

EMERALDHANDBOOKS

# THE EMERALD HANDBOOK OF AFRICAN STUDIES

EDITED BY  
KINGSLEY **OBI OMEIHE**  
CHRISTIAN **HARRISON**



# **The Emerald Handbook of African Studies**

The Handbook of African Studies is a timely and comprehensive contribution to the evolving discourse on Africa's socio-economic, political, and cultural landscapes. This volume brings together an impressive array of scholars and offers critical insights and fresh perspectives on Africa's past, present, and future. It is an indispensable resource for researchers, policymakers, and students seeking a deeper understanding of the continent's pressing issues.

—*Stephen Orajiaka* FRSA, Senior Fellow  
Marcel Advisory, Monusco-United Nations,  
Democratic Republic of Congo

This handbook is a must-read for anyone passionate about Africa's development and global influence. Professors Kingsley Omeihe and Christian Harrison have masterfully curated a collection of thought-provoking contributions that challenge conventional narratives and highlight the richness of African scholarship. This indeed is a compelling and insightful work that will inspire academics, practitioners, and changemakers alike.

—*Olatunde Akande* MBA, Regional Banking Executive,  
Institutional Banking, Federal Republic of Nigeria

# **The Emerald Handbook of African Studies**

EDITED BY

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AND

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*The book is dedicated to  
The great people of Africa*

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## Preface

For several years, we have nurtured the ambition to curate a handbook of this nature. In our view, given the historical failure to fully appreciate the significance of many earlier studies on Africa, we believe that bringing together scholarly work from African scholars – who seek to deepen understanding of African issues and propose solutions – is a welcome initiative. Just as curators present their finest work, we too, as editors, feel privileged to have identified highly relevant scholarly contributions on African subject matter. We humbly believe that this text makes a valuable contribution. The approach to this handbook is both prescriptive and solutions-oriented. Our purpose is to recommend solutions to what we perceive as numerous issues across the selected contexts – many of which we believe have been shaped by incorrect macro-theories, and possibly stereotypical or Western-biased conceptualisations of conventional problems. The fact that the narratives presented here are authored by African scholars means that the detailed findings and recommendations are contextually grounded and, more importantly, chart a way forward.

We are well aware that much of the research discussed in this text has been structured around societal perspectives, business and management. However, all the content is grounded, and while the writing remains academic, it has been carefully crafted to ensure that both the book and its chapters have as broad an appeal to the public as possible. For us, this handbook is an attempt to provide readers – especially those interested in contemporary issues and friends of Africa – with scholarly work that reflects how issues are perceived and experienced in the context of African social behaviour. Believing in the academic division of labour, we tasked each contributing author with capturing either empirical, conceptual (including reviews) or methodological aspects within their chapters to elucidate their contributions to the handbook. While we have tended to focus more on theoretical contributions, we have continuously asked: how do the respective studies contribute to policy and practice?

Of course, the policy aspect is where we believe researchers can contribute the most. There are many reasons why this is the direction we, as academics, should take. After all, how does one want the impact of their work to be felt? We believe it is when policymakers engage meaningfully with our research, and when the conclusions we draw can be used to address societal problems, that we can truly say we have made a genuine contribution. On this basis, we hope we have demonstrated academic responsibility as editors in justifying the need for this

book. Ultimately, we find this rationale compelling and leave it to our readers to decide.

As scholars, we are open to new perspectives, and that is one of the beauties of doing research – to uncover ideas that may not have been captured or perhaps were previously overlooked. This is why we want to take the time to recognise the many authors who contributed to this text, acknowledging that each one, despite their busy commitments, participated collegially. We express our deep gratitude to them for presenting us with the remarkable opportunity, over a period of time, to publish and share their material. We owe them our intellectual debt. As you will see from engaging with this book, it consists of 23 related chapters with the purpose of capturing and analysing contemporary African affairs. Just as this handbook is multi-purpose and draws on a range of disciplines, we have designed it not only to help readers better understand the continent but also to advance theoretical developments and illuminate the fields of knowledge, including methodologies more attuned to the contexts in which social problems occur. As previously mentioned, we hope this book will not only appeal to a broad audience but also demonstrate the relevance of African-centred research to those seeking to learn more about the motherland. All 23 chapters are valuable contributions in their own right, all covering dominant themes such as cultural and societal implications, market and social orientation perspectives, the entrepreneurship process, trust in supply chain operations and women's resilience in the informal sector. There are also summarised reviews addressing issues of culture and the role of non-state actors in international law, particularly where biodiversity is a concern, and also highlighting the need for legal instruments. The handbook also pursues discussions on human capital, including many unknown antecedents of corporate governance, which are closely linked to the impact of environmental forces on large corporations and bring employee engagement into focus.

Some of the most important conclusions are found in chapters discussing employee engagement and the effects of corporate social responsibility on financial performance. We believe that many analytical minds will find this especially interesting, as it ties into studies exploring the effect of training on lecturers' pedagogy. Other supporting discourses include audit quality in Ghana, rural land decentralisation and the migratory patterns of middle-class families, which highlight the need for sustainable leadership. This, in turn, supports research on distrust and trust repair strategies, including the influence of the extended family on women entrepreneurs.

We have made every effort to summarise the chapters here, but more comprehensive summaries are provided in the following chapters. We hope that the modest work we have done will inspire and encourage others to build upon it. Throughout our work on this book, including the chapters we have co-written on Africa elsewhere, we have noticed that research on Africa is never complete, as there is always more to explore and discuss. Our interest in the continent is, therefore, lifelong and perhaps endless in its own right. We hope to continue building on this work and encourage others to do the same. We also want to take the time to acknowledge the many scholars who have researched Africa, including those whose contributions have had a significant impact but have not received the

recognition they deserve. We are deeply indebted to their work and have greatly benefited from their expertise. Additionally, we extend our gratitude to many other writers, too numerous to name individually here, for their valuable contributions. We believe that this handbook marks a new chapter in the study of Africa – one that captures a substantial body of literature and findings on contemporary issues. We hope that other scholars and students will receive the book warmly.

In closing, we are greatly indebted to several people who, at various stages, offered us valuable suggestions. We are pleased to acknowledge our families and colleagues, but more importantly, our spouses, both of whom read the manuscripts in their final stages. As usual, any imperfections and errors in the book are our own.

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## Chapter 1

# Remarks on African Studies: Approaches and the Way Forward

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As is customary with important texts of this nature, there is good reason to provide an introductory section for this handbook. Therefore, this chapter, titled ‘*Remarks on African Studies*’, begins with a few general observations on the purpose of the text and other relevant background matters. To date, studies on Africa have continued to attract renewed interest from scholars eager to address the continent’s myriad issues. Given Africa’s vast complexities and rich diversity, it remains plagued by numerous development challenges that, in our view, require deeper inquiry and innovative approaches. This should underpin much of the policy prescription in society today. It is well established that Africa’s political, economic and social contexts are shaped by a unique confluence of historical, cultural and environmental factors, distinguishing it from other regions of the world. Despite this, academic exploration of the continent has often been limited by frameworks that fail to fully capture its distinctiveness.

This Handbook for African Studies aims to invite a new understanding of the field. Our goal is to address these challenges by providing a comprehensive, multidimensional exploration of Africa’s realities, by building upon the foundations laid by previous publications: *The African Context of Business and Society* and *Contextualising African Studies: Challenges and the Way Forward*.

In the first book of the *New Frontiers of African Business and Society Series*, titled *African Context of Business and Society* (Omeihe & Harrison, 2022a, 2022b), we examined the relationship between business and societal dynamics across the continent, by providing a snapshot of Africa’s emerging economy and its position within the global framework. The subsequent volume, *Contextualising African Studies: Challenges and the Way Forward* (Harrison & Omeihe, 2023), focused on the specific challenges and opportunities that arise when studying Africa. This second book highlighted the importance of developing contextualised approaches to African scholarship, emphasising the need for methodologies that are attuned to Africa’s unique characteristics.

*The Emerald Handbook for African Studies* is the next step in this intellectual journey, offering a broader, more detailed analysis of Africa's diverse contexts and challenges. Consisting of 23 chapters, this volume brings together leading scholars and practitioners from across disciplines, providing a holistic view of the continent's multifaceted nature. From economic development and governance to social structures and cultural dynamics, each chapter contributes to a deeper understanding of Africa's complexities, offering insights that challenge conventional narratives and frameworks.

A recurring theme throughout this handbook is the recognition that traditional Western academic paradigms often fall short in explaining or addressing Africa's unique challenges. For decades, African studies have been dominated by these external perspectives, often resulting in misrepresentations or oversimplifications of the continent's realities. The authors in this volume argue for the necessity of African-centric approaches that reflect the lived experiences and historical contexts of African nations. This means not only adapting existing theories but also developing new frameworks that emerge from Africa itself, rooted in its specific socio-economic and political conditions.

In addition to its focus on specific issues, the handbook emphasises the importance of interdisciplinary approaches to African studies. No single field can adequately capture the continent's complexities, and this volume brings together experts from fields such as leadership, law, trust, entrepreneurship, sociology, history, political science and management. This interdisciplinary lens allows for a more nuanced and holistic understanding of Africa's challenges and opportunities.

As the fastest-growing region in terms of population and one of the most dynamic economically, Africa holds immense potential for the future. Yet, this potential can only be fully realised through research that takes into account the continent's unique contexts. This handbook, with its 23 chapters, contributes to this ongoing effort, offering both theoretical insights and practical recommendations for scholars, policymakers and practitioners who seek to engage meaningfully with Africa.

## **Introducing the Chapters**

Samuel Osei-Nimo and Emmanuel Aboagye-Nimo (Chapter 2) examine the interplay between power and procurement processes in Ghana's construction sector. Using a Foucauldian perspective, the authors analyse how power and knowledge shape procurement practices, examining the influence of cultural norms, societal structures and historical contexts. Through interviews with key stakeholders, the chapter highlights both challenges, such as corruption, and positive cultural aspects, contributing to the broader discourse on procurement in African studies.

In Chapter 3, Satyendra Singh investigates the reasons behind the struggles of superstores in the African context. The chapter argues that the replication of Western business models, without considering local market and social conditions, is a significant factor in superstore failures. Singh proposes a balanced approach

that integrates both market and social orientation, offering a model that can enhance the sustainability and profitability of superstores in Africa.

A novel stance is taken by Priscilla Ntriwaa Otuo (Chapter 4) who focuses on the role of entrepreneurial role models in the capital accumulation process across different stages of entrepreneurship in Ghana. By integrating Bourdieu's concept of capital and the stages model of entrepreneurship, Otuo provides an insightful analysis of how role models influence entrepreneurs' access to social, cultural and economic capital, offering valuable lessons for developing economies.

Chapter 5, by Imowo and Salau, investigates sustainability and responsible management practices in Nigeria's supply chain operations. Through a combination of surveys and interviews with professionals, this study uncovers how green, social and ethical practices enhance supply chain resilience. It also sheds light on the challenges of emissions measurement and community engagement, presenting a compelling case for integrated sustainability practices in Nigeria's developing economy.

Maryline Kiptoo and Pratima Sambajee (Chapter 6) challenge the prevailing view that informal entrepreneurs in Africa are primarily driven by necessity. Using life stories of informal artisans in Kenya, the chapter reframes this narrative, exploring the complex social and cultural dimensions that drive entrepreneurial choices in Africa's informal sector, offering a more holistic understanding of entrepreneurship on the continent.

Women empowerment has become a core topic in management research and business practice, yet its relationship with resilience is underexplored especially in the African context. In the next chapter, Reem Kassem and Katarzyna Kosmala (Chapter 7) focus on women's empowerment and resilience-building in Egypt. Using a case study of craft-making initiatives among young women in sheltered accommodation, the chapter explores how hybrid cultural engagement fosters personal resilience. The findings provide valuable insights into innovative approaches to empowering women in crisis settings, with potential implications for policy development in Egypt and beyond.

Julie Ignatius-Osakwe (Chapter 8) examines the rise of regional creative industries and the potential for adapting the South Korean model to Nigeria's culture and creative sectors. It explores how nation branding, rooted in indigenous culture, can enhance Nigeria's global competitiveness by transforming local products into exports. The chapter highlights the importance of public-private collaboration in building a sustainable nation brand.

Chapter 9 by George Forji Amin explores the role of non-state actors in shaping international law and driving the colonisation of Africa. Focusing on the activism of prominent European empire builders such as Leopold II, Cecil Rhodes, David Livingstone and Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza, the chapter examines how their efforts influenced the partition of Africa and the creation of modern African states. It presents a critical view of the humanitarian justifications for colonisation and its long-term political and economic impacts.

Building on the legal perspective, the next chapter by Edinam K. Glover (Chapter 10) critically examines the legal frameworks for biodiversity conservation in Burkina Faso. Through a socio-legal analysis, the chapter explores how

national and international legislation interacts to guide conservation efforts, emphasising the role of robust legal frameworks in protecting biodiversity and promoting sustainable livelihoods.

In Chapter 11, Inyene Nkanata investigates the impact of human capital on the performance of female entrepreneurs in Nigeria. Drawing on human capital theory, the chapter highlights the challenges women face in accessing the resources and knowledge needed to succeed in business. It provides recommendations to enhance government initiatives aimed at improving the performance of women-owned businesses, which play a crucial role in Nigeria's economic development.

Mark Eshun, Shirly Ohenewa Eshun and Livingstone Divine Caesar (Chapter 12) explore the antecedents of corporate governance deviance in Ghana, focusing on entrepreneurial identity centrality and corporate governance discretion. It highlights how regulatory environments and corporate governance capacity can moderate governance practices, offering a nuanced view of the challenges emerging markets face.

In Chapter 13, Stephen Isa, Ibiyemi Omeihe and Kingsley Obi Omeihe investigate the impact of environmental forces on the growth of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). Using an interpretive paradigm and qualitative research approach, the study draws from in-depth interviews with 21 stakeholders to assess the impact of internal and external environmental factors on NNPC's growth strategy. This chapter examines how external pressures and environmental factors influence corporate growth, offering key lessons for large African corporations.

Employee engagement (EE) has become an important concept for academics, practitioners and business managers. In Chapter 14, Olu' Shokunbi evaluates EE within the African context, identifying key factors and tools used to measure engagement in African organisations. It offers practical strategies to build, maintain and sustain an engaged workforce, contributing to the discourse on human resource management in Africa.

Research has shown that female leaders bring unique perspectives to organisations across the globe. Despite the significant theoretical advancement in leadership research, most publications are based on Western perspectives. Ijeoma Okpanum and Ramona Blanes (Chapter 15) focus on female leadership in Africa, exploring how women leaders drive organisational development. It provides a theoretical framework to understand the distinct leadership traits that African women display and how these contribute to organisational success.

In Chapter 16, Victoria Manu and her co-authors examine the effect of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on the financial performance of rural and community banks (RCBs) in Ghana. The chapter explores the moderating role of corporate governance and provides practical recommendations for improving financial outcomes through CSR activities.

Bukola Kunle-Adebayo (Chapter 17) explores the impact of training on lecturers' pedagogy in Nigerian universities. It advocates for the inclusion of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning framework to enhance teaching quality and promote continuous improvement in higher education.

As a result of several corporate scandals that occurred in developed markets, corporate governance has gained prominence in business cycles for over four decades. Chapter 18 by Newman Amaning and his colleagues investigate the relationship between corporate governance and audit quality in Ghana. The study underscores the importance of safeguards in ensuring high audit quality, which is essential for improving corporate governance in the emerging economy.

In Chapter 19, Antoine Dolcerocca explores the effects of decentralisation and agrarian reforms on rural land access and management in Burkina Faso. This chapter provides valuable insights into the challenges of implementing land reforms in a context characterised by legal pluralism and decentralised governance.

Diverse factors propel migration, ranging from the desire to escape poverty and political repression to seeking new economic opportunities, engaging in trade and exploring different travel prospects. The next chapter by Charles Nzeh and his co-authors (Chapter 20) analyses the migratory patterns of Nigerian middle-class families in the United Kingdom, with a focus on student migration. The study highlights the challenges and opportunities for Nigerian students abroad and provides insights into their entrepreneurial activities and cultural adaptation.

The imposition of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 brought attention to the obligation of all businesses to advance sustainable development. Lateef Damilare Olusei and Christian Harrison in Chapter 21 address the need for sustainable leadership in Africa. Using a systematic literature review, the chapter identifies key areas of development, such as inclusive governance, entrepreneurship and human capital development, as crucial to achieving long-term sustainability on the continent.

Yvonne Enudeme and her co-authors in Chapter 22 contribute to the literature on distrust in developing economies. This chapter investigates the challenges ethnic minority entrepreneurs face, focusing on the role of trust in overcoming barriers such as limited access to resources, networks and financial support. Drawing on the literature, the study identifies trust as a key factor in fostering business relationships and securing necessary resources. A proposed framework illustrates how trust influences entrepreneurial outcomes, offering recommendations for research and policy aimed at improving support for ethnic minority entrepreneurs.

Finally, in Chapter 23, Tabitha Sindani investigates the influence of extended family roles on Jua Kali women entrepreneurs in rural Kenya. The chapter contributes to the literature on rural women entrepreneurship. By adopting a qualitative approach involving in-depth semi-structured interviews with 20 Jua Kali women in Vihiga County in rural Kenya, their lived experiences were understood. The study provides rich empirical insights on rural women's entrepreneurship from under-explored contexts in the Global South, and further proposes recommendations and implication for enterprise policy.

## **Taking Stock of African Studies: Contextual Embeddedness in African Research**

There is no shortage of explanations for why Africa remains where it is while others seem to be moving ahead. Although many of these explanations conflict, one undeniable issue is that African problems are not being solved with African solutions. This could be because African scholars have yet to fully take the initiative to address these challenges, rather than allowing others to attempt to solve them on our behalf. Or, to put it somewhat differently, what is the role of African scholars in the scheme of things? And what can we do to position the African continent in a way that many before us haven't done?

The answers are obviously of central concern to us, and as such, this book represents our effort to offer readers scholarly work that addresses many of the questions previously raised. As editors, we have intentionally ensured comprehensive coverage of research that tackles conventional issues while striving to avoid rehashing well-trodden topics. Our goal is to present fresh perspectives and new insights to advance the field. In doing so, we have taken on the academic responsibility of curating a range of engaging chapters that justify their inclusion, even when the problems they explore are a result of historical and structural influences.

Inspired by our previous research (see [Harrison & Omeihe, 2023](#); [Omeihe & Harrison, 2022a, 2022b](#)), we have aimed to advocate for deeper analysis through Africanist viewpoints. Conducting research on Africa is, for us, akin to searching for and uncovering new ideas that others before us may have missed. That is why this handbook focuses on the theme of contextual embeddedness – the concept that research should be deeply rooted in the specific historical, cultural and socio-economic contexts in which it occurs. The basic fabric of contextual embeddedness refers to understanding and analysing phenomena within the unique frameworks and environments that shape them. Of course, in the context of African Studies, this is important as it means recognising that the challenges, practices and perspectives within the continent are influenced by a complex interplay of historical legacies, cultural traditions and socio-political dynamics.

Given the need to uncover the contextual embeddedness of African research, one must understand the necessity of capturing hidden factors. This involves making every effort to seize opportunities to reveal those hidden narratives using appropriate methods – whether through survey questionnaires, interviews or observing local actors while they are at work.

This concept is crucial for a handbook on African studies because it ensures that the research presented is not only relevant but also reflective of the nuanced realities of the African context. This way, the handbook can offer more accurate and meaningful insights while avoiding oversimplified or externally imposed interpretations. In point of fact, this allows for a richer, more authentic understanding of African issues, grounded in the lived experiences and perspectives of those within the continent.

To us, the good news is that through the chapters, the respective authors set out to examine the under-researched aspects of Africa's unique context. This is

not to say that all the chapters were easy to curate and organise; indeed, organising a collection of this nature is very difficult and involves careful planning. So, we do take the humility to celebrate our achievement in having chapters that align with the theme of contextual embeddedness, which we think has long been taken for granted.

For instance, Osei and Aboagye-Nimo (Chapter 2) explore how power dynamics in construction procurement in Ghana are deeply shaped by contextual embeddedness. Drawing on a Foucauldian perspective, the authors highlight how power and knowledge within procurement processes are influenced by the country's unique cultural, societal and historical contexts. Through interviews with architects, surveyors and procurement consultants, the study reveals how local norms and structures embed procurement practices. Beyond highlighting issues like corruption, their study acknowledges positive cultural influences, by offering a more nuanced view that contributes valuable insights for improving procurement in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Similarly, context embeddedness is also evident in the chapter 'why superstores fail in Africa?' To some extent, findings from prior research, which has largely neglected this exciting field, reflect Singh's (Chapter 3) emphasis on the reasons for low performance. These reasons include the replication of the Western model and the lack of social orientation. Given the importance the author places on identifying key market orientation factors, it is refreshing to see the discussion around these factors – such as consumer behaviour, distribution, location and merchandising – which can contribute to superior superstore performance. Additionally, four macroeconomic factors – inflation, interest rates, foreign exchange and security – are identified as moderating the relationship between market orientation and superstore performance.

In Chapter 4, Otuo's insights in role models, capital accumulation and the entrepreneurship process provide valuable commentary on the nature of entrepreneurial role models across different phases of the entrepreneurship process. The chapter also presents intriguing insights into two theoretical perspectives: the stages model of the entrepreneurship process (*which considers the intention, pre-startup and post-startup phases*) and Bourdieu's concept of capital (*examining social, cultural and economic capital in the context of role model support*). The result is a comprehensive resolution that may serve as a baseline for stakeholders seeking to understand how entrepreneurial journeys are shaped by various role models, including globally recognised figures accessible through social media, as well as close family members. The authors demonstrate a strong commitment to providing evidence that shows how the influence of role models evolves throughout the entrepreneurship process.

An excellent illustration of sustainability and responsible management practices in supply chain operations in Nigeria is presented in Chapter 5 by Imo and Salau. They note that while firms benefit from concrete sustainability initiatives, challenges such as emissions measurement and community engagement persist. Their assessment, based on surveys and interviews, contributes to a broader observation and underscores the need for integrated sustainability practices through policies, partnerships and operationalising goals in Africa.

The notion that informal entrepreneurs in Africa are necessity-driven underscores the impact of contextual embeddedness on socially constructed historical patterns and material values. Chapter 6 by Kiptoo and Sambajee uses the concept of institutional logics to examine the life stories of two informal artisan entrepreneurs in Kenya. In focusing on certain factors, the authors acknowledge that other essential aspects, such as agency and sociocultural dimensions, are often overlooked in driving entrepreneurship decisions. The authors enhance the existing institutional logics theoretical framework, suggesting the need for a more contextualised understanding of entrepreneurial participation in the informal sector that goes beyond mere survivalist thinking. These findings provide a basis for further research across different contexts.

In Chapter 7, Kassem and Kosmala build on the previous chapter's findings to assess women's empowerment and resilience building in Egypt. Their analysis draws from case studies of craft-making with young women, residents of care shelters in Egypt, and discusses how hybrid formats of cultural engagement can aid in developing personal resilience, helping them emerge stronger from crises. Their findings shed light on how crafts-based engagement can support the process of empowering women through resilience building. They conclude by highlighting that innovative access to culture can inform policy development in the region and beyond.

In Chapter 8, Osakwe's focus on adapting the South Korean model to Nigeria's culture and creative industries offers valuable insights into nation branding as a strategy for enhancing global reputation. Her findings highlight that successful nation branding depends on public-private collaboration and the engagement of domestic audiences as key brand ambassadors. This approach, rooted in the concept of contextual embeddedness, emphasises the importance of cultural and local dynamics for long-term sustainability. Given the need to understand institutional contexts, the author stresses the importance of aligning national branding with domestic values and international strategies to attract foreign investment and drive economic growth.

In Chapter 9, Amin explores the activism and politicking of prominent European non-state actors who, in their efforts to push their home states to establish extraterritorial empires, inadvertently triggered the fierce scramble for Africa at the dawn of the 19th century. The study argues that the activism of these empire builders gave colonisation a recognisable, human face and was instrumental not only in the eventual partition of the continent but also in shaping the origins of nascent African states and their political-economic trajectory. The findings suggest that while some were driven by misguided humanitarianism, others were genuinely committed to the political and economic advancement of the continent.

In Chapter 10, Glover emphasises the significance of the legislative landscape surrounding biodiversity conservation in Burkina Faso by examining both newly promulgated laws and existing legislation. Through a socio-legal lens, the study explores the implications of land reform and analyses the country's adherence to international obligations and commitments. This study represents a commendable advancement in African scholarship. The author not only provides valuable