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Constitution and Conflict Management in Africa: Preventing Civil War through Institutional Design, edited by Alan J. Kuperman
Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015. Pp. 294. \ \$65 (hbk).

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became operational in 2008, it was the first US military command that actively sought to integrate significant planning and policy capabilities, and personnel from other governmental agencies such as USAID and the Department of State.

This edited volume provides a compelling analysis and authoritative assessment of these institutional innovations and policy initiatives, singling out the USA's role in forging comprehensiveness in military, foreign and development policy. The contributors to this well-organised book provide cutting-edge insights into various cases of e.g. US security reform assistance and maritime security in Africa. In addition to these case studies, the authors also address fundamental questions regarding the interface of security and development policy, in particular with respect to accountability, legitimacy and civilian-military interoperability. The editor meticulously sets the stage in a focused introduction and provides well-informed conclusions and recommendations at the end.

All contributions – a challenging task which only a very few edited volumes come to master – are superbly tied together by first exploring the operation of these programmes located comfortably within the ‘security-development nexus’ and second contemplating the role and place of the US military. Ultimately, the contributions find that only a few of the programmes have been successful, with the overall performance of AFRICOM being described as mixed at best. Ultimately, the Command has reverted into a more traditional combatant command in the aftermath of the violent conflict in Libya. Given the analytical strength of the volume, one would have desired to learn more about the micro-level of the interagency experiment undertaken with AFRICOM – taking for instance a more sociological or organisational theory perspective and exploring the cross-fertilisation of knowledge and expertise (or lack thereof) between staff from different agencies in some more depth. This could have made the book – perhaps in conjunction with a broader discussion of similar approaches in other militaries –, even more relevant and pertinent to a broader audience. Still, this book is highly recommendable for all students of US military policy vis-à-vis Africa and those interested in the practical as well as theoretical dimensions of the security-development nexus.

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This important contribution breathes life into an aspect of conflict management that is largely neglected in the literature: constitutional design. Not much has been written to address the question of constitutional design for ethnically divided societies. As the book claims, and rightly so, this is particularly true in Africa. Whether the tensions in ethnically divided societies can be managed or reduced by ‘a country’s domestic political institutions’ is a question that is particularly relevant to Africa and, yet, it ‘has never before been addressed in a rigorous, comparative manner’ (p. 1).

The book investigates the role of constitutional design in reducing domestic conflict through the prism of 'shocks', widely interpreted by the book to include 'a relatively sudden – or more gradual but especially large – change that affect the distribution of resources and power in a country, whether arising from economic, political, demographic or environmental dynamics' (p. 4). It examines 'the capacity and limitation of constitutional design to buffer shocks' (p. 8). Constitutional design is defined by the book to include both 'formal and informal structures of countrywide governance'. The menu of constitutional designs is, therefore, not limited to the usual set of institutions that often feature in the integration-accommodation debate. The book has extended the discussion by including liberal institutions that are governed by the doctrine of separation of powers, including an independent judiciary, a strong parliament, and transitional justice mechanisms for post-conflict societies.

The book develops its argument based on case studies that are accompanied by a separate chapter that provides a database of 'Africa's domestic institutions of integration and accommodation'. Six country case studies are used to explore how constitutional design interacts with 'shocks' to increase or reduce the likelihood of a violent outcome. Under the 'accommodation is risky' section, the constitutions of Burundi, Sudan and Kenya are discussed. On the 'integration' side, the constitutions of Senegal, Ghana and Zimbabwe are assessed. It is not, however, clear why these six countries were selected as case studies. The brief explanation on the selection of the case studies does not say much (p. 13). The absence of countries like Ethiopia and South Africa that are known for using their constitutions to deal with communal divisions is strange.

The book does not present the integration or the accommodation constitutional approach as a panacea to deal with 'shocks'. '[N]either of the two opposing constitutional approaches – integration or accommodation – is necessary or sufficient for buffering against shocks ...' (p. 18). The key is in how the approaches are implemented. That means even if the accommodation or integration approach is relevant, it is the particular configuration of the constitutional design that determines the extent to which the latter helps states to 'buffer shocks'. It all depends on how the approach is translated into a reality. In addition to its emphasis on 'appropriate institutionalization', the book cautions us against 'radical reform of constitutional design, in Africa and elsewhere, from integrative to fully accommodative' (p. 235). The fear is that a constitutional design based on accommodation may not be implemented fully and that partial implementation entails 'grave risks' (p. 235). It seems to opt for an incrementalist approach. But, as the book itself admits, this means requiring most African states to retain their integrative constitutions. Instead of introducing radical change, the book argues, African states must complement their integrative constitutions with strong liberal institutions.

As mentioned earlier, domestic political institutions have rarely taken centre stage in the literature on conflict management in Africa. Further, the extremely limited literature on constitution and conflict management in Africa usually focuses on how institutional design can be used to direct political behaviour in a manner that promotes the peaceful management of conflict in ethnically divided societies. It is usually about how institutional design helps to avoid or

exacerbate ethnic divisions. Rarely has a literature focused on the capacity of existing institutional design to absorb and respond to the many other challenges that African countries face. The book fills that gap. This is significant because it has allowed the contributors to broaden their scope of investigation into the capacity of African constitutions. Expectedly, the approach has allowed the book to include a discussion on how the constitutional design of Burundi has contributed to the dramatic decline of the political relevance of ethnicity in that country. But it has also left room for the inclusion of chapters that discuss the demographic and environmental challenges arising from rain-induced flood in Senegal and the construction of a dam in Ghana. What counts as an 'appropriate' subject of constitutional discourse is, thus, interpreted widely.

Further, the book's comprehensive approach to challenges, or shocks, as the book calls them, has helped it to bring into the discussion not only challenges that have rarely been the subject of constitutional discourse but also countries that have received little attention in the literature on African constitutions. I am referring to the countries that are canvassed in the 'integration' section of the book. The skewed focus on accommodation has meant little or no attention to the majority of African countries that are characterised by integrative institutions. This, perhaps, represents another important contribution of the book to comparative studies of constitutions in Africa.

Generally speaking, the book departs from other similar works that have focused on African constitutions, which have largely been directed at examining how constitutions have worked in practice or helped to manage ethnic-related divisions. It is thus a bit odd that the introduction locates the book in the integration-accommodation literature. The integration-accommodation debate focuses on communal conflicts, conflicts in which ethnic division has emerged as an important political division. It is very difficult to argue that (all) the shocks that were the subject of the contributions relate, potentially or actually, to communal divisions. This is particularly true of some of the shocks discussed in the context of Senegal, Ghana and, to some extent, Kenya. This does not make the book less important. However, the fact that it places itself in the accommodation-integration literature is problematic because it seeks to (claims to) provide a different institutional prescription or, at least, create a doubt on 'known conclusions'. How can it contribute to the debate when the nature of the conflict, which is its subject, is not the same as those that are usually discussed in the integration-accommodation literature? I might be exaggerating here but the point remains relevant. Perhaps, the placement of the work in the integration-accommodation category could have been qualified.

Although it does not come out strongly in the concluding chapter of the book, the distinction between 'accommodation is risky' and 'integration can work' gives the impression that integration is a better alternative. This is problematic because the case studies, including Burundi and Sudan, do not show that accommodation does not work but rather that more accommodation is required. Even the Kenyan case shows that integration has not worked, giving rise to a constitution with some elements of accommodation. It is, in fact, odd to see the Kenyan chapter in the 'accommodation is risky' section.

This is a valuable contribution. It will be useful for students of African constitutions and the divided societies the constitutions seek to regulate. It is my hope that this publication generates further interest in the capacity and limitation of African constitutions to deal with the challenges of ethnicity that characterise many of the societies on the continent.

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Bush Bound: Young Men and Rural Permanence in Migrant West Africa by

PAOLO GAIBAZZI

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Bush Bound is a timely and important, but in ways counterintuitive, contribution to the scholarship on African migration to Europe and elsewhere. Based on ethnographic research conducted in the Gambia over a total of 17 months between 2006 and 2012, the book examines permanence, or 'how young men stay put in a Gambian village' (p. 3). The book is divided into six chapters, plus an introduction and a conclusion, with each chapter offering a detailed and at times poignant view into the lives of young men (and a few women) from the village of Sabi as they work to earn a living, with Europe being the wished for, but seldom reached, destination.

The chapters' sequence loosely mirrors the aspirations of the would-be migrant. The first chapter reviews the history of Sabi agriculture, trade and migration, contextualising these within the broader stretch of Senegambian and West African history. The second chapter describes farming life in Sabi, including the cultivation of an agrarian ethos and the social importance attached to being seen as hard working. The third chapter describes how Gambian young men look for money and other (liquid or illiquid) resources. A central part of this chapter is the detailed histories of two Sabi men who both seek to travel, but are never able to go further afield than the city of Serrekunda, the Gambia's economic centre, save for one man's travel to Benin in an unsuccessful bid to obtain a visa to Europe.

Throughout these chapters, Gaibazzi makes several arguments. Firstly, he convincingly shows how mobility and immobility are just two sides of the same coin. Referring to the imperative to work hard and make a life for oneself and the family, or hustling in Gambian parlance, Gaibazzi notes that mobility is 'one possible outcome of ... *hustling* [emphasis in original] as a general livelihood practice that largely cuts across moving and staying' (p. 91). Mobility here is not a line of continuous action, but action in fits and spurts, shaped by unexpected opportunities and cul-de-sacs. Similarly, farming and travelling are presented not as dichotomous but as two facets of the same skill set: 'men explicitly construct their subjectivity as hustlers on the basis of the dispositions and skills cultivated in the village bush' (p. 82).

Secondly, Gaibazzi shows how 'immobility' is not a residual category, signifying absence of agency and choice. Here, Gaibazzi makes an important contribution to the recent interest in mobility in anthropology and sociology (Gaibazzi