

special privileges or cosmic significance. Children take on their mother's rank, but any noble woman who has sex with a commoner loses her noble rank and House membership, though membership can be restored by a ritual that defines the offending woman as commoner. Smedal says that nobles generally, but decreasingly, disapprove of female cross-rank transgression, while commoners think that the disapproval and punishing ritual are ridiculous. As Smedal explains, the effect of the rule is to make it increasingly difficult for noble women to marry and produce the next generation of nobles, to the point that in some Houses noble women have renounced their rank. These noble lines, then, appear to be doomed.

The volume ends with an "Afterword" by David Graeber. It presents what he sees as Dumont's intellectual frame and his moral and political position, and makes two related arguments. One is that Dumont was opposed to capitalism and favoured an older hierarchical social and moral order. The other is that "hierarchy" has become increasingly common in anthropology since around the 1950s, displacing terms like "rank" or "dominance," a terminological shift that marks a conceptual shift, an increasing assumption that inequalities are legitimate and stable from the perspective of the people anthropologists study.

If inequalities are to be legitimate in people's eyes, values that justify them seem necessary. Taken together, such inequalities and values are a hierarchy in Dumont's sense. However, Dumont did much more than note their conjunction in hierarchical systems. It is to the credit of the writers in this volume that they illuminate and question those other things that Dumont linked to hierarchy. In doing so, they help make hierarchies problematic and linked to social processes and practices in ways that Dumont probably did not intend but that make the notion of hierarchy more useful as an analytical concept.

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**Hinton, Alexander Laban:** *The Justice Facade. Trials of Transition in Cambodia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. 282 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-882095-6. Price: £ 24.99

The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) were established in 2006 to prosecute international crimes committed under the Khmer Rouge regime between 17 April 1975 and 7 January 1979, during which as much as a quarter of Cambodia's population is estimated to have perished through starvation, forced labour, torture, and execution. The tribunal was to have a hybrid structure, with Cambodian and international staff working side by side and applying international standards. Much has been written along the way discussing the ECCC's various "successes" and "failures."

In "The Justice Facade. Trials of Transition in Cambodia," Alexander Laban Hinton invites us to critically

reflect upon the "transitional justice imaginary" – the yardstick against which the ECCC has generally been assessed.

His book opens with a preface describing a booklet published by a Cambodian NGO. The booklet contains drawings that depict the personal transformation of a Cambodian villager, "Uncle Yan" from traumatised to healed – a transformation effected through his participation in the ECCC trials. The storyline is linear and portrays a process of emergence from the nightmares of the regressive, brutal, communist past to dreams of a progressive, peaceful, and prosperous (market-driven and "developed") Cambodia. It is this storyline, that Hinton describes as a facade that masks multiple other realities. On the one hand, it masks the various ways in which transitional justice is lived and experienced on the ground. On the other, it masks its own historical and political roots and limitations.

With deft use of imagery, Hinton takes us behind the facade. He draws particularly upon the image of the Justice Cascade – the title of a 2011 book by Kathryn Sikkink. Sikkink argued that holding former leaders legally accountable for past crimes would aid transitions from authoritarianism to liberal democracy, the norms of which would then "cascade" down from international to local forums, becoming internalised and reproduced along the way. Hinton alludes to the way this fits into a broad civilizing mission that also includes the liberation of markets from former command economies.

In response to the assumption of a smooth, monodirectional flow from above to below suggested by the cascade metaphor, Hinton gives his book a tripartite structure under headings that capture the complex and unpredictable ways in which the "transitional justice imaginary" meets real people's lives: "vortices," "turbulence," "eddies." Hinton also uses the fiery images of sparks, fizzling, and combustion to describe what happens at points of encounter between discordant realities. One could perhaps instead extend his use of the fluid cascade metaphor to describe how the transitional justice imaginary filters through, splashes off, or seeps into various terrains of knowledge, power, and practice, sometimes nourishing new growth but sometimes also swamping or buckling novel ideas.

Hinton has a long experience of conducting in-depth research in Cambodia, and this enables him to use the phenomenological, experience-near approach in this book to great effect. He draws upon interviews with individuals who have been involved with the ECCC, particularly victims and NGO outreach workers. These stories unmask much of what is eclipsed by the "Justice Facade," disclosing power dynamics and cultural realms, particularly that of Buddhism, that frame lives and discourses, that are absent from the transitional justice imaginary. In doing so, Hinton reveals elements of people's experiences, hopes and fears – from before, during, and after the Khmer Rouge period – that have been hidden by the ECCC process.

In his concluding chapter, Hinton describes how translating concepts such as human rights results in meanings that, although they may resonate with the original, inevitably create a new field of vernacularised meaning. Overall, Hinton succeeds brilliantly in both denaturalizing the assumptions embedded in the transitional justice imaginary and disclosing how variously positioned actors appropriate and reframe transitional justice proceedings.

While Hinton mentions the fact that the Cambodian government has used the ECCC to buttress its own legitimacy and deflect attention from its continued abuses in relation to citizens and the environment, this is not the focus of his phenomenological exploration. His book is the result of fieldwork conducted before the watershed events that took place in Cambodia in 2017, in the lead up to the general elections of 2018. Even as the ECCC was continuing to operate at the margins of Phnom Penh in late 2017, in the heart of the city, the Cambodian Supreme Court outlawed the major opposition party, and the Municipal Court sentenced its leader to imprisonment for treason and espionage. Some of the legal staff involved were simultaneously working at the ECCC. Media and civil society organisations and even an Australian filmmaker suffered similar fates, provoking widespread outcries that this marked the death of democracy in Cambodia.

These developments prompted Peter Maguire (The Khmer Rouge Trials. The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. *The Diplomat* [14.11.2018]. <<https://thediplomat.com/2018/11/the-khmer-rouge-trials-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly/>> [20.05.2019]) to ask: "Did the ECCC help 'end impunity in the public consciousness'?" And did the court "help Cambodia transition to a better place?" He concludes: "Absolutely not. During the course of the Khmer Rouge war crimes tribunal, Cambodia [the domestic courts] imprisoned opposition leader Kem Sokha, killed a once vibrant free press, and became a one-party state."

To continue with the cascade metaphor, this book leaves open the question of whether the next phase of Cambodia's history may see a "backflow" of intensifying authoritarianism washing out some of the loftier ideals of the transitional justice imaginary.

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**Højbjerg, Christian K., Jacqueline Knörr, and William P. Murphy (eds.):** Politics and Policies in Upper Guinea Coast Societies. Change and Continuity. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. 342 pp. ISBN 978-1-349-95012-6. Price: € 123,04

This volume continues the important work that has been produced by the "Integration and Conflict along the Upper Guinea Coast" research group at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle, Germany, headed by Jacqueline Knörr. Like other volumes published by this group (for example, see "The Power-

ful Presence of the Past. Integration and Conflict along the Upper Guinea Coast," edited by Knörr and Trajano Filho. Leiden 2010), this is a tightly framed set of essays which collectively address the recurring tropes through which this part of West Africa has been understood for at least the past fifty years. Although other regions in Africa have their familiar simplifying characterizations (for example, the East African "cattle complex" or the "highly centralized monarchies" of the Great Lakes region), the relatively short stretch of coastline from Senegal to Côte d'Ivoire seems unusually trapped in conventional generalizations since Warren d'Azevedo defined the "Central West Atlantic Region" in 1962. The editors identify four dominant themes or tropes, which have become explanatory frameworks in the scholarly literature: 1) an emphasis on patrimonial and personal relations as the core features of political authority, 2) a fixation on the role of secret societies, and secrecy in general, as central to both religious and secular power, 3) a view of intergroup relations through lenses of first comer/late comer, host/stranger, patron/client, and wife giver/wife taker dichotomies, and 4) an assumption that creolized settlers and indigenous autochthones are fixed and immutable categories which give rise to unavoidable conflicts. The editors define their project as moving beyond these tropes to question and refine their application to the problems of post-conflict reconstruction and current development policies. Noting that these tropes have real-world consequences when they are uncritically used by powerful outside actors (NGOs, the United Nations, multinational investors) to design programs, the editors hope to advance our understanding of the region as well as of these theoretical constructs.

The editors have chosen to group the chapters by themes: Identifications and Alliances, Explaining and Situating Violent Conflict, Postcolonial Statehood and National Belonging, and Development and Intervention. Perhaps their intention was to emphasize the commonalities across the region, but specialists in particular countries may note that five of the articles (Ménard, Menzel, Murphy, Spencer, and O'Kane) concern Sierra Leone, four focus on Casamance and/or the Gambia (Ray, Rudolf, Evans, and Hultin), two on Liberia (Brown and Munive), one each on Guinea-Bissau (Kohl) and Côte d'Ivoire (Heitz Tokpa), and one on U.K. asylum cases from the region (Lawrance). Overall, this volume is tightly coherent in its focus on the geographical space of the Upper Guinea Coast and on re-thinking the tropes that have been used to define it. Although most of the individual authors warn of the dangers these tropes pose for policy-makers at the national and global level, few provide suggestions for new policy directions nor do they identify innovative policies that resist easy reduction being advanced in the region today.

Anaïs Ménard (29–51), for example, provides a compelling update on the contemporary uses of Poro (secret society) membership in a rapidly transforming coastal