



# Money Has No Smell: The Africanization of New York City

By Paul Stoller

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**Money Has No Smell: The Africanization of New York City** By Paul Stoller

In February 1999 the tragic New York City police shooting of Amadou Diallo, an unarmed street vendor from Guinea, brought into focus the existence of West African merchants in urban America. In *Money Has No Smell*, Paul Stoller offers us a more complete portrait of the complex lives of West African immigrants like Diallo, a portrait based on years of research Stoller conducted on the streets of New York City during the 1990s.

Blending fascinating ethnographic description with incisive social analysis, Stoller shows how these savvy West African entrepreneurs have built cohesive and effective multinational trading networks, in part through selling a simulated Africa to African Americans. These and other networks set up by the traders, along with their faith as devout Muslims, help them cope with the formidable state regulations and personal challenges they face in America. As Stoller demonstrates, the stories of these West African traders illustrate and illuminate ongoing debates about globalization, the informal economy, and the changing nature of American communities.

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## Money Has No Smell: The Africanization of New York City By Paul Stoller Bibliography

- Rank: #381892 in Books
- Brand: Paul Stoller
- Published on: 2002-04-15
- Released on: 2002-04-15
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x 1.00" w x 6.00" l, .78 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 232 pages



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### Editorial Review

From Library Journal

This urban ethnography explores the informal multinational and multiethnic economy of West African street vendors in New York City. The title refers to the vendors' business philosophy that religious, political, or ethnic differences should not interfere with their goal of making a profit, necessary not only to support themselves but also their African families. Anthropologist Stoller provides the cultural and historical context needed to understand how West African trading practices and Islamic traditions are incorporated into the challenges of the New York City environment. His narrative style nicely interweaves individual stories with theory about the social, political, and economic adaptations of immigrant communities and demonstrates the impact of globalization on all types of economies formal and informal, large and small. Additionally, this ethnography is a fine example of how traditional anthropological fieldwork fits into a complex urban setting. Prolific author Stoller (e.g., *Jaguar: A Story of Africans in America*) has worked with the Songay-speaking peoples of Niger for three decades, and the depth of his experience is evident here. Highly recommended for all academic collections.

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### Review

"Through this extraordinary study, Stoller succeeds in showing us how globalization is changing today's urban worlds. To do this he has to negotiate multiple levels of analysis, from the ethnographic detail of a vendor's sidewalk spot to that of the trading networks that connect across the Atlantic. This is a major contribution to the scholarship on immigration, the informal economy, and global cities." - Saskia Sassen, author of *Guests and Aliens*

### From the Inside Flap

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**Thomas Stewart:**

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**Luke Palmieri:**

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