



Review

Reviewed Work(s): *Merchant Capital and the Roots of State Power in Senegal, 1930-1985* by Catherine Boone

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In perhaps the most insightful section of the book (Chapter 4), Blunt and Jones include a discussion of the recent research on leadership and its relationship to management. Leadership differs from management in that effective organizations benefit from acts of individual leadership. A leader provides and communicates to others a vision of what an organization should be. In so doing, the leader brings change, while the manager brings consistency, control, and order to complexity. Since an individual rarely exhibits both leadership and managerial abilities, there is a need to build leadership teams combining the best leaders and managers.

Blunt and Jones then draw a cautionary picture of the predominant management style in African organizations – authoritarian, inward-looking, risk-averse, and lacking appreciation for organizational objectives and performance. This portrayal of the current state of leadership and management style in Africa contrasts sharply with both the urgent need of organizations to adopt a strategic approach and the key role played by leaders and managers in strategic management.

While the remaining sections address various aspects of organization and management such as managing the work setting, managing change and conflict, and managing and developing people, the discussion ultimately focuses on how best to provide management training and education that reconciles a top-down, cautious, and inward-looking approach to management with the need for a more participatory, collaborative, strategic, and outward-looking one. The need to develop African organizations as “learning communities,” which manage change through the on-the-job experiences of individual managers, is also emphasized.

For scholars and practitioners this is a useful text. The many references to the literature will be helpful for those who wish to heed the authors’ call for more empirical research on African organizations. A major weakness of the book is the authors’ over-emphasis on state-managed organizations. Increasingly, private sector and non-governmental organizations in Africa are assuming the burden of development tasks.

Michele Garrity

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Catherine Boone, *Merchant Capital and the Roots of State Power in Senegal, 1930-1985*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 299 pp.

At the heart of Catherine Boone’s fine study of the Senegalese political economy is a history of the Senegalese textile industry. It is good economic history – well-argued and based on solid research – occupying less than a fourth of the book, largely because Boone is forced to ask larger questions. The textile industry expanded rapidly in the 1960s and 1970s and was seen as the leading industry within Senegal’s industrial development plans. Then it collapsed in the 1980s. Boone asks why a deepening and expansion of capital did not take place. Senegal had, after all, political stability, good economic planning, a favourable location, and was attractive to French textile capital. Also, it viewed industrialization as a way out of poverty.

To answer the question, Boone describes the development of the Senegalese political economy. Senegal inherited an economy from the French in which most wealth was produced by peasant peanut cultivators and extracted either as taxes or as profit in

a trading economy. In the years after independence, Senegal faced two sometimes contradictory priorities: consolidation of power and stimulation of economic growth. Boone argues that consolidation of power and the demands of a new ruling class took precedence over economic development. The problem was that the state's ability to reward rising social groups rested on forms of authority rooted in peasant society and precapitalist modes of production. The textile industry was vulnerable, because it was inefficient, used old equipment, and depended heavily on protection; nevertheless, it was profitable as long as tariff walls were effective. Massive smuggling and customs fraud subsequently destroyed it. The state was unable to make good on its commitments to capital, because it depended increasingly on the very groups that profited from smuggling and fraud.

Boone does not, however, limit herself to Senegal. She structures the book as a case study in the theory of the post-colonial state. The ultimate question is why some states are able to promote capitalist development, while others are not. It is particularly relevant, given the crisis that bedevils much of Africa in the 1990s and the contrast between African and Asian economic performance. "The answer," she argues, "lies in the character, dynamics, and production requirements of the social formation as a whole" (254). It was crucial that industrial capital was external and that within an independent Senegal, wealth was still largely extracted from the countryside as rent and as mercantile profit. Boone contends that states differ and that scholars must examine the social base of each state.

She deals with a number of other questions, for example, the heritage of France's colonial system of protection, the effect of political balkanization, the limitations of an import-substitution strategy behind tariff walls, and reliance on expatriate capital. French textile companies invested in Senegal not to reduce costs of production, which remained high, or to develop an export economy, but to maintain their access to Senegalese markets. It is typical of neo-colonial strategies in French Africa that Senegal made no effort to force the textile companies to either train Senegalese executives or collaborate with Senegalese entrepreneurs. But this meant that there was no Senegalese industrial bourgeoisie, and when the crunch came, the textile companies lacked the clout of the local elites. Boone also handles the notion of class and the African bourgeoisie well. She understands that ruling classes never have a central committee, but are made up of competing groups involved in a constant struggle for wealth and power.

This brief summary cannot do justice to the subtlety of her argument. Boone writes lucidly and deals clearly with the complexities of theory. Her knowledge of the data is excellent. It is rare that I review a book on Senegal without quibbling with some point or other. This book's conclusions are, however, distressing. They suggest continued economic stagnation for many African states, including Senegal, for which both Boone and I have a very deep affection.

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