



States of Violence: Politics, Youth, and Memory in Contemporary Africa

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The essayists whose work is collected here -- historians, anthropologists, and political scientists -- bring their diverse disciplinary perspectives to bear on various forms of violence that have plagued recent African history. Exploring violence as part of political economy and rejecting stereotypical explanations of African violence as endemic or natural to African cultures, the essays examine a continent where the boundaries on acceptable force are always shifting and the distinction between violence by the state and against the state is not always clear.

Many of the essays address generational tensions through the role of African youth, which in this context is almost exclusively male. The violence perpetrated by young men stems not only from ideologies of masculinity but also from a frustration over both their own unrealized adulthood and the failure of an adult leadership whose interaction with the youth often seems limited to enlisting them in more bloodshed. Other essays examine the temptation in an atmosphere of violence to exploit the malleability of memory to construct, or reconstruct, histories in order to justify the sacrifice and shifts of power brought on by that violence.

Wide-ranging but sharply focused, *States of Violence* takes in power struggles in Sierra Leone, nationalism in postcolonial Zimbabwe, the Bakassi boys of Nigeria, and offers probing examinations of such pivotal events as the Rwandan genocide and the Alexandra Rebellion, shedding new light on the role of each in the drama being played out in this troubled continent.

Contributors William Reno, Northwestern University * Joanna Davidson, Emory University * Daniel Smith, Brown University * Elaine Salo, University of Cape Town * Martha Carey, Emory University * Jocelyn Alexander, Bristol University * Belinda Bozzoli, University of Witwatersrand * Timothy Longman, Vassar College

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