

**Katherine Bruce-Lockhart. 2022. *Carceral Afterlives: Prisons, Detention, and Punishment in Postcolonial Uganda*. Athens: Ohio University Press. 280 pp.**

In his seminal work *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault discussed the widespread nature of imprisonment. However, he did not consider race. The modern prison (a centrally controlled, all-encompassing state institution that contains, disciplines, and reforms violators of the law) spread from northeastern Europe in the 18th century to Asia and Africa in the early 20th century. *Carceral Afterlives* relates to a critique long posited by scholars studying colonial punishment. Those scholars challenge Foucault's argument that the emergence of the prison represented a shift from public and physically violent forms of punishment to custodial, disciplinary forms that had an impact on the soul. Katherine Bruce-Lockhart's *Carceral Afterlives* stands out with its unique and thoroughly detailed exploration of incarceration in postcolonial Uganda, covering the period between 1962 and the inauguration of Uganda's current president, Yoweri Museveni, in 1986. However, the book "leaves out Museveni's presidency: a period that forms a...still-unfolding chapter in Uganda's history, as Museveni and the NRM have been in power for over three and a half decades" (pp. 190-91).

The strength of *Carceral Afterlives* lies in moving beyond the simplistic view of prisons as solely repressive institutions to delve into the multifaceted uses of incarceration throughout Uganda's colonial and postcolonial eras, showcasing how prisons served as instruments of punishment and tools for political control, economic production, and even social engineering through the colonial alleged "civilizing mission" (p. 4). Furthermore, the book's meticulous attention to detail is evident in its avoidance of presenting a monolithic picture of Uganda's prison system. Bruce-Lockhart brings into focus the existence of a tripartite system, encompassing central government prisons, Buganda kingdom prisons, and local government prisons. This nuanced analysis allows scholars of transnational prison history to understand the variations in power dynamics and the interplay between local and central authorities within the carceral landscape. While focusing on prisons and other spaces of punitive confinement in Uganda, *Carceral Afterlives* attends to the connections between carceral systems in the Global South and Global North.

The book uses a wide array of written, oral, and visual sources, "analyzed in relation to a range of media sources, memoirs, and gray literature" (p. 20). Engaging case studies further enriches the analysis. The book profiles Fabian Okwaare, the first Commissioner of Prison Services, highlighting the complex position of prison professionals caught between human rights commitments and the demands of the state. On a similar note, the experiences of female warders shed light on the often-overlooked aspects of prison life. Their challenges in balancing professional duties with family needs and their ability to foster a sense of community within the service offer a valuable glimpse into the human dimension of the prison system.

"Imprisonment politicizes everyone," as renowned Ugandan political prisoner Rajat Neogy best put it. *Carceral Afterlives* is shaped by the fact that certain groups of prisoners are more visible than others. The book classifies people "held in sites of punitive confinement" into two categories, "detainees...who were detained without trial," and "prisoners...who were sentenced through a trial process" (p. 19). The book's focus on the state's perspective leaves room for further exploration of prisoner agency. While Bruce-Lockhart effectively analyzes the

influence of Ugandan presidents on penal policies, a deeper understanding of how inmates navigated the system, resisted authority, or even adapted to their circumstances would enrich the narrative.

There is also a tension between the author's stated aim to move away from "sensationalized stories of brutality" (p. 25) and the inherent drama of political violence—the brutality described within the book is undeniably shocking. A more nuanced engagement with sensory criminology could acknowledge the emotional impact of this violence without resorting to sensationalism. Perhaps analyzing the lived experiences of inmates and warders could shed light on the emotional landscape of Uganda's prisons.

In conclusion, *Carceral Afterlives* not only provides a comprehensive analysis and nuanced approach to understanding Uganda's history and the role of prisons in authoritarian regimes, but also serves as a catalyst for further research. Bruce-Lockhart's work offers a strong foundation, inspiring scholars to delve deeper into the experiences of those confined within Uganda's prisons. This book, de facto, can serve as a catalyst for such research, helping scholars understand the human cost and the complex social dynamics within these institutions and motivating them to contribute to this important field of study.

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