

The political role of the physicians and surgeons who were hired to practise their medicine in West Africa left plenty of room for racism in appointments to key medical posts. It is this rise of racism that Patton chronicles well through the biographies of the doctors that experienced it. Once colonial officials were allowed to bring out wives to West Africa, a further element of racism entered the equation: should Africans practising obstetrics and gynaecology examine white women?

There was, of course, medical practice outside government service, and there existed opportunities for Sierra Leonean doctors to earn a good income from private practice, especially from the business community in the larger towns. Freed from government constraints, they could act as leaders in society, socially and intellectually, as well as politically — writing articles, belonging to Freemason lodges, setting up doctors' trades unions, and articulating opposition to colonial government.

Finally, Patton looks at the cohort of doctors trained in the Soviet Union and other Eastern-bloc countries. In its wider implications, the subject is worthy of a full book. Their training — and therefore their practice — differed from those of others, as did the language in which they had been trained. The result was considerable friction and often a lower status for them within the medical services of the newly independent states. Patton provides us here, too, with a study of medical arrogance and anxiety.

But this book is not primarily a study of conflicts, interesting though these are. It is a celebration of both an intellectual tradition and a particular kind of skill — West African medics had to be competent surgeons, physicians, paediatricians, gynaecologists, and obstetricians all in one — competences which they had to adapt to a tropical context. And, then, some managed to do research as well. Their memory is well served by this study.

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Agnes Czerwinski Riedmann. *Science That Colonizes. A Critique of Fertility Studies in Africa*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993. 174 pp.

The publisher's flyer suggests a subtitle: "New book introduces 'world system demography.'" But the book weaves into demographic experiences and data more than just Immanuel Wallerstein's world system theory. Max Weber's formulation of bureaucratic surveillance as social control and Michel Foucault's view of disciplinary power are the other props on which the book rests.

To begin with, Riedmann meant to engage in routine analysis of the demographic and socioeconomic microdata collected during three surveys among the Yoruba of Nigeria in the 1970s. There is no indication whether the populations sampled were meant to be in any way representative and of what — certainly not of the Western region (the ethnicity was to be held constant), even less so of Nigeria as a whole, and still less of the Africa promised in the title. On page 9, statements on “African” findings are made three times, but the surveys are all limited to Yorubas. I am reminded of an early book on “African” homicide, based on several TV and only TV experiences.

In the process of getting acquainted with the raw data deposited in the Australian National University, Riedmann allowed herself to be sidetracked by the qualitative reports penned by the enumerators and their supervisors in the course of their field work. The enumerators entered the value-loaded world of their respondents armed with allegedly value-free questionnaires that had been developed in the Western world, though Riedmann admits that the questionnaires were first developed in the Yoruba language and translated into English only at the final stage. Pondering in distant Australia the many volumes of bound notes and reports from the field workers in Yoruba country, she was struck by the incongruities between anthropology and culture of the interviewers and interviewees — so much so that she lost interest in the demographic substance.

The incongruities identified by Riedmann arrange themselves in five lessons, all in conflict with the indigenous and religious/cultural beliefs of the Yoruba respondents.

- (1) The questionnaires implicitly suggested that the “real” family (the quotation marks are repeated a hundred times) is the nuclear family. On the first page of the opening chapter, the word “reasonable” is used three times in conjunction with “family size” as the main population interest of the Nigeria government.
- (2) Children bring into the family considerations of cost and income that should be consciously evaluated as part of the family building decisions.
- (3) All contraceptive methods are equally acceptable, whether traditional or Western.
- (4) Personal efficacy (and even the narrower concept of personal efficiency?) is an important personal characteristic. It is normal and natural to assess it in respect of an individual.
- (5) It is equally normal and natural to place oneself under bureaucratic surveillance.

The switch in Riedmann’s interest took place without the knowledge of the project leader (Jack Caldwell), and he “remain[ed] unconvinced that either he or his collaborators were unwittingly the playthings of great forces of

which they were largely unaware" (xiv).

Survey questions formulated within the five lessons provoked hostility among the respondents and various forms of avoidance up to, and including, refusals to answer questions, reliance on misleading answers, not turning up for interviews, and the like. Now, it seems that Riedmann is overly impressed by the proportions of refusals and the like among the Yorubas. Social survey takers in Western countries run into problems, and it is usual for non-response to reach thirty percent. Riedmann frequently encounters proportions as low as ten percent and builds her argument on such low percentages. On page 84, the same 13.4 percent of refusals is quoted three times (a somewhat higher percentage is quoted on page 88). One feels like asking: So what?

More generally, "me thinks she protests too much." She picks on the Population Council of New York, its field workers, and the attempts to measure social and demographic phenomena in the relatively narrow and modest area of family building. Would not inquiring into other areas affected by modernization provoke hostility among respondents, if Western-type questions were asked? Would not an attempt to assess and measure female genital mutilation? Mothers wait for the next travelling of the husband in order to arrange for the mutilation of their daughters. Any questionnaire to measure the phenomenon would be offensive to these mothers. It is also relevant to look into work recently reviewed in this journal (29, 3:516) on the abolition of slavery. The breaking of chains, whether those of slavery or bondage, would cause problems in interview dynamics, whatever the society. "[S]lave emancipation in Asia and Africa did involve the imposition of European notions about free labour on non-Western societies and that these societies often accepted this European discourse reluctantly, and sometimes not at all." Is it helpful, illuminating, or even relevant in such a situation to apply the label of academic imperialism? Still, even genuine demographers feel guilty enough. Paul Demeny, the distinguished editor of the Population Council quarterly, *Population and Development Review* (21, no. 4: 892), admitted that funding arrangements under which demographic research is conducted place invisible fetters on scientific freedom.

There are several minor issues and errors, as well as some not so minor. Riedmann seems to be unaware that for many years, Nigeria was the largest white area on the demographic map of Africa (as a result of the direct tie, since 1963, between population "counts" and legislative seats). The matter was more serious than just "various inconsistencies" (143). In Table 1.1, Riedmann suggests that Nigeria needs twenty-six years to double its population size, but actually doubles it in the table in fifteen years (1976 to 1991, when, incidentally, the worst abuses were getting smaller). Should not the million pounds earned by palm oil exports to Great Britain in the 1860s be

cited in more updated currency values (21)? To suggest that nation-states can be created by being "artificially carved up" shows that neither Riedmann nor Samir Amin, cited by Riedmann, understand what a nation-state is (not unusual on this continent). It is not true that "[r]andom sampling requires detailed geographic information" (48). It depends on the units of the most relevant sampling frame, though the Yoruba surveys appear to have used area samples (123). The messages sent through headmasters via pupils to families must have been counterproductive from the perspective of public relations (52). Assuming one hundred percent school attendance and one percent sample, ninety-nine percent of parents were informed of the forthcoming survey unnecessarily. Of the four well-known international surveys, three are mentioned on page 97 — KAP, WFS, DHS — but not the Contraceptive Prevalence Survey. The index is almost entirely a subject index with one or two names of persons thrown in (no names of authors of sources). As it stands, it has hurtful omissions; for example, as missing items: age heaping 148; ethnocentricity 151; fosterage (much made out of in the discussion) 69, 83, 143, 144, 147; nucleation 99, 100, 101, 150; polygyny 144; numeracy 27.

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Gilbert Rist. *The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith*. London and New York: Zed Books, 1997. 276 pp.

Insofar as Gilbert Rist has presented us with a history of the idea and practices of development, this book is to be welcomed. Although Rist has provided a fifteen-page exegesis of how the idea developed from the thinking of Aristotle and St. Augustine to the enlightenment of Reason and nineteenth-century social evolutionism, and given a cursory history of post-1970 French colonialism together with an account of the League of Nations, the substantial bulk of the book is taken up by a history of post-1945 development. To this extent, Rist's historical approach to development is also a restricted one.

Starting with President Truman's 1948 Point Four Message, which, akin to the radical Development Dictionary (published by Zed in 1992), purports to represent the "invention of development," Rist has examined what are taken to be some key documents which captured historical inflections of high "development" thinking during the second half of the century. Decade by decade, we are therefore taken at a fairly brisk canter through the Bandung Conference, the multiplication of UN agencies, the 1960s devel-