

The Problem of Health: Evaluating the Legacy of Western Biomedicine on Kenyan Health

Emily Anne Wolff

Department of Government

Increasing life expectancy and declining infant mortality are often held up as proxies of development. In the same way, Western biomedicine in Africa is popularly imagined as a “European gift” (Baronov, 2008) or else an indisputably fortuitous accident. This poses a problem for narratives emphasizing the inherent malice of colonialism. To resolve this inconsistency, this essay interrogates the legacy of Western biomedicine in Kenya using a combination of colonial administration records from the Kenya National Archives and secondary