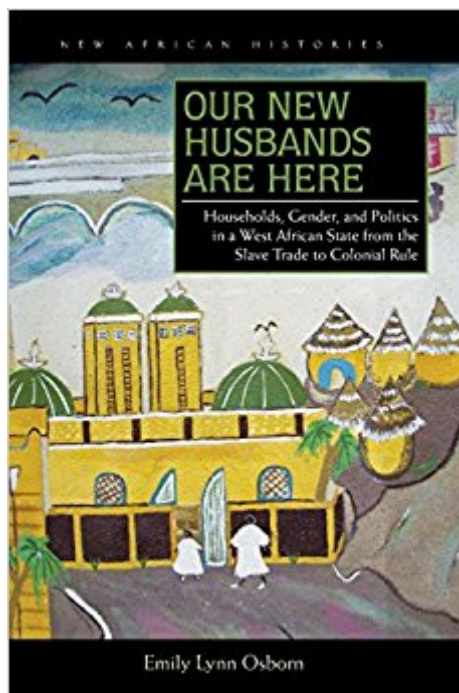


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# Our New Husbands Are Here: Households, Gender, And Politics In A West African State From The Slave Trade To Colonial Rule (New African Histories)



## Synopsis

In *Our New Husbands Are Here*, Emily Lynn Osborn investigates a central puzzle of power and politics in West African history: Why do women figure frequently in the political narratives of the precolonial period, and then vanish altogether with colonization? Osborn addresses this question by exploring the relationship of the household to the state. By analyzing the history of statecraft in the interior savannas of West Africa (in present-day Guinea-Conakry), Osborn shows that the household, and women within it, played a critical role in the pacifist Islamic state of Kankan-BatÃ©, enabling it to endure the predations of the transatlantic slave trade and become a major trading center in the nineteenth century. But French colonization introduced a radical new method of statecraft to the region, one that separated the household from the state and depoliticized women's domestic roles. This book will be of interest to scholars of politics, gender, the household, slavery, and Islam in African history. [View more](#)

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Original and stimulating, *Our New Husbands Are Here* challenges traditional historical accounts of gender and tests new concepts and frameworks that promise insightful openings in African studies. — Mamadou Diouf, Columbia University   
Emily Osborn gives us a deep and fascinating insight into the important inland center of Kankan, which has been sadly and strangely neglected in the historiography and anthropology of West Africa. She makes an enduring contribution to African history with ripples into the political science and anthropology of

household and gender. —David Robinson —Pathbreaking in its findings and approach, this elegantly written study explores the intimate relationship between household-building and state-building in West Africa over a span of three centuries. Through a sophisticated interrogation of oral and archival sources, Osborn has produced a new understanding of statecraft that bridges the artificial divide between the precolonial and colonial and anchors women firmly at the core. —Elizabeth Schmidt —This refreshingly bold and provocative study of Kankan draws upon a broad range of sources. By tracking the constantly shifting means through which households and wealth have been constructed over time, the author sets the reader up extremely well to appreciate the radical shift in the understanding of marriage, households, and gender that was introduced under French colonial rule. —American Historical Review —By focusing on the household as a social, political, and economic unit, rather than merely the domain of women, Osborn illuminates the intimate connections between slavery, marriage, and family in West Africa and de-centers the male-dominated state. Our New Husbands Are Here represents a rethinking of scholarly assumptions about the relationships between gender, power, and the state that provides an important intervention in Africanist scholarship as well as a helpful tool in the classroom. —International Journal of African Historical Studies —Emily Osborn has written a highly accessible and well composed social and political history of Kankan covering the period up to the First World War. She explores an impressive variety of sources: oral history, local manuscripts, and archival texts. This work is an important contribution to debates in the social history of West Africa and to gender studies. —Journal of African History

Emily Lynn Osborn is an assistant professor of history at the University of Chicago.

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