

hosted by the NGO where the expatriates' refusal to provide 'handouts', a stance grounded in what they see as best practice within the development community, collides with local norms of hospitality and understandings of global inequality. Within this example, as in many others in the book, the author demonstrates that whether or not an activity is considered to be 'for the public good' is deeply related to cultural norms and relations of power.

As the authors in this volume make clear, those with economic and political power are able to set the limits on how much compensation or personal benefit can be derived from voluntary activities before they are no longer considered 'altruistic'. This power is routinely exercised by wealthy volunteers who see no problem adding their experiences to their résumés, but question the practice of providing transport reimbursements in excess of the costs actually incurred (Wig, p. 80). The story is similar for development workers who pay volunteers but avoid the word 'salary' for various moral and ethical reasons (Bruun, Chapter 4; Kelly and Chaki, Chapter 2). As the authors of this volume illustrate, this exercise of power often reinforces inequalities rather than addressing them, a stated goal of many volunteer projects.

Importantly, in addition to providing localized rich ethnographic detail, the examples discussed in this book are skilfully positioned by the authors and editors within the context of global norms of participation, charity and neoliberal governance. Volunteers inhabit a liminal space, not usually serving as official state representatives, but often doing the work that the state once did: providing health-care, maintaining local environmental conditions and teaching in schools. But the boundary remains; both Jennings (Chapter 5) and Redfield (Epilogue) describe the real challenges that exist for NGOs asked to take on the burden of the state without sufficient resources or mandate. As the chapters depict, this change in governance affects local labour markets but also shapes how volunteers view their own endeavours. These voluntary acts become part of a 'highly individualized' voluntary sector, where participants enter into this form of labour to meet specific goals, rather than to contribute to the overall well-being of the community. As such, the growing voluntary sector contributes to new understandings of belonging and citizenship within African communities.

The primary criticism of the book lies in its somewhat limited geographical and thematic scope (four of the chapters focus on Tanzania and six on health). As the authors make such a convincing argument for the importance of understanding local history and cultural norms, the lack of primary ethnographic material from North, Central and most of West Africa is a limitation. That being said, this criticism does not detract from the volume's very valuable contribution to the literature on voluntary labour and the practice of African development.

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Gregory Mann, *From Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel: the road to non-governmentality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (pb £23.99 – 978 1 107 60252 6). 2015, xvi + 281 pp.

The principal question of Gregory Mann's book is 'what is government?' (p. 8). He explores it by studying controversies about 'neo-colonialism' and 'neoliberalism' and investigates how sovereignty was exercised during and after the

decolonization of French West Africa. Mann draws from rich archival material and provides an original perspective on Michel Foucault's concept of 'governmentality'. He argues that the power of NGOs is not a consequence of state weakness. Instead, he coins the term 'nongovernmentality' and shows that the emergence of new forms of governmental rationality, realized through non-governmental organizations (NGOs), did not commence with structural adjustment programmes but rather began a decade after independence, when sovereignty was highly valued. Mann's definition of 'nongovernmentality' differs from Michel Feher's concept of 'nongovernmental politics', as Feher's definition involves politics without the aspiration to govern. It is also different from Stephen Jackson's perspective of 'nongovernmentality' incarnated by an atrophied state, such as Zaire in the 1980s. Mann's book is propelled by the same questions explored by Béatrice Hibou and Mamadou Diouf concerning 'private indirect government' in the era of multiparty contestation. Yet, he invites us to look for answers in the earlier period of independence and the decade that followed it.

The book focuses on the idea of the Sahel as a 'political assemblage, a zone of intervention' (p. 244) marked by complex connections through intellectual life, migration, solidarity and activism with France and the United States. While basing his research mostly on Mali, Mann includes meaningful examples from Guinea, Niger and Senegal. The first and second parts examine the period of the French Union and the early years of independence, between the 1940s and 1960s. Focusing on social science, identity, migration and citizenship, these sections explain how and why certain characteristics of the government came to be defined beyond the prerogatives of the state – the process is then brilliantly portrayed in the third part of the book about humanitarianism and human rights.

Chapter 1 focuses on Madeira Keita, one of the leaders of the Sudanese Union–African Democratic Party (Union Soudanaise–Rassemblement Démocratique Africain or US–RDA) and an agent of the West African social science research institute. Keita was convinced that the impediments to Mali's modernization were grounded in its social structure and that only the US–RDA could reorganize society. The party accepted no social dissent and left little space for civil life 'distinct from state and party' (p. 41). Chapter 2 demonstrates how citizenship acquired meaning through a set of rules regarding the status of indigenes, women's enfranchisement and the abolition of chieftaincy, a key pillar of the colonial order.

By juxtaposing centuries-old mobilities across the Sahel with labour migration to France, Chapters 3 and 4 show that citizenship in the new republic was not performed only through formal laws, but also through the 'haphazard' practices of migrants, bureaucrats and diplomats. Chapter 4, for example, examines how aggressive tools for defining political membership opened up spaces for migrants and activists to generate new forms of politics that challenged postcolonial 'state thought' on migration. The former imperial power and the emerging states sought to create foreigners as well as citizens, to exclude as well as to include – therefore revealing the struggle for 'control over the meaning of political membership' (p. 122).

Part Three explains how, since the 1970s, humanitarian assistance and human rights activism, with roots in the anti-colonial left, have become powerful forces within the Sahel while coexisting with state sovereignty. Chapter 5 demonstrates how famine relief in the 1970s set up conditions of an emerging gap between new states and populations. The gulf was widened by international NGOs and filled in by new 'wedges' of nongovernmentality. While Sahelian states shared functions of schooling, public health and food supply with external actors such as NGOs, the gap between the state and 'the government' steadily grew.

Further, through famine relief efforts, human rights campaigns that supported imprisoned members of the US–RDA also contributed to alter the nature and meaning of government. Contrasting the activism of Amnesty International with that of the Association Française d’Amitié et de la Solidarité avec les Peuples d’Afrique (AFASPA), Chapter 6 shows how a political language and form of activism that had been conceived as apolitical became antipolitical in practice. Mann argues that, in the 1970s, human rights activism was working through anti-colonial political networks but rejected their politics; it produced ‘a new politics of human rights in diminished form’ and went on to reproduce itself (p. 213).

Throughout this impressive work, Mann offers a thoughtfully nuanced perspective on sovereignty and challenges our comprehension of the key concepts: the state and the government. His ‘road to nongovernmentality’ is an invitation to travel through space – across the Sahel and beyond – as well as through different time periods connecting the present of the region as a ‘dystopic site’ (p. 3) with the 1940s of the French Union and the first decades after independence. Although the book could have included a deeper study of the student activist networks operating throughout the region and reaching France and Eastern Europe and their links with human rights activism, NGOs or political leaders through a generational perspective, it is an extraordinary, original and profound piece of academic research.

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