BOOK REVIEW

Michael Amoah. *The New Pan-Africanism: Globalism and the Nation State in Africa.* London: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2019. List of Maps. List of Acronyms. Notes. Bibliography. $100.00. Cloth. ISBN: 978-1784533311.

The New Pan-Africanism: Globalism and the Nation State in Africa by Michael Amoah examines the responses of the African community to a selection of violent conflicts that arose on the continent between 2010 and 2018. The author suggests that most conflicts in this period resulted from the attempts of national leaders to remain in power beyond their constitutionally mandated terms. This pattern has led political opposition forces to engage in mass demonstrations or armed resistance. In the era of the "New Pan-Africanism," either African sub-regional organizations or the African Union (AU) have intervened diplomatically or militarily in many of these conflicts. The author's main contention is that the African responses "do not follow a particular script. Rather, Africa has responded on a case-by-case basis in whatever manner is deemed convenient or practicable in the circumstances…" (ix). The author is particularly interested in how African actors have coordinated with extra-continental forces, notably the United Nations (UN), but also unilateral actors such as France, in responding to African political crises.

The book includes an examination of eight crises of leadership that unfolded in Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya, Mali, Rwanda, and South Sudan after 2010. Each chapter-length case study systematically provides a short political background, a description of the leadership crisis, an account of the resulting conflict, and finally an account of the African response. Short discussions of "International Political Economy" and "Security Challenges" follow. Oddly, the chapters are organized alphabetically by the country name, rather than chronologically or by the level or scope of African response to the internal crises. The strength of this book lies in strong empirical work done in these chapters, which provide rich descriptions of the various crises and the responses of African organizations to them.

The author's rationale for the selection of cases, however, is not clear. Amoah briefly reviews a larger set of nineteen cases of leadership turnover in the book's Introduction. He seems to have selected the cases that involved the

most robust interventions by sub-regional organizations or the AU, while omitting those in which the African community played a minimal role.

The study's major flaw is its failure to carefully define and systematically deploy its major concepts, especially the titular "New Pan-Africanism." The author states at the outset that "The New Pan-Africanism is Africa's answer to the systems and institutions of global governance when it comes to handling African crises, which for a working definition, could be put simply as pragmatic doses of case-by-case solutions to real-time African problems … " (viii). This leaves the reader to wonder whether the "New Pan-Africanism" is simply more "pragmatism" when responding to African crises in conjunction with others, yet the author does not return to the meaning of this central concept. He does date the beginning of the "New Pan-Africanism" to the launch of the AU in 2002, but he then limits his period of study to post-2010, beginning with the Ivorian crisis of that year. Amoah frequently invokes the concept of "nationalism," but without integrating it deeply into the study.

In the conclusion, Amoah helpfully draws our attention to the central dilemma of African community responses to political crises on the continent: namely, those charged with responding to the violent crises occasioned by rulers "over-staying" their time in power or seizing power unconstitutionally are too often guilty of the very same transgressions. In response, he calls for the AU to restructure itself and "erect a superstructure body over and above the heads of government…" (230). Such a reform is hardly in the offing, however. Unfortunately, a better response by the African community to continental crises must await a deeper commitment to democratic norms *at the domestic level.* The strongest partners in continental "peer-review" enshrined in the AU's Constitutive Act are that handful of African states such as Benin, Ghana, and Senegal that have transcended both personal rule and de facto one-party state rule (as in Botswana and Tanzania). In due course, the values of the rule of law and the peaceful transfer of power via free elections may be absorbed into the political cultures of a majority of African polities. Only when that day comes can we expect that the AU will act systematically against the seizure of power in coups d'état or the unconstitutional extension of presidential terms of office.

John F. Clark [ID]
Florida International University
Miami, Florida
clarkj@fiu.edu

For additional reading on this subject, the ASR recommends:

Duursma, Allard. 2019. "Mediating Solutions to Territorial Civil Wars in Africa: Norms, Interests, and Major Power Leverage." *African Studies Review* 62 (3): 65–88. doi:10.1017/asr.2018.103.

Newbury, Catharine. 2002. "States at War: Confronting Conflict in Africa." *African Studies Review* 45 (1): 1–20. doi: 10.1017/S0002020600031528.