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Dmitri M. Bondarenko. 2016. *Ottenki chernogo. Kulturno-antropologicheskie aspekty vzaimovospriyatia i vzaimootnosheniy afrikano-amerikantsev i migrantovi iz stran subskharskoy Afriki v SSHA* [The Shades of Black: Cultural-anthropological Aspects of Mutual Perceptions and Relations between African Americans and African Migrants in the USA]. Moscow: Fundamental Linguistics Development Fund. 216 pages.

Dmitri Bondarenko is a Russian social anthropologist, historian and Africanist. He is Deputy Director for Research in the Institute for African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences and holds the titles of Professor of Global Problems and International Relations at the Russian Academy of Sciences and Professor of Ethnology at the Russian State University for the Humanities and the Lomonosov Moscow State University. He has over 400 publications, including such monographs as *Benin on the Eve of the First Contacts with Europeans: Personality, Society, Authority* (Moscow: Institute for African Studies Press, 1995, 339 pp., in Russian), *The Theory of Civilizations and the Dynamics of Historical Process in Pre-colonial Tropical Africa* (Moscow: Institute for African Studies Press, 1997, 71 pp., in Russian), *Pre-imperial Benin: Formation and Evolution of the Socio-political Institutions System* (Moscow: Institute for African Studies Press, 2001, 350 pp., in Russian). In English he published among others *A Popular History of Benin: The Rise and Fall of a Mighty Forest Kingdom*. Frankfurt am Main etc.: Peter Lang, 2003, 391 pp. (with P. M. Roese), *Homoarchy, A Principle of Culture's Organization: The 13th-19th Centuries Benin Kingdom as a Non-State Supercomplex Society* (Moscow: Komkniga, 2006, 182 pp.) and *The Axial Ages of World History: Lessons for the 21st Century* (Litchfield Park, AZ: Emergent Publications, 2014, xiii+137 pp. (with K. Baskin)).

Bondarenko headed a Russian Humanitarian Science Foundation project, which resulted in the publication of the book under review. In this book, Bondarenko focuses on the mutual acceptance and

relations of representatives of two African-born population groups of the USA. The first group is the community of African-Americans that has existed for several centuries. The second group has emerged in recent times and consists of diasporas of immigrants from various countries of sub-Saharan Africa. It should be noted that while the history of slavery and the struggle of African slaves for liberation and political rights and the issues of their modern socio-economic status are widely reflected in the scientific literature, the problem that the author discusses in this book has not been sufficiently studied. Even American researchers have made very few publications on the subject, which in part can be explained by the gravity of the problem. However, the issue of transnational migrations, particularly from Africa to the United States and to Europe, is of late highly relevant.

The book is based on the field survey data collected in 2013–15 in seven US states (Alabama, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, and Pennsylvania), in towns, medium-size cities, and large cities such as St. Louis, Boston, Chicago, Minneapolis, New York City, and Philadelphia. The author employed the methods of structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews and observation to collect the scientific material. He spent a great deal of time in urban areas densely populated by African-Americans and Africans as well as in rural areas, meeting and talking to people from various social strata and groups. The respondents included African Americans, the natives of 23 of the 49 countries of sub-Saharan Africa, black natives from states of the Caribbean, and US residents of other origins (Arab, Jewish, European, Indian, Chinese, Hispanic).

The introduction provides a detailed historical overview of the voluntary migration of Africans to the Western Hemisphere, including the United States, which began in the 1860s –at the time when slavery was abolished. The author rightly points out that for more than 100 years the scale of the migration of Africans to the United States had remained low, but it increased markedly during the 1980s and 1990s, when many Africans “abandoned their hopes of building politically stable, socially just, and economically prosperous societies in their own countries – the hopes they had nourished since gaining independence” (pp. 9–10). Bondarenko indicates the key features of African migration to the United States during these years: unlike the migrations of the first decades of the colonial and post-colonial

periods, starting with the 1980s there has been an increase in the influx of immigrants from almost all countries of the continent, including the French-speaking countries; the migrants include people of all educational levels, but their average level of education is quite high: the “brain drain” can be explained by the desire of educated Africans to have a decent standard of living, adequate to their qualifications. Moreover, “at this time, migrants from sub-Saharan Africa constitute the most highly educated segment of the US population” (p. 12).

The book consists of three chapters. The first one – “African Americans and African Migrants: Mutual Attraction and Repulsion” – describes the processes of formation of new African diasporas in the United States. For the purposes of his research, the author defines a diaspora not just as a group of people from one nation or country living in another country, but as a group that forms a networked community, which facilitates a more successful adaptation to the host society and the preservation of its own cultural identity. Based on the results of his fieldwork, the author argues that recent immigrants from many African countries have already formed such diasporas in the United States, and these diasporas are separate from each other. There are diasporas of immigrants from Ghana, Senegal, Ethiopia, etc., rather than a single African diaspora. Internally, the diasporas are extremely heterogeneous and fragmented – ethnically, religiously, socially, and politically; their members have business, friendship, or family ties, but their country of origin serves as the “reference point” for the identity of the majority of African migrants from the first generation. Furthermore, it determines their social circle even for those Africans who live side by side with Africans from other countries. The conclusion of the author, that national origin is the cornerstone of the identity of the migrants (p. 25) is of crucial importance for understanding the mutual perception of Africans and African-Americans, which in fact shapes the relations between them.

Summarizing the results of the interviews and conversations with African-Americans and African migrants, Bondarenko writes that, according to respondents, the significant differences between the two groups of the US population are due to the differences in their historical experience. While the first group consists of newly arrived, the second has been a part of the history of the United States for many generations; the first group had experienced the burdens of

colonialism, the other has encountered racism. These differences cause problems in the relations between both groups. Moreover, the minds of African-Americans are clearly burdened by the “racial component,” while Africans are not so conscious of racial differences. Black America lacks an ethnic consciousness, while the African continent does not incorporate the concept of race in its models of behaviour. Consequently, the interaction between Africans and African-Americans is sometimes fragile because of the differences in the models of primordial consciousness.

The other two chapters – “Historic Memory as a Factor of Interaction between African-Americans and Sub-Saharan African Migrants” and “Images of Cultures and Interaction between African-Americans and Sub-Saharan African Migrants” – focus on elucidating how perceptions of past events and phenomena, as well as cultural similarities and cultural differences, affect mutual acceptance, and through it the relations between African-Americans and African-Americans. Interestingly, many African-Americans do not understand how it is possible that Africans are unaware of the history of slavery in the New World, while Africans are frustrated by the ignorance of Black Americans regarding the history of the anti-colonial struggle in Africa and by a greater interest in the African continent shown by white Americans. According to Bondarenko, this is due not to the indifference of African-Americans towards Africans, but to the lower average educational level of the Black Americans compared to that of the whites. The impact of the issue of colonialism on the interaction between the two communities is not as great as the issue of slavery, partly because of the smaller number of African migrants in relation to African-Americans, and because of the fact that the interaction between the two develops on the land that has seen slavery rather than colonialism.

Many scholars of African and American history believe that the culture of black people is shared and that the difference between them lies only in historical experience. For this reason, the author notes, the differences between the cultures of African-Americans and Africans are often reduced to an assessment of the phenomena of slavery and colonialism. Bondarenko provides a more profound explanation of the historical and cultural unity and differences between both communities: this unity is due to the fact that representatives of both

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groups suffered from whites and fought against their oppression, while the divisions are explained by the differences in the levels of exploitation of blacks by whites in different parts of the world (p. 94).

The author points to a recent tendency to improve the relations and mutual understanding between African-Americans and African migrants, who face similar socio-economic problems. In general, however, as Bondarenko aptly notes, to the majority of both communities, the postulate of the brotherhood of all black people “seems no more than an ideological slogan, wrong and even absurd” (p. 152).

The text offers numerous detailed data, presents and supplements the views of representatives of both the African-American community and of migrants from many countries of sub-Saharan Africa, thus reflecting the mutual perceptions of two large population groups in the USA. With this book, Dmitri Bondarenko makes a significant contribution to modern social anthropology and to the history of the American and African continents.

Tatyana Denisova

Thompson, Gardner. 2015. *African Democracy: Its Origins and Development in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.*

Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 466 pages.

African democracy is one of the principal scholarly topics of interest for both political scientists and Africanists. While the former approach the problem mostly without much knowledge of African realities, the latter struggle with the theoretical framework for their African research. The reviewed publication mostly belongs to the second type of research. Gardner Thomson is a renowned British scholar in African studies, who has dedicated his academic work to a more profound grasp of African history, especially of British colonial rule in Eastern Africa. We could refer here to his fundamental work, *Governing Uganda: British Colonial Rule and its Legacy* (2003).

In the book under review, however, the author investigates a topic he is not very familiar with. The comprehensive analysis of (African)