The social and political life of identity papers in contemporary Africa

Editor's introduction

Séverine Awenengo Dalberto and Richard Banégas
Translated by Jessica Edwards

The refugee crisis has brought the issue of identification back to the forefront of public attention in Europe and elsewhere in the world. The *harragas*, or 'burners' of identity papers and borders, who try to make it to Lampedusa are required to register in the 'hotspots' that the European fortress has set up on its Mediterranean and now Saharan frontiers. Their fingerprints and biometric data are recorded by Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, so that under the Dublin regulation, European police forces can then send these migrants back to the country where they first left a trace of their stay, if not of their identity. In immigration offices and courts, asylum seekers are put through tests to assess their identity narratives, drawing the line between the entitled and the rest (Griffiths 2012; Beneduce 2015; Mazouz 2017). And the anonymous bodies of migrants wash up on Italian and Moroccan shores, prompting tireless efforts by certain activists to find out their names so that they might recover their dignity (Ritaine 2015; Kobelinsky 2019; A. Diallo in this volume). The fear of terrorist attacks in Europe has intensified the security-based obsession with vetting individuals and the surveillance of mobility, casting doubt on any document that could certify a person's legal identity—especially when they come from the Global South, and particularly Africa. In these hostile circumstances, African citizens moving about the world are more than ever associated with the archetypal figure of the undocumented migrant (Siméant 1998). Since the 2010s, the identification of individuals has become a key issue for the international and national programmes being deployed in Africa, at the crossroads of these security and migration objectives, but also of the demands of 'good governance' and 'development.' According to the World Bank, half of the continent's population has no legal identity and is consequently deprived of the most fundamental rights:[1] nationality, electoral and social citizenship, education, health, mobility, etc. In this context, the fast-tracked adoption of biometric identification technologies is seen as a solution to fill the 'identity

gap,' in place of the more traditional administrative techniques of the documentary state, civil registration in particular.

The international craze for biometrics is particularly strong in Africa and raises major questions. It is predicated on the premise of chronic weakness in postcolonial identification bureaucracies, which reinforces the idea of weak (if not failed) states and the outdated image of African societies with a documentary deficit, governed by informality and the absence of law, and resistant to bureaucratic reason and the material cultures of writing. New digital technologies have thus been hailed as a miracle cure for the structural ills of written identification and as the vehicle for an emerging modernity. Over the pages that follow, readers will quickly understand that this book challenges these preconceptions and offers an empirical, theoretical, and—to be frank—political critique of the new liberal fable of biometric identification and emergence. This technicist and globalizing premise precludes an understanding of national disparities and obfuscates the political issues at stake in the biometric modernization of legal identities. Furthermore, it hinges on the invisibilization and disqualification of the multifaceted systems of the identification of persons and their social and cultural roots in Africa. This volume seeks instead to bring them to light. By moving away from the usual North-South perspective to focus instead on the domestic production and uses of papers in the countries of the continent, it aims to shed new light on the role of identification policies and personal identity documents in the exercise of power and social life in contemporary Africa. In the process, the book challenges the common ideas of an Africa removed from written reason and the bureaucratic polity, echoing other scholarship which, following Goody, has shattered such stereotypes (Goody 1977; Ficquet & Mbodj-Pouye 2009; Bayart 2013; Hibou 2015).

The starting point for our research was a twofold observation. The dearth of research on legal identification and personal identity documents in Africa contrasted sharply with the role that they seemed to us to play in many contemporary political crises. A number of these crises—some have even been described as 'wars of identification'—centre on the recognition of rights and bring into play both the legal and political frameworks on which rights are based and the mechanisms and practices through which they can be asserted. What is involved in identifying those who, in given historical contexts, are (or are not) considered entitled to vote, to own land, to reside, to pass a police roadblock, or even, in the most extreme and dramatic situations, to live? How do individuals prove a name, filiation, origin, or nationality—elements that not only (and not necessarily) define the person's identity but also, and perhaps above all, determine their belonging to a group? These questions are not only raised in times of crisis; they arise in the banality of ordinary social life where papers play a key role: a national identity card presented to staff at a government agency or a mobile phone company, a freshly issued delayed birth certificate to enrol in school,

a certificate of indigeneity to attend university in one's home state, a driving licence required by the police or the transporters' union, a village card to prove one's local roots, and so on.

Many studies have analysed the ideological, political, and social drivers of identity-based mobilizations in Africa, be they religious, ethnic, or autochthonous. But too few have made the link between the dynamics of group belonging and those of individual identification, even though the latter is at the heart of public policy in that it allows administrations to include and recognize legitimate citizens and to exclude and discriminate against the rest. This book aims to fill that gap by empirically examining the complex logics of legal identification and by elucidating its relationship to the issues of state-building, citizenship, and the formation of the individual in Africa. Besides these major issues, it endeavours to analyse the everyday banality of the manufacture of legal identities, the uses people make of them, and the moral and political subjectivities they generate.

This book is the result of a collective research project, 'The social and political life of identity papers in Africa,' supported by the French National Research Agency. The project initially involved some 15 researchers working in a dozen countries in sub-Saharan Africa (South Africa, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Mauritania, Nigeria, Uganda, Rwanda, Senegal, and Chad).[2] The multidisciplinary team of young and experienced researchers—historians, political scientists, anthropologists, and sociologists—gradually expanded over five years of fieldwork and archival research.[3] Their findings were presented at an annual seminar and several international conferences with a comparative approach. Most of the research projects and eventually chapters were discussed collectively at several writing retreats the team attended together. The fieldwork was carried out from a dual perspective: 'from above,' to study identification apparatuses as technologies of power, but especially 'from below,' to move beyond the usual state-centric paradigm and grasp the social depth of legal identities. The intention was obviously not to oppose these two scales of observation but, on the contrary, to underline their entanglement. Following the work of Arjun Appadurai (1986), we also wanted to focus on the material culture of papers and be able to trace and recount their social life and sometimes singular biography (Kopytoff 1986).

During their fieldwork, the team members constantly navigated between the offices of government agencies and the social and, in some cases, private and intimate space of individuals. This sociology of the government of papers was not confined to the air-conditioned offices of central administrations or biometric multinationals. It also included an ethnography of the local authorities that produce and issue documents and constitute the 'outposts' of the paper identity apparatus, particularly in rural areas. Some studies sought to capture the complex relationship between personal identity and paper identity at the level of individual experience. One of the originalities of this volume lies in this shift in perspective towards other bodies

that produce 'papers' and in the attention paid to the social and individual uses to which ordinary citizens put them.

Putting the issue of identification in Africa back on the academic agenda

This book brings together for the first time a series of contributions on legal identification and identity documents in Africa, bringing together analytical chapters and more concise case studies. By filling a historiographical void, it aims to stimulate comparative reflection and encourage the development of new research in the continent. This continental approach is obviously not cut off from the rest of the world. On the contrary, it builds on the remarkable surge in research on identification that has shaped the field over the last 20 years, mainly around the European and American contexts (notably Dardy 1990; Torpey 2000; Crettiez & Piazza 2006; Noiriel 2007; Lyon 2009; Higgs 2011).[4] Two main interpretations emerge from this research. The first stresses the coercive and surveillance functions of identification. It considers identification as a technology of power, associating the development of knowledge about individuals, recorded in registers, with the assertion and centralization of the authority of the modern state. The emphasis placed on the surveillance functions of state identification systems, historically linked to the control of mobility, has recently been strengthened with the analysis of the new biometric devices of global surveillance in response to post-September 11 security issues and international migration. Conversely, the second approach focuses on the dynamics of inclusion, access to rights, recognition of individuals, and the stabilization of economic and social relations that civil registration and the possession of identity papers allow.

The global reflection has been enriched by particularly stimulating transcontinental comparative research (Caplan & Torpey 2001; Bennet & Lyon 2009; Breckenridge & Szreter 2012; About *et al.* 2013). Among other things, this scholarship has demonstrated the ambivalence of identification and the need to complexify the analysis of its functions, meanings, and historical trajectories by moving past the Eurocentric perspectives from which it was initially studied. Some research has focused on the imperial circulation of identification techniques and policies, analysing how certain colonies served as testing grounds for such practices. It was in India, for example, that the British colonial government set up the first fingerprint registration system in 1877, initially for identifying the administration's Indian personnel and criminals (Sengoopta 2007). From India, biometric technology was introduced in South Africa for the identification of adult Africans. Keith Breckenridge has shown how South Africa was used as a laboratory for the biometric state (Breckenridge 2014a), incubating this form of government for a century. We also know that in France, before national identity cards were introduced for French citizens, the first identity cards were the foreigners' identity cards instituted in 1917 to control the mobility of colonial workers

in metropolitan France (About & Denis 2010). Studies published on the documentary regimes of surveillance or nationality in Indochina and Algeria (Blévis 2003; Spire 2003; Saada 2004; About 2011) and on the plan for universal civil registration in post-war French West Africa (Cooper 2012) have further opened up the discussion to identification systems in the French Empire.

The study of the individual legal identification policies of colonial and postcolonial administrations in Africa has nonetheless remained a blind spot. To be sure, the question of identity has given rise to an extensive literature, from works on colonial ethnogenesis by ethnographer colonial powers to those on the invention of tradition and the most contemporary ideologies of autochthony. But for the most part, the historiography has focused on the more salient facet of colonial and postcolonial governmentality, namely, the government of groups, communities, or patron-client networks rather than the government of individuals. Historians, political scientists, and anthropologists have taken a particular interest in community, ethnic, religious, or national affiliations and identifications in an effort to understand their historicity, moral economies, political instrumentalization, and the mobilizing effects they produce. On the other hand, little is known about personal registration systems or the bureaucratic and documentary translation of personal identities and the statuses and affiliations they delineate. The documents and techniques of state identification, as instruments of colonial and postcolonial power, have occasionally been studied in research focusing on mobility, combatants, police work, filiation, and medicine (Mann 2006, 2015; Gary-Tounkara 2009; Glasman 2012; Tisseau, 2017; Keller 2018). The recent revival of interest in bureaucracies, in the state in its concrete form, but also in the cultures and practices of the written word in Africa demonstrates the relevance of looking at identity papers as both objects of negotiation and interface between bureaucrats and the public and objects of material and written culture (notably Barber 2006; Bierschenk & Olivier de Sardan 2014; Wion *et al.* 2018; Dewière & Bruzzi 2019). Yet until recently, legal identification had not been a subject of research in its own right, apart from a few isolated publications (Barnes 1997; Anderson 2000; Longman 2001; Medina-Domenech 2009; Kouakou 2010; Balaton-Chrimes 2014).

In this context, the research undertaken in South Africa has long been an exception for the continent. Analysis of the identification systems implemented to serve the colonial administration and later the policy of apartheid has been fruitful, producing an abundant literature that we cannot cite in full here (Savage 1986; Wells 1993; Posel 1995; Breckenridge 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014; Edwards & Hecht 2010; Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2014). The themes have diversified over the last decade, particularly in the fields of bureaucratic materiality and visual studies (Rizzo 2013; Masondo 2019; Minkley 2019), while new research has emerged on the circulation of biometric techniques in other colonial territories, particularly Kenya (Brückenhaus 2016; Weitzberg 2020). The most recent developments in biometric identification

and digital capitalism in Anglophone Africa are attracting growing interest in the social sciences (Thiel 2020). International agencies and multinational biometric firms have also taken up the subject. Publications on identification in Africa are now flourishing in this sphere, with an operational and legal approach.

Since the early 2010s, historian Keith Breckenridge has helped to bring Africa back into the academic discussion on identification and has played a remarkable role in renewing international thinking on these issues (Breckenridge & Szreter 2012; Breckenridge 2014). Building on this trend, our book aims to contribute to comparative thinking about the continent by bringing together 20 or so case studies on legal identification and identity documents, a large part of which deals with French-speaking areas that have hitherto been scarcely explored or taken into consideration. This is another of the book's contributions. Indeed, the heuristic implications of the comparison between Anglophone and Francophone countries are significant. The South African context has influenced the way research questions on identification in Africa have been shaped. The long history of biometric identification techniques and the current acceleration in the biometricization of public and private identification systems in Southern and Eastern Africa have focused attention on the hypothetical advent of a new form of (biometric) state, relegating the documentary systems of identification—and the architecture of power that they helped to shape—to history (Breckenridge & Szreter 2012, p. 2) or non-existence. This is a strong theoretical hypothesis which is discussed empirically in our book. By covering a greater diversity of experiences across the continent, several chapters of the book offer scope to refine, and sometimes considerably qualify, certain points of this interpretation. They show that today, the documentary state is not really disappearing behind the biometric state, and that various regimes of identity verification continue to coexist, through complex arrangements that define, in each country, a historically situated governmentality of individual and collective identities.

Power and knowledge in Africa: a (hi)story of papers

The field studies conducted as part of this collective project allow us to re-examine the question of the state in Africa, its relationship to individuals, and associated issues of citizenship. First, they introduce a notable reorientation in the comparative study of state expansion and control and of the relations between knowledge and power. Legal identification is typically interpreted as a vehicle of state centralization and an essential aspect of the exercise of state power through the progressive expansion of bureaucratic knowledge about individual identities. But how apt is this interpretation, which is based on European history, to elucidate the processes of state-building and the government of women and men on the other side of the Mediterranean? This brings us back to a central discussion on the state in Africa: its will to know

its citizens, record their existence, and govern through mechanisms of normalization and individualization designed to make each person legible to the state, or, on the contrary, its will not to know (Breckenridge 2012), to keep the mass of its subjects invisible, and govern collectives rather than individuals. Many states have forgone this kind of individualized knowledge about the lives of the governed without being considered weak or failed states. As Breckenridge shows in Chapter 2, the 'informational void' has even constituted a mode of government: both British colonial rule and the apartheid regime excluded Africans from documentary identification, precisely to restrict the scope for negotiation and struggle that civil recognition of the person allows. He explains that the systematic biometric identification of Africans was not a biopolitical project, based on knowledge and reserved for settlers, but an instrument of domination, of 'hegemony on a shoe-string' (Chapter 2). In a similar vein, Frederick Cooper (2002) considered that we must abandon the idea that the power of colonial and postcolonial states was founded on knowledge of individuals, on their hold on the social, cultural, and intimate realms of people in Africa, and that these states acted more like 'gatekeepers' preoccupied with controlling the resources of extraversion.

While we must not, of course, 'overstate the bureaucratic enthusiasm for information gathering' (Breckenridge & Szreter 2012, p. 7), our research demonstrates that it is equally important not to underestimate it and that it is possible to qualify these analyses. Indeed, the colonial control of Africans was also exerted through the registration of persons by name and the provision of identity documents. In a minority of territories—Kenya, South Africa, and Rhodesia and, as Léon Saur shows in this volume, the Belgian territories—the intention was to expand such identification on a 'racial' and often gendered basis. In his chapter on Ruanda-Urundi, Saur explains that personal identity booklets began to be issued in conjunction with the census in 1930. While these operations were initially limited to the category of 'able-bodied adult males' to serve the immediate interests of the administration, the goal was ultimately to achieve a much broader registration. In 1948, it was extended to all adult men and to women living alone—as with children, the existence of a married woman was recorded only in her husband's booklet, which was both typical of colonial androcentrism and its bureaucratic translation, and indicative of the administrations' concern about women living alone. These booklets contained individuals' fingerprint data together with a series of information about the life of their holders. The debate that arose in the 1950s over whether to maintain the reference to the holder's 'race' (the term printed in the booklet) shows that biometric identification did not discount the bureaucratic mode of knowledge production. Those in favour argued that this information served not only in the surveillance of individuals but also to monitor demographic change and the relative size of the Bahutu and Batutsi in the population.

In French West Africa (*Afrique occidentale française*, or AOF), the colonial administrations also registered and issued identity documents from the

outset of colonization, but in a much more fragmentary and limited fashion than in the territories mentioned earlier, including certificates of freedom, military cards, seaman's papers, health booklets, workers' booklets, and foreigners' cards, among others. Inter-territorial mobility theoretically required the issuance of a temporary pass or, in endemic-disease areas, a health passport. These documents were produced by different authorities, were not all mandatory, and their registration was not centralized. Unlike in South Africa, Kenya, or the territories under Belgian domination, little use seems to have been made of fingerprinting in the French colonies, where it was reserved for judicial and military identification—much to the chagrin of Dr Jouenne, director of the AOF's forensic anthropometry department in the 1920s, who dreamed of applying the technique to the whole of civil life to solve the problem of uncertainty about the real identity of the 'natives' (Awenengo Dalberto 2020). These documents may have concerned only a tiny proportion of the inhabitants of AOF, but what is interesting is not so much to measure the number of people registered in the first decades of colonization as to examine the logic of this identification: namely, a category-based approach to French imperial identification, which corresponded more generally to a colonial mode of government exercised over collectives and communities rather than particular individuals.

After the Second World War, there was a shift in this logic. The spread of individual identification in AOF and French Equatorial Africa (*Afrique équatoriale française*, or AEF) corresponded to a profound change in colonial government and altered the objectives of identification. Amid the expansion of imperial citizenship, the extension—albeit initially limited—of the electoral franchise, and the embryonic development of the welfare state, the rationale behind identification was no longer so much surveillance as recognition—even if, with the liberalization of movement, the question of control was not entirely disposed of. As Cooper (2012, 2014) has demonstrated, the reform of imperial electoral and social citizenship sparked a reshaping of the relationship between the state and the governed, which had to be established on an individual, rather than simply categorical, basis. It raised new questions about very concrete problems: compiling electoral rolls, issuing voter cards, and determining the beneficiaries of family allowances. Recognition of individuals and knowledge of the stages of their lives became necessary in order to empower the new rights holders. Cooper nonetheless stresses how late the plan for universal civil registration in the AOF was in coming and how little hurry politicians and bureaucrats were in to finalize and implement it, which points to the weakness of the colonial bureaucracy and the limits of colonial governmentality. Yet Séverine Awenengo Dalberto's research on the AOF identity card in Senegal in the 1950s (Chapter 9) and Louise Barré's work on civil registration in Côte d'Ivoire during the same period (Chapter 18) provide a more nuanced picture. They show that in some AOF territories, identification was not only a colonial project; it was also a social and political demand that

bureaucrats and judges had to respond to. Our book aims to understand the contexts and ways in which individualized legal identification has become attractive for common citizen and to historicize its use as a technology of power.

This volume does not claim to be exhaustive, especially given how unevenly it covers the various historical sequences of the last century, with most studies focusing on very recent times. Yet the new interest in this field of research may, if we are attentive to contextual differences, put the premise of the chronic weakness of the colonial and indeed postcolonial documentary bureaucracy into perspective. It is true that in 1970, only 7 of the 16 francophone states could publish civil registration statistics, and then only with very uneven coverage, ranging, in Senegal for example, from five per cent in rural areas to almost full coverage in the capital (François 1979, p. 10). In 1977, some countries, such as Benin, Upper Volta, and Niger, had still not reformed the 1950 colonial law on civil registration (François 1979, p. 11). In the early years of independence, if and when they were promulgated, laws on civil registration, nationality, and the bureaucratic apparatus required to implement them were largely acts of national assertion and ostracism of foreigners rather than instruments of government (Manby 2016). Subsequently, the authoritarian and/or single-party regimes of the 1960s–1980s rather accommodated themselves to the mass invisibility of their subjects, developing other means to 'embrace' (Torpey 2000) populations than those based on knowledge of individuals—not least by leveraging the capacities of control, intermediation, and legitimation offered by clientelist, community, or partisan networks.

Yet our research shows that the situation has often been more complex and, on a continental scale, more contrasted. For instance, Florent Piton explains in Chapter 11 that the bureaucratic mobilization for the ethnic registration of Rwandans began immediately after independence, with major political effects. In Côte d'Ivoire, in the same period, the state invested in civil registration less for bureaucratic surveillance than to further citizens' entitlement to services and promote a certain model of the family (Chapter 18). Indeed, in examining the cases of Kenya, Nigeria, and Cameroon as well as Côte d'Ivoire, it becomes clear that the issuing of 'papers' was a significant component of what Mbembe (1992) called the 'postcolonial compromise'—which hinged not only on coercion but also on the delivery of public goods to legitimate beneficiaries, duly identified in the administration's registers and integrated into the government's patronage networks. The identification of individuals was, therefore, an integral part of the authoritarian mechanisms of subjugation and 'governmentality of the belly' (Bayart 2009), but not any and all individuals. Indeed, far from being inclusive and egalitarian, the postcolonial regimes' documentary policies were sectional and closely correlated to the patronage networks of the ruling party. In the course of this book, we will see just how significant these networks have been as vehicles for political inclusion or exclusion since independence, with

ruling party membership cards, for example, appearing in many cases to trump the national identity card when it came to passing through a police checkpoint or accessing basic social services. Socially and politically differentiated, the issuance of identification documents under one-party regimes was not necessarily geared towards the panoptic surveillance of the entire population. In fact, the authoritarian state built itself on the informality of identification procedures, if not the denial of identification to subalterns. Our investigations into this period remain incomplete. Future research will doubtless be able to enrich the understanding of documentary identification in the first decades of independence: for example, the role that ruling party membership cards or tax receipts played in the identification of individuals, or the documentary dimension of African cultural revolutions which, as in Chad under Tombalbaye, led to the forced renaming of individuals and the transformation of civil status records (Manatouma 2020).

Our research nonetheless establishes that the crisis of one-party regimes at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s changed this picture considerably. The return to a multiparty system, and the highly equivocal democratization movement that followed in most sub-Saharan African countries, thrust the issue of personal identification and 'papers' back to the top of the agenda. Since then, tensions have continued to mount over the issuing of identity documents and the registration of individuals at the civil registry and on the electoral roll, at times degenerating into violent conflict. But here, too, the apparent correlation between identification and political violence needs to be clarified. Our research suggests that the intense concern with 'papers' in this phase of political liberalization was not simply tied to the question of who was or was not a voter but, more fundamentally, to a debate that had been largely neglected since independence, about the contours of the nation as an imagined community and ultimately the question of who is sovereign; and this amid increasingly heavy and visible donor intervention in electoral and state reform processes. Under the guise of technical reforms, this tendency towards extraversation and international standardization has undeniably interfered with local debates on sovereignty, national belonging, and citizenship. This is what Marielle Debos illustrates in the case of Chad (Chapter 3), where behind the sovereignist debates on the census conducted by external actors, a new imagination of the Chadian nation has emerged. Our research aimed to investigate these moments of political tension around civil registration, the census, the establishment of electoral rolls, and the distribution of cards, to assess not only the extent to which these procedures constitute instruments of political inclusion or exclusion but, more importantly still, the extent to which identification played a part—or not—in the vast rights movement that has taken hold across Africa over the past 30 years. At the juncture between these endogenous and exogenous logics of identification, the book also offers a renewed analysis of the ambivalent dynamics of democratization and the crises of citizenship they reveal.

State, identification, and citizenship in contemporary African societies

In the chapters that follow, the 'papers' (and biometrics) that give tangible form to individuals' legal identity are discussed not only as 'acts of state' (Bourdieu 2012), but above all as an 'infrastructure of citizenship' (Breckenridge 2014), and as empirical indicators for studying citizens' relations to the state. As highlighted earlier, many of the crises affecting the African continent centre around the issue of identifying individuals, which determines the mechanisms of social inclusion or exclusion. These tensions around papers raise key questions about the foundations of nationality and the criteria that define the 'good citizen,' while at the same time discriminating against 'second-class' citizens. Côte d'Ivoire illustrates this problem perfectly. The Ivorian conflict of the 2000s was a 'war of identification' (Banégas 2006; Marshall-Fratani 2006), a war for papers that pitted against each other two radically opposed conceptions of national belonging, one cosmopolitan, the other ethnonationalist, making 'autochthonous' status the key criterion for citizenship. As Banégas, Cutolo, and Kouyate point out in their contribution (Chapter 8), the post-war identification reforms undertaken by the Ouattara regime certainly helped to deradicalize this ideological opposition under a technicist veneer, but at the price of a general amnesty for documentary fraud that amounted to state (and biometric!) institutionalization of identity falsification.

Laurent Fourchard (Chapter 14) shows that autochthony has also been institutionalized in the Nigerian federal framework through the widespread production of certificates of indigeneity, which determine access to public-sector employment, universities, and more. The result is intense 'documentary anxiety' and a de facto partitioning of the perimeter of citizenship, correlated with the principle of ancestrality, between those who can prove their local roots and the 'non-indigenes' who are relegated to the fringes of the civic realm. Fourchard's comparative analysis of the bureaucratic channels of identity certification highlights how the boundaries of this 'indigenous' citizenship fluctuate from state to state and the role that these certificates have played in the mass violence in Plateau State. The history of the continent offers other illustrations of this pernicious correlation between identification processes and political violence, as shown, for example, by Claude Mbowou's research on the radicalization of identification criteria in North Cameroon during the struggle against Boko Haram (Mbowou 2019 and Chapter 16 in this volume), or, in an even more extreme case, Piton's contribution (Chapter 11) on the use of ethnic identity cards in the violent history of Rwanda, and the preparation and conduct of the 1994 genocide (see also Piton 2018).

Far from putting an end to these controversies and easing tensions around citizenship, the new identification technologies seem in some cases to aggravate them. Our research underscores that in some countries, the

introduction of biometrics accentuates exclusionary effects and produces new tensions over who is a citizen and who is not—or, more precisely, who is not quite. In Mauritania, for example, studied here by Zekeria Ould Ahmed Salem, the introduction of a new biometric census in 2010 revived controversies over national belonging and sparked a major resistance movement among those who saw themselves excluded from the civic sphere, 'Touche pas à ma nationalité' (Hands off my nationality) (Chapter 15). In Uganda too, Florence Brisset Foucault points out a major paradox: the biometric reforms have increased uncertainty about the identity of individuals, with ordinary citizens and local elected officials feeling that 'the new system brought more insecurity. (…) We don't know people [anymore]' (Chapter 18). Similarly, in Côte d'Ivoire, the widespread use of biometric techniques for registering identities, far from depoliticizing the issue, has heightened suspicions of nationality fraud and revived tensions around Ivorian nationality in the run-up to the 2020 presidential election. In South Africa, as Jeanne Bouyat shows (Chapter 5), the modernization of student registration systems in schools intensifies the discrimination suffered by the children of immigrants, with the digitalization of identification systems markedly reinforcing 'paper barriers' and security-based logics.

The case of Kenya is also significant: the country is at the forefront of new digital technologies, which are spreading to all sectors of social, economic, and political life. Following the electoral crises of 2007–2008, ambitious civil registration reforms were undertaken with the introduction of a new biometric ecosystem designed to provide each individual with a unique and reputedly unforgeable ID number (the National Integrated Identity Management System—NIIMS—otherwise known as *Huduma Namba*). As Hervé Maupeu shows in his contribution (Chapter 13), these e-government reforms have certainly facilitated access to citizenship for certain communities that had previously been excluded (Makonde and Nubians), but they have increased the segregation of Somali populations, whose Kenyan nationality is more disputed than ever. These studies confirm that instead of fostering social and political inclusion as the advocates of biometrics had hoped, digital technologies can on the contrary reinforce the logics of exclusion that already pervaded the practices of the documentary state.

One of the objectives of our collective research, however, was to compare the production and use of papers in crisis situations and in routine circumstances, postulating, following Dobry (Dobry 1986), that there is no dramatic sociological break between the two. Our studies, therefore, took seriously, by exploring empirically, the idea that papers are an interface between the state and the citizen and not just an instrument of control or administrative 'legibility' (Scott 1998). They illustrate that, contrary to the nonsense about the artificiality of the imported state in Africa, the relationship between citizens and government has been intensively cultivated since the 1950s. These ties often rely on the work of brokers and intermediaries, whether they are stationed behind the desks of Nigerian local governments,

on the tarmac of Senegalese bus stations, on the pavements outside the courthouse in Abidjan, or in the vicinity of administrations in Yaoundé (Chapters 14, 23, 8, 7). These street-level bureaucrats (literally as well as figuratively for once) do not work against a hated or weakened state. On the contrary, they are part of a long chain of intermediaries that contributes to (and partakes of) the capillary expansion of bureaucratic reason across all strata of sub-Saharan societies. Our research thus shows that the production of papers in Nigeria, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, or Cameroon cannot be reduced to corrupt practices of intermediation or to a political economy of falsification, even if both remain important. Even in countries marked by the extraversion and privatization of identification systems, the state remains ever-present, and not only because of its 'practical norms' (Olivier de Sardan 2015) or because, as the South Sudanese claim, it 'makes the best passports' (Marko 2016). The documentary state also maintains its hold through its routinized, bureaucratized legal norms, which compel drivers in Dakar to take the driving test properly to get their licence, civil servants in Ibadan to scrupulously follow the procedures for issuing certificates, or the *margouillats* in Abidjan and the *appacheurs* in Yaoundé to make 'proper fakes' when working, in the *margouillats*' parlance, to 'get nationalities out' (Chapters 7 and 8).

As a counterpoint to the paradigm of the centralizing state, our book offers another interpretation of the historical modalities of the spread of bureaucratic power in Africa by shifting the focus to local authorities, whose role in the identification of individuals and, especially, the authentication of identities is in many cases crucial. Fourchard demonstrates this eloquently in the case of Nigeria, where the federal system grants exorbitant power to local governments in the procedures for verifying citizens' origin. Brisset-Foucault also underlines the importance of local document production in the exercise of citizenship in Uganda: village identity cards, letters of introduction (and moral recommendation), and citizenship verification forms signed by local council officials are essential documents for anyone who wants to settle elsewhere, find a job, or even prove their citizenship to obtain a new biometric identity card. Varying the scales of analysis in this way gives another picture of African bureaucracies and helps refine the formerly established equation between identification and centralization.

Fundamentally, this book grapples with a major question: do new registration technologies reshuffle the cards of legal identity and alter the conditions of the exercise of power and citizenship? This was one of the big issues raised by our collective project, echoing numerous publications on the real or supposed effects of the biometricization of societies. Chapter 1 attempts to address the issue, which obviously resonates beyond the African continent. Without going into the detail of these debates, we shall outline here the most salient comparative findings of our research: besides the fact that biometrics does not always fulfil its promises of sociopolitical inclusion—as mentioned earlier—and may even, in some cases, aggravate crises of citizenship, it also

fails to deliver on the promises of 'state modernization' and efficiency. The big tech companies, donors, international organizations, and their African government partners have been quick to propose and adopt a new biometric cargo cult, presenting digital technologies as an antidote to the poor territorial coverage of civil registration and the state's shortcomings in general. But our field research suggests that the trend towards centralizing legal identity data, which biometric registration theoretically allows, is contradicted by a multitude of factors. For a start, the multiplication of 'pilot initiatives,' promoted by such and such a 'development partner' in such and such a locality, fragments the national coherence of census policies. Added to that is the highly privatized nature of these policies, the implementation of which is most often subcontracted to foreign multinationals—which, in passing, raises major questions as to the sovereignty of the states, the capacities of which biometrics are supposed to build.

Thus, our team's contributions bring to light an important contradiction between the strong tendency towards the technicalization and centralization of identity registration, and equally strong logics of privatization and fragmentation of identification systems, implemented by a host of actors whose schedules and agendas do not always coincide, far from it. They also show that the biometric modernization of identification apparatuses, seen as a recipe for 'good governance,' does not prevent the reproduction of informal brokerage and corrupt practices—on a scale that seems to have kept pace with the exponential growth of the colossal biometric markets. Contrary to the hypothesis of a rupture introduced by these new identification technologies, we maintain that these practices are instead a continuation of 'the politics of the belly' (Bayart 2009), a form of governmentality in which the entanglement between private and public was already the norm. The first section of the book, especially, discusses the issues at stake in this 'indirect private government' (Mbembe 1999; Hibou 2004) of legal identities and its consequences for citizenship practices in sub-Saharan Africa.

Our collective research leads us to qualify another argument that has been asserted in recent years in the study of new identification technologies, namely, the emergence of a new biometric state in place of the old documentary state. This thesis, put forward most notably by Breckenridge in his 2014 book and refined here in Chapter 2, highlights the difference in the intrinsic nature of the two systems of identity registration—one mathematical, the other written—and the architecture of power and citizenship that they underpin. We share his particularly stimulating analysis of this theoretical difference and of the strong tendency towards the biometricization of states and societies. However, most of the chapters in our book and the diverse situations studied controvert the idea that one system is replacing the other. Documentary and oral identification techniques continue to coexist with biometric registration, though on complex terms—overlapping, sometimes conflicting and competing, and often complementing one another. Nora Bardelli shows, for instance, that in practice, the UNHCR's biometric

registration of refugees has not altered the preliminary process of collecting biographical information, which alone makes it possible to establish the legitimacy of those claiming refugee status (Chapter 6). Debos echoes this with regard to Chad, stressing the crucial role that third-party testimony plays in biometric registration campaigns. She turns the view of the biometric state replacing the documentary state almost on its head, demonstrating, on the contrary, that the biometric capture of Chadian society has helped strengthen the documentary state, mainly through the expedited and necessary documentary registration of individuals' biographic data (Chapter 3).

As indicated in Chapter 1, biometric identification cannot really do without the documentary state, the written word, testimony, and other—particularly local—forms of social certification and authentication of individual identities. In other words, biometrics remains deeply embedded in the social sphere, and—contrary to Agamben's (2011) assumptions—the social person is not erased, or not completely, by their digitized legal identity. Neither is there any evidence that the citizen is giving way to a biometric 'statizen,' as Arjun Appadurai (2019) prophesied with regard to the Aadhaar project in India. Lastly, the current biometric boom invites us to examine, in comparison, the deployment of bureaucracy that is being played down on the altar of the new digital deities. These findings are not just specialists splitting hairs; they have direct implications for ways of thinking about citizenship in action, in countries subjected to the new imperium of new and willingly depoliticizing technologies. They are also an invitation to cast aside a positivist view of history that sees one identification regime succeeding another through the ages, from the face to face to the documentary state to the biometric state, to instead underline the fundamental contingency of these developments and, above all, the entanglement of the techniques of identity veridiction.

Bureaucratic writing of the self

This major finding—the entanglement of identification regimes—is directly linked to another key idea that structures the book: the social embeddedness of the government of identities, which cannot be grasped in its technical or bureaucratic dimension alone. Our research shows that identification is deeply embedded in the everyday production and experience of the social world—reproducing its norms and logics, including the most discriminatory.

This is not to sidestep the fact that legal identification systems have been and still are injunctions, instruments of coercion, and identity allocation, which do symbolic and/or physical violence to individuals. In the pages that follow, Saur and Piton show how in colonial and postcolonial Rwanda the state obliged individuals—first adult men, then the general population—to define themselves according to ethnic categories, which were powerful tools for stigmatizing Tutsis before becoming appallingly deadly. Sandrine Perrot describes the Ugandan political elite's opposition to the plan to adopt an

identity card for Africans in the British colony, inasmuch as it recalled the despised *kipande* system in Kenya, based on race and a source of suffering and humiliation until its repeal in 1947. Today, in the far north of Cameroon, where the state is remote in all but its increased punitive functions in the context of counterterrorism, identification imposes its discriminatory violence on the individuals, and chiefly the men, who want to escape police repression during road checks, as Mbowou's chapter shows.

Yet in many other contexts, we observe that papers are a central means of claiming and securing (individual and collective) rights, but also of status recognition. Barré's chapter demonstrates the remarkable adaptability of social actors, particularly women, to this 'world on paper' (Hawkins 2002), whose importance grew as first the colonial state, then the postcolonial Ivorian state took on a—modest—welfare role. Her work shows how individuals and certain social groups—still a minority in the late 1950s and early 1960s in Côte d'Ivoire—seized the legal opportunities afforded by compulsory civil registration to assert their conceptions of family and filiation. The chapter by Sidy Cissokho, studying the relationship that professional drivers have with the driving licence in contemporary Senegal, also shows how the meanings of this document are ingrained in the social and professional values of its holders. The licence does not merely sanction a skill-set and standardized knowledge; rather, it recognizes a new status within a professional group, and substantiates an individual's success. These studies prompt reflection on the intertwined relations of meaning and power that are formed around registration and the issuing of documents. What Souleymane Kouyate, Armando Cutolo, and Richard Banégas reveal of the 'arts of doing,' the inventions and popular (re)appropriation of administrative systems by the *margouillats* of Abidjan, warrants our speaking of a 'logic of practice' that is formed and passed on around identification documents—a 'logic of practice' which, of course, varies widely with different groups and circumstances and is unequally distributed according to variables of gender, class, and living environment.

Indeed, being identified does not always mean individuals simply complying with the law—be it compulsory civil registration or a compulsory national identity card. In many cases, the undertaking relates to a quest for rights and the politics of recognition (Englund & Nyamnjoh 2004). Obviously, it is also very often a matter of practical necessity, which can therefore be situated in the biographical and social trajectory of individuals and families. Many of the chapters throughout this volume attest to the strong demand for papers, which corresponds to a demand for access to political but above all social rights—in this respect, the development of the welfare state favours consent to identification, as Paul-André Rosental (2012) clearly showed with regard to civil status in nineteenth-century France. Access to school and to school examinations, for instance, is a common reason for applying for a *jugement supplétif* (delayed birth registration document), as in Côte d'Ivoire (Chapter 7 and 17) or in contemporary South Africa (Chapter 5). In Senegal in the

1950s, the AOF identity card was coveted not only by the urban and literate elites already familiar with the colonial bureaucracy, but also by other social categories apparently more distant from the administration. For instance, obtaining an AOF identity card figured in young farmers' plans for professional mobility, allowing them to access salaried employment and escape from work in the fields (Awenengo Dalberto 2020 and Chapter 9). In contemporary Nigeria, as Fourchard shows, the peak periods for issuance of indigene certificates correspond to moments in the university and military recruitment calendars.

It is also possible to gauge the demand for papers by studying the importance of the role of intermediaries and the intensity of the transactions they conduct around courthouses and the authorities charged with producing identification documents. The *margouillats* in Côte d'Ivoire and *appacheurs* in Cameroon support—however illegally—the state's administrative capacity for issuing documents and, as such, make the relationship between citizens and the state more fluid. Yet this 'fluidification' remains profoundly unequal. Even in the market for forged documents, the purpose of this demand can be socially and geographically situated, as Marie Emmanuelle Pommerolle shows in her chapter on Cameroon: forged documents do not have the equalizing effects that one might suspect. The elites already have a legal identity and are usually looking for a diploma, while the little people want a birth certificate. The elites are also the most likely to obtain 'real fakes,' that is, false documents registered and/or authenticated by official authorities. With regard to North Cameroon, Mbowou strongly underscores the gender and class discrimination that also manifests itself in access to papers: women in particular and individuals 'without paper or pencil' (Goody 2004) bear the brunt of the physical and symbolic violence of biometric identification obligations, with circumstances (electoral in particular) making them into 'disposable, fixed-term citizens' (Chapter 16).

Legal identities can also be seen as the product of bureaucratic violence, in that they are the result of a process to transform and normalize personal identities into identities 'proper to states' (Scott *et al.* 2002), which have sometimes accompanied nationalist projects (Bouquet & Fliche 2013). The bureaucratic categories of civil identity do not always correspond to the different cultural and social practices and norms of naming, differentiating an individual, or establishing kinship ties, as Debos shows in Chad, for example. In some states, the stabilization and passing on of a family name—most often a patronymic—is the result of recent reforms, as in Mauritania where, in addition to the prevailing practice of indicating the father's first name, the family name did not become compulsory until the 1999 civil registration reform. The adoption of biometric identification technologies has reinforced this standardization of the rules of legal naming.

For all that, the imposed frameworks of bureaucracy do not make identity documents into objects independent of the subject, and papers do not force the citizen to face the state and a depersonalized bureaucracy alone.

Several chapters show how the concrete manufacture of legal identity is a moment of interface and negotiation between not only bureaucrats and the individual, but also the social world in which he or she is embedded (see also Rader 2017). Many identity documents are established on the basis of self-declaration and the oral attestation of witnesses, be it birth certificates at the civil registry, delayed birth registration documents, certificates of indigeneity, refugee cards, or even identity cards. This shared manufacture of legal identity partly explains the common errors of identification and sometimes the existence of multiple legal identities—which does not usually involve falsification, even if the lability of the process allows individuals to make very pragmatic use of it. Our studies show that biometrics has not—or not yet—undone the dialogical and interpretative logics that govern the identification process in the documentary state. In the pages of this volume, Kelma Manatouma shows, for instance, that in Chad, which adopted the biometric identity card in 2002, an Identity Control and Verification Commission intervenes in the procedure for establishing identity cards to verify the veracity of the civil status information given—and whose reliability is regularly contested. Ironically, this commission also draws extensively on oral hearings, the calling of witnesses, the examination of social markers, and modes of self-presentation and self-narrative as evidence of identity. The social recognition of the person is thus at the heart of the veridiction of legal identity. Alimou Diallo's chapter details the painstaking efforts of those who describe themselves as 'tracers' to piece together the sociabilities and family ties of migrants who have died in the Mediterranean, without which they could not be identified. He demonstrates that it is only by reintegrating the person into the chain of social relations that it is possible, post mortem, for them to recover their name, nationality, and dignity. If biometric identification was imposed at some point along the migration route, it may well have associated a false name—a sometimes whimsical or insulting false name—with the captured body data: the subalterns' final ruse.

The bureaucratic writings (or biometric records) discussed in this book cannot, therefore, be reduced to the determination and presentation of a legal and administrative identity. Rather, they proceed from a bureaucratic writing of the self—both individual and collective—which reveals the full complexity of its social meanings. The abundance of logics of self-census and self-registration is a strong sign of these social appropriations from below of bureaucratic forms of self-affirmation. Indeed, many identification documents escape, link up, or compete with those produced by the state: traditional chief's cards, baptism or religious community cards, village association or local residents' cards; professional, party, or trade union cards; tea grin membership cards; the cards of neo-traditionalist self-defence groups (dozos or Koglweogo); militia ID cards, demobilized ex-combatant cards, etc. These diverse documents often borrow the state's graphic forms, aesthetics, materiality, and signs of authentication, reflecting the strength of

the state imaginary (Bayart 2013 and Chapter 25 in this book) in African societies which are typically cast as resistant to administrative reason.

Yet it is not a question here of considering these borrowings as mere mimicry. The diversity of contexts and instances in which these papers are produced is certainly an indication of the deep-rooted culture of the written word and bureaucracy in Africa. In her chapter on evangelical migrant churches in Morocco and Senegal, Johara Berriane highlights the central role that the registration of the faithful and the issuance of personal cards (baptism cards, membership cards, letters of recommendation) play in building up these congregations. Of course, these practices seem to fall into the long history of ecclesiastical identification, but they do so in a rather paradoxical way: these new churches were often founded in reaction to the institutionalization of religious practices and are not officially recognized in Morocco. Issuing these 'faith papers' makes it possible to control mobilities and maintain transnational networks and seeks to instil a sense of belonging among the followers. Berriane (Chapter 22) thus shows how these cards and documents play a part in identifying the 'Christian,' but above all the 'good Christian.' Indeed, they make it possible, at a distance, to situate migrant believers in a social and moral space of recognition, in the same way as the letters of introduction and village cards drawn up by the village chiefs in Uganda to accompany the mobility of 'good citizens,' which Brisset Foucault analyses in Chapter 19. In a quite different context, Romane Da Cunha Dupuy (Chapter 20) highlights the central role of the written word and self-identification in the functioning of the neo-traditionalist Koglweogo self-defence groups in Burkina Faso. While bureaucratic practices aim to legitimize and justify their coercive methods, her chapter also shows how the production of personal cards is a means of proving their moral integrity, on both an individual and collective scale.

This perspective invites us to go beyond a purely utilitarian view of the demand for or production of papers, to understand them also as vehicles of political and moral subjectivation, following the pioneering work of Claudine Dardy (1990). The academic literature has discussed the performative role of paper identity, the effects of the power of naming on the constitution of the subject (Bourdieu 1982; Wilson 1998), especially the gendered subject (Butler 1997). Several chapters in our book explore the material dimension of this process of subjectivation. The chapter by Sandrine Perrot and Gerald Owachi shows how in Uganda, for instance, the mobilization of the Maragoli Association to obtain national identity cards is not only a question of gaining access to a political and electoral space that has been denied to them. The mobilization is also geared towards self-assertion produced through the material proof of identity, as evidenced by the association's efforts to constitute an archive of old identity documents, tax receipts, and administrative documents dating back to the colonial period. This meticulous archiving coupled with self-census practices is a way of attesting to their presence in the state and in the world. Kamina Diallo (Chapter 21)

also discusses the practice of archiving identification papers at the individual level of Aicha, a former member of the Ivorian rebel forces who worked as a cook in the organization—corresponding to a fairly classic gendered division of labour in armed struggle. The various cards issued to Aicha bear witness to the central role that documentary identification plays in formalizing membership, roles, and status within the social space—in this case within a rebel organization. Keeping this series of cards not only supports her claim to the status of demobilized woman combatant—and the rights that go with it, it also corresponds to a way of thinking of and representing herself to the world, materializing a personal history of engagement.

In this way, our research blurs the boundary often established between the voluntary, subjective writings and the bureaucratic printed materials of legal identity, instead considering that the latter also originate in a form of self-enunciation (Awenengo Dalberto 2018), and thus enable us to account for the complexity of the relationship between the production of the intimate sphere and bureaucracy and its materiality. It is on this journey between the micro-social intimacy of individual identities, the mesosociological dimension of collective belongings, and the macro-political apparatuses of state identification that this book invites the reader. We hope it will provide a better understanding of the 'social life of papers in Africa' and, from a broader perspective, stimulate reflection on the historical trajectories of citizenship and its future in a global context of the rapid biometricization of societies.

Notes

1. The World Bank measures global coverage of legal identities as part of the ID4D Initiative. The survey data are regularly updated on the dedicated website: https://id4d.worldbank.org/global-dataset/visualization.
2. PIAF project, co-directed by Séverine Awenengo Dalberto and Richard Banégas: https://piaf.hypotheses.org.
3. In particular, to include the members of the IHA (Paris)—CREPOS programme 'Identification and Bureaucratization in Sub-Saharan Africa' established at the University Cheikh Anta Diop (2015–2018) – which is now the transnational research group 'Bureaucratization of African Societies', funded by the Max Weber Foundation.
4. The bibliography is too vast for us to cite all this stimulating literature here.

References

About, I., Brown, J. and Lonergan, G. (eds.) (2013) *People, Papers, and Practices: Identification and Registration in Transnational Perspective, 1500–2010*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

About, I. (2011) 'Surveillance des identités et régime colonial en Indochine, 1890–1912'. *Criminocorpus* [online]. Available at: http://criminocorpus.revues.org/417 [Accessed 20 March 2019].

About, I. and Denis, V. (2010) *Histoire de l'identification des personnes*. Paris: La Découverte.

Agamben, G. (2011) *Nudities*. Translated by Kishik D. and Pedatella, S. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Anderson, D. (2000) 'Master and Servant in Colonial Kenya, 1895–1939'. *The Journal of African History*, 41(3), 459–485.

Appadurai, A. (2019) 'Goodbye Citizenship, Hello "Statizenship"'. *The Wire*, 4 September [online]. Available at: https://thewire.in/rights/goodbye-citizenship-hello-statizenship.

Appadurai, A. (ed.) (1986) *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Awenengo Dalberto, S. (2018) 'Fragments de vies ordinaires: papiers d'identité au Sénégal'. *Sociétés Politiques Comparées*, 46. Available at: http://www.fasopo.org/sites/default/files/charivaria1_n46.pdf.

Awenengo Dalberto, S. (2020) 'La première carte d'identité d'Afrique occidentale française (1946-1960). Identifier et s'identifier au Sénégal au temps de la citoyenneté impériale'. *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 75(1), 113–151.

Balaton-Chrimes, S (2014) 'Statelessness, Identity Cards and Citizenship as Status in the Case of the Nubians of Kenya'. *Citizenship Studies*, 18(1), 15–28.

Banégas, R. (2006) 'Côte d'Ivoire: Patriotism, Ethnonationalism and Other Modes of Self-Writing'. *African Affairs*, 105(421), 535–552.

Barber, K. (ed.) (2006). *Africa's Hidden Histories: Everyday Literacy and Making the Self*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Barnes, T. (1997) «'Am I a Man?': Gender and the Pass Laws in Urban Colonial Zimbabwe, 1930–80», African Studies Review, 40–1, 1: 59–81.

Bayart, J.-F. (2009) *The State in Africa. The Politics of the Belly*, 2nd edn. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bayart, J.-F. (2013) 'La Cité bureaucratique en Afrique'. In: B. Hibou (ed.) *La bureaucratisation néolibérale*. Paris: La Découverte, pp. 291–313.

Beneduce, R. (2015) 'The Moral Economy of Lying: Subjectcraft, Narrative Capital, and Uncertainty in the Politics of Asylum'. *Medical Anthropology: Cross-Cultural Studies in Health and Healing*. 34(6), 551–571.

Bennett, C.J. and Lyon, D. (eds.) (2008) Playing the Identity Card: Surveillance, Security and Identity in Global Perspective. London: Routledge.

Bierschenk, T. and Olivier de Sardan, J.-P. (eds.) (2014) *States at Work. Dynamics of African Bureaucracies*. Leiden: Brill.

Blévis, L. (2003) 'La citoyenneté française au miroir de la colonisation. Étude des demandes de naturalisation des 'sujets français' en Algérie coloniale'. *Genèses*, 53(4), 25–47.

Bouquet, O. and Fliche, B. (eds.) (2013) 'La réforme des noms propres en Turquie'. *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 60(2), 7–126.

Bourdieu, P. (1982) *Ce que parler veut dire: l'économie des échanges linguistiques*. Paris: Fayard.

Bourdieu, P. (2012) *Sur L'Etat. Cours au Collège de France, 1989–1992*. Paris: Le Seuil.

Breckenridge, K. (2005). 'Verwoerd's Bureau of Proof: Total Information in the Making of Apartheid'. *History Workshop Journal*, 59, 83–109.

Breckenridge, K. (2012) 'No Will to Know. The Rise and Fall of African Civil Registration in Twentieth-Century South Africa'. In: K. Breckenridge and S. Szreter (eds.) *Registration and Recognition: Documenting the Person in World History*. Proceedings of the British Academy 182. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 357–383.

Breckenridge, K. and Szreter, S. (eds.) (2012) *Registration and Recognition: Documenting the Person in World History*. Proceedings of the British Academy 182. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1–36.

Breckenridge, K. (2008) 'The Elusive Panopticon: The HANIS Project and the Politics of Standards in South Africa'. In: C.J. Bennett and D. Lyon (eds.) *Playing the Identity Card: Surveillance, Security and Identity in Global Perspective*. London: Routledge, pp. 39–56.

Breckenridge, K. (2014) *Biometric State: The Global Politics of Identification and Surveillance in South Africa, 1850 to the Present*. Oxford: Cambridge University Press.

Brückenhaus, D. (2016) 'Identifying Colonial Subjects: Fingerprinting in British Kenya, 1900-1960'. *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 42, 60–85.

Butler, J. (1997) *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*. New York and London: Routledge.

Caplan, J. and Torpey, J. (eds.) (2001) *Documenting Individual Identity: The Development of State Practices in the Modern World*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Cooper, F. (2002) *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cooper, F. (2012) 'Voting, Welfare and Registration: The Strange Fate of the *Etat Civil* in French West Africa, 1945–1960'. In: K. Breckenridge and S. Szreter (eds.) *Registration and Recognition: Documenting the Person in World History*. Proceedings of the British Academy 182. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 385–412.

Cooper, F. (2014) 'Citizenship between Empire and Nation'. *Remaking France and French Africa, 1945-1960*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Crettiez, X. and Piazza, P. (eds.) (2006) *Du papier à la biométrie. Identifier les individus*. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.

Dardy, C. (1990) *Identités de papiers*. Paris: Lieu Commun.

Dewière, R. and Bruzzi, S. (2019) 'Paroles de papier. Matérialité et écritures en contextes africains'. *Cahiers d'études africaines*, 236(4), 949–966.

Dhupelia-Mesthrie, U. (2014) 'Paper Regimes'. *Kronos*, 40, 10–22.

Dobry, M. (1986) *Sociologie des crises politiques*. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.

Edwards, P. and Hecht, G. (2010) 'History and the Technopolitics of Identity: The Case of Apartheid South Africa'. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 36(3), 619–639.

Englund, H. and Nyamnjoh, F. (eds.) (2004) *Rights and the Politics of Recognition in Africa*. London: Zed Books.

Ficquet, E. and Mbodj-Pouye, A. (2009) 'Cultures de l'écrit en Afrique. Anciens débats, nouveaux objets'. *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 64(4), 751–764.

François, M. (1979) *L'état civil en Afrique*. Paris: CEPED.

Gary-Tounkara, D.(2009) 'La dispersion des Soudanais/Maliens à la fin de l'ère coloniale'. *Hommes & Migrations*, 1279, 12–23.

Glasman, J. (2012) '"Connaître papier". Métiers de police et État colonial tardif au Togo'. *Genèses*, 86(1), 37–54.

Goody, J. (1977) *The Domestication of the Savage Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Goody, J. (2004) *Au-delà des murs*. Translated by M. Kennedy. Marseille: Éditions Parenthèses, Maison Méditerranéenne des sciences de l'homme.

Griffiths, M. (2012) 'Anonymous Aliens? Questions of Identification in the Detention and Deportation of Failed Asylum Seekers'. *Population, Space and Place*, 18, 715–727.

Hawkins, S. (2002) *Writing and Colonialism in Northern Ghana, an Encounter between the LoDagaa and the 'World on Paper'*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Hibou, B. (2015) *The Bureaucratization of the World in the Neoliberal Era: An International and Comparative Perspective*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hibou, B. (ed.) (2004) *Privatizing the State*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Higgs, E. (2011) *Identifying the English: A History of Personal Identification, 1500 to the Present*. London: Continuum.

Keller, K. (2018) *Colonial Suspects: Suspicion, Imperial Rule, and Colonial Society in Interwar French West Africa*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

Kobelinsky, C. (2019) 'Les traces des morts: gestion des corps retrouvés et traitement des corps absents à la frontière hispano-marocaine'. *Critique internationale*, 83(2), 21–39.

Kopytoff, I. (1986) 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process'. In: A. Appadurai (ed.) *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 64–94.

Kouakou, J.K. (2010) *L'état civil en Côte d'Ivoire, système étatique et réalités socio-culturelles*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Longman, T. (2001) 'Identity Cards, Ethnic Self-Perception, and Genocide in Rwanda'. In: J. Caplan and J. Torpey (eds.) *Documenting Individual Identity: The Development of State Practices in the Modern World*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 345–358.

Lyon, D. (2009) Identifying Citizens: ID Cards as Surveillance. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Manatouma, K. (2020) 'Identifier les individus au Tchad: Politiques et pratiques des papiers d'identité'. PhD thesis in Political Science. Paris: Université Paris Nanterre.

Manby, B. (2016) *Citizenship Law in Africa: A Comparative Study*. New York, NY: Open Society Foundation.

Mann, G. (2006) *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Mann, G. (2015) *From Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel. The Road to Nongovernmentality*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Marko, F. (2016) '"We Are Not a Failed State, We Make the Best Passports": South Sudan and Biometric Modernity'. *African Studies Review*, 59(2), 113–132.

Marshall-Fratani, R. (2006) 'The War of "Who Is Who": Autochthony, Nationalism, and Citizenship in the Ivoirian Crisis'. *African Studies Review*, 49(2), 9–43.

Masondo, I. (2019) 'Unstable Forms. Photography, Race and the Identity Document in South Africa'. In: P. Hayes and G. Minkley (eds.) *Ambivalent. Photography and Visibility in African History*. Athens: Ohio University Press, pp. 77–104.

Mazouz, S. (2017) 'La République et ses autres'. *Politiques de l'altérité dans la France des années 2000*. Lyon: ENS Éditions.

Mbembe, A. (1992) 'Provisional Notes on the Postcolony'. *Africa*, 62(1), 3–37.

Mbembe, A. (1999) 'Du gouvernement privé indirect'. *Politique africaine*, 73, 103–121.

Mbowou, C. (2019) 'Pouvoir et savoir sur les identités à l'âge biométrique aux abords du Lac Tchad. Impossible vérité, impossible citoyenneté?' *Sociétés Politiques Comparées*, 48. Available at: http://www.fasopo.org/sites/default/files/varia1_n48.pdf.

Medina-Doménech, R. (2009) 'Scientific Technologies of National Identity as Colonial Legacies: Extracting the Spanish Nation from Equatorial Guinea'. *Social Studies of Science*, 39(1), 81–112.

Minkley, G. (2019) 'The Pass Photograph and the Initmate Photographic Event in South Africa'. In: P. Hayes and G. Minkley (eds.) *Ambivalent. Photography and Visibility in African History*. Ohio: Ohio University Press, pp. 105–125.

Noiriel, G. (ed.) (2007) *L'identification. Genèse d'un travail d'État*. Paris: Belin.

Olivier de Sardan, J.-P. (2015) 'Practical Norms. Informal Regulations Within Public Bureaucracies (in Africa and Beyond)'. In: J.-P. Olivier de Sardan and T. De Herdt (eds.) *Real Governance and Practical Norms in Sub-Saharan Africa*. London: Routledge, pp. 19–62.

Piton, F. (2018) *Le génocide des Tutsi du Rwanda*. Paris: La Découverte.

Posel, D. (1995) 'State, Power and Gender: Conflict over the Registration of African Customary Marriage in South Africa c. 1910-1970'. *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 8(3), 223–256. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-6443.1995.tb00088.x.

Rader, A. (2017) 'Politiques de la reconnaissance et de l'origine contrôlée: la construction du Somaliland à travers ses cartes d'électeurs'. *Politique africaine*, 4(144), 51–71.

Ritaine, E. (2015) 'Quand les morts de Lampedusa entrent en politique: damnatio memoriæ'. *Cultures & Conflits*, 99–100, 117–142.

Rizzo, L. (2013) 'Visual Aperture: Bureaucratic Systems of Identification, Photgraphy, and Personhood in Colonial Southern Africa'. *History of Photography*, 37(3), 263–282.

Rosental, P.-A. (2012) 'Civil Status and Identification in Nineteenth-Century France: A Matter of State Control?'. In: K. Breckenridge and S. Szreter (eds.) *Registration and Recognition: Documenting the Person in World History*. Proceedings of the British Academy 182. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 137–165.

Saada, E. (2004) 'Paternité et citoyenneté en situation coloniale. Le débat sur les "reconnaissances frauduleuses" et la construction d'un droit impérial'. *Politix*, 17(66), 107–136.

Savage, M. (1986) 'The Imposition of Pass Laws on the African Population in South Africa 1916–1984'. *African Affairs*, 85(339), 181–205.

Scott, J.C. (1998) *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Scott, J.C., Tehranian, J. and Mathias, J. (2002) 'The Production of Legal Identities Proper to States: The Case of the Permanent Family Surname'. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 44(1), 4–44.

Sengoopta, C. (2007) *Imprint of the Raj. How Fingerprinting Was Born in Colonial India*. London: Pan Books.

Siméant, J. (1998) *La cause des sans-papiers*. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.

Spire, A. (2003). 'Semblables et pourtant différents: La citoyenneté paradoxale des "Français musulmans d'Algérie" en métropole'. *Genèses*, 53(4), 48–68.

Thiel, A. (2020). Biometric identification technologies and the Ghanaian 'data revolution'. The Journal of Modern African Studies, 58(1), 115–136.

Tisseau, V. (2017) *Être métis en Imerina (Madagascar) aux XIXe-XXe siècles*. Paris: Karthala.

Torpey, J. (2000) *The Invention of the Passport. Surveillance, Citizenship and the State*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Weitzberg, K. (2020) 'Biometrics, Race Making, and White Exceptionalism: The Controversy Over Universal Fingerprinting in Kenya'. *Journal of African History*, 61(1), 23–43.

Wells, J.C. (1993) *We Now Demand! The History of Women's Resistance to Pass Laws in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

Wilson, S. (1998) *The Means of Naming: A Social and Cultural History of Personal Naming in Western Europe*. London: UCL Press.

Wion, A., Barret, S., and Mbodj-Pouye, A. (2018) 'L'écrit pragmatique en Afrique'. *Afriques*, 7 [online]. Available at: http://journals.openedition.org/afriques/1941. DOI: 10.4000/afriques.1941 [Accessed 26 October 2019].