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The Locality of Chieftainship: Territory, Authority and Local Politics in Northern Malawi, 1870-1974

van Mary Davies

1. By exploring the spatial context of traditional power new perspectives on colonial chieftainship can be discovered.

2. A "locality" is a multivocal space shaped by relational factors: with regard to neighbouring localities, in relation to the state, and through processes that are global.

3. Indirect Rule enabled the reach of the Native Authority to stretch over social domains like the household but it also gave many chiefs the opportunity to assert control over space, over land, and over fixed natural resources as they never had done before.

4. Chieftainships are constructed and contested within the context of local histories and regional contestations, as well as through the eyes of the State.

5. By the beginning of the Twentieth Century personality politics rather than ritual power was the platform on which the Balowoka chieftainships in Northern Malawi established their authority.

6. Timothy Chawinga and his contemporaries were able to use their new “customary rights” to allocate land access to “natives” whilst denying it to “strangers” in late colonial Malawi; the ramifications of this continue to unfold today.

7. Biography is a useful genre of historical investigation.

8. Time flies like an arrow; fruit flies like a banana.

9. Taking the coach from London to Amsterdam might often be the cheapest option, but it is rarely a good idea.

10. There is nothing quite like a good cup of tea.