

mends "for economics to be relevant to economies, development economists should stop acting as advocates for very specific models of economic development" (p 131). Put differently: the 'one size fits all' approach econometrics often at least implicitly seem to advocate, at times combined with a scent of Eurocentric bias (in the sense that 'learning from history' tends to be misunderstood as learning from European history), is of little use and rather damaging.

Four chapters, embedded in a substantial introduction and conclusion, are able to summarise Jerven's game-changing *oeuvre* so far in an easy reading manner, which is also understood by those not familiar with the economic jargon. At times slightly redundant or repetitive in its eagerness to hammer home his valid points of criticism, he manages to use good examples to point at the weaknesses of the hegemonic state of the art, all too often marred by flawed models and evidence. By doing so, Jerven manages to competently give voice to concerns many others share. Alex de Waal posted on the 'African Arguments' web site (24 June 2015) a euphoric review, concluding that this book "is a charter for liberating African economic policymaking from the tyranny of econometricians".

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Williams, Christian A, *National Liberation in Postcolonial Southern Africa. A Historical Ethnography of SWAPO's Exile Camps.* New York: Cambridge University Press 2015, 2015, xviii & 259 pp.

This fascinating study presents insights into the realities of the camps under the administration and control of SWAPO of Namibia since the mid 1960s until Independence in 1989/90, at locations in Tanzania (Kongwa), Zambia (the Old Farm, Oshatotwa and Nyango) and Angola (Cassinga and Lubango). It builds on a long engagement of the author with these sites of struggle, survival, and — unfortunately and sadly so — violent deaths (both through barbaric attacks by South Africa as in the case of the Cassinga massacre, but also by atrocities committed by SWAPO 'securocrats' and willful executors against rank and file members). Field research undertaken included visits to some of these sites (and sharing hitherto

unknown visual documentation of what is visibly left at some of these locations as well as earlier photos). Even more importantly, however, this revised PhD thesis (of which parts were also published in several journal articles) presents in-depth interviews with those exposed to these realities. A particular focus is thereby on the repressive aspects of camp life and the dramas unfolding against perceived 'dissidents' or 'traitors' in various intensities at different times, leading to massive violation of human rights (including detention in dungeons, torture and execution) of numerous Namibians in exile rather arbitrarily accused of being South African agents and forced into 'confessions' and implicating others in what at times was tantamount to a witch hunt.

The author thereby seeks to voice "stories about a shared past" to "address important temporal dimensions of how the region's recent past and present relate to one another" (p 18). In adding to the critical reflections on the limits to liberation, he seeks to emphasise, "more fluid processes of social construction that move back and forth over time and whose future outcomes remain uncertain" (p 19). This is considered as an effort to overcome what he considers as an implicit dichotomy dividing the colonial and the postcolonial periods into two distinct phases. Camps for him are a suitable reference point, since these are "caught in national narratives that both reflect camps in the past and that shift as people articulate camp histories in the present. These sites are worthy, therefore, of more sustained attention" (*ibid*).

One wonders, however, if such perspective is indeed applicable in a similar degree beyond the Namibian case for South Africa or any other of the states governed by former liberation movements in political power. The specific Namibian camp history, with more than 40 000 Namibians in exile from less than 1.5 million people has certainly left marks until today and emerged as an integral part of the national discourse in different, at times contradicting ways. Several more recent studies have convincingly testified to this — most prominently Martha Akawa, who gives particular voice to a gendered perspective and adds an important dimension to the work by Williams.¹⁾ But exposure to camp experiences as an integral part of exile structures seems to be much less prominent and relevant in South Africa. Though maybe — while Suttner²⁾ and Trehwela³⁾ have already provided related insights combining underground work and mobilisation (and repression) in exile as constituting parts of a democratic South Africa⁴⁾ — this is only an indication that a similar study to that of Williams on the Namibian case is still missing.

Williams reconstructs through narratives and archival studies the

realities of these camps and their impact mainly on those exposed to authoritarian structures and oppressive treatment. While this is done until now not in such elaborate and detailed way, it nevertheless leaves doubt to which extent this is — as claimed by the author — indeed a qualitative new perspective compared to earlier works, which give voice to these people. Rather, the historical ethnography of camps seems more to reinforce in detail earlier critical contributions than to take these to higher levels of agency.⁵⁾ Such initial claim by Williams is not convincingly followed by the detailed descriptions. The insight that, "camps were simultaneously producing new power relations that were pulling the nation apart, utilizing and refracting the very categories through which colonial regimes had divided their subjects" (p 220) rather enriches and reinforces earlier critical analyses on the limits to liberation through more personal/individual evidence presented than adding substantial new perspectives beyond earlier accounts recorded and accessible. This observation does, however, in no way reduce the value of the insights and evidence presented. By stressing "the spy" metaphor and its function in the repressive structures, he explains how "the hierarchical social order of camp life made those on its bottom rungs highly vulnerable. ... There was generally no place for appealing to personally held moral values or rights in resisting camp authorities' commands" (p 127).

Williams indeed manages to document "how things in and around liberation movement camps may order the structure of a nation. Camp aid delivery, spatial control, and knowledge production ... provided powerful mechanisms through which SWAPO's emerging national elite asserted its authority to represent Namibians during its exile years" (p 122). This again might underline the specificity of the Namibian case (where SWAPO was considered and treated as "the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people"), but is a relevant additional contribution to the better understanding of the hegemonic role SWAPO continues to play without substantial challenges in Namibian society even 26 years into Independence (with some of those among the first 'struggle generation' still occupying the commanding heights). For Williams, "camps administered by SWAPO and Southern Africa's other exiled liberation movements are not merely places where people once lived and that have now been incorporated into one or another national history. Rather, they are a kind of space in and around which these histories have been produced, structuring knowledge and mediating relationships among a nation's citizens. Through their considerable control over camps, national elites have affirmed this form of community and protected their interests.

And yet, camps' relationship to nation and history may be utilized to critique national forms of knowledge and to open new opportunities for dialogue and recognition" (p 227f).

Namibia, as this study through a vast body of resources utilised convincingly documents, is a case in point *par excellence*, which might serve as a motivation and invitation to test if this is the case to a similar degree in other Southern African countries governed by former liberation movements.

Endnotes

1. Akawa, M (2014), *The Gender Politics of the Namibian Liberation Struggle*. Basel: Basler Afrika Bibliographien.
2. Suttner, R (2008), *The ANC Underground in South Africa to 1976. A Social and Historical Study*. Auckland Park: Jacana.
3. Trehwela, P (2009), *Inside Quatro: Uncovering the Exile History of the ANC and SWAPO*. Auckland Park: Jacana 2009.
4. Williams misses the opportunity to introduce Suttner's insights as reinforcing aspects for some of his arguments. But his case remains strong enough.
5. Williams makes detailed reference to several personal accounts of those who were victims of the repressive structures, including most prominently and importantly the books by Keshii Nathanael and Samson Ndeikwila, as well as the unpublished accounts by the late Salatiel Ailonga, but misses out on the relevant additional insights by Beukes, H (2014), *Long Road to Liberation. An Exiled Namibian Activist's Perspective*. Johannesburg: Porcupine Press.

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Southall, Roger, *The New Black Middle Class in Southern Africa*. Auckland Park: Jacana 2016, xix & 296 pp.

According to figures recently presented by a research project at the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) at the University of Cape Town, South Africa's population classified as middle class increased from 12.8 per cent in 1993 to 16.6 per cent in 2012. Two-thirds of these are categorised as 'black' (Indian, Coloured,