



Generations Past: Youth in East African History

ANDREW BURTON

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Contemporary Africa is demographically characterized above all else by its youthfulness. In East Africa the median age of the population is now a striking 17.5 years, and more than 65 percent of the population is age 24 or under. This situation has attracted growing scholarly attention, resulting in an important and rapidly expanding literature on the position of youth in African societies.

While the scholarship examining the contemporary role of youth in African societies is rich and growing, the historical dimension has been largely neglected in the literature thus far. *Generations Past* seeks to address this gap through a wide-ranging selection of essays that covers an array of youth-related themes in historical perspective. Thirteen chapters explore the historical dimensions of youth in nineteenth-, twentieth-, and twenty-first-century Ugandan, Tanzanian, and Kenyan societies. Key themes running through the book include the analytical utility of youth as a social category; intergenerational relations and the passage of time; youth as a social and political problem; sex and gender roles among East African youth; and youth as historical agents of change. The strong list of contributors includes prominent scholars of the region, and the collection encompasses a good geographical spread of all three East African countries.

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