

Ghana Drama Studio. Despite this funding, Sutherland did not compromise on crafting a Ghanaian aesthetic based on African storytelling, which she called Anansegoro.

The volume covers what it calls 'theatre in the global South'. The global South is such a vast geographical expanse that fourteen chapters obviously will not cover it exhaustively. I would imagine that the goal was not to cover every space suggested by the epithet, but to record the activities of international organizations and aid agencies in a sample of countries. To that end, the volume succeeds, but it fails to satisfy the geographical space suggested by the title.

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doi: [10.1017/S0001972024000688](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0001972024000688)

Carola Lentz and Isidore Lobnibe, *Imagining Futures: Memory and Belonging in an African Family*. Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press (hb US\$90 – 978 0 2530 6021 1; pb US\$40 – 978 0 2530 6020 4). 2022, xvi + 296 pp.

Imagining Futures: Memory and Belonging in an African Family is a highly original and exciting book by fellow anthropologists Carola Lentz and Isidore Lobnibe about their shared extended family, which they belong to by adoption and birth respectively. Confirming the importance of mobility for West Africa's social history, they trace the trajectories of family members from northern Ghana and southern Burkina Faso around the turn of the twentieth century to Accra, Ouagadougou, Lagos, Germany and the USA in the first decades of the twenty-first century. The book's substantial introduction explains that the authors draw on interviews, fieldnotes and recordings collected over many decades as well as personal memories and insights. In addition to setting out the book's key arguments, it also highlights the challenges and difficulties that surrounded its production. This allows the book to make an important contribution to Ghanaian, and indeed West African, social history and historiography.

Central to the book are the lives, narratives and perspectives on the family life of members of different generations and occupations. Thus, we learn about Gabriel and Jonas, born into the family then living in northern Ghana and southern Burkina Faso around the turn of the twentieth century. While labour migration to southern Ghana in the 1920s and 1930s offered members of their generation the chance to assert their independence and see the world for themselves, most migration was seasonal and on return these men spent their lives close to the fathers and elders who controlled cattle and farmwork. But we also encounter their near-contemporary Anselmy, by his own reckoning the family's earliest convert to Christianity, whose work as a catechist, civil servant and politician allowed him and his wife Catherine to live at some distance from the extended family and to invest significant resources in the education of their children. The close, though occasionally prickly, relationships between Anselmy and his rural relatives, and the fact that the educational success of

Anselmy and Catherine's children has enabled them to take on a central role in family politics, challenges conventional understandings of family life as a distinct form of social practice. The authors show that, in the context of family life, differences between nuclear and extended families – and, by extension, between ostensibly modern and traditional forms of social life – are malleable and historically contingent.

Unlike their fathers and parents, the members of the next generation of family members often played down the contrast between rural family tradition and their urban or cosmopolitan experiences. When the mostly Christian and urban-based family members visited their ancestors' settlements and the family shrine in 2016, the non-Christian family priest assured them that this was compatible with Christianity. Similar dispositions are shared by urban and Christian family members. When Anselmy's son Paul was made a bishop, he chose an episcopal crest that seemed to many observers to refer to the family's pre-Christian spirituality. His contemporary, Sebastian, a retired academic and civil servant now living in Accra, conveys information about family traditions and experiences to the younger relatives he hosts and supports. Many of the films produced by their younger relative Stanislas (Stan) reflect a growing urban nostalgia for 'ancestral traditions'. The shift of perspectives within the family offers a distinct assessment of the social and religious transformations of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. At the same time, these representations are underpinned by highly individual and sometimes contradictory narratives about the past. This suggests that family does not necessarily provide an enduring positionality or perspective, but rather locates individuals in ongoing debates about the past that generate and reproduce a multiplicity of perspectives.

Finally, the book highlights that, as in many patrilineal societies, family history seems to be primarily attached to its male members. This point is illustrated by the fact that the book focuses largely on the male ancestors and members of the family, although views appear to have changed in recent decades. The acknowledgement of Catherine, Anselmy's wife, as 'a progressive matriarch' in her 2010 funeral programme points to the growing recognition of women in the context of family memory. Among the next generation, the family's singer and cultural organizer Mamili also draws strongly on Christian ideas and ideals. In a slightly different vein, the active participation of daughters and wives, as well as northern Ghanaian family friends, in the family gatherings at Sebastian's villa suggests that, in the urban context of Accra, family belonging is less dependent on patrilineal descent and more open to female agency, affiliation and cultural celebration. However, it remains unclear whether these changes will transform the imagination of family (again). When the idea for a family reunion was first embraced by the group from Accra, its members started to plan a homecoming event; however, the plan was rejected by family elders, who felt that they had not been properly consulted. Other family members then organized a different homecoming celebration that foregrounded more traditional forms of belonging.

The book's last chapter appropriately focuses on the 'unfinished business' associated with the production of this family history, and in particular the authors' desire to promote unity among their relatives. This last point is the reason many of the book's genealogical questions remain open, but it undoubtedly also influenced the decision not to foreground debates about gender or about the different cultural and racial identities of the authors and fellow family members. I very much hope that the authors will explore these questions in a different context. For now, however, they are to be congratulated for a book that

both showcases how family history illuminates the social history of Ghana and celebrates the achievements of a distinctive and yet in many ways exemplary family.

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doi: [10.1017/S000197202400069X](https://doi.org/10.1017/S000197202400069X)

Ifi Amadiume, *African Possibilities: A Matriarchitarian Perspective for Social Justice*. London: Zed Books (hb £20 – 978 1 3503 3380 2). 2024, 248 pp.

Ifi Amadiume's *African Possibilities: A Matriarchitarian Perspective for Social Justice* emerges as a critical text that interrogates the multifaceted dimensions of African societies, culture and identities. Published in 2024, this work continues Amadiume's trajectory of scholarly inquiry into African gender, literature and spirituality, building upon her earlier influential works such as *Male Daughters, Female Husbands* (1987) and *Re-Inventing Africa* (1997). In *African Possibilities*, Amadiume is concerned with the structural power of women in social and political processes. She delves into the epistemological and cultural transformations necessitated by Africa's colonial and postcolonial experiences, emphasizing the potential for African societies to reclaim women's traditional leadership structures through the application of relational matriarchal models.

The book is structured into three interconnected themes – 'Voicing', 'Alternatives' and 'Possibilities' – each addressing different aspects of African societies, particularly in Nigeria, South Africa and Senegal. Amadiume begins by contextualizing the historical disruptions caused by colonialism, which dismantled indigenous knowledge systems and social structures. She uses data from the 2022 World Economic Forum to highlight gender disparities in African economic, health, educational, labour and pay indexes, emphasizing the global nature of the gender gap. Her critique of the colonial imposition of rigid gender binaries and patriarchal structures sets the stage for exploring gender, culture, family and kinship relations in Africa.

A central feature of *African Possibilities* is the re-evaluation of gender roles in pre-colonial African societies, where gender was more fluid and egalitarian. Amadiume's overarching thesis argues for the recognition of a plurality of paradigms, which, in expanding social dynamism, makes room for a fluidity of cultural thought and a tolerance for difference. In her meditation on the merit of varied feminist thought, she introduces 'matriarchitarianism', a broad theory of the movement towards relational matriarchy and systemic gender complementarity.

Matriarchitarianism focuses on the dialectic of both the collective and the individual woman, while creating a language for the longstanding culture of matriarchy. It challenges patriarchal discourses and advocates for an egalitarian reconfiguration of society and state power. Amadiume explains further: