Justice, Corruption, and Sundry Social and Political Economic Issues

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Editor’s Introduction

Justice, Corruption, and Sundry Social and Political Economic Issues

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The African Social Science Review kicks off its volume 9 with topics on restorative justice, corruption, and other social and political economic issues. The volume begins with presentation of restorative justice as a new conventional method of solving crime that highlights the needs of victims and community, while holding the offender accountable in a meaningful win-win public policy outcome. It concludes with an examination of the Boko Haram insurgency and its consequences for security and economic development in the affected countries. The five articles assembled in this volume reflect the Review’s positioning as an authoritative source for theoretical and practical analyses of African social, economic, political, and public policy issues.

The first article, “Restorative Justice: Psychological Needs of Offenders and Implications for Safety and Security,” by Fetus Obi, Ifeoma Okoye, Andrew Ewoh, and Ihekwaba Onwudiwe suggests that crime creates psychological needs for all stakeholders wherever it occurs, and that the failure of the criminal justice system to recognize and meet these needs derive from a false characterization of the state as victim. Analyzing various established programs of restorative justice that focus on meeting the psychosocial needs of victims, offenders, and communities, the authors conclude that these programs are effective because they are supported by high rates of stakeholder participation. In the African context, the authors contend that, ceteris paribus, the principles of restorative justice can be employed in tackling strategic security needs such as communal conflicts and violence against peacekeepers.

The second article, “Corruption in Uganda: A Comparative Study of Citizens’ and Public Officials’ Perceptions,” by Michael Kaluya and Euel Elliott uses a survey of 12,000 citizens and 670 public officials to examine corruption in Uganda. Kaluya and Elliott found that while the perceptions of citizens and public officials tend to vary slightly, they are both entangled in an unholy alliance that alters the meaning of corruption, from the abuse of public office to an act beneficial to the community. Corruption, the authors insist, can be remedied with introduction of technological control mechanisms, reduction of work incentives, and requirement that would-be candidates for public office prove their suitability for such portfolios.

George Klay Kieh in the third article, “The ‘Hegemonic Presidency’ in African Politics,” argues that hegemonic presidency emerged in post-colonial Africa as a result of unlawful exercise of presidential powers beyond constitutional and statutory provisions. To remedy the phenomenon, the article suggests that African countries should consider redesigning their constitutions, limiting the appointive powers of the presidency, and enhancing the legislative and judicial branches of government to strengthen checks and balances.

In the fourth article, “Understanding Why Households Foster-in Children: Evidence from Ghana,” Derek Asuman, Louis Boakye-Yiadom, and Nkechi Owoo used data from the 2012-2013 Ghana Living Standards Survey to explore the determinants of child fostering focusing on its economic implications. Their findings suggest that households engage in fostering-in of children to increase their family size and meet demand for labor, which is consistent with the notion that child fostering decisions entail rational economic reasoning driven by self-interest.
Ultimately, the authors recommend that government formulate and adopt social welfare policy reform measures that may have positive effects on quality of life and economic opportunities for citizens.

The fifth and final article, “The Boko Haram Insurgency and its Impact on Border Security, Trade, and Economic Collaboration Between Nigeria and Cameroon: An Exploratory Study,” written by Viviane Foyou, Peter Ngwafu, Maribel Santoyo, and Andrea Ortiz examines how sporadic conflicts between bordering states can be leveraged by terrorists to advance their agendas and undermine regional security. The authors suggest that interstate cooperation that establishes long-term border security is the key to stemming the expansion and nefarious activities of terror groups.

In conclusion, I appreciate our dedicated reviewers for their invaluable service, and extend my gratitude to all the contributing authors for considering the African Social Science Review as an outlet for their scholarly work. I will like to sincerely welcome Nicholas Alozie, Jesse Chanley, and Kathy Thomas to our editorial team.