

# Cahiers d'Études africaines

Issue **230** • 2018

## Photographies contestataires, usages contestés

*Contestatory Photographs, Contested Usages*—Through its use in colonial contexts, photography in Africa has been an instrument of scientific commodification, population and identity control as well as a means of coercion through images. What is photography's role today in acts of protest, resistance and emancipation? Half-torn, effaced, barely legible, figures from the past re-emerge through retouched, recomposed images, staged and mobilized for struggles in the present tense. This issue takes account of the extraordinary malleability of photographic materials. In this digital age, a growing need to re-appropriate historic images is expressed through multiple forms of re-circulation, re-use, and transformation, often in contradiction with the intentions of their original producers.

### CONTENTS

Images à rebours: relire les histoires officielles • **É. Nimis & M. Nur Goni**

Photographies de Samori Touré: de la carte postale coloniale aux pochettes de vinyles. Le devenir d'une icône • **E. Bertho**

Searching for the Origin(al): On the Photographic Portrait of the Mouride Sufi Saint Amadou Bamba • **G. Paoletti**

Sur quelques images de chefs baoulé. La photographie en guerre (Côte d'Ivoire, 1893-1910) • **F. Viti**

Des femmes « évoluées » pour une nouvelle Nation (Côte d'Ivoire, 1964) • **L. Barré**

The Dynamics of Context. Reflections on the Changing Meanings of Sam Nzima's 16 June 1976 Photograph • **F. Mando**

Exhuming Apartheid: Photography, Disappearance and Return • **K. Thomas**

Performing the Historical Moment: Nadia Seboussi's *Hidad* • **S. Petty**

The Struggle Complex: Facebook, Visual Critique and the Tussle for Political Power in Nigeria • **G. E. Agbo**

Countering Political Narratives through Nairaland Meme Pictures • **D. Dike**

Des photographies de *Vazaha* en révolte. Une autre facette de mars 1947 à Madagascar • **H. Rajoanarison**



Revue *Cahiers d'Études africaines*, n° 230  
ISBN 978-2-7132-2742-4  
18 € • 284 pages

### Editorial office

EHESS  
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75006 Paris - France  
Tel.: 01 53 10 54 69  
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### Journal sales

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Diffusion France: CDE  
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Dossier #04

## The Pitfalls of African Statistics

To understand African countries' economic performance, international institutions and most economists focus their attention on growth statistics, particularly GDP. Norwegian economic historian Morten Jerven sparked much discussion with *Poor Numbers* (2013), arguing that most of these statistics are arbitrary or distorted. Yet the most prominent analysts still rely on these shaky foundations to discuss the performance of African economies and to make predictions. Without challenging Jerven's conclusions, several economists and economic historians working in the Francophone world have questioned how they should be interpreted. The statistics are wrong, but could it be otherwise? Can we really expect national statistics to reflect reality, particularly in developing countries? Isn't it equally interesting to use sociological or ethnographic methods to examine how these statistics are compiled and to draw lessons about the workings of the countries in question and the international institutions they are accountable to?

### Our selection:

Agnès Labrousse, Boris Samuel, and Sara Randall.

And also: Nicolas van de Walle, Carlos Oya, Morten Jerven, Vincent Bonnecase, Sarah Fichtner.

**Carte blanche** given to Carlos Oya.



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Éditions EHESS, 2017

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Distributed by Cambridge University Press (Cambridge/New York) — Legal deposit: 2017  
no. 4, October-December 2016

Printed in the UK by Bell & Bain Limited  
ISSN: 2398-5682 (English edition in print), 2268-3763 (English edition online)



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