identities (p. 3). As such, Muslim American women find themselves in "an in-between space awkwardly straddling recognized categories, fitting into none" (p. 11). Building on these conclusions, in her final chapter Mir offers a critique of American campus culture. She argues that the fact that so many Muslim women feel assimilation is required in order to avoid discrimination points to an essential flaw in campus culture: "[T]his is an occasion not to celebrate the possibilities of American pluralism but to examine its inflexibility" (p. 179).

In recent years, the field of anthropology of education has experienced a long-overdue growth in the interest in studying the place of religion in schooling experiences. Mir's work contributes to this growing literature while also demonstrating how fruitful it can be to take anthropological research on education beyond the classroom and into spaces of leisure. The social insights of Mir's work—especially the reflections of a minority group on majority campus culture—and the approachable writing style make this text particularly useful to scholars of education and policy makers. Its themes make it a fitting choice for an undergraduate course dealing with issues of minorities and identity, especially given that undergraduate readers, whatever their background, may be questioning American campus culture themselves.

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Claire-Marie Hefner is a PhD candidate in the Department of Anthropology at Emory University (chefner@emory.edu).

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The NGOisation of Education: Case Studies from Benin. Sarah Fichtner, Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2012
Reviewed by Kathryn Anderson-Levitt, *University of California, Los Angeles*

Anthropologist Sarah Fichtner offers a rare book-length study of the actors who promote education reforms in the global South. The monograph provides important insights for anyone studying education and development but also deserves to be pondered by scholars studying education reform in the global North.

Fichtner focuses her gaze on international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) in local settings in Benin, West Africa. However, her ethnographic interviews and observations also encompass donors who funded the INGOs—notably USAID—and much of the work of local development brokers, from ministry of education experts to school directors and community activists. She conducted multisite fieldwork during three visits totaling ten months in 2006 through 2008. She interviewed participants in French and English and occasionally, working through an interpreter, in local languages.

The book's analysis builds on four case studies of particular, diverse projects run by organizations based in the United States, Switzerland, and France. One was a teacher-education project run by the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH). Another was an establishment of a municipal education committee by Aide et Action. She also looked at an anti-child trafficking project implemented jointly by Catholic Relief Services, World Education, and Terre des Hommes, and she studied support for

school cafeterias implemented, again, by Catholic Relief Services. Fichtner studied the last three cases within a single school district in northeast Benin to better understand the interaction of INGOs, donors, school personnel, and municipal officials within a single social arena. She also includes a contrasting study of a community that attracted few INGO projects.

Weaving a double argument throughout the book, Fichtner first describes the state "at work," drawing on theorizing and empirical work by a larger research project of which she was a part. The concept of the state at work means not only that states construct realities, such as converting children to pupils or pupils to degree holders, but also that the state itself is constantly under construction, with many different builders layering new projects on top of previous half-built structures. She applies the metaphor to all states, not just African states (p. 21), and her comment, "Education reforms can . . . be imagined as never-finishing building sites of the state" (p. 38), could easily describe a U.S. reform like No Child Left Behind. Fichtner shows how each project she studied constructed the state in a different way—by disciplining it, incorporating it into a non-governmental committee, bypassing it, or feeding it by supporting enrollment growth.

In her second argument, Fichtner claims that the work of INGOs "involves foremost the promotion, marketing, and management of global models, norms and standards in the field of education, and [only] to a much lesser extent the provision of resources and services to 'the poor' " (p. 12). She makes this case convincingly by documenting that each project she studied prioritized the sensitizing of teachers, parents, or other community members to particular norms while also developing committees meant to function in ways comprehensible to current Western audit-culture managers.

In using the concept of *global norms*, Fichtner recognizes that she is traveling in the same territory as neo-institutionalism, also known as world culture theory or world society theory (e.g., Meyer et al. 1997; Ramirez 2012). However, she objects that world culture theory (like many uses of the culture concept, she warns), neglects the actor and also neglects questions of power (p. 28). In contrast, her greatest contribution is to show in rich detail who the many actors are on the local scenes, what their agendas are, and how they exercise their varying degrees of power to sometimes-contradictory ends.

At times the argument about global norms seems little related to the theme of the state at work. However, Fichtner links them by arguing that the "development-driven promotion of norms . . . takes place at the very heart of the state," and hence "the NGOisation of education . . . is a phenomenon that is central to the state 'at work' in the international system" (p. 13). This is true because states themselves exist only because the state is the "model that is supported by a common world culture," another tenet of world culture theory (p. 27).

Although now working in France, Fichtner was trained by an Africanist anthropologist in Germany. I wish she had explained whether she based her fieldwork on her own prior knowledge and experience in African settings or was simply building on her advisor's contacts. However, she provides details on the improvisations of fieldwork that will help many a new ethnographer. In addition, she provides insights not only on *studying up* (Laura Nader's term) but also on studying *Sideways* (a concept from Ulf Hannerz), in this case on learning from INGO staff members who were fellow PhD students and had their own theses about what was going on.

While I would have advised breaking the text into more chapters and providing an index, this compact volume is a quick first read—and worth a second read for its theoretical insights. It should be assigned in courses on comparative education and development. For teachers of anthropology and education, it would stimulate students to reflect on the connections between schooling and the state. Importantly, it would also provoke

them to ask how norms for schooling are promoted and how people dissect and reconstruct them on the ground, including in the global North.

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Kathryn Anderson-Levitt is professor emerita of Anthropology at the University of Michigan–Dearborn and a lecturer in Education at University of California, Los Angeles (kandersonlevitt@ucla.edu).

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