

Many people who will find this book useful will no doubt be challenged to read extensively because of the author's attempt to inter-weave perspectives of class, gender, and ethnicity. A good example is shown in the discussion on connections. Bottomley observes that political economists of migration simply identified foremen and leading hands of the working class as "a labour aristocracy" but left virtually unexplored statistical realities such as the implications of simple facts like the Australian working class is mostly non-Anglophone.

The whole import of this account is to stress that assumptions that culture is coterminous with ethnicity can prevent commentators from examining the processes by which people are incorporated, subjected or mobilised to resist. Ethnicists, for example, emphasise a kind of ahistorical and apolitical culturalism, while political economists tend to deduce action and interactions from structures, under-estimating the significance of pre-migration experience and continuing contact with, and understanding of the world beyond a geographical area under study, in this book Australia.

There is no doubt that this book is of great value to students and staff in institutes of higher learning especially those in social studies and humanities. It is not the type of book one expects to be cover-to-cover fast reading material. One needs to take their time in order to absorb its contents because the author challenges readers to re-negotiate certain givens in the process of raising new questions.

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**The Black Elderly: Satisfaction and Quality of Later Life**, Marguerite Coke & James A Twaite, The Haworth Press Inc, New York, 1995, 126 pp with index, ISBN: 1-56024-914-5 (h/b). Price: \$14,95.

Coke and Twaite's findings present the practical situation in which the black elderly in America live in the context of the conditions and factors that affect their lives. There is a comparative study of the experiences of black and white seniors in the States. The findings are chronologically laid out so that the facts brought up highlight the actual situations and life events of the black elderly. There is no question that readers from developing countries will find the information brought up in this book not only to be empirically valid but also a true presentation of what is happening in America among the blacks, as well as in Africa and elsewhere.

Chapter One reflects the situation of the black elderly (referred to as senior citizens in later chapters) in relation to the socioeconomic indicators that were used to compare their lives with white senior citizens. The black elderly were found to live in hardship because of lack of adequate income, poor health conditions, lower levels of educational attainment and occupational status which is a result of the

design of American policies. Their coping capacities depends greatly on the status the society accorded them. The reason for carrying the study was that the number of elderly are quite significant as the life expectancy rate has greatly improved; another reasons being that attitudes are generally biased against the elderly as most people regard old age as a form of illness; hence the need to examine their situation in some detail.

In Chapter Two demographic factors as correlates of life satisfaction are discussed. Respondents were asked to rate the degree of their distress, with health problems ranking highest because most blacks voluntarily preferred to utilise their traditional resources of support (families and kinship networks) to being bundled in white nursing homes. This means that they do not have full access to the health services. It is an interesting chapter in which researchers bring out views brought by different sources on how blacks in America value their own elderly.

Glazer & Moynihan (1993) were referred to in Chapter Three as having championed the debate on whether the African culture had an impact on blacks in the United States. Their assertion that blacks in the United States are just Americans were challenged by other authors like Herskovitz (1958) and Billingsley (1992) who catalogued elements like art, family roles, primacy of blood ties, the importance of extended families and the value placed on children as important when considering the influence of African culture. This is a crucial chapter as it helps one to understand why after so many years the blacks and whites in America have not been able to come up with a unique culture.

Chapter Four discusses the importance of the church since it had a great influence on the style of life of most African Americans. An interested individual examining how the church has had an influence on slavery would find this section very valuable as it reveals how religion is rooted in the past when the slaves were bound by the white man's catechism which made them accept that they were inferior to whites whom God had given authority over them. The importance of the existence of the black church is discussed here.

Chapters Five and Six are a revelation of the empirical investigation on predictors of life satisfaction. Factors that predict life satisfaction are discussed using dependent and independent variables in order to establish the needs in life of the black senior citizens.

The last part of the book deals with additional findings which helped to strengthen the research. This helped in concretising the recommendations in the last chapter.

This is not only an important book to gerontologists and social workers but to historians and researchers because facts and information brought up in the research are laid out in a useful and academic way. The findings and recommendations are important and could guide other researchers in the same area of study.

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**Markets, Civil Society and Democracy in Kenya**, Peter Gibbon (ed), Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala, 1995, 283pp, ISBN: 91-7106-371-4. (p/b) Price: SEK140, £12.95 (p/b).

The struggle for democracy in Kenya has created a very polarised society in the wake of demands for political and economic reform from both the donors and Kenyan peoples. Pressures for demanding change are motivated by a variety of reasons and at times conflicting interests. But the reality covered by contributions in this book, generally capture the fact that major struggles have been seen around the issues of economic and political reform, in a context of generally deteriorating economic performance, heightened ethnic tension and often poor relations between government and donors.

As noted by Peter Gibbon in his summary of the book, the studies deal with central dimensions of grassroots development and change in Kenya over the last decade and a half. The first concern covered by Gerrishon Ikiara, Mohamud Juma and Justus Amadi concerns continuity and transformations in the cereals marketing chain, the centrepiece of the World Bank, European Community and USAID efforts during the 1980s and early 1990s to liberalise Kenyan economic institutions on the basis of aid conditionality.

The second contribution by Karuti Kanyinge, examines development institutions, before and after the re-emergence of multi-party politics in 1991-92. The third, by Mutahi Ngunyi, examines the political developments and religious organisations characterised elsewhere as the most important institutions in contemporary Kenyan civil society.

In the development discourse, Kenya is now often seen as a problem child rather than a success story, and from these accounts, ample evidence is provided which allow us to reflect on the convincibility of the donor diagnosis of central policies and practices which preceded economic liberalisation. Ironically, Kenya had been eulogised for most of the 1980s by 'donor friendly' western academics who saw it as one of the Africa's few economic and political ornaments, a country to be held up, admired and analysed mainly in order to detect what might be transferable in its "exceptional" performance.

In the chapter on 'The Cereals Chain in Kenya: Actors, Reforms and Politics' the reader is made to understand the politics surrounding cereals production and the marketing chain. The chain as noted by the contributors, is extremely important to the Kenya government since it is the main conduit for the country's food supplies and also an activity which became central to the national political patronage system developed since the death of President Kenyatta.