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In sum, in my view the author has missed an opportunity to direct the study towards an appreciation 'from within' of waste collection in Abuja, which limits its contribution to academic debates on urban governance in contemporary Africa.

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Conflicts over Land and Water in Africa edited by B. DERMAN, R. ODGAARD and E. SJAASTAD

Oxford: James Currey/East Lansing: Michigan State University Press/Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2007. Pp. 244, £17.95 (pbk.).

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This collection sets out to complicate simplistic notions that land scarcity and dwindling natural resources inevitably lie at the root of conflicts in Africa. In the editors' words, 'rigorous study of the isolated effects of a single factor on conflict becomes impossible when interlinkages make nonsense of the assumption that "all other things remain equal"' (p. 25). It is these *interlinkages* between identity, land, citizenship and belonging, overlapping regimes of tenure and statecraft, amidst variable environmental conditions, that must be explored empirically in order to clarify, rather than obscure, complex African realities. In turn the mainstays of land tenure reform usually advocated by international agencies, and often only partially implemented by African governments, need to be made more responsive to local situations and environmental fluctuations. In particular, the book offers a critique of widespread movements towards individual land titling and the formalisation of tenure regimes, which are often exclusionary, static and statist, and fail to make land rights more secure, and in some cases promise to provoke rather than prevent scarcity conflicts.

If this nuancing of scholarly understandings of conflict and resource scarcity is the central aim of the book, then on the whole it does this well. Its strength lies in those chapters that develop detailed empirical case studies. In Section One on conflict and 'customary' law, Amanor focuses on the reinterpretation of customary tenure in Ghana to illustrate how 'struggles between broadly defined groups, divided on the basis of generation, seniority and citizenship, tend to mask processes of commodification and labour' (p. 57), through which the rights of rural people continued to be swamped by powerful local chiefs and political elites extending their control over resources, and particularly timber. Gausset's analysis of disputes between Kwanja farmers and migrant Fulbe herders in Cameroon points towards the ambiguity of the state, in both undermining the customary authority of Kwanja chiefs being challenged by Fulbe migrants, and simultaneously relying on that same authority to function. Larsen's focus on Hawawir in Sudan illustrates how particular histories of past migrations and return are implicated in changing livelihood practices and moral codes that are entangled in contests over identity and belonging in the context of a 'modern' irrigated agriculture project.

In Section Two on land reform and policy, Toulmin discusses the importance of secondary and derived rights to land across West Africa, stressing the need for reform programmes to build on the flexibility and diversity of local practices, and making a well-judged warning that ‘pursuit of titling risks damaging the secondary rights of less powerful groups’ (p. 112). Wisborg’s fascinating account of the unexpected stalemate that resulted from ‘an apparently pragmatic and non-prescriptive tenure reform act’ (p. 116) in Komaggas in South Africa illustrates how ‘paradoxically, a strong local sense of ownership became an obstacle to a reform that aimed to “return the land”’ (p. 132). With a broader view, Andrew examines how South African land reform based on market sales has ‘tended not only to preserve the existing division of the land and its control by a white land owning minority but to continue to doubly exclude African women ... as blacks and as women ...’ (p. 154).

This links to Derman and Hellum’s analysis of Zimbabwe’s fast-track land reform, in the next section on land and identity. Here there is some disappointment. Their suggestion that land reform was simply ‘a smokescreen for the government’s desperate effort to stay in power’ (p. 162) ignores the complexity of different agencies involved at local, regional and national levels in this massive reshaping of authority over land. Focusing on the redefinitions of boundaries of inclusion and exclusion that have marked ZANU PF’s increasingly authoritarian project since 2000, and particularly the marginalisation of farm workers, opposition supporters, urban populations and women, Derman and Hellum fail to account for what may have motivated people in different places to take part in land occupations and political violence, and vague comparisons with Hutu extremists in Rwanda are not particularly useful (p. 182). Contrary to the larger aim of the volume – to dissolve commonplace and essentialised notions informing public and policy debates about land and conflict in Africa – this chapter seems to reinforce simplistic distinctions between the human rights-informed activities of civil society and opposition groups on the one hand, and the cynical use of violent land reform by the ruling party amid assertions of anti-colonial nationalist rhetoric on the other, ignoring the much more complex, entangled interests, agencies and motivations of most Zimbabweans located between these extreme positions, including both perpetrators and victims of recent violence. In some ways this simplification merely mirrors rather than complicates the very polarisation of Zimbabwean society that ZANU PF’s violent exclusions have engendered.

The last three chapters deal with the complexities and ambiguities of violence with more nuanced success. Hagberg’s chapter on hunters’ associations in Burkina Faso is interesting in its analyses of the cultural and political contexts through which narratives of victimhood and ‘traditions of hunting’ are intertwined and deployed by vigilante groups acting out struggles between ‘autochthonous’ farmers and ‘stranger’ pastoralists, evoking a complex picture of how different agencies overlap and intertwine through acts of violence. Maganga, Odgaard and Sjaastad discuss how clashes between Tanzanian cultivators and livestock keepers in Morogoro have been sustained by flawed stereotypes cultivated ‘in the press, among politicians and protagonists themselves’. Violence may result where ‘there is a tendency, across the board, to focus on a single dimension of multi-dimensional identities and livelihoods’ (p. 212); yet in the long durée, ‘violence

is the exception rather than the rule and examples of peaceful co-existence ... are much more common than examples of violent incidents' (p. 212). The last chapter returns to the relationship between scarcity and conflict. Focusing on water resources in northern Kenya, Witsenburg and Roba show how water scarcity does not necessarily lead to conflict; here, conflict 'occurs more often during times of abundant rain and grazing' (p. 231). Not only is this an argument against common simplifications of the link between scarcity and conflict, the authors also warn that introducing title deeds in areas of 'double ethnic use rights' threatens to fix what has been flexible, and the exclusion of certain user groups and 'reduced possibility of negotiating access to closed territory makes it perfectly rational to use violence and contest efforts at formal land adjudication' (p. 235). Land planners and tenure reformists must clearly tread with great care.

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Modernization and the Crisis of Development in Africa: the Nigerian experience by JEREMIAH I. DIBUA

Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006. Pp. 372 + xvi, £65 (hbk).

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In the Western discourse on non-European, particularly African, states, modernisation simply means transforming those states along the standards of Western societies, although it has been well established in contemporary social science scholarship that modernisation is in fact a generic term with several faces. Dibua's book illustrates the trajectory of political, economic and technological development of Nigeria from its colonial past to now, in the context of the Western paradigms that have become the touchstone by which to test and define development in Africa. Post-independence Nigeria, like other African nation states, was caught between the Scylla and Charybdis of development economists who advocated state control, and political developmentalists, the proponents of society-driven approach to economic progression. Neither group appeared to have worked for the real interests of Nigeria.

Dibua discusses the socio-political and economic realities of Nigeria from colonialism to independence: its attempts at democratic governance at the instance of the military until 1999; its efforts at agricultural transformations before and after the discovery of oil, the 'black gold' which ultimately transformed into resource curse; the economic crises of the 1980s which stimulated the adoption, *grosso modo*, of the IMF and World Bank Structural Adjustment Programme; and the roles and contributions of youth, especially students, and women groups in confronting the political and economic morass generated by the debilitating effects of unpleasant government policies. The concluding chapter proposes the indigenisation of African development paradigm such that the roles of the state, culture and local NGOs would be more definitive in the sustained attempt at overcoming the crisis of development in Africa in general, and Nigeria in particular.

African peculiar and cultural realities had been discounted by advocates for the replication of Western approaches and experiences in political, economic and