

Beyond impressive fieldwork, a particular strength of Glawion's intervention is his commitment to disentangling security outcomes from the form of political order-making, clearly noting that greater levels of security are no more closely associated with stability than with fluidity. This is a very important finding, helping to counter-balance the too-often uninterrogated assumption that formality and state-ness provide better outcomes for ordinary people than informality and non-state-ness. The framework has the significant benefit of putting diverse actors and their jurisdictional claims-making on equal analytic footing, allowing not just a comparison across a range of cases, but an examination of farmers and teachers alongside warlords and international aid agencies to offer a textured picture of everyday security in often overlooked parts of the world.

The book left me with a couple of questions. First, I wondered why Glawion chose (urban) *space* to conceptualise and identify distributions of jurisdictional claims, as compared with other potential axes – for instance, patterns of legal pluralism (see Benton's *Historical Perspectives on Legal Pluralism*, Cambridge University Press, 2002 and Massoud's *Shari'a Inshallah*, Cambridge University Press, 2021) or sites of surveillance (see Purdeková on “Mundane Sights” of Power’ in *African Studies Review*, 2016). Intuitively, space seems helpful to understand conflict zones, criss-crossed by frontlines and no-go zones – but this assumption merits elaboration.

Second, while the book purports to delink stable ordering, state control, and security, at times it implies the opposite, for instance, when Glawion notes that the outer circle is characterised by ‘unruly actors’, ‘security-related rumours and the use of violence’ (222–3). This left me wondering the extent to which the very real methodological constraints of researching (and thereby literally centring) comparatively safe zones might risk reproducing the very approach that the security arena seeks to critique – namely, the notion of a less-governed and more insecure hinterland (see, e.g. 112–14).

These questions point to the challenge of disentangling complex and contingent political dynamics, and their relation to the elusive concept of security. The book should be applauded for its efforts to investigate often-pathologised places on their own terms, its empirical richness and its theoretical ambition.

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Mennonites and Post-Colonial African Studies edited by JOHN M. JANZEN, HAROLD F. MILLER & JOHN C. YODER

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This earnest book documents the lives of a cohort of men and women who, in the 1960s and 1970s, helped to define the academic study of Africa. All of the 22 people whose stories are told here were Mennonites, formed in a Christian tradition of non-violence. Most of them were conscientious objectors who refused to serve in the US military during the Vietnam War. Most of them enlisted, instead, in overseas service, principally in the Congo or in Tanzania, where there were long-established Mennonite churches and schools. All of them were purposefully transformed by their period of service, and went on to advanced study in history, medicine or

anthropology, with a research focus on Africa. All of them have had careers of distinction and importance in African and American universities. In the biographies of these ethically minded people we can see part of the social and religious architecture that lies beneath the scholarly field of African Studies.

A commitment to simplicity is essential to the Mennonite way of life, and most of the people whose stories are told here spent their childhoods on farms in rural America. That is one of the remarkable things about this book: that a people uniquely dedicated to communal living would have lived lives that were intentionally dislocated. Mennonite communities were by no means removed from events in mid-20th century Africa. The Mennonite Church was a conduit for a two-way flow of ideas and Christian disciplines. Missionaries and African pastors regularly appeared before interested audiences at Goshen College and other centres of Mennonite learning, and many of the people profiled in this book were inspired by lectures they heard in their youth. It is fascinating to learn that there was, in the 1960s, a fellowship of converts of the East African Revival that met regularly in New York City (44). There were new technologies – relatively inexpensive air transport in particular – that allowed these people to live multi-sited lives, lives that were, in the words of one of the contributors, ‘circuitous and disjointed, involving a continuous commute between North America and the rest of the world, especially post-colonial Africa’ (217).

Was there an identifiably Mennonite scholarship about Africa? The majority of the people whose stories are told in this book did advanced degrees in history or anthropology, and many of them composed works that document the dynamics of communities over time. The only African contributor to this book – Musuto Mutaragara Chirangi – wrote a PhD dissertation on the relationship between tradition and modern medicine (Chapter 15). The art historian Curtis Keim suggests that a life spent as ‘part of a peculiar people’ gave him a ‘distance from mainstream American culture’ from which he could make observation (87). For Keim as for Chirangi, John Janzen, John Yoder and other Mennonite scholars of Africa, the personal experience of living within a self-perpetuating religious community was perhaps a licence to investigate the logics of cultural longevity. Having been formed in a society that was self-consciously at the edge of things, many of the people discussed in this book were fascinated by the mechanics of moral and social reproduction.

There is another thread that runs through these life histories. Many of them have been written down before. This edited book draws from – and in some cases reprints – autobiographic writing that American Mennonites have composed outside the academic context, as documentary evidence of God’s provision or as testimonies that could inspire commitment. Africans wrote autobiographies, too: there is for example mention herein of the autobiography of Zedekiah Kisare, the first African Mennonite bishop (26). The practice of autobiography was essential to Christian non-conformity in rural America and, also, in eastern and central Africa: in all of its intimate and revealing detail, it was the core discipline that defined conversion (see Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism and the East African Revival*, Cambridge, 2012).

The practiced ease with which these stories are told reveals their formation within the religious context of the church. That is why it is hard to see the larger political context in which Mennonite scholars worked. The African actors whose ideas and innovations shaped the conduct of American Mennonite scholarship are largely

absent on the pages of this book. I was struck by how many of the scholars profiled in this book served in the Congo in the 1960s, during and immediately after the Mulele Rebellion. Melvin Loewen and his family were evacuated from Stanleyville (now Kisangani) in 1964, after living for 111 days under siege from millenarian Simba rebels (33). How far were Loewen and other Mennonites who served in the Congo obliged to respond to Simba rebels' theological preoccupations? Here is an African political and religious history that delimited and shaped scholarly careers, just as surely as the Vietnam conflict. But it is hard to see where and how Simba theology mattered.

One might have wished for a bigger and more ambitious book than this, but *Mennonites and Post-Colonial African Studies* has its own lessons to teach. Here there are no grandiose claims. The book's analytical modesty reflects the organising principle of Mennonite religious life: one is responsible for authoring one's life with intention. This revealing book deserves to be read by all those interested in the social history of our shared scholarly enterprise.

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