

The rest of the book examines how Kenyatta's precarious political position before independence and the question of land redistribution shaped the institution of the Kenyan presidency. To this end, Angelo relies on both Kenyan and British archives. The former paint a picture of Kenyatta's administrative style. The latter document Kenyatta's imprisonment, unexpected political resuscitation right before independence, and British perceptions of the post-independence administration.

More than previous works, Angelo documents the unexpectedness of Kenyatta's political revival. Much of Kenya's political development in the decade leading up to independence happened while he was in prison. And even after he became Prime Minister, Kenya's political class still believed that his leadership was temporary. Angelo argues, convincingly, that the precarity of Kenyatta's political power, his personal predilection against organised politics, and the Kenya African National Union's (KANU) organisational weakness and factional squabbles led him to adopt a strategy of intentional seclusion. Instead of involving himself with everyday party politics, Kenyatta relied on his charisma as the founding leader of the nation, tactfully managed KANU's factions, and projected power through a bureaucracy. Stated differently, Kenyatta chose to be above politics as a matter of necessity. The same strategy of seclusion informed his approach to the question of land resettlement. After centralising control over land policy, he retreated, leaving bureaucrats and politicians squabbling over policy specifics and actual pieces of land. Overall, Kenyatta's approach to land redistribution stunted the development of mass politics within KANU and precipitated the schism in 1966. Ultimately, these dynamics yielded the presidency that emerged under Kenyatta: at once powerful but also secluded from everyday politics and governance.

Power and The Presidency in Kenya is likely to fuel enriching academic debates well into the future. More broadly, it is a timely reminder of the need to take seriously African leaders' political thought and agency in structuring post-colonial institutional trajectories in the region.

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The Politics of Poverty: policy-making and development in rural Tanzania by

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South-eastern Tanzania, comprising Lindi and Mtwara regions, is an area under-explored in historical and ethnographic works of Tanzania. It is also considered one of the least economically developed areas in the country. This book aims to illuminate the roots of this marginalisation and to address debates in development and poverty more broadly by focusing on the social, economic and political dynamics of the region from the colonial era of the 1930s to the 2000s. Becker examines why rural poverty endures here despite generations of efforts to address it. Her analysis relies on archival material, documents from a local NGO, and interviews with development practitioners and residents of the region, to understand the persistence of poverty and the efforts made by the state to address it.

Becker's opening chapter introduces the region, signposts the literature that helps frame her analysis, and highlights her central themes of environment, officials' neglect and the unreliability of markets. She then turns to an analysis of the responses and views of residents and colonial officials to a famine that plagued Tunduru, in the western part of the region, in the 1930s. Here Becker relies on archival material and some interviews, though with individuals long removed from Tunduru. The dynamics behind the famine, not surprisingly, include a mix of environmental, political and social factors. Labour migration took men out of the area in search of wages to meet tax demands and rains were scattered and poor overall. Becker suggests marriage practices may also have been a contributing aspect to the famine but provides little elaboration on this relationship.

More detail about the region's environment, demographics and infrastructure, or lack thereof, follows in Chapter 2. The story here, of a population striving to meet their livelihood needs in an environment characterised by low or erratic rainfall, low soil fertility, predation of crops by wild animals and livestock disease, is not particularly unique to this region alone. Cassava and cashew emerge as important cash crops with all the vulnerability to markets and prices that characterise such crops across the continent. Becker emphasises the highly variable nature of the environment and livelihoods in the region, yet, perhaps because she attempts to cover such a wide geography, we learn little about farming practices or the people who practice them. Here, Becker might have provided some of this detail by drawing in more depth from existing work on this region by authors such as Koponen (*People and Production in late Precolonial Tanzania*, Finnish Society for Development Studies, 1988) and Seppala and Koda (*The Making of a Periphery*, Nordic Africa Institute, 1998).

Markets, the search for a profitable cash crop to trade, and the uneven playing field between producers and traders, are the focus of Chapter 3. While cashew – probably the most important cash crop in the region – is mentioned briefly, Becker focuses more on cotton which produced little profit for producers and erratic returns for traders. The constraints and problems from the colonial era continue to afflict the south-east at independence. Newly independent government officials rely on technocratic approaches to farming to address production and poverty. Villagisation, described in Chapter 5, the ultimate planned technical intervention, aims to transform the economy and livelihoods of the region. When transformation fails to materialise, officials blame farmers for the persistent poverty. As in many development projects, officials emphasise the need to 'educate' farmers in new approaches to agricultural production. Due primarily to the production and sale of cashews, we begin to see increasing social stratification but the gains are short-lived as the vagaries of the crop on the global market are felt. Becker turns (Chapter 7) to a case study of one village near Lindi town to examine anti-poverty programmes in greater depth. She focuses on the performative aspects of development and the expectations of both recipients of development efforts and those tasked to implement 'improvements' in local livelihoods.

Becker's work is ambitious in scope and goal. Her aim to demonstrate how and why poverty persists in one of the more remote regions of Tanzania is commendable, but her task is constrained by the limits of the archival material and her inability to visit some of the areas of focus for her analysis. Becker situates her study in the wider literature on development and poverty by referencing scholars widely cited in development studies and state-society analyses such as James Ferguson, James Scott and others. Familiar themes such as the prevalence of technocratic approaches, the

rhetoric of progress, and the increasing if erratic penetration of state power are highlighted. However her examination does little to extend the analysis of these subjects. She does demonstrate well that colonial officials were struggling to address both the demands of their subjects and their bosses in the capital.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Becker shows that poverty persists because of constraints of the environment on production, the erratic nature of markets, and the neglect and lack of effective action and policy by colonial and post-colonial governments. Less elaboration is provided on the details of this environment, agricultural production and the livelihood strategies of the region's residents. While poverty is the focus of the book, there is little actual elaboration on how it is defined or measured, either by Becker or by the region's residents. Becker's work here might have benefitted from more attention to these nuances provided by scholars of Tanzania such as Maia Green (*Journal of Development Studies*, 2006), who complicate definitions of poverty. Becker's examination of markets, the environment and agriculture, does not engage with the rich literature on these subjects, such as the work of Jayne *et al.* (*World Development*, 2010), Djurfeldt (*Journal of International Development*, 2015), Christiaesen *et al.* (*Journal of Development Economics*, 2011) and others. Additionally, her consideration of the performance of state-society relations in Tanzania ignores some work already done on this subject such as Harrison's excellent analysis of Lushoto (*Journal of Modern African Studies*, 2008). Greater attention to these works might have resulted in new insights.

The book will be of interest to scholars of Tanzania, but its ability to be of significance to a wider audience is limited in part by the lack of clarity produced both by the limits of the archival material and Becker's rather complicated and confusing verbiage which frequently gives way to rhetoric and jargon. The data on which she bases her arguments, particularly about environmental constraints, is quite thin as it is presented. There are questionable Swahili translations and curious misuses of English words. While these are perhaps minor issues, they do distract. Given the price of the book, one would have hoped for more careful copyediting. Becker's work shows, as do many others in the scholarship on development, how complex and often persistently misguided efforts to address rural poverty in the Global South have been.

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Africa's Gene Revolution: genetically modified crops and the future of African agriculture by MATTHEW A. SCHNURR

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Matthew Schnurr's new monograph is an important read for anyone interested in African agriculture, development, technological change and the ongoing controversy over genetically modified (GM) crops. Clearly written, richly empirical and intelligently analysed, *Africa's Gene Revolution* offers the most comprehensive interrogation to date of the promise that GM crops hold for improving the lives of small-holder farmers. Schnurr examines 10 case studies associated with two 'generations' of GM crops in Africa: first-generation crops that were originally designed for US