

Jonathan Fisher and Nina Wilen. *African Peacekeeping: New Approaches to African History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. 242 pp., 14 figures, 1 map, 8 tables, Abbreviations, index. \$30.99 Paperback. ISBN: 978-1-108-71349-8.

The story of state-building and the development of authority in Africa can only be told through the lens of African peacekeeping. Whether examining early periods of colonialism or identity problems in Nigeria in the 1940s and radical leaders in late 20th century Ghana, examining Africa's history through peacekeeping represents a means of promoting stability and development in the country (22-23). The stories of African peacekeepers provide researchers with the ability to understand how the support across Africa was an opportunity to manage and reward military individuals through the development of unity and pace across African governments and recovering from long periods of financial and physical trauma (24).

Enter Jonathan Fisher's and Nina Wilén's *African Peacekeeping: New Approaches to African History*. This well-researched work provides insight into the benefits of peacekeeping missions in Africa throughout the late 20th century and early 21st century. Using a map, photos, and government data through the use of tables and referenced information, the authors describe how: "Peacekeeping as a set of practice has become a central element of state-building and the construction of political authority in many states and regions of post-colonial Africa in different ways" (11). More specifically, by employing an understanding of peacekeeping, the authors claimed that "peacekeeping represents a critical means to continuously secure arms, training military assistance from foreign powers who are keen to promote stability in geostrategically significant regions" (23).

Jonathan Fisher of the University of Birmingham and Nina Wilén of Lund University are political scientists whose work centers primarily on justifying sovereignty and the security and development of city-states throughout Africa. Over time, both professors have attempted to explore Africa's contemporary history and politics through the lens of peacekeeping contributions. The focus is on how these contributions are blended into politics and contribute to the region's prosperity.

In *African Peacekeeping*, Fisher and Wilén examine how peacekeeping is a practice central to the development of political power and prosperity across African states. Throughout the text, both authors examine peacekeeping missions throughout the late 20th century to understand Africa's concerns with developing regions of peace and prosperity. By examining historical, political, and social experiences, the authors can contextualize Africa's development of peace and combating regional and international political tensions through the work of peacekeeping missions.

In the introduction, Fisher and Wilén provide their arguments and review the book's organization. The book is separated into seven chapters, looking at the early stages of peacekeeping in African history while transitioning to the modern day. As the work progresses through the seven chapters, the authors express the importance of peacekeeping and how "participating in peacekeeping has shaped contemporary Africa and its place in the international system" (225). Based on how the chapters are organized, Fisher and Wilén assemble an easy-to-follow chronological approach to examining the importance and benefits of peacekeeping missions. Most importantly, by incorporating government data, statistics, and historical evidence, the authors demonstrate the development of peacekeeping missions over time and how they have benefited Africa's economic, social, and political development.

Chapters One and Two focus on the development of early African peacekeeping in history and how peacekeeping is a central factor in the development of African states. When examining the early periods of colonialism in Africa, Fisher and Wilén demonstrate that "peacekeeping has often been grafted onto existing postcolonial approaches to regime maintenance" (68). The authors' intertwined use of historical facts and political data depicts that participation "in peacekeeping can therefore be of great political and economic value to African governments" (94). The authors' examination of the "politico-economic benefits" of peacekeeping through the examination of different African states such as Uganda and the role under Yoweri Museveni/NRM regime (95). Through these examinations, they demonstrate how peacekeeping missions such as the African Union (AU) can play a role in civilian protection, economic recovery, and business development in a region where there have been leader coups or tensions with political systems (91).

Chapter Three introduces the relationship between "African peacekeeping and the continent's international relations, tracing peacekeeping's evolution from the periphery to the heart of many bilateral and multilateral relationships" (26). In this section, Fisher and Wilén draw attention to the issues in Rwanda and Ethiopia and how the use of peacekeeping missions in Africa has provided more development and help than the Western world's military aid. The authors imply that through organized peacekeeping missions, African states can play a significant role in opening up and developing their nations by eliminating conflicts (126).

Chapters Four, Five, and Six address the "interplay between African peacekeeping and the evolution of national and regional identity" (27). Peacekeeping has been incorporated across Africa to address issues in a region post-conflict or post-liberation. Over these three chapters, the authors examine the experience of the AU peacekeeping mission in regions including Rwanda and South Africa. The authors discuss the historical background of these regions while focusing on the post-conflict experiences of the regions. Examining the difference in economic, political, and social gains between those who did and did not experience peacekeeping missions. Overall, the authors provide insight into contributing factors of peacekeeping missions in these regions compared to others who did not while providing readers with a look at the identity transformation that comes from the establishment of peace (193).

The Conclusion reminds the readers that Africa has a historical legacy and apparent issues with conflict over history. Overall, their study discusses how, though it is important to understand the benefit of peacekeeping missions for the economic, political, and social development of African states, people cannot look beyond the history and events that have happened in Africa and how these events have shaped the continent today. Regional governments are looking to achieve security in their region, which, through a modern lens and peacekeeping, changes can be made over time to length and mandate political powers across African states (230).

This book's primary strength lies in Fisher's and Wilén's ability to take historical facts and events and connect political events and findings to formulate their arguments. This work provides an insightful read into the benefits of peacekeeping in developing a stable economic, political, and social status in African states. If *African Peacekeeping* had any weakness, it leaves the reviewer wondering what ways African states can further develop these peacekeeping missions to bring together multiple states to form a more connected African continent.

Fisher's and Wilén's work constitutes a smooth, easy-to-read study that would appeal to a broad audience. Historians of African history, African politics, and Africa's Development studies would benefit from examining the benefits of peacekeeping missions in African states. Fisher's and Wilén's study opens the door for future historians to more thoroughly address the benefits of African peacekeeping missions while even making comparisons to other peacekeeping efforts across the world.

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