and resulted in the new possibilities being fashionable through enjoying some control over the color and style of their coverings.

In the sixth chapter, José van Santen explores the change in women’s veiling practice during their life course is explored. The chapter focuses on the influence of pilgrimage to Mecca, the hajj, on the veiling of Cameroonian women, as many women dress differently after the hajj. It is argued that veiling differently is an assertion of her presence in Mecca and that she is no longer the same person.

Hauwas Mahdi’s chapter seven argues how hijab is controlled by the state and how politics and codes of veiling are intertwined in Nigeria. Although the cause for veiling seems to have multiple reasons in Nigeria, such as being descent, being like others, avoiding evil men attentions, etc. it is argued that the hijab “represents an underlying power game seen in the workplace and in political decision making” (p. 166). The eighth chapter, by Peri Leemm, deals with the recently adoption of veil among Oromo refugees living in Eastleigh, Kenya. The veiling which is a powerful symbol of disguise allows these women to go to nightclubs and other non-Muslim spaces undetected, to appear in public like rich Somali women, to escape prosecution, dress fashionably and to provide protection from Ethiopian agents. Amal Fadlalla’s ninth chapter examines the vulnerability of unveiled women in the Sudan.

Overall, Veiling in Africa represents a valuable perspective on a less investigated topic that could be very interesting and novel for Western audiences. And, finally, it should be mentioned that in addition to the general readers, this volume could be of interest of anthropologists, psychologists, and sociologists as well as students of these fields who are interested in both African studies and Islamic cultural practices.

Farid Pazhoohi, Independent Researcher, Iran


Benedetta Rossi, lecturer in African studies at University of Birmingham, has made an impressive contribution to the growing body of the literature focused on the history of development and non-governmental organizations in Africa (e.g., books and articles by Erica Bornstein, Frederick Cooper, Julie Hearn, and Gregory Mann among others). In this monograph, originally submitted as her dissertation at the London School of Economics in 2002, Rossi explores the relationship between the politics and ecology of Ader, a region of southern Niger, and the persistence of slavery and unfree labor from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the turn of the twenty-first century. By placing an analysis of modern development plans within the political and social history of Ader over the last two hundred years, she underlines the continuous influence of place, specifically the desert, on human relations in the Nigerien Sahel. Rossi, however, is no environmental determinist, as her monograph is filled with countless examples of Nigeriens overcoming the limitations placed on them by the desert.

At the heart of this book is a discussion about the central role that mobility has played in defining social relations in Ader since the nineteenth century. In precolonial times, the political authority of the two main Tuareg confederations of Ader—the northern Iwellemmeden Kel
Denneg and the southern Kel Gress—was predicated upon their ability to exert control over limited resources scattered over the desert by making them available to allies and subjects and limiting the access of enemies to them, a form of government Rossi calls “kinetocracy” (p. 11). The less mobile Nigeriens were, the more vulnerable they were to slavery and raids, so relatively immobile groups, such as the Hausa, would offer dependency to the Tuareg in exchange for protection and resources.

While the arrival of the French in Niger somewhat upset these precolonial political structures and social arrangements, the importance of mobility in the desert in the first half of the twentieth century persisted. Nigeriens migrated to avoid taxation, forced labor recruitment, and military conscription by the colonial state, to earn wages as migrant laborers in British Nigeria, and to shed their old identities as slaves. Despite this widespread shift from slavery to labor migration in Ader, many of the traditional social hierarchies remained because the impersonal colonial state did not guarantee the security and welfare of its dependents, and not all Nigeriens could migrate, highlighting the limited power of the French state and the incompatibility of its governing logic with the unruly desert landscape.

Following the rise of development initiatives in the 1940s, many Nigeriens (mainly men) continued to migrate seasonally to neighboring countries for work because it was their best option. Those who remained behind were mostly immobile poor women who only participated in development projects aimed at fighting desertification, like the Kieta Project in the 1980s, because they lived in villages on unproductive land, their husbands were long-distance labor migrants, and they desired access to food rations. Although these programs provided women with protection from hunger and dependence, many maintained good relations with former masters in case things should ever change. Like many Nigerien bureaucrats, these women did not participate in development because they wanted to contribute to rebuilding their nation or advance aid goals—it was in their own self-interest. Nonetheless, developmentalist discourses made it possible for political authorities to mobilize local labor after slavery and forced labor were no longer socially acceptable.

Rossi critiques development policies that have largely ignored this complicated historical reality, preferring to reduce the inhabitants of Ader to generic human beings waiting for intervention. She suggests that the most sensible aid objective would be to facilitate and properly regulate labor migration, but the developmentalist discourse of desertification focuses on the land and what it is capable of supporting rather than the function of mobility in southern Nigeriens’ lives. Also, like many other Africanists (e.g. Laura Hammond at the School of Oriental and African Studies), Rossi emphasizes the important role that remittances from abroad play in African society today.

Although Rossi’s book is well-organized, clearly written, and easily digested, this monograph could have benefitted from some minor editorial changes. Rossi’s liberal use of block quotations, including one quotation that spans four pages (pp. 155-58), can be a bit dizzying at times. With all of the foreign words and aid organizations zooming around its pages, however, this reader appreciated the inclusion of a glossary and a list of acronyms and abbreviations at the beginning of the book. The short note on the terminology of slavery and the name Ader was also a nice addition.
From Slavery to Aid successfully blends archival research with ethnographic fieldwork, making it an exceptional specimen of historical anthropology. By taking into consideration the experience of Tuareg nobility, emancipated slaves, colonial authorities, and project coordinators and volunteers in Ader, Rossi shows that the persistence of dependence in the Nigerien Sahel is a historically conditioned reality. Overcoming this situation requires coming to terms with this fact.

D. Dmitri Hurlbut, Boston University


This book attempts to demonstrate the importance of geographical perspectives in the analyses of emerging powers and to revitalize realist approaches in political geography. The author begins by pointing out that the geographical criterion as it is included in the definition of regional power highlights that geopolitics research is grounded in a misinterpretation of geography and regioness. In order to advance a geographical perspective on regional powers, the author indicates the importance of understanding how manmade and natural geographical factors existing in geographical space influence the economic and political relations of regional powers. The author indicates that in the contemporary period constructivism predominates in Political Geography but, however, argues that material structures in geographical space cannot be examined from a constructivist perspective; hence the need for a materialist perspective based on scientific realism: classical geopolitics, specifically realist geopolitics. The dimensions of classical geopolitics are spatial, functional, and longitudinal, thereby making it a suitable approach for explaining long-term patterns in international relations. The author acknowledges that not everything can be explained by geography, but geographical factors can be appropriate intervening variables explain many social phenomena that occur.

The choice of realist geopolitics is highly topical given that several contemporary approaches and theories of geopolitics lack clearly defined spheres of influence and disregard of geographical factors. The author formulates three hypotheses based on the relationship between geographical factors and policy options of regional powers. The geographical factors include location and geography, manmade material structures, and the sphere of influence of regional powers. The author tests these hypotheses in the context of South Africa as a regional power, justifying the use of the Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and Process Tracing methods of research.

The author examines the strengths and weaknesses of several approaches and theories that can be successfully used as frameworks to analyze geopolitics. The author’s choice of realist geopolitics is successfully operationalized and applied empirically to analyze the problem of the geopolitics of regional power in Southern Africa using manmade and natural geographical factors. By doing so successfully, the book demonstrates evidence of original work and significantly contributes to the knowledge and insight into the subject of the regional powers and geopolitics in developing regions.

The author is very familiar with the academic literature on political geography particularly geopolitics at the theoretical level and at the empirical (case study) level. This is evident in as far