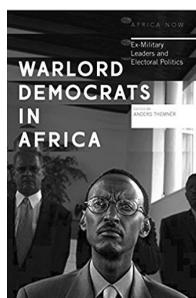


for opposition by confused youth, prison indoctrinated criminals, and various others at the angry margins of society. He even notes that the infamous terrorist known as Carlos the Jackal converted to radical Islam while serving a life sentence in a French prison, possibly because he viewed it as a stronger challenge to Western society than the Marxism of his youth. Still Kepel is focused on more than reform and demands that French security forces start to address the jihadist threat as it currently exists and not how it was structured and organized twenty years ago. Additionally, it is worth noting that Kepel's work provides many interesting insights important to non-French readers concerned with the problems of their own countries as well as the global terrorist threat.



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Warlord Democrats in Africa: Ex-Military Leaders and Electoral Politics

Edited by Anders Themnér

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The collection of essays contained within *Warlord Democrats* examines ten transitions led by former combatants, or “warlord democrats,” of nonstate groups who struggled to establish themselves as viable political actors in postconflict and complex environments. Given public demand for regular, multiparty elections across the continent in the postcolonial era and the prevailing notion that democracy is “the only game in town,” participation in electoral competitions has become a popular route for ex-warlords to attempt to integrate into systems claiming to offer legitimate governance, thus allowing them to convert military power into political influence. Through this well edited volume, a diversity of case studies seeks to address whether these actors’ participation in societies after a civil war has positive or negative effects, and what the manifestations of those effects have been across seven African states.

From the 1990s on, the international community’s preference for using the democratic template in peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations sought to impose a governance structure that would enhance stability. Yet many former warlords and rebel leaders have struggled in their pursuit of legitimacy within a formal state structure of governance. The transition from illegitimate to credible power brokerage has ranged from efforts to address and mitigate the root causes of conflict, to those who merely seek to maintain the immediate postconflict status quo to preserve their own positions of power. Four main explanatory factors emerge across the seven chapters to explain the warlords’ freedom of action in a series of postconflict environments. These include electoral constraints, the capacity for warlords to misbehave, the expected cost of doing so, and personality traits that influence how they perceive and act on these considerations.

Each case study discusses these shaping factors via a structure/agency perspective, allowing the reader to observe the extent to which the individual exerts authority as either a free agent or within existing social contexts. In chapter 1, Judith Verweijen traces the postwar trajectories

of former leader of the Congolese Rally for Democracy-Kisangani-Liberation Movement Antipas Mbusa Nyamwisi, who has showed unique prowess in quietly rekindling conflicts for the purposes of publicly resolving them. Chapter 2 sees Lars Waldorf focus on Rwanda's Paul Kagame and his quest to centralize power in Rwanda after the genocide. In chapter 3, Carrie Manning and Anders Themnér analyze the behavior of two Liberian former military leaders as they seek to navigate elections. Chapter 4 has Alex Vines tracing the country's transition from war to peace via a former Mozambican National Resistance Movement leader's efforts to ensure continued political relevance. In chapter 5, Henrik Vigh follows Guinea-Bissau's multifaceted João Bernardo Vieira before chapter 6's Mimmi Soderberg Kovacs and Ibrahim Bangura compare the experiences of three Sierra Leonean warlords after the civil war. Johan Brosche and Kristine Høglund's chapter 7 investigates the political maneuverings of South Sudan's Riek Machar, who played a pivotal role in cementing his party's dominance in political and economic spheres after the signing of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. This is followed by Anders Themnér's excellent concluding chapter, which compares the postwar experiences of the ten individuals analyzed in this volume and offers prescriptive commentary on how best to navigate the half decade following the conclusion of open hostilities, the period within which civil war relapse is most likely to occur.

As with many multiauthor volumes, there is some discontinuity in the collection's tone. Some chapters possessed more value-added analysis than others, which instead veered toward historical recitation. Out of necessity, the book also bore a proliferation of acronyms and actors, which sometimes made for dense reading. A density of acronyms and briefly introduced complex sociopolitical dynamics may preclude this book from acting as an introductory work to the case studies. To its credit, the book offers diversity of chapters from some providing background on well-known figures such as Prince Johnson of Liberia and Paul Kagame of Rwanda, to others providing apparently original analysis of the origins and motivations of lesser-known "strong men" such as Alfonso Dhlakama of Mozambique, Riek Machar of South Sudan, and João Bernardo "Nino" Vieira of Guinea-Bissau.

On the African continent, successful transitions to legitimate governance are rare. The essays document kleptocracies, criminalization of the political system, extractive exploitation, human rights abuses, and capitalization on social, political, and economic cleavages that already existed within their fragile states. Even reflecting on implications of leadership outside of the ruler's home territory, author Lars Waldorf recognized that Kagame's contribution to multilateral interventions on the continent was not wholly altruistic and notes that "for one thing, it keeps his soldiers busy outside Rwanda" (74).

A footnote reveals that Kagame has also used Rwanda's provision of troops as leverage within the international community when he threatened the withdrawal of 3,300 Rwandan peacekeepers from Darfur in 2010 after a United Nations report documenting Rwandan crimes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was leaked, undermining his own transformation into a peacelord by strong-arming the international community into capitulating to his wishes. Further, this book's detailed look at the aftermath of such engagements is both timely and salient to

other contemporary scholarship and touches on some of the follow-on repercussions of international sponsorship of foreign military training—both Rwanda’s Kagame and Liberia’s Johnson via the United States as well as Guinea-Bissau’s Vieira via China.

The volume does, however, offer a few glimmers of hope. One of the few successful transitions of power can be credited to Liberian politician and former rebel leader Sekou Conneh, who after losing an election was, “Gracious in defeat and acted in a statesmanlike manner when he called on the supporters of the opposition to accept the results and uphold peace. . . . After his electoral defeat Conneh left the political scene and went back to being a businessman” (109). Observing this rare, but exemplary behavior, editor Anders Themnér wrote in his concluding essay that “the best chance to support peace and democracy may be to transform ‘warlords’ into ‘peacelords’” (222). Although this catchphrase tells us little about facilitating such a transformation, there is recognition that many of these figures played on their wartime credentials to mobilize support for their political agendas. Understanding how they capitalized on their postelection accomplishments might also be useful to the design of postconflict political civil society engagement strategies.

Themnér’s editorial prowess in securing such diverse, thoughtful contributions is evident. So is the volume’s overall call for further attention to the role such transitioning “strong men” can play in shaping democratization and peacebuilding after civil war. This work’s examination of patron-client relationships is essential reading for any individual interested in postconflict stabilization and the reintegration of former state adversaries within state governing structures.