

is apt, it neglects the strong cultural threads upon which Studies in Imperialism built its reputation. The volume's momentum recovers, however, with help from Chandrika Kaul and Sunil Amrith. Kaul skips refreshingly across time and discipline in a globetrotting, multidimensional examination of the colonial and postcolonial media, while Amrith weaves a clever tapestry of clarity and complexity as he writes of Chinese diasporas that stretch so far that they must be analyzed in a panimperial context.

Coincident attention to genealogy and innovative potential is the hallmark of this collection. Leonardi and Ward, among others, connect recent cutting-edge scholarship with its still-active ancestor: John M. MacKenzie, the founding editor of the Studies in Imperialism. The theme reappears subtly in Robert Aldrich's study of gender in empire, as he demonstrates that the series carved out a space for sexuality to be taken seriously as a point of historical investigation, and, more pointedly, when Dane Kennedy traces a clear path from early histories of exploration to the environmental histories now in vogue in the academy. In fact, the dual vantage points make this collection much more than a retrospective. While each of the essays elucidates the importance of past contributions to the field, the assembled authors also propose compelling future paths of inquiry. Aldrich observes that sexuality became a somewhat under-examined topic shortly after it sprang from series-associated minds; as he argues, it might well provide a locus for wider-ranging studies across empires. Meanwhile, Sinha asserts that the concept of an 'empire-nation nexus' may continue to provide fresh insights on citizenship, national formations, and global histories. Such a nexus, along with Amrith's diasporic model, might be indicative of the direction Thomas and his colleagues envision for the series, and in imperial studies at large: work that cuts across existing knowledge to enable novel reconceptions of national, imperial, colonial, and international constellations.

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THE APPEAL OF THE LAW

Imperial Justice: Africans in Empire's Court.

By Bonny Ibhawoh.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. xiii+211. £50, hardback (ISBN 978-0-19-966484-9).

doi:10.1017/S0021853714000449

Key Words: Colonial administration, law, sources.

In his engaging new book, Bonny Ibhawoh navigates his reader through the complicated operation of imperial legality by uncovering the worlds of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (JCPC) and the colonial appeal courts of West Africa (WACA) and East Africa (EACA). His primary aim is show how these powerful judicial spaces impacted the operation of colonial law and governance throughout Britain's African colonies from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. He shows how colonial attempts to simultaneously civilize Africans through a kind of legal universalism, while still recognizing

African customary law, frequently exposed the inherently contradictory nature of British imperial projects. Yet despite these obvious conflicts and an uneven power dynamic, African colonial subjects continued to use appeal courts as sites to assert their right to participate in the modern legal world. As litigants, lawyers, assessors, and witnesses, Africans used appeal courts as public forums for critiquing colonial rule and carving out new possibilities for themselves and their communities. Perhaps even more intriguing are the moments when Ibhawoh reveals the ways African litigants attempted to use British courts to solidify their own gendered, generational, or ethnic privilege. By highlighting important case studies, Ibhawoh reveals how the JCPC's rulings had a profound impact on shaping the laws of not only individual colonies, but by setting significant judicial precedents for the British Empire as a whole.

Like the fallacy of colonial projects themselves, colonial law sought to rationally order the diverse and sometimes untranslatable world that it existed within. Ruling through and recognizing difference was seen as essential for maintaining order on the ground. However ruling on these, as one visitor to the JCPC chamber put it, 'queer cases that occur in strange lands beyond the sea' (p. 6) frequently clashed with deeply rooted liberal ideologies that strove for legal uniformity across the colonies. The British legal imagination, Ibhawoh shows, was deeply challenged by trying to understand, and partially rule, through complex and unfamiliar African laws which they often viewed as barbaric and uncivilized.

One strategy was to label some local practices 'repugnant' to the universal laws of nature. The repugnancy doctrine became a powerful tool in refashioning imperial laws to suit imperial purposes, as well as to reinforce racial and moral superiority. Europeans sought the assistance of local intermediaries, usually older African men, to interpret local laws. These assessors, in turn, flipped the repugnancy doctrine in their favor in an attempt to strengthen their own position in society. Colonial subjects forced governments to engage in detailed investigations of 'the facts', propelling an ongoing and complex dialogue about how exactly to unravel African customary law across seemingly impermeable racial and social boundaries. Tools like the repugnancy doctrine were useful in cases of witchcraft and 'blood money' (funds given to a victim's family by the guilty party) that particularly challenged British morality and legal norms. In precedents set in these cases, colonial officials transformed any actions they deemed immoral into crimes.

Likewise, in court cases pertaining to land, Ibhawoh clearly outlines how the colonial state used both British and African laws to challenge African leaders' claims to sovereignty or compensation. In both criminal and civil cases, litigants and their communities placed their hopes in finding real justice at the JCPC, while simultaneously condemning it as incompetent and irrelevant for their purposes. This condemnation, perhaps predictably, grew as urban African elites participated in the judicial system in greater numbers and as nationalist movements gained momentum. However, even after independence, Ibhawoh importantly reminds us that the breakaway of many independent Africa nations from the JCPC was not inevitable, as many countries throughout the British Empire continued to use it as their court of appeal well after independence.

Imperial Justice highlights important networks between colonies and the metropole, as well as within Africa itself. Throughout the book, Ibhawoh strikes a good balance between explaining the big picture and the details of many fascinating landmark cases. This is

history through a wide lens, making it a perfect introduction to African historians who want to begin working with legal archival material themselves. The scope of the text, which often provides examples from throughout the Commonwealth, makes this a valuable read for scholars whose work focuses on legal, Atlantic, or global history. This book successfully addresses pertinent questions about the nature of globalization by showing how both empires and marginal actors used judicial spaces to construct their own vision of power, citizenship, and sovereignty. In his conclusion, Ibhawoh asks the reader to consider similarities and differences between the JCPC and current international legal bodies, such as the ICC. In doing so, he provides a great entry point in a history or law classroom to discuss why his study remains relevant today.

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DYNAMICS OF POSTCOLONIAL STATE BUILDING

The Postcolonial State in Africa: Fifty Years of Independence, 1960–2010.

By Crawford Young.

Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012. Pp. xviii + 468. \$31.95, paperback (ISBN 978-0-299-29144-0).

doi:10.1017/S0021853714000450

Key Words: Decolonization, governance, nationalism, politics, postcolonial.

In this much-anticipated sequel to his magisterial *African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective* (1994), Crawford Young charts the trials and tribulations of postcolonial state formation over the past fifty years. The analysis pivots on the claim that the crisis of state legitimacy of the 1980s marked a critical juncture in the life of the postcolonial state: it separates the first moment from independence through the 1980s of broadly parallel itineraries in state formation, and the second moment since of widely divergent state itineraries. The analysis unfolds in three parts.

The first, with two chapters, elaborates the book's conceptual framework. Chapter One lays out a six-fold periodization of the evolution of the postcolonial state, along with three dominant modes (optimism, pessimism, and mixture of both) that modulated commentary on postcolonial African politics at various junctures. The next chapter specifies six key behavioral attributes of states (quest for hegemony, security, legitimacy, revenue, accumulation, and autonomy) and three normative (developmental, integral, and liberalized) models of states that have guided evaluation of the efficaciousness of the state-making enterprise at different points. The four chapters of Part Two detail the dynamics of state building through three cycles of hope and disillusionment. Chapter Three recounts the launching of the postcolonial state. Despite variance in pathways to independence, a set of circumstances ensured a high degree of uniformity in infant postcolonial states. Prominent was the 'code of decolonization' that partly held sovereignty and territoriality as sacrosanct. Relieved of fears of external challenges to their territories, ruling elites' attention focused on competition for power and social control. The 'colonial bureaucratic