

impressive growth success – understands that growth and development can be very different phenomena. Botswana experienced the longest and strongest growth episode in recent world history. According to the Spence Commission's Growth Report, Botswana grew by at least 7 per cent annually on average between 1960 and 2005, increasing its per capita GDP by a factor of eighteen over the period. Despite this growth, Botswana has one of the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in the world, suffers from high income inequality, and struggles to diversify its economy in the face of depleting diamond deposits, on which the country is dependent for tax revenue and foreign exchange. Hence, even though challenging GDP data is a useful exercise, questioning growth regressions needs to go beyond the data, calling into doubt the theoretical foundations upon which these regressions are conducted.

Nevertheless, both books are insightful contributions to current debates in development policy. *Poor Numbers* has been a huge success well beyond specialist circles and scholars will surely greet *Economic Growth and Measurement Reconsidered* with similar enthusiasm. In fact, both books should be required reading for anyone dealing with development statistics.

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TODD CLEVELAND, *Stones of Contention: a history of Africa's diamonds*. Athens OH: Ohio University Press in association with the Ohio University Center for International Studies (pb US\$26.95 – 978 0 8214 2100 0). 2014, 240 pp.

Todd Cleveland's *Stones of Contention* is a welcome addition to the literature on the social and political impact of Africa's diamonds. One of the book's most valuable aspects lies in its outline of how diamonds came to appear on the geopolitical map of world powers in the nineteenth century. Cleveland's account of the finds in Kimberley and the worldwide rush for the stones they triggered is masterful. It covers both individual diggers' search for fortune and a discussion of how the discoveries placed South Africa on the global map as the most promising African territory, less than two decades before the Berlin Conference.

Cleveland allows us to see just how important the discovery of diamonds was by placing Kimberley in 1867 in the context of Europeans' increasing demand for diamonds and the geopolitical shifts associated with that demand. Equally fascinatingly, the author guides the reader into the world of legends about places of immense natural wealth, centred on fantastic ideas of African kingdoms awash in glittering gems and with roads paved with gold. And yet, another argument running through this historical fabric is the fact that there were indeed sites of valuable minerals from Mali to Mozambique that Africans were able to protect from outsider access. The remarkably successful story of African participation in the global trade of minerals only began to dissolve, according to Cleveland, with the discovery of the Eureka diamond in Kimberley. His account of how Africans were able to turn the mineral trade to their advantage is useful not only because this is an oft-missed part of the story of the continent's wealth, but also because it allows us to see Kimberley as the harbinger of a qualitatively new era of roughly a century of colonial-style exploitation of minerals and people.

Another valuable contribution of this book lies precisely in its vivid account of some of the people who made the diamond exploitation possible and the conditions

under which they worked. Cleveland's presentation of how Africans were drawn into the diamond mines is significant. Indigenous people were first able to make claims for sites in Kimberley but soon lost their rights to such claims, eventually reducing their opportunities to wage labour. This story gives us a concrete example of a form of dispossession that came with colonization. Cleveland further shows how diamond-generated capital was soon concentrated in only a few hands, leaving the workers in a weak bargaining position. Even so, diamond miners engaged in various forms of resistance and negotiation to improve their situation. However, a shortcoming of the analysis is that little attention is paid to how the new diamond industry affected groups other than mine workers. Most glaringly, there is no discussion of how it affected men and women differently. Questions left unaddressed include what jobs were available to women versus men at the mines, to what extent women's experiences of mine-related work differed from those of their male colleagues, and how the fact that many male family members left their households for long periods to work at the mines affected the livelihoods and security of women.

Compared with the colonial history, Cleveland's account of diamonds in post-colonial Africa is generally less fulfilling. This part is less original, including in its use of morally loaded terms such as 'greed' for explanatory purposes. The discussion of diamonds and conflict would have been more relevant had it positioned itself in relation to important recent contributions, such as Cederman *et al.*'s *Inequalities, Grievances, and Civil War* (2013) and Le Billon's *Wars of Plunder* (2012). Given Cleveland's critical edge in his outline of myths of Africa in times past, it is also surprising that less analytical distance is taken from common stereotypes of our era. For example, the Democratic Republic of Congo is depicted in a classical heart-of-darkness fashion, with claims of an 'ongoing chaos' there as well as a 'remarkably wide and continually shifting ... array of entities involved in the looting' (p. 140).

And while the author pays considerable attention to agency, it would have made for a more comprehensive analysis of postcolonial trends had structural issues been better illuminated. For instance, it would have been useful to discuss the nature of the global trade system into which diamonds have been channelled and the economic options of postcolonial rulers at various stages. This might have helped address questions such as why it is that several of Africa's diamond-rich countries continue to rank among the world's most unequal societies.

That said, for readers interested in learning more about how diamonds have come to shape Africa's political economy in significant ways, or about the history of African labour, this is a well-written and informative book that will give much food for thought.

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PHILIPPE LE BILLON, *Wars of Plunder: conflicts, profits and the politics of resources*. London: C. Hurst & Company (pb £20 – 978 1 84904 145 4). 2012, xi + 363 pp.

The question of how an abundance of natural resources has impeded African development has been a major concern to many an observer of African political economy. Paul Collier, author of *The Bottom Billion*, equates the 'resource curse' with the 'Dutch disease', whereby the country's currency rises in value