

*African Affairs*, 108/431, 321–339 © Royal African Society 2009, all rights reserved  
doi: 10.1093/afraf/adp011-008

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Making Nations, Creating Strangers: States and citizenship in Africa**, edited by Sara Dorman, Daniel Hammett and Paul Nugent. Leiden: Brill, 2007. xiii + 277 pp. €69.00 (paperback). ISBN 978 90 04 15790.

The making of African nation states is a major theme in contemporary African studies. Rather than labelling these processes as ‘failed’, the authors of this volume try to draw a more differentiated picture. Their intention is not to deconstruct the African state but rather to understand its permanence. As ‘there is scarcely a country on the continent where the state of the nation and the boundaries of inclusion/exclusion have not been debated in recent times, and in many instances violent conflict has ensued’ (p. 4), the book interrogates the relationships between nationhood, state-building processes, struggles over national citizenship, and debates about ethnicity. Most of the contributions were presented at the conference on ‘States, Borders and Nations: Negotiating citizenship in Africa’, held at the University of Edinburgh in May 2004. The book is organized in twelve chapters. In their opening section the editors introduce the reader to the overall topic as well as the various contributions. Although this provides the reader with valuable references on the key relationships in which the authors are interested, the overall aim of the book is only vaguely stated.

Regardless of the different regional foci of the individual chapters, a common theme that runs through the entire volume is the discussion of the conflicting dimensions of citizenship, nationality, and ethnicity. In a brilliant contribution, Ruth Marshall-Fratani analyses the historical roots of the Ivorian crisis. She argues that both the colonial and post-colonial Ivorian state ‘have produced’ ethnic identity and have promoted a territorialized and ethnicized definition of citizenship and national identity (p. 38ff.). Thus, the Ivorian crisis is not simply a struggle for state power, but, more importantly, a redefinition of the substance of citizenship itself. The chapter by Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja is, against the background of blurred conceptions of citizenship in the Great Lakes Region, a reminder of the need for a more multinational and global type of citizenship and an accentuation of pan-African solidarity. Sam Hickey highlights the disadvantaged situation of the Mbororo Fulani in the Bamenda Grassfields of Cameroon in an empirically well-founded analysis. He identifies the non-territorial structures of the Mbororo Fulani as a major cause of their marginalization. However, he concludes that the Mbororo have not simply been excluded from local definitions and practices of citizenship, but have to be seen as an internal ‘other’ against whom dominant notions of citizenship are formed and used within the local and national politics of citizenship (p. 87). Following a discussion by Blair Rutherford of the historical process by which farm workers have been constituted as morally suspect citizens with limited virtue within the nation of Zimbabwe, Deborah James examines the relationship between land and citizenship in the context of the South African land reform. Nicodemus Fru Awasom focuses on the relationship between anglophone and francophone Cameroonians. He concludes with interesting remarks on their common ground, which depends on ethnic ties rooted in pre-colonial times and on their disagreement, which is a colonial heritage. Ned Bertz then underlines commonalities between Tanzanian Africans and

Indians and emphasizes that ‘conflicts – such as those seen where race, nationalism, and education are concerned – are simply part of the ongoing creation of Tanzanian society’ (p. 180). The current situation in Zimbabwe, lucidly discussed by Brian Raftopoulos, indicates that national identity is instrumentally deployed against all other forms of identification and belonging.

In the last part of the book Neville Alexander, in an elegantly written piece, points to the fact that notions of identity need to incorporate ‘more modern understandings of flux, hybridity and change’ (p. 217), while Will Reno rethinks warlord politics by considering citizenship in relation to resource control and violence. Crawford Young’s instructive final remarks emphasize the relationship between concepts of identity and territory and, as a result, conflicts.

Across the African continent the conflicting dimensions of citizenship, nationality, and ethnicity often lead to exclusion, marginalization, and racism. However, as demonstrated by some of the contributions, it may also simply be part of the creation of a society. Despite the last chapter by Young, most chapters only loosely connect to the volume’s opening reflections on the permanence of the African state. A concluding chapter by the editors might have remedied this weakness. Regardless of this, *Making Nations, Creating Strangers* is a valuable sourcebook for students and scholars interested in current discussions on citizenship in different African states and its relations to colonial and pre-colonial circumstances. It provides stimulating reading and a starting point for future research on the construction of multiple identities, the negotiation of statehood, and the quest for ‘African alternatives’.

*University of Zurich*

MICHELLE ENGELER

doi:10.1093/afraf/adp011

Advance Access Publication 3 February 2009

**Votes, Money and Violence: Political parties and elections in sub-Saharan Africa**, edited by Matthias Basedau, Gero Erdmann, and Andreas Mehler. Uppsala: Nordic African Institute, 2007. 301 pp. €31.00 (paperback). ISBN 978 91 7106 579 7.

This is a book that anyone interested in political parties, party systems, and democracy in Africa will want to read. Despite their importance in political life, African political parties and party systems have not been well studied. This book takes a step towards filling this gap in the literature. True to the book’s stated goals, it identifies a number of different research questions related to political parties and party systems that are worthy of attention.

*Votes, Money and Violence* is an edited volume whose chapters include most of the papers – several now substantially revised – that were presented at the AEGIS conference on ‘How People Elect Their Leaders: Parties, party systems, and elections in Africa south of the Sahara’, which took place in Hamburg in May 2003. As the editors note, the aim of the book is largely exploratory; its chapters attempt to identify the research questions and programmes that should be considered in the study of political parties and party systems in Africa. Few of the contributors claim to test hypotheses or come to firm conclusions.

The book consists of an introduction, ten substantive chapters, and a conclusion. The authors use different methodological approaches and address a variety of subjects. As is the case with many edited volumes, the diversity of the chapters