

government officials deliberately made unnecessary concessions to the rebellion during the Benghazi agreement, only to turn around and blame the rebels for breaking the terms of the agreement, thus leaving France with no choice but to mount Operation Tacaud in 1978.

Powell's argument is rich in anecdotes, such as the story of the French ambassador who kept an undated and signed letter from President Tombalbaye so that he could post it to his superiors in case Tombalbaye was under immediate threat and unable to request military assistance himself. Or how President Goukouni Weddeye had once stayed awake all night with his Kalashnikov, fearing that the French had staged a coup against him. The story turned out to be a false alarm sent by Chadian soldiers who had misapprehended French military movements at the capital's airport on that night.

However, for a book concerned with France's intervention and its impact on state formation in Chad, it is surprising that Powell does not provide any account of the connection between the colonial and the post-colonial, even more so because of the decades under study. An exploration of decolonisation in Chad would have set the stage for readers unfamiliar with Chadian politics to first understand Chad's dependence on external military support and, second, the preponderant role of France in its domestic politics.

MOUDWE DAGA
SOAS, University of London

Undoing Coups: the African Union and post-coup intervention in Madagascar

by ANTONIA WITT

London: Zed Books, 2020. Pp. 296. \$95 (hbk).

doi:10.1017/S0022278X21000355

What does it really mean to 'return' a country to 'constitutional order'? This is the central question that Antonia Witt addresses in her book *Undoing Coups: the African Union and post-coup intervention in Madagascar*, aiming to unpack the politics and contested interactions among multiple, entangled national, regional and international actors, as well as their interplay with different norms and legitimacies in processes of transnational order-making. Arguing for the need to bridge the divide, and problematic division of labour, between African studies and international relations (IR), Witt proposes a detailed case study (10ff.) and the concept of 'transboundary formations' (first advanced by Robert Latham, Ronald Kassimir and Thomas M. Callaghy) (38ff.), to overcome top-down and/or normative perspectives on African interventions, a limited understanding of concrete actors and the role of African agency in global politics, and a lack of theoretical orientation in academic literature on African regional organizations (ROs) in peace and security. In this way, the book contributes to an emerging body of literature that seeks to highlight, further specify and theorise 'non-Western' agency in (global) IR scholarship (14).

Based on extensive interviews and multi-sited field research, Witt takes a deep dive into post-coup interventions in Madagascar, between 2009 and 2014. Interestingly, contrary to what the title suggests, the book is actually not only about the African Union (AU) and its emerging policies and concrete efforts in response to

‘unconstitutional changes of government’. Instead, it places the AU in a complex setting of multiple, inter-related regional and international actors, such as the Southern African Development Community, the International Organization of the Francophonie, the Indian Ocean Commission, different UN agencies and Western states. Over the course of eight chapters, Witt makes a dedicated effort to identify (African) ROs as ‘sites’ where knowledge regimes are produced and disseminated, and interventions as moments during which these knowledge regimes are enacted, but also contested, in processes of transnational order-making (discussed in Chapter 1).

Following these methodological and theoretical considerations, the book offers a very thorough and extremely well-narrated account of the historical emergence and contested making of what Witt calls the ‘African anti-coup norm’, identifying and analysing actors, changing discourses and concerns. It convincingly demonstrates a strategic de-politicisation, to the detriment of more substantial provisions regarding ‘human rights’, leading to a seemingly inevitable strengthening and legitimisation of the AU, even if continuously contested by other regional and international actors (see Chapter 2). Subsequent chapters offer a close reading of the historical, socio-economic and political context of the complex Malagasy crisis (re)emerging in 2009 (Chapter 3), and present the intervention scenario (Chapter 4) as well as the intervention logic (Chapter 5). In these, although they are at times a bit lengthy and repetitive, Witt provides an empirically rich and analytically compelling account of the key actors, their different problem perceptions and solutions suggested, as well as the specific forms that they gave to their interventions and the complex often competitive interactions among them. Finally, she links these elaborations back to the book’s main argument, discussing actual ordering effects both on Madagascar and internationally more generally (Chapter 6), and pointing to larger patterns of conflict intervention in Africa, beyond Madagascar, that have resulted in similar outcomes (Chapter 7).

On a critical note, some key terms, such as ‘space’, ‘practice’, as well as ‘order’ itself, would have been worth developing more conceptually and with more precision. Moreover, reference to different intervening actors, across Chapters 4, 5 and 6, could have been more systematic, to make it easier to keep track of who did what, when and how this related to efforts employed by other actors. However, these are only minor issues in an otherwise entirely fascinating book that makes a valuable contribution to both African peace and security research and (global) IR.

JENS HERPOLSHEIMER
Leipzig University

Salafism and Political Order in Africa by SEBASTIAN ELISCHER

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. 322. \$89.99 (hbk) \$29.99 (pbk).

doi:10.1017/S0022278X21000367

Since the late 2000s, the number of attacks carried out by militant Islamist groups has been increasing considerably in sub-Saharan Africa. While jihadism has turned into a major regional security threat, some countries have been more affected than others. In his new book *Salafism and Political Order in Africa*,