MODERN AFRICA
POLITICS, HISTORY AND SOCIETY

ISSN 2336-3274 (Print) ISSN 2570-7558 (Online)
https://edu.uhk.cz/africa

Rosabelle Boswell and Francis Nyamnjoh (eds.) 2017. Postcolonial African Anthropologies. Pretoria: HSRC Press. 222 pp. ISBN: 978-0-7969-2569-5.

Author:

Petr Skalník – Philosophical Faculty, University of Hradec Králové, The Czech Republic

Recommended citation:

Skalník, P. (2018). Rosabelle Boswell and Francis Nyamnjoh (eds.) 2017. Postcolonial African Anthropologies. Pretoria: HSRC Press. 222 pp. ISBN: 978-0-7969-2569-5. Modern Africa: Politics, History and Society, 6(1), 167–171. https://doi.org/10.26806/modafr.v6i1.230

University of Hradec Králové
Philosophical Faculty

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Vlastimil Fiala

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This book echoes previous publications promoting the concept of anthropologies, i.e., the pluralism of the anthropological endeavour worldwide, especially by recognising the contributions of anthropologists from the Global South (Ntarangwi, Mills and Babiker 2006; Lins Ribeiro and Escobar 2006; Bošković 2008). In this sense, the editors and authors join the movement towards decentring and dehegemonising of the discipline. The book is dedicated to the late Elaine Salo, a significant South African anthropologist, activist and feminist. This makes the book exceptional because it is critical in Elaine's spirit. Critical of a colonial and postcolonial anthropology marked by an exoticising approach. Francis Nyamnjoh in his concluding chapter puts it clearly: the "business of transformation of colonial and apartheid ideologies on being human and being Africa" is unfinished. Frustration with the hierarchicised roles of the researcher and the researched continues. It will not finish until "the traditional anthropological subject ('the native')" is included "as a bona fide ethnographer with a licence to self-study as well as to study those who have traditionally studied them" (p. 195). In other words, it is all about overcoming the marginalisation and misrepresentation practiced through such categories like "race, ethnicity, class, gender, generation or geography." A decolonisation of anthropology will be possible only, and Nyamnjoh cites here Faye Harrison, if we carry out a rehistoricisation; rethinking, reworking and reassessing theory; rethinking disciplinarity; pursuing social responsible ethics and politics of ethnographic research; mapping the local and supralocal spheres; interrogating the organisation of anthropology; mobilising

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anthropology for a democratic engagement by linking it to public interests; and finally decentring Western dominance.

The book is a fascinating read. It contains ten chapters, most of them centred on southern Africa but all of them claiming the authenticity of research of Africa by Africans. The first editor, Rosabelle Boswell, in her introduction, reflects and self-reflects on "continuities and contradictions in postcolonial African anthropologies," in order to present the aim of the book. She stresses the "rich seam of recent ethnography in Africa" so that the reader can realise to what extent "reversing the 'gaze'" takes place in both research and politics of anthropology. The author admits that there is no definitive postcolonial condition, African identities being continuously changing, transcended, while colonialism has not been overcome (in the postcolony). What we live in is a sort of an interregnum of competing ideas that will end up in more polarised global society. Even though the ethnographic essays do not, could not capture the dynamism of postcolonial Africa in full, but instead of holism, they "offer deeply self-reflective accounts of life in Africa and its nearby diaspora" (p. 3). What is at stake is the change in the relationship between the researcher and her/his research participant (note: not informant but participant!). The Africans experience, perhaps even more than East Europeans, that their research is overshadowed by the hegemony of West European and American scholarship. Western anthropologists are more authoritative interpreters of Africa (or East Europe) than the locals! Their publications are not evaluated unless published by British or American publishers. A perspective from home is less valuable than research by visiting outsiders.

The theoretical tone of the volum is perhaps best palpable when reading Elain Salo's chapter. Salo stresses the need of overcoming the view that Africa is socially undifferentiated and homogenous. The problem for her is to grasp the heterogeneity of African societies, among them and within them. As she wrote: "the Africanists' essentialist search for African authenticity impede the recognition of social diversity and the social dynamics that feed it." Especially minorities, ethnic and social, are neglected within such approaches. Thus, Salo calls for a methodological shift ïn order to complicate our representations of African diversity." The shift is comprised of recuperating Africans' marginalised subjetivities, of acknowledging that the production

of knowledge is "deeply inflected" by the identitities of researchers and especially more complex representations of time and space as nonlinear and ruptured, in short, overcoming historicism (p. 13). Salo draws on the works of Mbembe and Hountondji ("defensive ethnocentrism") before she exemplifies the methodological shift in critical anthropology, African feminism and the work of feminist cultural geographers. She shows how complex an interdisciplinary methodology looks like and how difficult it is to overcome the view of African societies as homogeneous and thus unproblematic. This, however, requires "finely grained ethnographic analyses" and the recognition that "our knowledge is always partial and situated" (p. 31).

Chapter three is by Joy Owen, who worked with Congolese migrants in Muizenberg near Cape Town. The title is "Researching the Congolese 'Other': Romance, Research and Reflexivity in South Africa." *Amakwerekwere* is the name for undocumented asylum seekers such as these Congolese. According to the author, they want to return home or proceed further to Europe or America, but due to the heavy bureaucracy are stuck in South Africa. Owen also discusses her own position because as a "woman of colour" she was not supposed to study Africans other but her own community. Historically white anthropologists studied the racial "other" while "native antropologists" would study their own people (auto-anthropology). The author candidly narrates her first encounters with the Congolese "Other" in a Cape Town dancing bar. This contact later led to her PhD research in Muizenberg, a mixed village where 26% of Africans lived along with coloured and white people (both 36%). The rest of the chapter is full of concrete cases on fending for a livelihood, which involved sleeping in shifts in order to pay the rent in slum conditions. The rent for dwellings inhabited by the Congolese were more than double the usual local price. It was even difficult to find solid research participants, because as a lone brown woman Owen was exposed to flirtations and courtship. The research made her "an insider/outsider in my home/native space" (p. 45), who, however, was privileged because of her South African citizenship which the research participants did not have. There are moments of thick description in Owen's chapter that cannot be reproduced here. A love story that transcends racial barriers peppers her account.

The next chapter, written by Chris de Wet, recalls the experience of three decades this seasoned Xhosa-speaking fieldworker (a white

Afrikaner) spent in black communities, including years of fieldwork in Chatha, a Keiskammahoek village, situated in Ciskei that in the meantime became "independent." De Wet narrates an extraordinary story of bringing in 1981, at the height of apartheid, a foreign anthropological couple, Aidan Southall and Christine Obbo, one white, the other black, to stay in this village for three weeks. De Wet, fluent in Xhosa, is one of those researchers who put into reality the idea that Africans were research associates for him as he was for them. The chapter by Patricia Henderson elevates the new approach to the pitch by studying AIDS orphans in the time of Mbeki's AIDS denialism. Her study maps the "explorations of environment" amongst rural AIDS orphansin Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa.

In her article "Re-imagining Identity in Indian Ocean Africa," Rosabelle Boswell approaches the creation of identity where there seemingly was none: among the Creoles of Mauritius. She so to say applies to her data the philosophical position of Achille Mbembe, who wrote in his *On the Postcolony* that Africa epitomised the absence, non-being, nothingness, but instead offers an optimistic outcome! Helen Macdonald explores in her chapter "Border Crossing" the impact of African scholarship on Indian witchcraft studies. This obviously starts with Evans-Pritchard but further journey of the author brings us to the Indian context that remained a prisoner of the theorising that in the meantime in Africa had moved far away from the classics. Unexpected findings led Macdonald to enrich her Indian research by African witchcraft studies.

The chapter by Wale Adebanwi is a critical contribution in the Mafeje and Magubane tradition about the situation of the "native" ethnographer experiencing epistemological alterity in her/his fieldwork. Who then is the "civilised" observer and who the "savage" observed? The author critically surveys literature on elites in Africa. He explains why writings on elites are rare, why anthropologists have written much more about common people and chiefs. He suggests that the native ethnographer is an observer through her or his participation, thus reversing the traditional participant observation cliché. Last but one is the chapter by Nejm Benessaiah and Irene Calis who attempted to re/imagine the Saharan divide. This is an important chapter as the dominant view is that the Sahara is a barrier, in a natural, cultural and social sense (racially, linguistically and as to religion), which the

authors refute this as a fiction. In their reinterpretation the Sahara like before "continues to be a trysting place for northern and southern African cultures" (p. 191).

The concluding chapter by Francis Nyamnjoh stresses the incompleteness of the study of Africa where symbolic figures such as Amos Tutuola serve as examples. For Nyamnjoh, Africans are frontier beings who are creative, adopting different forms and manifesting themselves according to context and necessity. One cannot express this better than Nyamnjoh: "Frontier Africans ... straddle myriad identity margins and constantly seek to bridge various divides in the interest of the imperatives of living interconnections, nuances and complexities made possible or exacerbated by the evidence of mobilities and encounters" (p. 201). The reviewer must bend his head before this book so pregnant with, in fact, revolutionary thoughts. Thoughts that spring out of experience not only of fieldwork but hard won life.

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Petr Skalník