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Ethnic		0%	2%	One particular ethnicity or group of ethnicities at the expense of other ethnicities (so typically a series of stamps showing local culture of one group, but not showing other cultures, and no series within two years shows those other cultures- e.g. multi-cultural not spread out)
Icons		11%	27%	Images of the nation (antiquities, monuments, natural wonders, flags, traditional life, prehistory, historical events, coats of arms, etc.)
Multi-ethnic		41%	3%	Multiple ethnic or religious groups;

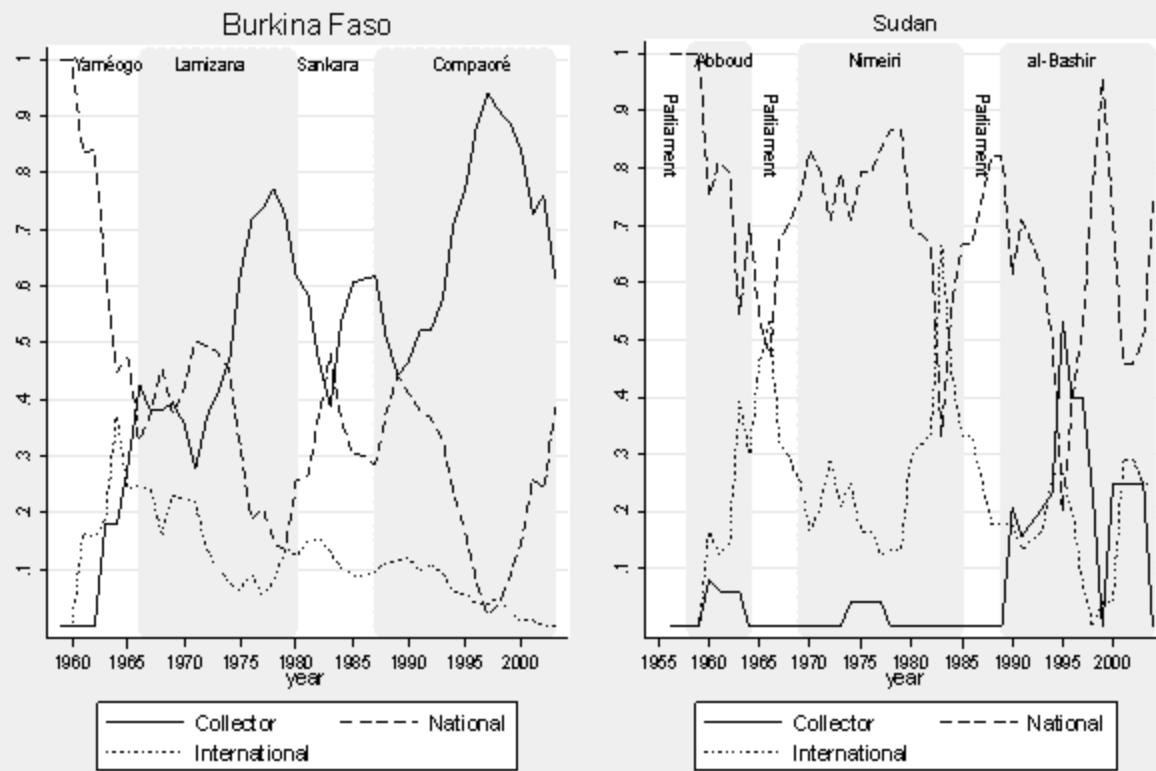
					usually a series of stamps showing local culture or traditional institutions where there is a clear attempt to represent a broad cross-section of ethnicities or religions; or stamps explicitly advocating tolerance
Political person		2%		7%	Political personage from the country (most are deceased)
Non-political person		3%		0%	Sports figures, artists, writers, etc. from the country (often still living)
PanAfrican		9%		11%	PanAfrican institutions or ideals, or that honor African leaders from other countries (e.g., Organization of African Unity, Africa Cup)
PanArab/PanMuslim		0%		16%	PanArab or Muslim institutions or ideals, or that

					honor Arab leaders from other countries or that have Islam as the central idea of the stamp (e.g., a mosque, not part of a series of multifaith stamps)
Presidents		2%		1%	Current President or national leader
Women		0%		1%	Named women, women's organizations, or women's empowerment.
<b>Fig 19:</b> Categories of stamps coded for Burkina Faso and Sudan: Definitions and Frequencies					

Figure 20 shows how the number of stamps issued per year varied over the period. As can be seen, Sudan has produced almost no collector stamps, and in general has produced a small number of stamps—only 208 over 40 years, compared with 936 for Burkina Faso. Even in the non-collector categories, the imagery output from Burkina is double that of Sudan. Among national-oriented stamps, there are sharp distinctions, as noted in the introduction. Burkina Faso has produced large numbers of multi-ethnic series of stamps. Sudan has not. Burkina Faso has also produced a much higher share of development-oriented stamps. Sudan, by contrast, has produced a higher share of stamps depicting national icons, commemorating political events (especially regime anniversaries and historical events), celebrating the Arab League and Islamic icons, and honoring political figures (mostly during the second parliamentary period in the mid-1960s).

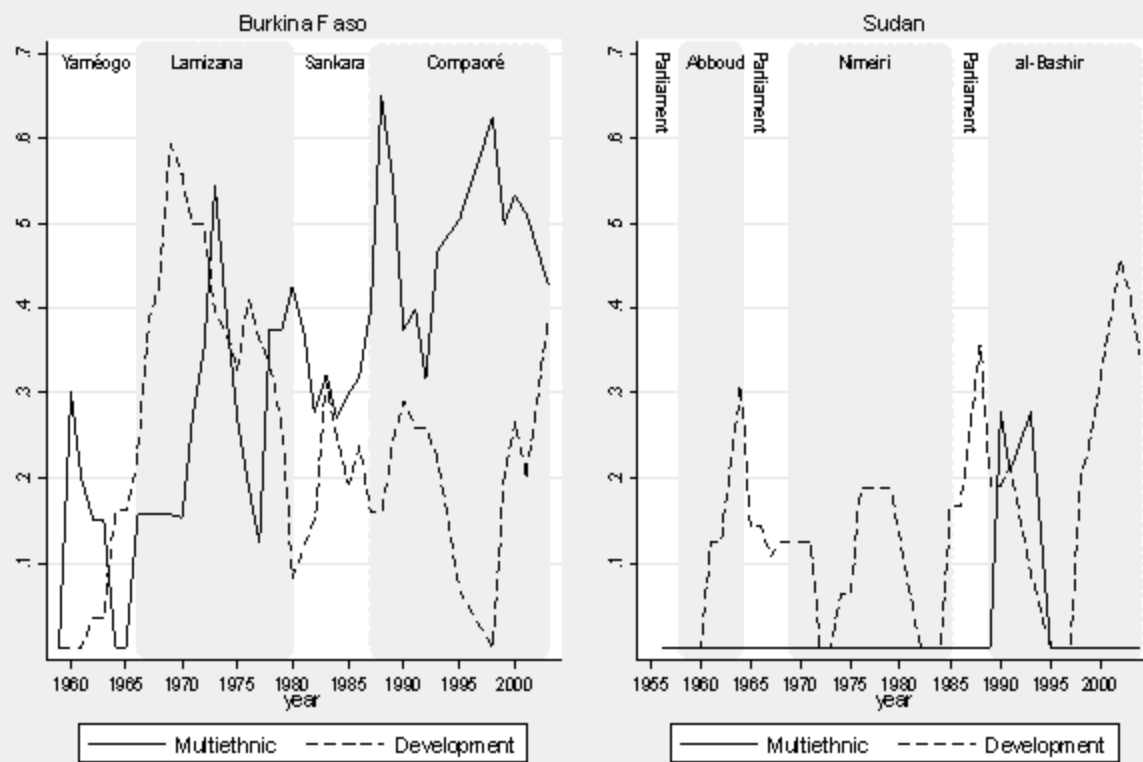
Figure 21 shows how the broadest categories have changed over time, for political regimes in each country. Remarkable is how for both countries the percent of national-oriented stamps has been declining. Collector stamps have been rising steadily for Burkina Faso, and only became significant for Sudan during the current military regime. The current Sudanese regime also sharply cut the number of stamps celebrating international organizations and activities. For the various national-oriented categories presented, it is striking how much more variable Sudan is across regimes, compared with Burkina, where percentages change slowly across regimes.

Fig. 21a: Percentages of stamps that are collector, national or international in orientation (with regimes indicated)



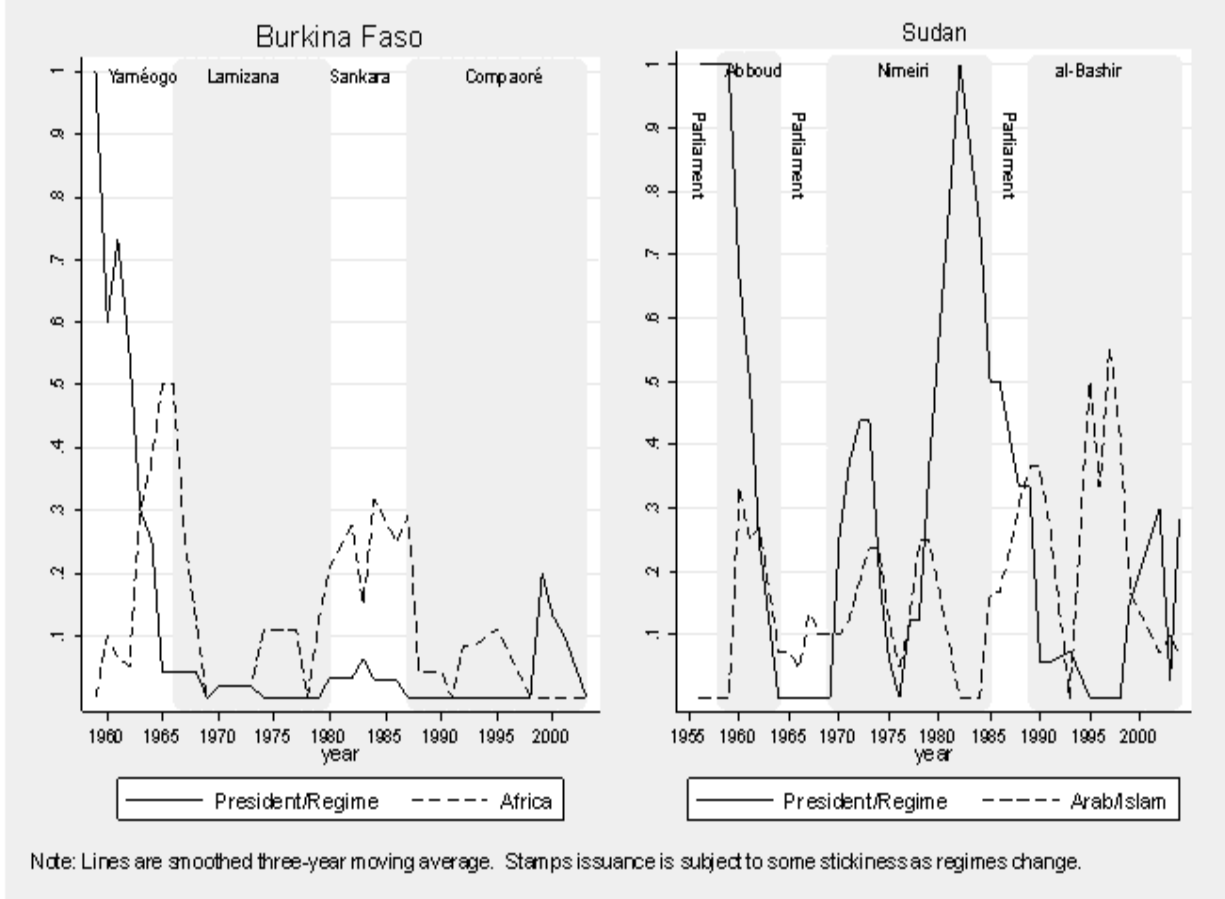
Note: Lines are smoothed three-year moving average. Stamps issuance is subject to some stickiness as regimes change.

Fig. 21b: Percentages of national-oriented stamps that are multi-ethnic or development (with regimes indicated)



Note: Lines are smoothed three-year moving average. Stamps issuance is subject to some stickiness as regimes change.

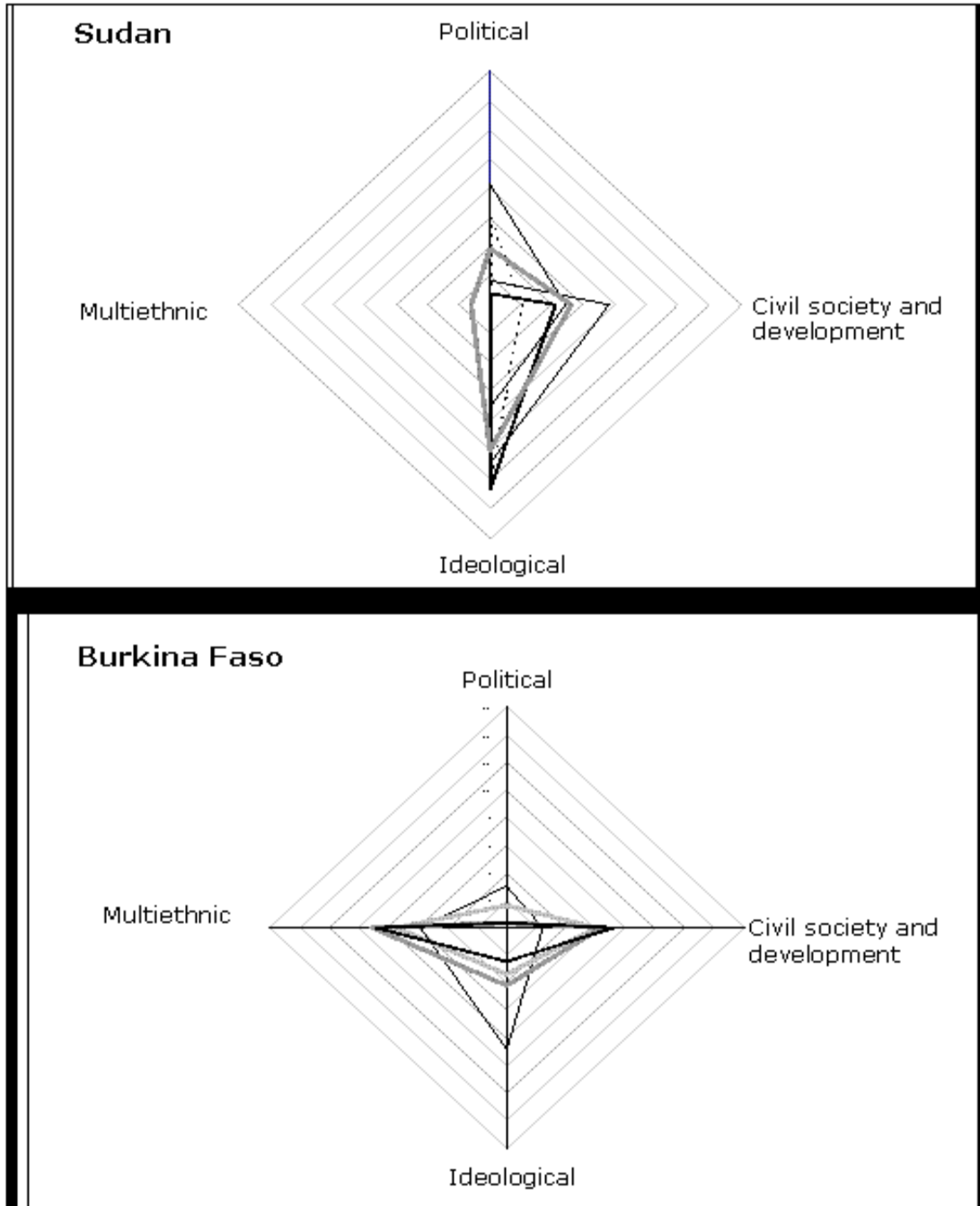
Fig. 21c: Percentages of national-oriented stamps that are President/Regime or Africa/Islam/Arab oriented (with regimes indicated)



Note: Lines are smoothed three-year moving average. Stamps issuance is subject to some stickiness as regimes change.

Note: Regimes for Burkina Faso are: (1) 1960-66, Yaméogo civilian regime; (2) 1966-80, Lamizana military regime; (3) 1980-87, Transition and Sankara military regime; (4) 1987-2003, Compaoré military regime. Regimes for Sudan are: (1) 1956-58, 1st democracy; (2) 1958-64, Abboud military regime; (3) 1964-69, 2nd democracy; (4) 1969-85, Nimeiri military regime; (5) 1985-89, 3rd democracy; (6) 1989-2003, al-Bashir military regime.

Figure 22 presents the same numbers in a different way, aggregating some of the smaller categories into four larger categories: political (commemoratives, political persons, presidents); civil society (development, women, non-political persons); ideology (icons, panAfrica, panArab and panIslam); and multiethnic. The radar chart shows the percent of stamps in each category for each regime. So Sudan has six regimes, while Burkina has four regimes. At this broader level of aggregation, there is striking consistency across regimes: Sudan's stamps are sharply skewed towards ideological and political stamps; Burkina's stamps sharply skewed towards multiethnic and civil society.



**Fig. 22:** Percent of images in major categories of national-oriented stamps for different political regimes

At a broad level Sudan’s stamps focus on the political center (regimes, Khartoum politicians, and Arab and Islamic identity of the country) while Burkina’s stamps focus on society (artists, multiple ethnic groups, and development). Sudan’s stamps build an image of the nation as

being about the northern-dominated regime in Khartoum (whether military or parliamentary); Burkina's stamps project an image of the nation as multi-cultural and development-oriented.

The consistency across regimes raises the interesting possibility that the pre-colonial and colonial experience may have shaped the iconography of post-independence African states. Did French colonies, more exposed to an ideology of inclusiveness (even if quite hypocritical) find themselves transmuting that discourse into an iconography of multi-ethnic inclusiveness? Did former British colonies take an opposite tack, and create images consistent with ideas of a superior or civilizing group standing above the rest and being responsible for the nation? These sorts of questions can only be answered by a broader statistical analysis of the imagery on all African stamps in the post-independence era.

## IMPLICATIONS

Political regimes that represent states in sub-Saharan Africa, as elsewhere, use iconography to evince emotion and sentiment. Citizens and subjects respond, of course, with icons of their own making. But the images individuals create are not always made under conditions of their own choosing, and state icons may display a disproportionate power in their effects. This power enables states to disproportionately initiate and capture the space of thought, and counter private responses.

Part of the power of states comes from the massive resources, reach, and organization available in its image production. States can mandate an image of the president in every office, a national icon on every postage stamp, the national emblem on every piece of currency, national colors on the airline, statuary in the roundabouts, and music on the airwaves. Few other organizations can compete: ethnic groups may be able to produce music, masks, clothing, and dances; churches and mosques use their rituals, architecture, and vestments; opposition groups may carefully choose a color and symbol for public manifestations. But as these examples suggest, their resources, reach, and organization are limited compared with that of most states. Another part of the power of the state flows from an international order that naturalizes states as expressions of the will of the people. The international legitimation of states adheres even to illegitimate states, making their icons have unwarranted effects. Ubiquitous and ordinary, postage stamps include themselves in the repertoire of everyday construction of national identity.<sup>12</sup> Appeal to authority is never sufficient to establish the reasonableness of a hypothesis, but in arguing the case that postage stamps reflect broader regime strategies of identity transformation it is useful to recall Albert Hourani's analysis of the emergence of nationalism in the Arab world. The new spirit, according to Hourani, "was symbolized by the change in postage stamps, which no longer showed mosques or sphinxes or kings, but workers and peasants in heroic attitudes, shaking their fists at fate."<sup>13</sup>

Excessive power and routinization banalizes and tempers the power of state iconography. Licking a stamp and handling the face of the sovereign on currency may make too intimate the majesty of power. A repressed community of the arts encourages the least imaginative to rise to positions of authority in the image-making machinery of a state; the

results are often laughable. A lively opposition may cleverly make mockery of state images. Intelligent citizens encourage others to pierce the hubris of power.

Inquiring into the effects and meanings associated with state iconography thus suffers from fundamental epistemological questions about translating and measuring popular understanding. Does the image of the President in leopard skin fez instill fear and abjection, or a derisive and dismissive grunt in the ordinary citizen? When the Islamic regime of 1989 Sudan ordered the painting of all commercial doorways in the pale green of Islam, did this encourage piety and respect for the regime, or compliant insolence? When the revolutionary regime of Thomas Sankara in Burkina Faso rebaptised a main street as Avenue Nkrumah, did the residents of Ouagadougou give a hooray for pan-Africanism or roll their eyes at the excesses of youth? More generally, have sentiments and actions inspired by national icons, whether of fear, derision, or compliance, engendered other common sentiments or inspired other common actions? Is the commonality extended to many through and reinforcing their identity as national citizens subject to or participating in a state? Or does the commonality disintegrate or exclude some from national identity?

A small, modest paper comparing the imagery on postage stamps of Sudan and Burkina Faso cannot answer these questions, but the questions that are addressed here are motivated by these larger questions. One thing is clear: the sovereign and internationally recognized state of Sudan has rationalized its long war against the SPLA and much of the population of southern Sudan by mocking rebels as malcontents overly distrusting of northern good intentions. The imagery on the stamps issued by Khartoum suggests the southerners are fully justified in their suspicions of a hegemonic project by the north. The stamps of Sudan are not at all like the multi-cultural expressions of tolerance and diversity seen in Burkina Faso.

**Notes:**

1. See, e.g. Sharkey 2003.
2. Adedze 2004a; Adedze 2004b; Levin 2004; Posnansky 2004.
3. Cusack 2003.
4. Baron 2005, pp. 74-77.
5. Jones 2004.
6. Brunn 2001.
7. Raento and Brunn 2005.
8. Child 2005; Lauritzen 1988; McQueen 1988; Newman 1989; O'Sullivan 1988; Reid 1984; Scott 1992.
9. Delobsom 1932.
10. Adedze 2004a.
11. Cerulo 1995; Scott 1995.
12. Billig 1995; McCrone 1998.
13. Hourani 1983, p. 350.

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# An Interest in Intervention: A Moral Argument for Darfur

CHRISTY MAWDSLEY

## Introduction

The United States government has consistently failed to act when faced with governments committing mass atrocities against their own citizens. Yet U.S. leaders acknowledge that the United States is capable of and responsible for such action. We have thus seen one U.S. administration after another crying “never again” after a humanitarian crisis or genocide, while allowing the crises to go on unhindered when they recur.

In response to this gap between belief and action, this paper proposes that the U.S. Government (USG) develop a policy toward genocide and other mass atrocities that is consistent with U.S. values. To underscore the practical and real need for such a policy, this analysis will examine the crisis in Darfur, Sudan. The paper will address three central questions: what is occurring in Darfur? What is the theoretical case for U.S. action in Darfur or any other mass murder? And how can this be carried out practically? These questions are extremely pertinent to U.S. policymakers and citizens as they help clarify how our country views and deals with humanitarian crises, if it should at all. The fundamental argument of this paper is that the United States does have an obligation to act in the Darfur crisis and in similar situations in the future, based on both interest and value-grounded rationale.

I aim in this paper to 1) outline the crisis in Darfur from 2003 to the present; 2) describe the U.S. response to the situation in Darfur; 3) delineate what I believe the U.S. should do/be doing in response to the crisis and 4) provide rationale for why the U.S. should undertake these or similar actions in response to genocide in Darfur or other nations in the future.

The scope of this paper is limited in two central ways. First, in addressing human rights violations that necessitate U.S. attention and action, I am speaking to situations in which a government or group within a country is committing mass abuses to a degree that “shocks the human conscience.” This is with an understanding that very basic laws of morality are universally available to human reason. The “atrocities” discussed in this paper entail those along the lines of genocide, ethnic cleansing, gendercide, or mass extermination.<sup>1</sup> The humanitarian crises referenced in this paper refer to objective crises in which mass atrocities are being committed by one group versus another, including but not limited to genocide. I am referencing here a (relatively) sudden act that could necessitate emergency status. Thus, excluded are “nation-building” operations, interventions in the case of a failing state, or interventions for purely economic or strategic purposes.

The second limitation of scope in this paper is the aspect of ethics that I am suggesting be

**Christy Mawdsley** recently received her master’s degree in international affairs from Texas A&M University, with concentrations in international development and diplomacy. She was editor-in-chief of the *Atlantic Affairs Journal* during her time in graduate school and currently works with the ONE Campaign and the Save Darfur Coalition.

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v10/v10i1a4.pdf>

added to American foreign policy. Though a perfectly consistent, moral foreign policy may be the ultimate goal of several theoretical approaches referenced here, developing this idea is not the goal sought here. Rather, I am addressing the addition of ethics and consistency in responses to mass humanitarian crises and atrocities. This paper is not intended to cast other governments or delineation of economies or political systems in terms of “good” and “evil.” It is not intended to promote or devalue any alliance with any other government along these lines, nor do I advocate forcible “regime change” from authoritarian to democratic.

## THE CRISIS IN DARFUR: 2003-PRESENT

The crisis in Darfur began to unfold as the Sudanese North-South Peace Agreement was coming to a close. The agreement was a momentous feat, bringing a 21-year long civil war to an end. Darfurians had appealed to the Sudanese government to include their concerns in the peace talks. These requests were ignored. Citizens in the Darfur region of Sudan were deliberately excluded from the talks and shortchanged by the negotiations and the power and wealth-sharing agreements that were arranged. This was compounded by the Sudanese government’s historic neglect of investment in Darfurian roads, schools, hospitals, communications facilities, and other hard and soft infrastructure in the region. Two rebel groups - the Justice and Equality Movement and the Sudan Liberation Movement - responded to the discrimination by calling for rebellion against the Government of Sudan (GoS).<sup>2</sup>

The Sudanese government responded to the rebellion by cracking down with disproportionate force against rebels and civilians in Darfur. The GoS also recruited militia groups in the region to raid villages and conduct massive killing sprees in Darfur. These militia groups came to be known as the “Janjaweed,” which literally means “evil horsemen.” The results of this four year catastrophe are as follows: 2.5 million Darfurian refugees and internally displaced persons; over 300,000 Darfurians killed or dead from related causes, a majority of whom are Sudanese citizens; thousands of abductions and rapes; around 1,000 villages burned to the ground; millions of livestock stolen; and a virulent spread of disease and malnutrition throughout the region. Attacks include violent and brutal crimes against humanity, including rapes of pregnant women, murder of male and female civilians of all ages, gang-rapes of women, other forms of sexual violence against men and women, abduction of children, and killing of infants. Rebel troops and government protestors face even worse torture and violence.

A wide body of evidence has emerged - much of which has been compiled by the U.S. Department of State, USAID, and the United Nations - proving that the Janjaweed are indeed government backed and sponsored.<sup>3</sup> Sudanese Army and Air Force units and equipment are frequently spotted during attacks and from satellite imagery. Predictably, the Sudanese government has denied the existence of genocide and has broken established cease-fires, all the while continuing its campaign against primarily civilians in Darfur.

### The U.S. Record on Darfur

The Bush administration, in dealing with the Darfur crisis, has done something that few administrations have done when confronted with genocide, ethnic cleansing or similar

catastrophes: it has refused to claim ignorance. This action stands in contrast to U.S. government responses to the Armenian massacre in Turkey, the killing fields of Cambodia, Saddam Hussein's cleansing of the Kurds in Iraq, the Rwanda genocide, and other mass atrocities.

In September of 2004, Colin Powell called the situation in Darfur "genocide" after reviewing a report from a U.S.-sponsored investigation. President Bush did the same in a speech to the United Nations soon thereafter.<sup>4</sup> These were important first steps for taking positive action to deescalate the crisis in Sudan. By calling what is happening by its proper name – genocide – the administration and Congress have increased awareness of the issue throughout the U.S. and the world.

The U.S. also allowed 51 members of the Sudanese government and Janjaweed militias to be referred to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in April 2005.<sup>5</sup> This was an historic precedent and weighty gesture given the U.S.'s typical stance of disregard toward the ICC – disregard based on a fear of U.S. sovereignty being encroached upon.

The U.S. catalyzed negotiations that produced the Darfur Peace Agreement in May of 2006. Though this was a positive step displaying U.S. concern and involvement, the peace agreement was deeply flawed. The agreement excluded one of the two main rebel groups and resulted in the rebel groups turning against each other, which the Sudanese government was only too glad to witness.

On April 18, 2007, after visiting a new photographic exhibit in at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., President Bush remarked that he "saw an exhibit that puts faces on the millions of men, women, and children who have been killed or driven into the desert...No one who sees these pictures can doubt that genocide is the only word for what is happening in Darfur - and that we have a moral obligation to stop it."<sup>6</sup>

Despite these positive steps, the United States government response to the Darfur genocide is insufficient. Diplomatic efforts with and current sanctions placed on the GoS have proven ineffective. The genocide has lasted four years and I argue that, on the grounds of both moral and self-interested rationale, the U.S. has an obligation to make reasonable sacrifices to bring an end to the atrocities.

#### What the U.S. Should Do in Darfur

U.S. policymakers have several options for action in the Darfur crisis. These include diplomatic processes (including diplomatic pressure on China to divest from Sudan) economic sanctions, arms embargoes, support of a NATO, UN or African Union (AU) peacekeeping force, and sending in U.S. troops. I will explore here the options of a NATO force, an AU force, and diplomatic pressure of China.<sup>7</sup>

One policy option the U.S. could choose to pursue is promoting NATO involvement in Darfur. This would decrease the chance that U.S. troops would be sent to Sudan and perhaps make the political will needed to support the mission more enduring. The counterargument to this policy proposal, as articulated by Christopher Preble of the Cato Institute, is that directing NATO troops toward a mission in Darfur will decrease the focus on NATO's mission in Afghanistan. This could become a "distraction" that threatens the security of NATO member nations and the world at large, according to Preble.<sup>8</sup>

Instead of NATO or U.S. troops, Preble asserts that a fortified African Union force is the only viable way that peace will be achieved and maintained in Sudan. Many share this perspective with him. There is no doubt that using regional organizations and forces to bring an end to regional conflicts or crises is the ideal. In this case, the solution would come from within, and references to a reinvigorated imperialism are avoided. The African Union's "Constitutive Act" declares "the right of the Union to intervene in a member state pursuant to a decision of the assembly [where all member states are represented] in respect of grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity."<sup>9</sup> The problem is that the African Union is severely under-funded, under-staffed and under-supported. The only way an African Union force can succeed is through monetary assistance and military and communications equipment from the developed world.

Most recently, multilateral international movement has become the most viable possibility for ending the genocide in Darfur. Global support exists for a mixed intervention force of African Union troops, UN peacekeepers, and regional police forces.<sup>10</sup> The United States has the option to provide resources and support or to stall, hide behind empty rhetoric and ignore the situation in Darfur – much as it did during the 1994 Rwandan genocide that cost the lives of 800,000 people in a 100-day massacre.

The United States must also place diplomatic pressure on China to divest from Sudan. China has developed increasing economic ties with Sudan in the past several years, in part due to Sudan's oil resources and China's ability to provide weapons to the Sudanese government in exchange. This contributes to the continued strength of the regime and its ability to conduct a genocidal war against rebel troops and civilians in Darfur.<sup>11</sup> Some pressure has been put on China to divest, but this has primarily come from the European Union. The U.S. of course fears putting a damper on its prosperous economic relationship with China, often precluding any U.S. critique of Chinese policies, but this is an extreme case and this should indeed be done.

After examination of what the U.S. should do to end the atrocities in Darfur, the question of peace maintenance arises. This is a complex question, with hints of imperialism to those already skeptical of American power and overreach in the world today. Nonetheless, author and philosopher Michael Walzer does suggest the possibility of trusteeships and protectorates after a genocidal government has been deposed or begun to decompose.<sup>12</sup> A trusteeship takes place when the intervening country essentially sets up shop in the nation, ruling it directly. This option has much heavier overtures to colonization and risks lowered support from the citizens of the nation in crisis, particularly if the ruling nation is the United States or a former colonial power. A protectorate, on the other hand, involves bringing a local group or collection of groups to power to keep the atrocities from resuming. In the case of Darfur, this might be an option as the African Union (with the support of the U.S., UN and other relevant parties and nations) might be able to broker an arrangement in which power is distributed more equitably.

### Why the U.S. Should Care about Darfur in the First Place: The Case for Intervention

There are several theoretical and practical reasons why the U.S. should intervene to stop the atrocities in Darfur or any other place they may occur. This section will address arguments against intervention and interest and value-based rationale in support of humanitarian

intervention.

One common argument against intervention by one nation in another nation's internal affairs is the principle of non-intervention, which has been a foundational aspect of international law since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. David Chandler, in *From Kosovo to Kabul and Beyond*, makes the argument that if this principle of non-intervention is repeatedly broken, the order of the state system will erode as respect for sovereignty decreases.<sup>13</sup>

However, a new consensus is emerging (albeit a limited consensus at this point) that "sovereignty is not absolute and that citizens as well as governments have rights" and that "the act of genocide is proof that the state has failed in its duty to its citizens...it should, as a result, forfeit some or all of its sovereignty."<sup>14</sup> That is, when state-sanctioned atrocities occur against a state's own citizens, that state loses its claim to sovereignty, leaving the door open for humanitarian intervention, militarily or otherwise. This also encapsulates the growing notion that human security, not only state security, is an important consideration in foreign policymaking as well as domestic policymaking.

Furthermore, humanitarian interventions are not a free-for-all, they are not "justified for the sake of democracy or free enterprise or economic justice or voluntary association or any other of the social practices and arrangements that we might hope for or even call for in other people's countries...their aim is...to put a stop to actions that... 'shock the conscience' of humankind."<sup>15</sup> Humanitarian interventions clearly should not be motivated by covert purposes or to achieve a strategic goal for the intervening nation, and interventionist policies must certainly be qualified.<sup>16</sup> But this does not mean that they should not occur under certain circumstances. Walzer points out that "yes, the norm is not to intervene in other people's countries; the norm is self-determination. But not for these people, the victims of tyranny, ideological zeal, ethnic hatred, who are not determining anything for themselves, who urgently need help from outside."<sup>17</sup> The principle of sovereignty and non-intervention loses its force and theoretical foundation in the face of genocide and similar atrocities.

The principle of sovereignty as limiting intervention can be countered by a final redefinition of sovereignty. Anne Marie-Slaughter calls this redefinition "sovereignty as responsibility," in which an important aspect of sovereignty becomes a nation's ability to uphold its duties to its citizens.<sup>18</sup> This may include very basic human rights, such as the right to life, but the major tenet is simply a "responsibility to protect." Even with this very basic definition, it is clear that the Sudanese government has shown remarkable inability to uphold its duty to a part of its citizenry. On these grounds, it has also sacrificed its sovereignty, at least in part.

Theorists focusing on great power politics tend to downplay the importance of Africa in the international system except when African countries enter into the interests of the great powers. The United States (and other developed countries) typically does not include African well-being as part of its "national interest." This has contributed to a general neglect of humanitarian and health crises on the continent, and this neglect has fed the Sudanese government's ability to continue its ethnic cleaning campaign without major opposition.

The Independent Task Force on U.S. Policy toward Africa, organized by the Council on Foreign Relations, appropriately underscores the nearsightedness of such a narrowly defined "national interest." The task force points out that

By the end of the decade, sub-Saharan Africa is likely to become as important a source of

U.S. energy imports as the Middle East...Africa is also one of the battlegrounds in the fight against terrorism. Osama bin Laden based his operations in Sudan before setting up shop in Afghanistan...Mass killings in the Darfur region of Sudan and the persistence of conflict on the continent challenge the world's will to spotlight, prevent, and stop atrocities. Africa is also the epicenter of the world's most serious health pandemic, HIV/AIDS.<sup>19</sup>

Thus it is clear that a more broadly-defined national interest will necessitate attention toward Darfur and similar crises.

Furthermore, a focused and narrow national interest is in danger of missing an important point. The U.S. national interest is consistently shifting, and has necessarily shifted since the end of the Cold War. During the Cold War era, resources and policymakers focused on the potential for great power war.<sup>20</sup> Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the major problems and foci have instead become ethnic, religious, and civil wars and conflicts. This shift from a bipolar to a unipolar world necessitates a new approach for creating a stable international system. Thus, U.S. resources should be allocated to deal with this new system in a new way.

Scholars and policymakers who propose that international stability is not relevant to U.S. national interests misunderstand the very nature of a globalized world. A globalized world, by definition, is one that entails aggregated systems of all types: economic, communications, transportation, ecological, and others. International stability levels have the potential to feed in to each one of these systems, thereby affecting American quality of life either positively or negatively (albeit to varying degrees). Genocide and similar atrocities have historically shown to have destabilizing effects. Because of globalization, this may have an (indirect or direct) negative effect on the American national interest.

In the Darfur genocide, for instance, millions of refugees have fled over the Sudanese-Chadian border into Chad, contributing to higher monetary and resource costs for the already poor government of Chad. The humanitarian crisis that has ensued in both Chad and Sudan divert resources from important areas in need of funding such as education, the fight against the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and economic development. In a world of independent nations, U.S. policymakers could write this off as irrelevant to the national interest. But in a globalized world, airplanes cross borders thousands of times a day, and the U.S. imports goods and resources from hundreds of nations, and nuclear weapons can be launched from one continent and hit another. Though these impacts might be irrelevant in the Darfur genocide, they might become far more relevant in a future genocide in a more strategically-relevant location. Ideas and products flow freely in this age, and it is certainly in the U.S. national interest to prevent the spread of the instability caused by genocide in our globalized world.

What makes an activist approach when faced with genocide or similar events far more compelling is the argument that action is not only consistent with U.S. *interests* but also with U.S. *values*. Values are important because, in a multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-ethnic country such as the United States, they are precisely what bring American citizens together as a nation. The values upheld in the U.S. Declaration of Independence and Constitution are the glue that gives American people a shared identity. They are thus of immense weight in U.S. survival as a nation. Our values should be upheld consistently both in domestic and foreign policy. An inconsistent application of our values in the broadest sense will lead to an erosion of the strength of the United States as a common nation as values are indeed the foundation.

The Genocide Convention, which was drafted in 1948 and ratified by the U.S. by President Reagan in 1988 says that the U.S. (and all member states) commit to *prevent and punish genocide*. In the case of Sudan, President Bush, high-ranking cabinet officials and U.S. Senators have all explicitly referred to the crisis in Darfur as “genocide.” This therefore carries with it in an obligation to act.

The United States has been one of the most ardent promoters of global “human rights” since WWII, having led the passage of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. It has been the driving force behind the concept of fundamental and global human rights. U.S. leaders travel to other countries on a regular basis and invoke the importance of democracy and human rights in high-level diplomatic meetings. The U.S. Congress frequently forces countries to achieve “Human Rights Certification” before American funding or aid can flow to that country. Despite these actions, the U.S. consistently fails to ratify treaties that it gets passed, refusing to be subject to international law in any form.<sup>21</sup> This gap between (professed) belief and action is one that undermines far more than the credibility of the U.S. in the world. It also decreases the ability of U.S. to promote security through other countries’ subscription to important treaties like the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Other nations have far less of an impetus to participate in organizations and treaties or to subjugate their own power or sovereignty to an outside body when the global hegemon and alleged “leader” refuses to do so itself. This has far-reaching implications. As other countries observe the U.S. disregard for international norms and lack of consequences, they will have an incentive to flout those norms themselves, which could impact situations from nuclear weapons inspections in Iran to a potential UN-led peace process for Israel and Palestine.

One argument for a foreign policy that incorporates a set of ethical standards that are applied consistently is that they strengthen U.S. initiatives in all areas. The United States will generally be more successful in international initiatives to achieve whatever goals it lays out if countries are in support of, rather than opposed to, the U.S. This idea works in tandem with the idea that “perceived hypocrisy is particularly corrosive of power that is based on proclaimed values. Those who scorn or despise us for hypocrisy are less likely to want to help us achieve our policy objectives.”<sup>22</sup> Supporting even this minimalist version of human rights consistently – the right to have life – is an action the U.S. can take to gain favor and support in the world, and be seen as a state that uses its force to protect the public good in dire circumstances.

When the United States refuses to act on its anti-genocide rhetoric, it betrays a crucial value and a crucial interest: it betrays our belief in human rights (including the foundational belief in a right to life) and it betrays our abidance by international norms, which has long-term implications for the security and power of the United States.

## CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

U.S. leaders and policymakers have frequently decried genocides after they occur. After the massacre of one million Armenians in Turkey in the early 1900s, then-U.S. Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, Sr. departed for the U.S., stating that “my failure to stop the destructions of the Armenians had made Turkey for me a place of horror – I had reached the end of my resources.”<sup>23</sup> When the Genocide Convention was up for a vote in the U.S. Senate in 1986,

Senator Dole declared, “We have waited long enough...as a nation which enshrines human dignity and freedom...we must correct our anomalous position on this basic rights issue.”<sup>24</sup> President Clinton called his inaction in Rwanda the worst failure and biggest regret of his presidency. And current President Bush has repeatedly claimed that genocide will not be allowed to occur on his watch. U.S. leaders throughout the 20th and into the 21st century have called for an end to genocide and similar crimes, and found themselves ashamed when they ignored what was happening. Yet the rhetoric of these and other leaders consistently fails to provoke meaningful action to derail the crisis.

There are innumerable barriers to creating a consistent policy for dealing with genocide and similar crises, if only for the fact that each one is innately different. However, if national leaders are willing to match their rhetoric toward genocide with action and policy measures, it can be done. Any developed policy plan will be necessarily vague to account for differences in the situation at hand. The President should issue a Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) making formal the idea that the United States will not allow another Rwanda or Darfur to unfold without attention and movement on its part. This should also include the idea that the term “genocide” does not have to be invoked before action is taken, as the word is not often used until thousands are already dead.<sup>25</sup> The State Department should also develop a plan for atrocity prevention and work with the UN Security Council to establish norms and rules for humanitarian intervention in the case of genocide.<sup>26</sup>

The action proposed for the U.S. Government toward Darfur provides a normative framework that can be used when dealing with similar situations in the future. To summarize, this involves maintaining an acute awareness of genocides and similar atrocities around the world at all times (this is not difficult for the U.S. Government – this is already being done, albeit not publicly); using diplomatic measures, political pressure and economic sanctions and other economic tools to achieve the desired result (cessation of the atrocities); logistical, financial, and resource support for regional organizations and forces able to intervene militarily, and finally, U.S. military intervention. The United States should also support International Criminal Court procedures for the prosecution of Sudanese officials and Janjaweed leadership who have incited and perpetuated the genocide. This is a policy of gradual escalation toward the government or group committing the genocide, and each step should be used in succession.<sup>27</sup> However, this should not understate the importance of preventive diplomacy and measures in every case.

I do believe it is possible, and important, for rhetoric to match action. The world is witnessing terrible atrocities in Darfur and leaders have named this genocide. The United States has an ethical obligation to act for the preservation of life in Sudan due to the values it holds domestically and the basic human rights it reinforces internationally. Key interests are also at stake. U.S. national leadership must recognize that adherence to international norms play an important role in power-maintenance in the long-run, and this is applicable with the Genocide Convention as much as anything.

#### Notes:

1. Thus, it should be clear that I am not referencing more low-intensity (albeit despicable) human rights abuses that arise from political oppression, gender discrimination,

- authoritarian regime types, et al.
2. Power, Samantha. 2004. "Dying in Darfur: Can the Ethnic Cleansing in Sudan be Stopped?" *The New Yorker Magazine*: New York.
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  4. Straus, Scott. 2005. "Darfur and the Genocide Debate." *Foreign Affairs*. Council on Foreign Relations.
  5. Aslam, Abid. 4/8/05. "On Anniversary of Rwanda Genocide, Activists Demand Action on Darfur." *WorldRevolution.org*. [http://www.worldrevolution.org/article/182<sup>9</sup>
  6. Office of the Press Secretary, The White House. 4/16/07. "President Bush Visits the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum." [http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/04/20070418.html]
  7. I purposely exclude a discussion of a U.S. peacekeeping force, given the current military overstretch in place due to campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. This subject warrants its own examination of misallocation of U.S. resources and the long-term consequences of this misallocation.
  8. Preble, Christopher. 2006. "Let the African Union Intervene in Darfur." *CATO Institute*: Washington, D.C. [http://www.cato.org/pub\_display.php?pub\_id=635<sup>3</sup>
  9. Haass, Richard. 2005. *The Opportunity*. Public Affairs: New York: 50.
  10. Sarrar, Salah. 4/29/07. "U.S. Sees Progress on Darfur solution, Peacekeeping." *Reuters AlertNet*: Tripoli.
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  20. Layne, Christopher. 2006. *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present*. Cornell University Press: New York: 203.
  21. Ignatieff, Michael: ed. 2005. *American Exceptionalism and Human Rights*. Princeton University Press: New Jersey.
  22. Nye, Joseph. 2004. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. Public Affairs: New York.
  23. Morgenthau, Henry. *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*. Taderon Press: 2000: 385.

24. *Congressional Record*, 99<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 1986, 132, pt. 15: S1355.
25. Feinstein, Lee. 2007. "Darfur and Beyond: What is Needed to Prevent Mass Atrocities." Council on Foreign Relations: CSR No. 22.
26. Feinstein, Lee. 2007. "Darfur and Beyond: What is Needed to Prevent Mass Atrocities." Council on Foreign Relations: CSR No. 22.
27. "Gradual escalation" is not used militarily in this context.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**Telling the Truths: Truth Telling and Peace Building in Post-Conflict Societies.** Tristan Anne Borer, ed. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006. 328 pp.

*Telling the Truths* is a collection of essays developed out of a conference at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies of the University of Notre Dame. The book provides a novel and welcome comparative examination of truth-telling processes. The introduction by Tristan Anne Borer provides a careful and thorough overview of terms and concepts and is therefore a useful resource for students and neophytes. Borer also addresses some of the big questions such as the politics of historical memory; who defines truth and delineates who the victims are (and are not) and what are the ramifications as hegemonic narratives emerge, potentially marginalizing other discourses, views, and experiences?

The volume essentially examines the relationship between truth-telling and peacebuilding from a variety of perspectives. Most chapters are overviews without in-depth case studies, and the lack of these is surprising. Although she correctly points out that her case is somewhat unorthodox, Shari Eppel's chapter on Zimbabwe is a welcome exception. The other chapters consist of thematic discussions such as Pable De Grieff's "Truth-telling and the Rule of Law" and Debra DeLaet's "Gender Justice." While these two topics in particular are of great interest, this reader was disappointed by the general nature of the text; the chapters generally offer more of a philosophical reflection on the subject than a hard-nosed empirical review of past and current truth-telling efforts.

The TRC of South Africa has attracted the most attention, and it is also heavily referenced in this volume. As it is a relatively well-known case, more details of other truth-telling initiatives would be desirable (a TRC has even been established in Greensboro, North Carolina to deal with violence during the civil rights movement). Juan Mendez's "The Human Right to Truth" chapter is helpful in this regard as he provides an overview of truth-telling initiatives in Latin America, bookended by a brief comparative discussion. (Readers may also wish to consult Rosalind Shaw's work on Sierra Leone and other recent publications).

While arguably a necessary feature of the academic marketplace, most edited volumes are weakened by a lack of integration. Like the vast majority of others, this volume would have been greatly strengthened by a concluding chapter drawing out some lessons from the assembled chapters. The introduction somewhat addresses this task, but a more thorough discussion would have been an excellent addition.

In summation, truth-telling will likely remain an area of great interest to both Africanist and other scholars and practitioners for some time to come. As this review was being written, the media are reporting calls for a TRC in Kenya to address the post-election violence of 2008. *Telling the Truths* is a worthy or even, given the embryonic state of this literature, necessary

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v10/v10i1reviews.pdf>

addition to the collections of scholars specializing in peacebuilding, truth-telling, and reconciliation. The introduction would be invaluable for advanced classes on the latter two subjects. As the introduction of *Telling the Truths* underlines, much work must still be done on these topics, and one hopes that further works will soon appear. In the meantime, this volume provides an important contribution, and it may have a significant impact on the evolution of this literature.

Mark Davidheiser

*Nova Southeastern University*

**Darfur: The Ambiguous Genocide. Gérard Prunier. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2007. 236 pp.**

Gérard Prunier is a research professor at the Centre National des Recherches Scientifiques at the University of Paris and Director of the Centre français des études éthiopiennes in Addis Ababa. The first edition of his *Darfur, the ambiguous genocide* was published by Cornell University Press in 2005. Unfortunately, the Darfur deadlock remains. Two years after the initial publishing of the book, millions of Darfurians continue to live in a precarious situation, threat of famine still lurks behind each corner and the quasi genocidal violence continues, allowing Prunier to publish a revised and updated edition of his book. It is a valuable account of history that places the situation in Darfur in a broader economical and political, African context.

As written on its first page, this book aims at describing and understanding the massive political, security and humanitarian crisis which has enveloped Darfur since February 2003.

The introductory chapter does not intend to give a detailed description of the region's geography, history or ethnography, but wants to provide us with a welcome overview to enable the non-specialist reader to grasp the context in which the crisis has developed. Only those elements necessary to announce and explain later developments, were singled out. Prunier succeeds in unravelling the complex mosaic of tribes and clears up the fog while correcting existing inaccuracies with regard to the fragile situation and complex economical and political influences are at the heart of the atrocities in Darfur. Therefore he provides a long-awaited, eye-opening work. The smart use of references to and comparisons with known European history, lighten the text. Nevertheless, this chapter requires the undivided attention and concentration from the reader, due to the complex terminology and the use of Arabic wording. Fear of oversimplification sometimes leads the author into a detailed narrative. It might make this book an unexpectedly difficult work, which possibly discourages the audience.

The introduction lays the vital foundations. In the build up to the start of the 2003 atrocities, attention is drawn to the socio-political climate at the time. The young democracy never was of the best health, stirring up feelings of deprivation, frustration caused by benign neglect externalised through for instance a lack of education and to little medical facilities. The socio-economic underdevelopment was and still is the seed for further conflict. The pressure of demographic growth due to the degrading ecological situation and the starting desertification worked as an extra fertiliser.

The following Libyan presence in the area, acted like acid on the open socio-economic wounds which started to be reinterpreted in increasingly ethnic and racial terms. It acted as the real trigger for the conflict and it did not take long before the situation reached the point of utter confusion. In the meantime, the international community stayed willfully blind. Even though Darfur was sinking to a point of no return, it never succeeded in grasping the international attention. The situation got unbearable for humanitarian aid organisations. "African solutions to African problems" is indeed a polite way to say that we aren't interested.

In this revised and updated edition, the 2005-conclusion is replaced by a new chapter, entitled "Darfur agonists," written during the summer of 2006, eighteen months after the research and writing for the first edition was completed. Starting with the United Nations Security Council resolutions as a turning point in the position of the international community, Prunier discusses their political implications, and the complex relationship between the referral to the ICC and the idea of setting up a Special Tribunal on Darfur. In the mean time, the African Union Mission in Sudan was faced with a harrowing situation on the ground, there being no "peace to keep," on top of a lack of cash, men, equipment and a clear mandate. Different political ambitions, expanding political hurdles and conflicting geopolitical agendas combined with the worsening situation in Chad and the collapse of agricultural production in Sudan, made the road to peace even more bumpy than it already was. The bitter and cynical narrative makes no attempt in hiding Prunier's anger and disappointment. At times he is a little too harsh and portrays the international community as naïve and incompetent even though there is a lot more to it. Statements are not always finely tuned.

It must be said that the book loses some of its power due to a number of flaws and inaccuracies. Even though most of the grammatical and spelling mistakes in the first edition have been corrected, some still remain. Additionally, the word divisions at the end of the line are often incorrect. Hyphenations are placed in the most bizarre places. Funny in the beginning, distracting after a while. Unfortunately the sentence that 'Even the usually well-informed advocacy NGO Justice Africa not mention Darfur in its October 2003 Monthly brief' is still there, even though reviewers of the first edition already noticed its incorrectness. The indignation caused by that sentence makes interested readers turn to Google to double check. The [brief](#) does in fact – though very briefly and maybe a bit disrespectfully – state that "The Darfur conflict continues to cause ripples more widely." The situation is dealt with in four rather short paragraphs. Whereas some sources are treated inaccurately, an impressively large number and wide variety of sources are brought together in this short book. Interviews and field information have a strong added value and give a crucial insight, complementing the literature overview.

Prunier provides us with a lot of food for reflection, certainly a contribution to the field and a practical source of reference for students interested in the historical, socio-economic and political roots of the ambiguous genocide in Darfur.

Wendy De Bondt  
*Ghent University, Belgium*

**Theatres of Struggle and the End of Apartheid. Belinda Bozzoli. Athens, OH : Ohio University Press, 2004. 208 pp.**

*Theatres of Struggle and the End of Apartheid* depicts the Alexandra Rebellion of 1986 as analyzed through various themes from literature on collective action and social movements, as well as those on identity and space. With these, Bozzoli frames the rebellion and its aftermath as a drama played out in the township, and although she uses just one case study, it is general enough to represent what was occurring in many of the townships during that time. She draws upon thousands of archived interviews with the actors involved to create a rich and cohesive story that one cannot help but think sets the stage for the horrendously high rate of violence experienced in the country today.

It is the youth who are the crux of this story, as they fight against the complacency of previous generations to overthrow apartheid in any way possible, and in the case of Alex, it is often a violent one. Ironically, these youth were educated enough under apartheid to know just how bad it was, and decided to follow in the steps of such fighters as Mandela, Tambo, Slovo, Mbeki, to get out of it. Some of the more important tactics depicted here include the almost impenetrable male social networks of bonding on the streets, 'comrade' activities of boycotts and strikes to render the township ungovernable, and the sheer violence in acts such as torture, public brutality and necklacing against *impipis* (informers). At one point the youth rival the police in dishing out punishments and organizing people's courts, which draw on the historicity of *kgotlas*, albeit led not by elders but by increasingly hostile youth themselves.

For Bozzoli's script, space is a key issue. The township represents the setting from which individuals need liberation, and how it is theirs to transform; they — the 'conveyors of a just cause' — are to free the adults from their own oppression. Audiences and actors play out scripts of revolution, justice, and transformation that pit nationalistic comrades against the immoral evils of apartheid. For many perpetrators, it matters not that there are times when the innocent inadvertently become entangled in the violence, for the importance lies in the evolving identity of the township and its inhabitants as 'free' in what is to become the new and improved South Africa.

'Nationalism' overtakes violence as the master frame, as is evidenced in the post-rebellion years as memories are re-constructed. The recollections of the most heinous of actions evolve into those by some 'other,' thus romanticizing the nationalist movement by spotlighting the repression and casting the brutal acts to the wings. In the TRC stories to emerge, Alex plays the role of victim and the stories of individual struggles transform into meanings that go beyond the private sphere. Thus, a new public sphere has been constructed that allows township residents to share in each other's stories and create a collective township mentality.

Bozzoli fully fleshes out the theatre theme in Chapter 9 (*Nationalism and Theatricality*), and she does a good job of portraying funerals as political street theatre, defining the framing as that of group suffering and persecution, and illustrating the rules of the game regarding discipline and interpretation of events. Yet the careful reader may find herself wishing these themes had emerged earlier in the book with as much depth as they do here.

Perhaps the greatest question the book raises, and leaves inadequately answered, is how these events have shaped the current extreme rates of violence in South Africa today. To the

author's credit, she acknowledges that this is not the aim of the book, as it is historical rather than predictive, but with the brief references she makes at various points, she cannot help but leave the reader wanting more. The youth and their activities are discussed in the final chapter as a source of great pride as well as great shame for the township regarding "our heritage to our children: The knowledge of how to die, and how to kill" (p. 276). This statement is chillingly prescient given that it was made by an interviewee over twenty years ago. Disaffection and displacement continued past the rebellions and bubbled to the surface in violent acts by the late 1990s: "A culture of criminality, rooted in the very shattering of bonds that took place under high apartheid, emerged" and is currently sustained much of the time through peer pressure (p. 281).

Thus the book shows us in part *how* township rebellions have set the precedent for violence today, but we don't fully understand *why* this has carried over and remained so strongly embedded. This is not the goal of the book, however, and thus it has no option but to leave this theme until the last chapter, even if it comes across as too little too late. *Theatres of Struggle and the End of Apartheid* does, however, successfully accomplish its goal of depicting the Alexandra Rebellion of 1986 as a type of political theatre in the streets, and it also accomplishes the task of raising questions quite relevant today to the region concerning relationships between nationalism and civic-ness, space and struggle, violence and crime, and elder and youth identities.

Kenly Greer Fenio  
*University of Florida*

**Reconstructing the Nation in Africa: The Politics of Nationalism in Ghana. Michael Amoah. London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007. 248 pp.**

In *Reconstructing the Nation in Africa*, author Michael Amoah examines the extent to which theories and debates on nationalism formed in eighteenth-century Europe and America are relevant to present day Africa. Amoah challenges the Eurocentric use of the late 18th century France as the threshold for the emergence of nationalism. He proposes that the term nation as defined by modernists could be applied to African entities which pre-date the French Revolution. The Ashante nation emerged in 1701 and the Fante nation even earlier.

Amoah argues that existing theoretical constructs are relatively successful in categorizing macro, but not micro expressions of nationalism as is generally the case in Africa's multinational states. He is critical of ethno-nationalism being presented as irrational or counter to patriotism except in nation-states. The book's brief introduction posits that a sense of nationhood can deteriorate or be lost over time and that in many African states nationhood was based on anti-colonialism and was strongest just after independence. Due to poor economic conditions, ethno-nationalism and "politics of the belly" have characterized much of post-independence Africa (p. 6). People quite rationally vote along ethnic lines (what Amoah terms rationalization of ethno-nationalism) or for ethnic groups viewed as good for the entire country (what Amoah terms figuration or civic nationalism). Whereas ethno-nationalism enhances

patriotism in nation-states, it undermines it in multi-ethnic states, if ethno-nationalism and civic nationalism are not aligned.

To learn whether civic nationalism or patriotism among urbanites is separate from ethno-nationalism Amoah carries his laptop to markets, factories, malls, schools, and restaurants to log survey responses and undertake unstructured interviews. He examines voting in Ghana's 2000 presidential elections as a form of nationalism; one which is particularly complex in urban areas and uses Tema as his study site because it is the most ethnically diverse of Ghana's larger cities.

Somewhat unconventionally, Amoah's methodological approach and field research are described quite late in his book, much of which is devoted to a review of the literature on Ghana in support of the author's theory that Ghana's origin derives from a federation of native states rather than being rooted in modernity. Amoah uses place names in multiple languages as evidence of place of origin or ancestry and argues that in virtually all but portions of the Volta region, modern Ghanaians trace their origins to Guan people who migrated from the old Ghana Empire, which had its capital, Ghannah, near present-day Timbuktu in Mali. Amoah maintains that people of common ancestry, but with somewhat different ethnic identities (Ashanti, Bono, Gonja) would have emerged as a nation "had there not been colonial intervention" (p. 70).

Amoah also believes that the Ewe of the Volta region would have emerged as a nation had it not been for colonial intervention and the partition of Ewe lands between the British and French. The emergence of an Ewe nation pre-partition is not difficult to imagine. The Ewe retain relatively strong ties even across international boundaries as evinced by the rapid absorption of Ewe Togolese refugees into Ewe homes in Ghana in recent decades.

Amoah's case for the emergence of a Ghanaian nation based on common heritage across Guan ancestry lines relies heavily on the work of Eva Meyerowitz. Meyerowitz's work, as Amoah admits, has been criticized by leading Africanists, including Jan Vansina, who described Meyerowitz as displaying a "'lack of critical judgment' in the 'handling of her sources'" (p. 93). Amoah is so convinced by the accuracy of Meyerowitz's work that he details potential inaccuracies in the works of her critics and positively presents authors who agree with her. Whereas Amoah's research does unearth some intricacies related to Ghana's electoral process, such as the role of ethnicity not only in who people vote for, but also who they would refuse to support, and that women are more likely to disclose political preferences to friends rather than spouses, he seems too willing to present only those facts which support his Guan ancestry hypothesis. Thus, his belief that his "book successfully traces the ethno-geographic origins of all nationalities in modern Ghana, fills the gaps, completes the jigsaw and explains the evolution of the phenomena" is a bit difficult to believe (p. 5). He dismisses Ashante-Ewe rivalries as post-colonial in origin and asserts that Ghana's relative political and economic stability can be attributed to its Guan ancestry and emergence of an Akan identity for much of its population.

Amoah finds that urbanites in Ghana do not lose their ethno-nationalism and tend to vote along ethnic lines even though they simultaneously recognize that tribalism undermines the state. He suggests that urbanites are only "partially detribalized" and that groups which believe they have been discriminated against, such as the Ewe and the Asante, are most likely to vote along ethnic lines or refuse to vote for a candidate based on the candidate's ethnicity (p. 132). The author notes Northerners have come to "see themselves as belonging to a common identity

or ‘brotherhood’” due to their common Islamic traditions and relative economic and educational depravity and that this regional identity further impacts voting patterns in Ghana (p. 70). Specifically, that the vice presidential position is typically slotted for Northern candidates in order to get ethno-nationalist based votes — which Amoah presents as another example of tribalism. He continues to argue that Northerners are well aware of this fact and “manipulate their ethnonational identity to their political advantage” in order to remain in the political sphere (p. 120). Amoah believes that Ghana will remain a democracy, but questions whether a revitalization of nationalism and patriotism is possible in modern African states and suggests that multinational states may not be viable in Africa.

*Restructuring the Nation in Africa* has several tables, but no maps, which could make it somewhat difficult to follow for general readers or even Africanists unfamiliar with Ghana. The two-page conclusion makes for a rather abrupt ending in which a more detailed recap of his philosophies could have helped the reader make sense of his arguments, and help transition more smoothly into his cursory introduction to global warming, Ghana’s diaspora, the African Union and other topics tangentially related to book’s main themes.

Amoah presents the politics behind the concept of nationalism akin to Dava Sobel’s *Longitude* which exposes the politics behind the placement of the Prime Meridian. *Restructuring the Nation in Africa* should make for interesting debates in upper-level undergraduate and graduate courses in International Studies, African history and politics.

Heidi G. Frontani and Kristine Silvestri  
Elon University

**Gallery Bundu: A Story about an African Past. Paul Stoller. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005. 176 pp.**

The Peace Corps, I was once told, has a matrimonial agency quality to it. It is about helping, and occasionally, espousing third-worlders. It is about roughing it up and sowing one’s wild oats. David Lyons, a rather self-absorbed, inconsequential type, does just that (besides dodging conscription to Vietnam, this being 1969): no marriage, however, comes from his encounters with Nigerien women, but a child, whose elusive quest makes up the main drive of an otherwise spectacularly bland story. Paul Stoller’s *Gallery Bundu* is a confessional novel that never lives up to the demanding criteria of that sub-genre, and, more sadly, fails to build on other possible strengths – like the exoticness of the setting (for Western readers) or the potentials for making a political point under the pretext of telling a story.

The novel takes place mostly in Niger, at various points in time between 1971 and today, following the comings and goings of Lyons between New York, Niamey (Niger’s capital) and Tillaberi (the small town north of Niamey where he serves as a Peace Corps volunteer). This has a slightly perverse tantalizing dimension: Lyons, himself as uninteresting as an un-carved piece of wood (the *bundu* in the title means, in Songhay, “wood”, as in carved wood art work), meets at several junctures fascinating characters, whom one would rather follow instead of sticking

with him, and he chances upon fascinating possibilities – for instance learning the art of seeing in the future, for which a Tillaberi elder told him he has a gift – which are not further pursued.

Nor does one feel that these threads could have been powered by Stoller's writing style. Supposedly, this is Lyons telling his story over tea to West African business partners in the African art shop he runs with his wife in New York, and although the style is written, not oral, it certainly has the endearing but thoroughly bleached quality of a fireside chat conducted by a scrupulously liberal American academic. This, of course, reminds us that Stoller himself is an anthropologist who lived as a Peace Corps in Niger, in the same locales visited by Lyons (some of the people portrayed here are adapted from his real life account of his experience in Niger's Songhay country, *In Sorcery's Shadow*.) Although Stoller's own story is very different from Lyons', and distinctively more interesting, he certainly endows him with his anthropological concern for minutely describing objects, events and scenes, in extensive passages whose only discernible relevance is to showcase and display expertise and attitudes.

To my surprise, Stoller does not eschew the trap of making of Africa and Africans a backdrop to the lives of a circle of Western agents – mostly French and American – although this is not done in a demeaning way. In fact, it is precisely the sense of respect with which the Nigeriens – and a family of Senegalese traders – are depicted that greatly participates in a stylization which, ultimately, makes them lifeless. The backdrop is usually steeped in misery and hospitality, the two flashing points of decent Africa nowadays: dazed donkeys and maimed beggars abound, as well as folks who force on you endless meals and welcome you with ecstatic clamors. It is marred by a few inaccuracies and anachronisms that would strike the admittedly few potential readers of this novel with knowledge of this area of West Africa, as definite blots: I doubt that children in Abidjan would run up to White men, crying "Toubab! Toubab!" This is more likely to happen in Senegal (where "Toubab" means White person). Describing the past of Zainabou, the beautiful woman with whom Lyons will have a son, Stoller shows her, in the 1960s, dreaming of becoming a student at the University of Niamey which was not founded until 1971.

Descriptions of life in Niamey in general are impervious to the many political and economic changes that transformed the place and its inhabitants over thirty years: but there is in fact no real sense of what is happening in the country outside of Lyons' small circle and his modest problems of growing up awkwardly and belatedly. Even this is not taken up as substantially as might lead us to think of Lyons' story as a kind of Bildungsroman. He doesn't have the internal meat and flesh that would make of his confrontations with the intense issues making up his story – his consorting as a White Westerner with a struggling Black African woman, his sexual escapades in Tillaberi, the racism of the French development workers or, for that matter, that of Nigerien society against half-breed children – life-shaping experience. Lyons, of course, meets his child at the end of the book – when, at least Nigerien readers, would read with a mix of embarrassment and incredulity the rage directed at him by the boy for having left him, a half-breed, in a society which allegedly hates half-breed. This part of the encounter has two conspicuous flaws: no Nigerien, or African-educated child would speak in such a direct, blaming manner to a parent; and inasmuch as it is true that Nigeriens would hate half-breed children (which I find by experience an extreme conception of the author), it is surprising that race-conscious France would fare better on this account: "You have no idea what

it's like to grow up a bastard *baturé* in Niger. You never fit in. The kids call you a half-breed, and the adults keep you away from their children [that is simply not true: to wit, there is not even a word for "half-breed" in Niger, apart from the French "*métis*", which is in fact indicative of an ambiguously superior social position inherited from colonial times]... In France I'm free." Whatever his individual experience of such matters, Stoller cannot be actually thinking that.

What Stoller really likes is the Songhay country, and Tillabéri. The scenes set in that area are the most captivating. Even the unbearable heat is conveyed to the reader with a sense of utter discomfort that is not without poetic intensity. Stoller reaches a calm lyricism as he describes the mesas of the Songhay country, quiet contemplative hours at dusk, or meaningful relations with local folks. We acknowledge here that we are no longer with Lyons, we are with his carver. The *bundu* comes alive. Otherwise the novel is quite wooden. It is an effortless read, this said, and I'd recommend it for exposing readers to a world so generally absent from the English language.

Abdourahmane Idrissa  
*University of Florida*

**Philosophical Perspectives on Communalism and Morality in African Traditions. Polycarp Ikuenobe. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006. 329 pp.**

The text is "a logical, systematic, and normative interpretation or analysis of the idea of communalism in African cultures" (p. 2). This, according to the author, is necessitated by the dilettante attitude and misunderstanding of the communal spirit in Africa with the result that at a metaphilosophical level it is criticized as harboring pervasive religious supernaturalism, reckless anachronism, and irrational authoritarianism. The text is therefore an effort to offer a critique of such criticisms, especially the last one, though the three are closely interrelated.

According to the author, moral thought and epistemology in African cultures are, contrary to what some scholars have suggested, not innocent of the critical and analytical mode of inquiry. Though the notion of community and its relationship to individuals in African cultures differ from those in Western worldview, this does not warrant the conclusion that the community in African cultures hinders individuals from independent thinking. The author notes that in African cultures a community is not simply the aggregate sum of individuals (as is the case in the West), but where the aggregated sum is fused. However, for him, the critical point which others have failed to take cognizance of is that the African view of communalism is not one-way, but a two-way affair between community and the individual. It still gives room for individual rationality, creativity, imagination, and inventiveness to adapt various situations. "What the community does as a normative structure, epistemic context, and conceptual scheme is to circumscribe the context of relevant alternatives and counter-evidence, and to provide some basis for one's rationality, imagination, and creativity" (p. 84).

In the Western world, because of its universalist metaphilosophical view of philosophy, ethics is basically conceptualized as systematic, rigorous, and critical theories of right and wrong. The author argues that this is not accurate. According to him, some of the ideas of the

past Western thinkers that have today been reconstituted do not in themselves display the so-called essential critical, systematic, and rigorous features of philosophy. On the contrary, it is the process of reconstitution that has infused rigor and systematization to such ideas. He argues that similar reconstitution and analysis of African traditional ideas such as communalism should pass as contemporary Analytic Philosophy. The author sees his text as a contribution in this regard.

In comparing and contrasting moral education in African (traditional) communities and Western (modern) world, the author argues that the informal (communal) methods and processes of moral education in the form of narratives, folklore, proverbs, and oral tradition in African communities are superior to the Western formal, individualistic, and cognitive view or model of moral education and development. "The relevant factors in African communal culture seem to have enhanced efficacy in moral education, while their absence seems to have hindered the efficacy of moral education in modern Western culture and in African cosmopolitan cities where people have adopted the Western ethos and individualistic attitudes" (p. 162).

On the controversial issue of whether the communal structures and informal processes in African traditions necessarily lead to authoritarianism, the author distinguishes between rational and irrational forms of authoritarianism and then argues in favor of a rational form of authoritarianism in African cultures. The error made by critics, in the author's view, is that they fail to see the rational form. The basis of the rational form of authoritarianism is, according to the author, the principle of epistemic deference, and the social, contextual, and pragmatic nature of knowledge and justification. Hence epistemic or rational authoritarianism in African cultures is not something insidious or bad. In fact, "it is pertinent to note that an element of epistemic authoritarianism is accepted in science as a legitimate principle" (p. 210).

The author also challenges the view that epistemic authoritarianism in African cultures leads to indoctrination rather than education. He postulates that indoctrination is not necessarily bad unless the process is extreme enough to involve brainwashing. At the same time, he argues that epistemic authoritarianism in African cultures does not involve brainwashing hence there is nothing bad about it. The author also argues that indoctrination, contrary to popular belief, is a necessary part of or a precondition for any meaningful education and that it does not vitiate rational autonomy. Ironically, the author proceeds on to argue that in all honesty and fairness, it is the Western emphasis on "thinking for oneself" that would actually in some instances constitute extreme indoctrination (brainwashing).

On some libertarian criticisms on communalism in African cultures, the author believes that they are misguided. Such criticisms, he is convinced, emphasize too much on individual autonomy to the extent that they either ignore the limits or exaggerate the power of individual rationality, as well as the value of individual autonomy and freedom. And this is a weakness that communalism in traditional African cultures does not suffer from.

Whether one agrees or disagrees with some of the views expressed by the author, one aspect of the text stands tall: the author has ably and meticulously fulfilled his primary objective of giving a logical, systematic, and normative interpretation and analysis of communalism in African cultures. In this respect he has made reasonable reference to works of some notable West African philosophers namely Wiredu, Gbadegesin, Gyekye, Appiah, Menkiti, Bodunrin, and Nzegwu. However, for the sake of balance, it would have been better had the author

included references from works of some renowned scholars from Eastern and Southern Africa besides Nyerere. There are some glaring typographical errors in the text though bearing in mind its voluminous nature some may turn a blind eye. All said and done, given the conscientious and detailed manner in which the text treats the topic of communalism in African cultures, the text should be resourceful and of interest to scholars in African studies regardless of their areas of specialization.

F. Ochieng'-Odhiambo  
*University of the West Indies*

**History Making and Present Day Politics: The Meaning of Collective Memory in South Africa.** Hans Erik Stolten, ed. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet. 2007. 376 pp.

This work is an important contribution both to the recent historiography of South Africa and to analysis of the post-apartheid era. It also provides interesting discussions of such practical matters as teaching, designing curricula in a challenging policy environment, and applied history in efforts towards the rectification of social injustices. For these reasons, plus the fact that it is well-written and edited, the volume should appeal to a wide audience of teachers, historians, political scientists, sociologists, and anthropologists.

The book grew out of a 2002 conference sponsored by the Nordic Africa Institute and the Center for African Studies at the University of Copenhagen. This brought to Denmark more than fifty historians and historically oriented scholars, most of them from South Africa and northern Europe. Students of South African history over the past several decades will recognize many of the names of the scholars present.

The editor, Danish historian Hans Erik Stolten, has divided the volume into three sections. Part I consists of six essays that focus on the "role of history in the creation of a new South Africa." These include an account of the history of South Africa as a concept (Saul DuBow); an analysis of the concepts used in the description of the democratic "transition" (Thiven Reddy); a discussion of how history is taught in the post-apartheid era (Colin Bundy); a critique of two prominent narratives of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Elaine Unterhalter); and descriptions of the role of the researcher in land restitution cases (Anna Bohlin, Martin Legassick). Part II consists of five papers on the theme of "heritage and the popularizing of memory." Topics covered here include public history and "heritage" in the post-apartheid era (Gary Baines, Christopher Saunders); the centenary commemoration of the South African War (Albert Grundlingh); how apartheid is depicted in the museum at Gold Reef City (Georgi Verbeeck); and the restructuring of key South African spaces to conform to global consumerism (Martin J. Murray). Part III consists of six papers that deal with South African historiography. The first three (respectively by Bernhard Makhosezwe Magubane, Christopher Saunders, and Merle Lipton) pay special attention to the debate between "liberal" and "radical" South African historians and its legacy. The fourth paper by Wessel Visser and the fifth by Allison Drew both concern representations of communism. The former is about the production of anti-communist history in Afrikaans and the latter about the role of racism in the Communist Party in the 1920s.

The sixth paper by Catherine Burns is rather unique in offering a new vision of the relevance of history for the South Africa of today. The editor has also made available on his [website](#) unpublished conference papers.

Due to space limitations, I can mention only a few things about the papers and the issues they bring up for debate. First, Catherine Burns' paper provides a fresh vision of history's relevance. It describes how she and her colleagues at the University of Natal, Durban are bringing history to life for a new generation by focusing on health and legal issues. History has a "thirsty audience," she suggests, but only when it is dressed up in such disguises. Martin Legassick's essay is particularly interesting for its personal insights on the role of an academic historian working to identify and foster legitimate land restitution claims in the Northern and Western Cape. This description is nicely supplemented by Bohlin's paper on land restitution and memory in the small Western Cape community of Kalk Bay. Murray's paper will be of interest to those concerned with the post-modern simulacra of global capitalism. Here Murray discusses the pseudo-gold mine at Gold Reef City, the pseudo-maritime ambience of Cape Town's Victoria and Alfred Waterfront, and the ostentatious fantasy of the entertainment facility known as "Lost City."

As mentioned above, the split between so-called liberal and radical South African historians is explicitly addressed by three essays in part III, but it is also an issue that is implicit in a number of others. This debate has essentially been about the relationship between capitalism and apartheid. Debate continues over the causal roles of culture, race, and class. That there are still tender emotions here is revealed Merle Lipton's paper as she describes the hostile reception her work has faced because it argues that segments of business were in fact instrumental in ending apartheid. From a quite different perspective, Magubane is scathing in his judgment that white South African historians, whether liberal or radical, "never confronted what it meant for black folks to be treated as non-persons in the country of their birth. Or indeed, what it meant to be white and be proclaimed a member of the superior race!" (p. 252).

Even if unduly harsh, Magubane's critique leaves one wondering how white historians investigating black history under apartheid could overcome the institutional racism of their segregated and economically privileged upbringings. Psychologically, how did they deal with the fact that many could jet off to study in England or the U.S.A. while at the same time research grave issues of poverty and injustice at home? Did they have life changing experiences that led them to history or did history lead to those experiences?

At least in their contributions for this volume, white South African scholars do appear reticent to reflect on the role of race in their work lives. While Saunders provides a nice paper on his four decades of work, he does so in a purely intellectual fashion, not really addressing psychological or identity issues. Furthermore, neither he nor anyone else in the volume brings up such issues as translation complexities and the use of research assistants. Why has translation or the use of European languages with non-native speaking informants been such a non-issue for scholars in a country where there are so many languages and dialects? And, if white scholars used black research assistants as translators and collectors of oral history why do they now seem invisible? Unfortunately, there is nothing here to compare with the fascinating account [published recently](#) in *ASQ* by historian Robert Edgar about his research life, the long-

term impacts his work has had on the peoples he studied, and the way that he has become personally intertwined in locally produced religious worldviews (Edgar 2007).

Robert Shanafelt  
*Georgia Southern University*

Reference:

Robert Edgar. "The Ash Heap of History: Reflections on Historical Research in Southern Africa." *African Studies Quarterly* 9, no.4: [online] URL: <http://web.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v9/v9i4a4.htm>

**Fighting the Slave Trade: West African Strategies.** Sylviane A. Diouf, ed. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2003. 242 pp.

Sylviane A. Diouf has assembled a collection of provocative essays by scholars of African history that challenges the idea of West Africans' complicity with the transatlantic slave trade by examining various strategies of resistance. Through the use of oral histories, ship logs and records, as well as archaeological findings, these scholars unveil a resistance to slavery that occurred in West Africa primarily before slaves were boarded and transported to the New World. The collection is divided into three parts, examining of different strategies of resistance: defensive, protective, and offensive.

The scholars in this collection overwhelmingly argue that certain populations of West Africans were keenly aware of the devastating impact of the transatlantic slave trade on their societies, and these populations sought to mitigate the damages as best they could. One method used was to develop defensive strategies, such as the environment, for protection. Elisée Soumonni and Thierno Mouctar Bah in their essays "Lacustrine Villages in South Benin as Refuges from the Slave Trade" and "Slave-Raiding and Defensive Systems South of Lake Chad from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century," respectively, examine the relations between the movement of refugee populations to the lake area and the impact of the transatlantic slave trade on these populations. They contend that as the market for human cargo increased, some West African communities relocated to environments that less accessible to slave raiders.

In addition to the use of environmental features as a defensive strategy, architectural features were also used as a means to protect against slave raiders. Homes and villages were often designed with labyrinths, high walls, and various points of ingress and egress to impede easy access by slave raiders. While West Africa and the transatlantic slave trade are the primary foci of this book, Dennis D. Cordell's essay "The Myth of Inevitability and Invincibility: Resistance to Slavers and the Slave Trade in Central Africa, 1850-1910" focuses on resistance to the Muslim slave raiding and slave trade in north-central Africa. This also involved peoples relocating, abandoning their villages and taking refuge in caves and tunnels, and banding together in large settlements to ward off slave raiders.







