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unambiguous political interlocutor. Yet, the reviewer thinks that even in this case nationalism was more than just a leading ideology.

Undeniably, the author is an excellent historian. Individual chapters dedicated to British colonialism in Uganda and Kenya, and partly also Tanzania, are lucid, well argued and represent a bright side of the author's research and his deep knowledge of the area. The chapters on post-independence development are mostly synopses but the reader finds interesting observations and conclusions. The research slightly lags behind when the author tries to provide political reflections and conclusions

Even though the reviewer as a political scientist has some reservations about the topic at hand, which relate mostly to more general research topics (African democracy, good government, constitutionalism), as an Africanist the reviewer must confirm that the book generally leaves the reader with a good impression. Lucid analyses of the colonial development, searching for the common roots of African democracy, the work of the government and the enforcement of constitutionalism in past and current political practice are important contributions to finding the specific features of these topics in the three Eastern African countries. The book under review will become a prime source for political analyses and will be of interest especially to scholars of African studies, including their students.

Vlastimil Fiala

Fiala, Vlastimil. 2015. *Politické stranictví v západní Africe (Benin)*. [Political Partisanship in West Africa (Benin)]. Ústí nad Orlicí-Hradec Králové: OFTIS, 159 pages, Czech language, English summary.

Within an extensive research project concerning individual African states (see St. Thomas and Principe, 2010; Botswana, Malawi, Ghana, Ethiopia and Eritrea, 2010; Mozambique, 2011; Senegal and Gambia, 2015; and others) the author makes a profound analysis of the Republic of Benin's political development. The Introduction (pp. 5–8) offers the basic geographic, demographic, and economic data of Benin; it also presents the book's composition along with the

most relevant sources. In part II, “Political development of Dahomey/Benin” (pp. 9–68), a short history of the French colony of Dahomey and the modern history of independent Dahomey, later Benin, is given with special attention to the constitution of political parties and to all legislative and presidential elections. The regional, social and personal context makes it possible to understand the changes between the first, second and third Benin republic, including the turns to the Marxist one-party state and, later on, to the democratic party system. Part III, “Development of Benin political partisanship” (pp. 69–105), deals with the individual stages of the formation of political parties. Broader international influences and the role of the armed forces, strong personalities, students and other sectors of society are not omitted when describing all important parties supporting every modern Benin regime up to the legislative elections held in the country in 2015. The last important part IV, “Roll of the Benin political parties” (pp. 106–148), comprises a list of 130 meaningful political parties with short characteristics concerning their origin, evolution and leadership. In the “Conclusion” (pp. 149–153) the author recapitulates the characteristics of Benin as an “interesting laboratory for political science” (p. 152) seen from the point of view of political partisanship. The “Bibliography” (pp. 155–157) is the last-but-one part of the text, preceding the English Summary (p. 159).

This book is an important contribution to researching the political development of West African countries. Benin offers a typical political trajectory compared to several other African countries looking for an effective modern state construction. Recent and contemporary African democracy is based on the activity of political parties, but Fiala’s detailed description enables us to understand much more: some specific motives of the origins, operation, and extinction of these parties, including many specific causes of political partisanship and/or party membership. Despite the excessive number of political parties in Benin (a typical feature of developing young democracies) the democratic system is able to work in an African country with specific traditions and an extremely complicated ethnic composition. The “technical” scientific approach of the author gives an account of the relation between the political system and daily life of Benin society, which is not entirely clear but the latter would exceed the framework of his research.

The work has been written for Czech Africanists and political scientists. An occasionally incorrect translation of some French names into the Czech language caused some problems. Instead of “Buduj národní svaz” the expression *L’Union fait la Nation* should be translated as “Jednota tvoří národ.” (p. 146) Instead of “Naše společná příčina”. *Notre Cause Commune* should be translated as “Naše společná věc” (p. 131). The Czech declination of many African names carries complications, but such double forms like “mezi Surou-Miganem Apithou” and “mezi Sorou-Miganem Apithym” (p. 110) should be avoided. An overall prevalence of English sources penetrated into the text, from the initial official denomination of the country as the “Republic of Benin” (p. 5, instead of *République du Bénin*), through many names of organizations, institutions and entities like Yound Dahomey Movement (p. 15, error in Young), Military Vigilance Committee (p. 24, error in Committee), Military Council of Revolution (p. 30), up to exclusively English names (pp. 47–48, 51, 54–55, 59, 63, 66, 67 and so on) of Benin political parties normally quoted in French. A thorough orthographical check should have been done previously in order to avoid typing errors like People instead Peuple (pp. 58, 98), Camélén (p. 95) instead of Caméléon, Dévélopmnet (p. 136) instead of Développement etc. The often-quoted work of “Houngnikpo-Decalo 2013” has not been included into the list of sources. As for the literature, Jacques Le Cornec, *Le calebasse dahoméenne ou les errances du Bénin. I. Du Bénin au Dahomey. II. Du Dahomey au Bénin*. Paris: Harmattan (2000) is also recommended, while useful information on Benin can be found in Omar Diop, *Political Parties and Democratic Transition Process in Black Africa*. Saint Denis: Publibook (2006), as well as in some Czech works dedicated to West Africa.

This useful book of Vlastimil Fiala fills a gap in Czech literature concerning African politics and the development of the modern state. It provides evidence of an essentially positive evolution of democracy in these parts of the globe, which are presented very rarely or in a conflicting way in the communication media. Along with other similar works a detailed picture of an important part of contemporary Africa emerges to wipe out disinformation and compensate for the lack of facts.

Jan Klíma