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Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda by Peter Uvin

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discloses the formation of discourses within mosque and imam institutions. Sermons could not be divorced from these historically grounded discourses. The sermons reflected and shaped them.

What we have here in this work is a fascinating insider's look into the development and inner workings of the Muslim community, or more appropriately, communities, in South Africa. Although it has historical context, and deals at length with struggles and controversies in the respective mosques and communities about which Tayob writes, this is not a history of Islam in South Africa. Although the text cannot help but include the social and political context in which these mosques developed and struggled, it is not simply a work of sociology or politics. It is rather a way of looking at two similar, yet disparate, communities as reflected through religious belief and action, contributing greatly to our understanding of the Islamic experience in South Africa. It also helps to explain how religious minorities can function, especially under less than optimum conditions. Finally, this study should also be useful for non-Muslims to understand some of the particulars of Islamic ritual and community. All in all, Tayob has presented us with a well-written and scholarly approach to this unique area of study.

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Peter Uvin. *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda*. West Hartford: Kumarian Press, 1998. 273 pp.

This is a recent contribution to what has become a vibrant discourse on the development enterprise in Africa. It is a path that has become well trodden by an array of multidisciplinary writers since the publication of James Ferguson's seminal work of the development project in Lesotho (*The Anti-Politics Machine* [New York: 1990]). In this book, Peter Uvin focuses on the dynamics of polarization and militarization that led to the Rwandan genocide in 1994. He explores the tensions and contradictions inherent in the social and political structures of a country considered a model of development by Western aid agencies. In examining the structural basis upon which the genocide was built, Uvin draws attention to the role of development aid in the process of inequality, exclusion, and humiliation that characterized social and economic life in Rwanda in the period leading up to the genocide. He argues that development aid ignored and reinforced these characteristics of social violence.

Uvin begins by challenging some of the now standard explanations for the genocide in Rwanda — explanations such as the effects of prevailing economic and political crisis, the invasion by the Rwandan Patriotic Front, the international pressure to democratize, the hate propaganda, and the role

of the militia. All these, he argues, tell us nothing about the deeper social basis on which the processes of manipulation and radicalization rest. It is in a bid to better understand the social basis of the genocide that Uvin turns to the role played by the international community, and development aid in particular. Uvin contends that the role of the international community was, at worst, ambivalent and, at best, contradictory. On the one hand, there were laudable moves by Tanzania and others in the West to bring about peace and democratization while, on the other hand, there was increased military and diplomatic support from countries like France.

In many ways, *Aiding Violence* bears some interesting similarities with Ferguson's study on Lesotho. For one, both Lesotho and Rwanda could be said to represent models of developmentalism gone awry. But more striking is how both works demonstrate the often "anti-political" nature of the development enterprise in Africa. In the case study he examines in Lesotho, Ferguson argues that what the development project so effectively did — besides not meeting its stated goals — was to become "an anti-politics machine; depoliticizing everything it touches, everywhere working political realities out of sight" (xv). The development project in Lesotho was carried on in complete denial of the prevailing political realities with the effect that social and political contradictions soon emerged, contradictions to which the project could not adequately respond.

Uvin makes the same point in the case of Rwanda. On the role of the World Bank in the period leading up to the genocide, he points out that the Bank failed to take into account the political crisis facing Rwanda and "acted in traditional fashion, as if politics did not exist" (59). The Structural Adjustment Program prescribed for Rwanda was to be implemented while the country was facing unprecedented economic crisis and simultaneously going through a civil war and a democratic transition. In the same way, throughout the period of sporadic violence and militarization leading up to the genocide, the aid community "largely continued business as usual as if oblivious of the challenges facing Rwandese society" (86). These are pertinent observations.

However, like Ferguson's *Anti-Politics Machine*, this book is deficient in the area of proffering solutions and exploring alternatives. Given the evident flaws of the development enterprise in Africa so clearly outlined in these books, what development options are there to be explored? Uvin also fails adequately to address the classic response of development workers to criticisms of their work. They argue that agencies working in developing countries delve into local politics at their own peril since the politicization of development projects may alienate national governments and imply interventions that are politically unacceptable to them (see Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard, eds. *International Development and the Social Sciences* [London: 1997]). The task of constructively addressing these legitimate responses remains the present challenge of the development discourse if it must transcend the specter of mere "development project bashing." There is now a need to go beyond identifying what is wrong and why, to positively

asserting how such developmental constraints can be better addressed in the future. In all, however, *Aiding Violence* provides useful insights into the workings of the development enterprise in Africa and makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the global dialectics of developmentalism.

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Susan Reynolds Whyte. *Questioning Misfortune: The Pragmatics of Uncertainty in East Uganda*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. 258 pp.

This text, which summarizes twenty-five years of fieldwork, is the first ethnographic account of the people of Bunyole County, East Uganda. Susan Reynolds Whyte reveals rich details of Nyole marital patterns, family structure, morality, history, subsistence strategies, and values, all of which are based on results of household surveys in two communities, case records from the local courthouse, accounts of about three hundred divinations and therapeutic rituals performed by local diviners, participant observation in health related events, funerals, offerings, and countless formal and informal interviews.

Whyte's discussion of the Nyole's pragmatics and strategies to alleviate suffering is organized into ten chapters subsumed in four sections. The section titles are: "An uncertain world," "What you cannot see: the revelations of spirits," "You will know me: The opacity of humans," and "The Pragmatics of uncertainty." In the first section, Whyte captures readers' attention with the riveting case of a woman possessed by a spirit — shaking, groaning, and speaking strangely; she then traces and analyzes the efforts of family members and neighbors to address the afflicted woman's suffering. In opening this case to the intellectual gaze, Whyte focuses on her primary theoretical premise, that Nyole strategies for help-seeking are best understood as a quest for hope in a life filled with misfortune and uncertainty. Thus, Whyte explains Bunyole visits to sorcerers, health centers, religious diviners, as well as their sacrifices to ancestors and others in the spirit realm, as rituals to negotiate the unknowable into a more knowable framework.

Whyte's explanation of Nyole behavior is grounded in the works of John Dewey, an American pragmatist, who theorized that uncertainty is unavoidable in human affairs, but the work of humans is to hedge against it, through the use of their social experience to organize it and of their agency to modify its profound ambiguity.

The three subsequent sections describe the "idioms," or three local explanations, of the cause of misfortunes: the symptomatic idiom, the