

Immanuel of Firepower Ministries International in Texas. As a physician, Dr Stella Immanuel combined spiritual warfare with conspiracy theories against scientists and science-based organisations. Dr Immanuel disarmed the mortal threat of Covid-19 and claimed a cure for the virus. Her assertion encouraged Nigerian Pentecostal Pastors especially Bishop David Oyedepo who dismissed the pandemic as ‘a noisome pestilence’ (81). Through the case of Dr Immanuel, the author explores ‘conspirituality’, the idea that there is a point of meeting between conspiracy theories, spirituality and disestablishing power.

In the last chapter, Adelakun explores the Christian reaction to the effect of Covid-19 in terms of virtual worship and emphasises prayers as an essential service during the pandemic. Using illustrations from Nigeria and the USA, she examines how discourses of spiritual warfare and rational-cum-moral authority mapped onto nativist and nationalist sentiment during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Powerful Prayer and the Political Praxis of Spiritual Warfare Devices is a fascinating and intriguing text. It engages the conservatism and parochial views of Charismatic-Pentecostal Churches on issues of prayer and political structure from a democratic point of view. I commend this publication to all and sundry as it is a brilliant scholarly work that conceptualises and analyses how the phenomenality of spiritual warfare is deployed as an ‘exoteric’ militarised device to exorcise a public space that is presumably saturated with activities of demons and opposing spirits.

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Searching for a New Kenya: Politics and Social Media on the Streets of Mombasa by

STEPHANIE DIEPEVEEN

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Searching for a New Kenya is a highly penetrating and thoughtful account of public discussion and its role in bringing about social change. By tracing people's participation in public debate in both physical and digital spaces, the book is not only a timely contribution to our understanding of ‘publics’ in an increasingly digitised world but also showcases the potential and constraints of digital communication channels in influencing socio-political movements.

Publics generate shared understanding and political debate through people's attempt to articulate and persuade others of their views and contest and challenge other people's opinions (20). Discussions can take place in varied spaces, including physical (streets and parks) and digital spaces (social media networks). Drawing on data collected from a post-colonial setting (Kenya), the book asks very important questions about why and how public discussion can provide for changes in shared imaginaries in the country (29). This is crucial for a number of reasons. Publics in Kenya continue to be divided along ethnic, religious and regional lines, despite the diversity of discussions and spaces in public debate emerging. Thus, Diepeveen's book asks why, if public debate is active, varied and open, do there not appear to be obvious changes in the terms of debate? (11). Secondly, the ideas around publics in Africa can generally be attributed to two distinct

scholarships: the normative conceptualisation of publics via histories and intellectual traditions within the continent and the empirically oriented studies of publics involving thick description of public discussion in Africa. The book attempts to combine these two traditions to offer an 'expansive view of publics, rooted in everyday interactions' (18). This approach is also critical to understanding both the potential and constraints of shared imaginaries emerging from public discussion in 21st century Kenya.

Where the book really stands out is in the application and revision of Hannah Arendt's ideas on publics and politics. Arendt understood publics as the driving force to bring collective social change. Yet her approach to publics has some limitations, particularly her idea that socio-economic necessity is incompatible with publics. However, the book's central argument is that people's material insecurity is crucial to public discussion (220–1). People's 'parliaments' and public discussions observed in the book were concerned with and driven by economic precarity faced by ordinary Kenyans. The author argues that material insecurity was an enabling condition that created time and reason for individuals to convene as publics. This finding resonates clearly with unemployed Indian youths who gather around urban spaces such as tea stalls, junctions, open parks, etc., for 'timepass', in the hope that a better future will come (in the form of salaried jobs) (Jeffrey, *Timepass: Youth, Class, and the Politics of Waiting in India*, 2010). Jeffrey notes that this act of 'waiting' is not necessarily to be seen as youth sitting idle. Instead, this provides solid grounds for social and political action in the form of campaigns against state corruption.

Though *Searching for a New Kenya* notes that public gatherings had little influence on political decision making, there is some scope for this to occur. This is particularly evident in the emergence of youth parliaments on social media networks. The use of Facebook groups (e.g. Mombasa Youth Senate) by young people in Kenya offers real possibilities for open and plural discussion since they can 'escape the precariousness of the physical spaces' and also bypass state control, albeit to some extent (141). Here, the book adds to existing studies of the potential of social media channels for influencing political action and public discourse (e.g. Nyabola, *Digital Democracy, Analogue Politics*, 2018) by highlighting the limitations of such digital networks, which are often under state surveillance.

In particular, *Searching for a New Kenya* shows the complexity of ownership structures of Facebook groups and the ways in which infrastructural limitations shaped people's participation and discussions in those groups. This finding is particularly useful for scholars thinking about the role of digital communications channels (e.g. Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter) on wider socio-political movements around the world. In essence, while public discussion and talk can be seen as becoming dynamic and ubiquitous in the contemporary digital era, there is a tendency for a certain kind of political action (e.g. elite-driven and personalised politics) to become reinforced via digital channels (221).

Overall, the book makes an important contribution to the literature that deals with publics within Africa, offers a robust critical revision of Arendt's thoughts on publics and how they emerge, and gives new directions to normative theory on publics (i.e. publics should be assigned value on their own terms reflecting participants' views (223)).

There are a few reservations to be noted. The author is fully aware of her own stance in the field and the ethical concerns that emerge from doing ethnographic enquiries.

However, there are some areas which, in the reviewer's perspective, need further clarification. First, the author mentions that 'participants increasingly welcomed her contributions in discussions' (28). What kind of contributions were made by the researcher while observing publics? And why? How did the author navigate the role of an observer and a discussant? And how did those contributions affect what was being discussed? This raises another important issue of language. At one point, the author notes, that 'participants would translate proceedings' (26) and 'would switch into English to enable me to more fully take part' (28). If the vast majority of public gatherings observed for the book were conducted in Kiswahili, then how did the author navigate the issue of meanings that might have been lost in translation?

That said, *Searching for a New Kenya* is laced with thick descriptions of people's interactions with physical and digital spaces and the debates that take place in these spaces. The chapters are organised logically, the flow of arguments is well-balanced and nuanced, and the accessible tone of writing should make it an easy read for most people. Scholars, students and activists interested in publics and political action in Africa will find the book extremely useful.

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Learning Morality, Inequalities, and Faith: Christian and Muslim schools in Tanzania

by HANSJÖRG DILGER

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Schools are central to projects of state-formation and nation-building but they are also sites for the reproduction of social inequalities and for projecting and negotiating ideals of ethical subject formation. In this highly interesting and accessible book, anthropologist Hansjörg Dilger explores how the rise of private, faith-oriented schools in Tanzania has affected these processes thereby also operating as a vector of modern secularity.

Dilger's starting point are the ongoing quarrels among Christians and Muslims about their relative position in Tanzanian state and society and the ways these are anchored in (post)-colonial history and fuelled by the increasing privatisation of education and the unequal performance of Christian and Muslim schools in attendant audit cultures. While always having an eye on the complex relationships between social inequalities and religious difference, Dilger seeks to go beyond the narrative of reproduction. Instead, he anchors his analysis and arguments in the idea that faith-oriented schools fashion themselves as, and to some extent are, production sites of moral meaning and ordinary ethics where values are inculcated via discipline (à la Foucault) but also imagined and embodied (3). These embodiments articulate larger historical forces related to the role of religion under German and British colonialism and Nyerere's Ujamaa programme. While chiefly inspired by the newer anthropology of ethics, I found much resonance here in Dilger's arguments with Bourdieu's notion of educational habitus as embodied history.

The book consists of two parts. The first part discusses key elements of the analysis of religion and schools as institutional fields and arenas of morality, revisits the