

tice is very widespread, both in contemporary societies globally and historically within Europe. The continuing practice of cousin marriage among young British Pakistanis must be understood within a keenly-felt desire to maintain and reinforce transnational family relationships. Contrary to the popular media representation that equates cousin marriage with forced marriage, many of the young people interviewed by Shaw actively chose to marry their cousins, citing emotional, as well as social and cultural motivations. Many were aware of the genetic risks, but regarded marriage within the family as “safer” than marrying “strangers” in other respects.

The second part of the book focuses on couples attending a genetics clinic for prenatal testing and diagnosis. Through a series of often very poignant and moving case studies, Shaw traces the ways in which couples engage with, negotiate and respond to medical surveillance and diagnostic uncertainty, how people respond to and make decisions about reproductive risk (such as whether or not to terminate a pregnancy), often based on uncertain information and diagnoses, and how parents cope with infant death or the knowledge that an unborn child is unlikely to survive. One key theme to emerge from these accounts is that the processes through which people interpret and negotiate genetic risk are not straightforward or easily predictable. While certain factors such as religious faith, family circumstances, and understanding of clinical genetics may shape these processes, they do not determine them. Instead, we get a highly nuanced account of the complexities and variation of responses to genetic risk and misfortune, in which people make use of culturally-situated knowledge in idiosyncratic ways to make sense of, and respond to, their situations. There is a very clear message here to health professionals who may, in an attempt to be “culturally sensitive,” make unfounded and problematic assumptions – for example that a Muslim woman would never wish to terminate a pregnancy. Shaw argues that clinicians should strive instead for “cultural competence,” which entails ensuring effective communication and “raising professionals’ awareness of the socially and culturally shaped nature of their own values and practices, and of the potential for stereotyping or making ethnocentric judgments about patients whose values and practices differ” (245).

This is a sensitively written and engaging account of a very difficult topic – both intellectually and emotionally. Shaw’s long-standing research with British Pakistanis in the Oxford area is very evident in her ability to develop strong relationships with informants, based on shared understandings and empathy. Shaw manages to produce a book which is both academically rigorous and highly readable, indeed compelling. This is not only a remarkable achievement in itself; it also means that the volume can – and should – be read not just by anthropologists and other social scientists, but by health professionals and policy makers. It should be compulsory reading for medical students!

Kate Hampshire

Shipton, Parker: *Mortgaging the Ancestors. Ideologies of Attachment in Africa.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009. 327 pp. ISBN 978-0-300-11602-1. Price: £ 35.00

In “Mortgaging the Ancestors,” Parker Shipton effectively challenges the economic logic of land privatization that centers on the use of land as collateral for loans (the mortgage) to be used to develop agricultural land. He argues that this logic fails in the case of rural Nyanza where he has conducted research among the Luo people for several decades. The reason it fails, in essence, is due to the nature of attachment of people to land, attachments that cannot be reduced to the nexus of cash exchange, of land for money. In the process of making this argument, he reviews a considerable literature on property rights reaching back to enlightenment (and even earlier) philosophers in Europe, more contemporary economic theory, development policy and practice, and anthropological perspectives on Luo culture. The book paints a broad canvass and draws from several disciplines, though at heart is an anthropological study. In some respects it reviews ground that has been fairly well covered in other studies (his own and many others’) regarding the problems attendant on privatizing land in Africa and introducing technologies such as mortgages (e.g., failure to maintain land registers, inability of banks to foreclose on mortgage defaulters, the male bias in allocating private property rights). However, it is an interesting and valuable contribution in that it illuminates aspects of the Luo case as well as the broader Kenyan situation that are all too relevant today. Indeed, as I write this review – in Kenya – the country is only two weeks away from its second constitutional referendum in five years and land issues, especially land rights, are among the most contentious in the debates over the proposed constitution.

Through the ten chapters of the book, Shipton moves from a review of early and later theorizing about the nature of property and property rights, through ethnographic examination of how Luo people relate to land, the history of land privatization, and operation of the mortgage in Luo country, to contemporary tensions in Kenya over land manifesting in violence in several areas of the country, and concludes – coming full circle – with reflections on the nature of property. Regarding theory, Shipton’s central premise is that land privatization and the mortgage are Western constructs that are ill-fitted to the African situation and were imposed by modernizing colonial and post-colonial regimes pursuing a vision of “the modern” that is incompatible with realities on the ground. Theories of property rights that emerged at the time of the Industrial Revolution in Europe have held sway in development policy circles and been most thoroughly implemented in Kenya starting with the Swynnerton Plan in the 1950s and continuing after independence and up to the present with the progressive privatization of land in many parts of the country. Ironically, in wake of the US financial crisis, most particularly the mortgage foreclosure crisis, one may wonder whether this instrument fits contemporary realities anywhere!

Following the discussion of theory are several chap-

ters that focus on the Luo including their history of settlement in the Nyanza region and exploring how kinship relations are marked on the land through settlement patterns, homestead arrangements, and – most recently – the placement of concrete gravesites near houses, in effect marking ownership. One interesting argument developed here is the way that Luo experience of increasing density of human population has led to enhancements of kinship as an organizing principle rather than it giving way to territorial-political, state-led systems.

Subsequent chapters present a detailed history of the emergence of land privatization policy in Kenya both in the colonial period and after independence. Interesting archival data are reviewed including testimonies demonstrating that privatization commenced in spite of opposition voiced from many quarters from the very beginning of the process. In particular, both Luo themselves and government administrators in their region generally opposed the idea, citing its incompatibility with local tradition. Shipton goes on to discuss the implementation of the mortgage and gives some examples of its effects in Luo areas and more broadly. Although empirical data are sometimes scanty, there is enough to draw the general conclusion that land-based mortgages have not been effective as a means to develop “modern” farming in Luo country (or most anywhere in Kenya), that banks have been unable to foreclose on most defaulters (e.g., because someone buying a foreclosed property would be subject to witchcraft from the former owner and their kin), and that this has led to changes in lending policies that generally require more surety than land (e.g., a steady source of income). There are also numerous examples of the conflicts that mortgages have caused among family members and wider kinship networks due to title holders mortgaging land without notifying others, defaulting on loans, etc. While the information in these chapters is quite interesting, much of the original, empirical work on Luo is rather dated (early 1980s), leaving the reader curious about more recent developments and changes over time.

The latter part of the book discusses a number of broader conflicts in Kenya that implicate land. The overarching argument here is that even private property rights guaranteed by title deeds are not necessarily secure – they are only as secure as the power of the state to ensure the security of the owner. The sad reality in Kenya since the early 1990s is that violence can trump the title deed. During and after the last few election cycles (particularly around 1992 and 2007) violence has broken out, usually in areas of mixed ethnic settlement, leading to the forced removal of members of one or another ethnic group that is labeled as not belonging in that area. As Shipton notes, it is difficult to characterize or attribute these acts of violence because the causes are complex, but they do show that title deeds do not necessarily bring security of tenure. The penultimate chapter discusses some of the constitutional review process that occurred before the first constitutional referendum in 2005. Again drawing on archival sources, especially hearings held to elicit public input, Shipton presents a wide range of issues that made their way into the constitutional review process, including nu-

merous critiques of the mortgage, privatization, gender bias, ethnic bias, and historical injustices of land policies and politics. He also reviews aspects of the draft constitution and land policy and how these changed over various iterations. All of this is fascinating, although it is surprising that the 2005 constitutional referendum (which failed) that had important implications for the 2007 elections and in which land issues figured prominently, is not discussed.

Shipton concludes the study by returning to basic questions about property and human relationships such as concerns about mounting inequality following privatization, the pressure of growing populations on limited and fragile resources, and the desire for secure and “modern” lives that may conflict with pressures from collectives like kin and ethnic groups. Many of these issues are effectively illuminated here and also provide plenty of room for continued research and debate.

Carolyn Lesorogol

Shorter, David Delgado: *We Will Dance Our Truth. Yaqui History in Yoeme Performances.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009. 373 pp. ISBN 978-0-8032-1733-1. Price: £ 31.99

Die Yaqui oder Yoeme, wie sie sich selbst nennen, leben am Yaqui-Fluss im Gebiet zwischen der Verwaltungstadt Ciudad de Obregón und der Hafenstadt Guaymas in Sonora, einem der nordwestlichen Bundesstaaten Mexikos. Dieses Gebiet, von den Yaqui “el territorio Yaqui” bezeichnet, umfasst knapp 500.000 km². Landbesitz sowie Wasserrechte und Verwaltungshoheit wurden ihnen in einem unter der Präsidentschaft von Lázaro Cárdenas 1939 geschlossenen Friedensvertrag zugesichert. Traditionell sind der Weizenanbau, die Viehzucht und die Küstentischerei die Hauptwirtschaftsformen. Die Landwirtschaft profitiert von einem umfangreichen, zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts eingeführten Kanalsystems, welches das Wasser des Río Yaqui auf die Felder leitet. Innerhalb des Territoriums leben die Yaqui in acht sogenannten traditionellen Dörfern, die im Verlauf der Jesuitenmission ab 1617 am Fluss gegründet wurden. Diese Dörfer wählen auch heute noch ihre Vertreter nach den Organisationsformen der kolonialzeitlichen *república de indios* mit den entsprechenden Ämtern. Unterschieden werden die politische, die militärische und die religiöse Führung. Versuche seitens der staatlichen Behörden, diese aus ihrer Sicht überkommenen Strukturen zu modernisieren und damit zu dezentralisieren, wurden bislang abgelehnt. Für die Yaqui zentral in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart ist die Verteidigung ihrer Landbesitzrechte gegenüber den vielfachen Begehren von anderer Seite. Dies muss man wissen, um die Ergebnisse von David Delgado Shorters Arbeit zu verstehen.

Das Buch “We Will Dance Our Truth” widmet sich ausgewählten religiösen Konzepten und sucht diese in ihren zeitlichen und räumlichen Bezügen zu verorten. Dabei wird analysiert, mit welchen Medien (Orten und Mythen, Erzählungen, Anekdoten, Zeremonien, Zeichen, etc.) diese Konzepte in der kollektiven Erinnerung transportiert werden, dabei zum Teil Anpassungen erfahren und ins-