

Editorial

Global Africa

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With this third *varia* issue, *Global Africa* continues its commitment to providing a space for debate and analysis devoted to the plurality of approaches and issues that cut across scientific disciplines in and from Africa. The first *varia* issue indeed laid the foundations for this opening; the second highlighted forms of resistance against gender-based violence in Africa; this new issue reaffirms the dynamism of the fields of knowledge, in constant evolution, characterized by the diversity of objects, terrains, and methods. The contributions, gathered here, reflect this dynamic, and their apparent heterogeneity does not conceal the coherence of the whole: each, in its own way, engages with transformation. This idea of transformation—the passage from one state to another—extends to domains as varied as urban planning, governance, economics, religion, and political participation.

It is in the fields of architecture and urban planning that the challenges of transformation become most tangible, particularly through the concept of the “smart city.” This idea seeks to transform the individual’s experience of the city. Architects and urban planners around the world continuously propose innovative ideas, integrated into modernization projects. At the same time, the issue of digital inclusion appears decisive for the economic future of nations, and of Africa in particular. What kinds of change can we expect from it? Are we speaking of genuine inclusion, or is this, once again, an indicator of states’ inability to transform technological potential into a true lever for sustainability? At the other end of the spectrum, Somaliland embodies the complexity of African political trajectories. This self-proclaimed republic nonetheless captures foreign attention. The determination to demonstrate a genuine democratic shift is evident, despite the lack of international recognition and the persistence of numerous internal tensions. Economic knowledge applied to biodiversity has experienced notable growth, despite the challenges of implementation. Change is observed in particular through the study of religious dynamics. These, as ancient spiritual structures, continue to influence contemporary sociopolitical balances. Yet, in the era of globalization, the question arises of their adaptation and recomposition; this is the case, for example, of the *Tijâniyya* Sufi brotherhood. Finally, there is the change that can be observed through the political socialization of youth. What political model do we offer our youth worldwide as a model of politics? What role do social media, through their immediacy, play in political consciousness?

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This *varia* issue opens the debate with an article by Cheikh Cissé, which offers a critical analysis of the Diamniadio project, Senegal's emblem of the "smart city." The author shows that this concept, promoted by technology companies and adopted by many African policymakers, oscillates between political horizon and operational reality. Diamniadio embodies a national ambition: to build a modern technopolis that would decongest Dakar and attract investors and international institutions. Yet the study reveals a persistent gap between discourse and implementation: delays in digital deployment, inadequate basic infrastructure, and limited citizen involvement. The research also highlights the project's dependence on external financing, rendering its viability fragile in the face of political and economic uncertainties. By situating Diamniadio within the scope of other African initiatives (Konza Technopolis, Eko Atlantic City), the author shows that the smart city model, often conceived as an international showcase, tends to favor an affluent clientele at the expense of local populations. The case of Diamniadio thus calls for rethinking the "smart city" as a hybrid and incremental process, capable of linking technological innovations with social realities.

The following article by Kalewongel Minale, devoted to Somaliland, invites consideration of the emergence of an atypical democratic experience in a context marked by regional instability. Since 1991, this self-proclaimed republic, although ignored by the international community, has consolidated relatively functional electoral institutions and experienced peaceful transfers of power. The analysis highlights the hybridization of clan structures, customary legitimacies, and electoral mechanisms, which underpins the uniqueness of this model. However, this trajectory remains fragile: the absence of diplomatic recognition, dependence on external aid, and recurrent territorial disputes constitute major factors of vulnerability. More broadly, the case of Somaliland invites a rethinking of democracy, not as a normative ideal imported from elsewhere, but as an endogenous process anchored in specific social and cultural practices. It thus contributes to a broader reflection on the conditions for the feasibility and sustainability of democratic experiences on the African continent.

Authored by Titilayo Shakirat Folarori and Temitayo Alice Onifade, the third article examines the links between digital inclusion and economic sustainability in the Nigerian context, where access to infrastructure and digital skills remains deeply unequal. Drawing on an empirical survey of academics, small businesses, and rural households, the study highlights the crucial role of three dimensions: digital entrepreneurship, digital financial services, and technology adoption. The results show that each of these variables exerts a significant effect on the country's ability to build a more resilient and inclusive economy. The authors underscore that digital technologies foster the reduction of urban-rural divides by opening entrepreneurial opportunities to traditionally marginalized populations. Yet the analysis recalls that the existence of technological tools does not guarantee their effective use, with persistent obstacles linked to accessibility, cost, and skills. This observation calls for moving beyond a technicist approach to digital transformation in order to integrate the issues of governance, education, and social justice. In this sense, the authors advocate a holistic understanding of digital inclusion, conceived as a lever not only for economic sustainability but also for social cohesion.

Morgane Gonon, for her part, examines the mobilization of economic knowledge to orient international action in support of biodiversity, using the example of spatial prioritization methods. She shows that cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analyses mechanically favor economically less productive areas, often located in the Global South, thereby reproducing global inequalities. These approaches ignore the economic determinants of natural habitat destruction and the systemic transformations necessary to slow biodiversity loss. Restoration is conceived as a mere ecosystem change, valued through spatialized ecosystem services, at the expense of the socio-economic and institutional complexity of territories. Morgane Gonon argues that economics applied to biodiversity should incorporate the geopolitical, social, and distributive dimensions of environmental policies. She proposes a research agenda centered on economic dependencies and global value chains, in order to support contextualized ecological action. This approach would make it possible to connect economic efficiency and environmental justice. She emphasizes the importance of an integrated,

multi-scalar analysis to guide action. The perspective she develops underscores the need to move beyond conventional economic frameworks. The objective is to build conservation strategies adapted to local and global realities.

Fadel Soubiane Bah explores the *Tijâniyya*, a Sufi brotherhood present in Cameroon since the nineteenth century, which illustrates how a religious institution can shape local socio-economic development. Through its community networks, it organizes the redistribution of resources, supports education, and fosters collective entrepreneurship. Its work ethic and internal solidarity make it possible to combine spirituality and economic initiatives, offering an alternative to purely state-led or market-based models. The Cameroonian experience underscores the role of religious practices in social structuring and the promotion of collective well-being, while also raising the question of balancing individual interests and community projects.

Mouhammad Dieng, Mamadou Aliou Diallo, and Mame-Penda Ba conduct a scoping review of youth employment policies in Senegal between 1999 and 2024. Their analysis highlights three notable areas of progress: the creation of jobs, the improvement of employability, and support for project initiators. However, they identify six major structural limitations: insufficient communication and lack of transparency, weak monitoring and evaluation, poor coordination, negative perceptions, the predominance of ad hoc measures, and limited availability of reliable data and resources.

The authors emphasize the paradox of sustained economic growth that has generated few durable jobs, and the gap between stated ambitions and actual outcomes. They call for rethinking public governance, based on long-term strategic planning, a culture of evaluation, and greater consideration of the heterogeneity of Senegalese youth. Such a reconfiguration would make it possible to move beyond fragmented and short-term responses, and instead build structural policies capable of linking economic efficiency with social justice in the fight against youth unemployment.

The final article in this *varia*, by Prisca Hélène Assiene Bissossoli and Alain-Patrick Loumou Mondoleba, revisits the fear and caution that structure young people's political engagement in Cameroon. The author explains that young people are socialized into fear through assassinations, arbitrary arrests, and the repression of demonstrations. The family plays a central role, oscillating between support and deterrence, while authoritarian socialization and the legal precarity of the opposition limit participation. Some overcome this fear through solidarity and determination, embracing ideals of justice and democracy. This formulation embodies disillusionment, caution, and activist engagement, revealing the complexity of young people's political socialization and the paradoxical effects of violence on their trajectories.

Ultimately, this new *varia* issue reaffirms *Global Africa's* commitment to exploring African transformations. The contributions show that change cuts across social, political, economic, and cultural dimensions. From Diamniadio, the smart city, to the democratic experiment in Somaliland, these initiatives illustrate the diversity of trajectories. Digital inclusion and biodiversity management reveal the interaction between innovation and local realities. Transformation appears as a hybrid process, combining adaptation, compromise, and recomposition, as illustrated by the case of the *Tijâniyya* brotherhood. This transformation invites moving beyond imported models to conceive endogenous and incremental solutions. The studies highlight the importance of linking technological and economic change to citizen participation and social justice.