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Gendering African Social Spaces

Women, Power, and Cultural Expressions

Edited by

Toyin Falola

Wanjala S. Nasong'o



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To Dr. Bridget Teboh of the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth

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Series Editor's Foreword

The *Carolina Academic Press African World Series*, inaugurated in 2010, offers significant new works in the field of African and Black World studies. The series provides scholarly and educational texts that can serve both as reference works and as readers in college classes.

Studies in the series are anchored in the existing humanistic and the social scientific traditions. Their goal, however, is the identification and elaboration of the strategic place of Africa and its Diaspora in a shifting global world. More specifically, the studies will address gaps and larger needs in the developing scholarship on Africa and the Black World.

The series intends to fill gaps in areas such as African politics, history, law, religion, culture, sociology, literature, philosophy, visual arts, art history, geography, language, health, and social welfare. Given the complex nature of Africa and its Diaspora, and the constantly shifting perspectives prompted by globalization, the series also meets a vital need for scholarship connecting knowledge with events and practices. Reflecting the fact that life in Africa continues to change, especially in the political arena, the series explores issues emanating from racial and ethnic identities, particularly those connected with the ongoing mobilization of ethnic minorities for inclusion and representation.

Toyin Falola

University of Texas at Austin

Preface

This volume focuses on the theme of gendering African social spaces. It is noteworthy that, at one time or another in past histories, many societies were essentially patriarchal in nature. The dynamic of women's empowerment is thus a pertinent issue in the contemporary world. In this volume, gender empowerment and the notion of gendering social spaces are approached broadly. The social spaces addressed range from the political arena to socio-economic spaces and church leadership, as well as spaces for artistic expressions.

Accordingly, the volume is divided into four parts. The first focuses on the issue of the politics of women's empowerment with particular reference to activities in the political and policy-making spaces in Africa. The second part deals with women's marginalization, victimization, and violent abuse with special treatment of women with both physical and mental disabilities. Part three of the book takes on the issue of gender and artistic expressions with a view to assessing the contributions of women to creativity. Part four rounds up the book with a focus on the role of women in church leadership with particular focus on Pentecostal churches in Nigeria.

The chapters in this volume are written by scholars, academics, and practitioners from multiple disciplinary perspectives including the social sciences, humanities, and even the natural sciences. The volume is thus rich in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary frameworks. We truly hope that readers will find the volume enriching not only from the multiple disciplinary perspectives covered, but, even more so, from the scope of the issues covered within the realm of gendering African social spaces. The contents should be valuable to students, analysts, and policy practitioners in the fields of gender and development, African politics, sociology, African history, and Africana studies generally.

In completing this volume, we owe a debt to a number of individuals. First, we would like to thank the contributors to this volume for their diligence in resubmitting the papers after the conference and for their patience as we

worked through the process of peer review and editing. Second, we would like to sincerely thank the organizers of the 2013 Africa Conference at the University of Texas at Austin for a most successful conference that brought together a broad range of scholars from across the world to exchange their ideas, research findings, and experiences in a most vibrant atmosphere. Lady Jane Acquah and Ryan Groves deserve special commendation for their efforts, dedication, and organizational ability. Finally, we express our gratitude to the publisher, Carolina Academic Press, for their diligence in getting this volume out.

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