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Justice in Conflict. The Effects of the International Criminal Court's Interventions on Ending Wars and Building Peace
by Mark KERSTEN.
Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. xviii + 254 pp. Paperback: £24.99.

In recent years, the International Criminal Court (ICC) has experienced an unprecedented institutional crisis due to the threat of a mass withdrawal from its Statute by African states. This threat follows the criticisms mounted against the ICC for allegedly targeting only African leaders and for undermining the peace processes carried out in that region. These criticisms raise two pivotal questions: Does the ICC intervention in certain situations have an effect on ongoing conflicts? If so, is it a negative or positive effect? The answer to these questions is provided in the excellent *Justice in Conflict* by Mark Kersten.

This book originates from the PhD research conducted at LSE by Mark Kersten, now a research fellow at the Munk School of Global Affairs of the University of Toronto, Canada. Through a detailed examination of the 'peace v. justice' debate and the analysis of two case studies (i.e. Uganda and Libya), the author presents an insightful study of the ICC's intervention in ongoing conflicts, looking at its effects on peace, justice, and conflict processes. The book consists of nine chapters, and it presents innovative and interesting findings.

The first part (Chapters 1 to 3) is dedicated to the theoretical and methodological aspects of the ICC's interventions. Here the author recalls the 'peace v. justice' debate and engages critically with the various views expressed in scholarship on the topic. Kersten argues for a middle-ground position, without endorsing any preconceived interpretation. The author proposes a new analytical framework for the study of ICC interventions, drawing on the scholarship on peace negotiations, conflict resolution, and conflict and peace studies.

Chapters 4 to 7 present the analysis and findings of the two case studies of Uganda and Libya. Kersten focuses on the dynamics and features of the conflicts in these countries and on the ICC's prosecution of the perpetrators of serious crimes committed in their territories. The outcome of this study is impressive. The author not only dissects the two situations, presenting a dramatic account of the political and legal consequences of the conflicts, but he goes further, clarifying the relationship between the various actors involved and the ICC, and between the peace processes and the prosecution of crimes.

Finally, in the last part of the book (Chapters 8 and 9), Kersten looks at the reasons why the ICC has certain effects on peace, justice, and conflict processes and the consequences thereof. The author concludes that these effects vary depending on the specific situation at stake: sometimes the ICC helps, other times hinders the peace processes. What is important is to overcome the traditional dichotomy of the 'peace v. justice' debate, presenting new approaches to the issue.

Overall, the arguments of the book are persuasive and the author is able to fill the gaps present in the literature and to propose a new understanding of the ICC's interventions. *Justice in Conflict* is certainly worth reading, for it addresses with competence and extreme lucidity one of the most complex and debated issues of International Criminal Justice of the last years.

reviewed by Ilaria ZAVOLI
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