

African Political Studies, Between the Dominant Epistemological Framework and the Multiplicity of Perspectives: A Critical Study

الدراسات السياسية الإفريقية، بين الإطار المعرفي المهيمن وتعدد المنظورات: دراسة نقدية

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Abstract :

This article discusses the development in African political studies from multiple intellectual perspectives, starting from the Western colonial perspective to the present day. It focuses on the ideological bias that dominated Western analysis, leading to the imposition of intellectual hegemony to maintain Africa's dependency on the West. It also presents African perspectives that reject this influence and propose analytical frameworks rooted in Africa's social, cultural, and historical realities. Additionally, the article addresses Arab studies aimed at enhancing Afro-Arab cooperation in response to the challenges posed by the international environment. The article provides a critical perspective on each viewpoint, and in the end, presents a set of recommendations for advancing research in the field of African studies.

Keywords: African studies, Developmental perspective, Afropolitanism, Afrabia.

ملخص:

يتناول المقال تطور الدراسات السياسية لإفريقيا من منظورات فكرية متعددة، بدءاً من المنظور الغربي الاستعماري إلى يومنا هذا، يركز على التحيز الأيديولوجي الذي ساد التحليل الغربي، وأدى إلى فرض هيمنة فكرية لاستمرار تبعية إفريقيا للغرب. كما يعرض رؤى أفريقية ترفض هذا التأثير، وتقدم أطروحات تحليلية تعتمد على الواقع الاجتماعي والثقافي والتاريخي لإفريقيا. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يتطرق المقال إلى الدراسات العربية بهدف تعزيز التعاون الأفرو-عربي في مواجهة التحديات الدولية. ويقدم المقال رؤية نقدية لكل منظور، وفي الأخير يقدم مجموعة من التوصيات لتطوير البحث في مجال الدراسات الإفريقية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الدراسات الإفريقية؛ المنظور التنموي؛ الأفروبوليتانية؛ أفرابيا

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Introduction:

Africa is a civilizational space rich in cultural diversity, a long history, and the enormous natural potential and capacities. This has made it a major focus of internal and external interactions throughout history. In the modern era, Africa was an arena for colonial competition, which influenced the development of its political, economic, and social systems. Today, the continent is undergoing major transformations, becoming one of the fastest-growing economic regions, despite the challenges it faces, such as political instability, corruption, and the repercussions of colonialism. It is also an arena of geostrategic conflict between global powers, which increases the importance of understanding its political, economic, and social dynamics. Hence, the necessity of studying Africa not only from a historical perspective, but also of analyzing its current political and economic systems and critiquing the cognitive frameworks that have addressed them.

This article traces the course of political studies about Africa, presenting the most important epistemological frameworks, that have studied and analyzed African systems, with an attempt to raise methodological issues that arise when studying Africa politically.

From this, we pose the following central problem question: How have african political studies been approached? Have the various epistemological frameworks succeeded scientifically in contributing to the advancement and progress of Africa and the practical solution of its problems?

To address this problem, we have formulated three scientific hypotheses as follows:

- Western political studies of Africa dominated during and after colonialism, and were not free of cultural and cognitive biases in ongoing attempts continuing to annex Africa to the West politically and economically.
- African studies for Africa is an attempt to get rid of the colonial legacy, but they misses to provide practical alternatives stable systems of government.
- Arab studies of Africa are based on a promising partnership that revitalizes common dimensions, but they suffer from weak scientific production.

An analytical approach, was followed to explore the content of political studies on Africa from a multifaceted theoretical perspective, and each time we attempted to highlight its lacking as a critical view. Therefore, we divided this article into three sections, as follows:

1. African Political Studies from a Dominant Western Perspective
2. African Political Studies from an African Perspective (Attempts to Liberate African Studies)
3. African Political Studies from an Arab Perspective (The Search for Convergence and the Strengthening of Partnership and Interrelationships)

I: African Political Studies from a Dominant Western Perspective:

European colonialism, turned to studying African politics, due to its need to understand the social and political structures on the continent to facilitate colonial control, and determine the best ways to exploit natural and human resources, with the aim of strengthening political and intellectual dominance over African peoples, which helped in implementing colonial policies, and imposing political systems that serve Western interests. Therefore, in this chapter, we decided to present the development of Western analysis of African studies and monitoring the most important issues and the aspects of the analysis.

A) The colonial phase and the focus on studying Africa anthropologically :

The beginning of Western studies on Africa began with the encounter of European colonizer with African societies in an attempt to give image of the history of African societies, and the relationship between it and the colonizer. The first studies focused on giving negative cognitive image of the African continent.

Hegel, in his book, *The Philosophy of History*, said: "Africa is not a historical continent, for it shows no change or development, Its people are unable to develop or learn manners and education. We see them today in this state, and they have always been like this¹."

In the same context, the traveler Richard Burton described the African man, saying: “The Negro, in general, will not improve and will not go beyond a certain point that is not worthy of respect. He remains mentally a boy²”.

This viewpoint demonstrates the racism with which Europeans wrote about Africa, in a complete absence of objectivity and scientific study. Indeed, the colonial viewpoint even extended to studies directed towards colonial goals, that consecrates and justified the European presence in Africa, and erased and obliterated any scientific evidence of the existence of a civilization or methods of governance and politics specific to the African continent.

He was also focus, among anthropological first studies, to focus on studying social structures and languages, and knowing the prevailing social classes, and various suitable approaches and tools were used for this. It was the starting point for directing writing on Africa by the colonial administration, with the aim of knowing the African peoples and the nature of social organizations and the special models prevailing in them to facilitate the process of controlling and organizing them and extending control over them³.

The study of the thinker Wurtz and Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard was through his anthropological investigations, role in revealing various social organizations through the trilogy of relationship between kinship, lineage, and political authority. He deduced three forms of African political systems that it representing the reality of teamwork, as follows⁴.

1- **Hunting bands groups:** Prevalent in the Bu civilization among the clans Hbuti, Kung, NAREM, Albert kadama, and Mobuti tribes.

2- **Segmental lineage and kinship societies:** represented by the Musa, Luo, and Ibo tribes in southern Nigeria, as well as the Nyor, Talinzi, and Nande tribes.

3- **Primitive states:** represented by the experience of the Zulu, Bemba, Asanti, and Baganda tribes.

The aim of these studies, according to the first foundational publications of African political studies, “**African Political Systems**,” published in 1940, was also to investigate the difference between societies that knew political organizations (states) and societies without states. The study revealed the existence of traditional political organizations such as the Zulu, the Bomba in present-day Zambia, the Ankole in Uganda, the Talunsi in Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana, and the Nuer in Sudan, which are organizations that existed before colonialism⁵.

One of the most important writers who were interested in African studies is Max Gluckman, who revived a new flow of research at the University of Manchester interested in African studies that focused on the dynamic characteristics of African social and political organizations⁶.

However, what is taken from these anthropological analyses is their reliance on analyzing social stratification based on the ties of kinship and lineage, and confirming on food gathering and hunting models, and focusing on tribal structure, while ignoring the multicultural and multilingualistic and all forms of governance, politics, and civilization in pre-colonial Africa. This neglect has reduced Africa to unorganized societies that did not know the tradition of the state⁷. In this regard, Edward Said pointed out in his book "Orientalism" that Western knowledge of non-European societies, has been shaped by a superiority vision, which is also true of African studies, which depicted the continent as a space of chaos and decadence⁸.

Since its inception, studies of Africa, have been linked to colonialist tendencies that depicted Africa as a backward continent incapable of developing governance methods. which what Patrick Chabal has pointed out, that most studies were formulated within a conceptual framework that lacks an understanding of local dynamics, where European models of governance were overthrown onto African contexts without taking into account their specificities⁹.

In addition to ignoring the cultural and linguistic pluralism which could have been an incubator for the ideas of political pluralism in Africa, It focused on subjugating these societies and

implementing toxic policies to divide and separate African peoples, such as the divide and rule policy, which created rifts and inter-communal conflicts, and its feeding and management during and after the colonial period, The state model was imposed, and Africa was divided based on Western interests without taking into account social specificities, which resulted in a crisis in Building the nation state after colonialism in most African countries.

B) The stage of Africa independence and the independence of African studies: promoting the development perspective:

In the 1950s, the works of many anthropologists and sociologists emerged and French and British, such as Georges Balandier and Paul Mercier, who attempted to study the changes taking place in Africa. This attracted historians, geographers, and economists, leading to the emergence of new approaches to the study of Africa with the rise of local national elites, as well as the rise of the wave of liberation in Africa also led writings trending on Africa focusing on development, and post-colonial state-building.

In France, the study of independent political systems was based on traditional legal approaches, and the focus was on the study of official political life, the state, constitutions, and the study of political organizations such as parties and unions. The state encouraged the writing of political encyclopedias and African series. Among the most important scholars were François G. Byard, Dimitri-George Lavroff, and Berger Levrault. National research centers for political science and institutes were established that cared on political life in Africa, the most important of which were the Center for the Study of International Relations (CERI) under the supervision of George Balandier, then Pierre Alex, and the Center for the Study of Black Africa (CEAN) in Bordeaux under the direction of Marcel Merle and Albert Malibeaux. However, the French authorities treated these centers with caution because of the facts they provided at the official level, and writings about Africa were directed outside politics, such as the study of religious movements, the city, communication, and others, as a first stage¹⁰.

In Britain, African political studies were within history and sociology with scholars, such as Monica Wilson, John Middleton, and others. Then interest began in national movements in Africa and promotion of democracy in Africa, away from the scientific aspect, and with scholars such as Thomas Hocking. Studies later turned to political economy with a liberal outlook, which was met by Marxist studies of the dependency school with Samir Amin¹¹.

In the United States of America, which had never had any colonial contact with Africa, studies on African countries were directed towards funding research and various means were mobilized to send researchers to the field. The studies were based on the development and modernization of Africa from the Western cognitive perspective, similar to the American model.

Among the scholars are David Apter, James Coleman, and Karl Rosberg. These writings were based on the Western epistemological model that dominated Western political studies and dominated the post-World War II era from the perspective of development and modernization directed at non-Western countries by promoting the concept of the grand theory and saying that all regions and areas can be analyzed from a comparative perspective, meaning the idea of the universality of the development perspective. Among the early studies are David Apter's study on Ghana in 1957, and James Coleman's study on Nigeria in 1958¹².

It is noted that when studying Africa from a comparative perspective, this is often done through prejudices, an insistence on reductionism, the difficulty of linking analytical contexts, and frameworks to African reality, and an attempt to impose, and adapt the development model forcefully without considering the specificities that can be observed when studying African political phenomena. This is one of the epistemological challenges posed by the study of Africa.

Especially since the controversy that dominated the political and intellectual sphere in Africa was the issue of building the nation-state. Given the long and harsh colonial experience that African countries endured, most of them sought to build the unified, centralized state. This is the challenge that confronted the leaders and governments of the African continent after colonialism, especially with the existence of heterogeneous social structures due to the nature of the human composition characterized by ethnic, racial, linguistic, and cultural plurality. These are complex identity components that make it difficult to achieve the model that Western powers sought to export to newly independent countries. This raised the issue of stereotyping and categorizing African regimes as authoritarian systems based on the Western democratic viewpoint¹³.

Therefore, failed state writings has dominated and was considered the most widely used analytical frameworks for analyzing politics in Africa. States on the continent are viewed as weak entities, incapable of providing services to their citizens or imposing order and stability¹⁴. Scholars attribute the weakness of the state in Africa to the sovereignty of the concept of personal rule, as most systems of government in African countries are run by personal leaders rather than through modern institutions. Weak institutions and unclear political rules lead to undemocratic forms of governance,¹⁵ chaos, internal conflicts, and external interventions, which in turn lead to the inability to provide basic services¹⁶.

From it came several studies on the nature of political systems in Africa, such as Christian Kolo's study on patriarchal systems, Jean-François Bayard's study on the politics of filling stomachs, Denis Constant Martin's study and others.

A new starting or French studies with the magazine of *L'Afrique Politique*, the Centre for International Relations Studies, and the Centre for Black African Studies. This new interest took into account the study of the political phenomenon within its overall framework, by studying political systems from all their social, cultural, and symbolic aspects. The functions of the political system and its performance study were also taken into account. Several books and collective writings appeared, such as "Elections and Power in Black Africa" and the magazine "Politique Afrique"¹⁷.

This phase was characterized by the dominance of the development perspective, and discussions about the political system prevailed, the reality of the state and its policies, the issue of power and hegemony, the division of administration and public policies, and the mobilization of the issue of identity. These are classic problems in the study of African systems¹⁸. As Hamdi Abd al-Rahman, a specialist in the study of African political systems, refers to the most important problems that dominated the process of establishing the state in Africa, the question of building the nation state, military-civil relations, economic achievement, and political legitimacy¹⁹.

Among the objections mentioned by Hamdi Abdel Rahman regarding the Western perspective on African studies is that the Western developmental context that was exported to Africa did not take into account its social, economic, political and cultural specificity, especially since it is a perspective that was not free of Western ideological and cultural bias, which was expressed by the late Guinean President Ahmed Sekou Toure as follows: "Words and concepts do not have the same meaning here - that is, in Africa - as they do elsewhere," which indicates the neglect of political history and pre-colonial experience, and the fall of Western studies from a development perspective into the dilemma of limitation and reduction, especially since the issue of political experience and political history is important for understanding and analyzing African reality.

The issue of generalization is also one of the methodological problems that arise in the African context, as the continent contains more than Africa. In this context, William Tordoff says: "Africa is a vast and diverse continent, and grouping these countries together in order to talk about a single African policy is misleading." This makes studying African phenomena and generalizing their results to all systems a relative matter. Perhaps solving the problem of generalization requires

monitoring the recurrence of phenomena and their causes in African systems and placing them in similar groups so that studies are more scientific²⁰.

C) The stage of emergence of political economy analysis based on structural adjustment policies and analysis of popular patterns for political action:

Studies on the political economy of Africa are both old and new, and they came in the context of theories and approaches to development and modernization, and the theory of dependency in the sixties and seventies. Samir Amin attributed the weakness of the economies of African countries to the continued dependency on Western countries due to the production structures imposed by colonialism, which made the continent's countries dependent on the export of raw materials instead of developing a strong local economy²¹.

After the global oil crisis and the failure of development approaches to advance Africa in the face of growing social and political crises (poverty, the spread of diseases and epidemics, famine, the dominance of political power, and the spread of the phenomenon of one-party and military regimes), major powers states and international institutions called on African countries to adopt reform policies in both the economic and political aspects. The first was represented by launching structural adjustment programs, and the second by adopting liberal democracy.

Regarding the promotion of structural adjustment policies, the call African countries was to adopt economic policies that would support the market economy. These policies consisted of strengthening the institutional framework for the market economy, and adopting a policy of economic liberalization, that would open up broad scope for the private sector to mobilize resources and stimulate the economy. This was called for by international institutions (the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund), and from this, studies focused on analyzing the role of the private sector and the international relations perspective in economic analysis²².

As for political studies, studies have emerged that go beyond the official and legal frameworks of analysis, influenced by the cognitive model prevailing at the end of the sixties, which was based on the role of the social actors in the mechanisms of the political system's operation, influenced by the works of David Easton, Nicholas Poulantzas, and Alain Tourin. From this, researchers of the journal *Politique africaine* were interested in studying the role of social actors under one-party systems, military regimes, personal dictatorships, and authoritarian regimes.

Jean-François Pierre's study of the state in Cameroon published in 1979, had an impact on directing studies toward exploring political action from below, and several works have been published in this regard²³.

Regarding the cognitive approach based on political economy and Africa's orientation toward structural adjustment policies had huge social impacts, impacting the poor social classes and policy of state monopoly has moved to the monopoly of private actors.

By analyzing the western perspective on African studies, it becomes clear that the West did not study Africa to understand it so much as to reproduce an image of the continent as a primitive space in need of guidance and control.

D) The rise of new perspective: Agile Governance in Africa

In recent Western political science literature, "Agile Governance" has emerged as a significant framework to analyze how African states can respond to accelerating global challenges such as digital transformation, pandemics, and climate change. This perspective emphasizes the capacity of political institutions to adapt rapidly while maintaining inclusivity, transparency, and responsiveness.

Countries like Rwanda and Ethiopia are often cited as models of agile governance in the African context. They have integrated data-driven decision-making tools, AI-based public service platforms, and decentralized administrative systems to enhance both state capacity and citizen engagement. The focus is not merely on technology but on building institutional agility—a form of flexible governance that bridges traditional statecraft and contemporary innovation²⁴.

Agile governance thus reframes African political analysis away from the deficit-focused narratives (e.g., “failed states”) and instead examines how institutional dynamism can emerge despite structural limitations. It critiques static models of democracy promotion that ignore African agency and instead explores hybrid mechanisms of state adaptation under uncertainty.

While the concept of Agile Governance offers an optimistic and modern framework for rethinking state responsiveness in Africa, several critical issues undermine its universal applicability and relevance in the African context.

First, critics argue that agile governance is often anchored in techno-liberal assumptions rooted in Western policy-making paradigms, which may overlook the embedded sociopolitical complexities of African states. The emphasis on digital transformation, algorithmic management, and real-time feedback loops can create a technocratic illusion of inclusivity, while bypassing deep-rooted structural inequalities and informal power networks²⁵.

Second, the rhetoric of agility sometimes becomes a justification for authoritarian efficiency. In countries like Rwanda and Ethiopia, streamlined digital governance has coexisted with tight state control, limited civil liberties, and weak opposition participation. Agile governance, in this sense, risks normalizing illiberal practices under the guise of innovation and effectiveness²⁶.

Moreover, the model’s reliance on external benchmarks and consultancy-driven reforms often leads to policy mimicry rather than endogenous political development. Agile governance frameworks may be promoted by international institutions such as the World Economic Forum, but they often remain disconnected from local epistemologies, traditional governance institutions, and indigenous knowledge systems.

Finally, the push for agile governance may also depoliticize governance itself, framing politics as a set of technical problems to be managed rather than contested terrains of power, justice, and identity. This approach risks reproducing colonial logics where African governance is continually re-engineered from the outside rather than decolonized from within.

II: African Political Studies for African : An Attempt to Liberate African Studies

This section addresses the efforts of African thinkers to liberate African political studies, aiming to transcend the colonialist perspective promoted by Western powers, and focus on analyzing African politics based on the continent's social, cultural, and historical reality. This trend stems from scholars' desire to build independent epistemological frameworks, that reflect African identity, and contribute to strengthening the sovereignty of African peoples, away from Western colonial and intellectual influences. The following is a presentation of the most important African analytical visions.

A) African Political Studies on Africa in Post-Independence a Critique of Western Influences:

African political studies that Africa have remained poor in terms of knowledge production, and research development, particularly given governments' reticence to develop research in the political field. Most African countries did not have institutes for political studies. After independence, despite the existence of institutes for law, history, geography, and sociology. This is what made political studies late. We mention, for example, the anthropological study of Kikuyu in 1938, which was rewritten by Jomo Kenyatta, and works on the national movement in Africa, as well as socio-economic works, such as the study of Diop Majhemout, and Osende Afana. Years after independence, it was only philosophers, such as Mudimbe Valentin Yves and others, They put forward problems related to power, values and political principles.

Most African scholars, whether historians or sociologists, who have attempted to study political phenomena were born outside the continent, such as Comi Toulabor and Mamadou Diof. The studies that formed the first ground for African political studies were those of Ali Mazrui from east Africa, who benefited from the major British debates on politics in Africa, as well as the studies of Samuel Mushi from Tanzania, who was educated in the United States of America, and a group of his sociological colleagues, such as Mahmood Mamdani from Uganda, and Claude Ake from Nigeria²⁷.

Many African writers have focused on confronting Western stereotypes about Africa. We can point to the Kenyan satirist Benyavanga Wainaina's famous essay "How to Write About Africa?", in which he addressed stereotypes, and ways of understanding Africa, not only in the West but also among many Africanists, as well as some Africans themselves²⁸. Therefore, Mahmood Mamdani argued that understanding the African state must begin by examining the interaction between the colonial legacy and local social structures, rather than measuring it according to the standards of the Western nation-state²⁹. Kwame Nkrumah focused on analyzing the role of neoliberal forces that control the fate of the economies of African countries. He considered that neocolonialism remained in control of Africa's fate through policies of economic dependency, as the independence of African countries did not lead to their actual liberation from Western hegemony³⁰.

The approach on which African writings are based is the approach of liberating African studies and building a local approach, based on African culture in an attempt to eliminate the problems of violence, identity, and citizenship, and the struggle for civilized of African societies on the one hand, and on the other hand, the self-construction of their economies. Mamadou Diouf considered this a historical mission for the educated elites to put African societies on the path of modernity and development³¹. African political analysis is based on an approach that opposes globalization and liberalism. This trend believes that Africa can withdraw itself and return to civilizational traditions that emphasize popular participation as a vision that confirms the existence of democratic traditions in Africa that were prevalent before European colonialism³².

Despite the attempts of African scholars to liberate themselves from Western ideological starting points, what we can record as criticism is that despite the valuable contributions of African scholars to politics in Africa after independence, we note the following:

- Some African studies tend to adopt subjective positions (revolutionary or national) that sometimes make the analysis subjective, especially when focusing on criticizing colonialism without presenting realistic alternatives. This has made some studies unable to provide applicable independent governance models. Studies have been directed towards criticizing colonialism without focusing on building local political institutions³³.

- François Bayard criticized African studies for focusing on colonial influences and neglecting to criticize local corruption and the role of political leaders in crisis of the political situation. Therefore, he believed that the ongoing writings about colonialism are sometimes used to justify corruption and favoritism in African regimes³⁴.

- Some African studies adopt an idealized view of Africa's pre-colonial past without acknowledging the existence of old internal problems. The continent faced structuralist challenges prior to colonial intervention, such as tribal conflicts³⁵.

B) African studies based on the impact of political and economic transformations that affected the continent:

At this stage, African political studies focused on the entrance of democratic transition, and the study of the actors in the process of political change, whether the internal or the external, which raised basic topics such as: elections, decentralized policies, the role of civil society, the establishment of political parties, constitutional reform, and the role of parliaments in the process of democratic transition,³⁶ and external, linked to conditionality imposed from the outside, within the framework of structural adjustment policies, and the impact of neoliberal policies on the economies of African countries was analyzed³⁷.

It relied on popular patterns of transformation and its political paths in African systems, such as the Popular Congress, change through elections, transition through consensus between the ruling elites and other elites seeking change, transformation directed from above, and gradual reforms.

Among the criticisms directed at African studies at this stage are the following:

- The inability to get rid of Western theoretical and cognitive production. Studies did not go beyond the circle of Western theses, that were known in the context of the third wave of democratic transformation. The cognitive frameworks of this stage neglected internal challenges such as

corruption, ethnic conflicts, and the weakness of African state institutions. The focus was on democratic frameworks, such as democratic values, and electoral processes, and the local political reality and challenges specific to African societies were not taken sufficiently into account³⁸.

-The problem of the local and the global in political analysis is an epistemological problem, especially since comparative studies require interpreting the local from various perspectives. Chabal and Daloz went on to say that the transition between general frameworks and local contexts is necessary, especially since Africans contributed to the theoretical progress of analysis in the humanities, especially in more complex issues such as the state, identity, secession, and corruption³⁹. However, the economic perspective of structural adjustment policies contributed to the ruling elites' adaptation to these policies, which made them attribute the reasons for the failure to build the state and the economy to external factors. This served the ruling elites in obtaining aid and prolonging their stay in power⁴⁰.

C) African Studies under International Transformations and the Influence of Globalization

The twenty-first century has witnessed global transformations and international competition over the African continent. This has opened up a wide range of fields of study, especially in light of the worsening crises on the continent, which are due to multiple internal and external influences. This has prompted us to conduct multiple studies to understand the dynamics taking place on the continent.

The African continent was a vital area for the traditional colonial powers (France and Britain), but the world's openness to foreign trade and the growing international interest in expanding markets and spheres of influence found in the African continent an arena for competition and the continent's international polarization grew from competing powers such as China, the United States of America, Russia and Turkey.

Among the recent studies that have been monitored on the continent, we find African thinkers who sought to complement political liberation with cognitive and economic liberation, especially in light of the international situations that seeks to dominate the continent and keep it attached to the major powers. Among these thinkers, we have decided to shed light on some of them.

Achille Mbembe believes that Europe has lost its international leadership, and within the framework of economic and political restructuring, the future of humanity is being shaped on the continent, while identities tensions are increasing. The battle rages all against all, Democracies are preparing in the name of the war against terrorism.

It has become urgent to build a Creole Africa a tolerant and open "Créolisation." An "African world," this thinker is an advocate of Afropolitanism⁴¹, basing his Creole and the Afropolitan concepts of the overlap philosophy developed by Edouard Glissant, who believed that Africa cannot be a closed space, but rather is the result of a long history of cultural interaction, whether through colonialism, slavery, or forced and voluntary migrations. Mbembe points out that African identity has never been static or pure.

Rather, it is always in a state of continuous reshaping as a result of contact with others. Therefore, accepting Creole means liberation from narrow nationalism and solid ethnic identity,⁴² which were the product of the discourse of a monocular national identity, which is originally a colonial product, creating artificial and incompatible identities that led to violent racial and ethnic conflicts. Therefore, it calls for an alternative Creole model in which African cultures interact with others without fear of melting, but rather from the logic of producing a new identity that is more capable of dealing with the challenges of globalization⁴³.

Jean Godefroy Bidima had previously innovate the concept of "crossing," which he considered more than just a motivating idea. Rather, it was an attitude toward reality, a desire to discover the multiple and diverse, and to realize the continent's potential in order to allow for the possible to flourish⁴⁴. The ideas formulated by both Bidima and Mbembe reflect a call to abandon

the idea of the nation-state in favor of more interactive, open, and pluralistic local spaces. They consider that as a liberating project that redefines modernity locally, rather than the dependency.

While Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni says that thinking about "decolonization" is more urgent than ever, because the independence of African states did not put an end to relations of domination. This is manifested in the imposition of economic sanctions or military interventions in the continent in the name of human rights, democracy, or counterterrorism. Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni (from South Africa) calls for moving beyond the academic spaces shaped by the European world engaged in the project of imperial conquest, to explore the margins and borders. She says that violence is not only physical or psychological, but also cognitive. Africans must therefore thinking new concepts and new intellectual references; she sees equality as a prerequisite for building a humanity based on social justice and "moral coexistence"⁴⁵.

In this context, Senegalese thinker Felwine Sarr, through his essay the *Afrotopia*, calls on the continent's thinkers to engage in an epistemological break by abandoning Western concepts that do not adapt well to the continent's facts and investing in African concepts such as "jom" (dignity), "teranga" (hospitality), and "Njoor" (sense of honor). Whether at the collective or individual level, this philosopher calls to find a private way by abandoning predetermined paths and ready-made ideas⁴⁶.

Regarding economic liberation, which is considered the second liberation for the African continent after its political liberation, and represents a real challenge to the completion of political independence, Kakou Nubukpo (a Togolese economist and former Minister of Foresight) believes that the Central African franc has been an obstacle to competitiveness and social progress in Africa. He is convinced that African countries must abandon the Financial community in Africa franc and develop its own monetary policy if its want to be able to "complete its political independence and strengthen the foundations for the structural transformation of its economies"⁴⁷.

There for the rise of African feminism perspective wich rejecting the Western model of feminism that assumes the existence of a unified global 'patriarchy' and argues that gender identities and relations in Africa have different histories and meanings. African women are not merely 'victims' as portrayed in Western literature, but actors within a multidimensional social and cultural space⁴⁸. African feminism emphasises that African women are not one, but multiple, with diverse identities that intersect with factors such as: Race, class, religion, colonialism, language, local culture⁴⁹. Some of the central issues raised by African feminism as deconstructing the stereotypical image of African women, especially in Western media and humanitarian aid, where women are presented as perpetual victims in need of 'rescue', while their economic, social and political contribution is marginalised, and re-reading history from a feminist perspective by revealing the roles of women in national liberation, anti-colonial struggles, and the informal economy, as Western feminism has excluded these experiences because they do not conform to the standards of 'liberal feminism.' Many African feminists criticise the dominance of international organisations (such as the United Nations and USAID) on the women's rights agenda, arguing that this dominance perpetuates dependency rather than liberation⁵⁰.

Emerging trends in African political studies include new currents that seek to understand current political transformations, such as studies that focus on youth and social movements and their role in shaping the political sphere away from traditional parties; studies on the environment and sovereignty where environmental justice and climate change have become key political issues, and the relationship between local communities is being rethought within the perspective of environmental sovereignty; studies on digital transformation and cyber sovereignty and growing interest in the role of artificial intelligence, digital platforms, and data security as sovereignty issues in the African context.

We conclude that African perspectives on African political studies are not limited to criticising Western theses, but rather seek to build a conceptual and political system that stems from the African experience and is linked to its cultural and social context.

The abundance of cognitive production by the continent's thinkers since the 1960s, along with attempts to construct a self-conceptualized understanding of the study of Africa africanly, prompts African rulers and decision-makers to seriously consider the concerns, and solutions to the continent's crises, far removed from imported templates and visions that persist in policies of hegemony and cultural subordination. The continent, with its potential and the minds of its thinkers, needs the will of conscious, nationalist political elites to advance the continent⁵¹.

III: African political studies from an Arab perspective seeking for rapprochement and enhancing cooperation and partnership:

After our attempt to research the most important arab political scholars of Africa, we found that Arab studies specializing in the political study of Africa were not early. Perhaps the reason is that the field of political science itself, as an independent field in Arab universities, was not independent, and its faculties were always associated with law or economics. Furthermore, Arab academic institutions did not make Africa an academic field at a level commensurate with the continent's geostrategic importance. However, we can exclude some countries that have established specialized institutes for African studies, such as the Institute of African Research and Studies at Cairo University and research centers in Algeria. Although these academic institutions have not reached the level of global universities in the Western in the applied field, African studies in the Arab have witnessed developments, the most important of which we will present, focusing on the prominent contributions of Egyptian and Algerian studies.

A) The trend of African studies in the Arab world is to search for ways of cultural rapprochement

Ali Mazrui, a Kenyan thinker of Omani origin, was one of the first to call for rapprochement between the African and Arab spheres. He considered that the history written by colonialism stood as an obstacle to the development of Arab-African relations, due to the exaggeration of the Arab role in the slave trade on the continent, and the discrimination between Africa north and south of the Sahara on the basis of color, ethnicity and religion; and an attempt to grabbing the north of the continent of its African identity and annex it to Europe. In his writings, he points out that “Triple Africa Inheritance” of local cultures, Islam and Christianity “constitutes a fusionned state, not hierarchical, and that Islam and Arabism are the most widely present, alongside national cultures.” On the continent, the diversity of Islamic and Arab cultural elements allows for a lot of convergence between Arabs and Africans.”

Ali Mazrouei went on to say that the first steps to activate Arab-African relations, are the integration of the peoples of the Arabian Peninsula with the peoples on the other side of the Red Sea, and the search for a new definition of the African continent, one that makes the Arabian Peninsula part of the continent. Hence, Ali Mazrouei's call for the establishment of a geographical unity between the two regions under what is known as “Afrabia,” especially since the shared religious, linguistic and historical ties between Arabs and Africans represent a solid foundation for Arab-African relations⁵².

Egyptian scholars were pioneers, as Helmy Shaarawi took an early interest in African studies in Egypt, which faced obstacles in academia during the 1950s and 1960s of twentieth century. Helmy Shaarawi's interests were embodied professionally by joining Department of African Affairs during the Nasser era in 1959, where he was appointed a researcher responsible for monitoring East African countries. He was also appointed to the Center for Popular Arts, and as a researcher in African affairs until 1974.

Shaarawy had critical visions on Arab-African relations. He believed that Arab historians and researchers focused on the influence of Arab and Islamic culture on African culture, ignoring the important role of Black Africans in Arab development. He also argued that they tended to ignore African cultures and their role in Arab culture. Shaarawy posed the question, "Why don't Egyptians consider themselves Africans?" Therefore, he believed that answering this question required a critical study of the relationship between Egypt and Sudan, and the relationship between Egypt and Africa⁵³.

Houria Tawfiq Mujahid devoted herself to specializing in African affairs. Among the things she proposed regarding "Roots of African Unity," she said that the establishment of African unity stemmed from a sentiment that rejected racism towards African Negroes. She considered that the idea of African unity is not racist, but rather a movement of racist awareness. Unity is an embodiment of the awareness of African blacks of the necessity of coexistence and the sublime spirit of solidarity and brotherhood, influenced by the pioneer of African unity George Padmore⁵⁴.

Despite the decline in political interest in the continent during the reigns of Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak, Egypt was the first Arab country to open a branch specializing in comparative political systems within African studies. Hamdi Abdel Rahman is considered one of the most prominent Arab scholars on Africa. His first book, "Pluralism in Islamic Africa", was published in 1991, based on the ideas put forward by the thinker Ali Mazrui. Hamdi Abdel Rahman started from an approach that sees the necessity of reading history from an objective perspective and get rid of distortion campaigns which still exists to this day specifically French writings. Therefore, the researcher believes that Africa should be rediscovered according to the concept of the Afrabia. He has made numerous contributions, including those related to the structure of African political systems, the experiences of democratic transition in Africa, and the role of political parties and the military. He has also contributed valuable studies that have facilitated specialists researchers in African affairs in understanding the nature of African political systems⁵⁵.

The interest in African cultural rapprochement was embodied by the positions of the late Libyan President Muammar Gaddafi, who directly supported many African countries, which amounted to funding budgets and local elections in many countries⁵⁶.

In her study, Egyptian researcher Amani Al-Tawil attributed the features of convergence and divergence between Arabs and Africans to strategic dimensions in the relationship with the Israeli entity. She believes that in the early stages of the independence of the continent's countries, the Arab countries found in African countries the most important supporter and advocate for the Arabs in their conflict with the Israeli entity, while the latter moved many files to increase its influence in the continent and incitement divergence, most notably supporting the division in Sudan and supporting Ethiopia in building the Renaissance Dam.

As well as fueling identities conflicts and pushing towards inter-ethnic violence in the Horn of Africa region. The researcher highlighted the challenges that hinder Arab-African rapprochement, such as counter-strategies by international powers and international competition over the continent. She believed that rapprochement requires developing a roadmap to enhance positive interaction between the two sides that preserves common interests⁵⁷.

B) Arab Studies for Africa: Strengthening Partnership and Cooperation

With the increasing awareness of the common challenges facing the continent's countries, and the Strengthening the frameworks of political and economic cooperation in the Arab world, Arab researchers in political studies on Africa have found a field to build approaches aimed at strengthening partnership and cooperation. In Algeria, specializations have been opened at the master's and doctoral levels in political science institutes and departments as a first step towards focusing on African studies, especially after the launch of the NEPAD initiative for Africa's development, in which Algeria played a major role in its launch, along with some African countries.

Theses and dissertations focused on topics related to African crises, such as identity, the role of ethnic and racial factors, the struggle over resources, the phenomenon of military coups and the role of the military in politics, political corruption and ways to combat it, as well as some dissertations and theses related to democratic transition and political reform, among other issues. Algerian researchers saw these as common areas for enhancing cooperation and seeking solutions to these shared issues.

Several national and international scientific forums and intellectual seminars were held to discuss African continent issues, with the aim of finding ways to understand the shortcomings continent suffers from and to value successful development experiences and political transformations on the continent, which can serve as exemplary experiences, especially since they achieved a qualitative leap and impressive results despite the internal and external challenges they faced.

Research interest in the African continent has been strengthened by the creating of scientific journals specializing in African affairs, such as the Journal of African Studies, and the African Journal of Political Science. The journal *Insaniyat*, also publishes field research in the fields of anthropology and social sciences, including studies on the African continent. Despite this, Algeria still lacks institutes or research centers specializing in African affairs, particularly in the field of field researches.

We also find a few institutes here and there, particularly in the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and the Sultanate of Oman, that focus on African historical and cultural aspects.

The Arab approach comes as a tendency to try to link the roots of the past to the present, especially the North African countries of Egypt, Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Mauritania, which are trying to consolidate their relations with the African depth. This has been embodied in multiple initiatives for cooperation and a common vision for Africa, such as the NEPAD initiative for Africa's development as a kind of attempt to overcome Africa's crises, and an attempt to work together within the African Union, especially since the common challenges and African capabilities and capacities allow African countries the possibility of forming partnerships and also Agenda of 2030 and 2063, these agendas are based on a liberating developmental perspective that opposes the neoliberal theories, imposed by international institutions, and aims to achieve developmental sovereignty, and regional integration instead of global dependency, as well as investing in human, cultural and local capital, and resisting all forms of neo-colonialism.

Promising in the economic and political fields, it aims to break away from Western dependence, whether on states or international institutions. North African countries are considered the gateway linking Africa to the world, which makes it necessary for all African countries to strengthen their partnerships and relations, especially in light of the growing phenomena that threaten security and stability in the region, such as asylum, illegal immigration, and terrorism in the African Sahel region, among others.

C) Criticism: a set of criticisms can be directed as follow:

- Regarding the thesis of civilizational convergence and the denial of cultural and social differences between the Arab and African components, this in itself is one of the reasons for the continuation of identity crises and violence on the continent, and we have the best examples in Nigeria, Sudan and the Horn of Africa.

- The longevity of these crises is due to the failure to raise these issues at the academic level among the aware and educated elites, to find ways to build the collective identity, and the elites' involvement in Western theses based on the concept of the minority, which made the possibility of addressing these crises seriously and without biases still a closed field shrouded in politicization, fear and non-recognition.

- African political studies suffer from the weakness of Arab centers specializing in African affairs, which has had an impact on Arab scientific production on the continent⁵⁸.

-The few of comparative studies between African countries, which represent an important research addition, with the presence of exceptional studies It is done regionally (such as comparing the countries of sub-Saharan with each other or between the countries of North Africa), which deepens the separation created by the occupying forces between the north and south of the continent⁵⁹.

- Lack of field studies and failure to exploit modern technology to bring Arab and African thinkers for rapprochement.

-Absence of South–South Intellectual Dialogue, Arab-African scholarly dialogues remain embryonic. There is an urgent need to foster Arab–African epistemic solidarity rooted in shared postcolonial experiences.

- Most Arab studies fail to engage with indigenous African theoretical frameworks, pan-Africanism, or decolonial thought. This results in a form of epistemic marginalization and reproduces the colonial gaze through Arab lenses

Conclusion:

In conclusion of this article, we can say that the African continent is a vast field for research and thinking in the field of social sciences in general and political science in particular. Today, the continent is in need of political studies to serve its renaissance and solve its crises. Despite the multiplicity of visions about studying it, the field is still open to develop research and find more balanced cognitive frameworks for African political studies. Through this article, a set of conclusions were reached as follow:

Western studies of Africa have not been free of the ideological tendency to annex the continent to the West politically, economically, and even culturally.

African studies for Africa have attempted to construct a self-modell for studies based on Africa's historical and cultural background, and on its ability to present visions specific to Africa through the editing of African political studies. These studies have witnessed an abundance of production and have featured multiple theories based on the history, reality, and future of the continent.

There is an Arab push to focus on African studies based on a shared vision and overlapping goals, especially with regard to issues of liberation from dependency, reform, development, cooperation, partnership, and combating common dangerous phenomena such as terrorism, corruption, illegal immigration, and others.

Therefore, we decided to provide some recommendations in this regard as follows

- Directing scientific research towards African political studies to encourage intellectual and cultural elites to engage in the context of initiative and practical action for the renaissance of Africa, contributing to providing scientific insights to solve the problems and crises of African countries, and utilizing modern technological means to bring together researchers and academics interested in African affairs, such as creating digital platforms for this purpose.

Encouraging interdisciplinary scientific partnerships and funding for field research by African governments, as well as investing in enhancing the scientific research environment within African missions present in Algeria, such as establishing scientific clubs for discussion and the exchange of expertise and experiences.

- Creating a balanced scientific research framework for African studies, that takes into account the history, reality, and future of the continent from multiple objective perspectives and perspectives.

-Establishing thought and thinking centers to serve as a bridge between academics and policymakers in Africa, to The importance of these centers in the governance of modern systems and providing recommendations and alternative policies to assist decision-makers in making sound decisions and formulating policies that reflect the needs of African societies and are consistent with the transformations in the international arena, without conflicting with the interests of African countries.

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