African Feminist Thought

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Summary and Keywords

African feminist thought refers to the dynamic ideas, reflections, theories and other expressions of intellectual practices by politically radical African women concerned with liberating Africa by focusing women's liberation, and as such cannot be easily defined or captured. However, the conditions out of which Africa's feminist movements form, and the intellectual labor that they carry out in the pursuit of women's rights and freedoms can be explored and discussed. African feminist thought is the potentially limitless product of movements that are themselves constantly in the making, succeeding in changing the conditions of their formation by their very existence. African feminist political thought can be traced to the world's women's movements that formed in the context of transnational liberal and emancipatory political discourses of the late 19th and 20th centuries of European empire. Out of these liberal emancipatory reformist, international labor, communist, socialist revolutionary, and Pan-African Diasporic and African nationalist movements were all formed.

However, following the flag independence of over fifty nation-states, women who joined the anti-colonial freedom movements have had to pursue further struggles in independent nation-states, because Africa's new states often hesitated or reverted to conservative patriarchal views when it came to extending freedom and equality to African women. It is as citizens of new nations that 20th century African women have formed independent feminist movements that continue to demand freedom, equality and rights, for example, by seeking freedom of movement, political representation, educational and economic equality, and perhaps most commonly of all, freedom from sex and gender-based violence.

Contemporary publications and writings by African feminists are the primary sources consulted here, because of the need to correct the spurious mis-representation of African feminism as "un-African," a position that hinges on the definition of feminism as exclusively Western. This view is advanced by conservative African men and women who seek the restoration of pre-colonial cultures, as well as in some of the early scholarly literature on the subject.

African feminism is a radical proposition: it refers to the liberatory political philosophies, theories, writings, research and cultural production, as well as the organizing work of the transnational community of feminists from Africa. These respond to objective conditions

of global systemic inequality that have led African women to resume the struggle for freedom and liberation. African feminists in 2019 identify with earlier generations of women freedom fighters but enunciate visions of a future in which the women of Africa will be afforded human rights and freedoms, on a continent liberated from a global neoliberal capitalist system that continues to marginalize the vast majority of the world's peoples and exploits natural and human resources to a degree that now threatens planetary survival.

Keywords: feminism, Africa, thought, theory, political intellectual, women's movement, pan-Africanism, nationalism feminism, socialist feminism, radical epistemology, activism, organizing, freedom movement, gender equality, justice, women's rights, international development, politics, policy, United Nations, African Union

Feminism on the African Continent

Over the past half-century, from the late 1960s, feminism and therefore feminist thought has proliferated across the African Union. It has emerged alongside other radical intellectual political philosophies concerned with pursuing the freedom and liberation of African peoples through modern movements that pursued inter alia the meaning of the African state, postcolonialism, the enduring critique of class-based economies of extraction, and the politics of movement building. African feminists describe their way of thinking as a woman-centered radical political philosophy, which has emerged through critical reflection on the ways in which oppressive regimes of gender and sexuality facilitate the exploitation of African women. Feminist thought is not exclusive to Africa as it animates a wide variety of women's movements across the world and is commonly traced back to 19th-century communist and socialist movements that formed across Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and, of course, the African colonies.

African feminists are an extremely dynamic and complex group with widely varied historical, political-ideological, intellectual, socioeconomic, and ethno-religious trajectories, not amenable to any simple catalog or generic definition. African feminist thought is movement thought, so it is constantly in the making through processes that are poorly documented but involve ongoing dynamics of resistance and struggle on multiple fronts.[1] By the time the final conference of the UN Decade for Women was held in Nairobi in 1985, there was already a long history of women organizing against colonial regimes, supporting decolonization movements and mass mobilizations for political independence. It is a matter of record that women in the national liberation movements founded the Pan African Women's Organization (PAWO) in 1962, before the Organization of African Unity itself was established.

Merely considering what African feminist thought may comprise and how it may be characterized is an epistemological reminder that theorizing is a product of labor, namely the intellectual labor of sustained reflection. Most African feminist thought is not written, and the epistemological conditions of its existence demand that our conceptualization of "thinking" extends beyond intellectual discourses. Beyond scholarly texts, thought is widely communicated through the performance arts, visual culture, fashion and style, and bodily expression are all shared through education systems. As these are often androcen-

tric, feminist consciousness-raising and feminist educational strategies have been key to mobilizing women's movements and educating the public. African feminists are developing their own versions of gender and women's studies in the continental educational systems, and have established information and communication networks, for example the Nairobi-based FEMNET, writers collectives like the Kampala-based FEMRITE, and publications, Feminist Africa, all of which take advantage of digital and social media applications which are key to feminist imagining and networking to make movements with the structures and capacities to influence, advocate, and achieve change.

Africa's leftist intellectuals thought about culture while they were fighting revolutionary wars. Amilcar Cabral and Frantz Fanon precede Edward Said in treating "culture" as a site of struggle and change in the pursuit of political as well as psychological decolonization.[2] The will to cultural self-definition and determination is very evident in African feminist thought, which sets out to sabotage the insistence that "feminism is un-African," in the first instance by their style.[3] The visual evidence of African feminist fashion choices illustrates a movement that has cultivated the art of self-definition and self-determination, in a manner that embodies and advances a revolutionary understanding of culture. This includes wellness, freedom, and modes of self-expression that parody, subvert, and resist conservatism. They repudiate oppressive and harmful practices and cultivate psychosexual and political liberation. In patriarchal societies, women's bodies are the front lines of their oppression in a manner that makes nonsense of economistic and structural determinist accounts that essentialize (and often conflate) sex, sexuality, and gender as culturally determined, so spinning a cultural mystique that obscures or even valorizes sex and gender exploitation across political, economic, and cultural arenas.

The growth of post-independence feminist thought and its modes of organizing to pursue change have been profoundly shaped by its engagements with the politics and policies of the Western-dominated global development industry, which responded by "adding women" into mainstream development planning. However, as early as the 1970s, Kenyan feminist Achola Pala had already described the UN push for the integration of women into development as, in fact, colonial.[4]

The use of the term "African" in "African feminism" has multiple philosophical and political ancestries, but these share the historical identification with the continent of Africa, and serve to mark some feminist thought as African and therefore not the same as feminist thought rooted in, say, Asia or the Americas. It also is a subjective, creative cultural identification with the cause of African liberation. The "pan-" prefix in pan-American feminism also opens up multiple possibilities. The more political usage locates continental African feminism in the centuries-old philosophy and politics of African liberation. This is commonly traced back to diasporic roots in the Garveyites' "Back to Africa" mobilization and numerous other diasporic movements. Pan-African movements were influenced by competing capitalist, communist, and socialist ideologies that saw them targeted by US anti-communism. Many Pan-African and leftist organizations infiltrated and their activists

jailed and deported, exemplified in the example of Claudia Jones, the Trinidadian-American communist feminist journalist.

Early African feminists traveled and had encounters with African American women active in international socialist and anti-imperialist movements (e.g., Una Marson, Amy Ashwood Garvey, and Claudia Jones).[5] African diaspora feminist Ashwood Amy Garvey, for example, worked with the politically prominent West African Students Union in London during the 1940s and 1950s.[6] Mabel Dove, journalist from the Gold Coast colony, and Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, socialist-feminist and nationalist from the British Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, met African diaspora feminists at international leftist gatherings. They participated in anti-imperialist actions, such as issuing statements condemning Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia and French atomic testing in the Sahara.[7]

Pan-African feminist linkages have been especially hard to achieve, requiring the deliberate networking and communication strategies have generated transnational feminist movements, that have developed ideas through movement exchanges, collaborations, workshops, and numerous other collective activities.[8]

Since the initial formation of the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD) in 1977, independent research centers, feminist non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and university gender and women's studies programs have been established by feminists determined to pursue change despite the divestment of African public universities. Some of these have drawn external funding to grow new feminist teaching and research interventions which have deepened and proliferated feminist theory within and across borders. There are many examples. In Zimbabwe, for example, the Women and Law Centre at the University of Zimbabwe has trained generations of feminist legal activists, building capacities that have fueled the success of Women and Law in Southern African, a network that has secured numerous legal reforms in the sub-region. In Uganda, the faculty at the School of Gender Studies at Makerere University have collaborated with the government and women's movements to carry out activist research.[9] Feminist higher education activists in South Africa, Nigeria, and Uganda have used activist research strategies to push university administrations to tackle endemic sexual harassment on their campuses.[10]

Early 20th-Century African Feminist Roots

Modern African feminism was forged in the ferment of nationalism and resistance to empire, when women threw their energy into nationalist movements that swept across the continent to liberate Egypt, Algeria, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Guinea-Conakry, and many other nations. The manner of women's involvement depended very much on local conditions, varying widely from one anti-colonial struggle to another, and having diverse outcomes.

Early examples show women consistently pursuing rights in relation to both European colonial regimes and the national political class made up almost exclusively of men. For example, Huda Sharaawi and her militant protégée, Doria Shafik, were both educated daughters of a multilingual elite; they dedicated their lives to Egyptian women's liberation and are deeply respected by Egyptian feminists today. Sharaawi established the Egyptian Feminist Union and launched its publication, the feminist journal *L'Egyptienne: revue mensuelle: féminisme, sociologie, art*, which advanced a distinctive and radical Egyptian feminism from the 1920s through the 1940s, promoting debates over women's rights in the context of culture and religion, as well as on political matters. In keeping with their radical political ideas, both women were outspoken agitators and organizers who devoted themselves to education, activist work, and direct actions that were explicitly feminist.[11]

A famous example of direct action took place in 1951 when Shafik organized a group of 1,300 women to storm the Egyptian parliament, demanding equal rights for women. The following year, she went even further, gathering a 7,000-woman force that was prepared to go to the front lines to support Nasser's troops in their fight against the British. The August 1952 edition of *Bint al Nihl* (Daughters of the Nile) carried a statement from Shafik on the Egyptian revolution that included the following:

> The Egyptian woman . . . announces her readiness and her suitability to take her proper place in the nation's lines behind the army to bring forth the nation's glory, its freedom, and the happiness of its citizens, men and women together.[12]

Along the West African coast, there were feminist thinkers among the educated daughters of the coastal elite. Among them was Adelaide Casely-Hayford, Sierra Leone's "Victorian-feminist" who was born in Sierra Leone, educated at home and in Europe. She married Ghanaian pan-Africanist J. E. Casely-Hayford, and then returned to Freetown where she founded and led a branch of the Garveyite United Negro Improvement Association and pursued her dedication to women's education.[13] Mabel Dove, raised in the Gold Coast colony, became a journalist and writer who expressed strident critiques of the expectations of the European-styled femininity which prevailed among the West African coastal elite, contributing to newspapers and magazines that circulated from Liberia to Lagos during colonial times. She resisted being pigeonholed into "women's column" writing, preferring to address the substantive political debates of the day, before eventually becoming the first woman to be elected as a councilor in Ghana.[14] Despite her colonial-elite status, Mabel Dove insisting on being a "cloth woman" (wearer of African cloth) instead of a "frock woman" (wearer of the latest European fashions).

Feminist thinkers reflect critically on Ghana's struggle for independence, and their studies record how market women became makers of modern history when they threw their support behind the revolutionary agenda declared by Kwame Nkrumah and his Convention People's Party, carrying them to victory.[15]

In the nearby British Protectorate of Nigeria, too, women engaged in many mass mobilizations against colonialism. Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti was another nationalist-era feminist, and her analysis of the abject state of women across the colony that was to become Nigeria largely blames the colonial regime for the parlous situation of women in the British Protectorate. Writing in 1947, she observes

> Women owned property, traded and exercised considerable political and social influence in society. They were responsible for crowning the Kings on Coronation days. Whatever disabilities there [existed] were endured both by men and women alike. With the advent of British rule, slavery was abolished, and Christianity introduced in the country, but instead of the women being educated and assisted to live like human beings their condition deteriorated. The women of Nigeria are poverty-stricken, disease ridden, superstitious, and badly nourished, although they are the main producers of their country's wealth.[16]

Kuti's political analysis offers insight into the ideas that informed her activism, specifically why she took it upon her educated self to work with ordinary women as an educator and an organizer of mass protest actions. The Abeokuta Ladies Club, which she established in 1942, became the Abeokuta Women's Union (AWU) in 1943, abandoning its elitism in favor of including ordinary women members. The AWU proceeded to organize the Abeokuta Women's Tax Revolts to protest against crippling taxes that were being imposed to support the British war effort. The colonial authorities responded violently, tear gassing and beating the women protestors, but were ultimately obliged to remove the Alake (local chief and colonial collaborator).

Although she had helped to found the leftist Nigerian Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, her bid to run as a candidate in 1951 was unsuccessful. Instead, Kuti moved from local organizing and party work to build a national women's movement at a time when male politicians were busy fighting each other in ethno-nationalist and regional competitions. During the 1950s, she joined hands with women from other corners of the country, notably Hajiya Gambo Sawaba, a political mobilizer for the socialist Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), and Margaret Ekpo an educator from South-East Nigeria, to expand the AWU into the national Nigerian Women's Union (NWU). The NWU affiliated to the Women's International Democratic Federation, but the Nigerian State banned and arrested both Sawaba and Kuti on multiple occasions.[17] Kuti remained an activist, protesting against the military regimes that dominated national political life until her death following injuries she sustained during a military raid on her son's home in 1977.[18]

A third example can be found in East Africa, where women did not access Western education in substantial numbers until much later than the creolized coasts of West Africa. Despite the socialist ideology espoused by Tanzania's liberation movement, women's participation in political life was minimal when the liberation movement began. Bibi Titi was the first woman to overcome male resistance to women's political participation by joining the Tanzanian African National Union (TANU). However, when the struggle intensified, popu-

lar singer Bibi Titi came to play a major role in Nyerere's TANU. The party leadership discovered the political value of her fame and reputation and deployed her as their leading mass mobilizer and propagandist, who proved to be extremely skilled at popularizing the intellectual discourse of its socialist leadership. Her role affected women as well as men, given the manner in which she embodied and performed a popular feminist consciousness that typically drew explicit links between women's sex and their claims of political power:

> I told you [women] that we want independence. And we can't get independence if you don't want to join the party. We have given birth to all these men. Women are the power in this world. We are the ones who give birth to the world.[19]

These examples illustrate how women intellectuals and political activists variously contributed to the political movements against colonial rule. They did so across the social classes, whether they were informed by the critical intellectual analysis of Western patriarchal colonialism exhibited by Sharaawi and Kuti or by the experiential and popular gender consciousness that nonliterate women like Bibi Titi and Gambo Sawaba exhibited in their bold public speeches and performances. Both invoked the power of women, strategically reminding men of women's reproductive capacity, playing on the local sex and gender culture that they knew well, and which was used metaphorically to give political significance to the fact women give birth to men.

Africa's Women Freedom Fighters

African feminist thought has also been profoundly influenced by the direct experience of anti-colonial wars that were fought in settler colonies. Where Europeans had appropriated the land itself and displaced agrarian societies, poorly equipped local peasant armies had to face heavily militarized white supremacist regimes that used extreme violence, chemical warfare, and torture, and were supported by Western military and financial interests. It is widely understood that victory against such odds required more than guns. It required the social, political, and military mobilization of women as well as men, a great many of whom were children.[20] The so-called Cold War was hotly fought on African soil because the Western sponsored the South Africa, as well as multiple counter-insurgency groups (e.g., UNITA in Angola, RENAMO in Mozambique) and the covert interventions of the US Central Intelligence Agency played a part in the coup d'etat that overthrew Kwame Nkrumah and the assassination of Patrice Lumumba in the Congo.

More generally, revolutionary political organizations—the South-West African People's Organization (SWAPO), the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), *Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde*(PAIGC), *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola—Partido do Trabalho* (MPLA), and the oldest liberation movement of all, the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa—were all outlawed. With their leaders jailed or assassinated, the initially political movements seeking independence from the heavily militarized Portuguese, Rhodesian, and South African white supremacist states were forced underground and into exile during the 1960s. They were left with no option but to wage

people's wars, that won support from other quarters—notably Scandinavian nations, the Soviet Union, and the Cuban revolutionary government—while the Western alliance sponsored "anti-communist" proxies, some of which would continue to undermine their governments for decades after political independence.

The conditions of anti-colonial wars of the 1970s and 1980s presented a very different scenario than the women who had contributed to the political transitions that took place through the 1950s and 1960s. The Algerian *Fronte Libération Nationale* (FLN) was the first African liberation movement to utilize women combatants when, at a critical moment in the war, they mounted a campaign of guerilla attacks on the European urban quarters, immortalized in Gillo Pontecorvo's 1966 classic film *The Battle of Algiers*. Transforming local veiled women into revolutionaries required a radical reorientation of local Muslim cultural norms, but became possible, motivated both by the total nature of the war fought by Algerians, and the possibility of defeat.

The revolutionary movements of the 1970s (Mozambique, Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Guinea Bissau, and Eritrea) involved even larger numbers of women as fighters who had to face the heavily armed battalions of conventional armies. The involvement of thousands of women freedom fighters, most of them from poor, rural peasant backgrounds, was powerfully transgressive in relation to both indigenous and colonial gender norms.[21]

The women freedom fighters of *Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde*(PAIGC) and the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) were also radical women, who theorized their situation as a "double oppression" as early as the 1970s. They embarked on a twofold struggle, on the one hand fighting against the oppression inflicted by the racist-sexist colonial regime, and on the other, engaging African men who preferred to maintain their customary and colonial authority over women. The tension between revolutionary gender politics and the exigencies of war has been persistent. Ironically, FRELIMO and ZANU Commanders sent young armed women in combat fatigues to rural communities to mobilize men for the war by playing on conservative gender assumptions about men as heroes, women as weak, and in need of their protection, to embarrass men into signing up. By the 1980s, African women freedom fighters had acquired added propaganda value, as the image of the woman freedom fighter with the baby on her back became iconic in Western international solidarity circles, despite the obvious double-burdening, and the pronatalist implications. The realities of falling pregnant and having to give birth in the notorious Osibisa camp were a far cry from the iconic images that romanticized women fighters.[22] Local narratives do not romanticize the iconic image of the woman freedom fighter but rather indicate the high personal price women paid, not just at the hands of the enemies but at the hands of male comrades and commanders who took sexual advantage of young women who had left the existing protections in their families and communities to join the fight.

Ultimately flag independence changed women's understanding of what was possible. Having "a state of one's own" made it possible for the masses of women to think

differently about themselves, because it pole-vaulted them into citizenship, making them rights-bearing political subjects who felt empowered to call their governments to account.

Overall, the tapestry of women's historical experiences in anti-imperialist and anti-colonial nationalist political movements and liberation armies present an wide variety of scenarios across the fifty-four nation states. Although many different examples could have been provided, the few presented here aptly illustrate the capacious new possibilities for women's liberation that emerged from multiple anti-colonial conjunctures. How were these realized in the aftermath of colonial rule?

Africa's Post-Independence Feminisms

The nations that gained political independence in the 1970s did so at different moments in the global salience and history of feminism. The emergence of post-independence African feminism was clearly facilitated not just by the development crisis, but by some of the global responses to it. Among these was the UN Decade for Women, Peace and Development (1975–1985), a landmark in the globalization of feminist thinking during which progressive gender discourses gained ground in international governance arenas that would prove very valuable to feminists across the formerly colonized world. The end-of-decade United Nations Decade for Women Conference took place in Nairobi in 1985 at the height of Africa's so-called Lost Decade, during which both Africa and Latin American economic fortunes plunged, and most governments succumbed to the IMF/World Bank's imposition of structural adjustment programmes.[23] It has been well-established that these took the greatest toll on women. In other words, the globalization of concern over the marginalization of women in development took place at the same time as the divestment of the public sector. This global conjuncture therefore inexorably positioned the worsening situation of poor and rural African women at the heart of African feminist engagements with the development industry, informed as these were by combined by anti-imperialist, socialist and feminist analytics.

The rise of both UN feminism and state feminism during the first decades of post- independence development led to contradictory outcomes. One of these was the UN's call on its member states to establish a national policy structure for women that would work to integrate women in development. These national machinery structures remained donor dependent and largely ineffective. These structures are not feminist in any independent sense of the term because they are nested within the patriarchal state, but they do indicate the globalization of a liberal, inclusionary gender discourse through the global governance system. This is critically referred to as "state feminism" (in relation to the nation-state) or as "UN-feminism."[24] At the same time, relatively independent movements of local feminists have continuously engaged both their local states and the global development industry around women's interests. Both sides gather and report annually at the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York.[25]

At another level African feminist political theory challenges patriarchal states in which power is monopolized by men, to demand political equality and accountability to women. Feminist engagements with the state power inform the manner in which broader networks and civil society coalitions are organizing to pursue common agendas that hold the state accountable for pursuing freedom and justice for women. For example, the successful mobilization of Ugandan feminists during the constitutional reform process in the early 2000s led them to form the Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE), an organization set up to leverage the impact and effectiveness of women working in the political arena. As of 2019, they work with the opposition and other pro-democracy organizations to challenge the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM). In Ghana, an incumbent government's lack of consultation with local feminists prior to announcing the establishment of a Women's Ministry in January 2000 provoked a Women's Manifesto Movement that would catalyze public debate and consultation over the status of women. ABANTU and its partners applied participatory democratic methods to generate a national women's agenda in 2004, thus challenging the persistence of authoritarian political culture after the much-acclaimed transition to civilian rule.[26]

The role of international donors has become important, in the resurgence of women's movements, but this is also widely problematized among feminist theorists in Africa, because they are deeply informed by anti-imperialist politics. The more established and influential feminist organizations and networks have often been able to define the terms of their engagement with donors effectively. However, the meagre scale of donor funding is such that most women's NGOs expend much energy to sustain their resource base, and many struggle to provide limited support services that will never be able to alter systemically-produced suffering. Common examples are the centres assisting women victims of sexual and domestic violence, or providing micro-credit, as women work ever harder to survive and care for dependents. The fact that NGOs also create employment for lower middle-class women graduates is inadequately appreciated in the critical analysis of NGOs that point fingers at the new, generation of women professionals directing such organizations in the neoliberal era.

Post-independence African feminism began with feminist critiques addressing the negative impact of Western development on women. Modernization was premised on industrial capitalist models that continued to focus on male labor and compounded the marginalization and losses that many African women had already experienced under colonial regimes. The effects of the crisis on women and children, as much as men, provoked African feminists to form the first post-independence continental feminist network, the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD/ AFARD). AAWORD/ AFARD members included the likes of Zenebworke Tadesse (Ethiopia), Achola Pala (Kenya), Marie-Angelique Savane (Senegal), Fatima Mernissi (Morocco), and Alya Baffoun (Tunisia), who rebutted development industry calls for African women to be "integrated into development" and convened a series of workshops at which they developed some of the earliest feminist critiques of male-biased Western industrial development models, publishing the results of their investigations and discussions in a series of occa-

sional papers and statements, as well as in the early issues of the AAWORD/AFARD magazine, *ECHO*.[27]

As the crisis worsened, economic adjustment programs that were imposed as solutions also exacted disproportionate costs on women, and feminists participated in movements that challenged regimes that became increasingly authoritarian as they quashed popular resistance to satisfy their international creditors. By the mid-1970s, more than half of the newly independent governments had been displaced by military rule. The contradictions of living under often corrupt military regimes that incorporated the US institution of the First Lady and that sponsored projects appearing to promote women, to offset the less palatable aspects of their practices, raised entirely new challenges for African feminist political theory and strategy on the continent, which Nigeria's feminist scholars thought about and wrote about in the 1980s and 1990s.[28]

By the 1980s, the West was declaring Africa a "lost continent," and the imposition of economic reforms proceeded, divesting the public sector and promoting market fundamentalism. In 1988, the World Bank declared that the continent did not need universities, provoking outrage from the African public.[29] The policy had to be retracted, and in its stead US foundations developed a neoliberal higher education reform package. The so-called second wave of democratization movements emerged across many nations during the 1990s, and the international policy formula added "good governance" to the packages of conditionalities regulating individual national economies. Both South Africa and Rwanda underwent major transformations, the former averting white predictions of civil war violence and bringing the ANC to power, the latter collapsing into a major genocide in 1994.

The Beijing Conference of 1995 was attended by many African feminists, but more importantly, the convening of preparatory meetings led to a great deal of critical reflection, and the situation of women in the majority of countries was assessed, publicly debated, and then reported and debated at Beijing. For example, Zimbabwean feminists describe Beijing as a watershed moment. There, feminist organizations, most less than a decade old, gathered under the umbrella of the Zimbabwe Women and Resource Centre and set about mobilizing and convening public debates that would generate the first nongovernmental national platform document on the general situation of women in post-liberation Zimbabwe, where women had begun organizing against violence against women and demanding land rights. Women's sexual rights also had to be brought to the front line of the struggle against the HIV/AIDs pandemic.[30]

Because academic discourse is especially unrepresentative in African contexts, the few feminist academic texts are a limited resource. Feminist political thought, and in particular feminist understandings of change, are dynamic and often based on shared assumptions that may not be written out or extracted from activism, but rather need to be "read" from the activist strategies that are pursued, and there is no doubt that multiple readings can be made. It is possible to identify three main strategies that have commonly been used to address women's interests through the structure of the independent state in Africa. A key demand of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies called on governments

to establish national policy structures for women, referred to as national machinery (see note 25). A second strategy demanded legal expertise and gave rise to well-developed feminist jurisprudence. A third strategy is more political in the sense that it addresses the continued marginalization of women from power, which was underlined by the Beijing Platform (1995), demanding that women be given a greater share of political power and decision-making. Such strategies have often occupied African feminists critical of development-driven politics, and an intellectual tension remains across the continent between those who concentrate on the need to get women represented in existing institutions, and those who insist on the need to transform patriarchal and neoliberal systems, which dehumanize women and build radically different institutions.

Changing Nation-States: Feminist Political Praxis

The state was the most obvious and powerful fruit of freedom, but in keeping with the Western model that was adopted, political life continued to be dominated by men, many of whom presumed that “traditional” gender relations would be restored in the aftermath of flag independence. African feminists have pursued equal political power, a demand that was underlined at Beijing in 1995. African feminist organizations nowadays describe their work as “political but nonpartisan,” distinguishing themselves from the “apolitical” discourse of many women’s NGOs (as a condition of their funding).

Nation-statehood was the a priori condition that made it possible for African women to become feminists in the modern sense of the term. Becoming rights-bearing citizens and gaining access to new national mass education programs may be the two most significant conditions behind modern women’s movements globally, and it has clearly enabled feminist thought to develop at multiple locations on the continent. The feminist critique of patriarchy includes a critique of the modern state, but for African feminists, “exit” has not been seriously pursued, as women’s movements have pursued a politics of constant engagement with states that are still falling short with regard to women citizens. The persistence of patriarchal power in postcolonial states has been the primary target of women’s movements, as women have had to organize and fight to actually enter spaces that were closed to women, as a route to securing the basic rights and freedom that might reasonably be expected to accrue to women with independence. African women’s collective sense of power—and their audacity in calling some of the world’s most authoritarian states to account—derives from a sense of justice that is rooted in the acquisition of citizenship by fifty-four UN-recognized nationalities.

For women in the nations formed during the “first wave” of independence through the 1960s, the shift from colonial status to citizenship created a new landscape, albeit one that varied as flag independence was variously arrived at. Feminists in new nations (among them Egypt, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Togo, and Benin) now had governments they could call to account in a man-

ner that did not exist under the governance of all-male colonial states and their local male proxies.

Political development has proceeded unevenly in a changing international environment so that each nation presents a unique scenario, yet there are no local or national studies on most nations but feminist intellectual communities exist under extreme challenges and radical academics are among the movement leaders. Ghana, for instance, had a small feminist intelligentsia early on, but this could only become politically engaged when independent feminist organizing became possible with the transition from military rule. Nigeria's military banned political organizations but not Women in Nigeria (WIN), which presented the first significant report on the situation of women. WIN members were not prevented from participating in the Nairobi Conference, but they were detained on their return.[31]

Many nations saw flag independence rapidly followed by the outbreak of the first civil wars, and military rulers who excluded people, not just women, from politics dominated the landscape. In Nigeria under the military, feminist organizations convened a national women-in-politics movement, which demanded the demilitarization and demonetization of Nigerian politics. Independent feminist researchers were able to offer critiques of the opportunistic gender politics of authoritarian military regimes in an era when public campaigns and protests were not feasible.[32] In Uganda, the rise of the NRM during the 1990s took state feminism to a new level, taking advantage of the 1990s global discourse on "gender mainstreaming." Uganda now hosts several leading pan-African and Ugandan feminist organizations and theorists as well as the School of Gender and Women's Studies at Makerere University. Many highly productive collaborations have thus occurred between feminist legal and political scientists, sexuality activist researchers, and the women's movement.[33]

There have also been nations like Mauritius and Senegal that have never fallen to military dictators. In both, women have always been especially active in leftist and opposition parties throughout, but minimally represented. However, in 2012, a sustained women's movement campaign succeeded in doubling the number of women in the National Assembly to 44.6 percent. South Africa democratized into a globalized world already transformed by decades of post-independence, and South African feminists organized so effectively across racial and political interests that they were able to negotiate highly advanced constitutional provisions for women and state-of-the-art national machinery at all levels of government, complete with an independent Commission for Gender Equality. Feminist economists worked to develop Gender Budgeting as a strategy to hold the state accountable for budgeting that honored equality commitments and were soon exporting Gender Budgeting as a political strategy.[34]

Like the South African Women's National Charter, the Women's Manifesto movements (above) show African feminists leading campaigns to raise public awareness of the situation. Pursued by feminist-led coalitions, they have at their best, used popular participatory democratic campaigning methods to generate a national policy agenda for women's

liberation and used this to lobby political parties and government institutions and inform and educate the public, in Tanzania, Botswana, Ghana, and Uganda, among others.

Changing Laws: Feminist Jurisprudence

The second well-utilized strategy has been the pursuit of legal reforms. Feminist jurisprudence has developed significantly, for example within the Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA) Network and Women, Law and Development in Africa (noted above) and (WILDAF). Numerous legal reforms have resulted from feminist legal activism, but there have been a number of occasions where incumbent regimes have announced reforms prior to any public education campaign and their implementation has been curbed by misogynistic reaction from conservative sections of society (e.g., the Legal Age of Majority Act in Zimbabwe in 1982, and some of the reforms introduced by the NRM in Uganda).

Feminists have played strategic leadership roles in constitutional struggles (e.g., the involvement of feminist MPs in Uganda during the 1995 constitutional reform process or Zimbabwean feminists' prominence on both sides of the 1999 constitutional crisis, out of which the political opposition Movement for Democratic Change [MDC] party formed). The goal of African feminist legal work has generally been equal rights and freedoms for women. Like state-directed feminism, feminist jurisprudence in Africa emerged in the course of feminist moves to eliminate discriminatory features in the continent's complex plural legal heritage.

The customary laws often invoked to defend "African culture," for instance, were determined by colonial officials in consultation with male elders during the colonial era, which positioned African women with the status of dependent minors. African feminist scholars have challenged androcentric interpretations of religious texts as well as cultural prescriptions. Feminists have pursued reforms in both modern secular and religious legal systems, as exemplified by the Women Living Under Muslim Laws network, which focuses on Islamic jurisprudence. Legal reforms often require combinations of legal expertise, research, and public campaigns to counter the populist discourse that rejects women's human rights as "un-African." National-level legal and policy changes have been a major achievement of post-independence feminism, and movements have built both legal research, theory, and activism through transnational networking. In addition to WLSA and WiLDAF (noted above) the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) has long had an extensive presence in many African countries, where multiple offices gather information, offer legal education and advice clinics, and support women's legal expenses. As a strong professional network FIDA started many African women lawyers on the path toward both feminist legal theory and activism.

African feminist engagements with politico-legal spheres have changed laws and generated gender changes in policy in many countries, notably in the introduction of legislation concerning gender-based violence (e.g., Nigeria in 2016, Ghana in 2013), access to education, and access to reproductive health options. Unsurprisingly, the success in enacting new legislation and policies is constrained when there is a lack of political will and (as is

almost always the case in eternally indebted nations) and where there is no budgetary provision for implementation. Where there has been implementation, it has tended to be the result of governments “outsourcing” to international donors for the funding, where it is instrumentalized by governments who are merely negotiating credit lines and debt repayment.

The challenges facing African women in 2019 reflect the impact of the renewed corporate-led “scramble for Africa” that is occurring with the global ascendance of powerful private and corporate interests as a result of market fundamentalism. African feminists bear witness, conduct research, and contribute transnational strategic thinking to policymakers as well as to civil society interest groups and movements emerging to address gendered exploitation and abuse in mining and other extractive industries. Land grabbing, militarization, conflict, and resultant long-term gendered insecurities also curtail women’s rights and freedoms. The last half-century, from the late 1970s, has seen a rapid and continuing emergence of feminist intellectual and practical activities that constitute feminist thought on the African continent. In 2019, Africa’s feminist movements are multiscalar: the majority work in local communities while others work at subnational, national, and regional levels. Relegating the harshness of the oppression and exploitation of African women’s laboring minds and bodies to some preordained African culture is especially counterproductive for African feminists living in a global era in which their fates also reflect competing continental and global gendered interests and discourses, currently dominated by a resurgence of right-wing populism that threatens women’s rights in the West. It is to be hoped that both global governance and transnational feminism can withstand contemporary encroachments on women’s rights and freedoms and pursue the liberatory praxis of African feminism, as it continues to inspire, and grow effective intellectual-activist movements pursuing the freedom struggles of African women, come what may.

Coloniality and Anti-Feminist Cultural Discourse

Among the cultural challenges confronting the delineation of African feminist thought is the historic fact that before the phrase “African feminist” had been claimed by a single African feminist, there were African nationalists who had decided it was not for African women (see discussion of the literature, next section). While it was commonly understood that modernization would require new, modern African men, the modernization of African women has been far more fraught, and at times reversed, by false nostalgia for an idealized past and male sexual anxieties over modern African women who they fear and portray as “corrupt.” Political liberalization may have allowed women to organize more effectively, but it has also seen conservative social forces mobilize episodically within and beyond the state to impose dress restrictions on women, banning miniskirts, wigs, and other symbols of “modern” femininity. The rising political presence of women in some instances has seen orchestrated public misogyny give way to orchestrated homophobia in both

Uganda under the NRM and Zimbabwe under the ZANU. In Nigeria, a nation in which here are indigenous cultures in which woman-woman marriage is practiced, the women's movement failed to avert the Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition Act in 2013. However, it did successfully averted the passage of the Indecent Dress Bill into law in 2016, when feminists bussed into the House of Representatives to successfully block its passage.

Feminists who worked on the front lines of sexuality research and activism during the devastating, predominantly heterosexual African HIV/AIDS pandemic have stayed on the front lines of emergent movements and collaborations against politically orchestrated homophobia and victimization of lesbian women by the public (e.g., through the punitive practice of gang rape in South Africa). Feminists are only now beginning to support LGBTQI activism and develop deeper awareness around sexual politics, especially where queer feminist organizing is a reality within women's movements on the continent.[35]

These examples illustrate that the hard-won freedoms accruing from political independence and citizenship did not end colonial patriarchy, or the assumption the men have an absolute right to exercise authority over women. Instead, it has fallen to African feminists to pursue the decolonization of plural, often colonial regimes of gender and sexuality that African men have remained psychosexually and politically invested in, but which are toxic for African women.

Discussion of the Literature

The most widely cited books that keyword searches using "African" and "feminist" or "feminism" turn up are US publications, mostly the scholarship of the very small number of African women academics who have spent their careers in US academies.[36] The only full book published under the title *African Feminism* is a US-edited collection of works in which the editor describes African feminism in a stereotypical and ahistorical manner as "distinctly heterosexual, pro-natal, and concerned with many 'bread, butter, culture, and power' issues."[37] It is a description that echoes constructions of the African women as the "Western burden" at the heart of the global development industry.[38] In Western contexts, these works "stand in" as sources of African feminism because they are easily accessible, in contrast to the growing corpus of writings of African feminists living, working, and making movements on the continent, many of which have been historically ignored and remain hard to access.

African feminism appears to have been the subject of a great deal more refutation than investigation, with key sources not doing justice to a 21st-century reality in which African feminists have made major contributions to the global landscape of the women's movement. It is therefore especially important to base any engagement with feminist thought on empirical data (i.e., work produced by existent African feminist scholars and movements) and the relevant precursors noted here (i.e., the diasporic pan-African feminist and communist movements of the 19th and 20th centuries).

In 2019, neither African men nor Western intellectuals can seriously deny the fact that African feminists exist, in the face of their presence in the global feminist intelligentsia, and as well as in active movements that pursue women's liberation in national contexts, as well as in subregional and pan-continental organizations and networks. Few can deny that while women's freedom and liberation remain a global vision for Africa that is yet to be achieved, African women have become especially visible, self-determining, and assertive in how they embody and express feminist thoughts. Most of this has happened outside the institutions of the formal education system, but even Africa's universities, which as late as 1996 had a professoriate with as few as 3 percent women, now have a small but highly productive cadre of feminist academics in their ranks.[39] Recent decades have seen deliberate moves to collectively articulate and define African feminism as an intellectual and political movement of African women, which its advocates are committed to co-creating. Most significant as primary sources are the multiple genres of writings and cultural interventions by African feminists themselves, but these are widely dispersed, inadequately archived, and most are not easily accessible. The growing pool of biographical works on African feminists is also a rich, emergent, and underutilized source.

Primary Sources

The 2000s have seen a number of co-edited books that include African feminists from the continent as writers and editors, but women from the continent remain poorly recognized and underrepresented as authors and editors, even within global African studies, where it is a mostly externally authored feminist subfield. Researchers are encouraged to use primary and continental sources to avoid perpetuating the epistemological injustice that defines and locates feminist thought as a Western invention.

Women's organizations and networks produce a copious range of published materials, from fly-posters and leaflets to newsletters, magazines, and research reports. These are hard to access and compile, but they offer the most credible source for insights into African feminist thought as this is understood by those who embody and define it, as well as insights into the constituencies they reach out to and cultivate through such publications.[40] However, this potentially rich source of women's movement organizations is poorly archived and has faced constant challenges with regard to mobilizing resources and sustaining the capacity for documentation work.

There are e-accessible platform documents generated by feminist movements in the region. The African Feminist Forum (AFF), launched in Ghana in 2006, developed the Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists as a "movement-building tool," as explained in the preamble:

> It was felt that we need something to help us define and affirm our commitment to feminist principles, which will guide our analysis, and practice. As such the Charter sets out the collective values that we hold as key to our work and to our lives as African feminists. It charts the change we wish to see in our communities, and also how this change is to be achieved. In addition, it spells out our individual and

collective responsibilities to the movement and to one another within the movement.

The African Feminist Charter is the founding document which forum participants are asked to study and commit to as they participate. The importance given to self-naming as feminist clearly responds to prevailing male-dominated nationalist and anti-feminist discourses and sets out to claim, acknowledge, and assert the place of the feminist theories and movements generated on the African continent in the an unequal global arena.

African Feminist Journals

As noted, African -authored feminist scholarship has limited availability, and what is available is preselected by global gatekeeping and scholarly canons. *Feminist Africa* is the pan-African feminist scholarly journal published on the continent since 2002.[41] *Agenda*, the South African feminist journal, now carries content from the rest of Africa and has edited several special issues on the subject African feminisms.[42] The *Southern African Feminist Review* (*SAFERE*) was established by Patricia MacFadden at the Southern African Political Economy Trust (SAPES) and published between 1995 and 2000.[43]

Western-based African studies journals occasionally include feminist writings by Africans, but most tend to be dominated by the sheer volume of Africanist scholarship produced in the much larger and better resourced Western universities. CODESRIA, the leading African scholarly network, has been under pressure from feminist academics since the 1980s, and in 2004, it introduced the CODESRIA Gender Series. Explicitly feminist African thought remains located largely outside of academic publishing arenas, the preserve of the movement activists, leftist scholars and other radical and revolutionary intellectuals nowadays applying feminist epistemologies and methodologies in the work of the range of institutions across civil society, educational, and public sector arenas. Gender training has also been an important tool and been widely appropriated in organizational development and diversity work. Feminists use it as a political education and movement-building tool, to build feminist awareness among the wider public where it serves as the major outreach and educational strategy.[44]

Books by African Feminists

The number of scholarly books by African feminists has steadily grown, but still reflects severe global underrepresentation of African radical thought in general, compounded by the small numbers of radical women thinkers. Even so, the list is growing and expanding to include theoretical works alongside empirical and basic research.

Most of the internationally accessible books are on times and places that have attracted Western researchers, notably South Africa and Uganda. As a result, the French and Portuguese language zones which have the lowest education rates at the moment of independence have produced far fewer book-length writings than the more populous Anglophone zone. Probably the most significant collection of African women's writings are the 4-volume *Women Writing Africa* series published by the Women's Press between 2004 and

2009, and the two volumes *Daughters of Africa* (1991) and *New Daughters of Africa* (2019) both compiled and edited by the Ghanaian feminist publisher, Margaret Busby, and which include global African Diaspora writing.

Links to Digital Materials

Pan African and Training & Development Network, Regional Office for West Africa, Accra.

University of Cape Town.

Regional gatherings bring together African feminist activists to discuss strategy, refine approaches, and develop stronger networks to advance women's rights in Africa.

2009 African Union Gender Policy.

African Union Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2004).

African Union Women's Directorate: promotes gender equality in Africa and within the AU.

African Women's Development Fund is a grantmaking foundation that supports local, national, and regional women's organizations working toward the empowerment of African women and the promotion and realization of their rights.

South African Feminist Journal, Empowering Women for Gender Equity.

A feminist, activist, and pan-Africanist network of fourteen organizations in ten countries in sub-Saharan Africa committed to advancing freedom, justice, and bodily autonomy for all women on the African continent and beyond.

Akina Mama wa Afrika is an international pan-African NGO development organization for African women based in Kampala.

AWID is an international feminist organization committed to gender equality, sustainable development, and women's human rights.

Network of feminist scholars, researchers, and activists from the economic south working for economic and gender justice and sustainable and democratic development.

FEMNET: The African Women's Development and Communication Network is a pan-African, membership-based feminist network based in Nairobi with over seven hundred members across forty-six African countries.

Feminist Africa: provocative African scholarship attuned to feminist agendas.

Gender Links: for equality and justice in southern Africa.

ISIS-WICCE: Women's Cross-Cultural International Exchange, based in Kampala, School of Women and Gender Studies, Makerere University.

WILDAF: Women in Law and Development in Africa: Pan-African network bringing together 500 organizations and 1,200 individuals with a view to promoting a culture for the exercise and respect of women's rights in Africa.

Further Reading

Biographies and Autobiographies

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Matembe, Miria (with Nancy R. Dorsy). *Miria Matembe: Gender, Politics, and Constitution- Making in Uganda*. Kampala, Uganda: Fountain, 2002.

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Sharaawi, Huda. *Harem Years: The Memoirs of an Egyptian Feminist (1879–1924)*. New York: The Feminist Press, 1987.

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Nonfiction Books by African Feminists (Scholars and Activists)

Adichie, Chimamanda. *We Should All be Feminists*. New York: Anchor Books, 2015.

Amadiume, I. *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Sex and Gender in an African Society*. London: Zed, 1987.

Badri, Balghis, and Aili Mari Tripp. *Women's Activism in Africa Struggles for Rights and Representation*. London: Zed, 2018.

Busby, M. (1992). *Daughters of Africa: An International Anthology of Words and Writings by Women of African Descent from the Ancient Egyptian to the Present*. Pantheon Books.

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African Feminist Blogs

Varyanne Sika. ***The Wide Margin*** is a digital collection of essays that focus on discussion and thinking about social, economic, political, and cultural issues through a feminist lens.

Minna Salami. *MsAfropolitan* connects feminism with critical reflections on contemporary culture from an Africa-centered perspective. Minna Salami is a Nigerian-Finnish and Swedish author, blogger, social critic, international keynote speaker, and the founder of this multiple award-winning **blog**.

African Feminism. A pan-African feminist digital space for exploring African feminisms through lived experiences.

Black Looks. Authored by Sokari Ekine, Nigerian writer and photographer based in Haiti.

Notes:

(1.) See YouTube clip, What's New in African Feminism? BBC London: Southbank Centre, posted March 12, 2013.

(2.) In this respect, African feminist thought is more closely aligned with the revolutionary cultural theories of Amilcar Cabral and Frantz Fanon than with the more conservative cultural nationalist schools of thought.

(3.) "Feminist and African" is the title of the first editorial to *The Wide Margin*, Varyanne Sika's blog.

(4.) Achola Pala, "Definitions of Women and Development: An African Perspective," *Signs* 3, no. 1 (1977): 9–13.

(5.) African Diaspora Feminism is a term increasingly used to distinguish US black and Caribbean feminist genealogies (e.g., Rhoda Reddock, Editorial, Diaspora Voices, *Feminist Africa* 7, 2006).

(6.) Hakim Adi, *Pan Africanism and Communism: The Communist International Africa and the Diaspora, 1919–1939* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1996).

(7.) See, for example, Stephanie Newell and Audrey Gadzepo, eds., *Selected Writings of a Pioneer West African Feminist* (Nottingham, UK: Trent Editions, 2004); Adelaide Cromwell, *An African Victorian Feminist: The Life and Times of Adelaide Casely-Hayford* (London, UK: Frank Cass, 1996); Cheryl Johnson-Odim and Nina Emma Mba, *For Women and the Nation: Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Constance Agatha Cummings-John and LaRay Denzer, *Constance Agatha Cummings-John: Memoirs of a Krio Leader* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Sam Bookman for Humanities Research Centre, 1995); and Keisha Bain, *Set the World on Fire: Black Nationalist Women and the Global Struggle for Freedom* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018).

(8.) Development Alternatives for Women in a New Era (DAWN) was founded and led by AAWORD feminists, in collaboration with Latin American, Asian, Caribbean, and Pacific Islander feminists since 1980.

(9.) *Feminist Africa* [special issue], no. 1 (2002), "Intellectual Politics," has several contributions on the subject of gender and women's studies: Jane Bennett, "Exploration of a 'Gap': Strategizing Gender Equity in African Universities"; Deborah Kasente, "Institutionalizing Gender Equality in African Universities: Case of Women and Gender Studies at Makerere"; Shereen Essof, "'To a Different Degree': Student Reflections on Gender and Women's Studies." For the African University context intellectual context, see Thandika Mkandawire (ed.), *African Intellectuals* (Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA); Amina Mama, "Restore, Reform, but Do Not Transform," *Journal of Higher Education in Africa* 1, no. 1 (2003); Joy Kwesiga, *Women's Access to Higher Education in Africa: Uganda's Experience* (Kampala, Uganda: Fountain, 2002).

(10.) Jane Bennett pioneered anti-sexual harassment work during her early years at the African Gender Institute, leading to the 2008 UCT policy. Charmaine Pereira led the National Initiative for Women's Studies to complete an activist research project in Nigerian universities, which has given rise to new legislation in the form of the Sexual Harassment in Tertiary Educational Institutions Prohibition Act (2016). See Charmaine Pereira, "Sexual Harassment in Nigerian Universities," *The Nigerian Social Scientist* 7, no. 2 (2004): 2–12. Sylvia Tamale, who was also the first woman to serve as Dean of Law Faculty, led the process that culminated in success at Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, in 2018. Available online.

(11.) See the published memoirs:Cynthia Nelson, *Doria Shafik, Egyptian Feminist: A Woman Apart* (Cairo, Egypt: American University in Cairo Press, 1996); Huda Sharaawi, *Harem Years: The Memoirs of an Egyptian Feminist (1879–1924)* (New York: The Feminist Press, 1987); Cummings-John and Denzer, *Constance Agatha Cummings-John*.

(12.) Nelson, *Doria Shafik*.

(13.) Cromwell, *An African Victorian Feminist*.

(14.) Newell and Gadzepo, *Selected Writings*.

(15.) T. Manuh, "Women and Their Organizations during the Period of CPP Rule in Ghana, 1951–1966," in *The Life and Work of Kwame Nkrumah*, ed. K. Arhin (Trenton, NJ: African World Press, 1991), 108–134.

(16.) Russell, 2013, 88.

(17.) N. Mba, *Nigerian Women Mobilized: Women's Political Activity in Southern Nigeria, 1900–1965* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

(18.) Kuti was mortally injured when she was thrown from a window during a Nigerian military raid on her son's home in Lagos in 1976. See also Maria Martin, "'More Power to

Your Great Self': Nigerian Women's Activism and the Pan-African Transnationalist Construction of Black Feminism," *Phylon* 53, no. 2 (2016): 54–78; Stephanie Shonekan, "Fela's Foundation: Examining the Revolutionary Songs of Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti and the Abeokuta Market Women's Movement in 1940s Western Nigeria," *Black Music Research Journal* 29, no. 1 (2009): 127–144.

(19.) Susan Geiger, "Women in Nationalist Struggle: Tanu Activists in Dar Es Salaam," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 20, no. 1 (1987): 1–26.

(20.) Alcinda Honwana, *Child Soldiers in Africa* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018).

(21.) See, for example, Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For Better or Worse? Women and ZANLA in Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle*. (Harare, Zimbabwe: Weaver Press, 2000); Irene Staunton, ed., *Mothers of the Revolution*: *The War Experiences of Thirty Zimbabwean Women* (Harare, Zimbabwe: Weaver Press, 1991). Ingrid Sinclair's feature film, *Flame*, provides a powerful cinematic representation of the war as seen through the experiences of two young women with different class aspirations (released 1996).

(22.) Nhongo-Simbanegavi describes the Osibisa camp as a camp for impregnated fighters, where they lived under deplorable conditions. See also Fay Chung, *Re-Living the Second Chimurenga: Memories from Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle* (Harare, Zimbabwe: Weaver Press, 2006); Staunton, *Mothers of the Revolution*; Diana E. H. Russell, *Lives of Courage: Women for a New South Africa* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2003); and Sinclair, *Flame*.

(23.) See, for example, M. Mkandawire and C. Soludo, *Our Continent, Our Future: African Perspectives on Structural Adjustment* (Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA, 1999).

(24.) "UN-feminism" was a term coined in the Epilogue to *Engendering Social Sciences* in distinction from movement feminisms (feminisms residing in movements) and state feminism (residing in government). Some users extend the term to include state-focused feminist activism, but the use here refers to state gender machinery and gender policy work that responds to feminist interventions.. Imam, A, A. Mama, and Sow, eds. *Engendering African Social Sciences*. (Dakar: Senegal, CODESRIA, 1997).

(25.) See e.g. Amina Mama, "Feminism or Femocracy? State Feminism and Democratisation in Nigeria," *Africa Development/Afrique et Développement* 20 no. 1 (1995), 37–58; Dzodzi Tsikata, ed., The National Machinery Series (Accra North, Ghana: Third World Network-Africa, 2000) is a series of commissioned research reports on the first NGO evaluation of the national machinery in Africa; includes theoretical articles by Dzodzi Tsikata, *Lip-Service and Peanuts: The National Machinery for Women in Africa* (Accra North, Ghana: Third World Network-Africa, 2000); Amina Mama, *National Machinery for Women in Africa: Towards an Analysis* (Accra North, Ghana: Third World Network-Africa, 2000). National case studies were also commissioned from other known feminist researchers for the series: Ruth E. Meena, *National Machinery for the Advancement of Women in Tanza-*

nia (Accra North, Ghana: Third World Network-Africa); Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network, Dzodzi Tsikata, *The National Machinery for Women in Zimbabwe: An NGO Assessment* (Harare, Zimbabwe: Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network); and Esther Ofei-Aboagye, *The Role of National Machinery in Implementing the Beijing Platform* (Accra North, Ghana: Third World Network-Africa, 2000).

(26.) The Women's Manifesto strategy is discussed in a conversation with ABANTU activists and published in a special issue, Women Mobilised, *Feminist Africa* 4, 2005; and Tsikata, Dzodzi. "Women's Organizing in Ghana since the 1990s: From Individual Organizations to Three Coalitions," *Development* 52, no. 2 (June 1, 2009): 185–192.

(27.) For example, AAWORD/AFARD occasional paper no. 3 (1985) reflects on AAWORD in Nairobi: "The Crisis and Its Impact on Women, and the Nairobi Manifesto." It tells of the historical significance of having AAWORD/AFARD's presence. Thirty AAWORD members attended the Nairobi Conference and there they convened a gathering that was able to focus on "The Crisis in Africa and Its Impact on Women." Several were involved in the DAWN session, which brought southern feminists together at Nairobi, many of them for the first time.

(28.) N. Mba, "Kaba and Khaki: Women and the Militarised State in Nigeria," in *Women and the State in Africa*, eds, J. Parpart and K. Staudt (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1989); Amina Mama, "Feminism or Femocracy? State Feminism and Democratization in Nigeria," *Africa Development/Afrique et Développement* 20, no. 1 (1995): 37–58; Amina Mama, "Khaki in the Family: Gender Discourses and Militarism in Nigeria," *African Studies Review* 41, no. 2 (1998): 1–17.

(29.) The shifting climate of African higher education reform has been amply documented. See T. Mkandawire, ed. *African Intellectuals* (Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA, 2005); Akilagpa Sawyerr, "Challenges Facing African Universities: Selected Issues," *African Studies Review*, 47, no. 1 (2004): 1; and Mahmood Mamdani and Mamdani Diouf, eds. *Academic Freedom in Africa* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1994).

(30.) Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network publications from the 1990s to the 2000s included news bulletins, a popular magazine (*WomanPlus*), many reports on public debates, referred to as "GAD Talks," and research reports on key issues the movement engaged with (e.g., women and HIV/AIDS, and women and land), but these are no longer easily available due to common challenges.

(31.) *The WIN Document: The Conditions of Women in Nigeria, and Policy Recommendations to 2,000 A.D*. Zaria, Nigeria: WIN, 1985.

(32.) *A Political Agenda for Nigerian Women*. Gender and Development Action, Lagos, Nigeria: 1996 was the product of an extensive national consultation during the prolonged campaign to end military rule. The process was implemented by the Lagos-based group Gender and Development Action (GADA), a feminist organization founded by Nkoyo Toyo and her colleagues and funded by USAID for the purpose.

(33.) *ISIS-WICCE Making a Difference: Towards Women's Substantive Equality in Politics* (Kampala, Uganda: ISIS-WICCE and UWONET, Report 2014).

(34.) Pregs Govendor discusses the theory and political strategy that lay behind the gender budgeting strategy in her memoir, *Love and Courage: A Story of Insubordination* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2008).

(35.) "Ugandan LGBTI rights activist Kasha Jaqueline Nabagesera acknowledged the support of other members of the Uganda Feminist Forum in building a cross-movement front against the increasingly fierce persecution of LGBTI people in that country," writes Jessica Horn in her review of the 4th African Feminist Forum in Harare, Zimbabwe in 2016. Available online. Other key sources are Sylvia Tamale, *African Sexualities, A Reader* (Cape Town: Pambazuka Press, 2011); and Sokari Ekine and Hakima Abbas, eds. *Queer African Reader* (Dakar, Senegal: Pambazuka Press, 2013).

(36.) Oyěwùmí, O. (1997). *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*. See also discussions, e.g. Bakare-Yusuf article "Yorubas Don't Do Gender': A Critical Review of Oyeronke Oyewumi's The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses, in *African Identities* 1, no. 1 (2003); and Carole Boyce-Davis, "Pan-Africanism, transnational black feminism and the limits of culturalist analyses in African gender discourses. *Pan-Africanism*, *Feminist Africa Issue 19*, 2016.

(37.) G. Mikell, *African Feminism: The Politics of Survival in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997). (see Chapter 1, p. 4).

(38.) See Rudyard Kipling's famous poem 'The White Man's Burden' about the British Empire.

(39.) J. F. Ade Ajayi, Lameck K. H. Goma, and G. Ampah Johnson, *The African Experience with Higher Education* (Suffolk, UK: Boydell & Brewer, 1996); Kwesiga, *Women's Access to Higher Education*; *Rethinking Universities: Feminist Africa*, no. 8 and 9; and Ebrima Sall, ed., *Women in Academia: Gender and Academic Freedom in Africa* (Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA, 2000); and Amina Mama, "Restore, reform but do not transform: The gender politics of higher education in Africa," *Jnl Higher Education in Africa* 1, no. 1 (2003).

(40.) Many feminist organizations are now adopting digital formats that will make them more available (e.g., Akina Mama wa Afrika, FEMNET, FEMRITE, and the African Women's Development Foundation). However, it would be a mistake to assume that the websites do any justice to the activities that go on in organizations and in the movements that cannot be reduced to the NGO structures established to access resources.

(41.) *Feminist Africa* is an open access peer reviewed journal .

(42.) *Agenda* Feminist Media.

(43.) *Southern African Feminist Review* (*SAFERE*).

(44.) Dzodzi Tsikata, *Gender Training in Ghana: Politics, Issues & Tools* (Accra, Ghana: Woeli, 2001).

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