

bizarre condescension of the Capricorn Africa Society to the post-Cold War announcements of African vitality, ascribing these to the continued desire for Westerners to see their own Whiteness reproduced and justified by non-phenotypically white actors.

Imagining Africa is a compelling and soundly historical analysis that turns a keenly critical eye to contemporary depictions of Afropolitanism and the waves of positive but ultimately narcissistic Western depictions of a commodified continent. Gabay's archival work is sound, his theoretical interventions are solid, and while he understates the nuanced and effective contributions of earlier scholars such as Achille Mbembe, Chinua Achebe, V.Y. Mudimbe and Stuart Hall at locating Whiteness's self-obsession even in African praise, *Imagining Africa* offers original and necessary arguments.

Gabay begins and ends *Imagining Africa* with Richard Dyer's earlier plea that Whiteness 'must be made strange'. *Imagining Africa* makes considerable effort towards provincialising whiteness's universal pretensions and understanding the genealogy behind our contemporary views of the continent. It is a valuable and timely contribution.

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Religion, Violence, and Local Power-Sharing in Nigeria by LAURA THAUT VINSON.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. 360, \$99.99 (hbk).

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For scholars and observers troubled by a seemingly interminable cycle of communal violence in some parts of the world, especially violence described in religious terms, political scientist Laura Thaut Vinson's *Religion, Violence, and Local Power-Sharing in Nigeria* offers a ray of hope. Focusing on the Middle Belt of Nigeria, where Christianity and Islam are both widely practiced, Vinson asks why some pluralist communities suffer from religious-tinged violence while others do not. Her answer – that informal power-sharing agreements between ethnolinguistic groups at the community level reduce Christian–Muslim tensions – offers important evidence that power-sharing mechanisms can be effective when implemented at a level where actors' interests are practically represented. It also suggests that concrete, if informal, institutional steps can be taken to avert episodes of violence that otherwise leave communities broken, divided and subject to broader narratives of inter-religious hatred.

After taking readers through the patterns of religious change over time in Nigeria, Vinson explains the systems of federal and local governance in Nigeria that create space for informal local power-sharing arrangements, should leaders choose to adopt them. The evidence section turns on differences in the prevalence of religious violence in communities within two states, Plateau and Kaduna, that have adopted informal power-sharing agreements versus those that have not. Supplementing those findings with three paired community-level comparisons, Vinson argues that where power-sharing exists, typically in the form of guaranteed leadership roles for different ethnolinguistic groups on local councils, more community members feel represented and leaders are incentivised to adopt inclusive, multi-ethnic,

collaborative approaches to burgeoning tensions, thereby reducing the threat of religious violence.

Vinson's book has several features to commend it. She astutely notes that, 'while communal violence can result in devastating loss ... many cases of communal violence fall outside the purview of major studies of ethnic conflict' (274). Her work overcomes this problem, adding substantive insight to low-level communal violence and also providing original data of communal violence in the Middle Belt states of Nigeria that far surpass the level of detail found in commonly used conflict datasets. The book also places much needed emphasis on informal institutions, often most critical to political outcomes despite their absence of codified status. Finally, Vinson makes a convincing case that we should set aside our scepticism of power-sharing agreements borne out of national-level examples and recognise that their value may be apparent only when the sharing of power is consistent with the groups who compete locally.

The book also offers to readers the opportunity to question, pry and reflect. One important area in which this is true is in the link between *ethnolinguistic* power-sharing and *religious* peace; in short, it remains unclear how and why the one may be related to the other. Vinson at times alludes to overlapping cleavages that mitigate religious violence through the happenstance of 'ethno-tribal' identities correlating with 'ethno-religious' ones, but this leaves her at pains to explain why the ethnolinguistic power-sharing arrangements do not seem to have a similar tempering effect on ethnolinguistic clashes, which should be reduced first and foremost. Readers may find themselves wishing for a more thorough treatment of overlapping cleavages, and of the things that actually happen among religious leaders and instigators of religious violence when different ethnolinguistic groups are represented on local councils. From an empirical standpoint, readers must decide for themselves whether the argument is supported; the evidence is not overwhelming, and as many cases must be explained away as serve as archetypal examples. Finally, Vinson goes to some length to dispel concerns of reverse causality. While the effort is commendable, she also acknowledges that 'power-sharing was ultimately less likely to emerge where existing ethno-tribal cleavages or tensions were exacerbated by post-colonial political changes' (197). The needle is a difficult one to thread.

Readers of *Religion, Violence, and Local Power-Sharing in Nigeria* will be treated to a rich description of local histories and politics in the Middle Belt, and especially the city of Jos, where Vinson conducted months of obviously intensive (and intense) fieldwork. They will also see advances in the micro study of communal conflict. Those interested in Nigeria, informal institutions, communal conflict or local politics will all gain importantly from its reading.

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Soldiers in Revolt: Army Mutinies in Africa by MAGGIE DWYER.

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Between 1960 and 2014, there were over 70 mutinies in West and Central Africa. Dwyer argues that mutinies – defined here as an act of collective insubordination by military personnel to express grievances without intention of overthrowing the