

commercialism is a form of neo-colonialism, and is therefore overwhelmingly detrimental for African clubs/leagues, and for African viewing publics. Yet this view denies all but a very small business elite any agency in the process. Certainly, the trend has generated the kinds of negative effects Alegi describes – in particular growing financial and competitive disparities between elite and other clubs. Yet the broadcasting of African football on satellite TV (and the broadcasting of European football to Africa) has also led to a veritable explosion in the number of ‘viewing halls’ across both urban and rural areas. These have, in turn, become key sites for ordinary Africans to engage in new money-making ventures and new forms of spectatorship, both of which may also be politically empowering in various ways. Overall, though, *African Soccerescapes* provides an excellent starting point for anyone new to the subject, and it will be useful in teaching.

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Globalization in Africa: recolonization or renaissance? by P. CARMODY
Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner, 2010. Pp. 195, £47.50 (hbk).
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Writing from within the broad critical development geography framework, Pádraig Carmody sets out to explore to what extent globalisation might be said to be ‘good’ for Africa. The volume investigates the developing character and effect of globalisation throughout Africa, framed within the recent huge upsurge in Chinese, American and others’ economic and political interests in the continent.

From the 1980s onwards, Africa was basically marginalised by globalisation processes. The colonially inherited economic structures that Africa was left with clearly did not function in the interests of the continent’s people. Stressing low-value added cash crops and resource exports demonstrably hemmed Africa into a vicious cycle of asymmetrical trade relationships, as price fluctuations and an overall decline in commodity receipts occurred alongside a steady increase in the cost of imported manufactured goods. Throw in poor governance and misjudged economic planning, and the end result was familiar to all. This was compounded by the inability of import-substituting industries, which were set up post-independence in a wave of nationalist fervour, to compete with imports (primarily Asian) domestically, or in the global export market after economic liberalisation was undertaken. The end result was an entrenchment of Asian supremacy in the manufacturing sector, a decimation of Africa’s manufacturing base, and a subsequent intensification of Africa’s resource dependency. Subsequently, the continent was inadequately placed to take profitable advantage of the opportunities and economies of scale that an increasingly globalising economy arguably presented.

Using illustrations from the historical trajectories of Chad, Sudan and Zambia, the author looks at whether the resource curse, which has long staked out much of Africa’s political economy, can become a good thing. Thus far, the emphasis on enclave-based natural resource exports has been highly lucrative

for domestic political elites. Revenue generation has been confined to small locales whose prime markets are international. This situation has generally made concern for the general economic health of areas outside the enclave quite secondary, if not irrelevant. Indeed, in such enclave economies, elites gain little from any deep, growing, economic prosperity of the masses of the population – and in fact may be threatened by such development. Although individuals involved in such enclaves may benefit handsomely, the system fundamentally fails to promote broad economic growth and development, and consequently leaves little incentive to try to diversify economies away from this. Interestingly, Carmody argues that the ‘resource curse’ should be thought of as a mode of governance, despite all of the social and economic problems it necessarily brings with it. In the context of external actors’ growing interest in the continent’s resources, Carmody provocatively asks whether it is in the interest of external actors to move away from neo-patrimonial regimes in charge of resource enclaves. As he notes, ‘perhaps this would not be seen to be in the interests of either the United States or China because these states [African resource enclaves] would then keep their own resources, rather than placing them on the international market’ (p. 140).

So, the call for ‘good governance’ and ‘win-win relationships’, so favoured by Washington and Beijing respectively, may just be empty slogans: the *last* thing either power wants are well-managed African political economies where the elites have the best interests of the local population, rather than the foreign oil companies, at heart. Thoughtful and original, this well-argued book makes a substantial contribution to our understanding of the new – and not so new – dynamics that are currently being played out in Africa. It has important implications for all observers of Africa’s politics and international relations.

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Christianity and Public Culture in Africa edited by H. ENGLUND

Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2011. Pp. 238, £45.50 (hbk).

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In his introduction to this diverse and well-researched volume, Harri Englund valiantly sums up the theoretical antecedents and the historical and contemporary context that have informed the study of religion and Christianity in Africa. His task is no simple one. Conceptualising religion as more than personal reflection and internal experience has led to a tendency for descriptions in terms of political statements and action. Theorists must struggle with secular accusations of fundamentalism, as well as spiritualist demands for religion to be differentiated from other modes of social performance and cognitive frameworks. In this volume contributors from various disciplinary backgrounds set out to explore Christianity in Africa as an integral part of everyday life amongst a range of what are defined as ‘publics’. This terminology is employed as a means of bringing religion into the open whilst keeping ‘its impact in perspective’. Christianity is seen as being of great importance, but as an aspect of life or everyday discourse rather than ‘an all-consuming force’ that its opponents might fear.