



Forensics of Capital

By Michael Ralph

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As one of Africa's few democracies, Senegal has long been thought of as a leader of moral, political, and economic development on the continent. We tend to assume that any such nation has achieved favorable international standing due to its own merits. In *Forensics of Capital*, Michael Ralph upends this kind of conventional thinking, showing how Senegal's diplomatic standing was strategically forged in the colonial and postcolonial eras at key periods of its history and is today entirely contingent on the consensus of wealthy and influential nations and international lending agencies.

Ralph examines Senegal's crucial and pragmatic decisions related to its development and how they garnered international favor, decisions such as its opposition to Soviet involvement in African liberation—despite itself being a socialist state—or its support for the US-led war on terror—despite its population being predominately Muslim. He shows how such actions have given Senegal an inflated political and economic position and status as a highly credit-worthy nation even as its domestic economy has faltered. Exploring these and many other aspects of Senegal's political economy and its interface with the international community, Ralph demonstrates that the international reputation of any nation—not just Senegal—is based on deep structural biases.

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Editorial Review

Review

“*Forensics of Capital* is a top-notch intervention into several fields, ranging from African studies to anthropology to economic history. It effortlessly takes the reader along for a ride on the tangled history that has led to the current sovereign state of Senegal. But part of its ambitious theoretical contribution lies precisely here: by employing a novel argument about ‘forensic profiles,’ Ralph ably shows that *all*nation-states have a similarly tangled emergence.”

(Gustav Peebles, New School)

“*Forensics of Capital* uncovers new theoretical and ethnographic pathways that will have important implications for both African studies and anthropology scholarship. It draws from various sources and resources to identify critical moments, events, and key social actors; investigates issues of risk, liability, citizenship, sovereignty, leadership, historical injustices, violence, (un)employment, and displacement; and proposes an original cartography of the formation of modern Senegal. This bold, concise, and innovative book presents a compelling profile of the ‘Senegal exception / success story’ narrative based on a scrupulous and captivating probing of forensic anthropology in an African context by one of the most astute and versatile theorists.”

(Mamadou Diouf, Columbia University)

“*Forensics of Capital* takes you on a whirlwind tour of five hundred years of West African history to show how polities and markets have been made in the cauldron of an expanding world economy. Wolof merchants and French railroad builders, fifteenth-century Spanish kings and twenty-first-century American presidents, unemployed Dakar youth, and US military strategists all appear on Ralph’s brilliant *tableau vivant*. They engage in petty violence, grand strategizing, infrastructure construction, and profit seeking, creating in the process a messy world of coercion and contract, of states and markets, that is at the very heart of modern capitalism.”

(Sven Beckert, Harvard University)

About the Author

Michael Ralph is associate professor of social and cultural analysis at New York University.

Users Review

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Rufus George:

The knowledge that you get from *Forensics of Capital* will be the more deep you searching the information that hide in the words the more you get thinking about reading it. It does not mean that this book is hard to comprehend but *Forensics of Capital* giving you joy feeling of reading. The article author conveys their point in particular way that can be understood by simply anyone who read the idea because the author of this reserve is well-known enough. This book also makes your current vocabulary increase well. It is therefore easy to understand then can go together with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We suggest you for having this particular *Forensics of Capital* instantly.

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