



Decolonising African Intelligence Studies:

Histories, Cultures, Relevance and Trends

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In contradistinction to the widespread conduct of espionage which can be traced since the beginning of human history, the evolution of intelligence as an academic discipline is a product of the post-Second World War era. Since then, there has been an explosion of intelligence education in western Europe. However, by various accounts, intelligence services remain the least studied, researched, theorised and understood instruments of state security apparatus in Africa. This is because intelligence education is not yet widely recognised at universities in Africa as it is not considered a respectable academic endeavour for scholars and students.

While most universities in Africa do not offer intelligence-related study programmes, this topic is increasingly gaining a foothold in the public domain. It is thus incumbent upon intelligence scholars, practitioners and students in Africa to interrogate intelligence histories, cultures, relevance, and trends. This is important because the prevailing Western European discourses are based on an ontology of 'absolute alterity'. Pedagogically, absolute alterity leads to a myopic conception that inevitably imposes the endorsement of a single *authoritative* rationality and *authoritative* epistemology. As a corollary, knowledge production and landscape in different parts of the world suffer due to a Western European "single story problem". Knowledge production is highly ethnocentric and nativistic and its standards of entry, engagement and exit are not permanent. This makes African intelligence studies imperative. However, to be relevant, intelligence education in Africa should speak to the concrete conditions and peculiar challenges on the continent. This makes the context and contours of modern African intelligence services important.

Internal dynamics, including negative factors such as ethnic and tribal factors, intra- and interstate conflict, as well as political influences should inform intelligence research and policy directions. *Juniorisation* of senior positions to either effect nepotism or nurture loyalty, ethno-political patronage to sustain networks, non-meritocratic recruitment and self-interest(s) of intelligence leaders are

commonplace characteristics that weaken intelligence systems in Africa. However, there are critical positive factors primarily defined by the democratisation of African polity and institutionalisation of oversight and accountability on the part of intelligence services in Africa. The establishment of the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA) has also inaugurated new institutional cultures of intelligence sharing and awareness of the transnational nature of many of the challenges faced by the continent. Despite the foregoing,



African intelligence scholars and students are aware of how research in the field of intelligence services constitutes a challenge precisely owing to secretive nature of the various intelligence activities.

It is noteworthy that without intelligence studies providing policy advice on the positive role that intelligence can play in the realisation of national security and human security, this important instrument of statecraft will remain a major liability in Africa's development trajectory. The dual positive and negative internal factors necessitate African universities to establish focus areas, departments and schools on/of intelligence studies. In establishing intelligence studies, African universities learn some best practices from their Western counterparts. Notwithstanding such lessons, the key for African universities would be to decolonise the teaching, research and knowledge production in intelligence studies. In this respect, it is also noteworthy that intelligence in Africa did not start as a colonial project. Rather, it predated colonialism as it was used to monitor, gather and analyse threats and opportunities vital for the survival and advancement of traditional societies.

We understand that the development of intelligence traditions, even at theoretical level, is a collective effort. As such, the editors call for chapters that try to re-imagine, reshape, repurpose intelligence studies in Africa. This is in line with the recent publication of a special edition on Frontiers in African Intelligence Studies in the *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*.

We seek chapters that are surgical, cutting deep into the history, cultures, relevance and trends of intelligence in the context of challenges and opportunities confronting the African continent. The editors solicit chapters covering, but not limited to, the following topics:

- The role of intelligence in Africa in historical perspective
- Indigenous African intelligence practices and theory
- Critical thematic issues in African intelligence studies
- Statecraft, policy and national security
- Statecraft, policy and human security
- Data world and challenges of intelligence management in Africa
- Intelligence management and nation-building
- Humanitarian intelligence and humanitarian crises in Africa
- Expanding frontiers of intelligence studies – African contributions
- Decolonising African intelligence studies
- Intelligence history, practice and cultures in Africa
- CISSA: From 'need to know' to 'need to share'
- Oversight and accountability in African intelligence
- Politicisation and political principals as consumers of intelligence
- Multiplicity of intelligence actors in Africa
- The value economic intelligence in Africa
- Intelligence and epidemics/diplomacy



Submissions should be sent:

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Manuscripts should be between 6000- and 7500-words using Bookman Old Style font

Deadline for submissions of full papers: **15 March 2026** (those who wish to forward working titles can do so).

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