



Making and Unmaking Public Health in Africa: Ethnographic and Historical Perspectives (Cambridge Centre of African Studies)

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Africa has emerged as a prime arena of global health interventions that focus on particular diseases and health emergencies. These are framed increasingly in terms of international concerns about security, human rights, and humanitarian crisis. This presents a stark contrast to the 1960s and '70s, when many newly independent African governments pursued the vision of public health "for all," of comprehensive health care services directed by the state with support from foreign donors. These initiatives often failed, undermined by international politics, structural adjustment, and neoliberal policies, and by African states themselves. Yet their traces remain in contemporary expectations of and yearnings for a more robust public health.

This volume explores how medical professionals and patients, government officials, and ordinary citizens approach questions of public health as they navigate contemporary landscapes of NGOs and transnational projects, faltering state services, and expanding privatization. Its contributors analyze the relations between the public and the private providers of public health, from the state to new global biopolitical formations of political institutions, markets, human populations, and health. Tensions and ambiguities animate these complex relationships, suggesting that the question of what public health actually is in Africa cannot be taken for granted. Offering historical and ethnographic analyses, the volume develops an anthropology of public health in Africa.

Contributors: P. Wenzel Geissler; Murray Last; Rebecca Marsland; Lotte Meinert; Benson A. Mulemi; Ruth J. Prince; and Noemi Tousignant.

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