

The shift of African studies towards open access, promises and paradoxes: recent experiences from France and East Africa

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Nairobi
IFRA



IFRA-Nigeria

Books imprints & journals hosted and supported by the French research institutes in subsaharian Africa (CNRS units)

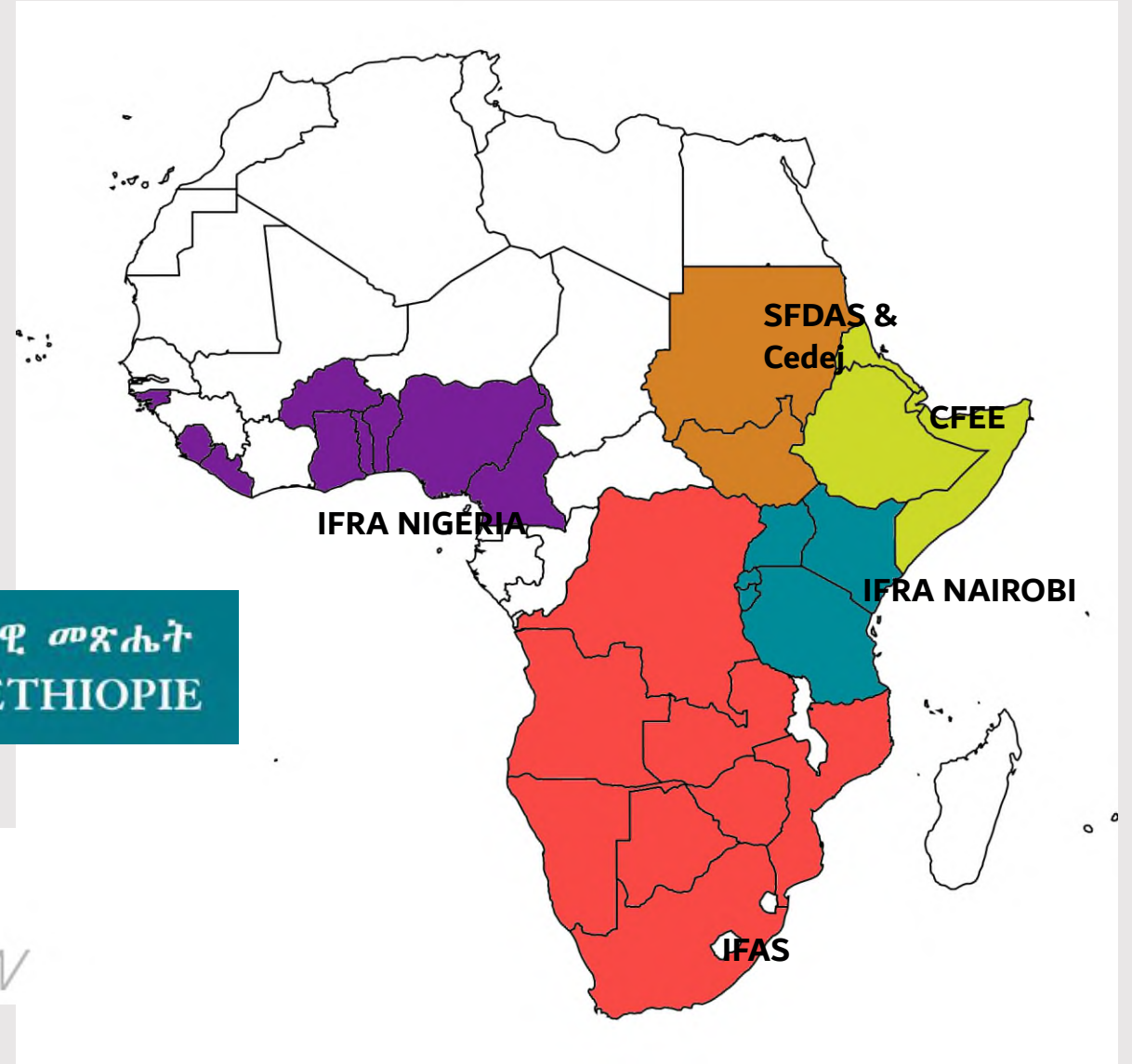
Open access diamond in African studies

AfricaE



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ANNALES D'ÉTHIOPIE

LES CAHIERS
D'AFRIQUE
DE L'EST THE EAST AFRICAN REVIEW



A long history of supporting & publishing fieldwork research

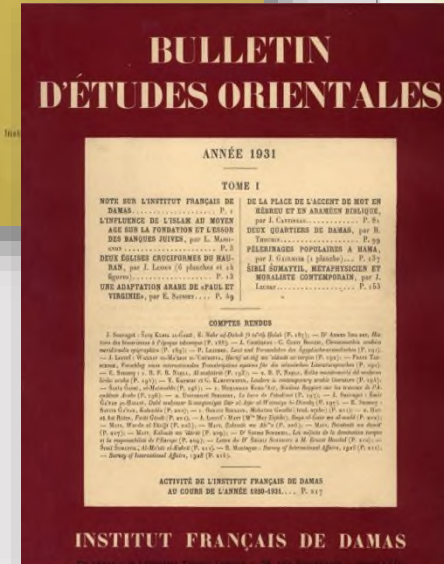
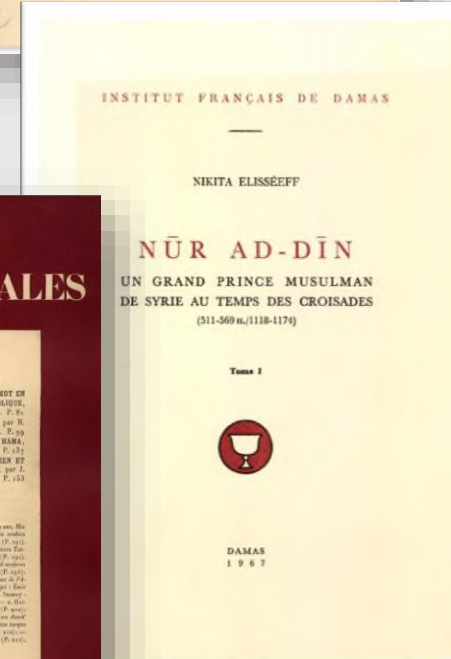
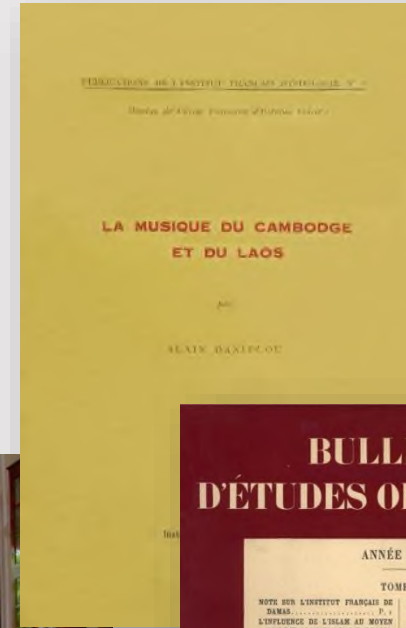
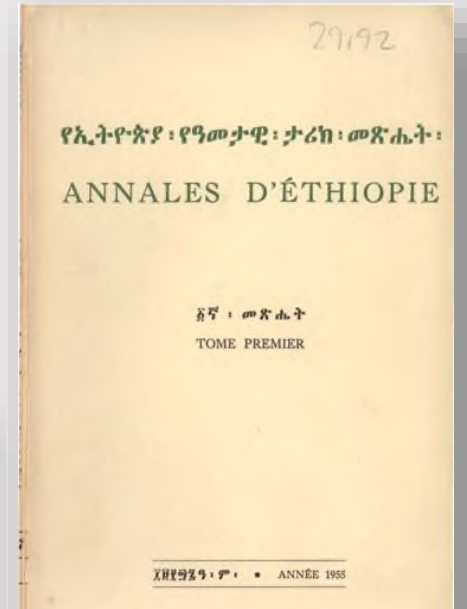
Supporting research:



Creating libraries



Publishing journals and books (in subsaharian Africa since 1955)



Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

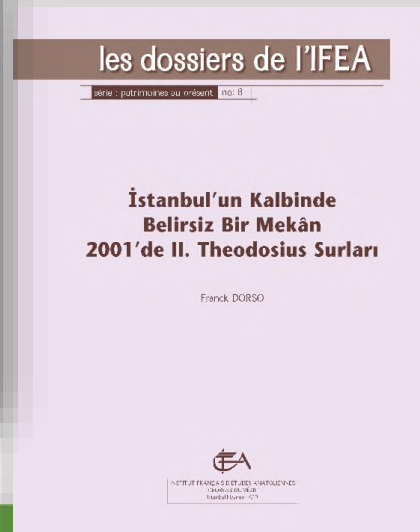
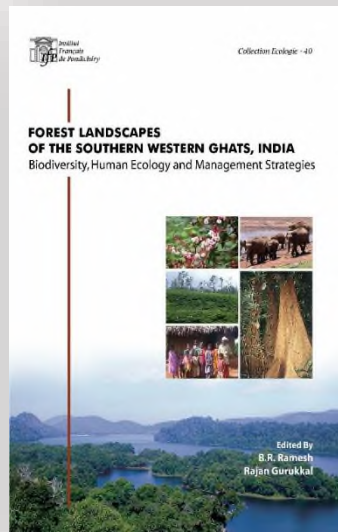


Pondicherry, India

Evolution to multilingual publications & open access

Diversifying languages and authorship

... Early move to open access (since 2000)



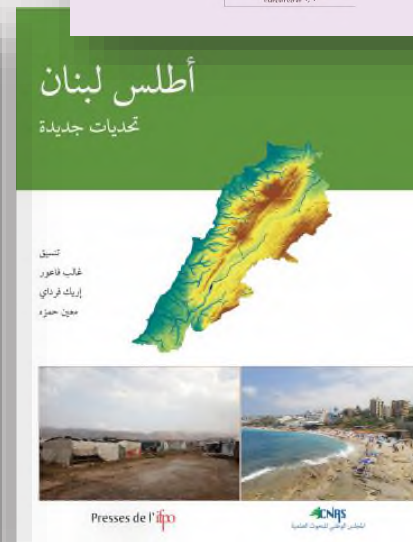
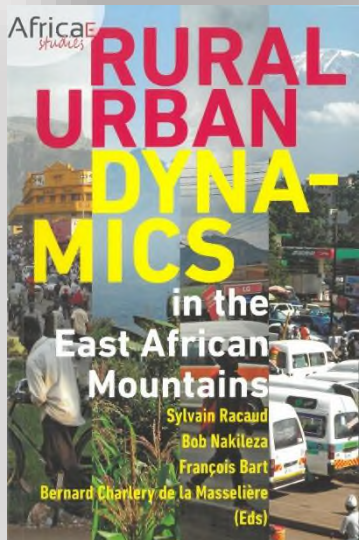
JSTOR



OpenEdition Journals:
9 journals from FRIA

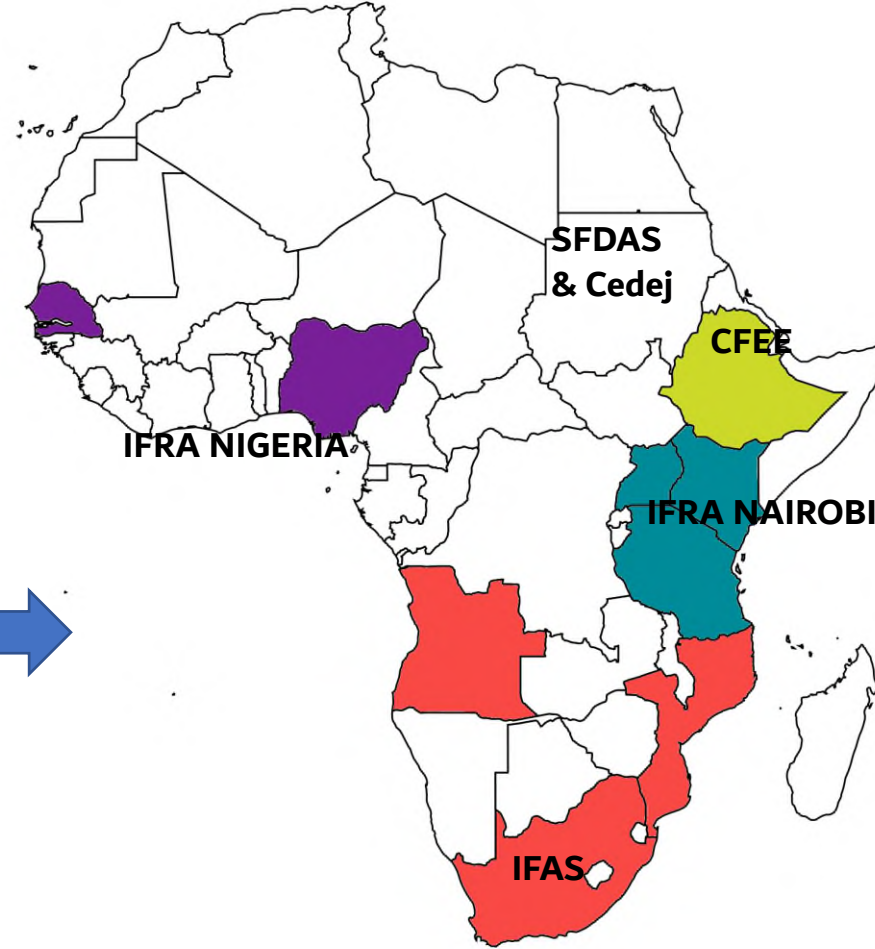


OpenEdition Books :
13 book imprints & 900 books
(7% of the total catalogue)



Africae/CFEE: setting up a copublication policy

DOAB in Africa: meeting African publishers, creating a network for strengthening OA dissemination



1. Nena, Sénégal
2. Noirledge, Nigeria
3. Addis Ababa University Press, ET
4. Academy of Science, ET
5. Forum for Social Studies, ET
6. Twaweza, Kenya
7. University of Nairobi Press, KE
8. Moi University Press, KE
9. Mkuki na Nyota, TZ
10. Fountain Publishers, UG
11. African Studies Bookstore, UG
12. Makerere University Press, UG
13. Aframo-CHS, Mozambique
14. Centro de Estudos Africanos, Angola

Allies on Open Access:

1. Wits U. Press, SA
2. African Minds, SA

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TWAVEZA COMMUNICATIONS
Working Towards a Better World



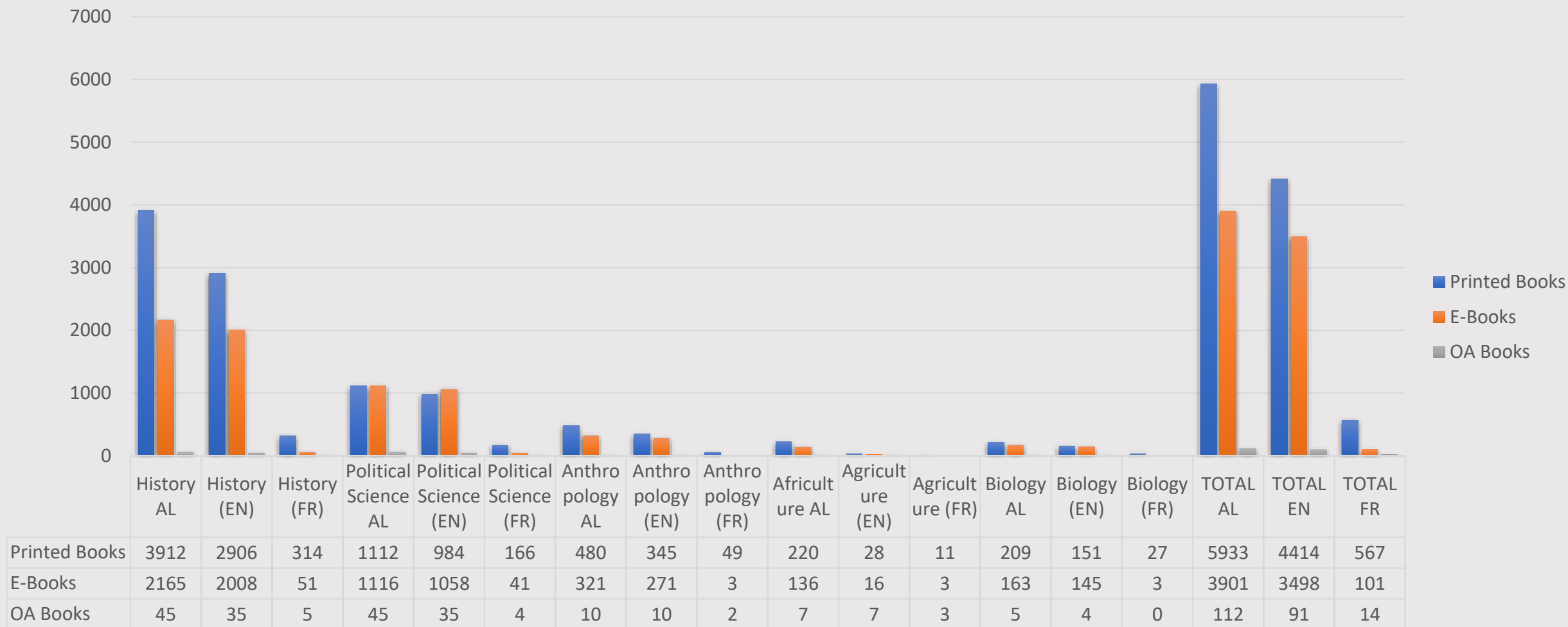


- 1/ What is OA books landscape on African Studies?**
- 2/ Do OA have really an impact on African societies?**

1/ What is OA books landscape on African Studies?

.. A small isle in a big industry

Books Published in 2022 on "Africa" Subject (Worldcat)



Sources: <https://search.worldcat.org/> ;

https://search.worldcat.org/search?q=k%3AAfric%2A*+OR+k%3AAfrik%2A*+OR+k%3AAfriq%2A*+OR+ti%3AAfric%2A*+OR+ti%3AAfrik%2A*+OR+ti%3AAfriq%2A*+OR+su%3AAfrica&audience=nonJuv&datePublished=2022-2022&itemSubType=book-digital&topic=16000000&itemSubTypeModified=book-digital&inLanguage=eng&openAccess=true

Very few books in OA on African studies.. Mostly published in Europe and USA

Example of OA African History in 2022: all publishers from Europe or USA

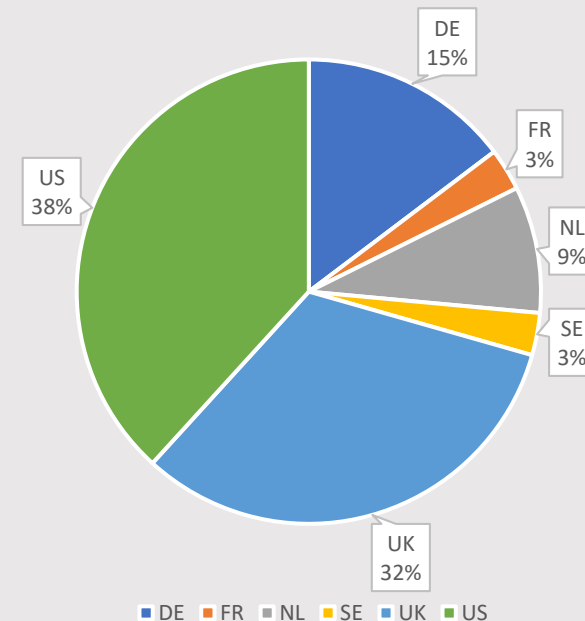
Type of Publishers:

- Mostly :
- 1/ University Presses in US and Europe (Cornell, Manchester, Indiana; Amsterdam, Leiden.. And Africae!)
- 2/ Companies in US and Europe (Routledge, James Currey, De Gruyter...)

Profile of OA publishers in African history (2022)



Countries of OA Publishers in African history (2022)



Sources: <https://search.worldcat.org/> ;

https://search.worldcat.org/search?q=k%3AAfric*%20OR%20su%3AAfrica&datePublished=2022-2022&inLanguage=eng&topic=28000000&audience=nonJuv&openAccess=true&groupRelatedEditions=true&orderBy=library

Very few books in OA on African studies.. Mostly published in Europe and USA.. But also some in Africa

Codesria, Senegal

African Minds, SA

AOSIS Publishing, SA

UNISA Press, SA

Wits University Press, SA

UJ Press, SA

These are the only African publishers in the first 500 results for OA books – non-fiction, keyword: afri* ; most of them from Codesria, then 5 publishers from South Africa. They represent less around 5% of these books.

Do we have the right method to search for OA books in Africa? Wouldn't there be a lot more books under the radar of cataloging tools like Worldcat or directories like DOAB? Shouldn't we be doing more fieldwork to identify OA books?

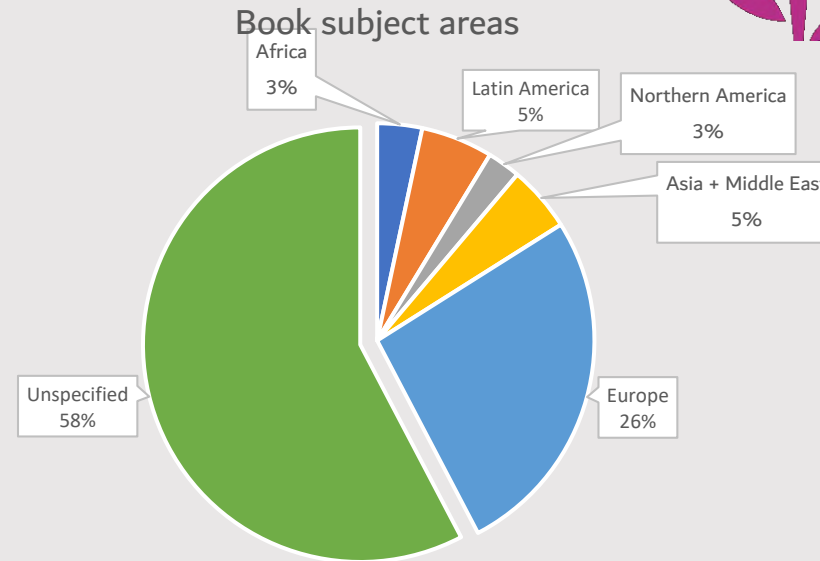
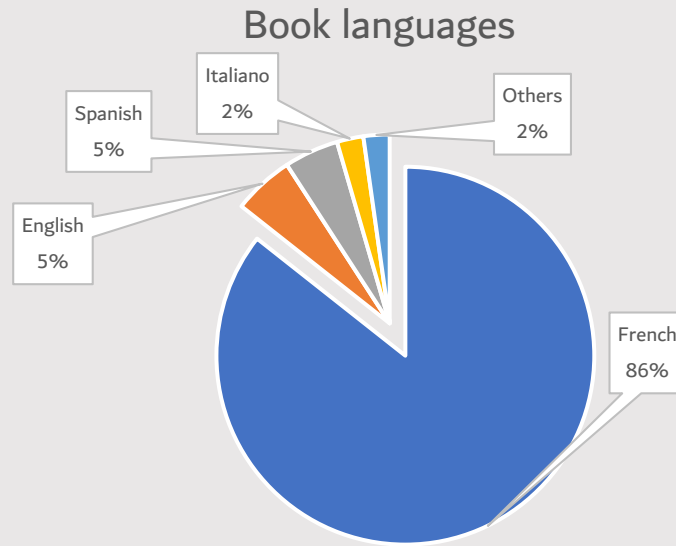
Sources: <https://search.worldcat.org/> ; https://search.worldcat.org/search?q=kw%3Aafri*+&itemSubType=book-printbook%2Cbook-digital%2Cbook-mic%2Cbook-thesis%2Cbook-mss%2Cbook-braille&itemType=book&limit=10&offset=331&openAccess=true

2/ Do OA have really an impact on African societies?

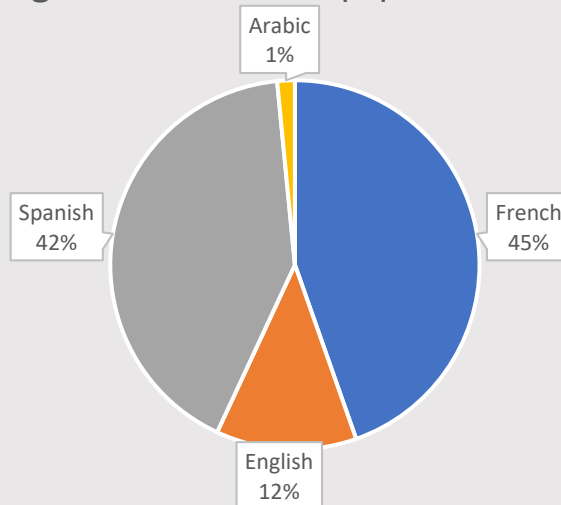


Stats from:

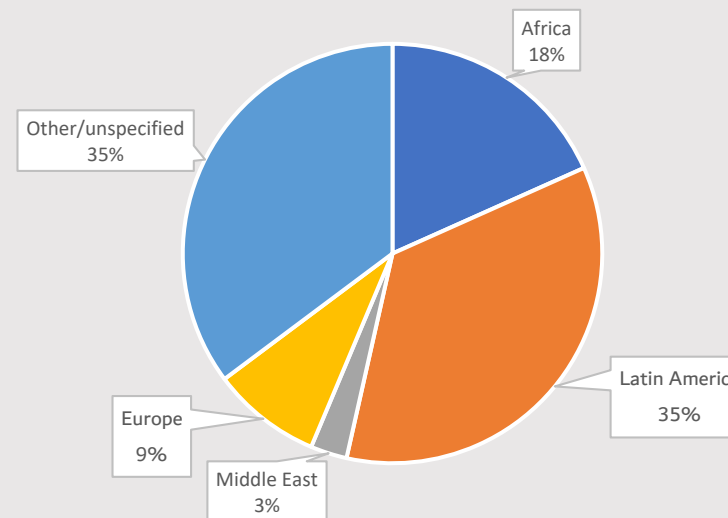
<http://books.openedition.org/>



Languages of the 1% most popular books (25k+)



Subject areas of the 1% most viewed books

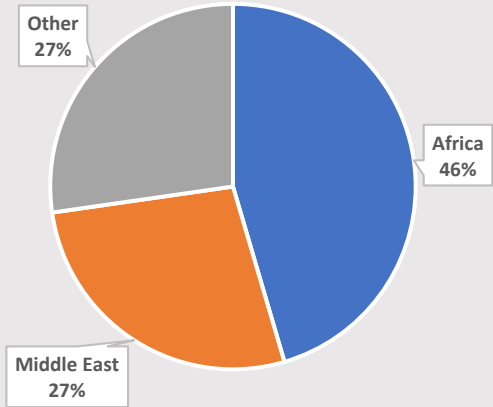


OpenEdition Books' catalog is largely in French (85%). Southern" themes make up 16% of the catalog, "Africa" 3%.

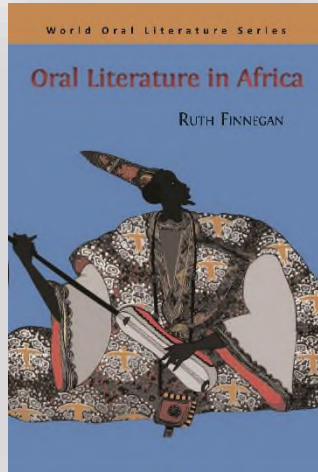
The most popular books (on average 100k / year, 25k-400k) are much less in French (45%) and deal much more with Southern themes (56%) and Africa (18%).

Impressive exposure for works on the Souths in OA

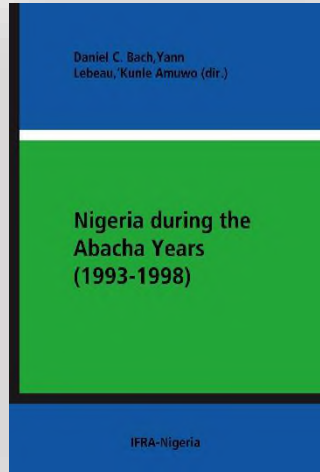
70k+ views, English-written
(2019-2021)



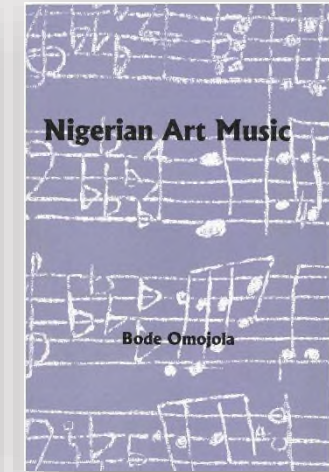
Most-viewed book on Literature (English) (150k per year)



Most-viewed book on Politics (English)

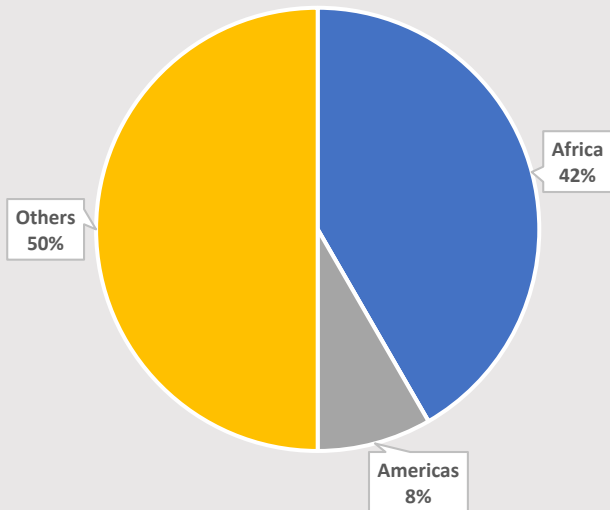


Most-viewed book on Art (English)

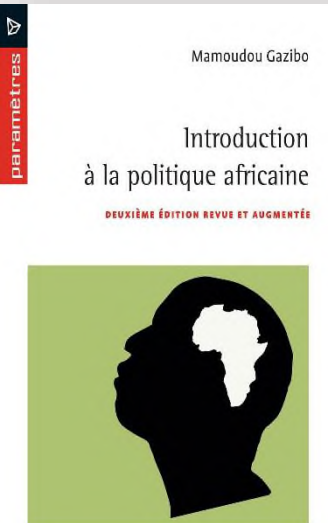


The "Africa" theme is even more prevalent in the most-viewed French and English books (42% and 46%, although they make up 3% and 10% of each language catalog).

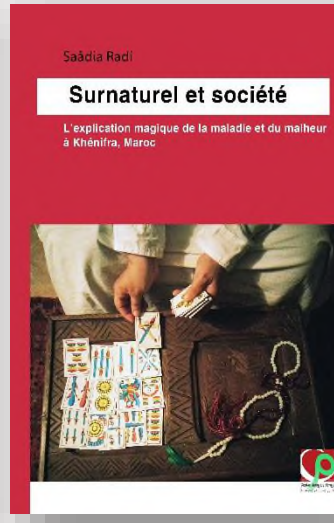
100k+- views, French-written (2019-2021)



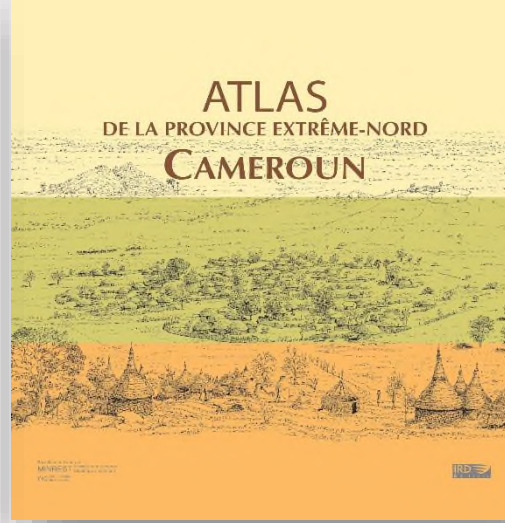
Most-viewed book on Politics (French)



Most-viewed book on Anthropology (French)

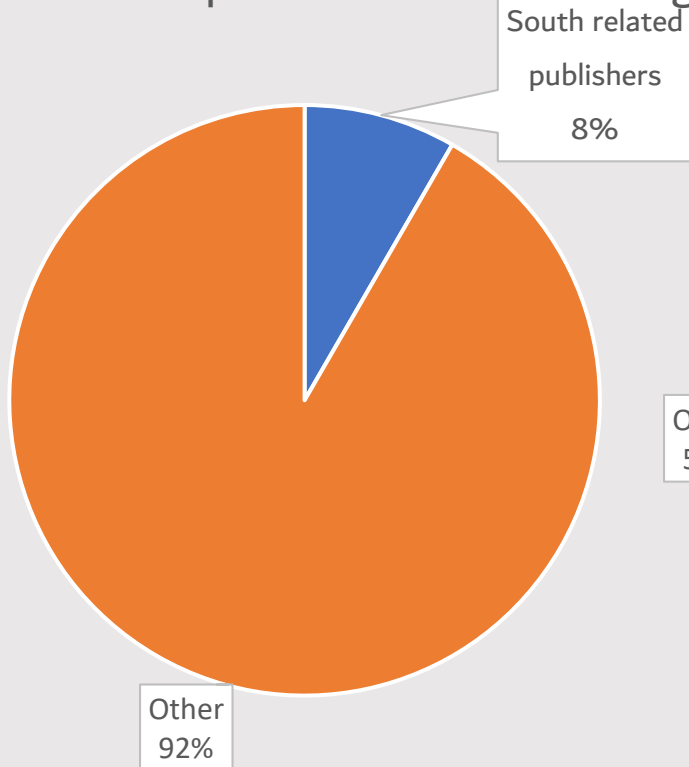


2d most-viewed book on Geography (French)

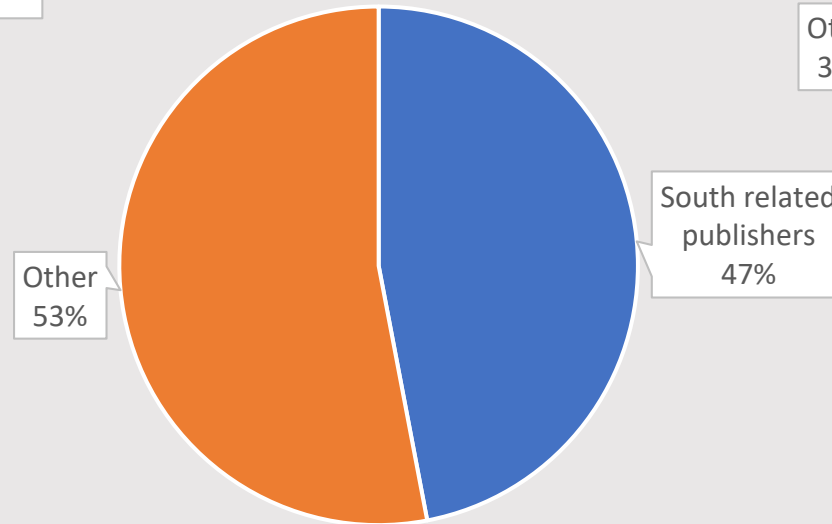


Publishers dedicated to publishing research on the South (Africa / Latin America / Middle East) are largely over-represented in the top views and downloads.

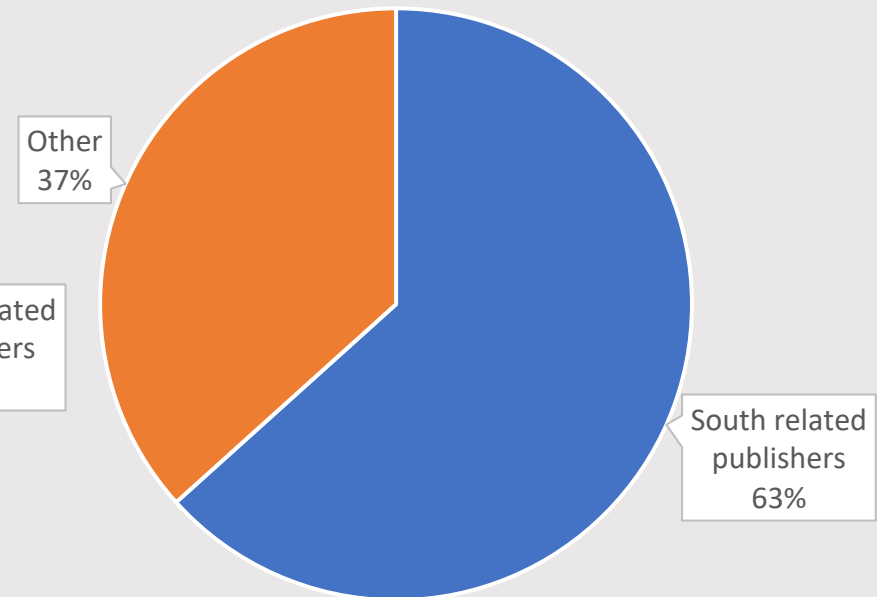
South-related publishers in the catalog



100 most viewed books – 60k+/year



30 most viewed books - 100k+/year



Impressive exposure for OA Publications on the Souths (Journals)

2nd article in French, 1st in anthropology (Cameroon)

Séverin Cécile Abega et Esthelle Kouakam Magne, « Le premier rapport sexuel chez les jeunes filles à Yaoundé », *Cahiers d'études africaines*, 181 | 2006. <https://doi.org/10.4000/etudesafricaines.15132>

3rd article in French, 1st in history (West Africa) Constant Hamès, « Entre recette magique d'Al-Bûnî et prière islamique d'al-Ghazali : textes talismaniques d'Afrique occidentale. », *Systèmes de pensée en Afrique noire*, 12 | 1993. <https://doi.org/10.4000/span.1344>

8th article in French, 2nd in philosophy (Cameroon)

Samba Diakitè, "La problématique de l'ethnophilosophie dans la pensée de Marcien Towa", *Le Portique* (2007). <https://doi.org/10.4000/leportique.1381>

3rd article in English, 1st in political science

Austin, Gareth. 2010. « African Economic Development and Colonial Legacies ». *International Development Policy / Revue Internationale de Politique de Développement*, n° 1 (mars): 11-32. <https://doi.org/10.4000/poldev.78>.

5th article in English, 1st in sociology (Zimbabwe)

Guillermo Martínez Pérez, Concepción Tomás Aznar and Harriet Namulondo, "It's All About Sex: What urban Zimbabwean men know of labia minora elongation", *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos*, 27 | 2014. <https://doi.org/10.4000/cea.1522>

6th article in English, 1st in Anthropology (Niger)

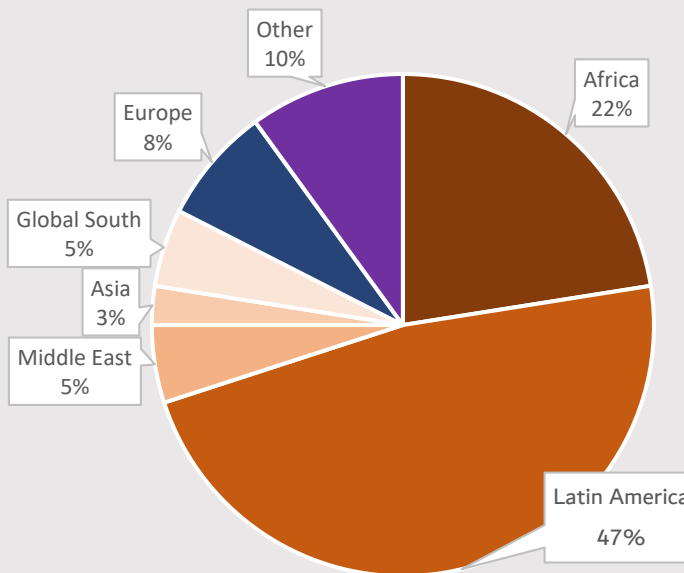
Adeline Masquelier, "Witchcraft, Blood-Sucking Spirits, and the Demonization of Islam in Dogondoutchi, Niger", *Cahiers d'études africaines*, 189-190 | 2008. <https://doi.org/10.4000/etudesafricaines.10302>

Most consulted journal issues (any language)

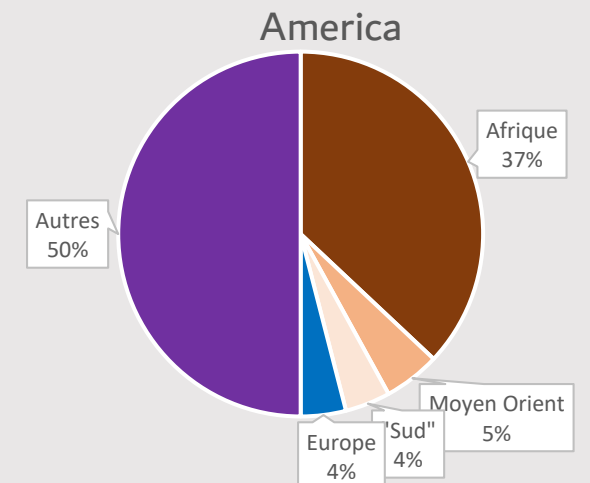
Africa: 50 years of independence. *International Development Policy / Revue internationale de politique de développement*, 1 | 2010.

<https://doi.org/10.4000/poldev.75>

40 most viewed articles (70k+)

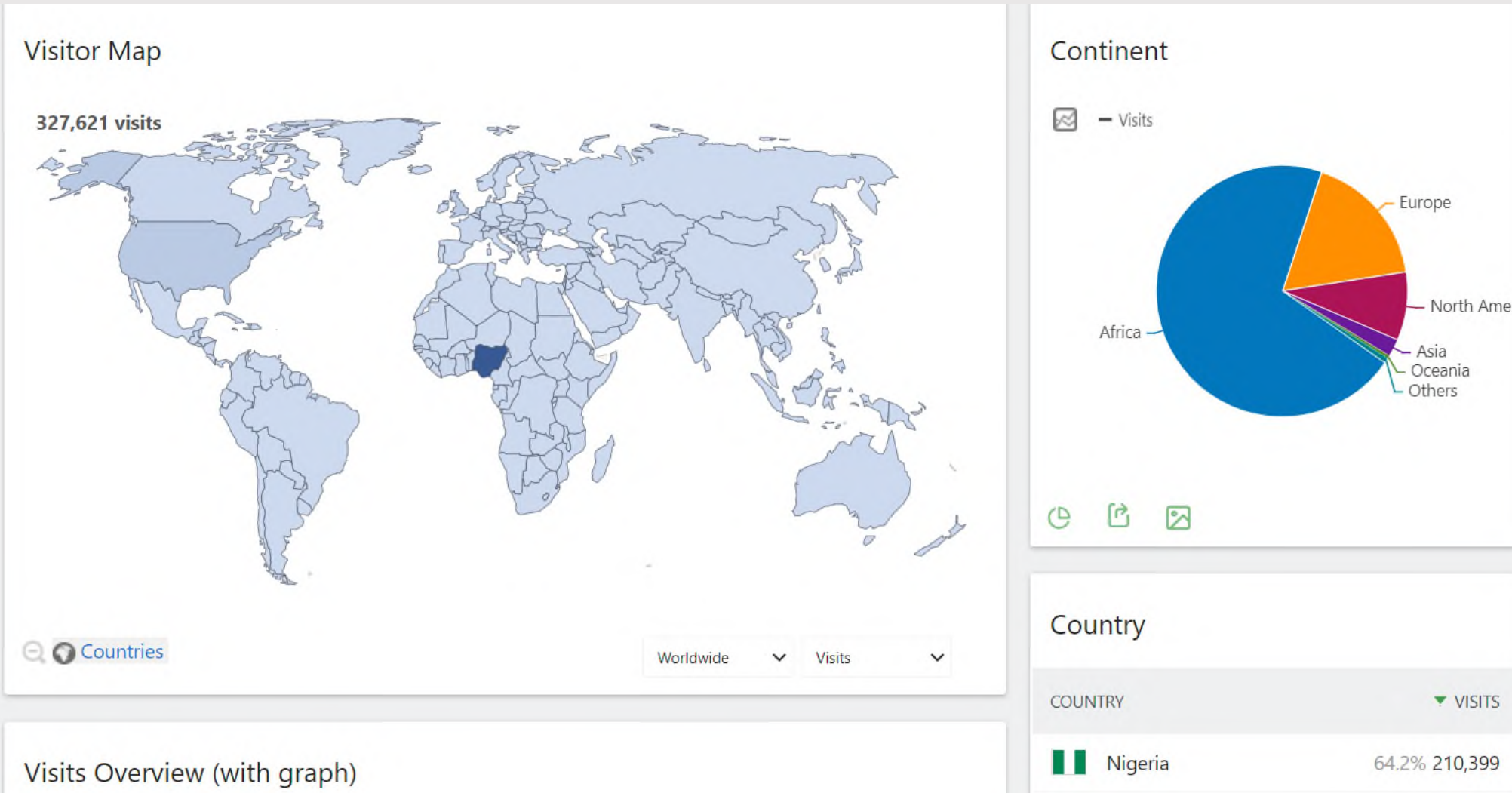


Most-viewed article (40k+) without Latin



Impressive exposure for OA Publications on the Souths (Books)

Nigeria-related book collections, in English

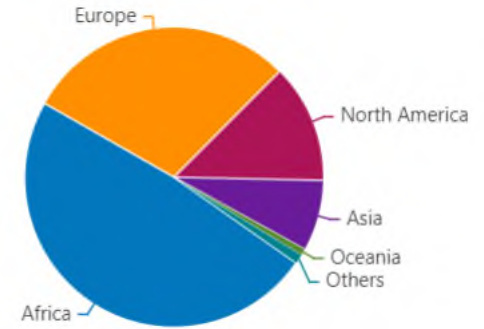


Impressive exposure for OA Publications on the Souths (Books)

Eastern (and Southern) African related collections, in French, English, Portuguese

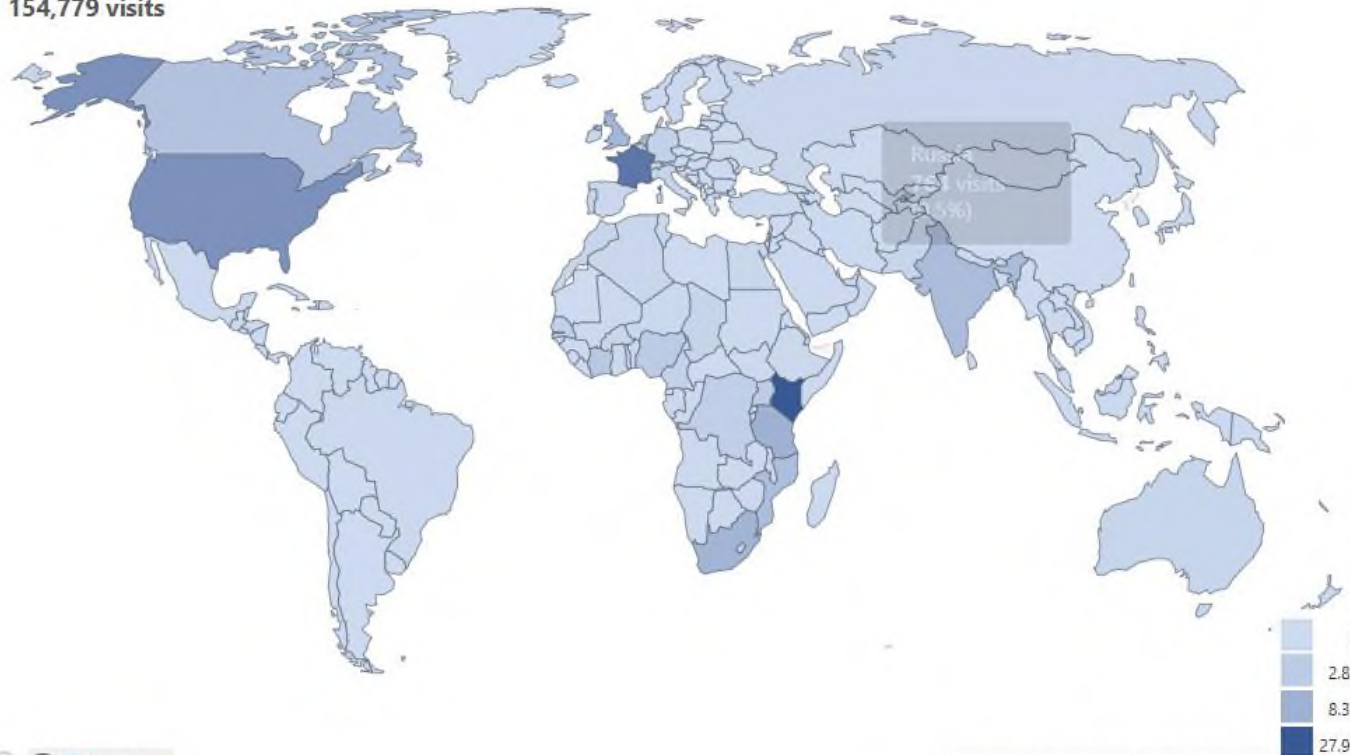
Continent

📄 — Visits



Visitor Map

154,779 visits



COUNTRY

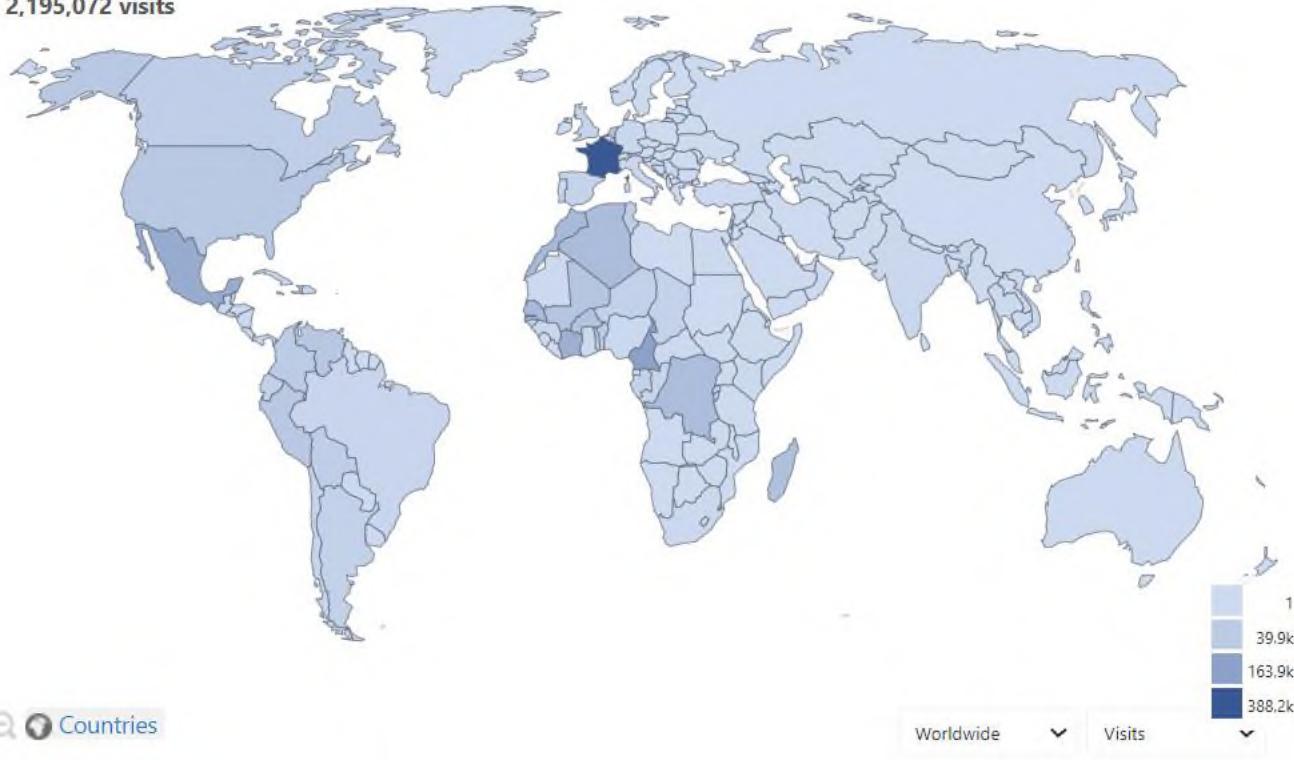
	Kenya	18% 27,919
	France	13.6% 20,993
	United States	9.7% 15,037
	Tanzania	5.4% 8,335
	South Africa	5% 7,760
	United Kingdom	4.6% 7,156
	Netherlands	4.2% 6,521
	India	3.9% 6,093
	Mozambique	3.7% 5,675
	Canada	3% 4,666

Impressive exposure for OA Publications on the Souths (Books)

Development studies in French (mostly) and Spanish, on Af. and LA

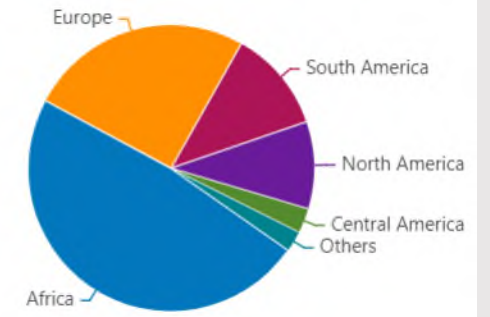
Visitor Map

2,195,072 visits



Continent

Visits

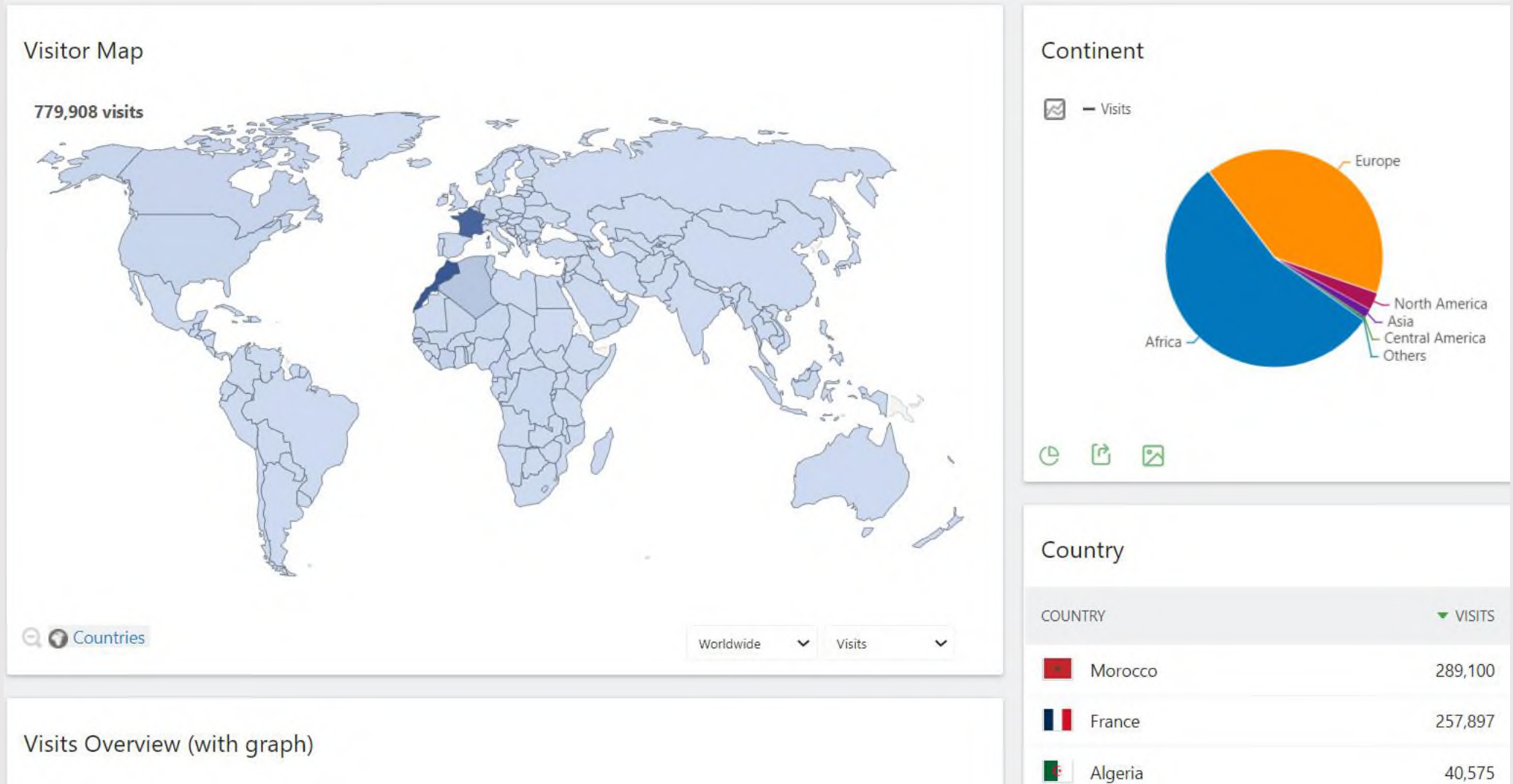


Country

COUNTRY	VISITS
France	388,174
Cameroon	163,925
Mexico	134,300
Côte d'Ivoire	118,484
Morocco	93,417
Senegal	89,577
Algeria	82,872
Congo - Kinshasa	81,664
Madagascar	73,256
Burkina Faso	65,621

Impressive exposure for OA Publications on the Souths (Books)

Morocco studies in French and Arabic



A big exposure for a little corpus: Distortions in the representation of African studies research?

The overwhelming majority of OA books on African studies **are published in northern countries:**
GOLD: By dominant commercial publishers via grants from the North: foundations in the USA (e.g. Mellon Foundation...), research councils in Europe (ERC, ESRC...)
DIAMOND: By Northern university presses with university / research institutes / foundation funds

- **Books are overwhelmingly in English. None in African language**
- The majority of the books focus on the English-speaking regions of Africa - notably Southern Africa (SA, Zimbabwe), West Africa (Nigeria, Ghana) and East Africa (Kenya, Uganda).
- Authors are mainly Northern Anglophones **or** Africans working in Anglophone universities (UK, US) and mostly (90%) from Anglophone country
- BPC waivers and discounts **have no appreciable effect in engaging African institutions outside SA: almost no authors from African institutions OA-published through BPC payment.**

BUT

- Some funding initiative are **way more diverse than other:** e.g. **Knowledge Unlatched** has way more diverse authorship than any other system of funding (BPC programmes by publishers; northern research councils).
- **South Africa's exception:** SA and SA universities keep a solid presence but it is the only African country seemingly able to fund open access books (e.g. NRF, Universities)
- “Local preference” phenomenon: country-based authors seem more shared than foreign-based author

A hidden African landscape for OA Books?

Examples in Eastern Africa

The answer is most probably: NO. (Example in Eastern Africa and Nigeria):

- There are (a few) professional academic publishers left in East Africa; **none has developed a funding model suitable for open access.**
- 1/ BCP are not relevant in these contexts, as they aren't any donor institution.
- 2/ There is no “diamond” institutional support for books.
- 3/ University presses are under pressure to be profitable.
- 5/ Teacher-researchers in EAC write much less than their northern counterparts and notably much less monographs. Journal articles or book chapters are more profitable in terms of career. Handbooks are more profitable in terms of revenue.

Some exceptions:

- 1/ OA Books funded by foreign research institutes based in East Africa: French Research Institutes, IRD... Others?
- 2/ Free books made in Africa by Africans of Academic interest outside of the Academic network : very rare to find (in contrast to some very interesting journalism proposals, or open data / open archives websites)
- 3/ Some books are available through University Open Access repository, e.g. University of Nairobi OAR:
- 13 originals books (2000-2023) available... lost in a OAR of 75,000+ documents

Sources: Personal interviews ; research on Eastern African & Nigerian universities website

Why hasn't the OA for journals been extended to the OA for books?

Exemples in Eastern Africa

- **OA policies are specifically made for articles**
- **Book publishers and "librarian publishers" of OA journals do not belong to the same professional networks**
- **Some university administrations simply turn university presses into sources of revenue for the university: for example, student loans conditional on the purchase of books from university presses...**
- **Training in digital publishing and funding networks for digital journals publishing have not concerned books at all (EIFL, OJS training in Eastern Africa).**

Sources: Personal discussions, EIFL website

Widespread destruction of book academic publishing in universities

- **For political and economic reasons, many universities in East and West Africa have simply lost many of the skills, financial resources and institutional support needed to produce quality academic works (in SSH).**
- **Some national scientific lives are still suffering from the structural adjustment policies and political repression against the university of the years 1990-2000: large areas of academic life have been considerably destroyed in flagship universities in certain African regions.**

Ex. 1. University of Ibadan & Kenneth Dike Library & UI Press

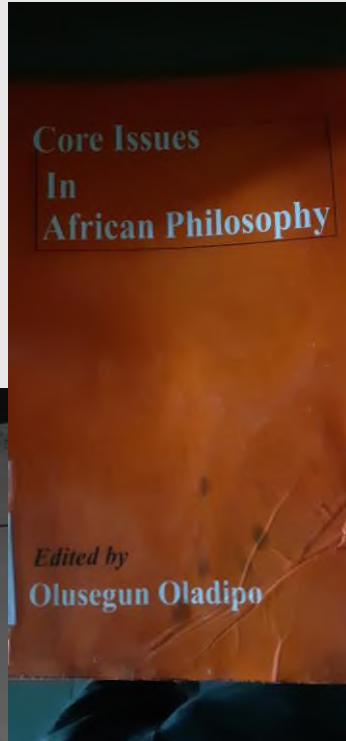
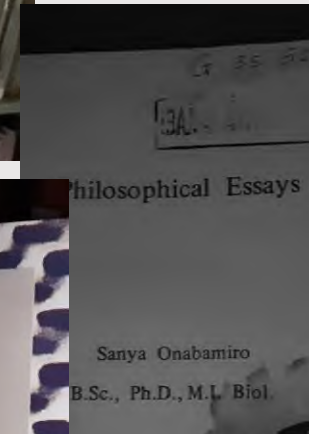
"The policy of proliferation succeeded only in stifling higher education in the country. Government interference in running universities reached its apogee, while haphazard funding became the norm. Universities began to outdo one another in currying government favor. Academic pursuits became severely constrained, limited to face-to-face teaching. Intellectual ferment became a forgotten phenomenon, because free discourse cannot thrive under a military dictatorship. Again, the University of Ibadan bore the brunt of this highly unfavorable political and socioeconomic climate. In the days of structural adjustment, the university was unable to shift from a monopoly to a competitive strategy as other institutions were born. The pull of management and administration between political interests, inept appointees, and stagnating bureaucracy led to the exodus of faculty and the disrepair of facilities and equipment. Scholars from different disciplines moved in large numbers to Europe and to South Africa and the United States. What was left of the university's non-Nigerian staff also left the country. This period thus ended with Ibadan drained of its senior academics, its facilities depleted, its flawed policies still yielding large student numbers and a burgeoning administrative structure, its subvention from government barely covering only staff salaries, its external links severed, and its research output in deep decline."

Materu, Peter, Pai Obanya, and Petra Righetti. 2011. 'The Rise, Fall, and Reemergence of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria'. In *The Road to Academic Excellence*, 195–227. Directions in Development - General. The World Bank. https://doi.org/10.1596/9780821388051_CH07.

Zell, Hans M. 2022. 'Nigerian University Presses: A Bleak Picture'. *Africa Bibliography, Research and Documentation* 1 (November): 12–30. <https://doi.org/10.1017/abd.2022.4>.

Widespread destruction of book academic publishing in universities

- Kenneth Dike Library, Ibadan: no foreign books after 2000; so few local books after
- University of Ibadan bookshop: lot of copies but few titles, mostly “old” titles of local books



Nigerian Women in Historical Perspective by Bolanle Awe, 1992
Ethnography of Culture and Civilization in Africa S.C. Madubuike, 2012



No room for OA publications in Africa? The opposite is true.

But they are often not “academic publications” according to Northern acceptance (involving PR process and editing per se).

Thus, a strong presence of « publications without publishers »

We forget other forms of OA dissemination that Books or Journals :

Phd, Master Dissertation

Research / Technical Report, Working paper (Governmental / NGO)

We don't consider « alternative » ways of OA publishing :

Self-edition for Books

Non-PR Journals (« predatory »)

Non-regularly published journals (most of the University journals)

This is both where African colleagues publish, and what they cite, in the absence of access to or availability of peer-reviewed journals from the North.

This landscape should help us understand the very strong epistemic enclosures in SSH, as well as the high cost of the academic investment required to produce peer-reviewed publications.



University of Nairobi Research Archive

RIVM Committed to health and sustainability

Home Topics About RIVM Publications International

Home > About RIVM > Corporate publications > RIVM reports

RIVM reports



Inter-Research Science Publisher

3/ Is the OA maintaining positions of strength and renewing inequalities?

- **Inequalities in access to OA publications depending on whether you work in the North or the South** (see list of author in OA book publications)
- **Inequalities in access to OA funding depending on whether you publish in the North or South** (see list of BPC funders)
- **Inequalities in access to digital infrastructures for disseminating quality digital publications** (ex. Codesria Books; every OJS platform of Universities)
- **Extreme linguistic inequalities** (languages other than English are virtually invisible)
- **Extremely strong regional inequalities** (virtual absence of OA studies about non-English-speaking zones, such as French-speaking West Africa, Portuguese-speaking Africa or Arabic-speaking Africa).

-> *Now*, the world of OA book publishing in African studies is even more unequal than in the world of print publishing.

4/ Finding better ways to a fair OA Book publishing?

- **As a Publisher:**
- ~~**Suspending the OA in the North?**~~ (This would mean returning to epistemic extractivism)
- **Set up *delayed open access*** (Objective: enable publishing partners to monetise print/digital copies)
- **Share our digital publishing tools—Métopes** : open source tools for single-source publishing and multi-format output: ready-to-print, epub, XML-Jats (for OJS / OMP)
Trainees: 12 publishing team, 30 students in Master in Publishing (KE, ET).
- with publishers and African universities.
- **Promotion of Multilingualism:** English, French, Portuguese, Kiswahili, Arabic, Amharic...
- **Put together joint grant applications** to Diamond OA funding programme
- **Diverse Editorial Boards, Guest Editors, Reviewers...** (paying A. reviewers)
- **Promotion of open-access references used by African researchers**—thesis and master's dissertations, reports, non-Western journals....

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cfee

SOURCES 

Finding better ways to a fair OA Book publishing?

As a Directory of Open Access Books:



- **Provide information on available OA financing channels. Concerning OA there** cultural barriers and so many barriers in funding opportunities
- **Build the best possible view of the academic publishing landscape in the different regions of Africa**
 - > don't parachute in unsuitable solutions
 - > learn about the history of publishing in the social sciences and African studies, and the state of the ecosystem in each country

In order to .. **Support excellent & important independent knowledge publishers** (creating library publishers everywhere is not always the best solution)

- **Influencing the policies of research funders:** for example, by encouraging editions / co-publications with publishers from the region concerned by the study. (Idea to be refined in light of potential political risks.)
- **Encouraging “hackability” of existing platforms, tools, infrastructure**

Finding better ways to a fair OA Book publishing?

What is always-urgent:

**Produce more information on the state of publishing and OA publishing in African Studies around the world;
Work on more solid criteria for judging the level of fairness of the OA of African Studies.**

Examples of few points to be aware of:

- Ethnography of authors publishing in OA – distinctive profiles? Dynamics?
- What is the level of access to OA platforms in the North for researchers in the South?
- What is the level of acceptance by publishers in the North of projects led by South-based authors/editors?
- Technical comparison of security, robustness and referencing between North and South platforms
- Ratio of North and South African Studies content in full-access HTML
- Percentage of OA references of OA publications in African studies? What is the North/South ratio?
- ...

The issue of African studies is fascinating because it reveals some very profound aspects of science, and of SSH in particular.

This reveals the (enormous) hidden costs and the still (very) underestimated positions of strength in the global competition for knowledge.

Thank you....