

country in Indian scholarship. It is politics, rather than culture, that is understudied. This contrasts with the Indian international relations and political science scholarship on North America, Europe and East Asia. Although this is a book about 'developmental policy' and not diplomacy per se, archive-based analyses of diplomatic and political engagements on developmental assistance would have added factual substance to the usual ululations about India's great support of Africa – or would have assisted with moderating those claims.

Furthermore, as important as this book is, it focuses heavily on a relatively well-studied region of the continent: Eastern Africa. Other African regions are marginalized in the discussion. Partly, this is a function of the nature of Indian developmental assistance and diaspora politics, which have a long lineage in Eastern Africa. But surprisingly, even Southern Africa, which otherwise acquires considerable real estate in scholarship on India in Africa, gets little mention. From an Indian strategic point of view, Western Africa, an important region, also remains curiously absent from the book.

All in all, this is an insightful and timely intervention that will be an invaluable resource for African studies scholarship in India and elsewhere.

Vineet Thakur

Leiden University, Leiden, The Netherlands

Email: v.thakur@hum.leidenuniv.nl

doi: [10.1017/S0001972023000293](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0001972023000293)

Nicky Falkof, *Worrier State: Risk, Anxiety and Moral Panic in South Africa*. Manchester: Manchester University Press (hb £80 – 978 1 5261 6402 5). 2022, 244 pp.

In June 1976, I was a teenage pupil at an all-white girls' boarding school in a wealthy suburb of Johannesburg. As anti-apartheid protests spread from Soweto to other Black townships in the city, we whispered to each other in the dormitory after lights-out, expressing fear and anxiety about what might happen. Would the residents of nearby Alexandra township invade the school grounds and attack us in our beds as we slept? Would the Black staff who lived in designated quarters on the school grounds slip poison into our food? Was this the beginning of a wider uprising? And what did that mean for our own white security and privilege?

Although the Soweto uprising was swiftly and violently put down by the apartheid police and state security apparatus, it did mark the 'beginning of the end' of formal apartheid. Yet racialized anxieties have persisted in the post-1994 era, if in modified forms. As Falkof shows in this compelling and important book, cultures of fear and anxiety emerge from deep socio-economic inequalities that continue to characterize South Africa today, on intersecting bases of race, class, gender and citizenship. To live in, and make sense of, this climate of risk, she suggests, South Africans construct sensationalized collective narratives of crime, deviance and folk devils.

Falkof, a media studies professor at Wits University in Johannesburg, draws on a mix of methods, disciplines and theoretical approaches in constructing her

multi-stranded argument. She analyses newspaper and radio coverage, social media such as Facebook and Twitter, and various groups' online presence on websites and in YouTube videos. She also conducted her own interviews and focus groups. In each of four distinct chapters, she explores a particular example of risk, anxiety and moral panic. Chapter 2 describes representations of farm murders and white genocide as portrayed by groups such as Afriforum, made up mostly of white Afrikaners. Chapter 3, 'Christian nightmares', analyses coverage of two separate cases of 'satanic' murders of young women in different, and differently racialized, areas of Johannesburg (the city that forms the focus of much of the book). Chapter 4 examines how drugs and crime intertwine with consumption in the theft of 'plasma TVs' by so-called plasma gangs in Alexandra township. Chapter 5 looks at the gentrified, middle-class suburb of Melville – in particular, the Facebook group 'I Love Melville', with its contradictory narratives of (white) vulnerability and liberal humanitarianism.

These four core chapters provide rich descriptions and persuasive interpretations of events, circumstances, and their representations in media and popular discourse. For each case, Falkof juxtaposes empirical realities with stories, images, media accounts and, in some cases, legal judgments about murders, burglaries and perceived social deviance, showing how a nucleus of empirical reality is distorted into perceived threat from a mythologized, demonized 'other'. She successfully navigates a tricky balance between the perspectives of insider and outsider, subjective and objective, and academic and personal.

Less compelling or persuasive is her grappling with theory. She engages with a broad, eclectic mix of theoretical work across diverse disciplines and intellectual traditions, without this ever quite amounting to a coherent analytical framework. Zygmunt Bauman, Pierre Bourdieu, Stanley Cohen, John and Jean Comaroff, Michel Foucault, bell hooks and Achille Mbembe all put in an appearance. Sometimes this seems like theory for theory's sake, although it does provide Falkof with useful concepts and terminology. To me as a geographer, the most interesting insights came from the urban geographical work that she deploys, especially that by geographers who themselves conduct research in South African cities (Richard Ballard, Mark Hunter, Charlotte Lemanski, Susan Parnell and Maano Ramutsindela, among others). This enables her to incorporate place and space into her analysis, highlighting how narratives of community and (non-)belonging are inherently spatial, functioning as a means of territorial bordering, exclusion and protection. The book as a whole traverses scales (national to local) and evocatively captures four very different locations in Johannesburg. Each place is distinct from the others in its racial and class composition, and in the ways in which these are being reworked and contested in processes of post-apartheid socio-spatial reordering.

Falkof begins the book with an account of her personal experience as someone who lived abroad for a few years before returning to South Africa. She recalls the alarmist warnings that she was given, and her own efforts to distinguish 'real' risk from urban legend and amplified collective anxiety. As she concludes, rather than anything exceptional, spectacular or uncanny, it is in the unequal and inequitable 'social-spatial formation' (p. 198) of South African cities that risk is produced, both imagined and lived, in people's everyday experience. Ultimately, Falkof shows how mythologizing

crime and violence into spectacular forms acts to conceal their embeddedness in deep-seated and enduring structural violence. *Worrier State* is a valuable addition to critical scholarship on urban South Africa and deserves wide readership, in academia and beyond.

Belinda Dodson

University of Western Ontario, London, Canada

Email: bdodson@uwo.ca

doi: [10.1017/S000197202300030X](https://doi.org/10.1017/S000197202300030X)

Zainab Usman, *Economic Diversification in Nigeria: The Politics of Building a Post-Oil Economy*. London: Zed Books (hb £90 – 978 1 7869 9394 6). 2022, v + 352 pp.

Nigeria, an oil-producing country, remains Africa's largest country in terms of gross domestic product (GDP), in addition to having the continent's largest population size. No doubt, events in Nigeria therefore tend to attract the attention of the international community, given its potential as an economic powerhouse. However, since gaining independence in 1960, the country has struggled to translate its economic fortunes into benefits for its citizenry and has instead continued to reinforce clientelist interests and rent-seeking.

Academics and policymakers alike have sought to understand the realities of these contradictions, which have prevented the country from achieving its potential. In her book *Economic Diversification in Nigeria*, Zainab Usman offers a compelling argument that explains the country's dilemma through rigorous and thought-provoking analysis substantiated by empirical evidence.

Prevailing frameworks for understanding the failures of oil-rich countries in sustaining economic growth have mostly dwelt on narratives such as the 'oil curse' and 'neo-patrimonial culture'. The basis of these analytical constructs is not only shallow and insufficient; it also fails to offer a comprehensive framework for understanding the intricacies and dynamics that inform the absence of economic growth and development in a complex country such as Nigeria.

The author instead adopts a political settlement framework of analysis for understanding these complexities. As posited by the author, the nature of a country's political settlement shapes policymaking and economic outcomes. Adopting such a framework thereby offers useful insights beyond the traditional approaches to explaining the woes of monolithic product economies that have failed to diversify.

According to the author, policy reforms in Nigeria have mostly focused on crisis management rather than economic diversification. The implications of this argument are demonstrated in a lack of the proactive economic foresight and planning that are required to cushion the effects of unforeseen contingencies, such as economic shocks occasioned by fluctuations in oil prices. When such events occur, they tend to disrupt budgetary allocations in Nigeria. This is reflected particularly in the overdependence on oil revenues by sub-national entities in Nigeria, from the federal government to the Federation Accounts Allocation Committee (FAAC).