

versies, and religious voices that served as a backdrop for the cloning controversy of 2001–2005; it traces and analyzes the 2001–2005 struggle that ended in a “General Assembly” deadlock, forcing the abandonment of efforts to establish a legally binding treaty and the recourse instead to the nonbinding “Declaration on Human Cloning,” passed by a slim majority in 2005, and in a final section draws conclusions from the cloning case for a better understanding of religious pluralism, globalization, and world politics. Banchoff sees the Catholic Church, within the Christian tradition, both the strictest opponent of embryo research and the best-organized and most influential political actor around the issue. Thus, how religious pluralism will shape the global governance of the life sciences in the future, remains an open question.

In “U. S. Foreign Policy and Global Religious Pluralism” (297–323), Elizabeth H. Prodromou analyzes the origins and implications of the relationship between religion and American foreign policy in a contemporary international system. Prodromou begins with the thesis that any effort to understand, much less to manage, the role of religion in world affairs must address a single, overarching reality: a historically unprecedented pluralism evident in national religious demographics, internally diverse faith traditions, and transnational religious actors and activities. The essay is divided into four sections: a brief historical overview of the influence of religion as an animating force in American foreign policy, and a discussion of two key historical junctures in U. S. policy: the “International Religious Freedom Act” (IRFA) of 1998 and of the proclamation of the “War on Terror” after the attacks of September 11, 2001. A concluding section argues that the religious turn threatens to isolate the United States and, paradoxically, undermines its efforts to combat global religious persecution and to counter international terrorism. Even if the U. S. foreign policy after the cold war has not been essentially and exclusively religious, it was widely perceived as an aggressive imperialism, mainly underpinned by a neoconservative ideology that has actually weakened America’s capacity to advance religious freedom, human rights, and peace in a religiously plural world. Prodromou ends her analysis on a hopeful note: despite its weakened moral authority, the United States possesses material resources that could serve to strengthen international law and global governance in a post-cold war order, marked by a resurgence of ethnic and religious differences and greater cultural and religious pluralism. On the other hand, this attitude will almost certainly provoke a defensive reaction against what will be seen as an arrogant effort to impose American beliefs on the rest of the world. Almost two decades since the end of the cold war, the idea of the United States as a benevolent hegemon and guarantor of world order, has alas lost adherents.

To whom then should appeal the discussed volume? Certainly to scholars interested in religion and to policymakers, as a useful book for courses in religion and politics and international relations. The essays reveal six interrelated dimensions of religious pluralism in world

affairs that will likely persist into the foreseeable future: fragile identity politics, strong ethical commitments, international-national-local linkages, interfaith and intrafaith dynamics, religious-secular interaction, and the centrality of the United States. The ambitions of the essays, stated in the “Introduction” by Banchoff, have been however modest – to define key concepts, including religious pluralism and globalization, and to explore their interaction with world politics across a variety of traditions, regions, and issue areas addressed in the volume. But even if the book does not provide a comprehensive overview of religious pluralism at the intersection of globalization and world politics, it shows the complexity of the topic called religious pluralism and some advantages and threats as well. Optimistically religious pluralism is defined by an absence of violence, as a peaceful interaction of religious actors with one another and secular actors in the public sphere.

Andrzej Bronk

Becker, Felicitas: *Becoming Muslim in Mainland Tanzania, 1890–2000*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. 364 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-726427-0. Price: \$ 100.00

The title of this book is misleading. It is not about Islam in all of mainland Tanzania nor even those parts that are most prominent. It is about Islam in the southeastern part of the country. That area is 80 % Muslim but the least closely tied, of all coastal areas, to the major Muslim centers in Zanzibar, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, and further north. It is one of the least studied parts of the nation, at least by sociologists and anthropologists, perhaps because it is one of the most cut-off politically, economically, and culturally. This is important since it means that we cannot easily fit Becker’s materials in any solid supplementary ethnographic framework.

Becker’s study is based mainly on archival work and a large number of interviews with local inhabitants recalling their past experiences and local oral historical traditions. This is welcome material on a neglected area and topic, but it is difficult at times to get a real sense of just what social life on the ground was or is really like. The ideas and motives of Becker’s informants cannot easily be analyzed within any local structural framework of social organization, local economy, or landscape, though the author does attempt at times to do so in a general way. Such oral testimony has full meaning only when we can place the speaker in a social structure. It is clear, but unsurprising, that Islam and particular ideas and values of local societies and cultures would have complexly interacted in manifold ways over the past century and that the meanings of being Muslim, modern, and worthy of social note have been issues of contention. Presumably, Islam is “locally received.” We have extensive material on Arab/Swahili coastal culture in general, but we lack rich knowledge about the ethnic culture and societies in this part of Tanzania. Becker notes that in the past, contrasts between coastal (Swahili) and inland African groups were more pronounced. Then, dominance of coastal culture over inland African groups was more prominent than later. Indian Ocean trade declined and

inland Africans were increasingly caught up in more local traditions and politics. In the 1890s, where this study begins, local ties to coastal trader networks, especially as these involved commerce in slaves, arms, and ivory, lessened after the arrival of the Germans and then the British. Becker rightly minimizes the influence of Islam on African resistance to colonialism, at least as evinced in the famous *Maji-Maji* rebellion which stemmed from this region. Becker seems to assume all her readers are familiar with this material on *Maji-Maji*, so she explains little of this. Becker also argues that Muslims rather than Christian missionaries were more successful recruiting adherents because they did not interfere in local traditional rituals, especially initiation of youth. That may have been so, but it does not explain why Muslims were unsuccessful in some inland areas to the north which were also accessible to Muslim influence. I mention only these points but could criticize other broad assertions by Becker which seem plausible so long as one does not measure them against the comparative material we have from elsewhere in upcountry areas also influenced by Muslim traders and proselytization. The key factors, not related in sufficient detail, probably are rooted in the ethnic, sociological, and historical particularities of each different area.

It is clear that British colonials tended to neglect Muslims when they could, though they and also the Germans at first sometimes preferred Muslim to Christian “tribal” agents in some areas. One of the problems, as Becker herself recognizes, is that colonial rule relied heavily on mission schools and those usually accepted Muslim students only if they converted. Colonial government did not invest much in secular government schools until much later. Muslim schools proved virtually useless to colonial needs since they derived from a culture which at that time was unprepared to foster the modern education needed for employment in the new government and commercial ventures that would soon dominate the country. Throughout her study Becker appears to go out of her way to present Islam in a sympathetic light, which is, of course, the usual way to describe those we study as social scientists. Still, it seems clear to me that during the colonial era traditional Islam did not provide many modern advantages to these local Africans. Of course, some of this was due to the way Islam was approached by European colonialists. Unfortunately, Becker provides little on why and how this happened.

Becker’s chapters on more recent developments after national independence are depressing. Muslim practices have been influenced by new, more radical Muslims funded, as in so much of Africa, by Saudi money encouraging fundamentalist Wahabi Islam inimical to what made African and Swahili culture and society meaningful and rewarding to local Africans and tolerable to national government. Local economic and political conditions were also disturbed by destructive, enforced vil-lagization programmes dictated by the oppressive pseudosocialist government of former President Nyerere. While such misconceived and harmful policies are no longer pursued, as in other parts of Tanzania, distrust, re-

sentment, and even open conflict continue between central government officials and local people.

Becker provides many accounts of what Islam meant to local Africans in this area. She demonstrates how adherence to Islam means a wide range of things to different people. Yet I still ponder how Muslims may accommodate themselves to modernization and democratic nation-building in a state such as Tanzania that is officially committed to secular rule and to peaceful tolerance of diverse religious and cultural affiliations. How successfully Islam, Christianity, and national secular political loyalties may interact is yet to be fully tested.

Becker’s study is a useful collection of information. Yet much is too general to take us very far. For example, her account of Muslim brotherhoods (*tarika*) in the region explains little about how they actually work. Do they work in ways similar to what is so richly reported from West Africa? I doubt it. She notes that Islam has steadily eroded social advantages of women and that Islam and a cash economy have led to a switch from lineage to small-family social organization, further undermining women’s options. Yet nowhere do we find any case studies or specific materials to make this clearer. Nor do we have much in the way of comments by either men or women regarding what this means to them. How differently do women and men report and see Islam? Becker notes that Islam has broken-down old social hierarchies based on land, descent, traditional learning, and age, yet again it is difficult to find any specific, detailed material to flesh-out just what this may mean. I know this is an “historical” and not an anthropological or sociological study, but I see the useful questions in anthropology and sociology being close to those in good history.

This, then, is a book that those deeply interested in worldwide Islam or in Tanzanian society will want to read, but it is not a book to which scholars will repeatedly turn for ideas or theory. Still, I am glad I read it. Unfortunately, this book reflects a decline in the earlier high standards of editing at Oxford University Press. Items mentioned in the text do not all appear in the bibliography. The names of Peter Lienhardt and Derek Peterson are sometimes spelled incorrectly. The author misuses the word “disinterested” four times. These probably seem small matters, but they are distractions not expected in publications from such a distinguished press, and certainly not in such an expensive volume.

T. O. Beidelman

Benda-Beckmann, Franz von, und Keebet von Benda-Beckmann: *Gesellschaftliche Wirkung von Recht. Rechtsethnologische Perspektiven*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 2007. 223 pp. ISBN 978-3-496-02804-8. Preis: € 22,90

Franz und Keebet von Benda-Beckmann zählen zu den wichtigsten Vertretern der deutschen Rechtsethnologie. Seit dem Jahr 2000 leiten sie die Projektgruppe “Rechtspluralismus” am Max-Planck-Institut für ethnologische Forschung. Der hier vorgestellte Sammelband fasst in loser Reihenfolge zehn ihrer deutschsprachigen