics and dynamics – suggests that a full accounting of kidnapping will have to provide a much more nuanced and empirically rich analysis (as he says 'kidnapping is a social fact that interpolates everyone in Nigeria;' p. 191). As it so happens, when I was reading *Criminal Resistance* a Nigerian friend – currently an advisor to President Jonathan – was visiting my home when

he received news that his sister had been kidnapped and a N500 million ransom was being demanded. This had nothing to do with MEND and was negotiated – as virtually all of these cases are – in a strange netherworld between the public and secret worlds of politics and crime in the ‘post-insurgency’ phase of the Niger Delta amnesty (signed in 2009). This case is not in any sense a representative example of kidnapping in the Niger delta but it suggests that Oriola’s important book is simply a start.

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**Sharia or Shura: Contenting Approaches to Muslim Politics in Nigeria and Senegal** by SAKAH SAIDU MAHMUD

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Despite a spate of recent work reviving the tradition of comparative political science research on Francophone West Africa (Villalon 2010; Bleck & Van de Walle 2011), efforts to bridge the conceptual and experiential gaps between these nations and their Anglophone neighbours remain sadly few and far between (with one exception being William F.S. Miles’s excellent 2007 edited volume on Political Islam in West Africa). In this light, Sakah Saidu Mahmud’s *Sharia or Shura* is an inspiring effort to buck current academic trends by offering an apt, if not entirely successful comparative study of two of the region’s Muslim-majority heavyweights. The book itself is structured around an intriguing puzzle: Given their shared heritage of 18th/19th century jihadist revival and active Sufism, why have Senegalese and Nigerian Islam taken such different political forms? Or, as Mahmud himself frames it, why have Muslim politics in Senegal remained ‘peaceful’ while in Nigeria they have yielded a successful popular movement to implement sharia, contributed to rising sectarian violence, and ultimately birthed the radical Boko Haram movement currently terrorising much of north-eastern Nigeria?

To this question, Mahmud applies a wide range of evidence, focusing particularly on differences in British and French colonial responses to organised Sufi Islam, the importance of a politicised ‘Islamic’ identity in building successful political coalitions in northern Nigeria, and economic and social ideologies of Senegalese brotherhoods – all well-trodden academic territory. His primary thesis, however (developed most clearly in Chapters 5 and 6), centres on a comparative analysis of ‘weak stateness’ (drawing, most notably, on the work of Joel Migdal) that draws a sharp institutional distinction between the Nigerian and Senegalese experiences. As he argues, the rise of politically influential Islamist movements in northern Nigeria resulted from the historical weakness of the Nigerian state, first in terms of its regionalist system inherited from colonial rule, and subsequently in terms of its fragmented military-federal system. Senegal, on the other hand, which benefited from the strong but tolerant leadership of Leopold Senghor, French *laïcité*, and a much greater capacity for channelling religious activism into state-approved channels, was able to stem the tide of more radical, potentially violent Islamism.