

BOOK REVIEW

Mohamed Saliou Camara, Alem Hailu, and Sabella O. Abidde, eds. *Issues of Governance, Security, and Development in Contemporary Africa*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2023. 428 pp. \$130.00. Hardback. ISBN: 978-1-66690-271-6.

The quest for effective governance is vital for achieving stability and prosperity in Africa, as emphasized in *Governance, Security and Development in Contemporary Africa*, edited by Mohamed Saliou Camara et al. This book offers a comprehensive analysis of governance, security, and development, reflecting thorough research and stimulating intellectual discussions that present significant avenues for addressing the continent's persistent challenges. It calls for an evaluation of the extensive scholarship focused on Africa, highlighting the necessity of this research. The book is structured into four parts, each containing four chapters, culminating in a conclusion.

The initial four chapters illustrate Africa's historical and contemporary challenges in achieving self-determination, governance, and equitable global relations while outlining potential paths for increased agency and development. Chapter One by Cíntia Martins and Pedro Ponte e Sousa critiques the League of Nations' mandate system, revealing its failure to genuinely grant autonomy to former territories. The authors argue that it perpetuated colonial hierarchies, favoring Middle Eastern over African mandates and was hindered by political interests and imperial mindsets. Chapter Two by Michael Rudolph Ten-Pow reevaluates Africa's economic trajectory, asserting that many nations are making strides toward growth and self-sufficiency despite facing significant issues such as poverty and corruption. He highlights Africa's youthful population and resource wealth as keys to transforming negative stereotypes into a narrative of resilience, provided positive trends are sustained. In Chapter Three, Oyebade Kunle Oyerinde analyzes federalism in Africa, critiquing Nigeria's centralized system against historically effective precolonial governance structures. He emphasizes the need for relational governance to enhance citizen engagement. Chapter Four by Walters Tohnji Samah investigates the lasting neocolonial ties between France and Francophone Africa, suggesting the emergence of alternative global powers as an opportunity for these nations to seek equitable partnerships with France, emphasizing sovereignty over dependency.


Chapters Five to Eight delve into the complex challenges Africa faces, merging historical context with issues such as civil-military relations, climate change, and external influences like China's development initiatives. Chapter Five by Stephen M. Magu critiques China's infrastructure approach, discussing its implications

for modernization and the duality of dependency and growth. Chapter Six, by Stanley Ehiane and Mabuvi Gumede, addresses climate change's severe effects on food security in the Lake Chad region and underscores the need for adaptive measures for vulnerable populations. Mohamed Saliou Camara's Chapters Seven and Eight explore the transition of coup leaders to democratic figures in Francophone and Anglophone Africa, analyzing the impacts of leaders like Mathieu Kérékou and Jerry Rawlings on civil-military relations and governance outcomes. Collectively, these chapters expose the intertwined issues of historical legacies, environmental challenges, and governance intricacies that obstruct Africa's path to stability and development.

Chapter Nine, authored by Priye S. Torulagha, examines the link between terrorism and Northern Islamic elite rhetoric in Nigeria, particularly surrounding the ideologies justifying the Fulanization and Islamization amid threats from groups like Boko Haram. Chapter Ten by Felix Kumah-Abiwu discusses drug trafficking across sub-Saharan Africa, emphasizing its threat to security and governance and calling for urgent attention to this growing issue, particularly in West Africa. Chapter Eleven by Oliver C. Ruppel and Larissa Jane H. Houston explores how climate change intersects with human security and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), advocating for the securitization of climate challenges to better address human welfare through strong governance frameworks. In Chapter Twelve, Seun Bamidele assesses the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) policy, revealing how the crisis showcased systemic vulnerabilities and led to a focus shift from collective priorities to national interests, underlining the need for policy reevaluation in light of economic integration and unity goals across Africa. These chapters highlight critical issues linked to security and development, including terrorism, drug trafficking, climate change, and economic integration, underscoring their relevance in broader governance discussions.

Chapters Thirteen to Sixteen explore a range of critical issues impacting Africa, both historically and in contemporary contexts. Chapter Thirteen by Adeyeri and Aluede focuses on European military conscription, forced labor, and refugee crises in West Africa during World War I, shedding light on local responses and societal disruptions caused by colonial actions. Oyerinde's Chapter Fourteen examines social heterogeneity's complexities regarding farmland ownership and cooperation among Nigeria's Yoruba, illustrating the role of indigenous institutions in facilitating or impeding community collaboration. Chapter Fifteen by Ibrahim and Magu discusses Kenyan women's empowerment through political participation and socioeconomic development since independence, recognizing both progress and ongoing challenges, particularly in legislative and societal contexts. Finally, Chapter Sixteen by Mhandara critiques globalization's connection to violent extremism in Africa, arguing traditional security theories inadequately address the transnational nature of contemporary threats, necessitating a global perspective on security dynamics.

In conclusion, this book serves as an essential resource for understanding Africa's multifaceted governance dynamics, underscoring the urgency of sustainable solutions and cooperative efforts to confront the continent's persistent challenges.

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