

# A COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW OF AFRICAN STUDIES IN TURKEY AND GREECE

NICOLAS MÉTAXIDÈS – NIKOLINA MYOFA

NICOLAS MÉTAXIDÈS  
HAROKOPIO UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS, GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT  
[HTTPS://ORCID.ORG/0000-0002-4787-3090](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4787-3090)  
NMETAXID@HUA.GR

NIKOLINA MYOFA  
POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER  
HAROKOPIO UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS, GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT &  
NATIONAL CENTRE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH (EKKE), ATHENS  
[HTTPS://ORCID.ORG/0000-0003-4132-2869](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4132-2869)  
NIKOLMYOFA@HUA.GR



## Abstract

For many years, African issues had a low priority in both political and academic circles in Greece and Turkey. However, as far as Turkey is concerned, scientific interest in African issues has gone hand in hand with growing political interest in the continent, with African studies focusing primarily on Turkish-African relations. Regarding the Greek reality, while the Greeks have had an active diaspora in countries of Sub-Saharan Africa for many decades, the state has never formulated any coordinated political proposal to strengthen the country's relationship with the continent. This lack of central policy leaves the Greek immigrants there absolutely alone to make their mark in their host societies. Respectively, the Greek academic community only in recent years has been dealing with Africa, even though to a limited extent, focusing mainly on issues concerning the Greek diaspora there. Given that in recent decades Greece has become a host country for immigrants and among them, immigrants or even refugees from Sub-Saharan Africa, so, due to this fact the scientific interest in Africa has increased. Therefore, the main aim of this paper is to compare the two case studies regarding the status quo of African Studies across them.

## Keywords

*African Studies, Greece, Turkey, non-colonial past, diaspora*

Received: October 11, 2024 / 1st Revision: April 13, 2025 / Accepted: May 10, 2025

Métaxidès, Nicolas – Myofa, Nikolina (2025). A Comparative Overview of African Studies in Turkey and Greece. Hungarian Journal of African Studies [Afrika Tanulmányok], 19(1), 5-21.

## 1. Introduction: The wider discussion on African Studies

African Studies in Greece and Turkey are relatively new academic fields. Neither country had a colonial empire, which explains the lack of a historical interest in developing these areas of study. Interestingly, the USA, China, and Japan, although also without a colonial past, have demonstrated significant academic interest in African Studies and achieved excellent results in this domain.<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, the colonial empires, France, Britain, Germany, Belgium, etc., had a strong interest in exploiting the subject of African Studies from the points of view of social and cultural sciences (human geography, social anthropology, demography, and economics) and natural sciences (geology, physical geography, zoology, etc.).<sup>2</sup> From the perspective of the social and cultural sciences, the primary subjects of study include pre-colonial and modern African societies, languages, religions, and cultures.

Africa is perceived with a multitude of stereotypes based on the Eurocentrism of its scholars and also on criteria linked to the needs of colonialism. Therefore, the study of Africa's societies requires that our knowledge of this continent be continually scrutinized (Courade, 2006). In this context, interest in African Studies is also diffused to scientific communities belonging to non-former colonial states. These countries perceive Africa not as a geographical entity but as a continent with diverse historical, cultural, religious, political, and ecological characteristics (Tepeciklioğlu, 2016: 6). This growing interest of the international scientific community in Africa has significant importance, as it reflects Africa's increasing role in the global geopolitical landscape (see also Copinschi and Noël, 2005; Power and Mohan, 2010; Carmody, 2016; Le Gouriellec, 2022).

Despite the undeniable fact that African Studies are often associated with the colonial era, the independence of African states – especially in the 1960s – did not halt the production of academic papers on African societies. African Studies were reinforced with critical perspectives and new epistemological trends, introducing the parameter of the role of colonialism in the postcolonial development of African societies.<sup>3</sup> An illustrative example is postcolonial theories, which, despite any contradictions, have attempted to disentangle the various interpretive schemes from the Eurocentric framework (Abrahamsen, 2003; Hill, 2005). However, Africans themselves have also sought to speak for themselves, either in the context of their claims to 'Black identity' or embedded within the academic framework of African Studies as it has been shaped in Europe. Africa demands reconsideration outside of dominant European frameworks (Ogunyankin, 2019).

Some believe that independence did not free Africa from colonial dependencies (Ocheni and Nwankwo 2012), while others, by referring to colonialism, attempt to answer the question: Why has Africa failed to meet the challenges of modernity and globalization? (Táiwò, 2010). There are, of course, perspectives that 'imagine' what Africa could have been like if not for its colonial past (Heldring and Robinson 2012), and there is also the view that wants Africa not to be seen as an exclusive victim of the West. By giving voice to Africans themselves, the aim is to bring a construc-

tive internal critique of their involvement in issues affecting the continent into the dialogue (Lonsdale, 2005).

To understand the place of African Studies in contemporary academia, one is called upon to trace who, with what motivations, and in whose interests they study Africa (Kessi et al., 2020). For this reason, it is relevant to examine countries without a colonial past and, in fact, without direct interest in the development of the African continent.

Despite the Western countries' monopolization of African Studies, the expressed interest of countries without a colonial past – many of which approach Africa through the context of colonial or post-colonial paternalism – is not negligible. These countries often conduct research within the framework of diplomacy, economic and trade relations, history, and migration. Notably, some of them maintained strong academic and political ties with Africa during the socialist era (Skalník 2016; Tarrósy & Solymári 2022). As Tarrósy and Solymári (2022:115) note, the end of the Cold War and the collapse of communist regimes in countries such as Hungary changed the agenda of their priorities, shifting them toward goals such as EU membership, Euro-Atlantic integration and individual ethnic issues. This result in a decline in interest in Africa, which of course was revitalized in the following years.

Basedau (2020), argues that research on Africa continues to be dominated by external, non-African, mainly Western views, which usually focus on negative aspects of Africa, overlooking progress in many areas. It also argues that Comparative African Studies can identify causal relationships and general trends both within Africa and between Africa and other regions. We support the view that African Studies conducted by non-colonial countries can contribute in this debate. Besides, the EU's increasing interest in Africa –expressed through the organization of EU-Africa Summits– is an incentive for other countries without a previous colonial past to get involved expressing in many ways –diplomatic, political and academic– their interest in Africa.

In this article, we focus on Greece and Turkey offering a comparative overview of African Studies in the two neighboring countries which share the characteristics of lacking a colonial past, holding a significant geopolitical position in the Balkans and the wider Middle East, and maintaining relatively close geographical proximity to Africa. Through the examination of these cases, we aim to fill the scientific

**Africa is perceived with a multitude of stereotypes based on the Eurocentrism of its scholars and also on criteria linked to the needs of colonialism. Therefore, the study of Africa's societies requires that our knowledge of this continent be continually scrutinized.**

gap in the relevant literature. The questions we will address and hope to contribute fruitfully to the debate are as follows: 1) Why are countries without a colonial past, such as Greece and Turkey, interested in studying African societies? 2) Are their motivations purely related to their scientific interest in Africa and its residents, or are they related to searching for answers to issues concerning their place within the contemporary world? 3) Have links been established between African intellectuals and the scientific communities in Greece and Turkey that deal with Africa?

## **2. The interest in Africa, as expressed by African Studies in Greece**

The Greek interest in Africa is initially linked to the existence of a wider commercial diaspora that had its origin in the Ottoman area and extended northwards to the countries of Western and Central Europe, Russia and the Black Sea countries (Hassiotis, 1993; Korma, 2017), and to the North African countries such as Egypt (Hadjiiosif, 1981; Kitroeff, 1989; 2019; Soulogiannis, 1999; Karanasou, 1999; Dalachanis, 2017), Sudan (Kamitsis, 1961; Chaldeos, 2018), as well as Libya and Tunisia that attracted Ottoman citizens of Greek origin (Kazdaghi, 2000; Agathangelidou, 2003; Chaldeos, 2015). Greeks, mostly seafarers, were found in the late 19th century in South Africa (Mantzaris, 1984) and its neighbouring countries, such as Zambia (former Northern Rhodesia) and Zimbabwe (former Southern Rhodesia) (Mantzaris, 1980). However, there is evidence of earlier individual presence in Madagascar (Condominas, 1968).

Various Greek travelers – doctors, journalists, artists – such as Nikolaidès (1923), Prokopiou (1930), Pahtikos (1938), Papamihail (1951), and Sakéllaridès (1960) were initially concerned with the Greek presence in Africa. These works are descriptive approaches and data collection efforts of great importance to researchers, published either with the authors' own resources or with support from the Greek communities in Africa. Scientific studies on Greeks in sub-Saharan Africa are limited, with the relevant literature including the works of Natsoulas (1975), Lazidou (2004), Métaxidès (2010a, 2010b), and Akono and Métaxidès (2017).

Greek academics, as well as the wider public, have limited knowledge of Africa. Before 2000, there were very few books on the Greek market about Africa, such as Basil Davidson's classic book (1997), Asteris Huliaras's book (1997), and Giannis Markakis's (1998) composite report on the Greek diaspora in Africa. Markakis was the first professor of African Studies in Greece, specializing in the study of political development in the Horn of Africa, which encompasses Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan, and Djibouti (Markakis, 1968, 1987, 1993, 1996). Since 2000, and especially in the 2010s, books have been appearing on the Greek book market that bring the Greek public – not only academics – closer to Africa.<sup>4</sup>

Apart from Markakis, academic professors dealing with Africa are Huliaras, Magliveras, Petropoulos, and Tsekenis [see Huliaras (1998, 2012), Huliaras and Petropoulos (2015), Huliaras and Magliveras (2008, 2011), Magliveras and Naldi (2013, 2024), Tsékénis (2010a, 2010b, 2015) and Makris (1996, 2000)]. However, the corresponding departments, such as the Department of History and Archaeol-

ogy and the Department of Oriental and African Studies at the University of Crete, where Markakis taught, are not staffed with academics specializing in Africa, but rather with subjects more broadly related to ancient and medieval Byzantine and early Ottoman history. Moreover, in Greece, there are no autonomous departments specializing in African Studies, such as the respective departments of Turkish and Asian Studies at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and Balkan Slavic and Oriental Studies at the University of Macedonia.

Despite the African continent's geographical proximity and its growing geopolitical role at regional and global levels, engagement with Africa at the academic level is relatively recent. Between 2010 and 2013, Harokopio University and the University of Peloponnese jointly organized an action titled "Investigation of the Potentials and Integration Prospects of African Migrants in the Greek Host Society." In 2013, Professor Huliaras, in collaboration with Professor Magliveras, founded "The Hellenic Network of African Studies" (see <https://hellenicafricanstudies.wordpress.com/>) which aims to join the forces of Greek researchers interested in Africa. In 2014, Professor Huliaras organized a conference titled "The European Union and Africa: Interregional Dynamics" at the Institute of Diplomacy and Global Affairs in Athens. Moreover, in Greece, there are think tanks and research institutes that deal with international relations issues and, in a broad sense, likely encompass issues related to Africa. However, they do not specialize in it.<sup>5</sup>

Another effort aimed at bringing together Greek researchers with an interdisciplinary interest in Africa is the two-day conference entitled "Sub-Saharan Africa in Research and University Teaching in Greece," co-organized by the French School of Athens, the National Institute for Oriental Languages and Civilizations in Paris, and the University of Aegean and Harokopio. The two-day conference took place at the French School of Athens from October 30 to 31, 2023.

Today, there is a gradually growing scientific interest in Africa, despite the fact that proposals from Greek doctoral candidates are limited, especially in cases that require field studies in Africa.<sup>6</sup> Searching at the National Archive of PhD Theses (<https://www.didaktorika.gr/eadd/>), we found that there are few dissertations about Africa, and only 20 of them were supported in Greek university departments between 1984 and 2023. More specifically, six of these were in political science departments, one in international relations, two in geography, two in history, five in science departments (polytechnic, medicine, biology, geology, and agriculture), and one each in departments of law, theology, economics, and social anthropology. Therefore, there is interest in the preparation of doctoral theses in various departments, which demonstrates a tendency to approach and study Africa through different disciplines. There is an enrichment of scientific debate and our understanding of Africa. Additionally, a better comprehension of Africa and the issues faced by its residents can help build a bridge for communication and cooperation.<sup>7</sup>

There seems to be no political interest in strengthening relations between Greece and Africa through a rational government proposal. In Greece, since the early 1960s, there has been a vision of the country gaining a leading position in the Balkans,

the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. This vision took shape when the 1967 Junta sought international recognition, as Western countries had not recognized the regime.<sup>8</sup> Greece's opening to Africa began in 1969, when the military dictatorship ruling the country supported Muammar Gaddafi's revolution against King Idris. In the following years, official visits to Greece by African leaders took place.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, Pattacos, one of the leaders of the Junta, visited Libya, Egypt, Ethiopia, Congo and the Central African Republic on behalf of the regime in 1971 and the Ivory Coast, Gabon, Senegal and Cameroon in 1972. Greece's civilizing role in Africa included the strengthening of economic transactions, the enrollment of Africans in military schools, and the development of missionary work by the Orthodox Church. Essentially, the Junta promoted Western interests in the continent, with the main goal of distancing Africa from the influence of the Soviet Union. As a result, the Junta's contacts with Africa are characterised as meaningless and without concrete results (Panoutsopoulos, 2018; 2022).

The Greek governments, after the period of democratic transition in Greece, have not shown a keen interest in Africa, especially sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>10</sup> In recent years, this seems to be changing, but the policies seem contradictory. In Greece there is only a small number of African embassies located in the capital city, Athens, while there are no embassies located on other region of Greece. Also, in Athens there is a relatively significant number of African honorary consulates and a few in Thessaloniki and Rethymno (Map 1). Moreover, regarding the diplomatic presence in Africa, Greek embassies exist in only 12 countries, a relatively small number considering that the African continent comprises 54 countries, and also small compared with Turkey's embassies in 40 countries. However, consulates (general and honorary) exist in more countries, 14 and 24 respectively, even more than the corresponding Turkey (Map 2). Additionally, the presence of official Greek government officials in Africa, with the aim of strengthening bilateral relations, is extremely limited. However, in recent years, for the first time, a Greek Foreign Minister (specifically Nikos Dendias) has visited countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Rwanda in 2021 and South Africa and Mozambique in 2023. In addition, in 2022, he visited Niger for the first time.

In the realm of educational diplomacy, the situation is relatively calm, despite the increasing interest among African students in Greece. This is noteworthy considering that a significant number of young Africans have either been born in Greece or have immigrated to the country.<sup>11</sup> The State Scholarships Foundation offers scholarships to African students, while others are provided by private institutions, such as the Onassis Foundation. Additionally, some students from Africa study in Greece through academic mobility programs.

■ **There seems to be no political interest in strengthening relations between Greece and Africa through a rational government proposal.**

In conclusion, what connects Greece with Africa is its diaspora, which dates back to the first quarter of the 20th century. However, this diaspora has never had the support of the Greek state, which has never expressed a comprehensive plan for a political proposal to strengthen the Greek element in the Black Continent.<sup>12</sup> Interest in Africa is primarily expressed through the individual interests of some scientists specializing in Africa and various private initiatives, such as those of the “Hellenic African Chamber of Commerce and Development” (<https://www.helafrican-chamber.gr/>). It is only in recent years that the Greek state has expressed political and diplomatic interest in Africa, ‘following’ Turkey’s moves to reduce, as far as possible, the distance separating the diplomatic presence of the two countries on the continent.

### **3. The interest in Africa as expressed by African Studies in Turkey**

For many years and until relatively recently, African issues have been a low priority in both political and academic circles in Turkey. Since the 1990s – mainly due to Turkey’s growing interest in Africa at the political level – a high priority has been given to the study of African issues. Although contemporary interest focuses mainly on Turkish–African relations (see Enwere and Yilmaz, 2014; Chigozie and Yilmaz, 2014; Tepeciklioğlu, 2017, Bayram, 2020; 2022; Hazar and Tepeciklioğlu, 2021), African Studies in Turkey have made progress and continue to engage with other scientific fields. Initially, African Studies in Turkey were part of the field of international relations and the study of specific regions<sup>13</sup> in which scientific interest began immediately after the end of the Second World War (Tepeciklioğlu, 2016: 4).

The interest in Africa, however, began much earlier, namely during the Ottoman period, mainly with travel documents and studies that demonstrated the Ottoman Empire’s significant relationship with Africa in the 19th century (Tepeciklioğlu, 2016: 9). A fascinating study is that of Minawi (2016), who convincingly explains that the Ottoman Empire’s colonial aspirations were as complex as those of other great powers. The relationship between the Ottoman past and Africa, along with the anti-colonial discourse, consists of the two main pillars on which, at a theoretical level, Turkey’s foreign policy interest in Africa is based (Bilgic and Nascimento, 2014: 2).

Since its establishment in 1923, the Turkish state has sought to develop relations with the Western world, with a declining interest in Africa (Kaya and Warner, 2012: 3). In the 1960s, the vast majority of African regions gained independence. This was the period during which Turkey began its efforts to strengthen relations with Africa, with meager results, as the will and resources to implement such a policy were still lacking. The political climate was not fertile ground for the academic development of studies on Africa (Tepeciklioğlu, 2016: 7). However, as early as the 1970s, some important books and studies on Africa, translated into Turkish, were gradually published (*ibid.*, 10). The coups of 1960, 1971, and 1980 significantly impacted the political environment, which in turn affected the academic environment, ultimately reducing the productivity of Turkish universities, as was the case in Greece.

The modern policy of openness of the Turkish nation-state towards Africa started only in 1998 (Kaya and Warner, 2012; Bilgic and Nascimento, 2014; Binaté, 2019) and is linked to the political orientation of the AKP (Justice and Development Party) government in the early 2000s (Tepeciklioğlu, 2016: 10). This increase in Turkey's interest in Africa has created a Turkish migratory interest towards the Black Continent, which is clearly influenced by Turkey's growing diplomatic interest in African countries<sup>14</sup> and the large number of destinations to Africa – over 60 – served by Turkish Airlines (Köse, 2021: 74). According to 2025 data the diplomatic interest of Turkey in Africa is very intense. There is a large number of African embassies in Turkey with the majority of them located in the capital city, Ankara. Also, there is a large number of African honorary consulates in Istanbul and fewer are distributed across different areas within Turkey (specifically in the southern and western coasts of Anatolia, also known as Asia Minor) (Map 1). At the same time, Turkey's embassies expanding across the entire African continent, although the consular authorities of Turkey are very few (Map 2).

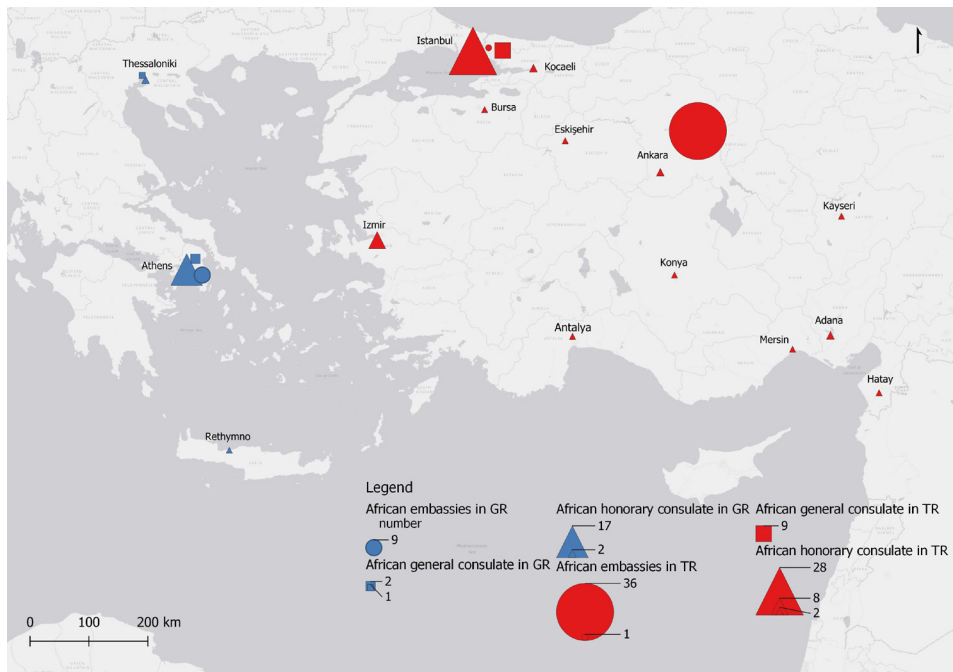
In an effort to strengthen its geopolitical position, Turkey increased its bilateral relations with many African countries, became involved in African issues by actively intervening in African organizations such as the “African Development Bank” (Angey, 2014), and tried to be Africa's voice in international institutions (Angey, 2009: 13). It exploited religious diplomacy (see Bruce, 2012: 144) by attempting to play an international role between Africa and the Arab-Muslim world (Binaté, 2019: 224), participating in peacekeeping missions and providing humanitarian and development aid, especially to Muslim states (Angey, 2014: 14), strengthening its relations with regional organizations, developing economic cooperation with African countries by increasing the volume of trade with them (Angey, 2009; 2014; Binaté, 2019), and investing in the construction of infrastructure (Angey, 2014: 21, 22). Another area of cooperation is the exchange of students and the provision of scholarships (Angey, 2009: 13), as well as encouraging business travel and business partnerships. *“All these goals were more or less achieved in the following years, primarily reflected in the opening of new embassies in various African countries”* (Bilgic and Nascimento, 2014). In a not merely symbolic move, Ankara declared 2005 the “Year of Africa”, a year that one commentator described as a *“turning point”* for Turkish-African relations, as many unprecedented high-level visits took place and Turkey gained observer status in the African Union (Kaya and Warner, 2012: 2).

Universities have followed the political and economic interest in Africa, offering postgraduate studies and establishing Africa-oriented research centers.<sup>15</sup> The contribution of the academic community in creating knowledge about Africa has benefited not only the academic community itself,<sup>16</sup> but also the governmental bodies responsible for policy-making. Since 2005, the production of studies about Africa has become more systematic (Tepeciklioğlu, 2016: 11), and academic production has expanded to cover areas such as African cinema, poetry, media, geography, education, migration, religion, history, security, tourism, economy, and the natural environment (Tepeciklioğlu, 2016: 12). Contemporary studies on Africa are comple-

mented by studies that “return” to the Ottoman past and historically document the Ottoman Empire’s involvement in Africa (Kaya and Warner, 2012: 3).

African Studies in Turkey are linked to university research centers for Africa (Tepeciklioğlu, 2016: 14; 15), and to several private think tanks such as TASAM (Turkish Asian Center for Strategic Studies,) which has been organizing an annual Turkish-African conference since 2005, ODAM (Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies) and others (ibid, 13), but also to state agencies, such as TIKA (Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency) and ASCA (African Solidarity and Cooperation Association). Turkish academic diplomacy includes the provision of scholarships to students, including those from Africa, with the number of the latter increasing rapidly over the last decade. In 1980, fewer than 100 African students were studying in Turkish universities. The economic cooperation that Turkey has established with African countries has led to an increase in the number of scholarships available to African students.<sup>17</sup>

The qualitative study by Dziwornu et al. (2016) is quite interesting. They analyzed the intentions of 15 African students studying at Süleyman Demirel University about their prospects and plans after their graduation. Despite the fact that most African countries are closely associated with some former colonial power, African



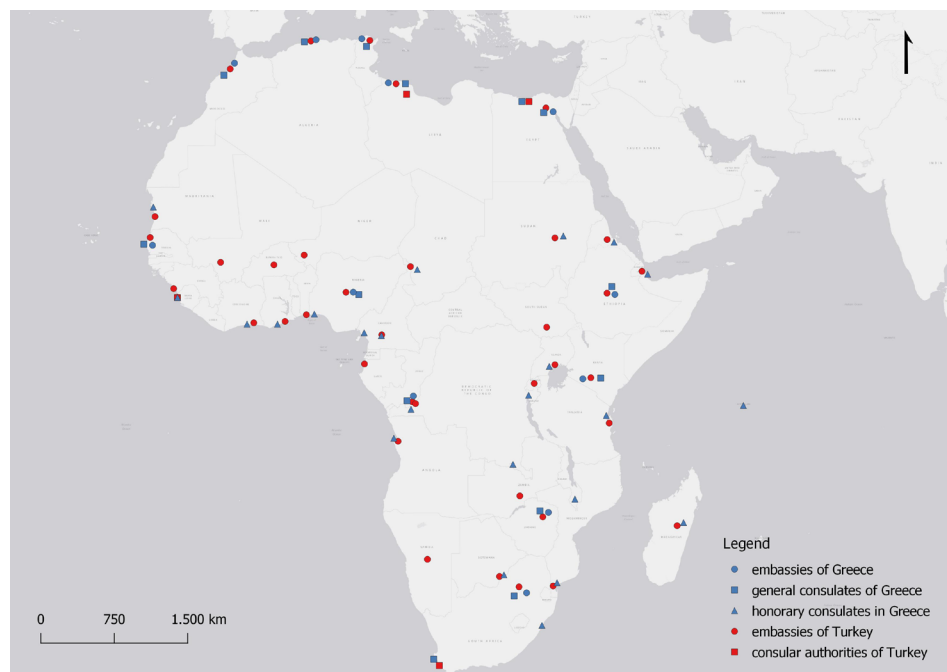
Map I: African diplomatic missions in Greece and in Turkey.  
Data source: Hellenic Republic, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Protocol directorate 2025 and <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/>  
© N. Myofa and N. Metaxides

students state that Western European countries do not attract them due to the lack of scholarships and the high cost of living there. The points that discourage African students from choosing France or Britain, for example, are the main reasons why they ultimately choose Turkey.

In conclusion, it can be said that the Turkish reality is favorable to the development of African Studies, both at the political and academic levels. The interaction between the two seems to be important.

#### 4. Concluding thoughts

Academic interest in African issues almost always arises from the relationship that has previously been established between the country in which this interest develops and Africa. In the case of the former colonial powers, this relationship was rooted in the colonial past, and any interests of Western European countries that were linked to this were tied to their knowledge of Africa. In the case of countries without a colonial past, this relationship may also be influenced by other factors, such as geographical, political, social, or cultural aspects, which do not seem to be characterized by purely academic interests.



Map 2: Embassies and consular authorities of Greece and Turkey in Africa.  
Data source: Hellenic Republic, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Protocol directorate 2025 and <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/>  
© N. Myofa and N. Metaxides

Among the countries with a non-colonial past are Greece and Turkey, which are the focus of our article. As far as Greece is concerned, although no department specializes in this academic field independently, interest in Africa is expressed by individual researchers and academics. This is not due to a lack of academic interest in African issues, but mainly to the fact that African studies – perhaps also due to the country's non-colonial past – is not a priority.

In the case of Turkey, the development of African studies is linked to both the traditional political ties of the Ottoman period and the contemporary political practices that Turkey is developing as a regional power seeking to play a significant role in the broader African and Eurasian regions. This political culture became the yeast that contributed to the development of the corresponding academic interest, confirming the fact that *“important events and developments in international politics and foreign policy have a fundamental impact on how those disciplines are studied and treated by academics”* (Tepeciklioğlu 2016: 4). The policy of cooperation promoted by the Turkish government is also transferred to the corresponding level of cooperation at the academic level, which is not developed in a corresponding institutional way in Greece.

Greece, despite its long-standing ties with the African continent, has only come into contact with African realities in the last decades, having been transformed from a country of origin for immigration to a receiving country for, among others, African immigrants and refugees (Papadopoulos and Fratsea, 2013). On the other hand, Turkey, despite its policy of openness toward Africa, is also confronted with African migration, which, to a significant extent, exploits the migration routes of the wider region en route to Europe (Wissink et al., 2018, 2020).

In examining the characteristics of African studies in Greece and Turkey, we find that although neither country has a colonial past, their perspectives on African issues are inevitably shaped by a form of “Eurocentrism.” This is due to the fact that Africa, in terms of its realities and cultures, is regarded as an “Other” that remains relatively unknown to their general and academic audiences.<sup>18</sup> This Eurocentrism is logically more pronounced in Greek affairs, given the role of the Greek diaspora in Africa in support of the colonial system, and is further underscored by Greece's accession to the European Union in 1981. In contrast, Turkey's approach to international relations does not prominently reflect Eurocentrism, or what might be more accurately described as ‘Western-centrism.’ This is largely due to its Eastern cultural traditions and its policies in Africa, which are characterized by a focus on fostering equal partnerships rather than colonialism. Cooperation between academic institutions in Turkey and Greece could enhance the field of African studies in Greece. Considering that the Greek government, particularly regarding African affairs, somewhat aligns with Turkey's approach – albeit from a distance – this collaboration could positively influence the academic landscape in both countries.

Knowledge about Africa produced in Greece is based on the fields of politics and international relations, anthropological knowledge related to the societies of the continent and to some extent on geography and history on issues concerning the

Greek diaspora on the Black Continent, but in recent years also on issues of African migration to Southern Europe, Turkey and the Balkans. Similar themes also shape research and teaching about Africa in Turkey. The relevant role played by the Greek diaspora in Africa for some scholars in Greece is matched by Turkey's growing political and economic interest in Africa in recent decades. On the other hand, the presence of African students, economists, migrants and asylum seekers in Greece and Turkey is a potential criterion for the development of the interest of these two countries in Africa. In the case of Turkey, this translates into political and diplomatic interest, which is hardly the case in Greece.

Despite the fact that African Studies was born in the colonial era, the African diasporic phenomenon, as well as the transnational movements of Africans over several decades, these latter have been a powerful factor in strengthening scholarly interest in Africa beyond colonial studies (Schramm, 2008). ✨

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> As an extension of African American studies, African Studies in the US followed the hegemonic role the country acquired after World War II (Martin and Young, 1984). The field of African Studies in China has grown steadily since the late 1990s, in a variety of disciplines while still maintaining a balance between practical and academic research (Anshan, 2005). Finally, for Japan, these studies have become increasingly important as a source of investment and foreign aid (Philips, 1997: 161) and are linked to scientific disciplines of relevance to it, such as earthquake studies (ibid, 163; 164).
- <sup>2</sup> The initial interest in Africa was geographical, especially at a time – the 19th century – when European public opinion was ignorant of the black continent. Until the 1950s, Africa was administered by the so-called colonial powers, mainly France and Britain, within a framework that defined the colonized as different from the colonizers, and thus their proper administration required their study. Since the 1960s, the colonial powers have withdrawn from Africa, but continue to exist more or less behind the scenes in the lives of their former colonies (Cooper, 2002).
- <sup>3</sup> It is important to mention that when we talk about Africa, we are essentially talking about sub-Saharan Africa.
- <sup>4</sup> Indicatively, translated into Greek, the works of Batṭūṭa, I. (2000). *Travels in Asia and Africa, 1325-1354*. Stoxastis; Kapinsky, R. (2009). *Ebony, the colour of Africa*. Metahmio Publishers; Cooper, Fr. (2023). *Africa since 1940: Yesterday and today*. Klidarithmos Publishers. There are also books by Greek scholars (Makris, 2015; Livieratos, 2013; Kefala, 2015; Tsekenis, 2020).
- <sup>5</sup> These are the “Institute of International Relations” (IIR), the “Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy” (ELIAMEP), the “International Centre for Black Sea Studies” and the “Centre for Mediterranean, Middle East and Islamic Studies” (KEMMIS).
- <sup>6</sup> Professor Makris –in a discussion we had with him– pointed out the security issues faced by the Greek doctoral candidates who might be invited to do fieldwork in Africa. Also, he pointed out the lack of organized institutions to support researchers, such as the “French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development” (IRD-Research Institute for Development) which is officially supported by the French Government and maintains cooperation strategies with universities and research institutions in Africa.
- <sup>7</sup> At the academic level, Greece's presence in the European family opens up –potentially– academic cooperation prospects in all scientific fields, through EU funding programs (Kraemer et al. 2018).

- <sup>8</sup> In September 1967, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands accused Greece of violating the European Convention on Human Rights at the European Commission of Human Rights. In 1969, the Junta reacted by withdrawing from the Council of Europe.
- <sup>9</sup> President Joseph Desire Mobutu of Zaire visited Greece in 1969 and President Jean Bedel Bokassa of the Central African Republic visited Greece in 1970 and 1972.
- <sup>10</sup> Greece as an EU member state participates in the growing number of agreements between the EU and African states, but there is no common policy at national level. Greece's main aspiration is the support of African countries to be elected to the non-permanent members of the Security Council for the period 2025-2026.
- <sup>11</sup> Besides, according to the 2021 census data, 23,515 people of African nationality reside in Greece. Of these, 27.8% are young Africans aged up to 24 years old (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2023).
- <sup>12</sup> In 1998 a general study on the Greek diaspora was carried out with European funding (Kazakos, 1998).
- <sup>13</sup> According to Tepeciklioğlu, (2016: 5) "*As of 2015, there are 27 graduate programs on European studies, with only three graduate programs on Africa – and one of these is combined with the neighboring Middle East region*". The first department of Middle Eastern and African Studies was established in 1982 at Gazi University in Ankara.
- <sup>14</sup> To increase its influence and presence in Africa, Turkey is increasing the number of its embassies in Africa. The number of embassies increased from just 3 in 1950 to 10 in the early 1990s, with the number soaring to 39 in 2019 (see <http://geopoliticalfutures.com/how-turkey-won-over-africa/> and Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs). However, the growth has remained static in the following six years, with the number reaching only 40 embassies by 2025 (Source: <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/>).
- <sup>15</sup> For example, at Istanbul Ticaret University there is an interdisciplinary master's level program which started in 2018.
- <sup>16</sup> In the period 1986-2014, 108 theses and dissertations were written on Africa. Of these, more than half were written between 2010-2014 (Tepeciklioğlu, 2016: 8).
- <sup>17</sup> The number of African students in Turkey between 1995 and 2008 did not exceed 100 per year, with the relative curve rising sharply after 2009 (see Figure 2. Number of African Students in Turkey from 1995-2014 in Dziwornu et al., 2016: 232). Between 1991 and 2013, 3,254 scholarships were awarded to African students, of which only 1,090 were awarded during 2014-2015 (Uchehara, 2010; Tepeciklioğlu, 2017).
- <sup>18</sup> The Turkish academic public, as we have already discussed in this paper, has a greater familiarity than the corresponding Greek one.

## References

- Abrahamsen, R. (2003). African Studies and the postcolonial challenge. *African Affairs* 102 (407), 189–210. <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adg001>
- Agathangelidou, M. (2003). *The Greek community of Libya from the beginning to the eve of the Second World War*. University Studio Press, Thessaloniki. (in Greek)
- Akono, M.F. and Métaxidès, N. (2017). Greek and Cameroonian Trade Relations and the Origins of Cameroon's Economic Elites (1920-1980). *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 50 (3), 517-531. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44723475>
- Angey, G. (2009). L'ouverture turque à l'Afrique: une évolution de la politique étrangère turque? *Observatoire de la vie politique turque*. Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes. <https://doi.org/10.58079/smsx>
- Angey, G. (2014). *La recomposition de la politique étrangère turque en Afrique subsaharienne. Entre diplomatie publique et acteurs privés*. Programme Afrique subsaharienne,

Ifri-Bruxelles. <https://www.ifri.org/fr/notes/la-recomposition-de-la-politique-etrangere-turque-en-afrique-subsaharienne-entre-diplomatie>

- Anshan, L. (2005). African Studies in China in the Twentieth Century: A Historiographical Survey. *African Studies Review* 48(1), 59–87. <https://doi.org/10.1353/arw.2005.0002>
- Basedau, M. (2020). Rethinking African Studies: Four Challenges and the Case for Comparative African Studies. *Africa Spectrum*, 55 (2), 194 - 206. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002039720945328>
- Bayram, M. (2020). Turkey and Africa in the Context of South-South Cooperation. *Current Research in Social Sciences* 6 (1), 39-51. <https://doi.org/10.30613/curesosc.594612>
- Bayram, M. (2022). Les impacts du printemps arabe sur l'équilibre des pouvoirs en Afrique et le partenariat turco-africain. *Akdeniz Havzası ve Afrika Medeniyetleri Dergisi* 4(2), 9-17. <https://doi.org/10.54132/akaf.1196587>
- Bilgic, A. and Nascimento, D. (2014). Turkey's new focus on Africa: causes and challenges. *Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Center*, Noref Policy Brief, 1-4.
- Binaté, I. (2019). La présence turque en Côte d'Ivoire contemporaine: entreprise transnationale au service de l'éducation, l'humanitaire et l'islam en Afrique de l'ouest. *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 53(2), 215–233. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00083968.2019.1597743>
- Bruce, B. (2012). Gérer l'islam à l'étranger: entre service public et outil de la politique étrangère turque. *Anatoli* 3, 131-147. <https://doi.org/10.4000/anatoli.433>
- Carmody, P. (2016). *The New Scramble for Africa*. Polity Press.
- Chaldeos, A. (2015). The French colonial policy in Tunisia between 1920 and 1930 and its influence on the Greek community. *The Journal of North African Studies* 21(3), 379 -391. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2015.1117390>
- Chaldeos, A. (2018). The Greek Community in Sudan at the time of the Mahdia, 1885-1898. *Sudan Studies* 58, 17-28.
- Chigozie, E. and Yilmaz, M. (2014). Turkey's Strategic Economic Relations with Africa: Trends and Challenges. *Journal of Economics and Political Economy* 1 (2), 216-230. <https://doi.org/10.1453/jepe.vli2.66>
- Condominas, G. (1968). Introduction à une étude sur l'émigration Grecque à Madagascar. In: Peristiany, J. G. (dir.). *Contributions to Mediterranean sociology: Mediterranean rural communities and social change*, Mouton, Paris.
- Cooper, F. (2002). *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present*. Cambridge University Press.
- Copinschi, P. and Noël, P. (2005). L'Afrique dans la géopolitique mondiale du pétrole. *Afrique contemporaine* 216, 29-42.
- Courade, G. (dir.) (2006). *L'Afrique des idées reçues*. éditions Belin.
- Dalachanis, A. (2017). *The Greek Exodus from Egypt: Diaspora Politics and Emigration, 1937–1962*. Berghahn, New York.
- Davidson, B. (1997). *Africa – History of a continent*. Aiolos, Athens. (in Greek)
- Dziwornu, M. G., Yakar, M., and Temurçin, K. (2016). Migration Intentions of International Students in Turkey: A Case Study of African Students at Süleyman Demirel University. *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* (38), 227-250.
- Enwere, Ch. and Yilmaz, M. (2014). Turkey's Strategic Economic Relations with Africa: Trends and Challenges. *Journal of Economics and Political Economy* 1(2), 216-230.
- Hadjiiosif, C. (1981). *La colonie grecque en Egypte 1833-1856*. Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Paris –Sorbonne.
- Hassiotis, I. (1993) (Ed.). *Overview of the history of the modern Greek diaspora*. Vanias, Thessaloniki. (in Greek)
- Hazar, N. and Tepeciklioğlu, E. (2021). Turkey-Africa Relations: A Retrospective Analysis. In: Tepeciklioğlu E. E. and Tepeciklioğlu A. O. *Turkey in Africa. A New Emerging Power?* Routledge, New York.

- Heldring, L. and Robinson, J. A. (2012). Colonialism and Development in Africa (working paper 18566). *National Bureau of Economic Research*. <https://www.nber.org/papers/w18566>
- Hellenic Statistical Authority (2023). *Census Results of population and housing ELSTAT 2021*. Available at [http://dlib.statistics.gr/Book/GRESYE\\_02\\_0101\\_00106.pdf](http://dlib.statistics.gr/Book/GRESYE_02_0101_00106.pdf)
- Hill, J. (2005). Beyond the Other? A postcolonial critique of the failed state thesis. *African Identities* 3(2), 139–154. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14725840500235381>
- Huliaras, A. (1997). *The collapse of the state in Africa (in Greek)*. Stohastis, Athens. (in Greek)
- Huliaras, A. (1998). The ‘Anglosaxon Conspiracy’: French Perceptions of the Great Lakes Crisis». *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 36 (4), 593-609. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/161926>
- Huliaras, A. (2012). The Illusion of Unitary Players and the Fallacy of Geopolitical Rivalry: The European Union and China in Africa. *The Round Table* 101(5), 425–434. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00358533.2012.713232>
- Huliaras, A. and Magliveras, K. (2008). In Search of a Policy: EU and US Reactions to the Growing Chinese Presence in Africa. *European Foreign Affairs Review* 3, 399-420. <https://doi.org/10.54648/eerr2008029>
- Huliaras, A. and Magliveras, K. (2011). «The End of an Affair? Libya and Sub-Saharan Africa». *The Journal of North African Studies* 16 (2), 167-181. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2011.534335>
- Huliaras, A. and Petropoulos, S. (2015). *Africa and the Others [Undergraduate textbook]*. Kallipos, Open Academic Editions. (in Greek) <http://dx.doi.org/10.57713/kallipos-779>
- Kamitsis, G. (1961). *The Sudan and its Hellenism*. Athens. (in Greek)
- Karanasou, F. (1999). The Greeks in Egypt: From Mohammed Ali to Nasser, 1805–1961. In: Clogg, R. (Ed.). *The Greek Diaspora in the Twentieth Century*, Basingstoke, 24–57.
- Kaya, K. and Warner, J. (2012). Turkey and Africa: A Rising Military Partnership? *Foreign Military Studies Office*, 1-15.
- Kazakos, P. (1998) (Ed.). *Hellenic Diaspora in African countries*. Published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece and the General Secretariat of Hellenic Diaspora, Athens. (in Greek)
- Kazdaghli, H. (2000). Communautés méditerranéennes de Tunisie: les Grecs de Tunisie, du millet-i-rum à l’assimilation française: 17<sup>e</sup> - 20<sup>e</sup> siècles. *Le Phare ecclésiastique*. Revue théologique du Patriarcat d’Alexandrie, 111-141.
- Kefala, B. (2015). *North Africa, Domestic politics – Regional and International Relations*. Papazisis, Athens. (in Greek)
- Kessi, S., Marks, Z. and Ramugondo, E. (2020). Decolonizing African Studies. *Critical African Studies* 12(3), 271–282. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21681392.2020.1813413>
- Kitroeff, A. (1989). *The Greeks in Egypt 1919-1937: ethnicity and class*. Ithaca Press, London.
- Kitroeff, A. (2019). *The Greeks and the Making of Modern Egypt*. The American University in Cairo Press.
- Korma, L. (2017). The historiography of the Greek Diaspora and migration in the twentieth century. *Historiein* 16 (1-2), 47-73. <https://doi.org/10.12681/historiein.8778>
- Köse, M. (2021). Boundaries of the Turkish Diaspora. *Turkish Journal of Diaspora Studies* 1(1), 64-79. <https://doi.org/10.52241/TJDS.2021.0005>
- Kraemer-Mbula, E., Vaitsas, C., & Essegbey, G. O. (2018). The dynamics of EU-Africa research and innovation cooperation programmes. In: *Africa-Europe Research and Innovation Cooperation: Global Challenges, Bi-Regional Responses*, 39-63. Palgrave Macmillan. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69929-5\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69929-5_3)
- Lazidou, E. (2004). La diaspora grecque au Kénia et en Tanzanie: identité, formation et organisation en réseaux. *Les Cahiers de l’Afrique de l’Est* 24, 2-26.
- Le Gouriellec, S. (2022) (Ed.). *Géopolitique de l’Afrique*. Presses Universitaires de France.

- Livieratos, D. (2013) (Ed.). *Introduction to the History of Africa, the English and French colonial systems*. Koukkida, Athens. (in Greek)
- Lonsdale, J. (2005). African Studies, Europe & Africa. *Africa Spectrum* 40 (3), 377–402. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40175091>
- Magliveras, K. D. and Naldi, G. J. (2013). The International Criminal Court's Involvement with Africa: Evaluation of a Fractious Relationship. *Nordic Journal of International Law* 82(3), 417-446.
- Magliveras, K. D. and Naldi, G. J. (2024). *The African Union (AU)*. Wolters Kluwer edition.
- Makris, G. P. (1996). Slavery, Possession and History: The Construction of the Self among Slave Descendants in the Sudan. *Africa* 66 (2), 159–182. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1161315>
- Makris, G. P. (2000). *Changing Masters: Spirit Possession and Identity Construction Among Slave Descendants and Other Subordinates in the Sudan*. Evanston, IL, Northwestern University Press.
- Makris, G. (2015). *The street of the spirits, Sufism, spiritualism, and magic in Sudan*. Patakis, Athens (in Greek).
- Mantzaris, E. (1980). Greek rural settlement in Southern Rhodesia 1890-1930. *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*. <https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC128646>
- Mantzaris, E. (1984). The Greek miners in the Transvaal, South Africa: A socio historical investigation 1902-1913, *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* XI (1), 25-37.
- Markakis, J. (1968). *An Interpretation of Political Tradition in Ethiopia*.
- Markakis, J. (1987). Ethiopia: Conquest and Colonization. *The Journal of African History* 28, 168 - 169.
- Markakis, J. (1993). Eritrea: the transitional period. *Review of African Political Economy* 20, 131-134.
- Markakis, J. (1996). The Horn of Africa. *Review of African Political Economy* 23, 469-474.
- Markakis, J. (1998). *Greeks in black Africa, 1890-1990*. Trohalia, Athens.
- Martin, G. and Young, C. (1984). The Paradox of Separate and Unequal: African Studies and Afro-American Studies. *The Journal of Negro Education* 53(3), 257–267.
- Métaxidès, N. (2010a), *La diaspora hellénique en Afrique noire: Esprit d'entreprise, culture et développement des Grecs au Cameroun*, Ph.D. dissertation, University Michel de Montaigne, Bordeaux 3.
- Métaxidès, N. (2010b). Les Grecs du Cameroun, une diaspora d'entrepreneurs (1950-2007). *Revue Européenne des Migrations internationales* 26 (2), 169-189.
- Minawi, M. (2016). *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa: Empire and Diplomacy in the Sahara and the Hijaz*. Redwood City, Stanford University Press.
- Natsoulas, T. (1975). *The Greeks in Ethiopia: Economic, Political and Social Life 1740-1936*, Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse university.
- Nikolaidès, K. (1923). *Guide to Hellenic Communities in South Africa*. Johannesburg. (in Greek)
- Ocheni, S. I. and Nwankwo, B. C. (2012). Analysis of Colonialism and Its Impact in Africa. *Cross-cultural Communication* 8, 46-54.
- Ogunyankin, G.A. (2019). Postcolonial Approaches to the Study of African Politics. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.830>
- Pahtikos, A. (1938). *Greeks in Africa*. Vol 1 & 2, Johannesburg. (in Greek)
- Panoutsopoulos, A. (2018). “Opening” of the junta in Africa, Athens, *newspaper Kathimerini*. (in Greek)
- Panoutsopoulos, A. (2022). *Greece, Cyprus and the Congo Crisis, 1960-1964*, Ph.D dissertation, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. (in Greek)

- Papadopoulos, A. and Fratsea, L. (2013) Between insecurity and integration: Sub-Saharan African migrants in crisis-stricken Greece. *Regions The Newsletter of the Regional Studies Association* 289, 1367-3882. DOI: 10.1080/13673882.2013.10662629
- Papamihail, M. (1951). *Pan-African Hellenism*, Alexandria. (in Greek)
- Philips, J. E. (1997). African Studies in Japan. *African Studies Review* 40 (3), 161-180.
- Power, M. and Mohan, G. (2010). Towards a Critical Geopolitics of China's Engagement with African Development. *Geopolitics* 15(3), 462–495.
- Prokopiou, S. (1930). *The Greeks in Abyssinia*. Athens. (in Greek)
- Sakéllaridès, G. (1960). *The Greeks of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Central Africa, 1959-1960*. Athens. (in Greek)
- Schramm, K. (2007). Leaving area studies behind: the challenge of diasporic connections in the field of African studies. *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal*, 1(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17528630701676588>
- Skalník, P. (2016). "African Studies in the other Europe. A Legitimate Perspective on Africa." *Politeja*, 42, 7–16.
- Soulogiannis, E. (1999). *The position of the Greeks in Egypt*, Athens. (in Greek)
- Táíwò, O. (2010). *How Colonialism Preempted Modernity in Africa*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- Tarrósy, I. and Solymári, D. (2022) Relations with the Global South, solidarity and pragmatism in Hungarian foreign policy since the 1960s – a focus on Africa. *Eastern Journal of European Studies*, 13(1), 106–122.
- Tepeciklioğlu, E.E. (2016). African Studies in Turkey. *Uluslararası İlişkiler* 13 (50), 3- 19.
- Tepeciklioğlu, E.E. (2017). Economic relations between turkey and Africa: challenges and prospects. *Journal of Sustainable Development Law and Policy* 8(1), 1–33.
- Tsékénis, E. (2010a). La 'frontière africaine' revisitée : 'ethnogenèse' dans les Grassfields de l'est (le cas de la chefferie bamiléké de Batié). *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 44 (1), 142- 177.
- Tsékénis, E. (2010b). Kinship values and the production of 'locality' in pre-colonial Cameroon Grassfields (West Cameroon). *Suomen Antropologi: Journal of the Finnish Anthropological Society* 35 (3), 5-27.
- Tsékénis, E. (2015). 'Children are the Food Sent by God': Culinary Imagery and the Making of Persons in the Cameroon Grassfields. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 21 (2), 331-351.
- Tsékénis, E. 2020. *Africa and its anthropologies, colonial and post-colonial ethnographies*. Edition Patakis, Athens. (in Greek)
- Uchegara, K.E. (2010). Economic Cooperation and Scholarships to African Countries: The Case of Turkish Government Scholarships for African Countries. *Istanbul Ticaret Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 9(17), 67-82.
- Wissink, M. and Mazzucato, V. (2018). In transit: Changing social networks of sub-Saharan African migrants in Turkey and Greece. *Social Networks* 53, 30-41. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socnet.2017.03.005>
- Wissink, M., Düvell, E. and Mazzucato, V. (2020). The Evolution of Migration Trajectories of sub-Saharan African Migrants in Turkey and Greece: The Role of Changing Social Networks and Critical Events. *Geoforum* 116, 282-291. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2017.12.004>

