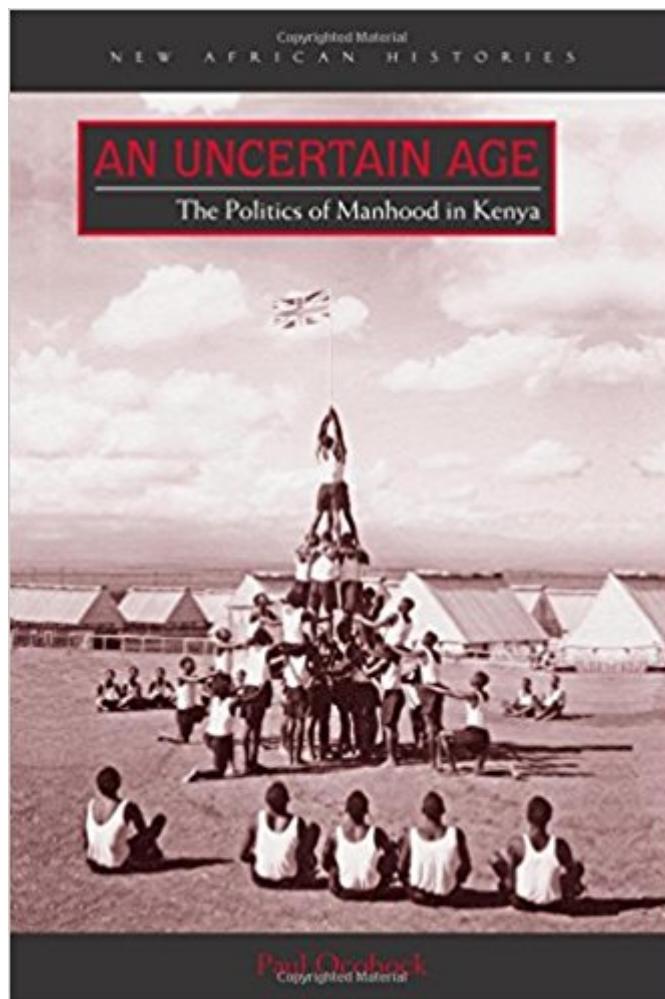


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An Uncertain Age: The Politics Of Manhood In Kenya



Synopsis

In twentieth-century Kenya, age and gender were powerful cultural and political forces that animated household and generational relationships. They also shaped East Africans' contact with and influence on emergent colonial and global ideas about age and masculinity. Kenyan men and boys came of age achieving their manhood through changing rites of passage and access to new outlets such as town life, crime, anticolonial violence, and nationalism. And as they did, the colonial government appropriated masculinity and maturity as means of statecraft and control. In *An Uncertain Age*, Paul Ocobock positions age and gender at the heart of everyday life and state building in Kenya. He excavates in unprecedented ways how the evolving concept of "youth" motivated and energized colonial power and the movements against it, exploring the masculinities boys and young men debated and performed as they crisscrossed the colony in search of wages or took the Mau Mau oath. Yet he also considers how British officials' own ideas about masculinity shaped not only young African men's ideas about manhood but the very nature of colonial rule. *An Uncertain Age* joins a growing number of histories that have begun to break down monolithic male identities to push the historiographies of Kenya and empire into new territory.

Book Information

Paperback: 376 pages

Publisher: Ohio University Press; 1 edition (March 17, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0821422642

ISBN-13: 978-0821422649

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1.1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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Paul Ocobock is an assistant professor of history at the University of Notre Dame.

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