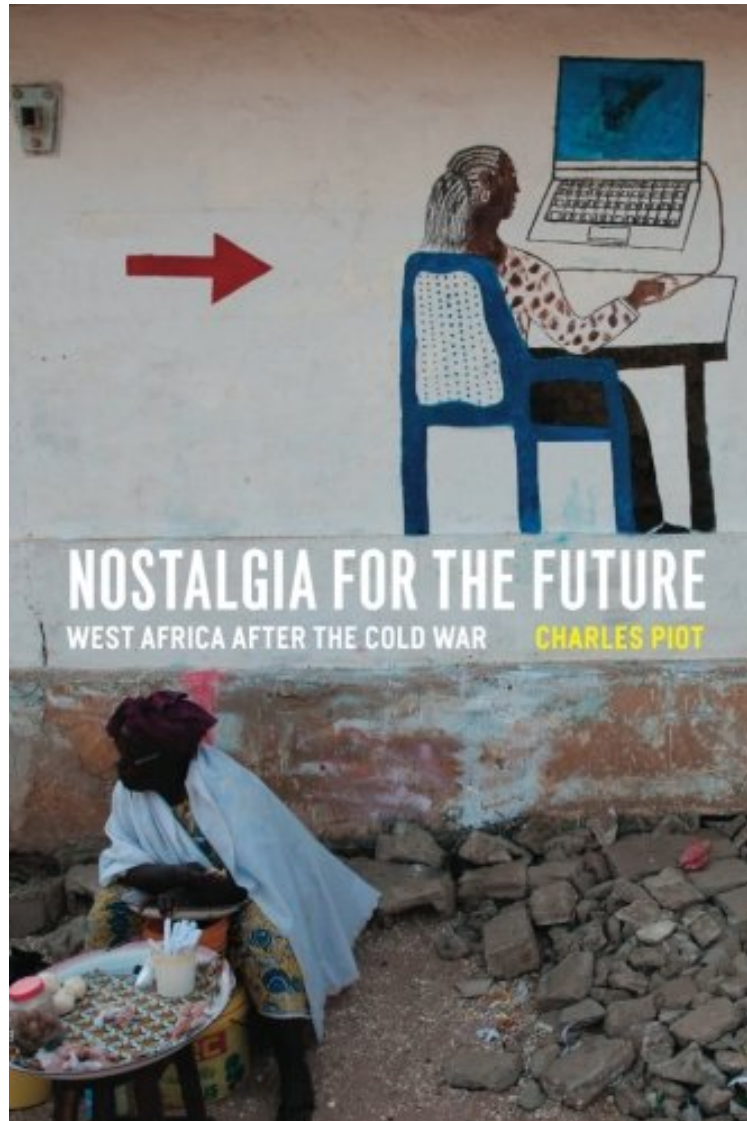


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## Nostalgia for the Future: West Africa after the Cold War

Charles Piot

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#703169 in Books Charles Piot 2010-07-01 2010-07-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x .80 x 6.00l, .65 #File Name: 0226669653216 pages Nostalgia for the Future West Africa after the Cold War | File size: 67.Mb

**Charles Piot : Nostalgia for the Future: West Africa after the Cold War** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Nostalgia for the Future: West Africa after the Cold War:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Piot reveals a sad reality that many people should understand about the repercussions ...By NataliaAfter the end of a dictatorship of Gnassingbe Eyadema, a series of drastic changes occurred from the Post-Cold War era to the present. Togo's society, religion, economy and political system were changed by neoliberal ideas of fundamental conduction between economic freedom and political freedom.

Privatization, Pentecostalism, and NGOs provoked these changes. In *Nostalgia for the Future*, Piot describes in five chapters the different shifts and struggles of different communities in Togo and other countries in Africa, from the clash between generations and family structure through new beliefs that influenced people and isolated them from their villages and traditions. It was eye opening to learn about the connection between globalization, and how created conditions that drove people to find ways to leave the country. Piot reveals a sad reality that many people should understand about the repercussions of greedy neoliberal policies. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good read overall

By Customer I had to read this book for an Anthropology class. Truthfully I was not looking forward, but the book was a pleasant surprise. Piot uses many stories to deliver his message. This makes the book readable, enjoyable, and really gave me a feel for the topic. Here is some background for the book. West Africa was under a colonial system of government (most recently under French rule) that came to an end with the end of the Cold War. Following Togo's Severance from France Eyadema, a patrimonial ruler, held office for two decades (1967-2005) until his death in 2005. Eyadema's son Faure took up office after his father's death. After the Cold War the state of West Africa lost its funding from the West and thus the political state falls from power, and from the lives of the West African people. To fill this space enter the NGOs (non-governmental organization) and Pentecostal churches. From this point on these organizations are responsible for the development of the nation. A short overview. Chapter one explores transformations in the Togolese state from early independence to the present. Chapter two discusses the significance of the new Pentecostal churches in the cultural life of Togo and Ghana after the Cold War. Chapter three discusses the visa lottery in Togo. Chapter four explores the interaction of between the churches and villagers over the new religious views and the traditional religious imaginaries especially with regard to funeral ceremonies. Chapter five examines development projects and practices, many run by NGOs, in Farende-Kuwde from the 1990s to the 2000s. Chapter six gives an overview perspective of West Africa's strive for modernity, and in doing so its departure from tradition. I particularly liked Piot's discussion of religion. Piot analyses the rise of the charismatic churches in the 1990s from a political and sociological viewpoint. More specifically, trying to answer the question of why charismatic churches became so popular in Togo in the 1990s. 6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Re-Conceptualizing Theory in Piot's *Nostalgia for the Future*

By Kara In *Nostalgia for the Future: West Africa after the Cold War*, Charles Piot works to re-conceptualize the theories of globalization and postcolonialism in relation to his study and experience of Togo. Piot draws on several theorists including Agamben, Bayart, Hardt and Negri and Mbembe. This book, as Piot states in the introduction, "is about a moment in history, it is also about a mode of theorizing" (7). The time period examined here is from the end of the Cold War in 1989 to the present (2009). The majority of the text deals with the switch in the 1990s when the power of the dictator was replaced by the power of the church. It is through the church that people are able to visualize the future, the globalized. He examines Togo's shift from past which haunts the present, and how that forms new perceptions of the future. The future in many regards is seen as the global. This relationship between the global and the local is a prominent theme within this book. Piot also does an excellent job of giving examples of individuals' stories that relate and give a personal touch to the subjects discussed. Togo in this sense is characterized by hybridizations of culture and politics. There are two major questions that Piot attempts to answer: Can Togo preserve some traditions while still moving towards the modern or is it necessary to abandon the past? And what place does Togo take in a globalized world? Piot does an in depth analysis of Togo in several areas in order to answer these questions. These areas of evaluation include: the state, the church, green card visa lottery ("fantasy of exile"), witchcraft (showing local and global tensions), and development (or rather "arrested development"). In his discussion of the lottery, Piot understands this as a major cultural event and something that is getting harder to win. He gives an example of an entrepreneur named Kodjo and his process through the lottery with all three of his wives. Witchcraft is also an interesting area of discussion. While this may seem to suggest a more traditional state, witchcraft as this book explains it is actually a concept of the postmodern, and as something that challenges beliefs as well as escalating panic in tension between the local and global. As the title suggests, the Togolese have this "nostalgia for the future" without really knowing what the future holds or how to get there. However, they do know that they are in many ways tired of the past and giving in to the hope of the future. The structure of this book includes a great overview in the introduction and is separated after three chapters by "Mise en Scene," basically introducing the second half of the book. I found this text to be very easy to follow and well organized even with the many topics Piot takes on. He also takes on a great task of re-conceptualizing theory to fit the intercut themes of a country and its individuals. This is most prominent in his last chapter "The Death of a Culture," where he suggests an end to history by new ways of looking at temporality and spatiality. He coins the terms "noncontinuous temporality" (break from the past) and "re-temporalizations" (rescaling of the spatial) to describe the present state of Togo. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in theory. Even for those who have not studied any of the topics I've mentioned above, I would still recommend this work. Because of Piot's personal experience in Togo and his experience as a professor, his expertise and passion for teaching is transparent in *Nostalgia for the Future*.

"Nostalgia for the Future is an evocative and topical study that is clearly the product of a mature, long-term engagement with contemporary Togo, the anthropological and historical literature on the country, and the theoretical debates that have been central to anthropology over the past fifteen years." - Mariane C. Ferme, University of California, Berkeley

About the Author Charles Piot is professor in the departments of cultural anthropology and African and African American studies at Duke University. He is the author of *Remotely Global: Village Modernity in West Africa*, also published by the University of Chicago Press.