

# GLOBAL AFRICA

## Call for Papers for Issue 4

### Theorizing for the Present and the Future: Africa, Knowledge creation, and Global Challenges

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African Studies is, among other things, a method of inquiry that attempts to think about Africa and the world beyond the limits of the modern teleology that has imagined Africa and Africans as spaces and spheres of inhumanity or pre-humanity that need, at best, to be dusted, brought into speed, and included in the long march of history, if not completely erased, subjugated, and discarded. For this reason, it is a truism to state that the rejection of the hold that the colonial matrix of power has over being, thinking, conceiving the present, and imagining the future is a precondition for engaging with the world from the perspective of African studies. Put simply, what is at stake in the discipline is the consciousness of the necessity of an epistemic stance that underscores the need to “delink” from the pervasive conceptual frameworks founded on the dehumanization and exploitation of the other—especially non-white and non-human beings. Despite this clear epistemic stance, however, the conditions in which we should engage, or not engage, with the seemingly pervasive modern West remains a site of disagreement between African scholarly traditions. While the postcolonial, afropolitan, and afrofuturist traditions, for example, consider the possibility of divergent modernities that do not necessarily oppose Africanness and modernity, other schools of thought, namely, the Afrocentrist, endogenist, and decolonial traditions call for the possibility of delinking from modernity/coloniality which, they postulate, exist only if Africa remains its darker side. What is yet to be worked out is, thus, how we put in conversation these discursive traditions as we think of Africa as a site of global theorizing if we take the continent’s historical and ongoing connections with global processes. This raises at least three questions:

- 1) what ideas and concepts can we develop/adapt from African spaces to address (Africa-wide and by implication) global social, political and environmental challenges?
- 2) how should we think about global problems, especially the Anthropocene, if we imagined them from within Africa?
- 3) what would be the outcome for Africa if it becomes the source of solutions to global challenges both in theory and practice?

All three questions point to the importance of making Africa a center of global theory. To attain this goal, we need to consider how we should recalibrate our orientation to critical thinking. This entails conceptualizing new ways of assessing the scope of theoretical exertion in the different disciplines so that, for instance, we can appreciate fully the global dimension of a theory developed in African spaces which contributes to the resolution of challenges in Africa that have global implications. The starting point of thinking globally from Africa therefore focuses attention on the so-called ‘how questions’ – that is, questions about how to think and not merely what we are thinking about. In finding new orientation to thinking to enable us make Africa a taken-for-granted center for the generation of global theories, we attain two goals – we conceive solutions to the current challenges in the African worlds and we demonstrate new ways of understanding global challenges as shared human problems that can be resolved using resources from every part of the world.

One of the main difficulties that one must tackle to realize this goal pertains to methodology. The challenge of methodology cannot be underestimated because we must have certainty about the suitability of the tools we deploy in our thinking if we wish to transform or reveal the global relevance of concepts embedded in African spaces. We must also ensure that key concepts are suitable to enable us to develop the new kind(s) of orientation to thinking we desire.

It is against this background that this issue of the *Global Africa* Journal examines the question of knowledge creation from the African World. The issue aims to contribute to the revitalization of social science and humanities scholarship, including in their dialogue with environmental sciences, in order to create new understandings of Africa and the World. It invites contributions that deal with the currently intractable challenges confronting the world, such as the meanings and implications of the digital moment, the question of migration and the challenge of global poverty, the ever-present threat of global insecurity – from human to existential threats to destructive activities of armed groups. We invite authors to submit contributions dealing with the most urgent global issues, namely, the relation between the planet and our society (a question that is inseparable from the processes of colonization and

access to resources) as well as Africa-centered epistemologies allowing for an alternative way of thinking our relation to Earth.

We also welcome contributions that foreground Africa-centered responses to these and many other global challenges:

- New imaginations of the project of thinking in response to a world in transition
- The institutional and organizational forms needed to tackle global economic, political environmental and cultural transitions
- The nature of the knowledge that will enable us to propose critical but relevant solutions to climate change, energy poverty and the just energy transitions in a truly global way
- New ways to recalibrate old concepts, such as Pan-Africanism, decolonization, liberation, freedom etc.
- Artificial intelligence (AI) and its implications for the sustainability of lifestyles
- African youths as global actors
- The changing patterns of human rights abuses and resistance from the periphery
- The ways of training and learning and the challenge of the current historical moment
- New ways of decision making in public policy

Proposed abstracts should be submitted directly to the editors of the special issue for initial consideration: [redaction@globalafricapress.org](mailto:redaction@globalafricapress.org)

Expected timeline:

- Abstracts (500 words) submission deadline: **March 15, 2023**
- Abstracts acceptance notification: March 23, 2023
- Paper submission deadline: June 10, 2023
- Publication of the issue: **December 16, 2023.**

For any queries about the special issue, kindly reach out to the editors:

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