

Education and Development in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa: Policies, Paradigms, and Entanglements, 1890s–1980s

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How do the persisting effects of colonial education complicate contemporary, neoliberal narratives of “international development” sponsored by organizations like the United Nations, IMF, and World Bank? This is the central question investigated by *Education and Development in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa: Policies, Paradigms, and Entanglements, 1890s–1980s*. Edited by Damiano Matasci, Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo, and Hugo Gonçalves Dore, this collection of essays covers an impressive geographical breadth: the essays address educational programs in the French, British, German, and Italian empires in Africa, as well as investigating how education translated on the ground in countries such as Mali, Senegal, Namibia, Mozambique, Morocco, and Tanzania. As the editors discuss in their introduction, the “question at stake is to determine how and why the raising of educational standards of indigenous populations and the training of local elites” became a priority for the “imperial, national and international agendas” of European colonial powers (p. 5), and how these agendas laid the groundwork for today’s “developmentalist’ discourse” (p. 9).

The essays are grouped in three main parts of the book. The first section “Education, Living Standards and Social Development,” explores the impact of colonial education on 19th and 20th century Africa’s social development. The second section, “Training Economic Actors,” investigates the role of colonial education in producing Africa’s worker corps and governing elites; and the third section, “Entanglements and Competing Projects,” discusses the influence of interactions amongst European empires on colonial education and development in Africa. This last area of research is particularly valuable, as most colonial and postcolonial research on the nations and regions of the Global South do not sufficiently delve into the significance of inter-imperial colonial relations on the nation or region in question. I have questions about the book’s decision to not incorporate a more full-bodied engagement with postcolonialism’s theoretical studies that also deal with the entanglements of education and colonialism. Nevertheless, the book is a meticulously researched and comprehensive intervention, that fills an important gap in research on education in colonial Africa

and its effects on the continent's postcolonial development. By providing historically nuanced analysis on how colonial education produced the development of various African countries that are today counted as part of the Global South, the book lays the groundwork for an effective critique of contemporary developmentalist discourse.

Peter Kallaway's opening essay, "Welfare and Education in British Colonial Africa, 1918–1945," provides valuable background on how the field of development studies emerged in the post-WWII era through the financial and policy leadership of the World Bank and the United Nations. Kallaway discusses how colonial education became an extension of the program of mass education employed in the industrializing polities of Western Europe to control an increasingly organized urban working class. Colonial implementations of European kingdoms' tactics of controlling domestic social mobilization proved to have profound consequences. He illustrates how a widespread European research community emerged to guide the transition of colonial education away from missionary based programs toward scientific ones that emphasized the development of health, social welfare, hygiene, and women and children (still prominent today in UN campaigns).

Next, Brook Durham's chapter, "*Une aventure sociale et humaine: The Service des Centres Sociaux in Algeria, 1955–1962,*," correlates the increasing poverty of Algerian Muslim families under French colonial rule and the French Algerian colonial system's widely criticized failures to ensure the literacy of its Algerian subjects. Durham then analyzes the impact of a colonial institution created to redress to situation: the *Services des centres sociaux* (Social Service Centers), which were designed by more liberal colonial administrators to deliver literacy, health care, and education to Algerians in the context of developing a broader "Franco-Algerian" national identity. While these centers showed some promise in integrating French colonists and Algerian subjects, they were ultimately undermined by the election of more conservative colonial administrators who disagreed with the centers' objectives, and also by a greater percentage of the French colonists who were uninterested in fraternizing with their subjects.

Jakob Zollmann's chapter, "Becoming a Good Farmer—Becoming a Good Farm Worker: On Colonial Educational Policies in Germany and German South-West Africa, Circa 1890 to 1918," offers a fascinating glimpse of how German agrarian policies shaped the colonial educational system in Namibia and Tanzania. Germany early recognized the importance of developing an agrarian educational system for its colonial farmers

and plantations managers, affiliating it with the broader national concern for cultural uplift. As colonial official Wilhelm Hübbe-Schleiden recognized, “Colonization in new territories is a repetition of our own cultural development” (112). Like the British, the Germans treated agriculture in Africa as a living laboratory where they could test modern methods of researching soils and plant species while at the same time expand their own knowledge over Africa’s indigenous flora and fauna. German colonization developed a strong connection between agricultural sciences and culture. Zollmann observes that while agricultural schools and training programs aimed to educate German men and (later) German women to bear German culture to the colonies, the same knowledge was not provided to African subjects of those regions. This contrasted with the education provided to South African chiefs who were earlier introduced to European methods of scientific agriculture.

Among the book’s notable chapters, it is important to include Michael Kozakowski’s analysis (“Becoming Workers of Greater France: Vocational Education in Colonial Morocco, 1912–1939”) of how the French colonial educational system in Morocco focused on implementing vocational training rather than educational systems that inculcated higher-order critical thinking skills. As the French director-general of public education Georges Hardy declared at a 1925 meeting in Rabat, “The education of indigenes will be vocational or it will not be.” The French used vocational education as a tool for colonial control and development in not just the Moroccan Protectorate but also in France. As Kozakowski observes, “Vocational education [in Morocco] . . . represented a shift in thinking about the purpose of education, producing not just loyal subjects or intelligent humans, but workers of an industrializing ‘Greater France’ [*la plus grande France*].” Kozakowski also makes the point that the colonial educational officials didn’t just have to plan for Moroccan Muslim students, but also for Europeans residing in Morocco and Moroccan minorities, such as Sephardic Jews. While grappling with the ethnic and religious diversity of Morocco, French colonial schools aimed to provide a dual education in general education and in a trade perceived as useful by colonial authorities. As Kozakowski notes, a core policy objective for colonial educational officials was to cultivate a Moroccan working class while avoiding the “threat that a Moroccan ‘proletariat’ might emerge, in the words of [French colonial scholar Maurice] Gaudefroy-Demombynes” (p. 184).

The final section of the book takes stock of the infrastructure and narratives of post-WWII “development” sponsored by the UN and the

World Bank, among other organizations. Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo and Hugo Gonçalves Dores's co-written chapter, "Enlightened Developments? Inter-imperial Organizations and the Issue of Colonial Education in Africa (1945–1957)," discusses how the "inter-imperial collaboration" (p. 238) between western European states during and after World War II laid the groundwork for postwar development initiatives in the Global South. While European empires collaborated on issues of colonial management before World War II, postwar "practices of collecting and comparing information on the most pressing colonial issues . . . took on a new dimension and direction" (p. 240). The aim of colonial officers from different European states to regularly meet to discuss colonial affairs shaped the international development and welfare organizations we are familiar with today. Jerónimo and Dores provide nuanced historical analysis on the role of intermediary inter-imperial development organizations and conferences that formed along the way, which included the 1950 Commission for Technical Cooperation in Africa South of the Sahara (CCTA) and the 1957 Inter-African Conference on Industrial, Commercial and Agricultural Education.

The chapters focus on the historical background of education and development of the late-nineteenth and twentieth-century African colonies. One of my reservations is that while some of the contributions sprinkle in terms such as "decolonial," they don't engage with postcolonial scholarship that addresses some of the same questions from a more theoretical perspective. For instance, scholars such as Paulo Freire, Inderpal Grewal, and others have also discussed colonial education and welfare systems and their continuing footprint in contemporary Africa, Asia, and Latin America. While it is understandable that the methodology of the edited volume centers on historical, economic, and social analysis on Africa, some referencing of analogous work in postcolonial theory would have been effective. Another small critique is that the studies mostly focus on the agency and decisions of colonial bureaucrats without adequately spotlighting indigenous resistance and reshaping of colonial educational programs for their own ends. One or two pieces on this topic would have been appreciated. Nevertheless, the essays make a valuable intervention in showing how colonial education systems shaped the spaces of both the metropole and the colony, interrelating the developmental infrastructure (or lack thereof) of regions we now name the Global North and the Global South. Thus, contemporary narratives of development often obscure the extent to which "the developed" world and "developing" world were

shaped by colonial systems of governance and management, which notably included education. While scholars recognize that today's developed and developing world were produced by colonial systems, understanding how this happened through research into specific educational policies, initiatives, programs, and bureaucracies is immensely valuable.

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