

## BOOK REVIEW

# “ÁFRICA OCCIDENTAL: CRISIS VS ESTABILIDAD POLÍTICA”

by Yoslán Silverio González<sup>1</sup>

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The African Series, edited by Brazilian Center of African Studies (CEBRAFRICA, in Portuguese) from the *Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul*, features us under the title “*África Occidental: Crisis vs Estabilidad Política*”, an excellent proposal from the young Africanist Cuban Yoslán Silverio González. This book, definitely, brings to the current debate about the crisis, conflicts, political instability and democracy, in Sub-Saharan Africa in general, and the specific characteristics that these phenomena acquire in West Africa.

The professor and researcher Silverio’s writing manner guides us through a difficult and complex framework. However, his text style makes it easy, pleasant and enjoyable for us to read. The author provide us explanations and answers for the restlessness and questions that may arise, at the precise moment and place, just like a puzzle that he help us solve easily. The awareness of the need for a multidisciplinary approach of the subject and the rigorously applied method, end up convincing the reader of an excellently well thought out and realized work.

In this book, the author proposes to us the analysis of the main political crisis and armed conflicts which took place at the sub-region between the period of 2010 and 2017. Without losing sight of the historical focus on the specific evolution of each of those situations, he exhibits how the trend

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has been marked by their solutions, through different ways. The work fulfills itself with the study of another group of countries that was not affected by those crisis and whose political scenarios were characterized as stable, such as Cabo Verde's, Senegal's or Ghana's cases.

The text also goes further into theoretical debate, as the necessity of dealing with the African political problems, from new analysis focuses and courses, not only for particular cases that arise, but also as foundation for others, given that it reference to the different destabilizing components that are present in the most varied kinds of conflicts which have taken place in the sub-continent: the role of the ethnic-religious and natural resources factors', the socio-economic problems and the issues related to security, such as terrorism and piracy.

The author also examines the *coup d'état* and their most important characteristics, taking as example the ones carried out in the sub-region of Western Africa. At the same time, there are some ideas related to the so called Third Mandate Syndrome and how such syndrome has gotten different expressions in these regions, many times manipulated following political interests.

In this sense, Silverio pays special attention to the dissimilar election processes, to the work of a wide range of parties and other political forces, as well as to the internal, regional and international factors, conjectural or structural, which influenced in the crisis and/or conflicts outbreak. Similarly, the Africanist makes reference to the mediation actions of organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States and African Union, in each political scenario described.

In the penultimate chapter, the author makes a comparative balance of the 15 countries studied, from the crisis and conflicts, the election processes, the parties and the sub-regional integration mechanisms, which allows us to arrive at some conclusions of our own, as well as to new questions, for example, if alternation will prevail in a climate of political stability. Meanwhile, the last chapter shows scenarios about the main trends that the author has identified.

The currency of the selected themes justifies the value of the scientific results achieved, which constitute a systematization of the successes that took place in every State of the sub-region. The methodology of the historical sciences articulates itself, harmonically, with that of the political sciences and international relations, evidencing a good level of interdisciplinarity in the analysis of such realities. It stands out, in addition to the scientific rigor of the book, its structure: in this last aspect, it highlights the expository logic

which goes from the general aspects to the actual study cases and the proper balance between the epigraphs and the chapters. The use of maps, graphs and tables is highlighted, which helps to better comprehend the political processes explained.

The difficulties to conduct field studies, to have access to information and updated bibliography, as well as consult primary sources were only few of the barriers the author faced. However, he's been successful. Such fact is seen in the important number of specialized bibliography consulted. In particular, it is necessary to highlight the wide quantity of documentary and journalistic sources, above all, provided by properly African organizations, agencies and institutions.

The work "*África Occidental: Crisis vs Estabilidad Política*" constitutes a contribution to the studies on the most contemporary African reality and in special, to the ones related to this sub-region, of French-speaking majority. As can be seen, one is before a work of great utility and a required reference for specialists, scholars of the subject and policymakers, as well as for everyone interested in deepening about problems that, directly or indirectly, are present in global level.

For all reasons exhibited above, I invite you all to read this book: a work that will help not only to comprehend the African world, but also the world in which we live.

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*Translated by Igor Estima Sardo.*