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SCHOLARLY REVIEW ESSAY

Pathways to Peace‡

Sharath Srinivasan. ***When Peace Kills Politics: International Intervention and Unending Wars in the Sudans.*** London: C. Hurst & Co., 2021. 400 pp. $31.75. Paper. ISBN: 9781849048316.

Sarah M. H. Nouwen, Laura M. James, and Sharath Srinivasan, eds. ***Making and Breaking Peace in Sudan and South Sudan: The Comprehensive Peace Agreement and Beyond***. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. 360 pp. $115.00. Hardback. ISBN: 9780197266953.

Sarah G. Phillips. ***When There Was No Aid: War and Peace in Somaliland***. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020. 256 pp. $39.95. Hardback. ISBN: 9781501747151.

Terence McNamee and Monde Muyangwa. ***The State of Peacebuilding in Africa: Lessons Learned for Policymakers and Practitioners***. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021. 431 pp. $57.14. Hardback. ISBN: 9783030466350.

Elisabeth King and Cyrus Samii. ***Diversity, Violence, and Recognition: How Recognizing Ethnic Identity Promotes Peace***. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. $140.00. Hardback. ISBN: 9780197509456.

Séverine Autesserre. ***The Frontlines of Peace: An Insider's Guide to Changing the World***. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021. 221 pp. $29.99. Paper. ISBN: 9780197530351.

This review essay explores the complex subject of peace in Africa by reviewing six volumes. While the African Union and the United Nations identify peace as providing the foundation for development, the quest for sustainable peace in regions of postcolonial Africa has remained elusive. Several works have sought to examine the contemporary pathways to peace currently being explored on the continent. The works under review must be located in this search for sustainable peace in Africa.

These works have fixed their gaze on the subject of peace, concentrating on several African countries affected by conflict, including Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Burundi, and Rwanda. Two of the six volumes (McNamee and Muyangwa's *The State of Peacebuilding in Africa*, and Nouwen, James, and

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Srinivasan's *Making and Breaking Peace in Sudan and South Sudan*) are edited volumes, with various contributors sharing their reflections. In order to critically review these six works, this review essay focuses on the cross-cutting themes in these volumes. This includes how they collectively and individually bring new insights to peacebuilding in Africa. Further, this review identifies unique qualities in each of the volumes. To round off, this review essay identifies some areas for further research that remain, even as these volumes have made significant contributions to the field.

Sharath Srinivasan's book, *When Peace Kills Politics: International Intervention and Unending Wars in the Sudans*, examines the role of foreign peacemaking initiatives. It highlights how these forays have perpetuated the logistics of violence in Sudan and later South Sudan since the turn of the millennium until the 2019 transition phase. Srinivasan's argument revolves around two main themes. Firstly, he posits that peacemaking in the context of a civil war heavily relies on ways and instrumental logistics that are inherently violent and which ultimately compromise rather than bolster nonviolent civil politics (12). Secondly, he suggests that although foreign peacemaking mechanisms are geared towards fostering nonviolent civil politics, their means and ends nonetheless engender the seeds of political violence and coercion (13). Through deploying Hannah Arendt's political views, Srinivasan analyses the relationship that politics and violence have in civil war and peacemaking contexts (31–53). He further buttresses his views by showing how multiple and conflicting interests between international peacemakers and local peace activists compromise genuine peace initiatives (31–55), resulting in what he terms, "make-do" peace, which is a futile attempt to accommodate the competing interests of the peacemakers and conflicting parties to develop a "neat" plan (70). Through Donald L. Horowitz's concept of metaconflict (86), he further analyses how "simplification" of the conflict in terms of binaries (for example, North vs. South Sudan) leaves out other crucial political actors and possibilities that are crucial for the peacemaking process (87–122). In his effort to demonstrate the detrimental effects of make-do peace through the means–end logics in the peacemaking process, he demonstrates that make-do peace only distorts, defers, and diminishes politics of civil war. This tragically reproduces violence, as evidenced by the Darfur conflict between 2001 and 2004 (133–62). In the subsequent chapters, Srinivasan shows how the "make-do" model deviates from political realities and intensifies the very violence it was designed to stop (163–270).

Srinivasan's book provides fresh insights to practitioners, policymakers, and scholars that politics is an integral part of peace and peacemaking processes (287). Furthermore, the book provides a rich narrative with ample data of how the international peacemaking processes were intricately linked to the conflict dynamics in the Sudan and later South Sudan from 2005 to 2019. However, the book overstates the effect of peacemaking on politics, as if politics was the only dimension that was sacrificed during the numerous peacemaking processes (187–214). Politics was one of many other dimensions—including ethnicity, gender, culture, religion, and youth among other entities—that was sacrificed for the sake of and success of the peacemaking process. Notwithstanding, the core argument still comes out clearly that peace and peacemaking cannot

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succeed without considering other aspects. Furthermore, the book, though rich in portraying the nuanced dynamics of the negative toll of peacemaking processes on politics, only goes so far but leaves the inquisitive reader with the question, "When peace kills politics what then should be done?" Although this is a different standard to what the author set out to do, it is, however, critical for practitioners and policymakers to not only understand how peace kills politics but also how that should be prevented. With this in mind, the book could have done more to reflect on processes that can be used in preventing the same situation from recurring in the Sudans or elsewhere.

Srinivasan's book is complemented by the volume he coedited with Nouwen and James, *Making and Breaking Peace in Sudan and South Sudan*, which explores similar issues, including the case study of the Sudans. Similar to Srinivasan's sole-authored book, *Making and Breaking Peace in Sudan and South Sudan* also grapples with the question of whether more than two decades of numerous peace interventions in Sudan and South Sudan have succeeded in either making or breaking peace (1). The book consistently identifies numerous reasons for the making and/or breaking of peace in the Sudans. It, however, places greater blame on unsuccessful external peace interventions, especially the contradictory input from foreign peacemakers, mediators, Sudanese warring parties, and various other actors. The incompatible input on various peace processes has resulted in piecemeal checkered outcomes which only plant the seeds of future conflict (2–3). Furthermore, unlike other books under review, the volume has a much broader focus on the various pathways influencing peace in Sudan and South Sudan, ranging from peacemaking processes (1–26, 43–61, 212–58) and gender dynamics (153–71), peace agreements (62–78, 97–172), role of natural resources (191–212), conflict resolution strategies (negotiation and mediation) in Sudan and South Sudan (258–77), and postconflict justice (297–319). Despite being able to capture rich and diverse perspectives behind the making and breaking of peace in Sudan and South Sudan, the book nevertheless did not provide adequate data on some of the issues it discussed, such as gender and natural resources.

Sarah G. Phillips's book, *When There Was No Aid* is a sound and powerful chronicle of Somaliland's political evolution and its noteworthy ability to maintain peace by ironically emphasizing the pervasive menace of a return to war and the highly constricted ability of state institutions to prevent that from happening. Phillips's book, like the two preceding works, exposes the limits of Western approaches in addressing conflicts in Africa. However, these three works differ on their contextualization of the factors influencing the success and/or failure of peace processes. That is, Phillips's work focuses on postconflict peacebuilding in Somaliland whilst Srinivasan's (2021) and Nouwen, James, and Srinivasan's (2020) books dwell more on peacemaking in the Sudans. Phillips's focus is to unravel the debatable question of why the widespread violence in Somaliland stopped while it continued elsewhere in Somalia. Like other scholars who have focused on the Somalia crisis, her first argument is that stability in Somaliland was prompted by the virtual absence of external intervention during its formative years (1991–96) compared to the overwhelming international attention given to the rest of Somalia (6). This absence of external interference advantaged Somaliland, especially in affording it the opportunity to establish locally legitimate governance

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organizations without externally circumscribed deadlines and organizational endpoints (8). In pursuing this question, she further propels her argument in two different directions. Her first position is outward looking, drawing from broader literature on the role of international aid on postconflict reconstruction (24–47). She questions the internationalized and conventional model of peace/state building by probing whether: 1) foreign aid is essential to end conflicts; 2) it is required to delineate an institutional endpoint; and 3) Weberian governance institutions are a requirement for upholding peace (38–47). She posits that aid institutions utilize the rhetoric of weak states with the aim of securing their own presence whilst failing on their primary goal of securing peace (26–31). In responding to the first enquiry, she claims that in its first decade Somaliland was a typical counterfactual example of no aid/no intervention (11). Contrary to prevailing literature that attributes Somaliland's stability to the relative strength of its institutions, she weaves a constructivist account centered on the importance of Somaliland's independence discourse, which is used to establish parameters for acceptable behavior that preserve peace in the absence of functioning institutions (136–64). In other words, the "independent discourse is based on three assumptions of a (1) 'Somalilander' identity; (2) the othering of Somalia; and (3) fear of 'returning' to violence" (165–73).

Overall, her book successfully utilizes the Somaliland case study to demonstrate the ineffectiveness of conventional postconflict state-building (167). Despite her argument that the book is not another addition to the literature on "the antiaid list" (165), the work nonetheless reveals itself to be exactly that. More so, she did not explicitly raise the point in her book that Somaliland's isolation was self-imposed such that it was never at any given time been forced upon it, which also explains its relative stability compared to the rest of Somalia. Likewise, Phillips also overlooked advancing a discussion connecting successful widespread collective action within communities that had fought against each other in an acrimonious and protracted civil conflict to the broader question of what lessons Somaliland's peace- and state-building trajectory holds for other postconflict societies; a point she only raises in the concluding chapter (172–74). Also, the constructivist independent discourse model she uses denies the agency of Somalilanders by implicitly refuting the possibility that the inhabitants might have chosen democracy over authoritarianism.

Terence McNamee and Monde Muyangwa's edited volume, *The State of Peacebuilding in Africa: Lessons Learned for Policymakers and Practitioners*, is rich in scope and coverage as it delves deeper on peacebuilding processes drawing from members of the academia, grassroots, practitioners, and policymakers within and outside Africa (7). The main theme throughout the volume is the search across the continent for a "viable process" (6) through which sustainable peace might be achieved. Though this task seems straightforward, the book's strong analytical approach proves this to be a tall order. The book's editors tie all the subjects covered within the book under three general areas of interest in peacebuilding: "understanding the context"; "local agency, ownership, and leadership"; and "collaboration" (417–18). Although drawing from the 2014 UN Independent High-level Panel on Peace Operations, which advocated for the "primacy of politics" (6), McNamee and Muyangwa's volume was able to concur

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with Srinivasan's book, *When Peace Kills Politics*, which also advocated for the centrality of politics and challenges brought forth by suppressing politics in the peacemaking process (295). Throughout the book, editors and contributors provide a clear argument also reflected by Nouwen, James, and Srinivasan's *Making and Breaking Peace in Sudan and South Sudan*, that the search for a "viable process" is riddled with misleading issues entangled within "local, national, and international interests, which are almost never in sync" (416). This scenario arguably leads to an "idea of peace that does not always accord with African realities or values" (417), which questions the trustworthiness of metrics used in determining the success or failure of peacebuilding efforts in Africa (417).

One of the book's merits is its ability to canvas numerous case studies within Africa, especially from sub-Saharan Africa, without straying from its theme on peacebuilding and thereby demonstrating the complexity of peacebuilding in the African continent. Unlike the other books reviewed above, McNamee and Muyangwa's work was able to move beyond focusing on a single aspect of the peace process, but upon variegated layers within this process alongside different players and related factors. Hence, the book captures, from a continental perspective, the overwhelming presence of actors, policies, agendas and environments, within which the burgeoning and shifting peacebuilding industry is situated. This explains the "failure to overcome inertia and put peace on a sustainable footing" (416). Also, unlike other books on peacebuilding in Africa which focus on a single case study or aspect of peacebuilding, the editors and contributors were able to clearly demonstrate that peacebuilding in Africa is a Pandora's box with too many variables and factors that are too numerous to be adequately analysed under a single volume. This gives room to advance research for future studies on the pathways to peace (295–375). However, the book's major weakness was to draw upon too many case studies without providing adequate focus on each area discussed, such that these case studies (the Sahel region, for example; 397–414) ends up generalizing. Singling out case studies within the region cannot provide enough data to speak for the whole region.

Elisabeth King and Cyrus Samii's book, *Diversity, Violence, and Recognition: How Recognizing Ethnic Identity Promotes Peace*, is crucial for practitioners, policymakers and scholars in grasping the logic behind ethnic recognition (public and explicit references to ethnic groups in state institutions) or nonrecognition in multiethnic states (4). Ethnicity has remained one of the enduring themes in contemporary debates. States are perpetually grappling with the choice of either recognizing (Burundi, Lebanon, and Switzerland) or ignoring (France, Rwanda, and Turkey) it altogether. The book provides complex solid quantitative and qualitative comparative data in articulating reasons why both recognition and nonrecognition is likely to produce better outcomes for peace (2–8). The authors argue that some states opt for recognition through quotas or autonomy arrangements to overcome the "tyranny of the majority" (10), whilst others embrace nonrecognition to minimize opportunities for ethnic conflict (11). However, they posit that none of the two (recognition and non-recognition) is superior to the other and there is no one-size-fits-all approach in addressing postconflict multiethnic communities (11). Instead, they argue that both approaches are

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effective depending on the conditions under which one approach might be more effective than the other. In order to demonstrate their proposal, they utilized the case studies of Burundi (85–107), Rwanda (111–34), and Ethiopia (136–56). Burundi and Rwanda were chosen because of their similar demographic composition (Hutu majority and Tutsi minority population) yet inverse ethnic configurations of power optimum for controlled comparisons. That is, Burundi and Rwanda opted for recognition and nonrecognition respectively. Ethiopia, on the other hand, provides an alternative option for minority states with high ethnic fractionalization where leaders may address the dilemma of recognition by favouring recognition (136–56).

The book successfully addresses two major questions in the field of ethnic studies: What are the conditions for ethnic recognition within a country? In addition, what are its implications for peace? Regarding the first question, contrary to prevailing literature that claims that recognition is mainly encountered in minority ruled states, the authors however concluded that plurality (majority) rather than minority ruled states are the ones most likely to embrace ethnic recognition (11–12). They argue that recognition has two effects; the first being "assuring effects" (26), which are meant to assure the opposition by granting symbolic legitimation through differentiated rights. Secondly, "mobilization effects" (28) whereby recognition entrenches ethnicity, thereby focusing political debates along ethnic lines. Plurality leaders benefit from both effects whilst minority leaders only benefit from the first effect due to their smaller ethnic size creating a "dilemma of recognition" (31), which explains why contrary to dominant literature, plurality leaders opt for adoption. Regarding the second question, King and Samii assert that there is a positive relationship between recognition and peace, which is very strong under plurality rule (79), whilst under minority rule recognition's effect on peace is neither positive nor negative. Under plurality rule, the assuring and mobilization effects align toward stability, unlike under minority rule. They argue that these two outcomes are a consequence of a "paradox of recognition" (86) and a "paradox of non-recognition" (112) respectively. The paradox of recognition is a scenario whereby recognizing ethnicity can occasionally remove the conflict potency of ethnicity whilst the paradox of non-recognition is when ethnicity remains politically salient despite being silenced. The book, therefore, contributes towards understanding the subtle mechanisms of ethnic recognition or nonrecognition on conflict.

Séverine Autesserre's book, *The Frontlines of Peace: An Insider's Guide to Changing the World*, is a unique addition to the peace discourse as it adopts a peculiar approach to peace studies, which is people-centered (18–19). Similar to the other books under review, her work also analyzes external intervention in the form of aid. By providing rich data drawn from her numerous case studies (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, South Sudan, and Afghanistan), she argues that the major significant flaw of the peace industry is the overdependence on financial aid which globally amounts to $10 trillion per annum or 13 percent of global GDP (17). Autesserre argues that building peace does not require billions in aid or massive international interventions but more attention should be placed on meeting the needs of the actors involved. The crux of her book is the profound yet simple message that: insiders, potentially with support from

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outsiders, build peace. She critiques the peace industry, "Peace, Inc," for adopting a top-down approach whereby peacebuilders and interveners arrive from outside the conflict zones pretending to know everything, which engenders stereotypes that perpetuate negative representations of those inhabiting conflict zones (71). Therefore, by drawing from her field experience, she proposes that insiders and outsiders need to interact regularly outside the work environment to create bridges that may eventually overcome the top-down approach practiced by Peace, Inc (151–76). She proposes the peacebuilding model, "Model Intervener" (153). If properly followed, the model can potentially promote greater indigenous ownership of peacebuilding processes, thereby dousing tense insider-outsider relationships (69–92). Her model also challenges conventional assumptions that peacebuilding is the third phase of the conflict management cycle (after peacekeeping and peacemaking) by presenting it as an all-encompassing process throughout the conflict management cycle. The book is of value to practitioners, diplomats, students, and scholars interrogating the peace industry, conducting fieldwork or providing diplomatic training in conflict zones.

Notwithstanding, her work was very vague when it came to articulating the local, national, and international levels during peacebuilding (44) and conflict (107) episodes. More so, although she accurately describes how many countries experience domestic conflicts, she did not clarify why these conflicts intensified in some cases and not in others. On a similar note, she also pointed to the inability of states such as South Sudan and Somalia to provide safety or building infrastructure, thereby affecting peace, and contrasted them to the DRC, a stronger state that also has failed to render social peace (104). Nevertheless, she argued that under the right circumstances, these states can also "do good," but failed to articulate how these right circumstances can be achieved. Again, she overlooks how other potential causes might lead to peacebuilding failure, such as profiteering by outside peacekeeping troops, leading to counterproductive behaviour in the conflict theatre. Finally, she provides gripping accounts of the phenomena she sees plaguing "Peace Inc." but this leaves the reader grappling with some questions. For example, how endemic are the stereotypes that she so graphically describes (70); how far-flung and deep are foreign peacebuilders' "frustration" with their local coworkers (p. 80); and how deleterious is "cutting corners" (99) and measuring outcomes quantitatively?

These six contributions are very crucial in appreciating current pathways to peace in troubled regions in Africa and abroad. The major theme emerging from these books is the counterproductive role of foreign, or in this case Western-based, approaches to peace. It emerges that these are not only responsible for failure in brokering peace processes, but are also responsible for casing conflicts. However, other than promoting indigenous participation in the peace processes, these works fail to identify new pathways to peace that can replace the current Western model, which they strongly castigate. Although these works were able to explore various themes influencing pathways to peace in troubled regions, especially in Africa and covering ethnicity, gender, external intervention and aid, they nonetheless ignored emerging and traditional variables that have an equally significant effect on peace. For example, religion, like ethnicity, has also

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had an influence on peace in the troubled regions. In addition, variables such as youth, digital social media and migration were not discussed in the six volumes, despite being equally important in terms of understanding the current drivers of the pathways to peace. Equally important was the choice of case studies. Much of the data for the six volumes was drawn from the Sahel region, East and Central Africa. There are also strategic contemporary conflict regions in West and Southern Africa, which are equally important, and given adequate attention, can provide new insights. These diverse yet interesting volumes argue that the pathway to peace is complex and demands greater effort than what is currently dedicated, evidenced by the cycles of peace and conflict in the study areas.

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