

who joked that Kissinger had visited ‘the worst places in cannibal-land’ (126). At its worst, this belief meant keeping silent about mass atrocities and going along with ZANU’s line, as British High Commissioner Robin Byatt did, that it was ‘a Biafra-type situation’, which meant an internal, ‘ethnic’ conflict that Britain could not intervene in no matter how bloody (284).

It is challenging to capture the sprawling, opaque messiness of Zimbabwe’s liberation war with its vast list of actors and multitude of rumours, and at times the book suffers for it. Unlike other similar works, which are respectively organised around a particular administration’s decision-making or the political intrigue of a city like Dar es Salaam, Scarnecchia’s book jumps across a dizzying number of institutions, locations, and personalities.⁵ At times it is hard to follow why diplomats and politicians thought in particular ways or made particular decisions. The book’s scope also leads to difficult choices. There were some notable omissions, including Third World diplomacy, particularly during the 1960s; ZAPU’s institutional and military history; and a clearer sense of how the diplomacy related to the war’s military events.⁶ Given the book’s source material is largely from US and UK archives, there’s also a limited engagement with frontline state perspectives — particularly Mozambique’s, which played the critical role in Mugabe’s rise to power and in hosting ZANU’s army-in-exile during the most intense period of the war. Ultimately, *Race and Diplomacy* provides an important contribution to the historiography of Zimbabwe’s liberation war as a history of Anglo-American diplomatic initiatives. In this regard, although the book’s central argument about race is more contingent than is claimed, by writing about race as an ideational construct Scarnecchia points the way to diplomatic historians of the late twentieth century for how histories of international relations during this era can be significantly enriched.

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Urbanism and Identity in East Africa

Making Identity on the Swahili Coast: Urban Life, Community, and Belonging in Bagamoyo

By Steven Fabian. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. Pp. xxvi + 343. \$126.00, hardcover (ISBN: 9781108492041); \$32.99, paperback (ISBN: 9781108710046); \$32.99, e-book (ISBN: 9781108581929).

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Keywords: East Africa; Tanzania; urban; identity; colonialism; local history; historical geography

This intriguing and well-researched book offers a subtle, relatively new approach to Swahili Coast urban social history. Built from multinational archival research and ethnography in Bagamoyo that began in 2001, *Making Identity* tells the rich tale of urban life in the town on Tanzania’s northern coast. Although it is small, Bagamoyo has great historical significance as a longtime mainland

⁵G. Roberts, *Revolutionary State-Making in Dar es Salaam: African Liberation and the Global Cold War, 1961-74* (Cambridge, 2021); L. Freedman, *Kennedy’s Wars: Berlin, Cuba, Laos, and Vietnam* (Oxford, 2000).

⁶For military events, for instance, see M. Tendi, *The Army and Politics in Zimbabwe: Mujuru, the Liberation Fighter and Kingmaker* (Cambridge, 2020).

base for Zanzibari caravan traders and, later, for a time, as the capital of German East Africa. Historian Steven Fabian demonstrates an agility with moving between anthropological, geographical, and historical perspectives. While the book's first life came in a 2007 dissertation, Fabian extended and deepened the analysis considerably in the 12 years that followed.

The book is organized into two parts, each consisting of three chapters, in addition to an introduction and an epilogue. It is engagingly written and largely free of jargon. While Fabian organized the book thematically, it does roughly follow a chronological order. The first part, entitled 'Becoming Bagamoyo', begins with two chapters detailing the 'owners of the town': indigenous Shomvi and Zaramo peoples, Nyamwezi porters, Indian traders, Baluchis, Omanis, and Spiritan missionaries. These chapters document Fabian's contention that 'the process of adapting to local interests' ended up as a key means for enabling the diverse population to 'succeed in town and live in peace with the community' (118). As Fabian shows in the third chapter, though, nothing was ever all that peaceful in Bagamoyo, with a fascinating discussion of the Swahili word *fitina* (which he defines in the glossary as 'rumor, gossip, slandering' but which has a more common translation as 'discord') as central to the sense of place from the 1840s to the present. Rivalries, religious tensions, and conflicts in sports and music came to define Bagamoyo, alongside a common affinity to the locality.

Part Two engages with the European colonial era. The first of its three chapters covers the coastal rebellion of 1888–90, providing new insights on the rebellion in Bagamoyo, 'the site of the most violent and prolonged struggle of the entire episode' (177). Here Fabian argues that what he labels 'spatial identity' — which he defines as the 'greater community [that] emerged based on people's relationships with place', including 'the practices of everyday life within the town'(10) — and its particular manifestation in Bagamoyo, was 'an influential force' in the uprising's organization and how the different Swahili communities of the coast responded to the uprising. Chapter Five moves through the experience of German colonial rule and the First World War in the town, and into the British colonial era in Tanganyika, with the theme of examining 'consultation' (211) between colonial rulers and community identity. Fabian uses the term consultation deliberately, arguing that 'both the Germans and the British adopted — and adapted' the local 'consultative form of governance' that had been forged in Bagamoyo under the Swahili umbrella term *shauri* (meaning consultation or advice) (213). The final chapter sums up Fabian's contention that the broad, cantankerous spatial identity of the people of Bagamoyo that he articulates in every chapter was crucial to 'the townspeople's agency to benefit themselves, or overcome economic obstacles' (294). The brief epilogue hints at the rise of Tanganyikan nationalism in the 1950s in Bagamoyo and the 'community spirit of resistance' (303) that this nationalism encountered there in the first decade of independence.

Bagamoyo's history has been studied before. Fabian engages and builds from this historiography and connects Bagamoyo's story to the wider Swahili world. He interrogates the development of a Swahili identity within the diverse and cosmopolitan urban space of Bagamoyo 'to ground cosmopolitanism in its local setting' (8). He makes a nuanced case for seeing Swahili people as 'but one society among many in the towns' (9) and for analyzing their relationships with the many cultures who shared these urban settings. This open and inclusive approach to identity and belonging leads Fabian to a careful argument for the people of this town, Wabagamoyo, as sharing an identity and place attachment despite their quite varied cultural origins.

The crafting and renegotiation of place identity thus becomes crucial to his argument. While the geographer in me might quibble with terming this 'spatial identity', that is mere semantics to most scholars. This concept of spatial identity is terrifically useful for articulating how different each Swahili town was and is from the next, and it suggests that we ought to reject generalizing and even universalizing Swahili urban identity. There is a massive literature in geography — indeed a century of debate — on the meaning of urban space and place attachment that might have been engaged with more in the book. While there is limited citation of geographers David Harvey, Steve Pile, and Michael Keith, and the geographically-oriented urbanist Henri Lefebvre, I found myself wondering, for one example, how Fabian would interpret the latter's conception of 'urban

society' in *The Urban Revolution* in relation to his concept of 'spatial identity'. Lefebvre interrogated the 'tendencies, orientations and virtualities' involved in the production of urban space.¹ For him, the move toward 'urban society' is a postindustrial, universal process of human life becoming more complex with dense 'interrelated networks' of relationships wherein the urban space produces a constant tension between homogenizing and differentiating forces.² It would take far more space than this book review allows for me to explore, but as I read *Making Identity* I pondered how Lefebvre's concept would, or would not, apply to Bagamoyo as it became an urban society, with tensions pulling toward localization and globalization at the same time. Likewise, Doreen Massey's work on 'a global sense of place' would to my mind clearly resonate with Fabian's analysis of cosmopolitanism and localization in Bagamoyo.³ Like Fabian, Massey was working to rethink 'our sense of place', to see it not simply as a defensive, reactionary attachment but as an 'outward-looking' strategy for engaging with the world, as Wabagamoyo often seem to have done over the period of time Fabian examines.⁴ But the book is already quite thick with references and empirical detail, so these are perhaps questions for someone else's book.

I have been engaging with the debates in which Fabian engages for 40 years, and yet I still learned much from *Making Identity*. The breadth, depth, and range of Fabian's archival work is astounding, including extensive work in the UK, Germany, Tanzania, Zanzibar, and elsewhere, utilizing French, German, Swahili, and English-language documents. Fabian's careful reading and deployment of archival evidence is masterful, backed by judicious use of oral interviews. It is a valuable contribution to African urban history on several fronts at once.

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Developing Automobile Culture in Tanzania

African Motors: Technology, Gender, and the History of Development

By Joshua Grace. Durham: Duke University Press, 2022. Pp. 432. \$114.95, hardcover (ISBN: 9781478010593); \$30.95, paperback (ISBN: 9781478011712).

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Keywords: East Africa; Tanzania; technology; development; modernity; gender

Joshua Grace's *African Motors* offers a fascinating, wide-ranging historical account of automobility in what is now Tanzania. Grace's central thesis is that 'African users put car, road, energy and society together' differently than in the Fordist heartlands of the Global North (8). Scholarship on the history of private automobiles tends to argue that the car stands for standardization and consumerism; it is near synonymous with 'midcentury forms of modernization ... [that] represented the

¹H. Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, trans. Robert Bononno (Minneapolis, 2003 [1970]), 3.

²*Ibid.*, 167.

³D. Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Minneapolis, 1994), 146.

⁴*Ibid.*, 147.