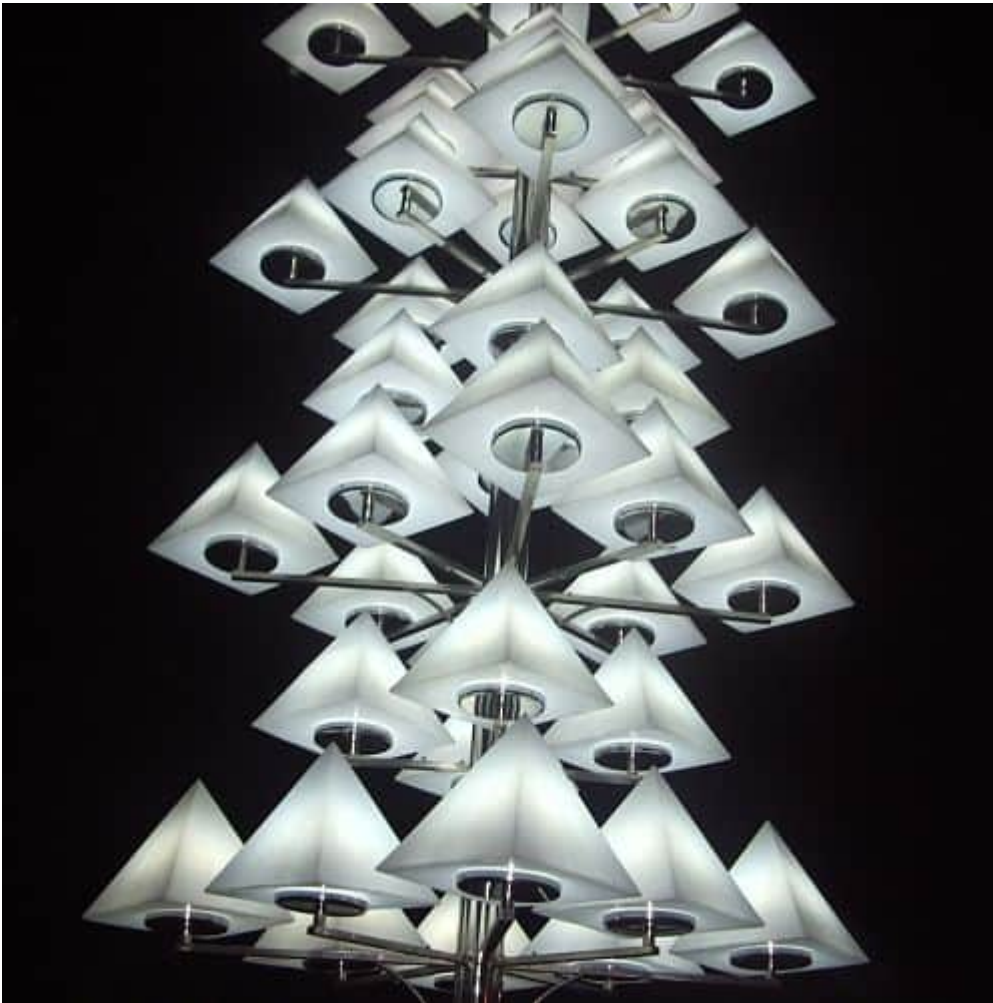




Pyramid Scheme. #hautalk

Ilana Gershon

June, 2018



For people immersed in bureaucratic institutions, like universities, the current ruckus over HAU raises at least one longstanding anthropological question: what kinds of organizational structures not only allow certain types of behavior but even allow these to be repeated over and over again? And here I don't simply mean: "when is someone allowed to repeatedly behave badly," but also "when is someone allowed to repeatedly behave well?" This question underlies people's concerns around the kind of oversight that existed at HAU but also underlies people's praise because the journal managed to contribute to productive intellectual dialogues time and time again. With this in mind, I want to write



without condemning anyone. Instead, I appeal to readers' anthropologically grounded curiosity about social organization as I discuss what I know about how HAU was structured before its transfer to University of Chicago Press.

How do I know what I know? I was on the HAU monograph board (2014-2017) and an associate editor at the journal (2016-2017). But more importantly, I was one of three people who agreed to run the journal as a team while Giovanni da Col took a six-month leave in 2016. The transition process was rocky, and I stepped down before I could fully take on the shared responsibility of interim editor-in-chief, but continued as an associate editor. But during this process I talked to staff members, read the HAU constitution carefully, and afterward continued talking to staff members and various people involved in HAU's organization. I was never involved in the day to day running of HAU, and so some of what I describe below may be inaccurate regarding the actual practice, although staff have read a draft of this and confirmed my account.

HAU was not run the ways that other scholarly journals I have been involved with are run. Yes, HAU had a constitution, and several boards associated with it; yet, to understand the internal distribution of labor, it helps to understand the open access software platform HAU uses, Open Journals Systems, which encourages but does not determine a certain way of organizing a journal. To be clear, social organization is more important than the interactions implied in the platform, but it helps to understand what the platform suggests.

The journal was run as a pyramid of labor, which intriguingly enough reflects the social organization imagined by OJS, which is the most popular open access software freely available.

Jason Baird Jackson, a colleague at IU, editor of the journal *Museum Anthropology Review* and fellow commentator in this series, explained to me (after my tenure at HAU) how OJS works, based on his own editorial experience. OJS is a platform that was initially designed not only with very large journals in mind, but was also supposed to facilitate scaling up quickly from a smallish



journal to a mammoth journal. It is a platform that could easily run a journal like *Nature* or *Science*, if that is desired, with thousands of contributors and many moving parts. It is built to allow a great many people to donate (or get paid for) labor. It can have one or many editors, section editors, and a huge number of other internal roles. The idea of different people with different roles is fundamental to the platform. In a small operation, one person can assume several roles, but that person must wear different (software) hats for each role. The platform also creates logical flows between tasks and people based on common norms already present in many journals. But like all platforms, OJS (especially the version that precedes the latest release) coaxes users down paths built into the software, especially by reminding users constantly that the journal could get bigger.

There are consequences to using a platform like this. It is designed to be a pyramid of labor, based on the assumption that many people will be willing to give a tiny bit of free labor, and other people will be willing to devote larger chunks of time, but may only be willing to do so sporadically. To address the quandary this poses for running an organization, it encourages cells: small labor collectives of people tackling one or two tasks, such as copy-editing a special section, or finding reviewers for a set of articles, with a few other people coordinating these tasks. All these cells are overseen by the editor-in-chief, and perhaps a handful of other people - the top of the pyramid can be a plateau instead of a peak. The higher you go up in the pyramid, the more you can see of other people's labor below you, but usually you can only see the segment of the triangle below you (you are at the top of a mini-pyramid within the overarching pyramid). Indeed, the only person who really has access to all moving parts and is able to coordinate everything is at the top of the pyramid. While the software could be adjusted so that this concentration of control is ameliorated, at HAU, the editor-in-chief was the only one who knew about all the moving parts, and who clearly invested social labor into ensuring that this remained the case. The platform's organizational suggestions were also supplemented by HAU's constitution and what little I know secondhand about the University of Chicago



Press's agreement with HAU, which proposed that the editor-in-chief was also envisioned as editor-for-life, with only one unlikely and complicated mechanism in place for removing the editor-in-chief being mentioned in HAU's founding document.

This of course could potentially be mitigated by having in-person or virtual meetings; indeed, all associate editors could theoretically meet and communicate beyond the OJS platform. This was not the case with HAU. All communication within the journal was funneled through the editor-in-chief. The different pockets of labor never coordinated with each other. Associate editors neither consulted with each other about how to handle a set of reviews, nor discussed about other concerns that came up in running the journal. The faculty board of HAU monographs never met to discuss book proposals, and indeed only made a decision at the front end, voting by individually assigning numbers to each book proposal to determine which projects should be pursued. After the manuscripts were reviewed, we never met to discuss the reviews and whether the book should be published. Any attempts to change this system were dissipated, and perhaps quite reasonably. After all, changing this system would have created more work for participants, and as academics, we try to minimize service work whenever possible. What is important to note is that while HAU regularly had parties at conferences, there were no institutional moments in which the boards as a whole were coming together to discuss running the journal. And as far as I know, there weren't actually many long-standing members who worked steadily together - except for the staff. The left hand truly never knew what the right hand was doing, indeed the fingers on the hands didn't coordinate often with each other either.

This meant that it was possible for associate editors (who were mainly tenured anthropologists) to have only minimal contact with the HAU staff (who were mainly graduate students at far-flung institutions), say, a brief email exchange about finding reviewers for an article. The editorial boards, to the best of my knowledge, never had any contact with the staff, who were all under the purview of the editor-in-chief. Should social problems arise at any stage in the publishing



process, there was no institutionalized process for dealing with these problems.

To repeat, all of this was made possible by the software-aided division of labor, but also the typical ways in which academics approach service work of this nature. In my experience, we engage the service tasks directly in front of us, often as quickly as possible, and ask few questions unless we are physically in a meeting together.

We have too little time: the academic life means juggling many obligations, and so we tend to accept institutional processes already in place instead of questioning them.

Scholars often find it boring and thankless (as indeed it often is) to get involved in running their institutions and associations. We often even encourage others to minimize the time they devote to institutional maintenance. This, of course, may be a rational response when those institutions are less and less committed to the individuals within them. Yet possibly as a result of this relationship to service, not many people knew how HAU was actually run, even those people prominently associated with HAU. This is the social consequence when a pyramid of labor occurs within the constraints of our contemporary academic lives.

There are two other aspects that I personally find useful for understanding how HAU functioned.

First, HAU's temporal rhythms were crisis-driven, much like the temporal rhythms of classroom teaching or many projects in contemporary capitalist workplaces. HAU would present authors and staff with challenging deadlines, commonly presented as an emergency situation in which all hands were needed on deck. This seems to have happened for every issue. And when you are living in periods of crisis, punctuated by periods of recovery in which you have time to deal with the other demands that were brewing in the background while you were in crisis mode, you are less likely to engage critically with the processes that created the 'crisis' in the first place.



Second, the editor-in-chief is assumed to remain editor-for-life. There is no expectation of a transition written into the HAU constitution, and no HAU board has the right to replace the editor-in-chief. This speaks to the nature of workplaces in which people tend to stay in the same career for life. Many academics are used to having to live with colleagues who behave in ways we wish they wouldn't, and realize we have to deal with them for the rest of our working lives.

We develop skills for tolerating less than desirable behavior.

I have been suggesting that HAU was possible because relatively new technologies allowed for new participant structures, and many of the academics involved were applying older models of how journals are typically run and what sort of practices institutional oversight enables (and/or prevents). It might sound like I am asking for institutional oversight, but this, [as Sara Ahmed has pointed out so elegantly](#), is a double-edged sword. What if the current uproar about HAU is precisely because it lacked the institutional oversight that typically buries problems created by people who have been engaged in community exchanges and institutional norms because they have been part of an institution and part of an academic community for a number of years?

In HAU's case, a newness carved out of older forms became possible, allowing for both good and bad in less familiar packages. At the same time, it was hard to know who knew what in the process - did associate editors know what staff experiences were like at the journal? Or even what authors' experiences publishing with the journal was like? Did the chair of the advisory board know? I personally believe that there were serious problems in how the staff were treated, but I was never sure myself who knew and what solutions were being attempted. Some people knew there were problems (not always the same problems!), but didn't always know the extent of the problems, and found it hard to confer with each other, and extremely difficult to assemble information even when they tried. And so I lived, very unwillingly I might add, one of the dilemmas that I find myself



reiterating about new media all the [time](#): new participant structures dramatically change in unexpected ways how knowledge circulates and how it leads to action; yet everyone involved can still think things are going on pretty much as normally as they ever do.

#Report: Envy and Greed: A Political Economy of Accusation and Critique

Geoffrey Hughes
June, 2018



On the fourth and fifth of June, the anthropology department at the London School of Economics and Political Science hosted a workshop exploring how accusations of envy and greed are mobilized in our contemporary world. All of the participants were united by a fascination with how moral emotions like envy and greed are instrumentalized in social life to both police the behavior of others and to justify various individual and collective projects. Yet far from wishing to dismiss the mobilization of these emotions in discourse as so much bad faith, participants also wished to show how social actors become genuinely invested in their own emotions, seeking to cultivate the right dispositions and avoid the wrong ones to the point where those emotions may indeed be deeply felt.

The goal was to catalyze new collaborations at the intersection of three bodies of anthropological literature: 1) ethics and morality 2) political economy and 3) the



so-called “affective turn.” In doing so, participants sought to re-ground these three exciting trends in scholarship by contextualizing them in terms of each other and revitalizing connections amongst them that have been sundered in the midst of increasing specialization.

The result was a focus on a set of concerns around the relationship between ethical self-cultivation, the body, and the broader political and economic forces transforming our contemporary world that could only be addressed through long-term ethnographic research grounded in a broadly comparative framework.

We received a great response to the call for papers and eventually brought together 14 papers organized around 4 panels: “Accusation and the Interpersonal,” “Shame, Blame, and Accusation,” “Race, Ethnicity, and the State,” and “Greed Deservingness and Desire.” Individual papers explored everything from narratives of gluttony and perseverance amongst Filipino migrants (Resto Cruz), to witchcraft accusations in a refugee resettlement camp (Sophie Nakueira), to accusations of greed leveled at real estate speculators in an isolated Australian mining community (Kari Dahlgren).

Workshop participants also discussed the positive values that accusations of ‘ugly feelings’ like greed and envy disrupt: aspirations for mutuality, cooperation, dignity, and reciprocity. Participants further discussed how many of their interlocutors’ narratives were structured around the emergence of economic and political forces creating conditions of anxiety and instability. While these anxieties played out differently in each case, it became evident that such policing, blaming and shaming could generate new forms of ‘othering’—yet often tended to reinforce the already existing power inequalities embedded in race, class and gender divisions in society. Indeed, the emotions that seem most potent from an ethnographic perspective often seemed to be those locked in a reciprocal, mutually constitutive relationship with preexisting power structures.

One particularly striking example of this was provided by Beverly Skeggs in her



reflections on work that she did on British reality TV in the early 2000s. Here, a new genre of TV show associated with deregulation and a new generation of boundary-testing media executives proved adept at revivifying cultural fixations involving Britain's classic 'constitutive others': women, people of color, and the working classes. Drawing on audience reactions in a series of group screenings that she organized as part of her research, Skeggs found that the most pointed moments of affective release were associated with instances of a particular species of *schadenfreude*. In these moments, audience members were invited to judge—and took pleasure in judging—reality TV stars in ways that they themselves were accustomed to being judged. Thus female audiences tended to emote more where the judgments were centered on women and minoritized audiences tended to emote more where judgments were centered on the minoritized. The evidence seemed to suggest that the shows created a stable emotional structure that both offered the working classes release from the affective weight of such judgments while upholding the validity of the judgments themselves. Too add insult to injury, the very enjoyment of such “trash TV” itself becomes a signifier of particular (supposedly) class, gender, and race-based inadequacies.

If there was one take-away from the workshop, it was this sadly common pattern in which some of the world's poorest and most marginalized seem to take on much of the psychic burden of emotionally processing the increasingly rancorous forms of inequality that define out contemporary world.

Yet far from being given credit for doing such 'affective labor,' the emotions and passions so aroused merely become yet more proof that the world's haves and have-nots are constituted by different forms of bio-moral substance. The cruel irony here is that the emotional burden of being stigmatized serves to provide further justification for that very stigmatization. The reification of this global common sense represents a disturbing trend in our contemporary world—one that we hope that anthropology can counteract through the development of a new, more critical analytic language.



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Mobile Secrets

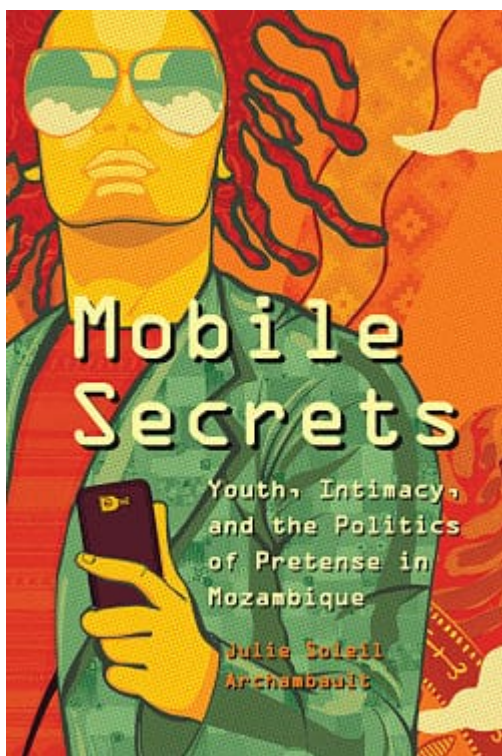
Peter Lockwood
June, 2018



Julie Archambault's *Mobile Secrets* is an ethnographically vivid and distinctive contribution to the ever growing anthropological literature on the topic of youth



in Africa. Whilst ethnographic accounts of the economic struggles of unemployed young men have become familiar tales of capitalism's more recent, employment-less mutations in Africa (see Masquelier 2013; Mains 2012; though such issues are by no means skipped over by the author), Archambault productively chooses to focus her attention instead on the intimate lives of her interlocutors, exploring how growing inequality in Mozambique's post-war era has transformed gender relations to the benefit of some and to the detriment of others. Although I do have a couple of concerns (which I shall touch on towards the end), Archambault's book represents an achievement for a contemporary anthropology attuned to the detail of our interlocutors' lives.



Most of the book's action takes place in the neighbourhood of Liberdade, part of Mozambique's coastal city of Inhambane. Liberdade's "village-like feel" (10) with its free-standing houses (home to families practising urban agriculture, usually alongside petty trade) provides the setting for the social dramas that unfold within. Archambault notes that although many of her young protagonists were born during Mozambique's civil war (1977-92), their outlook today is one of marked aspiration, and that hopes for better material futures have risen to meet the promises of economic liberalisation in the post-socialist era (10-11). As with so many other contexts in contemporary Africa, whilst a

limited group of *nouveaux riches* might have emerged to lead business and monopolise government jobs following the ruling Frelimo party's transition to liberal capitalism from one-party socialism, the vast majority can only hope to partake in the wealth promised by economic liberalisation. Through the book's many case-studies and vignettes, Archambault's fieldwork traces the lives of Liberdade's young men and women (and often their families to boot), exploring



everyday occurrences; the romances, ambitions, jealousies and disputes that play out against this backdrop.

Anyone picking up Archambault's book for the first time will not fail to notice the central role played by the mobile phone, and with good reason. Newer fieldworkers in Africa might perhaps fail to give mobile phones the attention they deserve as anything other than a commonplace. In peri-urban central Kenya where I work, for instance, the use of mobile phones and now smart-phone handsets (typically imported from China) are no longer out of the ordinary. Indeed, as Archambault herself deftly demonstrates in the case of Inhambane, they have become part of a new architecture of communication.

As we find out, in contexts like that of Liberdade where respectability and a general atmosphere of propriety ought to be upheld, the phone allows women users to transcend domestic boundaries.

Patriarchal authority in urbanising Africa has practically always found itself undermined by social change and although women now regularly participate in the labour market (Peterson 2004) moral norms that associate women with domesticity persist. With the assistance of the phone, married women and adult daughters are able to keep one foot in the domestic sphere of the homestead and yet simultaneously possess the potential to communicate beyond it, often with male suitors, regularly awakening male anxieties of infidelity in the process (104-116). Archambault's perspective on the phone as something *new*, having more-or-less begun her fieldwork in 2006, is a welcome reminder that things were not ever thus, and that the use of phones warrant ethnographic attention, not least for their effects on social relationships. (It is also testament to the value of long-term ethnographic fieldwork as a vantage point on social change.)

The phone's presence in many of the ethnographic anecdotes with which Archambault presents the reader serves to tie together the book's wide-ranging themes (spanning petty crime, aspirations to wealth, redistributive practices, and notably the vagaries of romance in a highly unequal social setting). But it is also



Archambault's emphasis on the use of the mobile phone from which some of her grander claims about "truth" spring forth. It is the lives of women in Inhambane that regularly appear to have been most thoroughly transformed by the arrival of the mobile phone. With its assistance, young women have been able to conceal their liaisons with men, and in some cases, economically successful men who have played the role of providers, all the while maintaining a surface impression of propriety (saving face within their families, as well as without). That phones have been used by Liberdade residents to hide "ugly" truths whilst maintaining other, more palatable ones (150) prompts further reflection on the social effects of mobile phone handsets, and now their smart-phone reiterations. Archambault's interest is in precisely how such technologies have assisted in creating alternative truths (or at least new ambiguities [152]) for her interlocutors. The author herself usually errs on the side of viewing such epistemological uncertainties as productive to her interlocutors: "certainty is a hope killer— it forecloses possibilities" (ibid.). What relevance these conclusions have for anthropologists studying the so-called "post-truth" world - [where such uncertainties may be purposefully exploited by national governments to fundamentally disorder attempts by their opponents to criticise their actions](#) - is an open question (Mair 2018), one that I believe Archambault has the ethnographic material to consider from a comparative perspective.

But if the phone is a ubiquitous presence throughout the book, it tends to play a supporting role to the most pertinent observations Archambault makes: those on the "intimate economy" (131) that emerges as a key theme towards the middle-of the book. It is across three chapters (entitled "Love and Deceit", "Sex and Money", and "Truth and Wilful Blindness") where the gendered effects of the post-war economy reveal themselves (128). In "Sex and Money", for instance, we find out how young women end up "trading on their subordinate status" (123), purposefully using sexual pretences to extract resources from richer men (127-8). This dynamic has created newfound difficulties for younger, aspiring though economically marginalised men who feel not only emasculated by the capacity of better-off providers (123), but equally threatened by the ostensibly "materialist"



(124, used in scare quotes by the author to index this is a male discourse) pretensions of their wives and girlfriends. Poorer men still feel compelled to portray themselves as patrons - the main way "to feel like somebody (133) - even if they end up spreading their meagre resources hopelessly thin. Archambault is probably right to argue that the exchange of sex for money should not be framed in such transactional terms, and that "new and meaningful intimacies" (127) are bound to transpire from such unequal relationships, the dualism implicit in abstracting intimacy from exchange notwithstanding (and which is carefully avoided by the author, 132-3).

It is nonetheless striking to see women (albeit situationally) view their own motivations as somewhat "materialist".

"I'm eating men's money [...] I charge them!", one of her interlocutors forthrightly declares before quickly back-tracking in order to emphasise that her relationships were not so utilitarian.

At times I therefore found myself wishing that the topic of the intimate economy could have been the whole book rather than a substantial part. A section entitled "The Commodification of Intimacy and the Crisis of Authenticity" barely spans four pages despite appearing central to the themes Archambault introduces through her ethnography. A more sustained engagement with the burgeoning ethnographic literature and anthropological theory on money, commoditisation and gender was curtailed. Important ethnographic threads are also sidelined by the ranging ambitions of the book. "Young people found food for thought on intimacy in Brazilian telenovelas, Pentecostal sermons, NGO slogans, party politics, and everyday dealings with tourists and expatriates", the author tells us, though this (hardly insignificant) list of knowledge producers and the reception of their ideas are never fully explored.

My other criticism relates to the manner of abstraction chosen by Archambault in an earlier chapter (named "Display and Disguise") on what she calls "the politics of pretence". Here we find that "all is not what it seems in a place where regimes



of truth are constructed on a careful juggling of visibility and invisibility” (43). I felt that this language (bordering on the metaphysical) sometimes worked to romanticise much more mundane happenings, imbuing them with a meaning they perhaps did not possess in an immediate sense. For instance, Archambault cites her research assistant’s caution over alerting others to their research activities as evidence of youth “creating remoteness” in order to make “claims of authorship over their lives” (69). My fieldworker’s instincts tell me that the reasons for such caution may be grounded less in the abstract logics of “creating remoteness” than a tendency (on the part of interlocutors) to avoid involvement in public disturbances, petty jealousies, not to mention the possible attention of the authorities. Though creating remoteness undoubtedly takes place, we lose a sense of what its purpose might be in a more grounded, socio-logical sense. After all, as Archambault herself remarks, Liberdade is a neighbourhood in which people live in close proximity and nothing much escapes comment in the circulation of gossip (55). Remoteness might not be an end in itself, nor a claim to authorship, rather than what I would argue is a more mundane social strategy on the part of interlocutors along the lines I mention above (for example, simply avoiding trouble). This is not to say that Archambault’s conclusions are in any way misguided but rather that I felt a step in the anthropological argument was missing - one that connected interlocutors’ motivations to their social consequences *for interlocutors*, rather than immediately finding their origin in more abstract cultural logics of display and disguise.

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Monrovia Modern

Pauline Destree

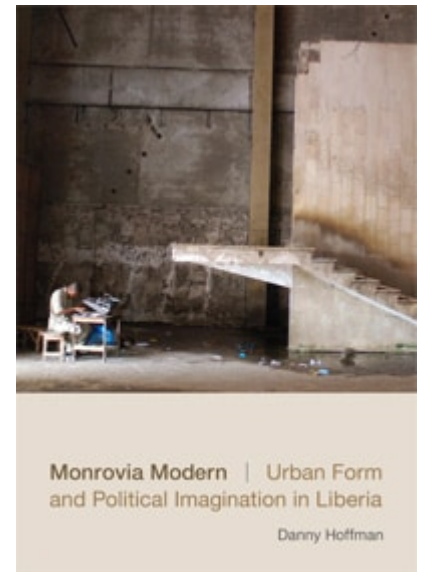
June, 2018



[*Monrovia Modern*](#) is a beautiful and perceptive book that describes the limitations and contradictions of architectural forms of political and urban imaginations in Monrovia. It will appeal to both architecture and anthropology scholars concerned with ruins, violence, material culture, photography and West African politics. Hoffman manages the difficult task of “writing Africa into the world” (Mbembe and Nuttall 2004) by depicting in sometimes painfully honest and raw prose the subtleties, perplexities and banalities of Monrovia’s “ruined and ruinous landscape” (6) and the transient lives that inhabit them while avoiding (and convincingly arguing against) a spectacularistic, romanticizing reading of ruin and decay.



Following an introductory chapter that situates historically and ethnographically the spatial politics of Monrovia and the lives of young ex-combatant men with whom Hoffman has done extensive research, the book unfolds through four architectural portraits of Monrovia's former iconic buildings of power and influence, now in ruins following decades of violence and inhabited by transient residents striving to "contend with the city's ruins" (xx): the Ministry of Defense, the E.J. Roye Building (headquarters of Monrovia's oldest political party, the True Whig Party), Liberia Broadcasting System (LBS), and the hauntingly picturesque Hotel Africa.



The book conveys an overwhelming sense of solitude and detachment, of people inhabiting spaces with no intention to dwell in them, professing an active acceptance of their own unmooring from any points of belonging, security, or identity that makes one think again about what it means to "occupy" space and to erase oneself from spatial history.

Hoffman's book inscribes itself in a well-established field of African urban studies concerned with forms of living, moving about, and strategizing on the city's immaterialities, informalities and invisible infrastructures (de Boeck 2013 ; Simone 2004). What makes Hoffman's contribution particularly incisive is his focus on an urban politics of the impossible (Chatterton 2010) in his discussion of the impossibilities of political formation for those "living in the gaps" (48) of the city. While he does describe the creative and imaginative strategies of "storytelling, bluffing, scamming" (41) and strategic navigation (Vigh 2004) deployed by ex-combatant residents, he is more concerned with exploring the "limits to invention" (59) and forms of "creativity without transformation" or "without claim" (55). Indeed, Hoffman's main aim is to investigate "uninhabitability" as produced in part by the modernist project (and in particular



brutalist architecture) and to look at the conditions of impossibilities put forth by certain urban forms that foreclose political and social formations.

As he puts it, “some urban forms work against a population group becoming a political society” - they resist alternative forms of imagination or living (75; emphasis mine); they are “non-subject-producing” (81).

For Hoffman, this uninhabitability stems from the very definition of the modernist project itself (87); he is quick to refuse attributing this impossibility to a distinctly “African modernism” or a defective modernity (87). Rather, he argues, uninhabitability is “a continuous project of invention” (88), one partly weaved through the uncanny comments, rumours, and foreclosed imaginations of the possible fates and histories of those buildings - in the speculation about futures from which their dreamers are removed, excluded by the very obduracy of these ruins. This self-excluded dreaming is an interesting inversion to the process of “conjuring the oneiric” without generating hope described by Filip de Boeck (2011:276) in relation to new luxury building sites in Kinshasa. The residents displaced for the project de Boeck describes, who paradoxically express their enthusiasm for the new gleaming vision of this exclusive development, invoke the contrived and “spectral dimension of the marvellous” that “combines with the dimensions of terror and the dismal” (278). In Monrovia, this erasure of oneself in the dreaming of an alternative, exclusive architectural imaginary conveys an uncanny sense of total respect for authority and the primacy of power (xx) even in the sites of its “necropolitics” (Mbembe 2003).

A fascinating prospect of this study of architectural impossibilities is the way it affords new theorizations on the recalcitrance of material forms to particular social and affective formations.

The four buildings of *Monrovia Modern* all exhibit a certain recalcitrance to political and social interventions, offering a “bulletproof” façade (as the Ministry of Defence was described in archival accounts - p. 84) that refuses to be peered



through even in their ruined form. Yet throughout the book, one would have liked to get a better sense of precisely what kinds of material properties and historical, political and social configurations of architectural matter produce these conditions of recalcitrance and obduracy. For instance, the “thousands of square feet of vacant concrete” (2) that characterize the ruined forms of these buildings would perhaps provide further discussion of the material conditions and manifestations of these impossibilities of dwelling. As the construction material of modernity par excellence, and of brutalist architecture in particular, concrete brings forth the contradictions of modern built forms (Forty 2012). Concrete forces us to “find room for the repugnance” and “repulsion” of materials, to embrace an aesthetics of negativity and impossibility in concrete’s “element of revulsion” and intransigence (Forty 2012:10). Concrete in West Africa is also tied to a popular imaginary of wealth and to the construction boom of the petrostate, associated with Africa’s richest man Aliko Dangote (business magnate and owner of Dangote Cement). One cannot help but wonder if this predominance of raw concrete, which seems to remain, as a ruin, one of the only things that still holds and endures, does not provide another vantage point or perhaps a form of “duress” (Stoler 2016) to rethink the socio-political impossibilities of living in those places.

This is where Hoffman’s strategy of photowriting comes apposite. In the photographs of those ruins, rubbles, and precarious living, there is an uncanny dissonance between the structuring weight of those structures of concrete and the flimsiness of the transient lives intersecting and temporarily inhabiting them. The immobile, gigantic structures of concrete become slightly blurred, effaced, and deranged by the ghostly, shadowed and partial presence of their residents, a photographic disturbance in the architectural order of the buildings. This had the profound effect of bringing out visually the tensions between these material structures and the human forms of survival against which they push. While one may initially regret the absence of a more ethnographic analysis of the lives of those affected by those buildings and living in their ruins, one comes to appreciate this visual rendition instead as a way in which the architectural decay



and violence of those ruins came to be felt through this erasure of humanity and their blurred presences.

Monrovia Modern is a thoughtful meditation on both processes of “ruination” (Stoler 2016) and the materiality of ruins (120) in a context in which the construction of many of those buildings designed in utopian post-independence architectural modernism were halted or altered by cycles of violence and political instability. One of the fascinating ideas that emerges from this truncated temporality is the reconsideration of “construction” itself and its teleological fallacy: can the Ministry of Defense or the Liberia Broadcasting House, which were never actually fully built, still be considered ruins or, alternatively, buildings? At which point does a building emerge as “built”, and a ruin become “ruined”? What is the political, social and material salience of an “already-ruined-but-as-yet-unbuilt-structure”? (53). Hoffman’s book proposes an alternative concept of ruin that is not simply defined as a “leftover”, that which comes after, or that which has been destroyed, but a kind of prefigurative ruin that forecloses particular future and generates its own sense of historical revisions.

What emerges is a landscape in which ruination and ruins appear as more banal aspects of life than the suspicious and conspicuous planned visions and dreams of totalizing construction of the political elite.

But one could take this further: *Monrovia Modern’s* buildings seem to pose a more general question: are buildings by definition “impossible” formations? Is ruination always already implied in the construction project itself? And could there exist alternative imaginaries of coherence and liveability, in ruins? In a fascinating passage, Hoffman describes the incoherence of peace for many ex-combatant residents for whom Monrovia’s violence and poverty “had a kind of coherence missing in the post-Taylor era” (154), signalling a wider disengagement from politics through architectural abandonment. Ibrahim’s (one of the author’s interlocutor) disapproving comment on the authorities’ dereliction of the former Ministry of Health as a “rot” is suggestive of the critical work of the



“rot that remains” (Stoler 2013) as material evidence of power’s incapacity to rule, and perhaps of power’s own “sinking power” (the Ministry of Health being referred to as Titanic) and decaying hold (uncannily evidenced in Hoffman’s anecdote that Taylor’s trial was somewhat “overshadowed by the Chelsea vs Barcelona match in the UEFA Champions League” (154)). In that sense, Hoffman also makes a powerful argument about people’s incredible capacities to relinquish, to let go, to move on (de Boeck 2013), against the “productivist” inclinations of the literature on West African strategies of creativity and survival.

Monrovia Modern ends with a powerful coda: the Ebola outbreak of 2014-15 whose quarantine measures of containment in one of Monrovia’s neighbourhood were quickly circumvented by its residents by charging exit fees or negotiating arrangements with the soldiers at the blockades (179). This moment of “magical realism” (181) seems to temporarily reactivate energies and creativities of playing with forms of political ordering that nicely points to what may happen after, and despite the ruins.

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The Nerds' Turn: Battling for a Democratic Academia in Poland

Mateusz Laszczkowski
June, 2018



As students and academics in Poland are fighting to defend democracy and autonomy of the universities, this post is a battle cry. It outlines the threats to intellectual freedoms posed by the new law on higher education being introduced by the Polish government. It also describes the ongoing protests and sketches an analytic view of the situation.

‘When they kick on your front door, how you gonna come? With your hands on your head, or on the trigger of your gun?’ Joe Strummer’s captivating voice calls in the famous song by The Clash, ‘The Guns of Brixton’. The time has come for Polish academics to ask themselves Strummer’s question. Across the country, students and faculty are in revolt.

For the first time in thirty years—the first time since the fall of the bandit regime that called itself ‘Communist’—university campuses are sites of struggle



in defence of democracy. At long last!

In many ways, I think, the university protests are long overdue. Since the victory of the conservative-populist, far-right Law and Justice party (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, PiS) in the 2015 parliamentary election, Poland has witnessed a fast-paced dismantling of democracy and curtailing of fundamental freedoms. With overnight votes in the Parliament and other procedures of dubious legality, the PiS majority has passed, inter alia, one of the world's strictest anti-abortion laws, and a reform of the judiciary that gives control of the courts to the Minister of Justice, thus effectively abolishing the tripartite division of powers in the Republic. Meanwhile, hunters' lobbies have achieved an outrageous liberalisation of the hunting law, while the Ministry for the Protection of the Environment allowed massive logging in Białowieża, Europe's last remaining primal forest. All of these 'reforms', as well as many other new laws, were met with popular protests. Numerous academics have supported all of these protests. More generally, however, one might argue that the academia remained not as vocal as one might expect. But

now it's the nerds' turn.

New legislation—proudly dubbed the 'Constitution for Academia' by the government, but more commonly referred to as the 'Law 2.0', or simply the 'Gowin Law', after the Minister for Science and Higher Education, Jarosław Gowin—is being hastily passed these very days. The law needs to be seen simultaneously in the context of Poland's broader authoritarian turn and as part of the sweeping neoliberalisation of academia across Europe, as witnessed, for instance by the University of Manchester strikes of last year. The Polish academics' concerns address multiple aspects of the Gowin Law. The law threatens the autonomy of universities and paves the way for their even further commercialisation. It introduces a new institution for governing universities: supervising boards whose prerogatives shall include the ongoing management of universities, deciding on their research and teaching strategies, financial plans,



and nominating rectors. By law, more than fifty percent of the members of these boards are to be non-academics: presumably corporate representatives and politicians. The rectors' relative power will also increase, leading to a further centralisation and hierarchisation of universities. Rectors will gain the right to freely restructure universities, for instance by abolishing Faculties and merging them into larger, more centrally controlled Schools. Faculty boards—key collective institutions representing academic staff—will likewise be easily abolished. Moreover, the new law puts disproportionate emphasis on the commercial applicability of research, while downplaying the social and cultural roles of academia. The State Accreditation Committee (PKA) that rates the quality of study programmes and ranks institutions of higher education is likewise to be reformed to increase the participation of business and employers' associations. What this means is that commercial applicability shall become the ultimate criterion for assessing academia. These changes are accompanied by a further expansion of qualitative assessment tools for academic outputs—the all too familiar push for translating research and teaching into numerical points. Furthermore, the Gowin Law divides institutions of higher education into two categories. A select number of largest (and presumably best—according to the new law's business-dictated criteria) institutions will retain the right to call themselves Universities. There will literally be only about a dozen of these across the nation. All other universities in Poland will be degraded to the status of 'professional academies' and reduced to the role of producing technical cadres for the economy.

This reform not only expresses a patently absurd (mis)understanding of the value of knowledge, but also is unbelievably regressive in its reaffirming of centre-periphery inequalities in access to higher education.

The government claims the new law has been widely consulted with the academic community. The truth is that the consultation process was a fake throughout. To begin with, the legislation process had started with an open competition for a project of the new law. The Ministry selected those projects that were proposed



by groups politically allied with the government and followed Minister Gowin's own vision. Alternative projects, such as the one submitted by the civic group Crisis Committee for Polish Humanities (KKHP), were rejected wholesale. Further, the law gradually taking shape was consulted exclusively with those academic bodies that supported the government's line of thinking. Sadly, the government has succeeded in dividing the academic community. Most university rectors, generally support the Gowin Law—and no wonder they do so, given the vastly increased powers that the law offers to them! Unfortunately, however, also faculty and students' associations at numerous universities are in agreement with the Minister. This mostly applies to technical and managerial faculties, whose ties with business are stronger than among the humanities and social science communities, and whose disciplines are likely to be less harmed by the increasing quantification of academic standards. Evidence from casual conversations suggests, moreover, that members of these sectors of academia have been targets of concentrated propaganda by government proponents of the law and tend to have a rather superficial understanding of the reform. Indeed, in the dramatically underfunded world of Polish academia, 'reform' may seem an appealing notion! But as the Polish adage goes, 'the devil is in the details'. The draft law, that incorporates not a single proposal by those critical of Gowin's project, is going to be discussed in the lower chamber of the Polish Parliament, the Sejm, on Tuesday, 12 June. The last two years' experience shows that parliamentary debates on socially controversial new legislation have often been rather perfunctory.

Vast sections of the academic community have risen up. As I am writing these words, several dozen students and faculty at the University of Warsaw have been occupying the balcony of the rector's office for several days. In a vibrant atmosphere of debate, lectures are delivered from the balcony, and a number of seminar groups have left their classrooms to carry out meetings in front of the building. Among many others, the collective of the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology—my own home department—has been at the forefront of this struggle at Warsaw. Colleagues and students have organised workgroups to



develop and sustain protest in the short, middle and long-term perspectives. They seek to persuade University authorities to take a critical stance on the reform and are looking for ways to put pressure on members of parliament and Poland's President to veto the law. Various forms of collective action are being considered, from petitioning to workplace strikes and civil disobedience. The situation unfolds very dynamically. Banners that had been hung out from the windows of the anthropology building in Warsaw's Żurawia Street—just a few blocks away from the Parliament and from the headquarters of Law and Justice—were removed by housekeeping staff (who are independent from the department and subordinate to the University's central administration). But the protest has been supported by numerous academic unions across the country, including the otherwise often pro-government *Solidarność*. Many university departments, faculties, professional and student associations—not only those representing the humanities and social science communities or the largest cities—have officially declared their support for the protest. Collective action has been taken up, among others, at the Universities in Białystok, Cracow, Gdańsk, Łódź, Poznań, Rzeszów, Szczecin and Wrocław. On Friday, students and faculty occupied one of the historic buildings at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow.

'Academia Is Not a Corporation', 'We Won't Give up our Autonomy' and 'We Demand a Democratic Academia!' read the banners across Poland's campuses in revolt. But many of the slogans on these banners are also those that have appeared in other popular protests in Poland in recent years: 'Freedom, Equality, Democracy', 'Solidarity is Our Strength!' Successful revolutions are those that manage to unite the most oppressed groups with the least alienated ones—proletarians with intellectuals. So far, the Law and Justice government in Poland has very skilfully compartmentalised dissent, framing each subsequent protest as an affair of a particular 'elite' group defending its privileges. Such a narrative is consistent with the party supporters' general vision of the world, where parasitic and treacherous 'elites' are seen as having appropriated the benefits of Poland's nearly thirty years' economic 'transformation', at the expense of the general, morally upright mass of the Nation. Moreover, anti-intellectual



resentment runs high in this country, where the quality of education has long been in sharp decline (inter alia by systematically diminishing high school standards and effectively erasing university entrance requirements), and where parochialism, chauvinism and obscurantism have been lately promoted to the rank of patriotic virtues. The defence of democracy and autonomy in Polish universities is thus an uphill struggle. In my opinion, reaching out beyond academia itself will be vital for any chance of winning it. The Gowin Law will most likely be passed, perhaps even before this text is published. Stamina and organisational capacity will then be needed to organise long-term resistance to its harmful effects.

In Poland as elsewhere across Europe and beyond, corporations and their political allies have long extended their influence on academia in bolder and bolder ways. Today, they're kicking right on our front door.

Sovereignty in Exile

Mark Drury
June, 2018



As a contributor to a recent issue in *Cultural Anthropology* noted, enough attention has been devoted to sovereignty over the past 15 years to constitute a “turn” in the discipline (Bonilla 2017). This development, generative of an impressive number of studies on the topic in both article and monograph form, reflects a departure from analytical frameworks oriented by globalization, on the one hand, and the state, on the other. The “turn” can also be seen as a move away from over- and underdetermined units of study in political anthropology. Where the state presumes a standard unit of study, globalization studies has at times, with its emphasis on flows and scapes, been characterised by the celebration of a certain formlessness. Sovereignty, by contrast, allows for the study of multiple, sometimes overlapping, political formations within a single analytic framework. Alice Wilson’s [Sovereignty in Exile](#) exemplifies this approach through a perceptive ethnography of governance in refugee camps run by the Sahrawi Arab



Democratic Republic (SADR).

These camps, formed in the desert region of southwest Algeria in 1975, present a site defined, at least in theory, by the “state of exception.” Populated by Sahrawis who fled Western Sahara after Morocco annexed most of the territory from Spanish colonial rule, the camps have been supported by humanitarian aid since their establishment. They have also, however, always been a site of governance under what Wilson terms the “state-movement” of SADR. International representative of the Sahrawi national liberation movement, SADR has operated as a state-in-exile in the refugee camps since 1976, and has during that time been recognised by dozens of UN member states. Even as the political dispute over Western Sahara remains unresolved over four decades later, SADR’s control of the camps has continued uninterrupted, if not unchanged.

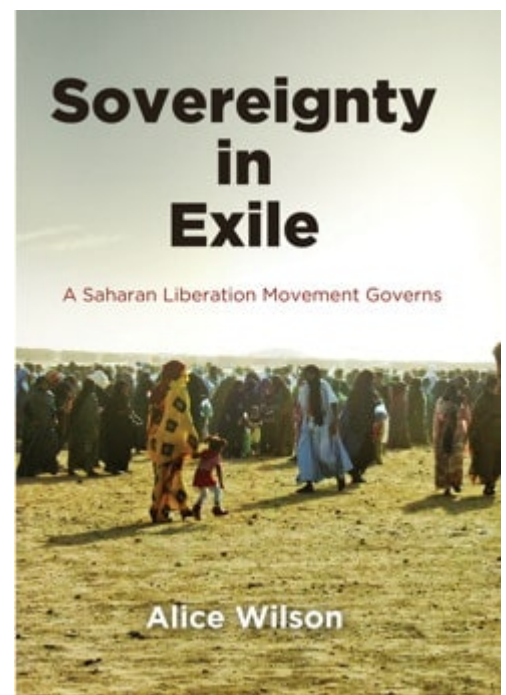
Wilson makes these governing practices the subject of her study through the conceptual grid of what she calls “projects of sovereignty.”

These multiple projects include both SADR, and competing (often tribal) affiliations that have historically constituted “alternative projects of sovereignty to state power” (38) in Saharan society. Using the metaphor of a palimpsest, Wilson argues that the project of state sovereignty has at various times attempted to overwrite tribal authority while, at other moments and in other realms, tribal authority has reasserted itself in sometimes unexpected and deceptive ways. Neither inherently antagonistic nor complementary, the multiple political projects emerge instead as necessarily co-constitutive since they are based upon the same sets of social relations. Readers familiar with the anthropology of the Middle East and North Africa will find Wilson’s novel incorporation of “older” topics of ethnographic research into the framework of sovereignty, such as tribe, particularly refreshing in this respect. Readers interested in Western Sahara, meanwhile, will find this ethnography indispensable for insight into a complex political landscape usually approached through the institutional frameworks of international relations and conflict resolution studies.



Sovereignty in Exile's contributions extend well beyond regionally specific ethnographic insights, however. By analytically foregrounding social relations, Wilson avoids a preoccupation with legal definitions of sovereignty, preventing abstract institutional forms from overtaking her framework. Rather than taking recourse to normative definitions based on “kingship” or the state, Wilson’s definition remains open to conceptualizing forms of authority as they are constituted “on the ground,” so to speak. One of the strengths of this social relations-based approach stems from how it “decenters state power from discussions of sovereignty” (9) and, as a result, remains open to recognizing different forms of sovereignty.

Just as impressively, Wilson’s approach displaces the direct relation between sovereign and territory that underpins normative conceptions of modern nation-state sovereignty. In doing so, Wilson extends insights from the anthropology of property, whereby property is a social relation between persons by means of things, into the realm of political authority (Verdery 1998). Situated first among social relations, sovereignty is made operative through control over “things” that may, or may not, be territorial in nature. This understanding of sovereignty as constituted by social relations and effected “in relation to resources, not necessarily in territorial form” (7) presents a framework particularly apposite to the context of the Sahara where what is often at stake in matters of authority is not landownership per se, but control over mobile forms of property, including livestock and labor (see also Scheele 2012).



The strength of this framework, then, lies in its capacity to trace the changing lineaments of sovereignty without presupposing the form that it takes.



Through a series of carefully observed examples, Wilson shows how political authority in the camps has been made and remade through the medium of social relations. She connects shifts in sovereignty during SADR's governance to the production of new political subjects. Drawing upon stories and documentation from SADR's "early revolutionary" period of the late 1970s and early 1980s, Wilson shows how the implementation of mass participation in camp governance displaced kin-based membership through the production of a new public domain. The state-movement's revolutionary policies effectively diminished the kin group's role (in Saharan society, the *firgan*, or collection of tents) in shaping refugees' sense of social belonging and political affiliation. Whereas SADR radically reshaped social relations through a series of "early revolutionary" interventions, *Sovereignty in Exile* suggests that the ramifications of these changes were complex and far from unidirectional.

From one chapter to the next, the study deftly moves across time, from "early" to "late" revolutionary camp life, as well as across different realms of governance: conflict resolution and the law; the appropriation of labor and the distribution of goods; elections; and the changing regulation of marriage in the camps. During the aforementioned "early revolutionary" period of governance in the refugee camps, for example, SADR attempted to reconfigure marital arrangements that had previously been guided largely by tribal relations. In doing so, the state-movement sought to replace marriage based upon hierarchies within and across tribes with practices that would mark equality between citizens. As the state-movement's revolutionary aims gave way to more modest interventions, and as a ceasefire transformed life in the camps, customary marriage practices returned. In their reemergence, however, new configurations of state, tribal and market relations in the refugee camps reshaped marriage practices anew.

In this way, changing governance in the Sahrawi camps illustrates how sovereignty is made and remade through attempts to manage social relations across a variety of realms.



Sovereignty in Exile offers several important contributions to the burgeoning anthropological literature on sovereignty. The ethnography's focus on the camps' internal governance contrasts with recent studies that consider the performative qualities required of would-be sovereigns seeking recognition in the international realm (Rutherford 2012; Bobick 2017). Indeed, many of these "external" dynamics of sovereignty are bracketed in *Sovereignty in Exile*, and yet have been integral to the refugee camps' existence as a political space. Thinking of these "internal" and "external" dynamics in tandem suggests that these approaches could be complementary, rather than mutually exclusive. By focusing on relatively quotidian governing practices, the ethnography also departs from more well-worn approaches in political anthropology that examine sovereignty through the instantiation of violence and the rule of the exception. Wilson's approach has the advantage of examining how sovereignty operates through specific governing practices, from committee work to the regulation of marriage practices to the distribution of resources, rather than through an overarching logic of power. Much the way that postcolonial studies has demonstrated how competing forms of political authority coexisted with the colonial state's limited reach, Wilson draws our attention to multiple, overlapping projects of sovereignty in a context of unresolved and ongoing decolonisation. In this respect, *Sovereignty in Exile* exemplifies one of political anthropology's longstanding strengths of providing a more elastic, and less normative, approach to understanding relations of authority, while taking this approach in new and exciting directions.

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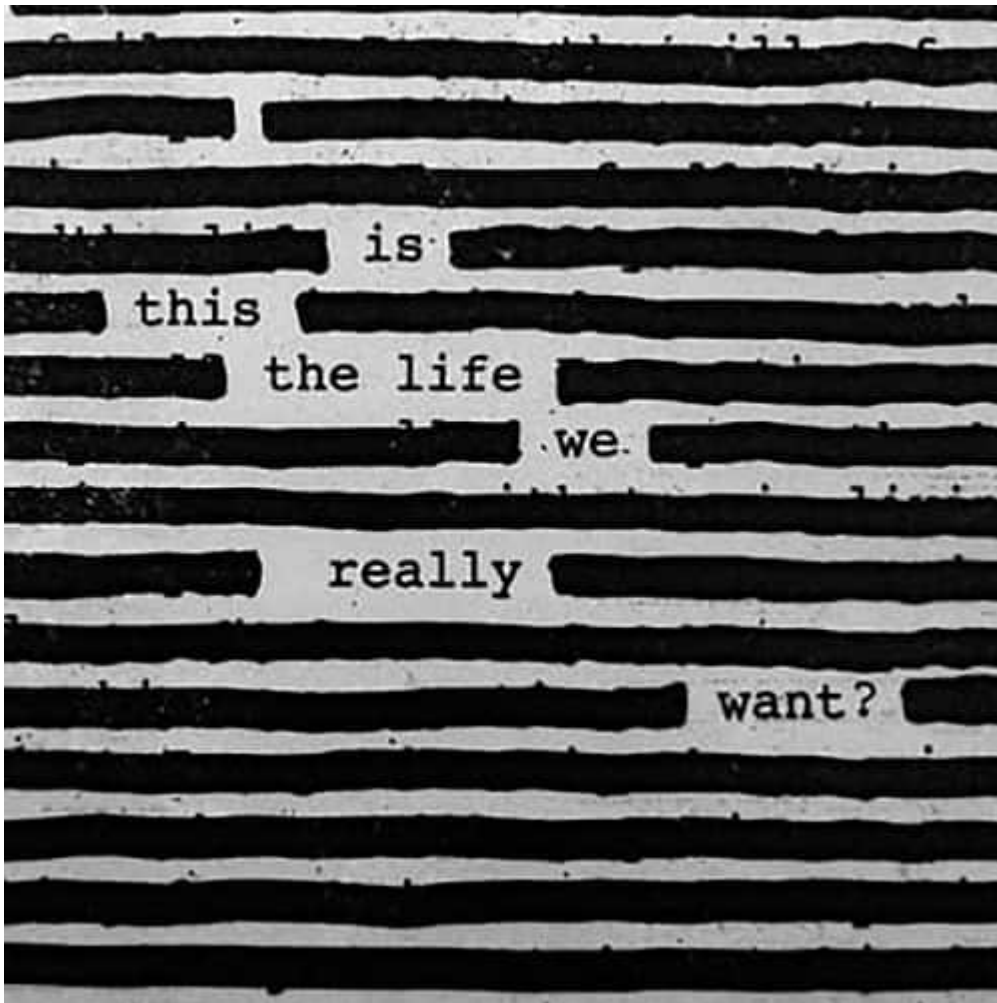
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51 essential rules for doing research

Julie Billaud
June, 2018



1. Be free.
2. Eat sweets.
3. Do not go to university (but use the university to print for free).
4. Resist academic hierarchy.
5. Do not believe what professors say.
6. Doubt, always.
7. Do not write research projects.
8. Keep your distance from people who get grants for research projects.
9. Go for walks methodically (between three and four times a day).
10. Waste your day in a coherent way.
11. Have friends.
12. Maintain friendships, be maintained by them.
13. Go to the movies and watch movies.



14. Dance and go to dance performances.
15. Talk with and meet artists.
16. Talk with animals (and plants too).
17. Organize parties.
18. Have fun.
19. Enjoy yourself: Never give up pleasure.
20. Have a routine.
21. Have a loving spirit, be in love and kiss (if necessary).
22. Trust your own skills.
23. Beware of yourself: always check your own statements.
24. Love your own intuitions and embrace them with all your heart until proven otherwise.
25. Give up on yourself.
26. Don't hope.
27. Be elegant.
28. Never (never!) give up style.
29. Be brave.
30. Seize opportunities.
31. Be a rock star.
32. Categorically reject mediocrity.
33. Spend time with children.
34. Nurture your dreams professionally.
35. Sleep and take naps (with method).
36. Procrastinate periodically as if there was no future.
37. Give yourself time.
38. Read other things than scientific articles.
39. Read more, write less.
40. Read several texts at once.
41. Write several texts at once.
42. Stop writing so you can write.
43. Listen to people, observe them, talk to them.
44. Do not recognize authority.



45. Categorically deny authority.
46. Be absolutely egalitarian: make no compromise with equality.
47. Be prepared to change your mind while remaining independent.
48. Never give up independence.
49. Get drunk (with poetry, with words, with wine).
50. Disobey.
51. Be radically free.

51 REGLES ESSENTIELLES POUR FAIRE DE LA RECHERCHE

1. Être libre.
2. Manger des gâteaux.
3. Ne pas aller à l'université (mais utiliser l'université pour imprimer gratos).
4. Résister à la hiérarchie académique.
5. Ne pas croire ce que disent les professeurs.
6. Douter, toujours.
7. Ne pas écrire des projets de recherche.
8. Garder ses distances avec les gens qui remportent des financements pour des projets de recherche.
9. Se promener méthodiquement (entre trois et quatre fois par jour).
10. Gaspiller sa journée de manière cohérente.
11. Avoir des amis.
12. Entretenir ses amitiés, se faire entretenir par elles.
13. Aller au cinéma et regarder des films.
14. Danser et aller aux spectacles de danse.
15. Parler avec et rencontrer des artistes.
16. Parler avec les animaux (et les plantes aussi).
17. Faire des fêtes.
18. S'amuser.
19. Prendre du plaisir : ne jamais renoncer au plaisir.



20. Avoir une routine.
21. Avoir l'esprit amoureux, être amoureux et s'embrasser (si nécessaire).
22. Faire confiance à ses propres compétences.
23. Se méfier de soi-même : toujours vérifier ses propres affirmations.
24. Aimer ses intuitions et les embrasser de tout son cœur jusqu'à preuve du contraire
25. Renoncer à soi-même.
26. Ne pas espérer.
27. Être élégant.
28. Ne jamais (jamais !) renoncer au style.
29. Avoir du courage.
30. Saisir les occasions.
31. Être une rock star.
32. Refuser catégoriquement la médiocrité.
33. Passer du temps avec les enfants.
34. Entretenir le rêve professionnellement.
35. Dormir et faire des siestes (avec méthode).
36. Procrastiner périodiquement comme s'il n'y avait pas de future.
37. Se donner le temps.
38. Lire autre chose que des articles scientifiques.
39. Lire plus, écrire moins.
40. Lire plusieurs textes à la fois.
41. Écrire plusieurs textes à la fois.
42. Arrêter d'écrire pour pouvoir écrire.
43. Écouter les gens, les observer, leur parler.
44. Ne pas reconnaître l'autorité.
45. Refuser catégoriquement l'autorité.
46. Être absolument égalitaire : ne faire aucun compromis avec l'égalité.
47. Être prêt à changer d'opinion tout en restant indépendant.
48. Ne jamais renoncer à l'indépendance.
49. S'enivrer.
50. Désobéir.



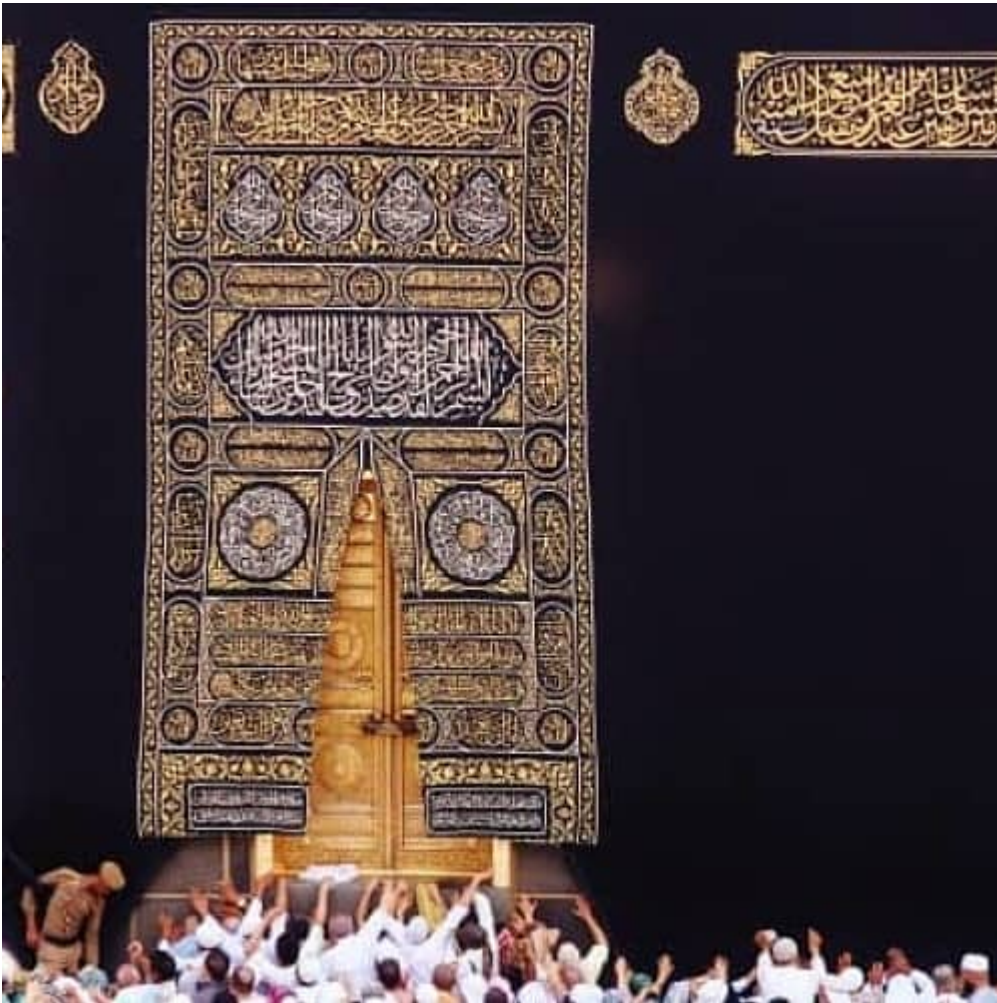
51. Etre radicalement libre.

P.I.R: Programme Indépendant de Recherche, Geneva, Switzerland.

(PLEASE make suggestions for additional rules in the 'Comments' section below)

A Note on MUHUM

Till Mostowlansky
June, 2018



Muslim Humanitarianism - short [MUHUM](#) - is a platform that seeks to foster debate on the complex relationship between charity, philanthropy, humanitarianism, development and Islam.

In anthropological and historical discussions about the emergence of humanitarian thought much emphasis is put on the global, and often violent, spread of “originally” Christian or Western ideas. This approach is countered by studies that underline the existence of alternative humanitarian genealogies that are rooted in the religions and philosophies of non-Western societies. Yet to what extent do such broad civilizational classifications withstand the force of fine-grained ethnographic and historical investigation? Which political and ideological positions exert influence on the existing takes on humanitarianism? And how - methodologically and theoretically - might one approach the concerns at hand?



Taking the perspectives of anthropology and history MUHUM invites fresh contributions on Muslim humanitarianism, development, philanthropy and charity, on how Muslim institutions, networks and individuals negotiate these concepts and on how they thereby foster manifold social, spatial and material transformations.

Contributions to MUHUM should aim to engage with a broad audience of scholars, activists and practitioners and can include text and/or visuals, snippets from the field and reviews of newly published works (max 800 words). For those interested in submitting material please get in touch with [till.mostowlansky](mailto:till.mostowlansky@graduateinstitute.ch) [at] graduateinstitute.ch

MUHUM is run by Till Mostowlansky, Research Fellow at The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies Geneva. MUHUM is linked to Till's research project "Genealogies of Development: Shia Muslim Giving Across Asia" which is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. If you would like to find out more about "Genealogies of Development" please click [here](#).

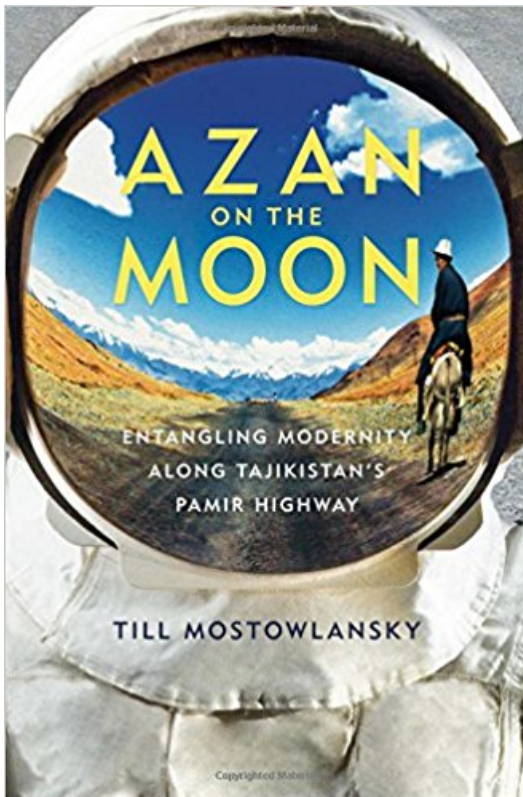
Till Mostowlansky on Muslim Humanitarianism

Allegra
June, 2018



Till Mostowlansky is a Research Fellow at the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the Graduate Institute in Geneva who was awarded an Ambizione grant from the Swiss National Science Foundation. His research explores notions of modernity, development, charity, humanitarianism in the borderlands of Afghanistan, Tajikistan, China and Pakistan. Allegra interviewed him to understand what he intends to study in the years to come.

Your first monograph, 'Azan on the Moon', was an ethnography of the border region along the Pamir Highway that explored issues of infrastructure and modernity. How did you move from such a focus to your current research on Shia development organizations in the borderlands of Afghanistan, Tajikistan, China and Pakistan?



In 'Azan on the Moon' I focus on modernity in specific sites along the Pamir Highway traversing southern Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In the course of my research I encountered a range of past and present actors promoting ideas of modernity: Soviet officials, road constructors, Islamic missionaries, the Tajik government and, of course, development institutions. In this regard, several NGOs of great importance in everyday life, especially in the western Pamirs, are part of the Aga Khan Development Network. The Aga Khan Development Network is chaired by the Aga Khan IV, leader of Shia Nizari Ismailis worldwide, and has been present in Tajikistan since the early 1990s when the Aga Khan

Foundation provided much needed humanitarian aid to people in the Pamirs in the context of the Tajik civil war. A majority of Pamiris are Ismaili and since the 1990s the Aga Khan Development Network has installed a powerful development machinery in the region which operates through close ties to the international donor scene and is based on the Aga Khan's religious authority.

In my first book on modernity, development institutions were just one part of the story, but I always felt that the merging of concepts from international development with forms of Islamic legitimacy deserved more attention. Once I had finished my research for 'Azan on the Moon' I began to focus on the role of Aga Khan institutions in everyday life and I soon realized that this required an understanding of transnational and transregional dynamics. Ismailis are not only present in Tajikistan, but also in adjacent border areas in Afghanistan, Pakistan, China, and far beyond in other places in Asia, Africa, Europe and North America.

Initially I followed institutional and inter-personal links from Tajikistan to northern Pakistan where I began fieldwork in 2012. Some areas in northern



Pakistan have been veritable development laboratories for Aga Khan institutions since the late British colonial period and have not only inspired later work in Tajikistan but have also influenced broader strands of rural development around the world. In northern Pakistan, there are, however, also sizeable Twelver Shia communities which have begun to compete in these development endeavours and who offer historical and contemporary intersections with Ismaili work throughout Asia. In the course of my research I have followed these connections in the borderlands and beyond. I am invested in better understanding these lesser-known forms of globalization that transcend a range of assumed frontiers - political, religious, institutional and social.

In your book 'Azan on the Moon', you defend the idea that spaces of 'marginality', of economic and political exclusion, are simultaneously spaces where people strive toward a modernity perfected by tradition. It seems like the organizations you are planning to study deeply contribute to shaping people's vision of a 'better future'. How is this 'future' imagined by organizations such as the Aga Khan? What kinds of translocal social imaginaries are mobilized in order to foster popular adhesion to such projects?

These are fantastic questions which certainly lie at the heart of the project. At the same time, it is perhaps too early to come up with polished answers; I hope to be able to provide these in my next book. For now, let me try to tackle this from a broad angle: research that I have already completed suggests that there are often disagreements between different actors



about how a 'better future' might look. I found that this is the case within the mentioned institutions, both in Aga Khan organizations and in Twelver Shia NGOs, but also amongst local populations in interaction with them. Positioning



vis-à-vis the state, pressures faced by donors, conflicting political legacies and questions of class, race and gender add more layers of complexity.

The official position of all organizations with which I have worked can be summarized with the “unity in diversity” mantra that is popular with humanitarian organizations across the globe. This mantra incorporates the notion of shared humanity that is at the same time structured by national, ethnic, cultural and religious divisions. In everyday encounters, this mantra is of course contested as resources have to be secured, boundaries have to be defended and authority needs to be reinforced. In short, the idea of a ‘common future’ for humankind is continuously challenged by centrifugal forces pulling at and adapting this abstract vision. In this respect, the Muslim NGOs on which I focus are not different from other humanitarian and development organizations that highlight their secular legitimacy. I think it is important to emphasize that Muslim organizations which have come under much scrutiny and suspicion since 9/11 often promote the hope of a ‘common human future’ as much as other NGOs. As anthropological research suggests the unintended afterlives of their projects, too, are related to broader issues in international development. In my view, this is less about these organizations’ alternative ethical foundations – the genealogies of their visions for development – but about systemic inequality in the development sector, the rise of development bureaucracy and the continuous expansion of neoliberal managerial practices.

You argue that Shia organizations are part of a broader turn to development in the Muslim world, where charitable institutions and forms of giving are entangled with international and nation-state development discourses and practices. How did these organizations emerge historically? In which ways are they connected to ‘the West’ and to national development projects?

Existing literature on this question is still patchy, but there are now a number of insightful studies in the making. What these studies tell us is that ongoing reform within charitable Muslim institutions alters concepts of administration, giving and



selfhood. This seems to be a phenomenon that is quite pervasive across different countries and regions. In my own research, I have come across managerial reinterpretations of Muslim charity, ideas of 'meritocracy' and a shift away from a focus on the intentional aspect of giving to results-based debates. Clearly, fragments of neoliberalist discourse have made their way into such discussions. But it is important to note that this is not a one-way process. These fragments also get appropriated into broader Islamic humanitarian thought. Seemingly, Young's sociological satire on 'meritocracy' and events from early Islamic history are not necessarily incompatible.



The question of how the specific organizations on which I focus have emerged historically is quite crucial. The short story is that colonial and post-Cold War events were central for Ismaili institutions to expand, first in the context of the legal framework of

British India. More generally, the legal and economic infrastructure of the British Empire served Ismailis, but also Twelver Shia communities, as a steppingstone to build long-lasting communal institutions and networks. In this regard, mobility between Asia, Africa and Europe was important for trade and to raise funds. Coming back to the borderlands of today's Afghanistan, China, Pakistan and Tajikistan, colonial and Cold War interventions and nation-state development have blazed trails for a range of different Muslim institutions. Without British telegraph lines and mail services communal schools and scholarships would have hardly been built in northern Pakistan in the 1940s. Ismailis in today's Tajikistan experienced the full force of Soviet modernization policies and infrastructures which the Aga Khan Development Network later utilized to enter Central Asia in



the 1990s. The NATO invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 opened the ground for large-scale development projects in Badakhshan and Chinese construction and investments continue to provide opportunities and restrictions to Muslim organizations in the region.

Your research is focusing on a rather large area covering four countries. Which research methods are you planning to use? Why, in your view, are 'borderlands' particularly appropriate regions to focus on when researching development?

As mentioned earlier, my choice to focus on the intersection of four countries – Afghanistan, China, Pakistan and Tajikistan – has developed quite naturally from my interest in the broader social history of the organizations on which I focus. I have been following personal and institutional connections for a number of years now. These journeys have not only led me across multiple borders in the region, but also to institutions and diasporic communities in, for example, the UK, India and Iran. My approach is anthropological, with a strong interest in historical aspects that has emerged from the reading of local histories about development projects in the area.

The question of 'borderlands' is an important one for my project on two planes: first, I see my project as situated in the broader endeavour of studying phenomena at the fringes of Central and South Asia outside the containers of the nation-state or 'the region.' For a historical and anthropological understanding of Shia organizations operating in the area



this seems inevitable to me. The centre of my study is thus not only located at the intersection of four countries, but at a former Cold War frontier that continues to be subject to various forms of imperial interventions. Speaking with Kuan-Hsing



Chen, I see this as both a duty and opportunity to consciously decolonize, “de-Cold War” and de-imperialize my own thinking without neglecting the historical legacy of these processes. Second, with my project I would like to engage with scholarship on borderlands that has brought forward some intriguing studies over the past decade. A useful conclusion in the field is that borderlands do not just offer alternative views on supposed centres but that they are sites where entities like ‘the state’ are both done and undone. For the purpose of studying development organizations I would like to speak of ‘humanitarian borderlands’ which are crucial to the very existence of the organization as a whole. This is where ‘success’ can be achieved and battles get lost. These ‘humanitarian borderlands’ do not have to be located in the fringes of the nation-state. As institutionally defined ‘borderlands’ they can be the ‘suffering other’ in the heart of the metropolis, too.

#Review: Working the System

Chloé Buire
June, 2018



[*Working the System*](#) is a great book. It holds the promise of its subtitle and offers a deep ‘political ethnography of the new Angola’. Through rich ethnographic snippets infused with empathy to the people whom the book is about, Schubert builds a strong analysis of ‘the reciprocity and consociality of the power relations’ that have shaped society in Luanda since the end of the war (p. 5). But *Working the System* also speaks beyond the specificities of ‘the new Angola’. It develops subtle ideas about the (un)making of race and social classes, the workings of collective memory and personal aspiration, and the double script of familiarity and estrangement behind the construction of political subjectivities.

As a scholar working on Angola myself, I can only welcome Schubert’s precious ethnography about such a particular place (the capital city of Luanda) at such a specific time, between the end of the civil war in 2002 and the political turn of



December 2016, when President dos Santos announced he would not run up for the 2017 elections, after 38 years in power. Moving away from the flat picture of an ‘oil-rich, neo-authoritarian state’ where press freedom is restricted, elections rigged and privileges of incumbency abused, Schubert introduces us to dozens of people — some anonymised ordinary citizens, others public speaking on the record.

All are portrayed in such a vivid and empathetic way that we close the book with the feeling we somehow know them personally.

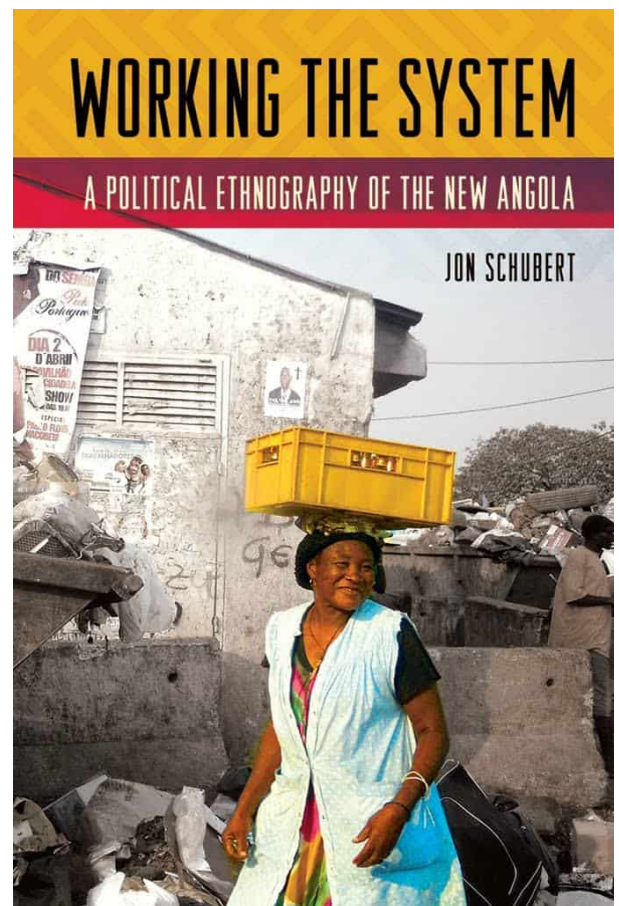
We meet Senhor Adriano, the nostalgic veteran deeply rooted in his neighbourhood; with him, we come to regret the past glory of the MPLA (the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola), yesterday’s vanguard liberation movement, today the entrenched party-state. As we sit for a beer with Simão, we share the dreams and struggles of this young entrepreneur whose world is divided between Luanda, Paris and Brussels. We contemplate the city through the disillusioned eyes of Dona Mariana, a witty sexagenarian who is tuned in to the latest gossip on social media. Leandro shares with us his aspirations to a ‘good life’: branded clothes, big cars and fancy parties in Luanda’s famously overpriced nightclubs.



Schubert is definitely a good story-teller. But his writing skillfully keeps the balance between the sensitivity of an account at the first person and the reflexivity of an analysis in dialogue with a wide range of scholars. The result is that every encounter sounds both intimate and purposeful. The text effectively 'decenter[s] and delocalize[s] the anthropological gaze [by moving] between different social strata and locales, not only imitating [the author's] own movement as a researcher across spatial and social divides but also attempting to connect seemingly disparate realities that are in fact intimately connected' (p. 22). Because Schubert never takes for granted what is, or what is not, political, he manages to unravel the very concrete ways by which hegemony is coproduced 'beyond the cultivation of consent by the dominant' (pp. 2-3).

In chapters 1 and 2, Schubert shows how a hegemonic system relies on a double process of embedding and territorialising memory. Chapter 1 offers a critical reading of the official history built by the ruling party. Against the picture of a straight trajectory leading from a long liberation struggle in the 1960s and 1970s to the booming decade fed by petrodollars of 2002-2012, Schubert exposes the mechanisms of 'an amnesiac master narrative' that allows the MPLA to 'equate peace with infrastructure reconstruction' and to dodge any talks about 'substantial reconciliation' (pp. 51-52). However, this distorted narrative also prevents the ruling party from instrumentalising national history. It actually opens possibilities for contestation elaborated throughout the rest of the book.

In order to illustrate how memory politics infuse daily life in Luanda, chapter 2





introduces us to a series of landmarks in a neighbourhood known as the cradle of the liberation struggle. As we listen to the memories of local residents, old and young, we get a sense of the place. Schubert takes inspiration from Navaro-Yashin's 'affective geographies' to bring to life the unresolved tensions that animate the relationship between historical events, official discourses and counter-memories. My only regret here is the lack of photographic record and the relative weakness of the map sketches.

The following three chapters open up the discussion to broader conceptual discussions that are relevant to anyone in political anthropology. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 discuss how dynamics of entitlement and subjection are negotiated on a daily basis through abstract concepts ("race", "class", "patronage", "good life") and concrete practices (how people address one another, how money circulates, how critiques are being verbalised - or not).

Chapter 3 explores the complex classism that plays out in Luanda. It describes a urban society marked by racial stratification, where decades of colonialism have put whites and *mestiços* at the top; and structured around a narrow nationalist narrative that distinguishes the role of the vanguard from the homogenized adherence of the masses. In 30 pages, Schubert accomplishes a veritable academic 'tour de force'. Not only does he deconstruct the interplay of race and class in the formation of Angolan elites - a topic that is still largely taboo in Angola nowadays; but he convincingly argues that this interplay - and the fact that it isn't settled on any clear definition of *angolanidade* ('angolanness')— actually allows both the MPLA leadership and its opponents to mobilise discourses of 'authenticity' without ever stabilising them into a rhetoric of autochthony for political gains.

Chapter 4 develops further this double-edged relationship to 'tradition' in Luanda through the question of kinship, both real and symbolic. Responding to a central trope in African political studies, i.e. patronage and corruption, Schubert unravels how family links are mobilized for personal advancement - a classic system of clientelism known as *cunhas* in Angola. He bravely sews together public stories of influence peddling with his own encounters with various administrations, in order



to describe how familiarity and hierarchy are defined and negotiated in relation to each other.

Some anecdotes are exhilarating – such as this young employee at a cellphone shop left totally puzzled by the fact one of her patrons decided to call her ‘mum’ in order to show respect.

But besides the many jokes that circulate in Luanda about these connections and their sometimes haphazard mobilisations in everyday life, the reality of ‘naming practices and naming taboos’ constitutes ‘an ambivalent resource’ (p. 136) that can backfire on those who are unable to activate the right *cunha* in the right situation. Here, I expected Schubert to push his analysis further. I’d argue that *cunhas* are not always ambivalent. People are often forced to mobilise a personal connection –not because they need to achieve a specific outcome but because they will literally lose family and friends for not doing so. Moreover, daily life in Luanda is not only a matter of activating a *cunha* but also of being oneself mobilised by/for a relative. Once forced to ‘lend’ their symbolic capital to a ‘relative’, anyone can find herself caught in a web of reciprocity that implies not only the ‘borrower’ but the network of this person. In many instances, *cunhas* are impossible to escape.

Chapter 5 tackles what is probably the best-known aspect of Luanda nowadays: the confounding high cost of daily life. Elites unabashedly show off their luxury shopping while international reports point to repeated human rights abuses across the country. The contradictions of a ‘magnificent and beggar land’ are well known (Soares de Oliveira, 2015) but Schubert is one of the first scholars to seriously ask what these contradictions do to the way citizens project themselves into the New Angola. Beyond listing easy money making schemes or ostentatious behaviours, Schubert describes what he calls a ‘culture of immediatism’ where ‘ideas of a better life are not just limited to overnight wealth and flashy cars but also include desires *for* the state, its services, and a normal life, cultivating the consent of large parts of the citizenship.’ (p. 157) What is missing in this account,



however, is the highly gendered bias that affects this new imaginary of citizenship and entitlement. The three main protagonists in this chapter are Leandro, Simão and Zeca, three young men. Schubert notes that to all of them, the culture of immediatism implies sacrifices and romantic relationships seem to be first on the list: 'here, the women only want your money', says Leandro (p. 148). Hearing what a few young women could say about their relationships with these young entrepreneurs would have probably given more weight to the idea of a collusion between love and business interests, either by offering an alternative vision of romance or by providing explanations about why 'money' is so crucial to young women...

If we put the gender bias aside, Schubert insightfully points towards the disruptive potential of immediatism.

All his respondents express a certain 'moral unease' when they admit that their wealth is directly conditioned by their complicity with the corrupt party-state. To Schubert, these ultimate 'moral reservations' indicate that the hegemony of the ruling party is constantly renegotiated on the ground; they also 'open up a terrain of political contestation', explored in the last sections of the book (p. 157).

Chapter 6 indeed focuses on the open calls for protest that multiplied in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. The chapter focuses on the run-up to the general elections of September 2012 and astutely brings back together the manifold political repertoires detailed in the previous chapters. We thus see how a handful of young activists unravel the dominant historical narrative imposed by the MPLA and how a collective effort of citizen's scrutiny exposes the myth of unhindered growth in the post-war era. However, because chapter 6 closes on the crushing victory of the MPLA at the polls in 2012, the general conclusion doesn't brim with optimism. Schubert rather closes the book on the 'very ambivalent political subjectivities' (p. 185) at work within the system. 'People creatively use the elements of the system to work it', summarises Schubert, before carefully hypothesising that these 'inventions of the everyday' somehow express



‘alternative political visions of what Angola is, or could be’ (ibid.).

With the distance we have today, such a conclusion fails to address the wave of change that has been rolling over Luanda since the election of dos Santos’ successor in August 2017 (after the book went to print). Against all expectations, President João Lourenço boldly attacked the oligarchy by dismissing about three hundred high-ranking public functionaries, including the sons and daughters of his predecessor. We are now inclined to think that the strongest ‘disruption’ that triggered change in Angola eventually came less from the work of a handful of activists in 2011-2012, than from the brutal economic crisis of late 2014. The epilogue is thus a very welcome addition to the book. Indeed, if in 2012, the possibility of open resistance to the regime remained ‘very ambivalent’, five years later, the ‘culture of immediatism’ described in chapter 5 has definitely reached its limits seriously crippling the hegemonic machinery.

So if in the detail, one could argue that Schubert’s analysis of Angola’s opposition repertoires somehow fell short of current civil society developments, the broader argument of *Working the System* remains valid: ‘even explicitly oppositional political action has to tap into the repertoires of dominant ideology to be effective’ (p. 159). As a matter of fact, the capacity of this book to absorb the shock of fast-paced political transformation in Angola is certainly the best proof that it is worth not only being read but being read again!

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[Featured image](#) (cropped) by [gabriel.macedo](#) ([flickr.com](#), [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#))

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On the Recent Rulings against Academics for Peace in Turkey

Allegra
June, 2018



The criminal proceedings against several hundreds of academics in Turkey who signed a petition for peace (Academics for Peace) continue in Istanbul. They are individually sued in various Assize Courts. Some cases are recently concluded, the courts of first instances found the academics guilty for “carrying out terrorist propaganda” and sentenced them to 15 months of prison. We are currently waiting the decision of the Court of Appeal.

We want to highlight these rulings against the signatories and request for urgent international support from our European colleagues.

In a petition made public in January 2016^[1], more than two thousand academics and researchers from Turkey, supported by several hundred international



academics—called on the Turkish government to abide by domestic and international law and to return to the peace process that had been interrupted in July 2015. After the petition was made public, the signatories were specifically targeted by President Erdoğan and subsequently attacked, threatened and became subject to administrative and criminal investigations. Some were arrested and kept in prison. In October 2017, some signatories of the petition, mostly the ones who are or were working at the universities in Istanbul, started to receive subpoenas, summoning them to the court with an accusation of carrying out terrorist propaganda.

As of April 30, 2018, more than 260 signatories are individually sued in various Assize Courts of Istanbul. They are separately tried according to hundreds of copy-pasted indictments with an identical content. There is also one group case against four signatories who read a second press statement of Academics for Peace on March 10, 2016. This statement condemned the persecution of signatory academics and affirmed signatories' commitment to the wording of the petition of January 2016. The four signatories are arrested and were held in pre-trial detention for 40 days.

There are 2212 signatories of the petition, only around 300 of them have been sued so far. Furthermore 386 signatories have been officially listed as persons affiliated to terrorist organisations in the state of emergency decree-laws, dismissed from their positions, banned from public service for life and had their passports cancelled. But there is only a limited overlapping between the “sued signatories” and the “decreed signatories”.

The indictment included no attestations that are based on factual evidences, was full of inconsistencies and even manipulated the facts by altering the translated versions of the petition[2]. Against this arbitrariness, the signatories have defended themselves with emphasizing their responsibility as academics that instigates them not to remain silent against historical occurrences. As researchers, lecturers and scientists from numerous fields, they have all underlined their responsibility as a point of intersection, which made them come



together through the demand for peace.

The differences between the qualifications of the “crime” committed by the signatories by different courts demonstrate also arbitrariness of the judicial proceedings. The individual cases against the signatories are engaged with the charge of carrying out terrorist propaganda. The indictment in the group case against the four academics also, initially accused them under Article 7/2 of the Anti-Terror Act[3]. However, at the first hearing on April 22, 2016, the Public Prosecutor announced that he considered a different qualification for the “crime” committed and intended to launch a new investigation under Article 301 of the Penal Code. That article prohibits “degrading the Turkish Nation and the State of the Republic of Turkey and the organs and institutions of the State.” [4] The Prosecutor requested the Court to stop the proceedings under Article 7/2 pending the required permission by the Minister of Justice for an investigation on charges under Article 301. The awaited decision by the Ministry of Justice in relation to the request for permission for an investigation under Article 301 of the Penal Code has reached the Court in November 2017.

In order to define an act as propaganda for a terrorist organization under Article 7/2 of the Anti-Terror Act, there must be an act having the characteristics of propaganda, which carried out in such a way that legitimizes or praises the coercive, violent and threatening actions of terrorist organizations or encourages the employment of these methods. In the Academics for Peace’s petition, there is no single expression having the characteristics of propaganda in favour of a terrorist organization. Neither does it legitimize or praise the coercive, violent and threatening methods of a terrorist organization nor does it encourage the employment of such methods.

As to the charge under Article 301 of the Penal Code, the act of signing the petition cannot be considered an offence under the third paragraph of the article, which explicitly excludes from its scope “expressions of an opinion for the purpose of criticism”. [5]



The focal point of all the hearings against Academics for Peace was the lack of clarity regarding the charges. Along with the requests for immediate acquittal, defence lawyers underlined the uncertainty surrounding the definition of the charges by pointing to the decision of the Minister to grant permission for an investigation under Article 301 in the case against four academics. Lawyers of some signatories requested the courts to merge the cases of all academics, including the one viewed before the 13th Assize Court against four signatories. They emphasized the need to avoid inconsistencies in the charges on which the prosecution will proceed and in the conclusions to be reached by different courts in relation to one identical act. On similar grounds, the courts with the exception of 35th Assize Court, dismissed the requests for rejoinder of the cases.

This routine of requests, pleas, rejections and objections had kept going on until the 23th of February, where the 34th Assize Court of Istanbul had given its first expedited judgment and found three of the academics guilty for “carrying out terrorist propaganda” under article 7/2 of the Anti-Terror Act. They have been sentenced to 15 months of imprisonment as the courts have decided that the punishment shall be aggravated as the crime of carrying out terrorist propaganda has been deemed to be committed through means of media.

The courts, relying on the Penal Procedure Code, have offered the academics an option: the deferment of the announcement of the verdict, which enables the court not to announce the decision, and in the case that the defendant will not be found guilty for another crime in a certain period, to foreclose the case. When the accused accepts this mechanism to be applied, then the qualification of the action as a crime becomes officialised and the accused becomes deprived of any rights on appealing the case at a higher court[\[6\]](#).

Until today 13 academics have their judgments delivered and 12 of them have accepted to resort to the mechanism of the deferment of the announcement of the verdict. And so far, one signatory had refused the application of this mechanism. As can be seen in the verdict (which is available in the appendices), the Court had



rejected the suspension of the punishment upon the grounds that she had not exhibited any expression of remorse. This academic has applied to the Court for Appeal (Istinaf) and she faces the risk of imprisonment.

Hundreds of other proceedings against other signatories are still on the course. It is still not clear in which way these 13 first rulings will affect the copy-pasted cases considering that the judiciary of the country is collapsing day by day under the state of emergency regime. The first case before the Court of Appeal will probably create a strong judicial precedent that will be highly persuasive while the decisions are made in the future cases against the other signatories. All signatories are tried before various Assize Courts in Istanbul. Istanbul Regional Court of Justice is the competent court for the appeals. The cases will be reviewed by the same two criminal chambers of this Regional Court having competence on cases related to the Anti-Terror Act.

Today, it is crucial to ask an international support for our colleagues.

- We would like to invite you to write a short analysis on the verdicts delivered so far. For this purpose, we send you in the appendices the translation of the verdict against the signatory academic, who faces the risk of imprisonment. Please let us know if you were to write an analysis and to publish it on a blog of your choice so that we can also cross post it on the Blog of the Academics for Peace-Germany. If you wish to publish your analysis on this blog, you can directly send it to us.

- Many academics from different countries assist the hearings as observers. You can be in solidarity in the courtrooms. The presence of international observers during the hearings is crucial.

Please also feel free to distribute this call for solidarity among scholars who would be interested in supporting our call by either participating in the hearings or by writing a short analysis.

These actions for solidarity will certainly not suffice to change the course of this politically motivated trials, but certainly influence the way the hearings are held,



strengthen the legal struggle of the Academics for Peace under judicial harassment.

Thank you for your concern and solidarity.

Academics for Peace - Germany

Legal Working Group

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For more information about the judicial proceedings against Academics for Peace, including the reports and comments of the international observers, please check our blog: <https://afp.hypotheses.org>

For a detailed flow of the hearing processes, please check: <https://bianet.org/konu/trial-of-academics>

For the calendar of the hearings, please check: <https://calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?src=nstr2fppd37d7o0ekp83qu6e7g@group.calendar.google.com&ctz=Europe/Istanbul&pli=1>

[1] The text of the petition in English, French, German, Spanish, Arabic, Russian, Greek is available at <https://afp.hypotheses.org/documentation/the-peace-declaration>

[2] The English translation of the bill of Indictment is available at <https://afp.hypotheses.org/documentation/bill-of-indictment>. A commented



summary of bill of Indictment in English is available at <https://afp.hypotheses.org/documentation/a-commentary-on-the-indictment>

[3] The relevant part of Article 7/2 reads as follows: “Any person who disseminates propaganda in favour of a terrorist organisation by justifying, praising or encouraging the use of methods constituting coercion, violence or threats shall be liable to a term of imprisonment of one to five years. If this crime is committed through means of media, the penalty shall be increased by one half ...”. The English translation of the Anti-Terror Act is available at www.legislationline.org/download/action/.../Turkey_anti_terr_1991_am2010_en.pdf

[4] Article 301 of the Penal Code reads as follows:

“1. A person who publicly degrades the Turkish nation, the State of the Republic of Turkey, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, the Government of the Republic of Turkey or the judicial bodies of the State, shall be sentenced to a penalty of imprisonment for a term of six months to two years.

2. A person who publicly degrades the military or security organisations of the State shall be sentenced to a penalty in accordance with paragraph 1 above.
3. The expression of an opinion for the purpose of criticism does not constitute an offence.
4. The conduct of an investigation into such an offence shall be subject to the permission of the Minister of Justice.”

[5] For further information please see the Legal Brief on the “‘Crime’ Allegedly Committed by the Academics for Peace: Propaganda for a Terrorist Organization or Degrading the State of Turkish Republic? At <https://afp.hypotheses.org/236>

[6] For more information, See: <https://afp.hypotheses.org/408>.



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#Review: Moving by the Spirit

Vanessa Watters

June, 2018



In [*Moving by the Spirit: Pentecostal Social Life on the Zambian Copperbelt*](#), Naomi Haynes provides a compelling ethnographic study of the centrality of Pentecostal Christianity in contemporary Zambia. In doing so she attempts to



complicate the narrative of Pentecostalism as an individualising religion focused on personal salvation and success, instead highlighting the social productivity of Pentecostal theology and church communities. This formulation offers a more complex and nuanced vision of the Pentecostal movement. Haynes' attention to certain socially productive elements of Pentecostalism allows her to dig deep into her ethnographic material and to detail what animates the everyday, interpersonal relationships at the core of Pentecostal Christian communities on the Zambian Copperbelt.

In the introduction, Haynes outlines her concept of “moving by the spirit” as a way to interpret the motivating values, desires, and ambitions of Pentecostal Christians. On the Copperbelt, as we learn through various ethnographic vignettes, “moving by the spirit” is recognized in conspicuous and material ways, both big and small. While Haynes notes that major events such as marriage ceremonies and securing steady employment are important in establishing one's position, she tends to focus on smaller and more intricate interactions that index the everyday ways people realize “moving” in a positive direction. These include improving one's household furniture, purchasing an upright refrigerator, traveling to church meetings in taxis instead of shared public transportation, and membership in local *chilimba* credit associations. Haynes uses the eight thematic chapters of the book to unpack how these material signs of spiritual movement are carefully managed by church members and religious leaders. She argues that a key tension emerges through Pentecostals' pursuits of economic and spiritual movement - one between charisma and prosperity.

In Copperbelt Pentecostalism, charisma and charismatic authority must always outrank prosperity, lest the pursuit of wealth become an end in itself.

Haynes uses this tension between charisma and prosperity as a lens through which to examine questions of gender, value, debt, and schism in the Pentecostal church. In chapter one, Haynes positions contemporary Pentecostalism on the Copperbelt within a longer history of cycles of “boom and bust.” She argues that a



cyclical nature of prosperity and poverty informs the characteristics of Pentecostalism in the extractive mining economy of the Copperbelt. Drawing on Jane Guyer's work on marginal gains in Atlantic African economies (Guyer 2004), Haynes highlights how "moving by the spirit" is often understood through small, gradual improvements in people's everyday material conditions. This raises interesting questions for future studies of similar "boom and bust" economies in other geographic sites, and the relationships between religiosity and value they may engender. Chapter two provides ethnographic insight into how individuals cultivate the types of interpersonal relationship it takes to "move" in a positive direction, and how these relationships are typically built around asymmetries of wealth and status between church members. Haynes describes these asymmetric relationships as necessarily comprised of "both stratification and sociality - of economic difference *and* of relationships that span that difference" (pp. 47).

Chapters three and four examine how church members cultivate relationships with pastors and church leaders and the challenging work of negotiating money and other gifts publicly given by congregants to religious leaders. These gifts, or "seed offerings," are meant to facilitate positive "breakthroughs" in the personal lives of church goers. But Haynes also documents the tensions these gifts create by challenging the egalitarian and democratic promises of Pentecostalism to bestow the gifts of God equally among believers.

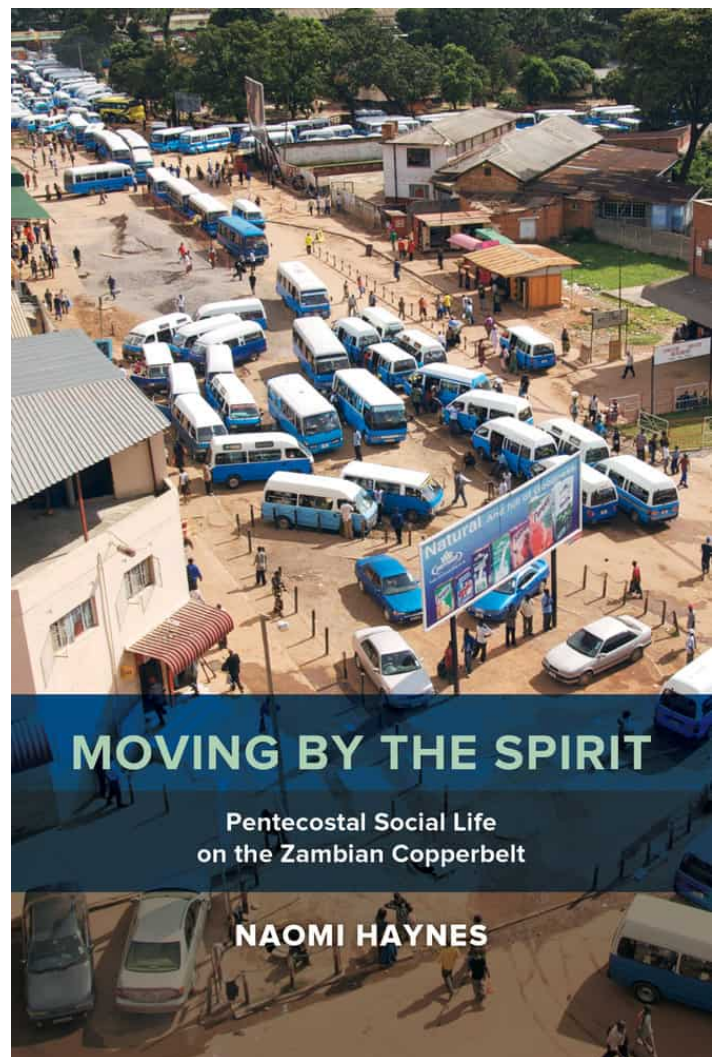
She shows how this form of conspicuous gift giving can work to sow suspicion among Pentecostals that all congregants, despite economic disparities, receive the same favor from pastors and church leadership.

In chapters five through eight Haynes returns to the tension between prosperity and charisma to take up issues of gender, hierarchy, and schism. In her discussion of gender, Haynes offers an insightful analysis that moves beyond Pentecostalism as either progressive in its empowerment of women via their inclusion in church leadership, or conservative in its promotion of traditional gender roles and norms. Instead, Haynes considers gender through the lens of



charisma and prosperity. She convincingly demonstrates that women most often come into positions of power in the Pentecostal church not through charismatic preaching or prophecy, as do their male colleagues, but by demonstrating how God's gifts have created prosperity in their own lives. Gendered roles, Haynes argues, are yet another site of contestation between charisma and prosperity and a powerful way in which prosperity is kept subordinate to charisma in Pentecostal social life. This is an important contribution to the study of gender in the anthropology of Christianity and provides a model for considering the Pentecostal movement, and its myriad social and cultural implications, outside of a binary progressive/normative framework.

Moving by the Spirit is part of a long tradition of Africanist anthropology concerned with life on the Zambian Copperbelt (Ferguson 1999; Werbner 1984). Haynes' methodological choice to focus on several small, Pentecostal congregations instead of a single "mega-church" is welcome. First, it allows Haynes to observe in detail how questions of prosperity and charisma motivate the common practice of schism in Pentecostal communities and the seemingly constant formation of new Pentecostal churches. Secondly, by focusing on what binds small Pentecostal communities together (even as they divide and reform anew), Haynes pushes for a reading of the Pentecostal movement as a site of social productivity, not simply one of





rupture. Haynes' methodology does not, however, provide much opportunity for considering the larger political economy of the Zambian state, or Zambian Pentecostals' relationship with Christianity as the official state religion. What we miss in broader considerations of state power (or its absence) on the Copperbelt, we gain in the kinds of fine-grain detail Haynes' offers of everyday Pentecostal life. This book will be of interest for scholars working in the anthropology of religion, economy and value, and researchers of Christianity and Pentecostalism more generally.

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