individual lives and experiences. Part 3 of the book focuses on building networks with those at home, in Senegal. Here Kane focuses on the development of a transnational spiritual economy involving a circuit of shaykhs moving between Senegal and Senegalese migrants abroad.

Kane shows the fraught nature of “integration” as part of the mission of Senegalese associations in the United States. He demonstrates how they help migrants navigate legal, social, moral, and economic structures and strictures. Yet Kane does not question the dominant paradigm in migration studies, which is the assumption that integration is the ultimate goal. One wonders what his interlocutors think about the possibilities for integration given their experience in post-9/11 America. As Kane argues, integration into American society requires not only a desire on behalf of immigrants to integrate, but the reception of the host society. Here the ethnography could have included field-based research and policy analysis of the politics of immigration in the United States. Moreover, as the title of the book indicates, the homeland is the arena (as translated by Kane from the Wolof, *Lamb jaa nga Senegal*) in which Senegalese women and men seek to fashion their reputations and that of their families. Given the nature of circular migration between the United States and Senegal, and the continuing importance of relations with those at home, it is not clear that integration and settlement in the United States is the ultimate goal of many migrants. Kane describes in vivid detail debates between men and women concerning the allocation of family resources, the importance of the education and upbringing of children in the home country, and the changing nature of work and social support in and out of Senegal.

Beth Buggenhagen, Indiana University


Scholars of Islamic law face the challenge of explaining to readers and students the array of texts, reasoning processes, and interpretation that go into this thing that we call “Islamic law” in the first place. Law, as many argue, does not exist in a vacuum in the world of text; rather, it is applied and interpreted through judges, litigants, and scholars. This is the premise of *An Islamic Court in Context*, a study of one particular Zanzibari court,
and indeed, one particular kadhi, Shaykh Hamid. Based on field research conducted on the Zanzibari island of Unguja between 1999 and 2005, the book is based on Stiles’s 2002 doctoral dissertation in anthropology at Washington University in St. Louis.

Chapter 1 is a strong introductory chapter which establishes the author’s intervention in the literature and her methodology. Stiles engages in a useful and informed discussion of the flexibility of law, particularly Islamic law, drawing significantly on recent research in anthropology and history. Here, she underscores her main objective in writing the book: exploring the ways in which judges, clerics, and litigants understand Islamic law. In addition to this core argument, Stiles identifies two themes of discussion to be threaded through the book: an exploration of the relationship between courtroom activity and the production of written documents, and the ways in which gendered experiences of divorce and marriage influence court activity and the judges’ reasoning. The situated process of judicial reasoning is most interesting to Stiles, but this does not mean discarding religious text. Instead, she perceives documentation as a product of a historical and cultural context, the result of socio-cultural engagement and intellectual reasoning based on religious and judicial precepts. The focus of this theoretical framing, Stiles tells us, will be a set of family court cases presented in the Mkokotoni court of Shaykh Hamid, a man whom Stiles clearly reveres and who sits at the center of the knowledge production outlined in the book.

Chapters 2 through 6, with a concluding assessment in chapter 7 (wonderfully titled “The Court Is a Hospital”), are largely descriptive narratives of the goings on in the Mkokotoni court, centered on the cases brought by women and men litigants and the rulings applied by Shaykh Hamid. Stiles moves back and forth between discussions of dispute framing and document production, interpretation by court staff, and gendered subject position. Stiles is at her best in chapter 4, where she explores the conceptually and practically slippery category of intention. Stiles tells readers that to some Islamic law scholars, particularly those who emphasize the power of text and discourse, intention is not so significant. However, intention is a powerful driving force, Stiles argues, and furthermore, it is measurable by culturally situated kadhis who are concerned with maintaining social harmony. Stiles shows us that there is a Shafi’i precedent for this type of legal interpretation through the fatwas of previous Zanzibari muftis. This chapter highlights the meaningful connection between the creation of text (whether text be divorce pronouncement, fatwa, or ruling) and cultural