

interesting, the political prisoners were held separately from the others in an isolation unit, where Mandela was accorded a 'particular status' not only by his fellow prisoners, but also by the white officials.

Lodge's account of the political differences that Mandela encountered with some of his fellow politicians seems more comprehensive than previous ones, probably because of a 'rich range of memoirs from Mandela's fellow prisoners' that have since become available. These included members of the Pan Africanist Congress, the Black Consciousness Movement, militant students after the 1976 schools demonstrations and young ANC guerrillas and saboteurs. The main difference was that some believed the struggle would end in a 'seizure of power', while Mandela and Sisulu believed that the ANC would compel the government to negotiate.

In March 1982, together with Sisulu and others, Mandela was moved to Pollsmoor Prison outside Cape Town, which Lodge suggests showed that the government was anticipating the possibility of negotiating with the ANC leaders. In October 1989 Sisulu and others were released and Mandela met President de Klerk in December. The ANC was unbanned on 2 February 1990 and Mandela walked free nine days later. Formal talks commenced on 2 May and continuous negotiations led to the first democratic South African General Election in April 1994, with Mandela emerging as President.

Nelson Mandela was essentially a man for his time who received hero worship of a kind no other international statesman has attracted, certainly in modern satellite TV times. Without him it is doubtful whether the relatively peaceful change in South Africa could have taken place and Tom Lodge's fine book gives a definitive account of those times.

*House of Commons, London*

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doi:10.1093/afraf/adm047

**Civil Militia: Africa's intractable security menace**, edited by David J. Francis. Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005. xxi +300 pp. £55.00 (hardback). ISBN: 0-7546-4452-9 (hardback).

The incorporation of civilians into military conflicts through the establishment of civil militias has long posed challenges to analysts of civil war. Do such militias warrant a distinctive analytical lens separate from the literature surrounding both state militaries and non-state guerrilla forces? What is the history and evolution of these forces? And finally, how can we understand their significance for contemporary conflicts in Africa and beyond? In this volume, the authors have tried to deal with this issue through theoretical analyses and detailed case studies. As is the case with many edited volumes, particularly when dealing with an understudied subject, the results are a mixed bag ranging from several very good contributions to some that will leave the reader wanting more.

Hanging over the project is the basic question of what constitutes a civil militia – and the contributors devote several chapters to constructing a convincing analytical framework that ties together the various contributions. Unfortunately, this remains out of their reach. In their conception, while earlier civil militias were viewed as auxiliaries to state militaries, a second generation has emerged in response to the weakening of the security structures of the post-colonial, post-Cold War state in Africa. This generation of civil militias is characterized by their lack of allegiance to the state. They often directly challenge the state's prerogative over the use of violence and are, thus, an 'intractable security menace'.

There are several problems with this theoretical formulation. First, is the contention that the emergence of civil militias outside the control of the state warrants a distinct analytical category. As the authors note, the prior conception of militias as a voluntary civilian armed force available to supplement the state's military during a crisis is enshrined in many liberal, democratic constitutions. However, they argue that this conception is no longer sufficient for talking about contemporary civil militias owing to the current generation's lack of loyalty to the state. This appealingly simple distinction leaves some muddle: why should civil militias outside the control of the state deserve a separate category from other groups that challenge state power – whether we call these guerrillas, rebels, insurgents, or even terrorists? Even if these new militias could remain voluntary in their membership, it is hard to see why they should be grouped – even in an indirect manner – with their government-sanctioned counterparts, instead of with a myriad other anti-state forces.

Second, by emphasizing a generic condition of state weakness as a precondition for the emergence of civil militias, the authors ignore the reality that the strength of African states varies widely, and that different states are weak in different ways. For example, does it make sense to classify Nigeria, with its overwhelming defence establishment, alongside a slowly reconstructing Sierra Leone? Furthermore, there is no conclusive evidence that state weakness is a prerequisite for the emergence of civil defence forces. India has long faced violent challenges by civil militias to its sovereignty despite the relative strength of the state authority. Even Western nations such as the United States and Spain have faced challenges from militias such as the Branch Davidians and Basque separatists, respectively. Despite their assertion that state weakness is the cause of civil militias, it is equally likely that the opposite is true – that civil militias can cause state weakness, bringing into question the focus on state strength as an explanation of why militias emerge in any given society.

To their benefit, the case studies have avoided sticking too closely to the theoretical discussion. In fact, the authors have succeeded in providing several specific analyses of individual cases that genuinely make original contributions to the literature on conflict in Africa. Amongst these, Joe Alie's discussion of the Kamajor militia in Sierra Leone and Kenneth Omeje's contribution on the Egbesu and Bakassi Boys in Nigeria situate their discussion of civil militias in the conflict between traditional sources of authority and the modern state. Cage Banseka's contribution on the 'Anti-Gang' civil militias in Cameroon sheds light on the construction of order outside of the state authority, while questioning the morality of vigilante justice. Other chapters, however, fall victim to the lack of theoretical clarity that pervades this project, and thus devote attention to groups that by most standards would be considered professionalized guerrilla armies, such as the OLF in Ethiopia, the LURD in Liberia, and the RUF in Sierra Leone. More problematically, considering the agenda of the book, groups that derive their support directly from the state also receive attention, such as the Janjaweed in Sudan. Overall, the book does bring up some important issues and provides useful information on specific movements. Although it does not provide a convincing analytical framework, it opens the path on which one can be constructed.

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doi:10.1093/afraf/adm048

**Modernizing Nature: Forestry and imperial eco-development 1800–1950**, by S. Ravi Rajan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. xvi +286 pp. £60.00 (hardback). ISBN: 978-0-19-927796-4 (hardback).