

the book would have analysed in more detail. Grace briefly engages with this theme, arguing that environmental sustainability was not a priority in the evolution of the Tanzanian automobile culture. However, there are opportunities to probe socio-economic aspects of sustainability (perhaps in another project) by using the extensive car repair and remodelling processes to interrogate the topics of waste, scraps, recycling and second-hand product importation in the Tanzanian/African technological imagination. Despite this minor concern, *African Motors* is undoubtedly a product of erudite scholarship. The writing is lucid, the narratives are nuanced, and the plot will be easy to follow by specialists, students and general readers alike. Beyond Tanzania, *African Motors* will remain an essential text for years to come for scholars of technology, gender, urban and rural studies, (auto-)mobility and Third World socialism.

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Sara Salem, *Anticolonial Afterlives in Egypt: The Politics of Hegemony*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (hb £83.99 – 978 1 108 49151 8; pb £25.99 – 978 1 108 79838 9). 2020, 294 pp.

How can we explain the outbreak of the 2011 revolution in Egypt? Some scholars have been content to highlight the role of social media, attributing such a monumental event to the spread of Web 2.0 tools. Others have focused on divisions within the regime's ruling class on how to manage the neoliberal transition. More nuanced approaches have situated the revolt within a rising social movement that started a decade earlier, with the second Palestinian intifada.

Sara Salem's fascinating piece of scholarly work, however, goes back as far as 1952 to explain how the scene was set for the 2011 uprising. Why would the search for the roots of a revolt in 2011 take us on a journey back to the mid-twentieth century, when an eclectic group of nationalist army officers overthrew the British-backed monarchy and founded Egypt's first republican order?

Drawing on the works of Antonio Gramsci and Frantz Fanon, Salem argues that Nasser's era was the only moment of 'hegemony' in Egypt's modern history. The officers managed to form a 'historical block' where a ruling class successfully sold its vision to the wider public, enabling Nasser to rule primarily by consent and build a wide class alliance that responded to the nationalist and social aspirations of workers, farmers, the middle classes and sections of local capital.

In pulling together such a hegemonic project, Salem further explains, Egypt's case challenges some of Fanon's reflections on the postcolonial bourgeoisie as incapable of severing ties of dependency on the imperial centre. In fact, Nasser's Egypt did. Such hegemony does not mean that coercion was not employed. The Free Officers, after all, inaugurated their rule by cracking down on industrial strikers in Kafr el-Dawwar and executing two communist workers. This was followed by the establishment of a labyrinth of security services, which did not hesitate to arrest, torture and kill dissidents.

But Salem makes it clear that Nasser's rule, at least until the catastrophic 1967 defeat in the war with Israel, rested primarily on consent.

Salem explores the role of ideology that helped cement this historical block, and the institutions that fostered the 'Nasserist project', politically, socially and economically. By the mid-1960s, small cracks had started to appear in this regime, when, following the end of the first Five Year Plan, prices of basic commodities increased, and some concessions were made to the private sector. But it was the 1967 war that struck the hardest blow to the Nasserist ruling class's ability to rule by consent.

The shocking defeat eroded the hegemony of the ruling class. It is not a coincidence that the revival of the student and labour movements was to commence in 1968. And neither was it a coincidence that the militarization of the police and the establishment of the Central Security Forces ensued immediately afterwards, as the ruling class gradually resorted to coercion to maintain its control. Ideology was not enough any more.

Anwar Sadat's rise to power in 1971 and his 'corrective revolution', which purged the Nasserist centres of power from the country, would put Egypt on the road to a neoliberal transition. And it is with Sadat that the postcolonial dependent bourgeoisie took shape, Salem argues, building on Fanon's theory. The ruling class was never a static group, with changing alliances and different groups not necessarily having an equal share of power in the ruling coalition.

Yet what Salem meticulously explains is that the ruling class(es) from 1967 to 2011 failed to form a historical block that could sell its vision to the wider public, and thus failed to create hegemony. Thus, both Sadat's and Hosni Mubarak's regimes had no other tools to maintain their rule but coercion. Both depended on the Interior Ministry to aggressively police every aspect of citizens' lives and both unleashed a wave of state violence that targeted not only dissidents but also other groups and individuals who were not necessarily politicized or opposed to the regime.

The absence of consent in favour of coercion, the failure to form a historical block and the erosion of hegemony, Salem argues, paved the road to the 2011 revolution.

Parts of the book are also devoted to the opposition – namely, the Islamists and the left. In these sections, Salem investigates the reasons behind their failure to become a 'counter-hegemonic' force, and how this ultimately crippled their ability to present a viable alternative before and after the 2011 revolution.

Salem's thesis on hegemony holds well in explaining Nasser's consolidation of power and his successors' inability to rule without coercion. But one issue that probably deserves rethinking is the extent to which the Nasserist project confronted the global capitalist order. Nationalizations to prop up the state capitalist order, the adoption of import substitution schemes, and the quest to encourage exports and find new markets for local products simply meant that the new Nasserist elite was actively trying to integrate into the global capitalist system, not confront it. State-led industrialization plans were popular throughout the global South in the same era, not just in Egypt. And virtually all of these states at later stages liberalized their economies in one form or another, in many cases at the hands of the same rulers who had devised state capitalist plans under the banner of 'socialism'. This should make us contemplate whether Nasserism was doomed to failure, regardless of the 1967 defeat or the eventual rise of Sadat.

Salem's book is a recommended read, not only for Marxists and scholars of post-colonial theory, but also for anyone who seeks to understand the potential as well as

the failures of revolutionary transformation in one of the largest countries in the global South.

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Uroš Kovač, *The Precarity of Masculinity: Football, Pentecostalism, and Transnational Aspirations in Cameroon*. New York NY and Oxford: Berghahn Books (hb US\$135/£99 – 978 1 78920 927 3). 2022, 220 pp.

In *The Precarity of Masculinity*, Uroš Kovač provides us with a timely and comprehensively researched ethnography of aspiring male footballers in Cameroon. The three pillars of Kovač's analysis are precarity, masculinity and Pentecostal Christianity: Kovač argues that since young footballers have a somewhat commodified status in football and a promising but uncertain future, Pentecostal Christianity operates as an engine of hope. It encourages asceticism and an avoidance of extravagant lifestyles (of alcohol consumption, for instance) that could bring down one's fledgling career. In this sense, a key observation of Kovač's book is about the sorts of persons footballers must become under the conditions of global aspiration and economic precarity, which combine in a classic instance of 'cruel optimism'. Kovač pays particular attention to the appropriation of 'suffering' as a narrative through which these men not only articulate their marginality, but also their capacity to endure and overcome.

Kovač has conducted field research with football clubs and footballers that is both in-depth and multi-sited. He has worked with two football academies and has followed Cameroonian footballers across the globe to understand their experiences of migration through football. Chapter 1 sets out context for the book, emphasizing the introduction of satellite television in the 1990s as a critical moment that brought European football to audiences in Cameroon. At the same time, Cameroon's ailing economy encouraged young people to look abroad to secure better futures.

In Chapter 2, Kovač illustrates, with meticulous understanding, how Cameroon's football clubs and academies became incorporated into the transnational political economy of contemporary football. The incorporation of Pentecostal Christianity into the lifeworld of these academies is fascinating, and Kovač shows – using the example of one amateur club – how a transfer of ownership from an old 'big man' to his son, Junior, embodied a total break in the club's philosophy. Junior's introduction of Pentecostal prayers into the pre-match ritual symbolized the new emphasis on success, in contrast to the academy's former status as something closer to a charitable home for boys. Meanwhile, other businessmen also began investing in clubs, hoping to market Cameroonian footballers abroad.

In a world where football clubs such as Real Madrid, Manchester City, Paris Saint-Germain and Chelsea are trying to push for a global 'super league', disconnected from local fans and able to play football matches to audiences as far afield as Shanghai and Doha, these observations about the disembedding of an old 'moral economy' of