

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to present volume 59, number 2, of the *African Studies Review*. This issue begins with an article by Akosua Adomako Ampofo, professor of African and gender studies at the University of Ghana, based on her *African Studies Review* Distinguished Lecture delivered at the 2015 meeting of the African Studies Association. Titled “Re-viewing Studies on Africa, #Black Lives Matter, and Envisioning the Future of African Studies,” the article presents a focused summary of the state of African studies, in both the United States and Africa, in this era of increasing scholarship from the African continent and developments in the Black Lives Matter movement in the U.S. and Rhodes Must Fall (RMF) in South Africa.

Next we present an exciting “ASR Forum on Surveillance in Africa: Politics, Histories, Techniques,” edited by Kevin Donovan, Philippe M. Frowd, and Aaron Martin, with six articles discussing private security and government surveillance in Kenya, South Africa, Niger, South Sudan, Rwanda, and Senegal. We conclude with three research articles: an analysis of boundary disputes in postapartheid South Africa by Mazembo Mavungu Eddy, an article by Paul Stacey on traditional and statutory institutions in post-Nkrumah Ghana,” and a study by Peter Anton Zoetl on youth, violence, and the state in Cape Verde. The issue also includes twenty-eight book reviews, including three connected to the topic of surveillance in Africa, and seven film reviews.

In her *ASR* Distinguished Lecture (7–29), Adomako Ampofo asks what scholars of African studies need to do to “retain [our] disciplinary relevance for the next generation and in the larger context of the Black Lives movement globally.” Comparing African studies as a discipline in the United States and on the African continent, she asks: where have we come from in terms of race consciousness in our discipline? She argues that this is a particularly important moment, and compares the recent Black Lives Matter (BLM) and Rhodes Must Fall (RMF) movements on U.S. and South African University campuses and urges Africanists to pay more attention to the related issues of black lives, the African diaspora, and pan-Africanism.

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In preparation for the lecture, Adomako Ampofo's students reviewed all articles published in the *ASR* in the fifty-year period between 1965 and 2015 (1,226 articles), looking at the sex of the authors, their institutions, and their subjects, "to glean how many articles directly addressed issues pertinent to the broader question of what we might call Black Lives, the African diaspora or pan-Africanism" (15). While articles by women nearly tripled in this period, those from the African continent see-sawed between 13 percent and 22 percent, and those from Europe steadily increased from 1 percent in the 1960s to 24 percent in the last decade. However, only 1.3 percent of all articles discussed black lives, the diaspora, or pan-Africanism. While it is fitting that most articles in the journal focus on issues of the African continent, she argues that it is time to expand our scholarship and consider precisely those three issues that stretch the boundaries of "African studies." The current student movements in the U.S. and South Africa, she argues, demand this focus as they have created new, global communities.

The forum on "Surveillance in Africa" begins with an introduction by the guest editors, Kevin Donovan, Philippe Frowd, and Aaron Martin (31–37). They argue that while the issue of surveillance commanded center stage in the post-9/11 global North, it has not been widely researched or discussed in the global South. Political power in Africa, they assert, has been considered in both the popular media and academic scholarship as "too local, too violent, or too symbolic" to necessitate much surveillance, while Africa has been seen as too "low tech" for sophisticated surveillance (32). Nevertheless, surveillance in Africa has increased, by state governments, by private corporations, and by international security agencies, which have become increasingly active in surveillance activities on the continent, particularly in the age of the so-called Global War on Terror.

Surveillance includes high-tech equipment coupled with on-the-ground observations. The editors write that "in an era of NSA databases and hovering drones, it is easy to forget that an enormous amount of state surveillance, including in the global North, occurs not digitally, but through eyes on the street, backroom gossip, and street-level encounters" (34). They point out that while media reports have drawn attention to regimes of registration, monitoring, and spying in Africa, the local exigencies and histories of these worldwide trends are little known. The six articles in the forum demonstrate the political, social, and cultural processes encompassed by increasing surveillance in African countries—both state and private. As the editors state in their introduction, "from its start, surveillance studies exhibited both an affinity for novel forms of monitoring and for theoretical inquiry; the empirical articles here examine surveillance in the fullest sense of this term, as a politically charged practice of observation, sensing, tracking, and identifying" (34).

Mirco Göpfert's article, "Surveillance in Niger: Gendarmes and the Problem of 'Seeing Things'" (39–57), discusses how the Nigerian state deals with internal security, particularly in light of conflicts in neighboring Mali, Libya, and Nigeria, and the efforts by the U.S. and France to boost

local security agencies. But while high-tech surveillance may seem omnipresent in Niger today, the Nigerian state is not a very efficient “registering machine,” and the gendarmes must accumulate their information through networks of personal contacts and informal communication routes. The author argues that in this context “the power relationship between the surveillers and those observed proves far more ambiguous than generally assumed” (39).

Andrea Purdeková’s study, “The Mundane Sights of Power: History of Social Monitoring in Rwanda” (59–86), also notes that monitoring is part of state control that has existed in various forms over the past one hundred years of turbulent political change. The article “considers three emblematic surveillance technologies—the *nyumbakumi* institution, the identity card, and *umuganda* works (and public activities more broadly)—which, despite their implication in genocide, were retained, reworked, and even bolstered after the conflict ended” (59). Social monitoring has continued as a useful tool for the maintenance of the current regime in Rwanda.

Sophia Balakian’s “‘Money Is Your Government’: Refugees, Mobility, and Unstable Documents in Kenya’s Operation Usalama Watch” (87–111) offers an ethnographic account of intense securitization in Nairobi during a 2014 government operation targeting Somali residents. Balakian investigates the plight of the fifty thousand Somali refugees living in Nairobi in the era of Al-Shabaab attacks. Periodic sweeps by police for identity papers, as part of Operation Usalama Watch, became shakedowns for bribes, with money becoming the “identity papers” used by refugees to prevent deportation. She argues that by paying bribes to continue living in the city and speaking of “money as their government,” Somali refugees make use of resources “untethered to the state” and construct a global, diasporan identity tied to transnational families, a “stateless” nation, and free flows of capital (89).

Ferenc David Markó’s “‘We Are Not a Failed State, We Make the Best Passports’: South Sudan and Biometric Modernity” (113–32) discusses the state-of-the-art biometric identity management system introduced by the independent government of South Sudan to handle its citizenship and passport databases. The author describes how registration and documentation of citizenship in the new South Sudan involve a complicated process of blood tests, fingerprint scans, and interviews with chiefs and patrilineal elders, which result in piles of paperwork that remain unsorted and identity documents that can easily be forged. He argues that the goal of the process, and particularly its biometric sophistication, is mostly to “convey an image of a ‘non-failed’ state to the international community” while in fact “all important decisions about inclusion and exclusion [remain] in the hands of the military elites” (117). In contrast to the post genocide Rwandan identity cards discussed by Purdeková, those of South Sudan emphasize ethnic affiliation.

Adam Sandor’s “Tightly Packed: Disciplinary Power, the UNODC, and the Container Control Programme in Dakar” (133–60) offers a case study of the UNODC’s Container Control Programme (CCP) in Dakar, Senegal,

and addresses the growth of North–South security cooperation over illicit drug trafficking and other transnational organized crime. But interdiction is hampered by corruption and the role local elites may have in the trade. This article focuses on relations of power and local responses to the disciplinary mechanisms imposed by international law enforcement agencies with an “analytical lens [that] cuts into North–South relations of power while being sensitive to local political contests in which reform interventions become embedded” (134).

The final article in the forum, Tessa Diphoorn’s “‘Surveillance of the Surveillers’: Regulation of the Private Security Industry in South Africa and Kenya” (161–82), describes the growth of the private security industry in Africa, which involves greater regulatory oversight by the state and also company- and industry-wide self-regulation. The author argues that the regulatory efforts, while ostensibly aimed at monitoring and controlling the labor force—ranging from guards to computer technicians—have become part of a larger “surveillant assemblage” (Haggerty & Ericson 2000) that includes “surveillance of the surveillers.” Through a comparative case study of Kenya and South Africa, she discovers strong public suspicion toward private security staff in both countries, and the increasing merger of private and public security apparatus.

Following the Surveillance Forum we present three independent research articles. Eddy Mazembo Mavungu’s “Frontiers of Power and Prosperity: Explaining Provincial Boundary Disputes in Postapartheid South Africa” (183–208) discusses contests and conflicts over postapartheid boundary designations and inclusions at the provincial and metropolitan levels carried out by both ethnic groups and political parties. Where previous studies have focused on the material considerations involved in communities’ preferences, Mavungu addresses “the role of symbolic attachments to provinces and a sense of social pride for one’s traditional place” (185) as well as the role of party political interests. The author presents three case studies from Bushbuckridge, Khutsong, and Matatiele, South Africa, and also compares these disputes with similar contestations over boundary demarcation in Kenya, Zambia, and the DRC.

Paul Stacey’s “Rethinking the Making and Breaking of Traditional and Statutory Institutions in Post-Nkrumah Ghana” (209–30) asks for a “rethinking” of the post-Nkrumah era (1966–72) as heralding a state-initiated process of reviving traditional institutions. Whereas historiographical work on this era tends to focus on political crises and the “triumph of neopatrimonialism over democratization” (210), Stacey discusses the mechanisms that maintain and reinforce traditional movements, including the revival of chieftaincies and ethnic polarization in elections, two traditional features that Nkrumah opposed and that political studies ignore.

In the final article, “‘Prison Is for Young People!’ Youth, Violence, and the State in Praia and Mindelo, Cape Verde” (231–49), Peter Anton Zoetl discusses increased gang violence, often drug related, in Cape Verde. With a large youth population embedded in poverty, unfulfilled aspirations to

migrate, and increased gang and drug activities, the state has responded with repressive security measures that find support in public discourses, including the media, that blame the youths themselves and their “broken” families for the rise in crime. After interviewing both youthful prisoners and their families, however, the author concludes that the actions of police officers themselves, including the extrajudicial punishment of suspects, increases the risk of youth to “opt for, or stick to, careers of marginality and delinquency” (231).

We hope that readers of the *African Studies Review* will enjoy and benefit from the related articles in the Forum on Surveillance as well as the individual articles.

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