

In his concluding chapter, Hinton describes how translating concepts such as human rights results in meanings that, although they may resonate with the original, inevitably create a new field of vernacularised meaning. Overall, Hinton succeeds brilliantly in both denaturalizing the assumptions embedded in the transitional justice imaginary and disclosing how variously positioned actors appropriate and reframe transitional justice proceedings.

While Hinton mentions the fact that the Cambodian government has used the ECCC to buttress its own legitimacy and deflect attention from its continued abuses in relation to citizens and the environment, this is not the focus of his phenomenological exploration. His book is the result of fieldwork conducted before the watershed events that took place in Cambodia in 2017, in the lead up to the general elections of 2018. Even as the ECCC was continuing to operate at the margins of Phnom Penh in late 2017, in the heart of the city, the Cambodian Supreme Court outlawed the major opposition party, and the Municipal Court sentenced its leader to imprisonment for treason and espionage. Some of the legal staff involved were simultaneously working at the ECCC. Media and civil society organisations and even an Australian filmmaker suffered similar fates, provoking widespread outcries that this marked the death of democracy in Cambodia.

These developments prompted Peter Maguire (*The Khmer Rouge Trials. The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. The Diplomat* [14.11.2018]. <<https://thediplomat.com/2018/11/the-khmer-rouge-trials-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly>> [20.05.2019]) to ask: “Did the ECCC help ‘end impunity in the public consciousness?’” And did the court “‘help Cambodia transition to a better place?’” He concludes: “Absolutely not. During the course of the Khmer Rouge war crimes tribunal, Cambodia [the domestic courts] imprisoned opposition leader Kem Sokha, killed a once vibrant free press, and became a one-party state.”

To continue with the cascade metaphor, this book leaves open the question of whether the next phase of Cambodia’s history may see a “backflow” of intensifying authoritarianism washing out some of the loftier ideals of the transitional justice imaginary.

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**Højbjerg, Christian K., Jacqueline Knörr, and William P. Murphy** (eds.): *Politics and Policies in Upper Guinea Coast Societies. Change and Continuity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. 342 pp. ISBN 978-1-349-95012-6. Price: € 123,04

This volume continues the important work that has been produced by the “Integration and Conflict along the Upper Guinea Coast” research group at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle, Germany, headed by Jacqueline Knörr. Like other volumes published by this group (for example, see “The Power-

ful Presence of the Past. Integration and Conflict along the Upper Guinea Coast,” edited by Knörr and Trajano Filho. Leiden 2010), this is a tightly framed set of essays which collectively address the recurring tropes through which this part of West Africa has been understood for at least the past fifty years. Although other regions in Africa have their familiar simplifying characterizations (for example, the East African “cattle complex” or the “highly centralized monarchies” of the Great Lakes region), the relatively short stretch of coastline from Senegal to Côte d’Ivoire seems unusually trapped in conventional generalizations since Warren d’Azevedo defined the “Central West Atlantic Region” in 1962. The editors identify four dominant themes or tropes, which have become explanatory frameworks in the scholarly literature: 1) an emphasis on patrimonial and personal relations as the core features of political authority, 2) a fixation on the role of secret societies, and secrecy in general, as central to both religious and secular power, 3) a view of intergroup relations through lenses of first comer/late comer, host/stranger, patron/client, and wife giver/wife taker dichotomies, and 4) an assumption that creolized settlers and indigenous autochthones are fixed and immutable categories which give rise to unavoidable conflicts. The editors define their project as moving beyond these tropes to question and refine their application to the problems of post-conflict reconstruction and current development policies. Noting that these tropes have real-world consequences when they are uncritically used by powerful outside actors (NGOs, the United Nations, multinational investors) to design programs, the editors hope to advance our understanding of the region as well as of these theoretical constructs.

The editors have chosen to group the chapters by themes: Identifications and Alliances, Explaining and Situating Violent Conflict, Postcolonial Statehood and National Belonging, and Development and Intervention. Perhaps their intention was to emphasize the commonalities across the region, but specialists in particular countries may note that five of the articles (Ménard, Menzel, Murphy, Spencer, and O’Kane) concern Sierra Leone, four focus on Casamance and/or the Gambia (Ray, Rudolf, Evans, and Hultin), two on Liberia (Brown and Munive), one each on Guinea-Bissau (Kohl) and Côte d’Ivoire (Heitz Tokpa), and one on U. K. asylum cases from the region (Lawrance). Overall, this volume is tightly coherent in its focus on the geographical space of the Upper Guinea Coast and on rethinking the tropes that have been used to define it. Although most of the individual authors warn of the dangers these tropes pose for policy-makers at the national and global level, few provide suggestions for new policy directions nor do they identify innovative policies that resist easy reduction being advanced in the region today.

Anaïs Ménard (29–51), for example, provides a compelling update on the contemporary uses of Poro (secret society) membership in a rapidly transforming coastal

region of the Freetown Peninsula. In contrast with the literature emphasizing the conservatism and trans-ethnic integrative functions of Poro, Sherbro people have “reinvigorated” the society as both a claim to autochthony and a means of livelihood by presenting Poro rituals and ceremonies for tourists. Ménard argues that the collective meaning of Poro membership has shifted to a more spiritual basis even as the Sherbro have lost political and demographic power in their home region. Also in Sierra Leone, Anne Menzel (77–98) and William P. Murphy (99–122) address the patron/client relations whose “breakdown” have been offered as both the cause and consequence of the civil war. Both authors suggest that while external observers, including NGOs, continue to see patronage systems as a central “problem” in post-war recovery, local residents identify other structural features, such as entrenched poverty or lack of kin and spousal reciprocity, as more important constraints. Beyond encouraging powerful outsiders to read these articles, however, it is unclear how these insights will lead to policy innovations. David O’Kane’s article (291–307) makes the important theoretical point that anthropologists and other analysts, following Foucault, have placed too much emphasis on the role of the state in determining and monitoring formal policies, while ignoring ethnographic evidence of how other actors (including “patrons” and “clients”) work together to produce specific outcomes.

Moving beyond the Sierra Leone context, David Brown (125–143) examines how narratives of rural agricultural “collapse” haunt development planning in Liberia, even in the face of no evidence that agrarian communities were fractured by either environmental pressures or generational tensions in the immediate period before the war. His analysis echoes that of Martin Evans (169–186), which concerns similar explanations for the decline in wet rice production in Casamance. Both argue for the value of a longer historical perspective while bemoaning the tendency of NGOs and development planners to prefer simpler, mono-causal explanations. Other authors address such topics as attempts to control the trafficking of small arms (Niklas Hultin, pp. 309–330), host/guest relations in Côte d’Ivoire (Katharina Heitz Topka, pp. 247–267), national road building projects in Liberia (Jairo Munive, pp. 271–289), and various ways in which identity is constructed for political purposes (Markus Rudolf, Sylvanus Spencer, and Christoph Kohl). The chapter by Benjamin N. Lawrance, on asylum claims based on gender-based violence, seems something of an outlier in this volume.

Collectively, these essays constitute a body of knowledge that policy planners working in the Upper Guinea Coast region *should* know about and include in their work. The authors and editors do not specifically address, however, the challenges of actually transferring this knowledge and making sure it is integrated into the policy process.

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**Huber, Vitus:** Die Konquistadoren. Cortés, Pizarro und die Eroberung Amerikas. München: C. H. Beck, 2019. 128 pp. ISBN 978-3-406-73429-8. Preis: € 9,95

Der Historiker Vitus Huber legt unter dem Buchtitel “Die Konquistadoren” eine kompakte Darstellung der Geschichte der ersten achtzig Jahre der kolonialen Expansion Spaniens in den Amerikas vor. Als Eckpunkte des besprochenen Zeitraums können die erste Reise des Christopher Kolumbus und die Promulgation der *Ordenanzas de descubrimiento* durch König Philipp II. im Jahr 1573 dienen (121). Der Untertitel “Cortés, Pizarro und die Eroberung Amerikas” mag suggerieren, dass der Fokus des vorliegenden Bandes auf einer detaillierten Darlegung der Biografien der bekannten Eroberer und des militärischen Geschehens liegt. Dies ist jedoch in dieser eingegrenzten Form nicht der Fall. Das Buch ist in fünf Kapitel aufgeteilt, die jeweils fein untergliedert sind. Das erste Kapitel ist den Fahrten des Kolumbus und den ersten Inbesitznahmen in der Karibik gewidmet. Es überblickt somit die Zeitspanne von 1492 bis 1519. Das zweite Kapitel befasst sich mit der Zerschlagung des aztekischen Dreiebundes durch die Konquistadoren und mit der darauf folgenden Etablierung des spanischen Kolonialsystems in Mexiko. Der Autor zeigt dabei auch auf, wie hierfür auf ältere Herrschaftsstrukturen der Azteken zurückgegriffen wurde. Zeitlich gesehen stehen in diesem Kapitel somit die Jahre zwischen 1519 und 1531 im Mittelpunkt. Das dritte Kapitel stellt die Eroberung des Inkareiches dar und die Errichtung der Kolonialherrschaft im Vizekönigreich Peru, wobei der Autor auch die gewaltsam ausgetragenen Konflikte zwischen den unterschiedlichen Konquistadorenfraktionen nachzeichnet. Der Blick ist auf die Jahre zwischen 1531 und 1572 gerichtet. Das vierte Kapitel thematisiert die unterschiedlichen Rollen, die christliche Missionare im Prozess der Landnahme und kolonialen Durchdringung der eroberten Länder einnahmen und das Scheitern von Erkundungs- und Eroberungszügen. Das Kapitel ist somit vom chronologischen Schema abgelöst. Hinsichtlich der Missionare versteht es Huber, deren Wirken darzustellen, ohne in Polemik oder Überhöhung zu verfallen. So betont er, dass sie verschiedene Rollen einnahmen, “die vom erwähnten Aufseher und Kritiker über den Beschützer der Indios bis zum Unternehmer und Finanzier reichten. Des Weiteren waren sie aber auch als eine Art Diplomaten und Berater, Feldkaplane und Seelsorger, als Kirchenbauer und Amtmänner, Pioniere und Utopisten, als Erzieher und Forscher sowie Übersetzer und Chronisten tätig”, und füllten vielfach mehrere dieser Rollen gleichzeitig aus (85f.). Der Verweis in diesem Kapitel auf die aus spanischer Perspektive fehlgeschlagenen Expeditionen erscheint wichtig, nicht nur um das historische Bild von der spanischen Präsenz in den Amerikas zu vervollständigen, sondern um auch auf einen anderen Punkt hinzuweisen. Dem Prozess der Conquista lag, wie der Autor wohlbegründet aufzeigt, eine Dynamik des “mehr” zugrunde. Diese führte bei nicht wenigen Konquistadoren zu einer Überschätzung der eigenen Stärke und Hand-