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# Book Review

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Fourchard, Laurent (2021), *Classify, Exclude, Police: Urban Lives in South Africa and Nigeria*, Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, ISBN: 978-1-119-58264-9 (paperback), 978-1-119-58265-6 (e-book), 288 pages

For over two decades, Laurent Fourchard has navigated urban spaces in both Nigeria and South Africa. With a specific focus on low-income neighborhoods, he has analyzed migrant settlement and exclusion, vigilantism, and patronage politics. This book captures his (provisional) findings on these themes. It is a translation and updated version of his 2018 book *Trier, exclure et policer: vies urbaines en Afrique du Sud et au Nigeria* (Presses de Sciences Po). The new English version opens up Fourchard's work to a larger community of scholars, including from Nigeria and South Africa. And for this, we are fortunate.

The book is structured in three parts. Part I traces the colonial (Nigeria) and apartheid (South Africa) roots of exclusionary urban politics. Both regimes tried to mitigate rural-to-urban migration, leading to unequal rights for 'temporary migrants' and 'non-natives' in South Africa and Nigeria respectively. Chapter 1 details the classification policies used and revisits the Sharpeville and Kano riots in both countries from the lens of migrant exclusion. Chapter 2 then shifts the focus to British and white settler concerns with unemployed young men ('boma boys' or 'tsotsis') as a source of criminality, and single women as a threat to good morals, and the policies implemented to stem delinquency.

Classification and exclusion also connect to vigilantism, the main theme of Part II of the book. In both countries, vigilante groups have a long history in urban security, typically focusing on monitoring young men and women as well as strangers to the community (Chapter 3). These practices continued in independent Nigeria and post-apartheid South Africa. Besides demonstrating the historical trajectories of vigilantism, Fourchard also shows that vigilante groups rarely operate outside of the state, but increasingly operate together and as part of the state, which also holds important risks for politicization and the use of vigilantes in political violence (Chapter 4).

Part III of the book focuses only on Nigeria and first zooms in on urban patronage politics in the South-West of the country, and how these politics have changed, but also persisted with new modernization efforts (Chapter 5). Fourchard specifically analyzes the continued dominance of commercial over public transport, and argues the quasi-monopoly of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) continues



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because of the union's political usefulness. Chapter 6 then explores how 'indigene' versus 'non-indigene' divisions in Nigeria play out on the local level. It argues that non-indigene exclusion from civil service and redistributive politics (e.g. scholarships, employment programs) does not become politically sensitive in all contexts. While debates on who is truly local or not have led to recurrent violence in Jos, Plateau state, indigeneity has not become politicized in Ibadan, Oyo state.

Fourchard's analyses draw on the work of Foucault, and his findings are predominantly connected to the French political science literature. The interpretive approach used in this tradition can be somewhat unfamiliar to researchers (including myself) who are more attuned to the language of variables, hypotheses, and controlled comparisons. For the latter type of scholar, the book can appear somewhat unstructured as it does not make one central claim, deals with slightly different topics, and focuses on two countries which are largely not even assumed to be comparable. Nevertheless, for scholars from both research traditions who want to gain in-depth insights into urban politics in Nigeria and South Africa, this book is certainly recommended.

Indeed, it is not just a cliché that interpretive research may perform better at laying out the complexities of social reality. Fourchard thoroughly rejects simple narratives about urban politics, and instead emphasizes many contradictions. For instance, while colonial and apartheid governments were obsessed with classification and control, policy implementation was often constrained by resource gaps leading to a lack of results, or even counterproductive outcomes. In South Africa, black youths in care facilities were actually brought into criminal gangs through the state system, incentivizing criminality rather than stemming it. These governments were also not just repressive towards black subjects in general, however, but also responded to public concerns with youth criminality by community members themselves, highlighting internal divisions between local populations.

With regard to urban security governance, Fourchard argues against conceptions of neo-liberal Global South cities in which security-for-hire is regarded as the privilege of the 'gated' rich, as it can be similarly prevalent in poor neighborhoods. At the same time, he argues that the state has not retreated from low-income communities but finds itself both bureaucratically and politically entangled with local vigilantes. And while vigilante groups typically police and exclude youths and strangers, they may also be devices of inclusion for poor urban women seeking an income or an escape from abusive husbands.

Finally, while migrant discrimination is real, Fourchard shows that the principle of indigene privileges in Nigeria is not necessarily contested. Furthermore, migrants may still be included in important patronage networks, and public services in migrant neighborhoods are not necessarily worse. Hence, 'exclusion' does not straightforwardly exist across socio-political dimensions. Indeed, Fourchard explicitly revisits his 2003 argument that the impoverishment of a particular Ibadan neighborhood is due to migrant exclusion. Based on new evidence, he argues that the traditional migrant leader of the neighborhood was in fact well-connected to high-level elites, but that this leader chose not to channel resources downwards to the neighborhood, while this does happen in some other migrant areas. This observation opens up interesting avenues for future


research on the interrelations between patronage access, elite and mass clientelism, and identity.

While Fourchard captures the complexity of empirical reality well in the book, the complexity of data collection receives somewhat less attention. The author relies on archival research and secondary literature, as well as on interviews and participant observation (i.e. joining vigilante routes). Throughout the book, Fourchard at times highlights how his position as a foreign researcher may affect responses and behaviors. Yet a separate, methodological chapter reflecting on these dynamics would have been a highly interesting addition to the book. For instance, Fourchard's revisiting of earlier arguments on migrant exclusion in Ibadan is certainly commendable, but it would have also been interesting to learn more about the underlying knowledge process over time leading to this reformulation.

Scholarship on urban politics in Africa is booming, unsurprisingly given high urban growth rates on the continent. The literature has steadily moved away from either optimism or pessimism about this trend, and in-depth empirical investigations have provided new insight into the complexities of urban politics. Fourchard's main contributions to this field of study include his attention for the colonial legacies of migrant and youth exclusion, and for the interrelations of state and non-state actors in the governance of low-income neighborhoods.

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