

Book Reviews

The Baobab and the Mango Tree; lessons about development—African and Asian contrasts

Nicholas Thompson & Scott Thompson

Bangkok: White Lotus; London: Zed Books, 2000, pp 212, £14.95

I was initially drawn to this book by its evocative title—two rather different trees being used as metaphors for the contrasting development experiences on two continents. Since the vast bulk of the development literature is based on research experience in one country, or perhaps several within the same (sub)-continental region, this book immediately stood out as distinctive in seeking to draw cross-continental comparisons. My sense of anticipation was underscored by a most attractive jacket design, the clear and challenging titles and sequencing of chapters, and by the discovery that the authors are a father (Scott) and son (Nicholas), drawing on their respective experiences at different times over several decades. But perhaps most of all, I was intrigued that the book actually compares two of the countries, Ghana and Thailand, in which I have been working for the past two or three years. Comparisons and contrasts have been forming in my mind for some time, with a view to possible future writing tasks, and I was eager to see how many of my perceptions were shared by the Thompsons.

It is an unusual but rather useful pair of countries to compare. As the first black African state to gain independence in 1957, Ghana embodied many of the aspirations of downtrodden colonial people across the continent; indeed, Kwame Nkrumah himself aspired to a continent-wide leadership role. The country's population had a higher average income per head than Thailand, one of the few countries of the global South never to have been a European colony, but which had been undergoing progressive modernisation for decades under royal guidance. Ghana, however, went into prolonged tailspin for reasons addressed at length in this book, and has only begun to turn the corner and show sustained positive signs within the past decade, partly as a result of the bitter pill of structural adjustment programmes. The peaceful post-election handover of power by Jerry Rawlings to the incoming NPP government of John Kufuor at the end of 2000 (after the book was published) certainly augurs well for domestic stability and investor confidence. By contrast, Thailand experienced almost unparalleled economic growth and development from the early 1960s until the crisis of mid-1997, transforming into a newly industrialised country with an average per capita income some four to five times higher than Ghana's. It is also emerging as an increasingly influential player in Southeast Asia. The authors do not, however, construct a simplistic opposition of abject failure versus unbridled success. As they point out, Thailand has also suffered very rapid deforestation and an increase in other environmental problems, as well as social problems, like prostitution, that reflect

a piranha tank of culture war—the collision of historical values and those carried by

globalization. As Sinith Sittirak has written about the fate of traditional Thailand, 'development is part of that Westernizing process of excluding difference by imposing sameness (a global consumer culture or monoculture)'. To many thoughtful people, before 'development' rural Thai were doing quite well and had no need of the pomp and affluence now splattered across the country. This same battle between development and tradition is being fought, on different scales, in almost every developing country in the world today, including Ghana. (p 4)

This is a lucidly written account, blending serious analysis and fascinating insights with a more popular style—evident in the above quotation—likely to appeal to a wide audience. However, I found the frequent off-the-cuff asides and superlatives for simplification or emphasis somewhat irritating, as well as being the source of some doubts about the analysis at these points. Given the number of places in both countries referred to, the absence of a map or two was disappointing, but the use of occasional simulated dialogue or factual boxes is an attractive feature, as is the single numbered sequence of footnotes.

In many respects, Part I is the most original and distinctive, for it is here that the Thompsons set out their stall and explore their main arguments. In essence, they frame answers to three big questions as the organising principle (pp 12–15): What is development? What is the relationship between economic growth and political development? Do countries get a second chance? Perhaps the most provocative chapter is entitled 'Historical trajectories', in which the authors outline five ways in which the present situation in Africa and Asia has been influenced by their historical legacy. These are cultural capital (what they refer to as the endemic power of colonialism and its aftermath; and the role of luck or contingent circumstance. I found myself both agreeing and groaning frequently, for well made points sit uneasily alongside oversimplifications and hyperbole, especially through the glib use of superlatives already alluded to. Clearly, each of these sections could fill a large book, but brevity in the name of popularisation or coherence has a clear price.

In exploring answers to the three big questions, Parts II and III elaborate aspects of the Ghanaian and Thai experiences in a comparative fashion, but in a manner and by means of chapter headings that will be familiar to anyone versed in current development discourses and policy debates. The authors also invoke the experiences of neighbouring or similar countries like Nigeria, Indonesia and the Philippines at times, to highlight alternative trajectories or the consequences of particular policy choices. The discussions of meanings of development, of the different experiences of economic development in Africa and Asia, of the four types of corruption the authors distinguish and trace through in terms of economic and political consequences, and of the nature of civil society, are all lively and will inform and entertain the novice and old hand alike.

Finally, like me, you may be wondering about the metaphor of the trees. Invoking literary sources, the authors ascribe to the baobab (that enduring and unmistakable symbol of drier savannahs in Africa) the gamut of negative characteristics: heavy top-down domination of the political and economic landscape, a predatory stifling of growth and diversification below the tall crown; once having taken root, it swallows up its surroundings. This is just plain unfair! Baobabs are solitary and not invasive. They are veritable symbols of endurance, of survival in hard times, providing animals and people who know how and where to look with a range of resources and sustenance. They also have strong, almost mythical, associations with wisdom and spirituality for many African societies. By contrast, the authors style the mango tree as a reassuring source of

abundance, that can be exploited modestly without damage but needs modern restorative care if damaged excessively. In addition, many trees are better than one colossus: 'The baobab and the mango: one leads to certain destruction; the other leads to a qualified success, if you do everything else right, too' (p 15). Besides being a blatant call to arms for the Baobab Liberation Front, this is too simplistic but eye-catching. Perhaps, therefore, the title is a better metaphor for the book than for African and Asian development!

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Religion and Politics in East Africa: The Period Since Independence

Holger Bernt Hansen & Michael Twaddle (eds)
Athens: Ohio University Press, 1995, pp 278, \$44.95

Development and the Church of Uganda: Mission, Myths and Metaphors

Canon Kodwo E Ankrach
Nairobi: Action Publishers, 1998, pp 197

African Christianity: Its Public Role

Paul Gifford
Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998, pp 368, \$22.95 paper, \$39.95 cloth

The role of religion in postcolonial sub-Saharan Africa has been one of the most contentious issues in the contemporary era in light of pertinent concerns such as political stability, dictatorship, human rights, democracy, civil society, social justice, economic development, corruption as well as health. These three books look at how religion has tried to come to terms with most of these issues.

In Holger Bernt Hansen and Michael Twaddle's *Religion and Politics in East Africa*, most chapters discuss the interplay between religion and politics in East Africa, notably in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Somalia and the Sudan by looking at Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam as well as at the emergence of 'independent churches'. François Constantin argues that few scholars have taken an interest in the development of Islam in postcolonial East Africa. The book begins by looking at the challenge of Islam. Islam is the oldest 'foreign' religion to have existed in East Africa. It arrived in the region shortly after the establishment of the religion in Arabia. Most Moslems are concentrated on the eastern coastal strip of East Africa. François Constantin argues that most Moslems are concentrated in low socioeconomic groups such as taxi-drivers, butchers and retail shopkeepers. In light of the economic crisis that has afflicted the region, there has been a resurgence of Islamic fundamentalist activity in places such as Zanzibar. R S O'Fahey discusses the controversial Sharia law in the Sudan. As most people know, Sudan is engulfed in a horrendous civil war between the predominantly Islamic north and the predominantly Christian and animist south. One of the reasons fueling this war has been the reaction of the south to the north's 'paternalistic' attitude in

trying to Islamise the whole of the Sudan, including the introduction of Sharia. The late Omari H Kokole looked at the development of Islam during the era of Idi Amin. Under his rule, Uganda became staunchly pro-Arab in its foreign policy and being a Moslem was seen as a privilege as well as passport to many privileges.

The second part of the book looks at Christianity, sectarianism and politics in Uganda. Heike Behrend examines the emergence of the 'Holy Spirit Movement', an organisation formed by an 'eccentric' Acholi woman by the name of Alice Auma 'Lakwena' in 1986 on the premise that God had instructed her to fight the government and establish the rule of the 10 commandments in the country. She led a rebellion against the government that was to be defeated in 1987 by the latter, but whose splinter group, 'The Lord's Resistance Army', led by her cousin, Joseph Kony, is still actually engaging in guerrilla activity against the state in the north of the country.

Kevin Ward looks at the relationship between church and politics in Uganda since 1962 (when it attained its independence) with an emphasis on the Anglican Protestant Church of Uganda. At the beginning of the chapter, he gives a brief overview of the eminence of the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches, which are still the two greatest religious organisations in the country (despite, of course, recent developments as we shall later see). We are reminded of the fact that during the 'religious' wars of the 1890s, the Catholic faction had lost out to the Protestant faction, which became more favoured during the colonial era since it belonged to the Church of England. This explains why most politicians who have governed Uganda since independence (with the exception of Benedicto Kiwanuka, a Catholic and Idi Amin, a Moslem), have belonged to the Anglican Church of Uganda, a long-standing legacy of the colonial era. Nonetheless, the Anglican church has always had a rather ambiguous relationship with the state, beginning with the late colonial era of the 1940s and 1950s when Uganda's largest ethnic group, the Buganda, saw the Anglican church as an extended arm of colonial oppression. After independence, the Buganda were deeply aggrieved when Erica Sabiti, a non-Buganda, was consecrated as the first African Archbishop of the Church of Uganda in 1965. Their grievance was further accentuated with the abolition of the Kingdom of Buganda by Dr Apolo Milton Obote, then premier (and later president) of Uganda, when his government provided the Archbishop with new furnishings for his house as well as Sabiti's travelling to Lira to baptise Obote's children. After Obote's overthrow, the tide turned against Sabiti as the new military government also associated Sabiti with the former government. Upon the retirement of Sabiti, the consecration of Janan Luwum (who was an Acholi, an ethnic group closely associated with Obote, the former president) as the new Archbishop of the Church of Uganda, was greeted with hostility by the Amin government, whose antagonism towards him reached a climax when he was murdered for having dared to criticise human rights abuses taking place in the country at the time. Bishop Wani was consecrated as the new Archbishop to succeed Luwum, in part because he came from Amin's ethnic group, and in part because he was seen as prominent elder clergyman who would have an effect in ameliorating the government's atrocious human rights record. The overthrow of Amin and the eventual return to power of Obote drew considerable suspicion on Wani, who was categorised as an 'Amin man'. He was eventually replaced by Yona Okoth, a confirmed supporter of the government. The chapter ends with the coming to power of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) in 1986 which preached against sectarianism within religious organisations. Nonetheless it underscores how the Anglican church has historically been closely related to changes in political power in

the country.

John M Waliggo looks at the development of the Catholic church, beginning with the late colonial era, through the contemporary era. Unlike the Anglican church, the Catholic church started the 'Africanisation' of its higher clergy in the 1940s. For example, by 1947 Joseph Kiwanuka was a bishop. Despite the historically antagonistic relationship between the Catholic church and the Anglican church in Uganda, Bishop Kiwanuka has been trying to bridge this gap as far back as the 1940s, when he regularly urged the *Kabaka* (king) of Buganda, Muteesa II (who belonged to the Anglican church) to put the interests of his people first in light of the colonial government's oppressive political and economic policies. He had even agreed to serve on the Protestant-dominated constitutional commission that drew up the new Buganda Agreement of 1955, which resulted in the triumphant return of the *Kabaka* after his deportation to England in 1953. For some time after the return of the *Kabaka*, the latter and the bishop worked closely together and were on cordial terms. However, partisan politics was to destroy this union with the formation of the Kabaka Movement, which was bent on preserving the Protestant-based hierarchy of Buganda. However, the chapter unfortunately skips some important events in the Catholic church, such as the historical visit to Uganda of Pope Paul VI in 1969 as well as the Amin era and takes us straight to the post-Amin era. Even during this period, it overlooks such momentous events as the army's raid on Namugongo in 1984, at the height of the country's civil war, in which a Catholic Bishop was killed and it only superficially touches on the relationship between the Catholic church and the current NRM government. In a related chapter, Ronald Kassimir looks at the relationship between Catholicism and the Kingdom of Toro. The chapter discusses the burgeoning influence of the Catholic church in the kingdom since independence. Its author goes to some length in discussing the relationship between the Catholic church and the NRM during its guerrilla struggle for power, although, like Waliggo, he does not delve into details about the church's current relationship with the government.

Part three of the book examines the relationship between Christians and Moslems in Kenyan politics. David Throup and G P Benson look at the trajectory of church-state relations in Kenya since independence. They contend that, unlike in Uganda, church-state relations in Kenya were very cordial under the first President, Jomo Kenyatta (1963–78). For some time these relations were also affable under his successor, President Daniel arap Moi until 1983, when in the aftermath of an attempted military *coup d'état*, Moi decided to dump his erstwhile political backers, namely Charles Njonjo and Mwai Kibaki (who belonged to the vocal and outspoken Protestant denomination) in an apparent power struggle. The churches also became increasingly vehement in their criticism of the government's ever more autocratic form of governance. Donal B Cruise O'Brien looks at the Moslem predicament in Kenya. Like Uganda, the minority Moslem population has historically been politically marginalised and, as the political and economic situation has rapidly deteriorated in the country, there have been threats of a form of an Islamic *jihad* to address what are perceived to be historical injustices against it.

Part four summarises the relationship between religious organisations and the state. A B K Kasozi examines the historically adversarial relationship between Christians and Moslems in the three Anglophone East African countries of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, while M Louise Pirouet sums up the churches' stance against human rights abuse in Kenya and Uganda since independence. Martin Doornbos concludes that the

development and functions of religious organisations in East Africa will often mirror the development of the state in these countries.

Development and the Church of Uganda is technically an autobiographical account of Canon Kodwo E Ankraah, with special emphasis on his service to the Church of Uganda that last for almost three decades. His involvement with religious affairs in Uganda is interesting, taking into account that he is originally from Ghana. The first four chapters in the book deal with the author's growing up in Ghana and going onto college in the United States and later working as a refugee secretary for various religious organisations, including the World Council of Churches. His first acquaintance with Uganda is in 1966 when he arrives as a refugee secretary for the World Council of Churches. He arrives in the country during the 1966 political crisis in the country, whose climax results in the storming of the *Kabaka's* palace and the subsequent abolition of the monarchies, which ushers in the Republican form of governance. He subsequently gets acquainted with the politics of intrigue within the Church of Uganda. Despite the political upheavals in the country and the persecution of some church officials (such as the murder of the Anglican Archbishop, Janan Luwum as well as the Catholic editor of the *Munno* newspaper, Father Clements Kiggundu), during the Amin era, he steadfastly sticks with his church through thick and thin until his retirement in 1992. Unlike other autobiographies, his account of events is very interesting in that it deals with the author's person-to-person relationship not with only church officials but also with government functionaries. As a foreign-born national, Ankraah is commended for having steadfastly put up with the country's most dangerous historical phase in the service of his church.

In *African Christianity*, Paul Gifford scours the status of Christianity in contemporary Africa by undertaking an investigative analysis of religious activity in four countries, namely, Ghana, Uganda, Zambia and Cameroon. The aim of this book was, first, to look at recent developments in African Christianity by using conceptual tools from political science and sociology and, second, to critically assess the churches' role in handling the multifarious crises confronting the continent. The first two chapters put contemporary conditions in Africa in their theoretical perspective. The author analyses the patrimonial nature of African political leadership. He critiques the external relations that have affected Africa such as the structural adjustment programmes, as well as the increasing economic marginalisation of the continent in the 1990s. Political reform, such as the role of civil society in the African context is appraised. He also looks at the African churches in the global context, by examining the proliferation of Pentecostal/evangelical/ 'revivalist' churches in the past few decades.

The author starts off by analysing Ghana's Christian historical development, such as the arrival of the Protestant missions in the 1820s. Unfortunately, he does not indicate when Catholicism arrived in Ghana, despite the fact that it is the largest Christian denomination in the country (comprising 50 per cent of Christians in the country). He highlights the Catholic church's condemnation of human rights violations of the 1980s, as well as its increasing involvement in social services such as education and health. He also spotlights the emergence of various churches such as the Pentecostal, and Deliverance churches. The conventional conflict between Christians and Moslems is discussed, albeit in a rather superficial way. His discussion of civil society and its relationship with religion in Ghana is to be found most wanting.

The next country Gifford looks at is Uganda. As in Holger Bernt Hansen and Michael Twaddle's *Religion & Politics in East Africa*, he looks at the history and development of

Christianity in Uganda. As in Ghana, Christianity in Uganda is dominated by the Catholic and Protestant churches, with the exception that, while the Methodist church is predominant in Ghana on the part of the Protestants, its counterpart in Uganda is the Anglican Church of Uganda. He discusses the politics of intrigue within the Christian churches, with special emphasis on the Church of Uganda, noting the Diocesan crisis in Busoga, which almost tore apart the Anglican church in the 1990s. His observations of political and ethnic differences within the Church of Uganda parallel those observed in Canon Kodwo A Ankrah's *Development and the Church of Uganda*. Gifford argues that the reason why the Catholic church has avoided the pitfalls bedevelling the Church of Uganda is that, first of all, the Church of Uganda is a loose autonomous conglomeration of the Anglican Canterbury Church of England, whose autonomous relationship with its religious affiliations may have facilitated the mismanagement of the latter's resources. Second, often the Catholic church does not recruit its clergy from its Diocesan jurisdiction. Thus, this has eliminated many problems such as corruption, nepotism and the mismanagement of church resources. However, Gifford bemoans the decline of male catechists in the Catholic denomination. He also discusses the proliferation of many churches in the past few decades.

As far as Zambia is concerned, it has a Christian configuration that in a way resembles that of Ghana and Uganda. Like Uganda and Ghana, the Catholic church is the most important religious denomination. However, unlike Ghana and Uganda, Zambia was faced at independence by two powerful separatist churches—one that was led by Alice Lenshina, known as the Lumpa Church and another led by Emilio Mulolani, known as the 'Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus'—both of which had strong nationalist overtones at independence. Lenshina's church was violently suppressed because of its violent confrontations with the government, while that of Mulolani simply 'went out of style' because of its controversial religious practices. Christianity has played a big role in Zambia's politics: after all 75% of its population profess to be Christians. It is this statistic that persuaded President Frederick Chiluba to declare Zambia a 'Christian nation', despite controversies such as the separation of church and state, as embedded in the Zambian constitution. Nonetheless, unlike Ghana and Uganda, the churches appear to be more united and more outspoken against government policies deemed to be high-handed. As in the other two countries there has been a proliferation of messianic and charismatic churches in the country in the past few decades.

As in the other three countries, the Catholic church in Zambia is the only church that appears to be undivided. The country also has a strong Protestant presence in the form of Presbyterians, Zambia. Other churches in existence in Zambia include the Baptists and other revivalist churches.

All in all, despite a few typos that could drastically change the meaning of some sentences, Paul Gifford is commended for having written an original book that assesses the role of Christianity in contemporary Africa.

In summary the role of religion in contemporary Africa is appraised in these three books. In light of the current multifarious crises that afflict the continent, the books concur that religious institutions are bound to play a bigger role in assisting the continent's people in their protracted struggle for genuine democracy and social justice.

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Gender and Nation

Nira Yuval Davis

London: Sage, 1998, pp 157

Nira Yuval-Davis' *Gender and Nation* is presented by the author as the culmination of her work in the areas of gender and ethnic studies, beginning with her work in the 1980s on gender relations in Israel and the ways they have related to the Zionist settlement project and the Israeli–Arab conflict through to the 'Women, Citizenship and Difference' conference at the University of Greenwich in 1996.

The book is organised in six chapters ('Theorising gender and nation'; 'Women and the biological reproduction of the nation'; 'Cultural reproduction and gender relations'; 'Citizenship and difference'; 'Gendered militaries, gendered wars'; 'Women, ethnicity and empowerment') and represents an attempt to critically review many of the theoretical and other studies relevant to the subjects of gender and nation published in the past two decades, as well as to make her own specific theoretical mark in the field.

Yuval Davis' critical review of the theoretical and case studies relevant to the subjects of gender and nation seems comprehensive enough. It is evident that she has put to good benefit her work as co-subject editor (with Shirin Rai) on 'Politics and state' for the *International Encyclopaedia of Women* (Routledge, forthcoming). Her critical review has, however, an ambitious sub-text, projecting an expectation that the author not only identify the contributions and the inadequacies of theoretical and case study landmarks in the fields of gender and ethnic studies in the past two decades, but also supplement, if not better, these with her own innovative, if not superior, contribution. It is at this level that the work does not deliver.

The aim of the book, says Yuval-Davis, is to promote the analytical project of a gendered understanding of nations and nationalisms by:

examining systematically the crucial contribution of gender relations into several major dimensions of nationalist projects: national reproduction, national culture and national citizenship, as well as national conflicts and wars. (p 3)

The project, however, is carried out masterfully so long as the author does what she does well, namely, deconstruct. The author does not do as well when the narrative requires that she suggest convincing definitions of the discursive building blocks of her work.

For instance, when the author is required to rationalise her use of the terms 'ethnicity' versus 'nationalism', she begins with the qualification that 'there is no inherent difference between ethnic and national collectivities: they are both Andersonian "imagined communities".' She then progresses to observe that 'what is specific to the nationalist project and discourse is the claim for a separate political representation for the collective'. Being aware, however, that the definition, as such, encompasses virtually all branches of political organisation, including party-political organisation and representation in the state parliament, she hastens to add that 'this often—but not always—takes the form of a claim for a separate state and/or territory'. Yet, recognising that some states are based on bi- or multinational principles and that 'some supra-state political projects like the European Union can, at specific historical moments, develop state characteristics' (p 16), the reader is treated to the following, regrettably meaningless, generalities:

Nationalist demands can also be aimed at establishing a regional autonomy rather than a separate state ... or they can be irridentist, advocating joining a neighbouring state rather than

establishing one of their own ... Although state and territory have been closely bound together, there have been cases of nationalist movements which called for the state to be established in a different territory than that where they were active ... Others have not articulated any specific territorial boundaries for their national independence. (pp 16–17)

After all, if the author cannot better Ernest Gellner's definition of nations and nationalism as 'primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent' (Gellner, 1983: 1) why not give Gellner due recognition rather than treat the reader to meaningless woolly generalities such as those cited above.

This weakness of Yuval-Davis' work is not occasional, but rather is systemic to the entire narrative. The author is Professor in Gender and Ethnic Studies at the University of Greenwich. One would expect that she would offer a viable definition for 'ethnicity'—the basic conceptual building block of her trade. 'Ethnicity', she suggests,

is primarily a political process which constructs the collectivity and 'its interest' not only as a result of the general positioning of the collectivity in relation to others in the society, but also as a result of the specific relation of those engaged in 'ethnic politics' with others within the collectivity. Gender, class, political, religious and other differences play central roles in the construction of specific ethnic politics, and different ethnic projects of the same collectivity can be engaged in intense competitive struggles for hegemonic positions. (p 44)

This is well and good. But why is this 'ethnicity' and not 'tribalism'?

On the question of citizenship the author (erroneously in the view of this writer) follows T H Marshall's definition to the effect that citizenship 'is a status bestowed on those who are full members of the community' (p 69). Her discussion of citizenship and difference is again a masterful deconstructionist examination of the Marshallian theme. Except that, in the view of this writer, the Marshallian theme is weak relative to other theories of citizenship, such as those of Thomas Hobbes, Thomas Hill Green, Henry Jones or the Treaty of the European Union signed at Maastricht, who define citizenship *not* primarily in relation to the community—but in relation to the state and the legal system (see Clarke, 1994).

It is against the backdrop of this structural weakness that the author's ambitious attempt at theorising and critically reviewing the theoretical and other studies relevant to the subjects of gender and nation in the past two decades represents a disappointment and in effect does injustice to the excellence of the works she critically reviews.

Her discovery of transversal politics, defined as being predicated on dialogue characterised by the movements of 'rooting' and 'shifting', again does not repair, and possibly compounds the theoretical weakness of her work. The idea informing transversal dialogue is that:

each participant in the dialogue brings with her the rooting in her own membership and identity, but at the same time tries to shift in order to put herself in a situation of exchange with women who have different membership and identity. (p 130)

But as Yuval-Davies herself recognises, correct political action cannot be based on identity politics, but on shared values and discipline. It seems, however, that the best value recommendation she is able to suggest in the end note (p 133), quoting a postcard sent to her by one of her 'transversal' friends, is the very appropriate Zimbabwean adage: 'If you can talk, you can sing; if you can walk, you can dance!'

However, this leaves at least one value problem unanswered: the consequences of the

Industrial Revolution have also meant that the majority of human kind are denied the necessary conditions to talk (without intimidation) and to walk (in good health)—let alone to sing and dance.

And the lovers of ‘barefoot boogie’, to whom the said end note is dedicated, would do well to remember that one can dance barefoot only where sanitation is good enough not to be infested with parasites and disease.

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Satellites over South Asia: Broadcasting, Culture and the Public Interest

David Page & William Crawley

New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2001, pp 455, ISBN 0-7619-9482-3

The 1990s saw an explosion in the use of satellite television in South Asia. As it swept across the subcontinent, distributors paid no respect to borders and have seriously challenged the legislative frameworks of the nations encountered. David Page and William Crawley have followed the debate generated in its wake, as all communities address the implications. This book, based on over 400 interviews by the authors and their associates, sought to gauge public reactions to changing television programming in areas ranging from language to patterns of consumption and the impact on women and children. The survey included the broadcasting cultures of India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Written in an engaging and highly accessible style, with little or no use of jargon, the profound changes in the South Asian media environment are explored and documented. Findings are set in the wider context of the globalisation of international media.

After briefly surveying the development of new broadcast technologies in South Asian countries from the colonial period through to 1990, the book moves on to tell the story of the opening up of the skies. It also details the means of distribution and reception given to the new content. The main body of the book examines the cultural influence of satellite programming and just how instrumental it has been in creating a new South Asian popular culture, with appeal across the region. The closing chapters look at the state’s role in the development of media and the interrelationship between the commercial sector and state-owned broadcasters.

Page and Crawley’s message is not one of a globally homogeneous culture inevitably saturating local diversity. Instead they support the view of James Curran and Myung-Jin Park (2000) who argue that: ‘... globalisation theory ... is often based on an aerial perspective that simplifies. In particular, it tends to understate the continuing importance of the nation.’ In their view, the nation state remains resilient in the new environment, certainly in defence of its own prerogatives. Page and Crawley argue that states in the

region must adopt a more effective regulatory role in order to safeguard the public interest from corporations and foster modernisation in state-owned public service broadcasters.

These developments are illustrated by the Indian example, where satellite services have developed in all four languages of the south suggesting that, where there is a viable market, corporations and entrepreneurs will launch channels for these audiences. This has usually been confined to the satellite and cable platform, although terrestrial services have yet to be deregulated across most of the region.

Beyond even the cultural invasion of channels from outside the countries' borders, the book describes an 'outvasion' that exploits the growing appeal of South Asian culture internationally and among expatriates. Simmering beneath the surface of the entire book are questions of whether any of these states is in a position to provide the regulatory environment required by the companies entering this nascent market. It is suggested in the closing chapter that a likely result, already emerging in some areas, is industry self-regulation.

One of the book's greatest achievements is discussion of the impact of centralisation in impeding the development of local and community media. It is a tension that parallels struggles occurring worldwide. This is an area which could have been investigated in greater depth, but perhaps there will be a sequel? The UK's own broadcasting white paper offers alternative models for the funding of the community sector, with an emphasis on radio, through contributions from the commercial sector. The UK is also attempting to factor in the growing impact of radio and television stations launching on the internet, which are mentioned only in passing by Page and Crawley. Internationally the boundaries between all media platforms are blurring—an image reaffirmed by the book's introduction, setting the international scene with the merger of TimeWarner and AOL—and this requires pre-emptive multilateral negotiations. These minor objections will not detract, however, from a book that provides new insights for those both familiar and new to South Asian broadcasting.

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Globalization: A Critical Introduction

Jan Aart Scholte
London: Macmillan, 2000

Globalization: Policies, Challenges and Responses

Shereen T Ismael (ed)
Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1999

Scholte opens with the query 'Another book about globalization?' A reasonable question given the rapidly spawning literature on globalisation. Yet textbooks on the phenomenon are few. Malcolm Waters' *Globalization* was useful but marred by its static treatment of economic, political and cultural 'aspects' of globalisation. The overview book by Held *et al* (1999) is pertinent but does not cover the South. Scholte's book offers a methodical,

crystal clear overview of dynamics and dimensions of globalisation, including questions of development. Among general books on globalisation I have seen, it is the most useful and up to date, a well organised and clearly written introduction with tables and lists that are helpful for students.

While its main purpose is not to serve as a theoretically innovative work it makes distinctive theoretical interventions. One of the main ones is Scholte's definition of globalisation as *deterritorialisation*, or 'the growth of "supraterritorial" relations between people'. He explains: 'The proliferation and spread of supraterritorial—or what we can alternatively term "transworld" or "transborder"—connections brings an end to what could be called "territorialism", that is, a situation where social geography is entirely geographical' (p 46). And further: 'the present analysis employs the four adjectives "global", "supraterritorial", "transworld" and "transborder" as synonyms ... Whereas international relations are *interterritorial* relations, global relations are *supraterritorial* relations. International relations are *cross-border* exchanges *over* distance, while global relations are *trans-border* exchanges *without* distance' (p 49). Advantages of this definition are that it distinguishes globalisation from internationalisation and provides globalisation with a distinctive periodisation. This shows Scholte's disciplinary background in international relations. The world of the Westphalian interstate system is national and territorial; the world of globalisation is transnational and supraterritorial. Fair enough, but let me take issue with this angle on several points.

First, globalisation is approached from the point of view of and as a deviation from international relations or the interstate system. This means that the period from the 17th century onward is taken as a yardstick, which involves a particular angle on history: weren't cross-cultural trade and the 'world religions' supraterritorial too? Do we lose in historical depth and scope what we gain in historical distinctiveness? Yet how can we properly understand and assess the distinctiveness of contemporary globalisation without a historical backdrop? An alternative, in my view, would be to identify *phases of globalisation* and refer to the present as one phase of *accelerated globalisation*. Second, an alternative view, common in historical sociology, is to regard the interstate system not as a yardstick (preceding globalisation) but as a phase of globalisation itself. Third, Scholte's angle closes other options such as comparing present times with medieval times and their multiple overlapping jurisdictions, as in the neo-medievalism thesis (*à la* Cerny, Kobrin). Fourth, Scholte's emphasis on 'transborder exchanges without distance' comes perilously close to the globalisation = borderlessness approach (*à la* Ohmae). Scholte cautions that '*transborder* relations are not the same as *open-border* transactions' (p 49); yet by squarely placing the emphasis on transborder relations this neglects analysing contemporary globalisation in terms of *reworking*, and not just transgressing, borders.

According to Scholte, 'In global space "place" is not territorially fixed, territorial distance is covered in effectively no time, and territorial frontiers present no particular impediment' (p 179). This is true for instance of financial transactions; yet this is also a very specific domain, and privileging it to produce the definition and diagnosis of contemporary globalisation yields a narrow framework. It is as if the world is being viewed through the business pages and their parade of new technologies, cross-border trade, currency, traffic, mergers and acquisitions, and corporate global reach, while skipping the front pages and their daily updates on border clashes, ethnic cleansing, illegal immigrants and assorted niche and culture wars. In effect we may view '*distancelessness*' and transborder relations as functions not of globalisation *per se* but of unequal

relations of power *within* the setting of globalisation. Contemporary globalisation, then, is a new politics of space and access, and the dramatic worldwide differences this entails are well known. Fifth, combining this angle of deterritorialisation with Deleuze and Guattari's notion of deterritorialisation (and reterritorialisation) and its ramifications in cultural politics, such as moving across space as parting with fixed identities, may give greater finesse to this approach.

It is interesting, analytically and as an educational strategy, to combine and contrast overview treatments of globalisation *à la* Scholte with regional studies or studies of globalisation from the point of view of the South. An example is Shereen Ismael's volume which, under a wide title, mainly deals with globalisation in the Middle East, featuring studies of the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey, Egypt, Jordan and Syria, and Bedouin Arabs, along with case studies situated in Africa and China.

Ray Kiely and Philip Marfleet offer data showing that the Third World is not being integrated but being marginalised in the world economy; which is hardly new, yet sobering perspectives on growing inequality as part of globalisation dynamics remain pertinent. The obvious question is how to rhyme this with other trends observed and views expressed in this volume to the effect that development now requires globalisation. The thrust of most chapters is that the Middle East and other parts of the South are in a process of inserting themselves into the world economy, with varying degrees of success. In terms of industrialisation and manufacturing value added the Middle East and North Africa lag behind most other regions and are ahead only of South Asia and Africa.

Ivan Ivekovic introduces the notions of 'regional laboratories' and 'social structures of accumulation' to discuss developments in the Eastern Mediterranean. Islamist neopopulism, in his view, is essentially a matter of a peasant surplus population. Global integration and fragmentation, in this view, are interrelated, thus: 'the fragmentation of the European periphery is the other face of the process of Western European integration' (p 107). Dan Tschirgi compares militancy in Chiapas, Mexico and Upper Egypt, and finds regional isolation, histories of stratification, land questions, and different cosmologies among the common factors shaping 'marginalized violent internal conflict'. Turkey, according to Semen Atasoy, represents a Turkish-European and Turkish-Islamic synthesis which now serve as twin approaches to adjusting to globalisation. This account breaks with easy stereotypes, for instance: 'Even the *Fetullahçılar*, an Islamist grouping, set up an English-speaking university in Istanbul' (p 266). Raymond William Baker perceives similar trends in Egypt, including 'grassroots globalism'.

Regional studies have limitations of their own and tap diverse theoretical lineages which are sometimes incoherent. This region is an interesting focus since it hosts several of the 'rogue states' that stay or are kept out of the main globalisation basket: Iraq, Iran, Libya (and Sudan) are occasionally referred to, although they are not part of the book's focus.

The point that matters here is that regional studies of globalisation can turn the tables on metropolitan perspectives, including the Westphalian system itself. Thus, Atasoy argues and documents that 'The defeat of the hegemonial attempt of the Habsburgs and the development of the Westphalian system were made possible by Ottoman pressure' (p 260). This suggests two considerations: the dynamics of the Westphalian system were not internal to Western Europe; and globalisation by this account *precedes* the Westphalian system. Along similar lines Paul Sullivan notes that globalisation is not new to Egypt, Jordan and Syria since they were part of the Ottoman Empire (p 178). Again this

relativises, in time and space, the metropolitan angle on globalisation. It is the combination of general (which usually means metropolitan) and regional perspectives on globalisation from the South that yield the most insightful approach to the phenomenon.

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Terrorism and War

Howard Zinn, ed Anthony Armove

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War, terrorism and violence have been around since the dawn of written history. Since 11 September 2001 terrorism has been a topic of renewed, widespread and vigorous discussions in the USA and in the Western countries. Yet the lack of rigorous, balanced and fair analysis of both retail and wholesale terrorism is rare in the annals of Western intellectuals. Most highly paid pundits of mainstream newspapers, such as Thomas Friedman, William Safire and Nicholas Kristof of the *New York Times*, avantgarde chic radicals, such as Christopher Hitchens of the *Nation* and the once fine novelist but now merely glorified 'orientalist' Salman Rushdie, have refused to look at the underlying causes of terrorism or consider the devastating effects of Western state terrorism. This booklet, a collection of Howard Zinn interviews edited by Anthony Armove, is an honourable and rare exception. The booklet is part of a series of publications that includes *9-11* by Noam Chomsky, *Bin Laden, Islam, and America's New 'War on Terrorism'* by As'ad AbuKhalil, and *Terrorism: Theirs and Ours* by Eqbal Ahmad. There is clearly a public demand for alternative perspectives on war and terrorism. Seven Stories Press is to be lauded for trying to fill a critical gap.

The atrocities of 11 September were a massive terrorist attack against American civilians that must be condemned; its perpetrators should be brought to justice and be punished in accordance with national and international laws. But instead of undertaking a lengthy and painstaking investigation and search for the culprits, the US authorities chose war. The Taliban regime's demand for evidence as a precondition for handing over Bin Laden was not an unreasonable request. Whether the Taliban regime's offer was serious or merely a ruse one will never know, because the US authorities refused even to pursue negotiations. Instead the US authorities chose an option that increased the scale of violence and suffering and has done little to reduce the risk of war and terrorism.

This book will benefit those readers who seek understanding rather than jingoist polemics. Armove successfully follows David Barsimian, who has established a tradition of probing and in-depth interviews of progressive and left intellectuals. Zinn's writings

remain refreshingly clear and poignant. Arno's interview questions allow Zinn to discuss his views. The book starts with Zinn's discussion of the events of 11 September. As a historian, Zinn provides an overview of the USA's long record of war and state terrorism. He rejects the notion of lining up behind the president and calls for dissent. Zinn believes that reading establishment newspapers such as the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and *Business Week* can provide one with a good understanding of the events of the world if one reads between the lines and the inside pages of these papers. As always, a critical eye and a sceptical mind is what one needs to uncover the truth. Zinn agrees with the historian Gabriel Kolko that war increasingly means war on civilians, despite the talk about precision bombings and the use of high technology. He recalls America's long history of anti-war activism and opposition to war. There are seven interviews in the book. Zinn's conversations with Arno are lucid and vibrant.

Appendix A of the book lists the key passages from the Geneva Convention which explicitly state that civilians should not be objects of military attacks and that acts that are designed to promote terror among civilians are prohibited. All the evidence gathered so far suggests that the USA's war in Afghanistan and Israel's military assault in the West Bank have been in violation of Geneva Conventions.

Several suggestions can be made to improve the book. First, the book contains two useful maps of Afghanistan, but an additional map showing Afghanistan's location in Asia would help readers who may be unfamiliar with the country's location on the globe, since geography is not yet taught as a subject in many schools in the USA. Second, if the publisher brings out a second edition of the same book, Arno and Zinn may find it worthwhile to discuss in detail the wars of terrorism in Colombia and Palestine. Having edited an excellent study of US sanctions on Iraq, Arno is particularly well placed to discuss the devastating effects and after-effects of wars on civilians. Third, Arno and Zinn can explore the practical issues of a broad-based anti-war coalition in the United States. Interestingly, in the USA not only progressive people and the admittedly marginal left-wing political groups are opposed to the war; many anti-state right-wing libertarians and old-style conservatives, such as those of www.antiwar.com, have also voiced strong, consistent and honourable opposition to the war, much to their credit, albeit for somewhat different reasons than those of the left. It is hoped, however, that new alliances surmounting the traditional divisions between left and right can be formed on the anti-war issue. Broad-based opposition to the wars of terrorism is much needed in these times.

The struggle for peace is likely to be long and arduous. At times of war, most 'intellectuals' support state power and thus the system of social science and humanities scholarship is devoted to serving power interests even in relatively free and open societies such as the USA. Hence books from alternative perspectives, such as *Terrorism and War*, are indispensable because they provide a glimpse of truth and aid in deciphering the news in the leading journals of our times, and in unravelling the distortions and lies of governments and corporations.

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The Baobab and the Mango Tree: Lessons about Development - African and Asian Contrasts [Thompson, Nicholas, Thompson, Scott] on Amazon.com. *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. I was unfamiliar with the trends in African and Southeast Asian development before reading this book the title and subject seemed interesting. However, during the course of my reading it, I have grown significantly more knowledgeable about how "3rd world" nations are on their own tracts to develop and enter the ranks of "modern societies". He begins with a short history of both African and Asian developments, the key players, and background that sets each region up before they take charge of their own destinies. The African Baobab (*Adansonia Digitata*) occurs on the dry, hot savannahs of sub-Saharan Africa, and its trunk can grow up to 25m tall and 12m wide. It loses its leaves during the dry season and remains leafless for nine months of the year. Photo credits: iStock. Contrasting with its massive trunk, its branches are thin and wispy, looking very much like a complicated root system. For this reason, the baobab is often called the upside-down tree. Spongy bark helps the baobab limit water loss. The tree's bark is more porous than the sort you'd find on regular wood, meaning it can absorb moisture like a sponge. Consequently, the baobab can absorb water when it rains and store it during times of drought. Photo credits: Four Elements. Baobab trees are strange trees that are found in East African countries and Australia. It has eight different species, of which *Adansonia grandidieri* are the tallest ones. Baobab trees are known as the thickest, tallest and oldest trees, with few of them 28 meters high even. These trees are also called upside-down trees because of their evenly spread roots-like branches on a straight trunk. If you go to Madagascar deserts, at first sight, many baobab trees together will give you an illusion of a painting because of their sheer beauty and similar sizes. The baobab tree flowers hang upside-down like a lamp with petals looking like the shade and the filaments like the bulb. Image Sources Flickr. Interestingly its flowers open at night. Baobab is the common name of a genus of trees (*Adansonia*). There are a total of eight types of its kind: six species live in the drier parts of Madagascar, two in mainland Africa, one in Australia and three in India. It is the national tree of Madagascar. Other common names include 'boab', 'boaboa', 'bottle tree', 'the tree of life', 'upside-down tree', and 'monkey bread tree'. The trees reach heights of 5 to 30 meters (16 to 98 ft) and trunk diameters of 7 to 11 meters (23 to 36 ft.). Its trunk can... The Baobab tree is a strange looking tree that grows in low-lying areas in Africa and Australia. It can grow to enormous sizes and carbon dating indicates that they may live to be 3,000 years old. One ancient hollow Baobab tree in Zimbabwe is so large that up to 40 people can shelter inside its trunk. Various Baobabs have been used as a shop, a prison, a house, a storage barn and a bus shelter. The tree is certainly very different from any other. The tasty and nutritious fruits and seeds of several species are sought after, while pollen from the African and Australian baobabs is mixed with water to make glue. ©Nigel Dennis. Native legends. Along the Zambezi, the tribes believe that when the world was young the Baobabs were upright and proud.