



African Intellectuals: Rethinking Politics, Language, Gender and Development (Africa in the New Millennium)

Thandika Mkandawire

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In this thought-provoking overview of the history, fate and possible future roles of African intellectuals both within Africa and in the African Diaspora nearly half a century on from Independence, some of the Continent's most eminent thinkers discuss the issues at stake. Their starting point is the uniquely difficult circumstances confronting intellectuals: regimes intolerant of independent debate, economies in sharp decline, societies wracked by violent conflict, and official languages different from people's mother tongues. Africa has experienced, compared with Asia or Latin America, much higher rates of emigration of its intelligentsia to North America and Europe, as well as frequent displacement from home countries to other parts of the continent.

Among the important themes explored are:

What has been the relationship of African intellectuals to nationalism and the Pan African project?

How has the developmentalist orientation of policy affected intellectual outlooks and roles?

The language question, including the non-development of higher education through indigenous African languages, and the social gulf this has opened up between African intellectuals and their societies.

Women intellectuals, the growth of gender studies, and the limitations that still constrain their impact on mainstream society and policy.

The potential roles of the hugely growing African academic diaspora, particularly in the United States.

This volume constitutes a valuable, because so rare, exploration of the complex interface between African intellectuals and society, state and politics in the context of fundamental new departures like the restoration of multi-party politics, new economic horizons like NEPAD, and a renewed awareness of the need for Pan African cooperation.

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