

BOOK REVIEW

Veronica Fynn Bruey (Ed.). *Patriarchy and Gender in Africa*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021. 248 pp. \$111.00. Hardback. ISBN: 978-1-7936-3856-4.

Patriarchy and Gender in Africa emerges as powerful evidence of contemporary gender justice by centering and meticulously delving into the intricate dynamics of gender roles and patriarchy within a multitude of African societies. This critical analysis, edited and authored by distinguished scholars across various fields, provides an enlightening perspective on the complex interplay between traditional cultural norms and modern gender constructs in various African countries.

The book's core lies in its comprehensive exploration of how patriarchal structures have historically shaped, and continue to influence, gender relations across various African countries, with empirical research, case studies, and personal accounts from over ten countries in the vast continent. The authors in this brilliantly edited volume adeptly navigate through the multifaceted experiences of gender violence across the African diaspora. The chapters illuminate the complexities in which patriarchy manifests itself in various forms of violence across the domestic, personal, and family levels as well as within the structural, institutional, and community sectors. A dynamic cultural perspective is included, giving insight into familial roles and political structures, and the profound impact of these traditional systems on the lives of both men and women.


Methodologically, the book stands out for its rigorous approach, combining qualitative analysis with a rich collection of case studies. This blend not only reinforces the authors' arguments but also provides a tangible context, making the abstract concepts of patriarchy and gender more relatable and understandable. The inclusion of numerous first-hand accounts and interviews adds a layer of authenticity and depth to the narrative, allowing readers to grasp the realities of gender dynamics in various African contexts.

In terms of academic contribution, the book significantly enriches the fields of social sciences, sociology, and (auto)ethnography. It challenges and extends existing theories on gender and power structures, offering fresh insights into the ongoing debates around gender equality and social change in Africa. The authors' critical examination of the intersectionality of age, race, gender, nationality, ethnicity, and social class (to name a few) in the context of African patriarchy is particularly noteworthy. These perspectives not only broaden the scope of the discussion but also invite further scholarly inquiry and interdisciplinary dialogue.

One of the book's most compelling aspects is its relevance to contemporary discourses on gender and society. The authors skillfully bridge historical perspectives with current issues, shedding light on how traditional patriarchal norms continue to influence modern African societies. This link provides a valuable framework for understanding current social and political dynamics, especially in the context of ongoing efforts towards gender equality and empowerment.

The book excels in delivering a comprehensive dialogue around gender justice and is an exceptional example of speaking "up/out." This text would be a valuable asset to any undergraduate or graduate gender studies or special topics course across the social sciences.

In conclusion, *Patriarchy and Gender in Africa* is a profoundly insightful and thought-provoking work. It stands as a crucial contribution to the understanding of gender dynamics on the African continent and across the African diaspora. This book offers a nuanced perspective that is both academically rigorous and highly relevant to contemporary discussions. The book is a must-read for scholars, students, and anyone interested in the complex interplay of gender, culture, and power in the African diaspora and in the continent of Africa. Its depth of analysis and breadth of perspective make it a valuable addition to the fields of sociology, social sciences, gender studies, and broader academia.

Nicole Dezrea Jenkins 
Howard University, Washington, DC, USA
nicole.jenkins@howard.edu
[doi:10.1017/asr.2024.34](https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2024.34)