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# Competing Methods for Teaching and Researching Africa: Interdisciplinarity and the Field of African Studies

Carla De Ycaza

## Abstract

African Studies has evolved as an academic initiative dealing with research and scholarship on the cultures and societies of Africa. Many academic programs focusing on African Studies emerged in the 1960s on the heels of the first wave of African independence movements. Over time, African Studies has expanded to include a wide range of approaches to various disciplines, including history, anthropology, political science, sociology, economics, linguistics, religion and law, among others. Much debate has surrounded the questions of whether African Studies is interdisciplinary in nature or whether it should be considered an academic field in itself, and whether to adopt a Pan-African approach to the discipline to include North Africa in addition to Sub-Saharan cases, as North Africa often is studied through the lens of Islam. This article examines the existing competing methods for teaching and researching Africa and the development and challenges facing African Studies today. This article analyzes the motivations and driving factors that have shaped the emergence of African Studies. What reasons are there for a shift from an interdisciplinary approach to the study of Africa? Has opposition to the creation of a regional academic field of study dealing with Africa indicated underlying racial and political tensions within academia? The term *area studies*, under which African Studies is often categorized, generally refers to the study of a particular group by an outside “other.” Does this imply a notion that the study of Africa by outside scholars is a form of cultural imperialism?

## **The Emergence of African Studies**

African Studies developed through a long-standing tradition at historically black colleges and universities, with prolific African American professional and lay scholars of Africa and epistemic communities based in Africa.<sup>1</sup> Prior to 1900, the study of other parts of the world in the United States consisted primarily of the classical tradition of studying ancient civilizations, the missionary movement encouraging conversion in other nations, scientific attempts to demonstrate the superiority of whites through comparison with other races, and an anecdotal tradition of information about non-Western cultures from tourists and travelers.<sup>2</sup> After the dawn of the 20th century, the First and Second World Wars were followed by the Cold War and the need to overcome isolationist tendencies in policy and academia, which had a profound impact on the development of area studies. From the 1940s–1950s, the area studies model became institutionalized in the United States, a country with the largest academic system in the world and one of the largest African studies establishments outside of Africa itself.<sup>3</sup>

The African Studies Association (ASA), a leading international American-based organization in African Studies, was established in 1957 to promote the study of Africa in all academic disciplines and for contemporary practitioners.<sup>4</sup> According to former ASA president Philip D. Curtin, “At the end of the Second World War, North America had no real community of scholars specializing on Africa.”<sup>5</sup> After World War II, a strong enthusiasm from the academic community emerged regarding the launching of various area studies programs facilitated and supported by the United States government for purposes of national security.<sup>6</sup> Americans “embarked on a study of Africa that inevitably took the state of European knowledge as the point of departure, and with an impetus that reflected foreign policy concerns, at least in part.”<sup>7</sup>

African Studies, originally largely policy-based after World War II, eventually became a more academic initiative in the aftermath of the Cold War. With newly independent countries in Asia and Africa and increasing political turbulence in Latin America, the struggle for global dominance between the United States and the Soviet Union led to increased support for higher education and research on the non-Western world.<sup>8</sup> Many academic

programs in African Studies emerged in the 1960s after the first wave of African independence movements. According to Alpers and Roberts, “A different kind of challenge to African studies within the academy has come from the fixation on globalization with the end of the Cold War and the emergence of the United States as the sole world superpower.”<sup>9</sup> This move towards globalization and the academic study of Africa has raised concerns among some scholars and practitioners regarding the underlying attitudes seemingly prevalent in African Studies stemming from the origins of the initiative in the West, as area studies generally refers to the study of a particular group by an outside “other.”

### **Status of Field versus Non-Field: Interdisciplinarity and African Studies**

In its 1961 report on the concept of area studies, the British Subcommittee on Oriental, Slavonic, East European and African Studies of the University Grants Committee found that United States area studies centers had two beneficial effects: “the generating of interest in non-Western studies within the universities where the centers are located, and the breaking down of barriers between the traditional departments.”<sup>10</sup> The idea of area studies spreading across disciplines and fields has appealed to many institutions. They claim that this would provide an alternative to the rigidity of traditional academic fields, allowing younger scholars the opportunity to have more scope and involvement, with the dividing lines of departmental disciplines as a major obstacle to achieving understanding in studying other areas of the world.<sup>11</sup> The idea that regional interests are more compelling than strict disciplinary ones is another motivating factor in favor of the interdisciplinary approach to African Studies.<sup>12</sup> The challenge seems to be to produce cooperation among the disciplines to create a cohesive approach to the study of Africa. There has been a push from many academics for the designation of field status to African Studies; however, opposition from universities to the creation of a specific regional academic field of African Studies has indicated potentially underlying racial and political tensions within academia regarding the study of Africa.

African Studies has either been included within existing disciplines or fields, or is seen as an independent discipline or

“interdisciplinary,” manifested primarily in departments, centers, or institutes in the social sciences.<sup>13</sup> Reining describes this duality further: “[T]he notion that area studies might be substitutes for the traditional university departments had subsided by the time that African studies centers began to proliferate.”<sup>14</sup> He goes on to explain how professional associations such as the African Studies Association have “allowed Africanists to get to know each other according to particular interests in African regions or problems, rather than along disciplinary lines alone” and that “the many disciplines required for studying African history may open the way for further interdisciplinary efforts.”<sup>15</sup> This idea of associations and centers bringing together Africanists to address regions or problems in Africa without disciplinary restrictions indicates the emergence of African Studies as an interdisciplinary initiative.

As Zeleza explains, African studies has both disciplinary and interdisciplinary dimensions: “[African studies is] disciplinary in so far as it is the object of research, study, teaching and publications in specific disciplines and interdisciplinary in situations where these activities are institutionally organized in specific African studies units whether called—the administrative nomenclature varies—programmes, centres, institutes, or departments.”<sup>16</sup> In Africa, there are few African Studies programs as such, since the study of Africa exists within various disciplines, whereas in Euro-America, where the area studies model was developed, African Studies provides a crucial institutional base.

In 1970, Professor Richard Lambert of the University of Pennsylvania conducted a survey of foreign area programs for the Social Science Research Council.<sup>17</sup> According to the Lambert data, the Africanist community in 1970 consisted of approximately 1,800 individuals who identified themselves as Africanists, with 80 percent in university research or teaching careers; 13 percent in foundations, libraries and the like; and 7 percent in government or business.<sup>18</sup> Ninety-three percent of Africanists in 1970, according to the data, were part of the educational-intellectual sector of American society, with 76.2 percent of those identifying as Africanists in social science based fields, including political science (21.5%), history (19.6%), anthropology (15.5%), economics (8.0%), geography (5.8%), sociology (4.6%), education (3.5%), law (1.7%) and others.<sup>19</sup> The remainder fell under the categories of either language/linguistics/literature (8.1%) or art/philosophy/

music/religion (2.9%).<sup>20</sup> This indicates a wide range of fields with specialists identifying as Africanists, categorizing African Studies as a multidisciplinary endeavor.

According to Zeleza, “[T]he changing disciplinary and interdisciplinary architecture of knowledge occurs as much in the context of, and sometimes in response to, transformations in the epistemic and conceptual orders of knowledge as in the changing socioeconomic and political conditions of the wider society.”<sup>21</sup> Zeleza distinguishes five separate phases in the transformation of area studies, characterized by shifting engagements between discipline and interdiscipline. The first phase occurred in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as a response to racist Euro-American and vindicationist Afro-American traditions. The second phase took place during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and was distinguished by dominating African American scholar activists and historically black colleges and universities working on the question of Africa’s place in a global context. The third phase was marked by the Cold War era’s shift of African Studies to European American scholars in historically white universities in departments such as anthropology, history, political science, and economics, with support from government sponsored Title VI educational programs and funding from foundations and donors. The fourth phase occurred during the post-Cold War period of the 1990s, when area studies were thought to be in crisis at a time when postcolonial scholarship questioned the integrity of regional and cultural identities and boundaries, as well as the privileged hybrid, immigrant and diasporic identities. The fifth phase was marked by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and a return to the national security imperative of area studies.<sup>22</sup>

In a national survey of African studies faculty within U.S. colleges and universities conducted by Larry Bowman and Diana Cohen, 91 percent of respondents disagreed with the idea that area studies have outlived their usefulness.<sup>23</sup> The majority of respondents (62%) also disagreed with downplaying the geographic focus of area studies in favor of tying in their intellectual and applied research questions to mainstream disciplines; however, 28 percent did agree with this approach. When asked what they understood *African studies* to mean, responses were divided into three categories: the study of the people of Africa both in Africa and in the diaspora (41%); the study of the entire

continent of Africa (33%); and the study of Sub-Saharan Africa (22%).<sup>24</sup> When asked to describe the preferred structure to sustain African studies, 48 percent of respondents felt African studies programs should retain autonomy from other academic programs, while 23 percent opted to incorporate African studies within traditional academic disciplines, and 18 percent said African studies should be joined with African American studies.<sup>25</sup> When viewing the data by respondents' race/ethnicity, the study revealed that "both Whites and Africans strongly prefer maintaining African studies autonomy, whereas African American scholars alone show a plurality (43 percent) for joining African studies with African American studies; only 9 percent of Whites and 20 percent of Africans hold this view," echoing Lisa Asili Aubrey's argument that continental Africans, African Americans, and Whites have very different views on what constitutes African studies and how to frame Africa both institutionally and intellectually.<sup>26</sup> Bowman and Cohen note the complexity of intersecting issues in their survey, highlighting the mixed findings that African studies should embrace both the continent and diaspora, but that there is a reticence to combine African studies with other disciplines, as doing so could potentially mean losing the identity of the African studies discipline and jeopardize the ongoing study of Africa.<sup>27</sup>

As a largely multi- and interdisciplinary initiative, African Studies has struggled to maintain legitimacy against more established disciplines, with numerous criticisms from skeptical scholars.<sup>28</sup> The study of Africa, however, has been approached through both disciplinary and interdisciplinary paradigms. Much of academia is divided into these disciplinary and interdisciplinary initiatives, with dialectical tension between the two approaches existing since the emergence of the modern research university in the 19<sup>th</sup> century;<sup>29</sup> however, the distinction between the two is often blurred. According to Zeleza, "it is evident that both disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity are not static phenomena, but changing epistemic constructions that evolve as part of the continuous transformations in the nature and function of the academy, which in turn, reflect the changing dynamics in the wider society and the wider world."<sup>30</sup>

## **Borders and Boundaries in African Studies**

### *Afro-Pessimist and Neocolonialist Views of African Studies*

When discussing the competing methods for teaching and researching Africa, the question arises as to whether the study of Africa by outside scholars is a form of cultural imperialism. Jean-Loup Amselle raises a highly contentious point about how a certain imaginary view of Africa as “the continent par excellence of misery” is “crucial to the European and North American ‘charity business’” as “an enterprise that relies on mobilizing and instilling guilt.”<sup>31</sup> This notion of Afro-pessimism, or the idea that the future of Africa is bleak due to the vast multitude of problems faced by the continent, continues to plague the study of Africa. This point that Amselle raises regarding Africa as a “charity business” for Western society due to guilt can be further evidenced by Western support for the creation and operation of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide, where Western countries failed to intervene. Support in Africa for other systems of transitional justice traditionally thought of as Western-based, such as international tribunals and courts, has also been raised as further evidence of Amselle’s theory. This implies a form of Western academic cultural imperialism regarding the field of African Studies that has been heavily criticized from those who call for organic research as opposed to supporting outside initiatives in the study of Africa.

Along these lines, the field of African Studies is thought by critics to be plagued with Western influence as a form of neocolonialism. The term *neocolonialism* generally refers to a post-colonial criticism of the involvement of developed countries in the developing world, a theory arguing that international political and economic arrangements created by former colonial powers can be used to maintain control of former colonies and create dependency after the colonial independence movements of the post-World War II period. The term and idea of neocolonialism gained popularity and became more widespread through the work of Pan-Africanist scholars and leaders of newly independent African states. Neocolonialism can be evidenced in the close relationship between France maintains with its former colonies in Africa. Many believe that this idea of neocolonialism can be

further applied to the study of Africa by Western scholars and practitioners. Contrastingly, many scholars refute this notion of Afro-pessimism and neocolonialism in African Studies as poorly disguised disdain for Western and outside academics who genuinely want to raise the visibility of Africa in world scholarship.

Due to the origins of African Studies as an academic initiative across various primarily Eurocentric disciplines, it was necessary for many African universities to decolonize the disciplines, so to speak, to create a field of African Studies removed from these prevalent neocolonialist and Afro-pessimist mentalities:

The golden era [in the development of African universities and African studies], which lasted from the 1950s to the late 1970s, was characterized by the excitement of building new universities and expanding old ones, all underpinned by the triumph of African nationalism and the euphoria of independence. During this era, vigorous efforts were made to decolonize the disciplines, to strip them of their Eurocentric cognitive and civilizational conceits.<sup>32</sup>

According to Zeleza, a primary feature of African studies and scholarship since independence has been the “deconstructive impulse to dismantle the hegemony of European thought as part of the struggle to reconstruct the historicity and integrity of African thought, to affirm African humanity long denied by the European geopolitical self and the metaphysics of white normativity.”<sup>33</sup> This approach to decolonizing African studies indicates a shift from the study of Africa through Eurocentric disciplines towards a new center of knowledge production. This concept has manifest itself through not only the push towards creating a separate field or discipline of African Studies, but also in advocating for the return of the study of Africa to African institutions and scholars.

### **Scope and Objectives of Seeing Africa as a Whole<sup>34</sup>**

#### *Pan-African versus Sub-Saharan Approaches to African Studies: The Case of North Africa*

When discussing the development and challenges of the study of Africa, and supporting the study of Africa by African institutions, it is necessary to examine what constitutes “Africa.” As

Bentahar notes, “‘Africa’ now ostensibly stands for Sub-Saharan Africa, whereas North Africa is considered in many academic disciplines to be part of the Middle East instead.”<sup>35</sup> Although some consider North and Sub-Saharan Africa to belong to the same geographic area and classification, the majority of scholarship distinguishes between the North and Sub-Saharan African regions, grouping North Africa with the Middle East due to the linkages through Islam. Many academic centers, government institutions, NGOs and civil society organizations with area studies departments include North Africa in their Middle East programs, and have developed the acronym MENA to refer to their Middle East and North Africa program collectively.<sup>36</sup>

Bentahar suggests that the connection between North and Sub-Saharan Africa dates back to the Carthaginian Empire in the ninth century BCE, with the emergence of trans-Saharan commerce and trade routes along the Mediterranean coast facilitating both economic and cultural exchange.<sup>37</sup> He draws further parallels by highlighting the link between communities of Sub-Saharan origin in Tunisia and Morocco, and the influence of North Africa on the practice of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Mazrui explains that it took European conceptualization and cartography to turn Africa into a continent, with the Berlin Conference in 1884-1885 creating what would become modern African states.<sup>38</sup> As Mazrui states, “How Africa is defined has been a product of its interaction with other civilizations.”<sup>39</sup> That is to say, external influences have clearly formed what is currently conceived of to be Africa. He posits that there are five phases in the historical external conceptualization of Africa. The first phase “regarded North Africa as an extension of Europe, while the rest of Africa was regarded as an empire of barbarism and darkness.”<sup>40</sup> The second phase dealt with the interaction with Semitic people and with classical Greece and Rome, with the presence of the Phoenicians and Hebrews in North Africa, and Black Semites such as the Amhara and the Tigre peoples of Ethiopia and Eritrea in the Horn of Africa, and the spread of Christianity across North Africa in the first century CE and into Ethiopia from the fourth century CE.<sup>41</sup> The third phase “involved the birth of Islam on the Arabian Peninsula and its expansion on the African continent. The earliest Muslims, persecuted in Mecca, fled for asylum across the Red Sea into Ethiopia.”<sup>42</sup> This third phase, according to Mazrui,

initiated the continentalization of Africa and the identity formation of the “other,” awakening Black consciousness, which would later in the twentieth century develop into the idea of Negritude, or the self-affirmation of black peoples, as a response to French colonialism.<sup>43</sup> The fourth phase is characterized by Africa as a product of three civilizations—Africa itself, Islam, and the West. The fifth phase is “the realization that the continent is the ancestry of the human species. Africa thus becomes the Garden of Eden and a major stream in world civilization.”<sup>44</sup> This idea of Africa as a product of external conceptualization and interaction with other civilizations is partly what has led to the study of Africa as such.

In Crawford Young’s seminal text *The Postcolonial State in Africa: Fifty Years of Independence, 1960-2010*, Young provides a comparative overview of African studies since independence, identifying three cycles of hope and disappointment over the past fifty years.<sup>45</sup> Young states that “History argues for a continental perspective [of Africa]; deep cultural, economic, religious, and political links unite the Arab tier of states in the north to the lands to the south,” and that “Official Africa claims standing as a constituted region of intercommunicating states with a commonality of goals; the Pan-African dream is surprisingly robust in the face of its institutional shortcomings and disappointments.”<sup>46</sup> Young argues that Africa as a whole is the world region that best lends itself to a comparative approach due to similarities between countries in cultural patterns, in the invocation of an “African society” as a general entity by leaders and analysts, elaborated and constructed historical tradition over broad areas, a distinctive African philosophical view of the world, the idea of a common African culture in nationalist discourse, distinctive notions of power and leadership across countries in a widely shared cultural sphere, constituting what Michael Schatzberg refers to as a common “moral matrix of legitimacy.”<sup>47</sup> Another crucial commonality to Young is the defining impact of colonial occupation, also important because of its relationship to another shared feature of simultaneous and rapid decolonization among most African countries. The last major factor Young discusses is the similarity in the high degree of political diffusion in Africa, with shared ideological debates across the continent and strong reciprocal interaction, as well as extensive intercommunication among leaders and intelligentsias, a phenomenon Young refers to as a “continental epistemic community.”<sup>48</sup>

For these reasons, among others, according to Alpers and Roberts, African Studies should broadly encompass not only the study of Sub-Saharan Africa, but also the study of North Africa and the diaspora:

As we learn from the data gathered by the Bowman survey, the attitudes of mainstream Africanists across the spectrum of U.S. higher education appear to be divided with respect to what constitutes “African studies,” with some 22 percent of respondents indicating “the study of Sub-Saharan Africa”; 33 percent, “the study of the entire continent of Africa”; and 41 percent, “the study of the people of Africa, both in Africa and the diaspora.” We contend that although the study of Africa must focus on Africa and the peoples of Africa, it should also include the study of Africans in African diasporas and the place of Africa in its global context, both historically and contemporaneously. African studies, we firmly believe, is about African peoples, both on the continent of Africa and abroad, rather than about a continent called Africa.<sup>49</sup>

This idea of an overarching study of both that which pertains to the continent of Africa and African people more broadly can be linked to the idea of Pan-Africanism and African unity which emerged after independence. States expressed the desire for greater unity and solidarity within the continent, which became one of the central goals of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Carroll and Richards both argue for a methodology to develop a “holistic approach identified with Pan African Studies [Afro-American, African American, Africana, Black Studies, etc.] as a discipline, rather than with the fragmentary divisions of European academic thought.”<sup>50</sup> Pan-Africanism aims to unify Africans, both on the continent and in the diaspora, to create a global African community.

The growth of the African academic diaspora and diaspora studies in the global North highlights the potential for productive engagement with Africa, as a critical mediator in the transmission of knowledge between Africa and the West, essential to both the globalization of African knowledge and the Africanization of global knowledge: “The challenge for the contemporary African academic diaspora is to mediate continental Africa and diasporic Africa, the political and economic projects of Pan-Africanism and

the cultural and discursive paradigms of diaspora and global studies.”<sup>51</sup> This emphasizes the value of the study of Africa in Africa and by the African academic diaspora, in partnership with Africans and African institutions, to strengthen and encourage the production of knowledge with African solutions to African problems.

### **Conclusions: The Current and Future State of African Studies**

Is African Studies considered a field or is it an interdisciplinary initiative? Would designating the status of field to African Studies create a greater awareness and respect within academia and the greater international community for issues relating to Africa? Does the lack of field status indicate underlying racial and political tension in academia regarding African Studies? Does the study of Africa by non-African scholars indicate the prevalence of a neocolonial Afro-pessimist form of cultural imperialism? Who “owns” the field of African Studies? Does the exclusion of North Africa in the corpus of African literature and African Studies indicate a type of reverse racism through the ideology of Negritude in contrast with Pan-Africanism?

Scholar Jane Guyer explores the question of the status of African Studies in the United States, claiming that the 1990s ushered in a new era in African Studies in the United States, and identifying two previous eras, with the first “marked by basic research on newly emergent Africa and the independence struggles and the second characterized by a development agenda in which ‘debt and disaster suddenly dominated the public view of Africa.’”<sup>52</sup> According to Alpers and Roberts, “During the era of the Vietnam War, in the late 1960s, federally funded African studies centers were tainted by association with U.S. foreign policy, drawing heated criticism from within the Africanist community.”<sup>53</sup> Moving to a more academic focus, the study of Africa evolved to become a multi- and interdisciplinary initiative, spreading across various social science and humanities-based fields, among others. This initiative stemmed largely from Western countries, with relatively few African Studies programs in Africa itself, and a greater influence of the West on studies of Africa than Africa on studies of the West.

Although the development of African Studies as a part of area studies was an important step in raising awareness of African

issues in the international community, this highlights the problem of the unequal nature in the global intellectual exchange:

There are other crucial differences in the organization of 'area studies' in Africa and Euro-America: the latter's overdetermination of African knowledge systems remains palpable, while the African influence on Euro-American scholarship is quite negligible. This shows the uneven and unequal ways in which the disciplines and interdisciplines are internationalized between the global North and much of the global South. It suggests that the terms of global intellectual exchange, like the terms of trade for the so-called developed and developing economies, are decidedly unequal: African studies in the North are a peripheral part of the academy, whereas the Euro-American epistemological order remains central in the African academy.<sup>54</sup>

Critiques against area studies include arguments that area studies have outlived their original use as a Cold War political project. Area studies are also criticized for being primarily concerned with ideographic description as opposed to the nomothetic theory building of the social science disciplines.<sup>55</sup> Others argue that area studies scholars have uncritically advanced the universal or localized perspectives of imperialist and nativist predecessors. Finally, many contend that globalization has rendered existing structures of organizing and producing knowledge in bounded regions increasingly obsolete in favor of international, global, and comparative regional studies.<sup>56</sup> According to Zeleza, this shift can be characterized by the fact that the "Social Science Research Council abolished its area studies committees and the foundations duly withdrew their area studies funding support and launched new initiatives on cross-regional and globalization issues."<sup>57</sup> This shift toward international studies highlights global problems and challenges stemming from relations between nations and states, but requires attention to specific context, as well as systematic conceptualization and investigation of the implications of globalization for disciplinary, interdisciplinary and transnational studies, including African Studies.<sup>58</sup>

This struggle over ideas and academic paradigms involves competing methods, visions, priorities and policies for teaching, studying and researching Africa in an increasingly globalized

arena; however, the “involvement of African studies and African scholars in setting the conceptual and methodological architecture of globalization or international studies remains minimal.”<sup>59</sup> Therefore, advocating for and supporting African scholarship, universities and the production of knowledge on the continent of Africa and by African scholars is essential to the future of African Studies, both regionally and globally, regardless of the designation as disciplinary or interdisciplinary.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Pearl T. Robinson, “Local/Global Linkages and the Future of African Studies,” *Africa Today* 44, no. 2 (1997): 169-178. In 1915, historian Carter G. Woodson established Association for the Study of Negro (now Afro-American) Life and History, which became the premier U. S. organization concerned with the study of the African American and other African-related experiences. See William G. Martin, “The Rise of African Studies (USA) and the Transnational Study of Africa,” *African Studies Review* 54, no. 1 (April 2011): 70.

<sup>2</sup> Burkart Holzner and Matthew Harmon, “Intellectual and Organizational Challenges for International Education in the United States: A Knowledge System Perspective,” in John Hawkins et al., eds., *International Education in the New Global Era* (Los Angeles: International Studies and Overseas Programs, University of California, 1998), 7.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, *The Study of Africa Volume 2: Global and Transnational Engagements* (Dakar, Senegal: Codesria, 2007), 2-3, 17.

<sup>4</sup> Olayiwola Abegunrin, ed., *Africa: The State of the Continent Fifty Years after the Liberation* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2014), xxiii. See also African Studies Association, “About the ASA,” accessed August 10, 2011, <http://www.africanstudies.org>.

<sup>5</sup> Philip D. Curtin, “African Studies: A Personal Assessment,” *African Studies Review* 14, no. 4 (1971): 357-358.

<sup>6</sup> Edward A. Alpers and Allen F. Roberts, “What is African studies? Some reflections,” *African Issues* 30, no. 2 (2002): 11-18.

<sup>7</sup> Curtin, “African Studies,” 360.

<sup>8</sup> Gilbert W. Merckx, “Graduate Training and Research,” in John Hawkins, et al., eds., *International Education in the New Global Era* (Los Angeles: International Studies and Overseas Programs, University of California, 1998): 76-86.

<sup>9</sup> Alpers and Roberts, “What is African Studies?” 11. See also: Robert H. Bates, V.Y. Mudimbe, and Jean O’Barr, eds., *Africa and the Disciplines: The Contribution of Research in Africa to the Social Sciences and Humanities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), xi.

- <sup>10</sup> Conrad C. Reining, "The Interdisciplinary Effect in African Studies," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 356, no. 1 (1964): 100-101. See also University Grants Committee, *Report of the Sub-Committee on Oriental, Slavonic, East European, and African Studies*, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1961), 14.
- <sup>11</sup> Reining, "Interdisciplinary," 101.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.
- <sup>13</sup> Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, "African Studies and Universities since Independence: The Challenges of Epistemic and Institutional Decolonization," *Transitions* 101, no. 1 (2009): 110-112.
- <sup>14</sup> Reining, "Interdisciplinary," 100.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>16</sup> Zeleza, *The Study of Africa Volume 2*, 2.
- <sup>17</sup> Curtin, "African Studies," 357.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>19</sup> Curtin, "African Studies," 359.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>21</sup> Zeleza, *The Study of Africa Volume 2*, 6.
- <sup>22</sup> Zeleza, *The Study of Africa Volume 2*, 6-7.
- <sup>23</sup> Larry W. Bowman and Diana T. Cohen, "Identifying New Directions for African Studies: The National Survey of African Studies Faculty," *African Issues* 30, no. 2 (2002): 2-10, 2.
- <sup>24</sup> Bowman and Cohen, "Identifying New Directions for African Studies," 2.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* See also Lisa Asili Aubrey, "African Americans in the United States and African Studies," *African Issues* 30, no. 2 (2002): 19-23.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>28</sup> See Roland Oliver, *In the Realms of Gold: Pioneering in African History* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 284, regarding Hugh Trevor-Roper's "notorious" dismissal televised live by the British Broadcasting Corporation in 1963 of the idea of African history as a legitimate academic pursuit. See also Alpers and Roberts, "What is African Studies?" 11.
- <sup>29</sup> Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, "The Changing Terrain of African Studies" (presentation, 2020: Re-Envisioning African Studies Symposium, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, April 13-14, 2007), 2. Retrieved from: [sitemaker.umich.edu/africa2020/files/zeleza.doc](http://sitemaker.umich.edu/africa2020/files/zeleza.doc).
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>31</sup> Jean-Loup Amselle, "L'Afrique: Un parc themes," *Les Temps Modernes* 620-621 (2002): 47. See also V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press 1988); V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Idea of Africa* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994).
- <sup>32</sup> Zeleza, "African Studies and Universities since Independence," 112.

<sup>33</sup> Zeleza, "Changing Terrain," 1.

<sup>34</sup> This section title is adapted from Crawford Young, *The Postcolonial State in Africa: Fifty Years of Independence, 1960-2010* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012) 4-5, where Young discusses in his sub-section "Scope and Objectives: Seeing Africa Whole" that the object of his volume is to examine the political trajectories of the (then) 53 African states over the past half century from his experience and research firsthand in Africa. He explains his methodological decision to include the entire continent due to historical links of North and South Africa, with Africa as a constituted region of states with a commonality of goals.

<sup>35</sup> Ziad Bentahar, "Continental Drift: The Disjunction of North and Sub-Saharan Africa," *Research in African Literatures* 42, no. 1, (2011): 1.

<sup>36</sup> The World Bank, "The Middle East & North Africa," accessed August 12, 2011, <http://go.worldbank.org/7UEP77ZCB0>. See also: Human Rights Watch, "Middle East/N. Africa," <http://www.hrw.org/middle-east/n-africa>; International Center for Transitional Justice, "Our Work: Middle East and North Africa," <http://ictj.org/our-work/regions-and-countries/middle-east-and-north-africa>; Binghamton University. *Middle East and North African Program*, <http://www.binghamton.edu/mena/>.

<sup>37</sup> Bentahar, "Continental Drift," 2.

<sup>38</sup> Ali Mazrui, "The Re-Invention of Africa: Edward Said, V. Y. Mudimbe, and beyond," *Research in African Literatures* 36, no. 3 (2005): 68-70.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Crawford Young, *The Postcolonial State in Africa*, 4-5.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 5. See also Michael G. Schatzberg, *Political Legitimacy in Middle Africa: Father, Family, Food* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).

<sup>48</sup> Young, *The Postcolonial State in Africa*, 7.

<sup>49</sup> Alpers and Roberts, "What is African Studies?" 13.

<sup>50</sup> See Karanja Keita Carroll, "Africana Studies and Research Methodology: Revisiting the Centrality of the Afrikan Worldview," *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 2, no. 2 (March 2008): 17. See also Dona Richards, "Toward the Demystification of Objectivity," *Imhotep Journal of Afrocentric Thought* 1, no. 1 (1989): 32.

<sup>51</sup> Zeleza, *The Study of Africa Volume 2*, 10-11.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 11. See also Jane Guyer, *African Studies in the United States: A Perspective* (Piscataway, NJ: African Studies Association Press, 1996), 1.

<sup>53</sup> Alpers and Roberts, "What is African Studies?" 13.

<sup>54</sup> Zeleza, "Changing Terrain," 4.

<sup>55</sup> See David Szanton, "Introduction: The Origin, Nature, and Challenge of Area Studies in the United States," in David Szanton, ed., *The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004): 20-21.

<sup>56</sup> Zeleza, *The Study of Africa Volume 2*, 7.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 8. See also James H. Mittelman, "Globalisation: An Ascendant Paradigm? Implications for African Studies," in Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, ed., *The Study of Africa Volume 2: Global and Transnational Engagements* (Dakar, Senegal: Codesria, 2007), 27-44.

<sup>59</sup> Zeleza, *The Study of Africa Volume 2*, 9.

