

Mohamed Saliou Camara, Alem Hailu, and Sabella O. Abidde (eds.). 2023. *Issues of Governance, Security, and Development in Contemporary Africa*. New York: Lexington Books. 428 pp.

The quest for effective governance is vital for achieving stability and prosperity in Africa, as emphasized in *Governance, Security and Development in Contemporary Africa*. It 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. Its multidimensional discourse surrounds the intricate dynamics of governance, security, and development on the continent. This compilation of sixteen scholarly essays aims to underline the pressing urgency of effective governance as a crucial pillar for achieving stability and prosperity in Africa amidst a backdrop of diverse challenges. The framework established by the editors serves to situate the discourse within a rigorous historical and contemporary context, leveraging a range of academic voices whose contributions deepen our understanding of Africa's governance challenges. The review encapsulates these perspectives through its structured format, leading the reader through a robust examination of the broad themes presented.

The collection stands out for its comprehensive nature, tackling various elements of governance and their intersections with security and development. The robust introductory chapters not only critique historical legacies of colonialism but also contextualize modern challenges that African nations face in their governance structures. With contributions from numerous scholars, the book presents a multifaceted view, ensuring that diverse African cases are represented. The ability to analyze governance through historical, social, and political lenses enhances the academic value of the work, allowing for a more profound discourse surrounding Africa's bid for self-determination.

One of the book's significant strengths resides in its organization and the sheer breadth of topics addressed. For instance, Chapter 1 by Cíntia Martins and Pedro Ponte e Sousa provides a critical examination of the League of Nations' mandate system, which perpetuated colonial hierarchies while failing to grant true autonomy to African nations. This setting clarifies how historical systems have paved the way for contemporary governance failures and underscores the need for decolonization in discourse surrounding governance in Africa.

Furthermore, Chapter 5, authored by Stephen M. Magu, offers an intriguing analysis of China's infrastructure approach in Africa, revealing a duality of both dependency and potential growth. This nuanced discussion of external influences on African governance is pivotal, highlighting how global dynamics shape local contexts. Meanwhile, the assessment of the impacts of climate change in Chapters 6 and 11 (by Stanley Ehiane and Mabuyi Gumede and Oliver C. Ruppel and Larissa Jane H. Houston, respectively) adeptly connects environmental challenges with security, showcasing the necessity of integrating ecological considerations into governance and policy-making frameworks.

Chapters examining the socio-political transitions of coup leaders, such as in Chapter 8 by Mohamed Saliou Camara, delve into the complexities of civil-military relations, further illuminating how governance outcomes can be shaped through broader historical trajectories.

These contributions collectively articulate the need for innovative governance frameworks that recognize past influences while addressing contemporary realities.

While *Governance, Security and Development in Contemporary Africa* succeeds in providing a wide-ranging discussion, certain chapters could benefit from a more detailed empirical basis. For example, while the connections between drug trafficking and governance are highlighted in Chapter 10 by Felix Kumah-Abiwu, a deeper exploration of case studies or statistical analyses to support the narrative would bolster the chapter's arguments and offer more substantial evidence for its claims. Additionally, some chapters might appear overwhelmingly focused on regional specifics without adequately addressing the broader implications that transcend national boundaries. For instance, while Chapters 13 and 14 present vital insights on the historical effects of colonialism and social heterogeneity, they could benefit from an analysis on how these dynamics interact with current continental governance frameworks.

In summary, *Governance, Security and Development in Contemporary Africa* emerges as a crucial scholarly resource that underscores the multifaceted challenges faced by African nations in their quest for effective governance and sustainable development. The book is commendable for its structural approach and the academic rigor of its contributors, effectively weaving together historical insights with contemporary governance issues. Potential areas for improvement, however, include a more robust empirical grounding in certain chapters and cross-contextual analyses that encompass broader continental implications. Overall, this compilation contributes significantly to our understanding of Africa's governance dynamics, calling for sustained intellectual discourse and cooperative strategies to address the continent's persistent challenges while fostering resilience and sovereignty. The insights generated from this volume are essential for policymakers, scholars, and practitioners engaged in the complex interplay of governance and development in Africa, making it a noteworthy addition to the existing scholarship in this critical area.

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