

1970s might have resonated with similar processes elsewhere on the continent in the same period. One thinks of the robust debates that were taking place at CODESRIA, for instance, and how these might have intersected with those in Ethiopia. Nonetheless, what Zeleke does with the history of the Ethiopian student movement challenges us to reconsider how we think about knowledge production and critical theory within African Studies. Most importantly, the book opens up new pathways for thinking about some of the most urgent social questions facing Ethiopia today.

Namhla Thando Matshanda

University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa

Email: ntmatshanda@uwc.ac.za

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Laleh Khalili, *Sinews of War and Trade: Shipping and Capitalism in the Arabian Peninsula*. London: Verso (pb £11.99 – 978 1 7866 3482 5). 2021, v + 384 pp.

In *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, Charles Tilly famously argues that ‘states make war and wars make states’. He traces the emergence of the modern state in Europe to mechanisms of protection and extraction that transformed warlords into state makers as competitive societies sought new resources. However, as the disruption of global trade and shipping lines caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has shown, trade is no longer state-limited. This new era of globalism has intensified economic competition for resources and products and highlighted the global interdependency and vulnerabilities between states. Therefore, it could be argued that international competition around economic nodes makes war, and war makes economic nodes. Laleh Khalili’s book *Sinews of War and Trade* shows how conflict created trade nodes and routes, which in turn produced wars.

Sinews of War and Trade is a unique intervention emphasizing the intersection of trade and security in the Middle East. Khalili tells the story of the making and unmaking of trade infrastructures that also define conflict and peace in the Arabian Peninsula. The central thesis of her book is that ‘maritime transportation is not simply an enabling adjunct of trade but is central to the very fabric of global capitalism’ (p. 3).

Khalili underscores the critical role of ships and ports in our modern global system. The book tells thoughtful stories about ‘how ports and maritime transport infrastructures have emerged out of the conjuncture of so many histories, struggles, conflicts, and plans (half-formed, implemented, and failed)’ around the ‘sinews of capitalism and conflict’. In her account of modern ports, Khalili grasps the nuances between modern automated ports and conventional populated ports (port cities), the latter growing due to local social factors rather than state-planned projects. She also shows the connections between ports and their hinterlands by highlighting the role of pilgrimage, trade and resource exploitation in road planning. Interestingly, she emphasizes the confluence of interests and motivations at the heart of infrastructural and development projects, eschewing a state-centric approach.

Khalili's work engages with the histories, economies and geopolitics of port nodes throughout the region. The first chapter shows how shipping routes are not simply the fastest journey between two points, but are long-lasting practices contingent on power relations, technological change, pilgrimage practices and physical infrastructure. Routes are made and unmade due to complex dynamics, such as the closure of the Suez Canal during the Third Arab–Israeli War (1967–75), which changed both the route of oil containers and their capacity. The second chapter makes a case for geopolitical supremacy over environmental considerations in deciding harbour locations. Chapter 3 surveys unseen legal systems that govern international maritime trade and how these norms favour global capitalists. Khalili also shows the links between harbours with their inland connections, offering a history of power dynamics facilitating trade between sea and land. The book then tells the story of the people who made and were made through these global connections in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. From racialized and marginalized labour to wealthy capitalists and royals, Khalili beautifully grasps the region's biopolitics of trade and shipping. The final chapter covers the relationship between node making and conflict, which has shaped the history and present of the region.

One of the main themes in the confluence between node making and conflict is the importance of labour protests. As Khalili shows, the Palestinian issue was central to the economic struggles of maritime labour, with strikes in solidarity with the Palestinian cause in the aftermath of the Nakba of 1967. The Zionist occupation of Palestine in 1948 produced many expats and refugees in the Gulf states, many of whom worked in ports and shipping. Their migration solidified widespread support for Palestine during the 1967 war. In addition, port-worker strikes were a symbol of decolonization struggles in the Arab world, as Khalili shows for the port of Aden.

Khalili also shows how conflicts can give rise to ports. The Israeli attacks on Syrian and Jordanian ports during the 1973 war led to the creation of the port of Shuwaikh in Kuwait. Khalili also shows how the Lebanese Civil War (1975–90) effected a spatial transformation after the Phalange militia burned down the Beirut docks in 1975. Following this event, Lebanese warlords developed their own port and the old port was replaced with several private docking spaces. This new arrangement had detrimental knock-on effects for the war-torn country, with shipping moving to ports in Syria, Greece, Cyprus and the Arabian Peninsula.

In many cases, conflicts – such as the Iran–Iraq War of 1980 and the Desert Storm War – can reshape trade nodes and routes throughout a region. Khalili reveals how Port Rashid and the Jabal Ali Free Zone benefited from both wars as trade was diverted from Iranian ports during Iran–Iraq and from Kuwait during the Second Gulf War after the Iraq invasion. The War on Terror and the invasion of Iraq during the 1990s further securitized trade nodes in the region. US military bases and their utilization of commercial ports for logistics support introduced a new convergence between civilian and military interests in the region.

Recently, a similar phenomenon has been shaping the politics of the Red Sea. Middle Eastern countries are building military bases and commercial ports in the Horn of Africa. Khalili's arguments about the confluence between node making and war making are especially relevant in the case of UAE involvement in the Yemen War. From Khalili's beautiful illustration of the slippage between conflict and trade, a new theme emerges in the Red Sea and other strategic regions.

Surpassing the conventional conception of security and trade as separate state domains, she tells a story of regional interdependency and convergence that advances our understanding of modern port politics.

Yasir Zaidan

Jackson School for International Studies, University of Washington, Seattle,
USA/National University–Sudan, Khartoum, Sudan
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Daniel E. Agbibo, *They Eat Our Sweat: Transport Labor, Corruption, and Everyday Survival in Urban Nigeria*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (hb £75 – 978 0 19 886154 6). 2022, 288 pp.

As the subtitle of Daniel Agbibo's book suggests, the author combines three themes into one comprehensive narrative. Throughout the book, Agbibo masterfully demonstrates how commuter transport workers (taxi, minibus and motor-taxi drivers and conductors) engage in bribing to carry out their daily activities, secure protection from harassment and avoid arrest. Corruption, while widely condemned across Africa, is nevertheless a widespread social practice in many countries. Between colonialism, neopatrimonialism, dazzling corruption scandals and internet scamming (or '419' scams), the ordinary Nigerian has learned that 'being an honest and law-abiding citizen does not pay' (p. 61). Rather than remaining as passive victims, however, Nigerians 'appropriate [corruption] in a variety of ways to minimize risk, maximize profit, and impose order on their workaday world' (p. 17).

For many transport workers, bribing constitutes a survival strategy, as their livelihoods are precarious and can easily be disrupted, not least by the state. Agbibo demonstrates this point using the 2012 Lagos Traffic Law, which banned motor-taxis (*okadas*) from most main roads, thereby marginalizing them and robbing the drivers of their only source of income. Without an alternative, many drivers continued working on the forbidden roads, which exposed them to paying ever higher bribes. This illustrates 'the role of the state as a creator and regulator of inequalities' (p. 208). Yet, *okada* drivers reacted by taking the Lagos State government to court for violating their right to the city, once more showing the agency of these underprivileged actors.

Being able to speak the local language and blend in, Agbibo collected his data through a participatory observation approach, even working as a conductor in one of the *danfos* (minibus taxis) himself. Getting around using commuter transport and hanging out with workers at urban transport nodes clearly gave him a deep understanding of daily practices in urban commuter transport, including bribery. This allows Agbibo to present the perspectives of transport workers. He also spoke to some *agberos*, touts who collect all kinds of 'fees' in the name of the transport union and who do not hesitate to use violence if drivers refuse to pay. These *agberos* are protected by 'big men' all the way up to the highest level of the transport union and beyond, and can therefore carry out their work unhindered. Due to the mafia-style characteristics of this system, it was unfortunately not possible for Agbibo