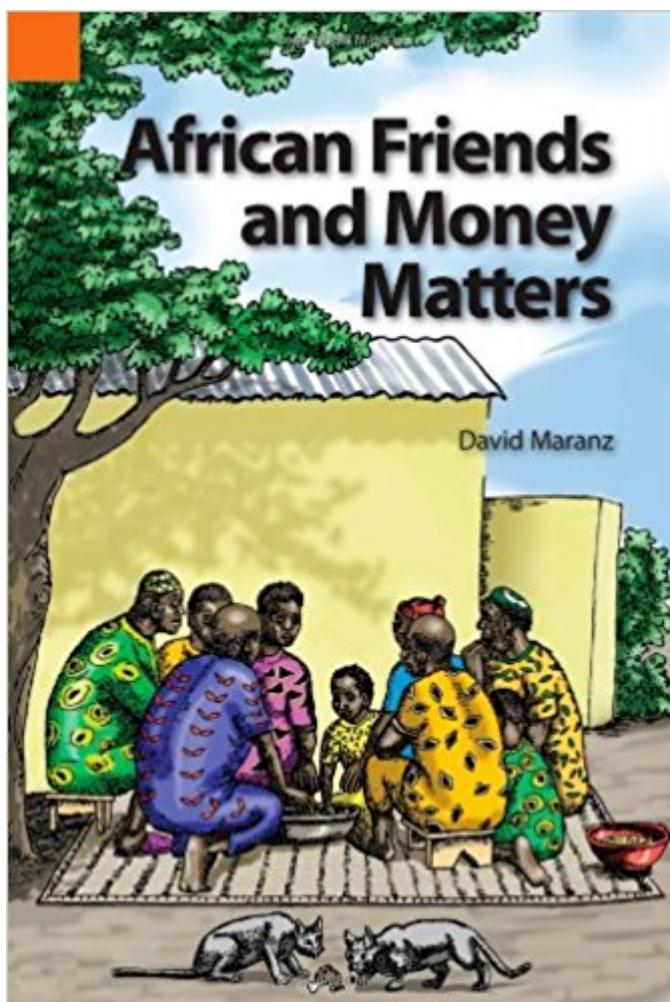


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# **African Friends And Money Matters: Observations From Africa (Publications In Ethnography, Vol. 37)**



## **Synopsis**

This book, African Friends and Money Matters, grew out of frustrations that Westerners experience when they travel and work in Africa. Africans have just as many frustrations relating to the Westerners in their midst. Each uses and manages money and other resources in very different ways, and these differences create many misunderstandings and frictions. The author deals with everyday life in Africa. He first introduces the very different goals of African and Western economic systems and then presents ninety observations of African behaviors related to money matters. Explanatory comments are given that show how each one works out in real life. He illustrates his and others' experiences with anecdotes from across the continent. Drawings by two African artists add further clarity to the text as they capture Africans and Westerners in authentic situations. The result is that the reader is able to make sense of customs that at first seem incomprehensible. This book will be of interest to Westerners living, working, or traveling in sub-Saharan Africa: business, government, diplomatic, and NGO personnel, religious workers, journalists, development sociologists, and tourists. The audience also includes professors and students in African studies. Africans will also be interested for what it reveals about Western culture and many of the significant ways Westerners react to Africa.

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## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

David Maranz, Ph.D., has lived and worked with SIL International in Cameroon, Senegal, and

several other countries in Africa since 1975. He has worked in community development, anthropology, administration, and as an international anthropology consultant. He has a Ph.D. in International Development. His earlier book, *Peace is Everything: : The World View of Muslims and Traditionalists in the Senegambia* , examines the worldview and religious context of the people in the Senegambia region of West Africa.

This book explains so much that I have wondered and been bothered by from my days in West Africa. This book taught me much about myself as well. As an American Southerner, many African cultural practices have mixed into my culture, especially in the area of the high value of hospitality, that I found myself talking to the author, saying, Yes! That is the way people are supposed to treat one another. That is Southern hospitality. Actually it appears to be Africanized American culture! This book is helpful as well for anyone interested in the current Administration's domestic financial policies. This book will help anyone who is confused by President Barack Obama's financial policy.

I recently returned from a 3 week trip in Kenya and I cannot state how incredibly valuable the information in "African Friends and Money Matters" was in my trip preparations. The book clearly outlines the way commerce works on an individual level in many African countries. The information contained in the book was put into use almost the minute I stepped off the plane. As the days progressed and I was able to practically apply the information in dealing with simple to complex business transactions. It was easy to internalize the information presented as the things I learned in the book played out in real time before me. It is very practical traveling wisdom. It's sometimes hard to understand how truly different most cultures are from our own, sometimes they even seem like "Bizarro" worlds, just as our culture would appear to them. Believe it or not, most of the world exists in 180 degrees of difference from the rest of the world. This is especially true for westerners traveling to non-western world countries. There is no way you can prepare yourself for the crazy shock of those first few hours in a land where you feel completely un-tethered from anything you would find familiar; different even down to the way you form thoughts. I believe books which deal more with ethnography like "African Friends and Money Matters," instead of tourist checklists and language phrasebooks will go much further toward helping you adapt quickly to a new cultural experience. I would say this was true even if you are going somewhere similar to the US, like Great Britain or Ireland (I use "similar" when comparing relatively to nearly any non-western country). In Africa, how you use money and accumulate possessions means something totally different than what it means to westerners. Add this to the fact that as a westerner you are essentially seen as

having a giant ATM sign over your head, it is nearly impossible to navigate simple day to day commerce without some kind of preparation. This book is that preparation. I cannot recommend strongly enough having this kind of knowledge before you arrive in Africa or any culture which is significantly different from your own. The other alternative is to hang out in tourist enclaves which are run so that you really don't have to deal with anything too radically different, except perhaps the convenient souvenir stands within short walking distance. I believe it is also important to understand this information not only for your own benefit but also to some level so you can protect those you are doing business with. Throwing money around foolishly, which is easy to do since things can be significantly less expensive there, can not only make you stand out and mark you as easy prey for scammers and thieves but also may cause real and considerable problems for your native hosts. These problems may manifest themselves as unintended insults (which I found are very common in Africa), unrealistic expectations and rude behavior. If I could only take a single book with me on any trip to Africa, I would take this one, or one like it, over a phrase book or tourist guide every time.

This is a wonderfully informative book. I run cross-cultural study-abroad courses in Senegal, as a part of in the ecovillage sustainable development movement. After reviewing Maranz's 90 points with Senegalese colleagues and friends, they and I understand how accurately Maranz describes local values and practices. Our Senegalese and American faculty and university students have begun to compare Maranz's points with their own results from carrying out "oldest living memory," surveys among the elders of Yoff, Dakar. The survey findings describe the memories of these elders of the lifestyles of their own grandparents, when today's oldest, themselves, were children. Surprisingly, we discover that most of Maranz's 90 points describe practices and operating rules that are reported by the elders to have worked idyllically in Yoff and other barely-monetized villages up into the first half of the 19th century. It appears to us that in many cases Senegalese society has continued to use these old rules without questioning them systematically although the environments in which they are practiced today are very different from those of the past, and many Senegalese are critical of some of them privately. Therefore we are putting into place a Senegalese study, research and writing group, interested in using Maranz's book as the basis for an in-depth evaluation of the role of these practices in the modern world, and for an exploration of ways in which the spirit and the warm familiar feel of traditional culture may be more accurately represented in modern life. It would be awesome if the author had an interest in participating in this project.

It took me nearly a year to get through this book. I kept throwing it across the room. After a number

of years in the bush of Zambia, I can honestly say that the author knows his stuff. Once I accepted some basic principles, I was able to complete my mission and make a lot of friends along the way. If you're going to sub-Saharan Africa, read this book before you go.

This book helped me a lot, while in Africa. It helped me to understand what the principles are for living, how the societies work and what the rules are. I have been both to Uganda and Nigeria. While in Uganda the observations I made, proved the advice and observations that are introduced in this book. Good reading, and good information to have while in Africa helping the local population.

This book does a very thorough job describing the complexity of dealing with African values. You will understand "major" differences that exist between the classic value of individual "ownership" and what can be described as "communal" ownership. You will certainly be able to correlate this communal relationship to what can be considered as very poor business practices and what individual ownership practitioner will consider "dishonest." Written in very simple terms and does a very good job in its' examples. Highly recommended! Easy read.

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