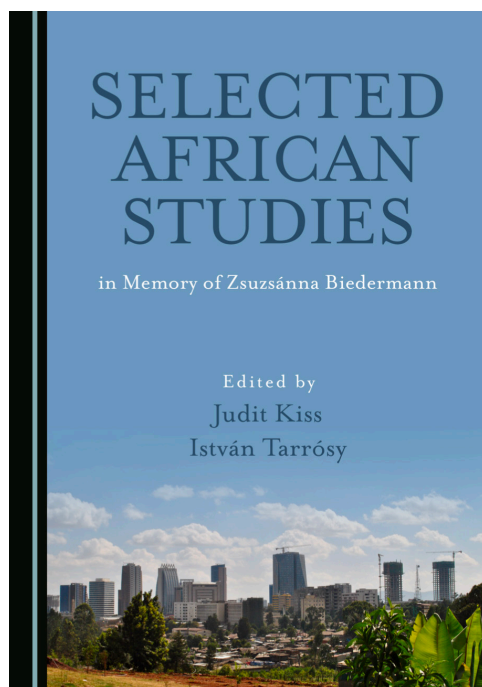


SELECTED AFRICAN STUDIES IN MEMORY OF ZSUZSÁNNA BIEDERMANN

EDITED BY JUDIT KISS AND ISTVÁN TARRÓSY

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In this globalized world not many collections of edited books are authored by scholars from the same region or country. The chapters in *Selected African Studies in Memory of Zsuzsánna Biedermann* are written by scholars from Eastern Europe, with the majority from Hungary. It offers rare worldviews of post-Communist Eastern European scholars specializing in African Studies, showcasing intra-generational scholarship in a vibrant research community. Dedicating this *Liber Amicorum* to Zsuzsánna Biedermann is befitting the life and times of a young researcher who refused to succumb to rampant pessimism about Africa even in the most treacherous circumstances.

The book consists of four thematic sections as well as an elaborate introduction that introduces the reader to the objectives and scope of this collection's unique East European contribution to African Studies. Part one explores continuity and change in Eastern European and African relations following the end of the Cold War and moving in the present day with its tumultuous fast-changing global order. There is tension between the United State's inclination to retain its coveted position as the world's only superpower while being challenged by emergent regional and global powers that aspire to retain the end of the Cold War's promise of a multipolar world order.

In Chapter 1, Zoltán Vörös and István Tarrósy articulate a convincing case illustrating that the economic ties between Central Eastern European Countries and Africa (CEEC–Africa) are not as strong now as there were compared to during the Cold War. CEE membership in the EU and NATO means that these countries have less geopolitical and geoeconomic significance for Africa as demonstrated by the trade figures of the authors, and the consolidation of trade and development relations with core EU former colonies, the United States, China, Brazil, Russia, India, Turkey and the Middle East. Geoeconomics and geopolitics resonate with Africa, and the fact that it has maintained only small number of embassies signifies the weakness of diplomatic relations.

In Chapter 2, Judit Ricz revisits the re-emergence of the developmental state in some African countries. She elaborates on three factors that set the immediate post-independence Sub-Saharan African version of the developmental state apart from its South East Asian counterpart: 1) The influence of Confucianist culture in Asia (particularly China), the presence of high-quality institutions, and the existence of homogeneous societies; 2) African South of the Sahara developmental states focusing on interventionist models based on redistributing political legitimacy rather than aligning with international market mechanisms; and 3) Africa South of the Sahara lacking a strong state to discipline the business sector. At the beginning of the 21st century, African developmental states emerged in a globalized world and offered many opportunities for countries to be amongst the fastest growing economies in the world. Judit Ricz divides these states into three categories: old successful states such as Botswana and Mauritius; contemporary experiments such as Rwanda's developmental neopatrimonialism; and aspiring newcomer developmental states such as Ethiopia and South Africa that show interest in developmental measures but have yet to fully implement them.

In contrast to Judit Ricz' optimism, in Chapter 3 Szabolcs Pásztor details the Ethiopian developmental state compared to the East Asian counterpart. The author concludes that the political setting is tightly constrained by the ruling political party (EPRDF) because the state does not permit the private sector freedom to generate the required levels of production. The answer to the question "whether a well-intentioned developmental state has been created or the ruling party (the government) has only overheated the economy with injecting money into the different sectors" (p. ix), is yes.

In Chapter 4, the deployment of a post-development perspective to unravel international development involvement in African urban segregate policies is discussed by Daniel Solymári and Ráhel Czirják. They present three cases of poverty in squatter settlements in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, highlighting developmental interventions and engaging in the complex issue of well-intended external policies and local reality. The authors claim that their research is based on a post-development approach, which is difficult to grasp in light of these desperate contexts.

Part two of the collection explores three cases of African relations with the world system: African dependence on food imports, irregular migration, and remittances. Each of these relationships are dynamic, stubbornly entrenched and hardly indispensable. In Chapter 5, Gábor Búr examines food insecurity, which is an ever-present existential issue on the African continent since the great Sahelian famine in the early 1970s. The Russia war in Ukraine has disrupted African food imports from these two countries, while the African countries are ill-prepared to compensate with grain exports from within the continent and imports from alternative trading partners. While this chapter stands on its own, it gives credence to Chapter 1's depiction of how Africa is entangled in interlocked regional and global geopolitical and geoeconomic food value chains. The African diplomatic effort to mediate peace between Russia and the Ukraine should be considered a sign of desperation considering the centrality of Russia food exports to the continent. Africa was used by the UN and OECD negotiators as the 'pitiful' continent that would suffer most from the food blockade on the Black Sea both for regular consumption and Africa's expanding humanitarian food crisis. This chapter analyses why Africa should relieve itself from food import dependence and embark on using its large fertile arable lands to feed people residing on the world's most food deficit continent.

The issues of irregular migration to Europe and remittances in Africa are discussed in Chapter 6 by Viktor Marsai. Since the 1990s, Europe has failed to curb the steady flow of irregular migrants from other world regions and in particular Africa, which is the closest in geographic proximity to Europe. The author begins his search for a solution to irregular migration by constructing a grand strategy that begins with determining the EU's geographic sphere of interest, using political, social, diplomatic, informational and economic instruments while operating within "Cooperative Regional Orders" (p. 174). For example, the EU cooperates with Africa Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on issues of irregular migration, including illegal migration. Marsai's grand strategy hinges on the EU lending more support

to migration transformation through economic and social development and good governance in the countries of origin. This is a noble but challenging proposal to sell during times of rising anti-migration sentiments among some sectors of the European public, political parties and anti-systemic movements.

In Chapter 7, Judit Kiss turns her attention to the positive and negative socioeconomic and developmental role of remittances, an issue ultimately linked to the role of the United States' annual \$50 billion remittances transferred to the continent by African migrants. The findings of the study were provided in the abstract:

The study considers the causes and uses of remittances and concludes that Africa should encourage and sustain remittance inflows as an alternative source of financing for development, minimizing the negative effects of corruption, inflation, moral hazard, brain drain, and the Dutch disease, while maximizing positive outcomes such as economic growth, savings, investment, financial and human development, and poverty and inequality reduction (p. 196).

This chapter includes current and comprehensive data, utilizing a dialectical method and political economy approach supported with in-depth analysis and explanations. This approach deserves attention in the academic and policy debates on remittances and development.

Part three is devoted to Africa and universal human rights values, focusing on gender, war ethics and the right to language. In Chapter 8, Judit Bagi and István Tarrósy examine gender equality in post-genocide Rwanda. The chapter is an attempt to go beyond rhetoric and examine reality beyond statistic data by showing gender parity achievements. In order to achieve this objective, the authors conducted fieldwork to reveal whether attitudes and behavioural patterns have also shifted and produced the intended effects. Rwanda has made considerable achievements in women representation in parliament and public life. Genocide still weighs heavily on gender equality as some women are ethnically more equal than others. Additionally, the election of the political elite to public office depends on loyalty and the pro-anti-genocide divide. Sadly, violence against women persists, casting doubt on how far traditional attitudes about the existence of authentic change vis-à-vis female social status have changed. Powerful position are still male dominated even though women have made impressive gender equality gains in political areas compared to social and cultural development related to this issue.

In Chapter 9, Lanna Lakor addresses sexual violence in the Great Lakes Region of Africa, including Uganda, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Echoing the sentiments expressed by Judit Bagi and István Tarrósy in Chapter 8, the author covers the phenomenon of sexual violence in great depth. Two arguments merit considerable attention: 1) The analogy between sexual violence as an expression of behavioural patterns that persist in times of peace as an extension of socialized war time activity is telling; 2) The author's lamentation on the gravity on the gruesome barbarity of sexual violence, revealing that "even during times of peace, the war

will partly be fought through the bodies of women” (p. 302).

In Chapter 10, Attila Horváth discusses Rwanda’s language policy after 1994 and the transition from French to English and Swahili as official languages. The official reasoning for this change is based on two arguments: regional integration with the English and Swahili East African Community (EAC) and an aspiration to make Global Rwanda integrated into the world through the English language. The author’s view is that not using Kinyarwanda – Rwanda’s *lingua franca* as the language of education – has exposed Rwanda to challenges emanating from frequent regulatory and linguistic changes, while entrenched society, economy and policy in the regional community. Meticulous details of Rwanda’s language policy rooting in colonialism is competently presented and analysed, leading to the conclusion that Kinyarwanda should play a leading role in fostering the stability needed

for a better functioning education system, while retaining the positive aspects of Swahili as a regional language and English as a global language.

Part four features Zsuzsánna Biedermann impressive bibliography and avid seminal contributions to the field of African Studies. Some of her collaborative unfinished work with her colleagues at the University of Pecs has been completed, included in this collection, and alluded to in some chapters.

Selected African Studies in Memory of Zsuzsánna Biedermann comprises an important contribution to contemporary African Studies in Central and Eastern Europe, provides an assessment of the past, and offers a window to the future. It is a must read for academics, policy makers, and students of African Studies at the graduate and postgraduate levels. It also offers invaluable insights for international relations professionals, NGOs, and civil society and democracy activists concerned with African issues and their related global implications. ☀

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