Muhammad Ali's modernization policies, created a class of modern intellectuals known as the *effendiyya*. These individuals are defined by their education, professions, modern thinking, and Western attire and lifestyle. In essence, this modernized elite, reflecting Enlightenment values, drove the modernization and nationalism projects in ways that were beyond the involvement of other social groups.

The importance of this work will be appreciated at many levels, including in relation to the exclusionary nature of Egyptian nationalism and the multiple layers of colonialism. By analysing novels about the Egyptian revolutions through the lens of the Bildungsroman, Mahmoud has contributed to the study of modern Egypt and its literature. Her analysis sheds light on different attitudes in the novels to British civilizational narratives and the unique roles of female characters as mentors to male protagonists. Her study opens up possibilities for further research in this field.

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Annalena Kolloch, *Faire la magistrature au Bénin: Careers, Self-Images and Independence of the Beninese Judiciary (1894–2016)*. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag (pb €59.80 – 978 3 89645 847 6). 2022, 248 pp.

Thomas Bierschenk and Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan are well known to Anglophone readers for their anthropologies of the African state. Their approaches have, however, inspired important detailed studies in French and German that will be less familiar. This translation of Annalena Kolloch's ethnography of the Beninese judiciary is, therefore, particularly welcome.

As Bierschenk notes in his preface, *Faire la magistrature* belongs squarely to a 'Mainz tradition of ethnographically grounded and non-normative research on African "states at work"' (p. 13). It thus sets itself against a static 'culturalist trap', analysing the dynamic interplay between formal institutions, informal cultural settings and (unpropitious) material circumstances (p. 16). And it identifies the 'practical norms' that emerge when bureaucrats (here judges) must 'find their way' (*se débrouiller*), navigating irreconcilable imperatives (p. 22).

Kolloch's starting point is a wave of strikes by Benin's judges and prosecutors between 2012 and 2014. She was 'amazed' by these protests. During fieldwork for her master's degree (in 2009), a 'good judge' was always described as detached from politics and public life (p. 19). They would never have eaten in judicial robes, let alone wear them to march through the streets. Field (2015) and archival (2017) research for her doctorate helped her explain this dramatic turn of events. Kolloch argues that it resulted from the increasing impossibility of reconciling judges' ideals and

self-images with the reality of their work. Judicial training and symbolism strongly reinforced an *esprit de corps* among magistrates, and produced an ideal of a judiciary set apart from society and independent from external pressures. (Their robes are custom-made at the *Maison Bosc* in Paris at an astonishing cost of 600,000 CFA francs (approximately €1,000) each. Some magistrates have gone on strike when offered cheaper Beninese alternatives (p. 159).) Yet this ideal comes under stress when they and their families are solicited at home by litigants and their relatives, when politicians intervene in sensitive cases (most notably by favouring punitive transfers to the interior) or when the average magistrate is responsible for a dizzying 618 cases at any one time (pp. 106, 127–8, 131).

The specific timing of strikes is partly explained by Kolloch's analysis of judicial 'generations' (a usage she associates with Mannheim) as reflected in carefully traced individual career paths. A first generation (1960–72) was trained wholly in France. A second (1972–89/90) entered the profession during 'people's justice' under the socialist regime of Mathieu Kérékou. They experienced this period 'almost traumatically' since it involved 'deprofessionalisation', judges eventually sitting alongside lay judges and having to wear new robes in national colours (pp. 72–3). A third generation (1990–2003) joined a judiciary hit hard by austerity and structural adjustment. Wages were low and recruitment frozen. Twenty-two male judges were eventually convicted of corruption in a major expenses scandal (pp. 79, 165). (Kolloch provides a particularly interesting account of the relatively higher social status and family incomes of female judges, which may have shielded them from such pressures and temptations (pp. 100–4).) A fourth generation (from 2004) benefited from much improved salaries and conditions that were largely the result of donor initiatives in the wake of this scandal (pp. 123–4). Kolloch's suggestion, in short, is that it was this fourth generation that was instrumental in the leadership and organization of recent strikes. Their orientation towards (donor-driven) 'global norms of the rule of law' favoured demands for both judicial independence and salaries comparable with other West African countries (p. 199). The recruitment freeze of the austerity period, meanwhile, had ensured that many of this generation had spent years after university working in different sectors while waiting for their judicial training to begin. They thus acquired a 'different perception of the state, its role and its duties' than that which had shaped preceding generations, more thoroughly socialized in the judiciary (p. 199).

This is the kind of compelling conclusion that only emerges from patient ethnographic research. Kolloch certainly immersed herself in the context, living with judicial families (at one point together with her own husband and children), conducting 121 interviews, attending hearings, filling out birth certificates and even being sworn in as a court interpreter (pp. 27–30, 139). She also, unusually, pays careful attention to the relevant legislative framework, demonstrating how formal rules have important practical consequences. Formal guarantees of independence, for example, have allowed judges much greater control over their time than prosecutors (pp. 27, 102). That this method produces a 'clear bias' in favour of judges and their own perspectives is frankly admitted (p. 167). Contrasts with other judges' strikes elsewhere in West Africa in the same period are perhaps, however, hastily drawn (pp. 197–8). Some combination of demands for better pay, greater independence and indignation

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0001972024000883 Published online by Cambridge University Press

at corruption allegations does seem to have motivated similar action in Burkina Faso, Togo, Gabon, Mali and Ghana. Nonetheless, this valuable addition to the literature is certainly recommended for law and society scholars and anthropologists of African states.

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Maria Abranches, *Food Connections: Production, Exchange and Consumption in West African Migration*. New York NY: Berghahn Books (hb US$135/£99 – 978 1 80073 372 5). 2022, 192 pp.

While there is a growing body of (anthropological) examinations of human migration and, more recently, food systems, the two are rarely brought together. Both, however, are central aspects of people's lifeworlds that should not be considered as separate spheres.

Maria Abranches' *Food Connections: production, exchange and consumption in West African migration* successfully combines the two in a multi-sited study focusing on how food connects migrants from Guinea-Bissau in Portugal to their homeland. The transnational ties underlying the movement of people and materials, such as food and plants, form tight social and economic relations. The book carefully examines how food practices of the present, such as consumption, production, trading, sending, receiving, gifting, selling and sharing of food, kindle imaginations of the future through memories and stories of the past.

Theoretically, Abranches builds upon Kalpana Ram and Christopher Houston's definition of phenomenology as 'an investigation of how humans perceive, experience, and comprehend the sociable, materially assembled world that they inherit at infancy and in which they dwell'.[1] Bridging this understanding with foundational anthropological concepts leads her to introduce the *phenomenology of food and migration*. Herein, the joint analysis of food and migration in everyday lived experiences and practices is possible.

The examined processes can be traced back to two brothers in the early 1990s who established the still existing close link between the two (physical) locations. This happened mainly out of the necessity to provide homeland food for Guinean migrant workers in Lisbon. This exchange of foodstuffs goes far beyond mere economic aspirations. How it involves many aspects of people's livelihoods on either side becomes evident in the five chapters of this beautifully written ethnographic monograph.

[1] K. Ram and C. Houston (eds) (2015) *Phenomenology in Anthropology: a sense of perspective.* Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, p. 1.