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**Munyaradzi Mawere and Samuel Awuah-Nyamekye
(eds.) 2015. Harnessing Cultural Capital for
Sustainability: A Pan-Africanist Perspective.
Bamenda: Langaa RPCIG, 392 pp.**

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lacking in the book, despite the fact that the introduction points out the impact of the diamond mining activities and the government's mismanagement on the regime transition. Despite these weaknesses, the book represents a good starting point for those readers unfamiliar with the Marange case. Several high-quality contributions and data gathered will hopefully be a valuable source for further analyses.

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Munyaradzi Mawere and Samuel Awuah-Nyamekye (eds.)
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Indigenous knowledge, intangible heritage politics and political structure, traditional religion, local cosmology and indigenous-based mechanisms for overcoming everyday obstacles and other elements make up cultural capital. However, in case of the African continent and its murky history in terms of slavery and colonialism, cultural capital has vigorously declined or been completely forgotten. Nevertheless, the current trend in approaching the local (indigenous) knowledge, customs and traditions has shifted. Thus, more scholars and researchers, together with politicians, focus on a revival of traditional thinking. The book under review concentrates on the interdisciplinary perspective of African cultural capital and explicates the role of the phenomenon which should secure the sustainable development of the entire continent and the world. It also underscores the economic and environmental aspects of sustainable development from the Pan-Africanist perspective.

Fourteen African scholars present diversity in knowledge production in Africa in fourteen distinct chapters. The individual chapters provide a unique view on cultural capital that should lead to development and sustainability from the political structures to old African testament proverbs. The chapters are linked by one core theme: most post-independent African governments do not consider the role and continued relevance of cultural capital as a key feature for social security, development and sustainability in their countries. The

comprehensive list of contributors, presented at the beginning of the book, provides readers with an overall view of the authors and their background. The extensive introduction (pp. xiii–xxxi) portrays crucial findings and acquaints readers with the content of each chapter.

Significant space (chapters 1 and 4) is devoted to the impact of indigenous knowledge on the environment, namely, to disaster risk reduction and climate change strategies. The authors of the first chapter (pp. 1–31) shed light on disaster risk management strategies in Africa through the indigenous Shona people of Zimbabwe. Munyaradzi Mawere and Tapuwa R. Mubaya argue that the Shona had successfully overcome natural disasters, including drought and famine in the pre-colonial era. The Shona designed the necessary measures to survive such disasters. As an example, they initiated the common granary, intercropping as well as growing drought-resistant indigenous crops. According to the authors, these mechanisms ceased to be utilised because of colonialism, Western education, Christianity and globalisation. At the end of their chapter they suggest the restoring of traditional techniques to overcome natural disasters. The other chapter related to the environment (chapter 4) provides an analysis of and indigenous-based adaptation initiative to sustainable climate change strategies for Africa. Nelson Chanza demonstrates that African indigenous people are capable of successfully countering the effects of climate change by means of rain-petitioning ceremonies and community fieldwork.

Apart from the environment, descriptions of political structures and politics appear in the book to a large extent. Indigenous political structures in Africa are discussed in chapter 2 (pp. 33–53). Pius Abioje illustrates that Nigeria’s political space has been shaped by serious conflicts and violence that affect sustainable development. He identifies religion, ethnicity and leadership as key factors of the dismal conditions in Nigeria. Intangible heritage politics and languages in post-colonial Africa are discussed in chapter 8 (pp. 203–218), which focuses on Mozambique with more than thirty indigenous languages. Munyaradzi Mawere disagrees with the fact that Portuguese, a colonial language, is still an official language in the country even though native speakers represent only 1% of the population while it has been revealed by some studies that local languages can be regarded as an instrument towards development and sustainability.

Various approaches to religion as another common topic of the book connects chapters 6, 7 and 10. In chapter 6 Akiti Glory Alamu describes the importance of sacred places in African religion (pp. 159–176). He presents environmental features including trees, lagoons, rivers and hills that are believed to be sanctuaries of spirits and ghosts. As an outcome, the environment around these sacred places is protected and conserved. In chapter 7, Hezekiah Olufemi Adeosun reflects the historical rivalry between the world's two major religions (Islam and Christianity) that have negatively influenced peace and stability in Nigeria. He also presents the traditional and almost forgotten religion *Ifá* that, according to him, represents good characteristics in particular. He concludes with a suggestion to return to the roots and practices of the traditional religion. Chapter 10 demonstrates the relation of the Tonga living on the shores of the Zambezi river with the environment which is positively affected by the existence of the river god *Nyaminyami*.

In my opinion, chapters 9 and 13 are pivotal. Both present the importance of indigenous knowledge for Africa's sustainable development. In chapter 9 (pp. 221–242) Samuel Awuah-Nyamekye criticises current African governments for their failure to use Western-based knowledge systems to address African problems. According to him, the solution for people to live sustainable lives and achieve sustainable development lies in the interconnection of indigenous and Western knowledge. Chapter 13 (pp. 307–328) examines present education in Africa and sums up its fundamentals. Munyaradzi Mawere speaks out strongly against the persistence of a *status quo* in the field of education since the colonial era. He appeals to African scholars and intellectuals for a re-examination of methods and outcomes of traditional pre-colonial education and an acknowledgement of the full recognition and integration in the current educational system.

The remaining chapters cover various topics focused on the concept of sustainable development in theories of international relations, the contribution of non-governmental organisation (NGOs) to sustainability in Africa, the depiction of polygamous marriages in the narratives of the Shona people in pre-colonial era and the role of Old Testament proverbs in promoting sustainable lifestyles. Chapter 5 (pp. 135–158) analyses the situation of NGOs in Africa, the challenges they have to surmount while working in different communities and

cooperating with the governments. Munyaradzi Mawere and Misheck P. Chingozha conclude the chapter with recommendations that can be adopted by NGOs to deal with some of the challenges. Some illustrative examples given include the formation of creative alliances, the refusal to accept funding from suspicious institutions and governments, the reduction of corruption and the discouragement of dependence among some beneficiaries.

Generally speaking, the book presents an interdisciplinary perspective of the African cultural capital from the Pan-Africanist view, which is easily recognised by the expressions used by the contributors. While indigenous African people are depicted mainly in a positive way, Europeans and Westerners almost exclusively appear in the texts as exploiters and imperialists who wish to control the African continent even though the decolonisation process ended more than six decades ago. Additionally, the recurrence of the same definition of the term *indigenous* (pp. 91, 224, 309) throughout the book is a bit redundant.

Despite these minor shortcomings, the book is a comprehensive collection of information about indigenous knowledge, skills, education and behaviour in Africa. It provides a unique insight into African cultural capital and its contribution to sustainable development. The book will be of interest to academics as well as to a wider general audience.

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