

Chapter Five engages with the spatialisation of the plantation and forms of life that are entangled within everyday relationships, modes of composing labour, calories, policies, markets and calculations. These *plantation analytics* are constituted within a set of distinct historical and spatial referents. What Cousins calls the ‘vicinal politics of repair’ accounts for the ways in which living is made possible in the context of plantation labour within which *amandla* expresses the capacity to navigate particular histories of cartographic violence and an enlivened politics of life.

This is not a book about repair work. It is much more than that. Resisting a singular definition, the book sensitises the reader to the work of repair as the capacity to contain, to receive, to act, to know, to produce, to make. Capacity is both situated action and an engagement with the multiplicity of topological forms that bear down on the question of what it means to live in a postcolonial scene set in the context of a timber plantation. In these terms, *amandla* is that which is required in, and emerges from, the ordinary work of repair. Ultimately the concept of *amandla* points to the conditions of possibility for forging persons as ethical actors in a particular postcolonial zone of labour and extraction.

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## **Democracy and Nigeria’s Fourth Republic: Governance, Political Economy, and Party Politics 1999–2023**

**edited by Wale Adebani.**

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*Democracy and Nigeria’s Fourth Republic* provides a comprehensive critique of Nigeria’s Fourth Republic (1999–), the longest democratic dispensation that Nigeria has enjoyed since gaining political independence in 1960. Before 1999, Nigeria was mostly governed by successive military regimes, except the first six years (1960–1966) of its independence (The First Republic), a brief return to democratic government, 1979–83 (The Second Republic) and a botched Third Republic (1993). The Fourth Republic therefore offers a longevity that creates opportunity for a more detailed assessment of the principles, practices, and consolidation of democracy in Africa’s most populous nation.

*Democracy and Nigeria's Fourth Republic* takes advantage of this unique opportunity in its robust assessment and profoundly insightful analysis of Nigeria's democracy or 'semi-democracy' according to Larry Diamond, one of the contributors.

Nigeria's Fourth Republic warrants a critical study. As Wale Adebaniwi, the editor of the volume rightly notes, the Fourth Republic has 'lasted more than two decades, despite continued worries about democratic viability and stability in Nigeria' (p. 6). The durability of Nigeria's Fourth Republic is both puzzling and promising. Despite the enormous security and developmental challenges that the Nigerian state faces since 1999, democratic government has remained and enjoyed successive change of governments that includes the wresting of power from an incumbent in 2015. Apparently, democracy in Nigeria is alive but unwell. Nigeria's democracy is hanging on a thread or *Dancing on the Brink* as aptly described by John Campbell, a former US Ambassador to Nigeria. The contributors to this volume agree with this assessment as they weave a complex story of a country with huge potential but unfulfilled goals.

Wale Adebaniwi assembles a coveted team of 18 Nigerian and non-Nigerian scholars and analysts with deep knowledge of Nigeria and all its intricacies. It begins with a foreword from Kayode Fayemi, a scholar-activist-turned-politician and former Governor of Ekiti State (2010–14; 2018–22) and ends with an afterword from Larry Diamond, a professor of Political Science and Sociology at Stanford University. In between Fayemi's foreword, Adebaniwi's introduction and Diamond's afterword are 13 chapters that are divided into four parts. Part one contains three chapters that focus on the broad categorisation of democracy and the Nigerian state. Eghosa Osaghae, Rotimi Suberu and Browne Onuoha delve into the issues of political elites and ethnic mobilisation, federalism, constitutional reform and political structuring, and the continued impact of the legacy of military rule on Nigeria's democracy respectively. In part two, titled Party Politics, the Presidency and the International Community, five chapters present different dimensions of Nigeria's political system including the inner workings of political parties and its negative impact on democratic consolidation. In part three, Sarah Burns and Olly Owen challenge the popular categorisation of Nigeria as an oil-dependent state (arguing that Nigeria's revenue has been less dependent on oil revenue for some years), while Eyene Okpanachi critiques the economic reforms that have been carried out by each of the presidents and their impact on human development. In the final part, the last three chapters deal with the electoral reforms, the transformation of civil society, particularly its relationship with politics and the prevalence of communal conflicts including the prospect of developing a local peace infrastructure.

Undeniably, *Democracy and Nigeria's Fourth Republic* is a significant scholarly piece of work that provides its readers a rich understanding of the history, growth and/or decline as well as the prospect and limitations of democracy in Nigeria. The book's weakness is not in what is said but what is left unsaid. This includes but is not limited to the critical role that the intellectual elites themselves have played in validating, perpetuating and sustaining Nigeria's

deformed democracy. Other deserving elements and frame of analysis including gender (or women), the youth and the educational institutions and systems have been left untreated. But, by-and-large, this book provokes a deep reflection on the utility of liberal democracy and its nuanced manifestations in different socio-political environments. The success (or otherwise) of democracy in Nigeria has a profound implication for the continent. Despite the negative trends observable in the democratic practices in the last twenty plus years, *Democracy and Nigeria's Fourth Republic* offers a glimpse of hope. According to Larry diamond 'The only option to save Nigeria from catastrophe is to transform the Fourth Republic into a real democracy' (p. 339).

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## **Apartheid's Leviathan: Electricity and the Power of Technological Ambivalence**

**by Faeza Ballim,  
Athens, Ohio 45701: Ohio University Press, 2023. Pp. 159.**

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In her first book, *Apartheid's Leviathan*, Faeza Ballim has not written a conventional history of socio-technical development under apartheid and democratic era. Instead, Ballim uses the development of a coal mine and two coal-fired power stations to explore the complex relationship between the state and state corporations, and how this relationship influenced and shaped the development of the Waterberg region. Ballim's analysis starts with the premise that the state and state corporations have an ambivalent and contradictory relationship that can be described 'as both autonomous and immersive' (p. 2). The two state corporations under the spotlight are electricity utility Eskom and steel manufacturer Iscor.

The book is divided into two distinct periods and unfolds over six main chapters, excluding the introductory and concluding chapters. Starting from the 1960s, the relationship between state corporations and the state are explored throughout successive governments with distinct political goals and priorities. In her exploration of this relationship, Ballim highlights the single most enduring feature of state corporations, their flexibility and ability to adapt and reflect the unique socio-political demands (Clark 1994).

Chapter 1 analyses Iscor's exploitation of the Waterberg coalfields, which occurred at a time when the supply of coking coal required to meet its