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Book Review: Toyin Falola and Ann Genova (eds) (2006) *The Yoruba in Transition: History, Values and Modernity*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press. pp. vii+498+Index

Saheed Aderinto

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The theoretical and empirical coverage of this volume is extensive. The contributors engage with their difficult subjects with elegant prose, which is a pleasure to read. It will be of much interest to those interested in the challenges of establishing progressive political projects in the contemporary era.

Reviewed by:

Richard Ballard

University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Toyin Falola and Ann Genova (eds) (2006) *The Yoruba in Transition: History, Values and Modernity*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press. pp. vii+498+Index.

The Yoruba in Transition is a collection of essays originally presented at the conference on 'Perspectives on Yoruba History and Culture', which was held at the University of Texas at Austin in March 2004. This long book has 27 chapters, which are grouped into three parts, namely, 'Histories Reconstructed', 'Identity at the Crossroads' and 'The Future of Modernity'.

Arguably, this book is to date the most multidisciplinary volume on the Yoruba. All the authors adopt diverse tools and methodologies specific to their disciplines to explore various aspects of Yoruba history, culture and society. Falola and Genova must be commended for achieving an unusual feat of bringing together essays written by scholars from different intellectual persuasions. The editors add value to the content of the essays through a brilliant introduction that demonstrates the high degree of diversity that Yoruba scholarship represents. Also, this diversity is exemplified in terms of change and continuity, which all aspects of Yoruba history, culture and society are undergoing.

All the chapters indicate the significance of change, defined as the effects of external contact and internal dynamics on the Yoruba society. The ingenuity of the Yoruba suggests their ability to adapt to changes, which time and events bring. Adaptation is the extent to which several aspects of the society are able to adjust to effects of historical events such as the coming of western missionaries and the rise of educated elites (Chapters 2 and 5), development of vernacular newspapers (Chapter 1), establishment of colonial law and justice systems which replaced the traditional ones (Chapters 6 and 7), and new forms of gender relations, based on the imported socially constructed sexual dichotomy and age stratification in marital relations (Chapters 9, 10, 24 and 26). The resilience of Yoruba culture in schools indicates the extent to which western education is not devoid of traditional Yoruba culture. Put differently, Yoruba culture remains a significant aspect of formal education in spite of the exotic nature of British-style education (Chapter 27). The fact that people still resolve to settlement of differences by traditional and informal means, allows one to appreciate the Yoruba's knowledge of failure of the imported British system of conflict resolution (Chapter 7).

Agriculture, as a very significant aspect of Yoruba economy, went through a lot of transformation during the colonial period. A cardinal aspect of colonial agricultural policy was the development of cash crops, which paved the way for the incorporation of pre-colonial Yoruba economies into the vortex of world capitalism. The introduction of some cash crops such as cocoa and coffee in the early 20th century affected traditional agricultural practices and gave birth to new forms of social and economic attitude towards the use of land and resources from it. Nevertheless, as seen in Chapter 21, traditional agricultural practices continue to serve as the mainstay of local production of food in spite of the call for 'modernization' of agriculture. Yoruba farmers' drive towards modernizing their farming techniques is inhibited by the failure of the Nigerian government which is addicted to the proceeds from crude oil and has refused to work out long-term sustainable policy towards the development of the agricultural sector of the economy.

The conceptualization of crime varies from one part of the world to another. Also, time is another very important factor, which determines what is regarded as a criminal offence. As the society moves from one period to another in the course of its history, the perception of crime and its control also changed. So, analysis of history of crime cannot be done without a critical understanding of the socio-economic, cultural and political changes, which the society experienced from one decade and century to another. This concise description of the relationship between crime and the history of society is a very important factor in the discourse of new forms of criminal activities such as cyber-crime and the rise of private security control such as the Oodua Peoples Congress (Chapters 8 and 18). Technological development leads to new forms of criminal tendencies. The use of computers for economic crimes is a manifestation of misuse of technology and the failure of the Government to provide employment for Nigerian youth whose idleness facilitates their involvement in cyber-crime. Importantly, the use of ethnic militia for crime control represents the inefficiency of policing by the State and the Yoruba's desire to search for alternatives. The alternatives created by the people represent a sort of pay-off because of the attendant contradiction noticed in the positive impact of the militia and controversies involved in their 'illegal' status of arrogating the State's primary responsibility of protecting the lives and property of its citizenry.

Noticeably, the length of each chapter varies. It must have been difficult for the editors to impose general guidelines based on length and methodologies because of the diversity inherent in the themes and perspectives employed for analysis by each author and the Herculean task of selecting the best essays out of hundred of papers presented at the international conference. On the whole, this is a remarkable achievement.

Reviewed by:

Saheed Aderinto

University of Texas at Austin, USA