

for women's rights helped contribute to the bills' success in both New York and California. Markens makes the fascinating argument that geography might have played a role. While New York responded to the fallout from the Baby M custody case, California turned to *Johnson v. Calvert*. She convincingly demonstrates that the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times* skewed their coverage and editorials toward local events. Judges and legislators then took their cues from the biased coverage.

In sum, Markens has conducted an important and well-argued analysis of the debates surrounding surrogacy. *Surrogate Motherhood and the Politics of Reproduction* should generate animated discussions in courses examining reproduction, race, class, and gender, family, social movements, and the sociology of law.

Pillars of the Nation: Child Citizens and Ugandan National Development.
By Kristen E. Cheney. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. Pp. x+299. \$52.00 (cloth); \$21.00 (paper).

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Childhood is central to notions of nationalism and development, with children viewed as embodying a nation's future. Yet how do children experience this privileged status, given their relative powerlessness? And what role can children play in shaping national development? Kristen Cheney's engaging ethnography, *Pillars of the Nation*, addresses these questions through a compelling account of children's lives in Uganda. By foregrounding the voices of children, Cheney reveals how young Ugandans comprehend their status as the pillars of a nation that is undergoing rapid social change. This child-centered ethnography not only enhances our understanding of national development on the African continent but also demonstrates how children's lived experiences constitute broader social relations.

Children's subjectivity and agency are both key themes for Cheney. Throughout *Pillars of the Nation*, she focuses on how children comprehend and actively negotiate their identities—identities that lie at the intersection of global notions of children's rights, national development agendas, and local conceptions of childhood. Cheney convincingly demonstrates that a new space has emerged for Ugandan children to advocate for their rights to education, protection from abuse, and a prosperous future. Yet she also shows how the political-economic context constrains the lives of young Ugandans. Many of the children in this book remain caught between a discourse about the right to an ideal childhood and the grinding poverty that makes actualizing such a childhood so difficult.

Much of *Pillars of the Nation* draws on Cheney's ethnographic research

in two primary schools in the Ugandan capital, Kampala. In addition, she spent time in war-torn northern Uganda interviewing children who had been abducted by, and escaped from, the notorious rebel group the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Life histories of several children (age 10 to early teens) figure prominently in the book, and Cheney excels in eliciting these short but rich life stories. Her ability to establish a rapport with such young informants is evident, and her writing is most engaging when describing their complicated and often arduous lives.

The book is structured in two parts: the first half presents the main components of child citizenship, while the second half is composed of case studies detailing the challenges children encounter in their new roles as child citizens. Education, identity formation, and political socialization are the three major aspects of child citizenship discussed in part 1. At times, these chapters seem more a collection of themes than cohesive arguments, especially the chapter on education. The chapter on political socialization is the most compelling and incorporates fieldwork during the 2001 presidential election. Cheney mines these events for fascinating insights into the development of children's political consciousness, and she also captures the frustration children feel at being excluded from the political process.

The actualizations of child citizenship in the second half of the book move beyond Kampala primary schools to examine children's notions of village life, childhood in northern Uganda, and children's participation in a national music and dance competition. The chapter focusing on urban-rural dynamics is one of the book's best, and Cheney describes significant generational shifts in local perceptions of village life. Cheney's young, urban informants see the village as the repository of cultural authenticity, and this rooted ethnicity is central to their identities as Ugandan nationals. These views often conflict with their parents' concerns over the divisive potential of ethnic identity, something many of the parents witnessed firsthand during Uganda's bloody postindependence period.

To her credit, Cheney also addresses the conflict in northern Uganda, making clear the radical differences between children's lives in the northern and southern parts of the country. In what is the longest chapter of the book, she discusses the harrowing tales of two young people who managed to escape from the LRA. While not dismissive of the brutality of the LRA, Cheney situates their experiences in a broader critique of the underdevelopment of northern Uganda. Rehabilitation of former LRA abductees is noble and necessary, she argues, but promoting their right to an idealized childhood risks further marginalizing these children, given the chronic poverty and instability in northern Uganda.

Because children's rights figure so prominently in Cheney's analysis, this book could have benefited from a more focused discussion of the human rights literature, especially the long-standing debates over universalist and cultural relativist approaches to rights. Cheney navigates a course between these poles and remains focused on the intersection of

global rights discourse, national development strategies, and indigenous ideas of childhood. However, she could have more clearly specified her framework for understanding human rights in cultural context. Such a framework would have helped connect her discussion of children's rights to other important examples of Ugandans adapting universal human rights discourse, most notably with regard to women's rights within the vibrant Ugandan women's movement.

Pillars of the Nation is much more than a case study of childhood in an African setting. The book engages key sociological themes of nationalism, social change, and generational conflict—all through the lens of childhood. Cheney makes a strong case that children play an active role in constructing their social worlds and that their actions have important repercussions for adults as well. She also provides insight into the ways global norms of human rights circulate and take on meaning in a particular social context. While Cheney could have done more to develop these broader implications, *Pillars of the Nation* engages essential sociological issues, making clear that social relations in Africa should be considered well within the purview of the discipline.