

undertook social surveys (censuses and interviews) during 1992, 1995 and 2002 to capture diverse opinions. From these surveys, he stresses that democratization has transformed social life in Kinshasa. Even though the Congolese population has not experienced democracy in the contemporary or Western sense, it still experiences and participates frequently in forms of democracy, for example through families, through professional circles where colleagues are organized in assemblies to elect their leaders, or through churches, where communities reflect and undertake common actions. Only the political arena does not appear to be progressing in this way (p. 113). Finally, the third part analyses the social life and urban culture of the city. His analysis demonstrates that Kinshasa's urban culture reflects a variety of everyday issues such as justice, identity and social responsibilities, education, work income, the rise of independent churches, and the influence of Western ideas in Congolese culture. As in the previous section, de Saint Moulin uses data from surveys from 1988 to 2008.

De Saint Moulin points out that, while topics such as the social perceptions of justice, working conditions and the role of the state could not have been discussed freely before, due to the dictatorial context of the time, by the end of the 1990s, with the collapse of the Second Republic, these subjects were back on the agenda (p. 181). On the one hand, the surveys point out that people's perception of justice was dominated by its political dimension. It is in the exercise of political power that injustice persists, thus engendering social injustice. Further, de Saint Moulin argues that the population does not have a clear vision of the strategies it should adopt to achieve its objectives of justice and democratization. In the eyes of many, the state does not play its role as protector of citizens, nor does it vouch for the opportunities that everyone should have. On the other hand, the surveys highlight a specific social conscience of Kinshasa, marked by its history and African traditions. The Kinois takes a holistic view of life that allows him or her not to be shaken by problems. The values of life, peace and solidarity marked the opinions and attitudes of the population surveyed (p. 187).

This is an interesting and readable book that will help the reader to better understand Kinshasa as a city in perpetual construction, as well as the values that contribute to its dynamism. It gives us an interpretation from within rather than from without. Although the volume is based on previously published articles, bringing them together in conversation with one another is a valuable exercise in its own right. The combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches contributes to highlighting the cultural and spiritual depth of the population. Lastly, this study will also provide a much-needed counterbalance to stories of ethnic problems and the misleading impressions of the degradation of the city that all too often dominate discourses on Kinshasa.

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James Essegbey, Brent Henderson and Fiona McLaughlin (editors), *Language Documentation and Endangerment in Africa*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins (hb €105/US\$158 – 978 9 02724 452 9). 2015, 317 pp.

This is a significant addition to the literature on language documentation and endangerment. Among the valuable contributions are a series of African case studies challenging conclusions drawn from Australo-American perspectives;

new material exploring the complexities of documentation in endangerment contexts; and new critical research on global language documentation and endangerment. The chapters assert that the linguistic situation of African countries represents a different socio-political situation from the Australian and American contexts of colonialism and indigenous language endangerment. The editors emphasize the unique linguistic diversity across the vast continent of Africa and offer a more 'global' perspective on comparative language documentary conceptualizations and practices. Chapters represent not just the diversity of linguistic situations but also disagreements among authors regarding theoretical generalizations as well as documentary practices. This is a clear strength of the volume. There is a danger that the prevailing consensus on language endangerment has been influential in determining research agendas, valorizing some languages over others, and implementing documentary 'best practices' that may not apply to African linguistic situations. For example, Ameka (Chapter 1) presents counterarguments that linguists must reconsider their priorities regarding endangered languages and dominant languages as well as the tension between linguistic 'intrinsic value' and 'linguistic social work' (p. 31). Dimmendaal (Chapter 2) also challenges prevailing assumptions about the value of language revitalization programmes by warning language researchers about the danger of 'patronizing attitudes' that promote 'open air museums' for language revitalization. The case studies and the linguistic issues echo many of the same concerns facing Australo-American endangered languages but also offer important new insights that contribute to a more 'global' understanding.

Language Documentation and Endangerment in Africa is volume 17 of the 'Culture and Language Use: Studies in Anthropological Linguistics' series from John Benjamins Publishing Company. The volume provides much-needed case studies and conceptual insights in the publisher's broad offering of volumes dedicated to the issues of language documentation and revitalization. The volume begins with a short introduction that positions it within the general literature of language endangerment and documentation. The collected chapters are divided into two sections: 'Language endangerment and documentation' and 'How to document particular domains or use documentary data to address specific issues'.

Section 1 grapples with theoretical and conceptual issues such as the efficacy of documentation strategies, the role of African languages in colonial contact situations, orthographic concerns, and language documentation in multilingual settings. Each chapter presents ongoing debates in the broad field of documentary linguistics but with cautions and challenges to the general understanding of endangerment and documentation through case studies. Connell's chapter (Chapter 4) alerts readers to the complex contexts of colonial languages and asserts that language must be considered alongside the social and bureaucratic structures and politics that contributed to the growing prestige of colonial language over local languages. Similarly, Essegbey's description of orthographic practices (Chapter 6) cautions researchers to be wary of a unified orthographic standard that can potentially create obstacles to language revitalization. Therefore, a consideration of 'vernacular' orthographies could present greater efficacy for local revitalization efforts (p. 175). Ngué Um (Chapter 8) provides another view of valorizing smaller endangered languages in multilingual settings by cautioning against dismissing the size of a linguistic community in relation to perceived neighbouring and related languages. Ngué Um reminds researchers to take seriously the dilemmas entailed in documenting the linguist's language or the community's language. The editors include a chapter on Maya linguistic 'social institution building' (Chapter 7), arguing that the chapter provides a comparative case study useful for many African examples (p. 4). The intention of such

'social institution building' is to realign development thinking away from 'language as social development' to 'social development through language' (p. 190), thereby offering an alternative model to the top-down language revitalization model in general use. It is a significant insight but it would have been more effective to reference the Maya work through a case study in an African context.

Section 2 provides examples of documentation efforts that emphasize 'folk definitions', 'ex situ' documentation of immigrant languages, linguistic evidence for archaeological/historical interpretation, and language documentation as a PhD thesis. These chapters offer practical examples of documentary linguistics. They also engage larger questions from earlier chapters about orthographic and codification issues; the neglect of language documentation of immigrant linguistic communities and the potential for new technologies and methodologies for documenting immigrant languages in urban settings; grammatical evidence for language and social change; and, finally, the challenges inherent in documentary linguistics from the perspectives of researchers, institutional constraints and community 'team environments'.

Taken together, the Introduction, Section 1 and Section 2 present a rich variety of language endangerment and documentation cases in African contexts. No single volume can adequately cover an entire continent of linguistic issues, concerns and exceptional cases. However, the editors provide a glimpse of the amazing work linguists and communities are doing in language documentation while critically engaging the prevailing discourses on language endangerment. The volume is an important contribution to the global literature in that it demonstrates the complexity of linguistic issues across the African continent. The volume also provides a much-needed contribution to our understanding of language and culture in African contexts.

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Paul Wenzel Geissler, Guillaume Lachenal, John Manton and Noémi Tousignant (editors), *Traces of the Future: an archaeology of medical science in twenty-first-century Africa*. Bristol: Intellect Books (pb £20 – 978 1 78320 725 1). 2016, 256 pp.

In the past ten years, histories of the ethics of biomedical research and the practices of biomedicine have taken centre stage in the historiography of health and healing on the African continent. These works push beyond some of the more established ways of addressing biomedicine in an African context, such as exploring colonial medicine as a form of colonial domination and African resistance or the entanglements of traditional and Western therapeutics as patients and care-takers navigate a therapeutic landscape shaped by pluralism. In addition, these new works historicize and theorize the rise of globalized pharmaceutical trials and medical research.

Traces of the Future is the latest collective instalment by a group of historians, anthropologists, science and technology studies scholars and biomedical scientists who have been in conversation with one another for over a decade. Other volumes have come before this one, notably *Evidence, Ethos and Experiment, Para-States and Medical Science* and *Making and Unmaking Public Health in Africa*. This volume is the most experimental and visually driven, combining archival