

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910462176503321
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Titolo	Unmasking the state [[electronic resource] ] : making Guinea modern / / Mike McGovern
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Chicago ; ; London, : University of Chicago Press, 2013
ISBN	1-283-73323-4 0-226-92511-0
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (311 p.)
Classificazione	LB 40690
Disciplina	966.52/03
Soggetti	SOCIAL SCIENCE / General Electronic books. Guinea Politics and government 20th century Guinea History 20th century
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Frontmatter -- Contents -- Acknowledgments -- Part One. The Grammar and Rhetoric of Identity -- Part Two. Revealing and Reshaping the Body Politic -- Appendix 1 -- Appendix 2 -- Notes -- Works Cited -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	When the Republic of Guinea gained independence in 1958, one of the first policies of the new state was a village-to-village eradication of masks and other ritual objects it deemed "fetishes." The Demystification Program, as it was called, was so urgent it even preceded the building of a national road system. In Unmasking the State, Mike McGovern attempts to understand why this program was so important to the emerging state and examines the complex role it had in creating a unified national identity. In doing so, he tells a dramatic story of cat and mouse where minority groups cling desperately to their important- and outlawed-customs. Primarily focused on the communities in the country's southeastern rainforest region-people known as Forestiers-the Demystification Program operated via a paradox. At the same time it banned rituals from Forestiers' day-to-day lives, it appropriated them into a state-sponsored program of folklorization. McGovern points to an important purpose for this: by

objectifying this polytheistic group's rituals, the state created a viable counterexample against which the Muslim majority could define proper modernity. Describing the intertwined relationship between national and local identity making, McGovern showcases the coercive power and the unintended consequences involved when states attempt to engineer culture.

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