

assume a Christian character for the entire continent. Yet Haynes does little to show how indigenous and traditional African religions might be playing a more pronounced role in shifting the balance of political power.

It is actually quite difficult to fit African experiences of religious and political interaction into any preconceived framework because no two countries are alike tribally, ethnically, religiously, and politically. Whatever generalisations are made will be subject to a series of qualifications and exceptions. The Islamic impact in Southern Africa, for example, is completely ignored and the South African experience is worthy of mention in only two pages. This will disturb proponents of the view that religion has played a central role in the dismantling of apartheid.

Historians, and theologians belatedly, have clearly demonstrated the critical contribution made by women in the total experience of religion. Haynes has a page on women in Islam, where such a contribution is less critical, but little to offer on their significance in Christian leadership roles.

Due to the relative instability and rapid pace of political change, one should expect Haynes' book to be in need of revision shortly. In its present form, though, it is still an important study tool for the uninitiated student of African politics seeking a short overview of how religion continues to exercise a steady and growing influence in shaping political reality.

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## **Conflict in Africa**

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The political conflicts, economic disparities, and social disharmony in Africa have remained a major cause for concern for many. Extensive discussion regarding the causes and effects have produced a myriad works, both within and outside the region.

It is within this context that this book positions itself. Examining the dimensions of the strife from a general perspective, the book provides a comparative overview of the African condition in relation to 'conflict'. Set against the backdrop of internal constraints and external pressures, the book progressively addresses the magnitude and essence of the conflict, systematically introducing the novice into basic elements of the nature of the wide-spread strife. This is clearly demonstrated by the different case-studies which serve to bring to the fore the various dimensions of the conflict in a region-by-region manner.

'Child Soldiers in Africa' is a narrative investigative chapter exploring one of the most important effects of the conflict. Furley examines the widespread use of children within the African conflict by addressing the following questions: 'How and why they were recruited? Why did they stay? What effect may this have on their generation and what of their future?' (p. 28). Using this as a framework, Furley proceeds to enlighten the reader about the peculiarities of the conflicts in Mozambique, Uganda, and Liberia which had inherently absorbed children within its ranks. 'Conflict in South Africa' by Alexander Johnstone, analyses the political struggle inside the country within the confines of the 'twofold legacy of conflict, both from the apartheid years and from the first four uncertain years of transformation' (p. 46).

Chapter four, deals with 'The Horn of Africa: A Conflict Zone', and supplies a modest account of the conflict within this region. The central argument put forth by Clapman notes that the struggle is a product of 'secessionist, irredentist, regional, ethnic and ideological conflicts combined with straight-forward power struggles and disorder resulting with the proliferation of imported weaponry' (p. 72). Inadvertently, this necessitates the rise of a complex variety of interrelated acts of violence. In chapter five, 'Sudan: War Without End', Peter Woodward examines the strife within a broad framework of the country's colonial legacy which precipitated the rivalry and subsequent clash between the Arab and Muslim majority in the North and the African and often Christian minority in the South. Woodward highlights the extent to which this strife was influenced by the support and interference of the big powers. George Joffe in his chapter, 'Conflict in Western Sahara', echoes that the conflict is a direct consequence of decolonisation. While Paul Richard's comments upon the effect of the struggle in Liberia and Sierra Leone is informed by the need to eradicate entrenched and corrupt regimes, this hope may remain elusive as the conflict is infused by political power struggles over resources and human conscription.

Chapters eight and nine address the implications the demise of the Cold War had on the African state. Peter Lyon broadly discusses the perceived threat of the marginalisation of the African Continent within contemporary geopolitics. And Kathryn O'Neill and Barry Munslow provide an in-depth review of the changes in the

foreign policies of the two superpowers during the 1980s and the effects their global compromise had on the conflicts in Angola and Namibia where the Cold War confrontation in Southern Africa appeared to be most intense.

The chapter on Namibia by Reginald Herbold Green is a historical account of the colonialisation process, the Namibian liberation struggle and, eventually, the road to democracy. In his chapter on Uganda, Amii Omara-Otunnu explores the conflict as a consequence of disturbances within the country's socio-political equilibrium, shifts in the locus of power together with concomitant economic benefits, and the influence of shifts in society, notwithstanding attempts by incoming ruling groups to restructure power relations. The final three chapters of the book cover the conflict in Africa from an even more general perspective. 'The Colonial Legacy' by David Throup reiterates the impact of colonial rule upon the African state—which in itself served as a catalyst for the onset of a variety of struggles in most African countries. Chapters thirteen and fourteen outline the more obvious effects of the conflict, namely human rights abuses, mass migration in the form of refugees, and economic stagnation caused by the destructiveness of the struggle.

By examining the nature of the conflict in this way, the book can relate its various findings to a neatly compiled theoretical framework which correlates Timour Dimitrichev's major causes of tension and conflict: 1) Military; 2) Political/International; 3) Political/Domestic; 4) and Persecution, with a typology that breaks down domestic political conflicts into five main types.

First, elite conflicts can be between old guard politicians and younger technocrats; between ideologists and bureaucrats; between party functionaries and civil servants. Second, factional conflicts can be organised by elites but usually reach down to a variety of social groups, involving regional and ethnic inequalities, where mobilisation in the conflict may be based on appeals to ethnicity and class. Third, communal conflicts involve a threat to the state by a sub-group, such as a secessionist movement or a group organising for and fighting a civil war, often involving external support. Such conflicts may transform themselves into guerrilla struggles. Fourth, there are mass conflicts where political movements call for complete revolution and change in the power structure. Last, there are conflicts where popular political protest erupts, is mustered or orchestrated against existing patronage networks that exclude large numbers of the general populace. In such situations, general resentment is the force which brings the people together to confront the regime—often accompanied by outbreaks of violence (p. 5).

This typology provides the underlying basis of the text and seeks to explain not only the causes but also the effects and outcomes of the various conflicts and struggles. The latter are those related to Africa's refugee crises, casualties, disease, malnutrition, starvation, social and economic decline, and general moral decay. This is dealt with adequately in the chapters pointed to above, all of which offer a broad

exploration of the causes, effects and consequences of the conflict within the Continent. As much as the literature is enlightening and provides the reader with an invaluable databank of information, the book remains primarily an introductory descriptive reader particularly aimed at the non-initiated African scholar. For this reason alone the predictive dimension of the text is weak (apart from the chapter by Ali Mazrui), and fails to provide any thoroughgoing analytical commentary regarding the origins, nature, and solutions to the conflict—i.e. other than that already investigated and tabled by previous authors.

Ali Mazrui's chapter, 'Conflict as a Retreat From Modernity' is the only essay that succeeds to provide a more profound theoretical analysis of the African struggle. His study is informed by questions related to the following: Are these African conflicts the product of an over-reaching rush towards an ill-thought-out goal, that of modernity? Are Africa's conflicts caused by failures in development? Is Africa's development dependent upon at least a partial retreat from modernity? Mazrui's thoughtful problematisation facilitates a more profound understanding of the conflict than any of the other studies. This is so, because he questions the method followed in post-colonial and post-independent African countries with regard to issues related to development. The main problem here, seems to be that the conflicts are the result of the fact that development is typically modelled after Western models and standards. This, it seems, is the primary cause for the tension and conflict or for that matter, the collapse of the colonial state in the 1990s. If this is indeed the case, this fact will either signal the onset of true decolonization and eradication of the old colonial order, or the birth pangs of a new African political order trying to establish itself. This poses the question, however, as to whether the essence of the conflict in Africa must be understood generally in terms of supposing it to be a retreat from modernisation or an advance towards a particularly African post-modernity.

Notwithstanding the generality of the work, the book is a well-structured and easy readable text that provides comprehensive insight in general into the conflicts that plague the African Continent. As such, it caters for the otherwise uninitiated scholar of African affairs. Even though the book does not successfully contribute much towards understanding the conflict(s), it is a useful reader for anyone interested in obtaining a general understanding of the conflicts and struggles, and should serve as an elementary text to those seeking to further their knowledge-base in this area of study.

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