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# Trends and Gaps in African Legislative Research: Major Topics from the 1960s–2021

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## Abstract

This article takes stock of African legislative studies, focusing on trends and gaps between the 1960s and 2021. It begins with a discussion on the nature of African legislative research by reviewing common research topics on African legislature between the mentioned period from leading scholarly journals in the field before delving into the generational studies and their specific foci. Particular circumstances under which African legislative studies operated are also noted. A notable feature of African legislative scholarship is that most of them are a product of different critical junctures in historical contexts in Africa, which underscores the importance of context-specific variables and histories in discerning legislative policymaking in Africa. The article demonstrates that legislatures are emerging as vital players in governance in some countries more than others, thus informing the recent comparative discourses for African legislative studies. Although the obtainable studies offer insights into the structure and operation of African legislatures, most fail to delve deep into the design

and utility of various legislative functions and processes. This calls for a more focused study on the capacity of legislative committees and how they function. This review attempts to provide insights that may inform such an endeavour.

### Keywords

African legislatures – legislative development – legislative studies – Africa – public policy

## 1 Introduction

Legislatures in developing countries, especially, African legislatures have attracted little scholarly attention. Many scholarships on African politics often focus on the executive, its centralization of power, patronage, political pluralism, politics of change, regime consolidation, and how these relate to governance (e.g., Bretton, 1966; Hyden, 2006). Also, even though a few scholarly articles and donor-sponsored literature have been published over the years on African Parliaments, these institutions and their functions are often only mentioned in passing without incisive focus on their role in theory and practice of governance in Africa. In addition, until recently, there has also been little focus on the importance of African legislatures in understanding the state's capacity in handling today's wicked policy problems (e.g., Khumalo et al., 2021; Onyango, 2021; Pabari et al., 2021). Several legislative studies journals have similarly sparsely published articles on legislatures outside Europe and America (Onyango, 2021: 70; also see, Barkan et al., 2004). As seen in Mezey's (1983) analysis, a majority of the erstwhile comparative legislative studies, especially in the 1960s, were based on "highly impressionistic evidence [...] heavily influenced by a narrow, culture-bound view of what an effective legislature should be" (p. 512).

Like most comparative political studies, early studies narrowly focused on the structural and legal analysis of data with over-reliance on case studies mainly from the western world, scanty primary sources, and fewer data-gathering techniques. However, this trend would change in the late 2000s and 2010s with Joel Barkan's led project with Robert Mattes on comparative study of African legislatures. From this project Barkan and his team produced insightful publications (e.g., Barkan et al., 2004). In particular, Barkan's edited collection published in 2009 and the 2019 work by Ken Opalo, respectively

have provided critical insights for setting the research agenda for studying comparative African legislatures. These books and subsequent articles have given an exclusive focus on African legislatures and their roles in governing processes. Also, more recently, especially, with the expansion of democratic space in most African countries, there has been a focus on the practical contributions of legislatures in public policy processes. In this regard, the focus has been on the legislatures' capacities to utilize evidence in decision-making or influence political action (e.g., Khumalo, 2021; Onyango, 2021; Oronje and Zulu, 2018). It also suffices to state that the return of multiparty politics in the 1990s shifted attention to studying the dynamics of legislative development. Barkan observed that multiparty politics ushered young, energetic, reform-oriented legislators who invested considerable time in legislative strengthening. Even so, this particular scholarship hardly understood the context-specific determinants of legislative development in different African countries (Collord, 2018). In addition, to the best of our knowledge there is no study that has systematically reviewed topics in African legislative research between the 1960s to 2021.

Against this backdrop, the overall research question of this review is: How has scholarship on African legislatures evolved since the pre-independence phase? This is achieved in three folds: First, the article historicizes African legislative research and ascertains whether early biases of the 1960s persist. Second, it identifies the gaps, albeit not exhaustively, that need focus to improve the study of African legislatures and legislative oversight, as well as other legislative activities more broadly. Third, it demonstrates how legislative strengthening is critical in policymaking, an issue that has been loosely addressed until recently (e.g., Onyango, 2021; Khumalo et al., 2021). In doing so, this review is organized as follows: In the proceeding section, we provide the background of African legislatures, followed by an outline of our methodology before providing a survey of studies in the proceeding sections mapped into four generations. We conclude by focusing on synthesis and research gaps.

## 2 Historical Development of Legislatures in Africa

### 2.1 *Pre-Independence Phase*

The story of African legislative research naturally links it to the historical chronology of the development of legislature in the continent that go in tandem with state transformation or paradigms of governance in Africa (Opalo, 2020; Onyango, 2021). During the colonial period, African legislative representation was underdeveloped (Meredith, 2011). Its design and function was a colonial

mechanism where *citizens* collectively legislated on their interests against those of the colonized black Africans who were the *subjects* (Mamdani, 1996). The legislative authority mainly promoted colonial interests with a few *fixes* depending on other races' roles in the colonial political economy. In Senegal, for example, French descendants were granted rights to vote for a deputy in national elections in the French National Assembly (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2001). Some British colonies like Gold Coast and Nigeria had some legislative representation (Gocking, 2005), while some, like Sierra Leone, had little political representation (Bourges and Wauthier, 1979: 524). In Portugal and Belgium, colonies strongly restricted indigenous Africans' political representation (Meredith, 2011: 12). After World War II, substantial developments took place, changing the entire landscape of legislative representation.

Decolonization laid grounds for indigenous legislative representation and attendant processes that would later inform institutional structuration of legislatures, their relationship with the executive and relative performances today. The Brazzaville conference in 1944 granted the native population the right to vote for the representative of overseas territories in the future French constituent assembly (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1992: 96). British colonies similarly transferred legislative powers to local legislative councils (Bourges and Wauthier, 1979: 524). However, many challenges remained. For example, there were few parliamentary experiences and capacity among legislators and the parliamentary staff. Also, making the inherited rational state work in contexts where public authority and legitimacy resided more on the informal institutions presented a more significant challenge than deepening legislative authority and representation.

Therefore, nation-building projects overlooked developing legislative power over asserting executive control and the latter's dominant role in enhancing economic development. The subsequent institutional reforms did not provide adequate time to accumulate legislative experience before independence, an issue that persists to date judging by the mostly donor led legislative capacity-building activities in Africa (Nijzink et al., 2006; Onyango, 2021). Put differently, pre-independence African legislatures did not evolve alongside the consolidation of executive powers (Ojwang, 1980). The consolidation of the colonial state was principally a product of continuous constitutional amendments to sustain their grip on power. The common feature of the numerous constitutional amendments in Africa is that the amendments principally shifted authority from other branches of government to the presidency. The dominant role of the executive has affected legislative development in some countries like Kenya to date weakening its core functions of representation, oversight, and legislation (Onyango, 2021). Thus, the pre-independence

contexts that informed scholarship were fundamentally informed by the colonial governments' consolidation and the clamour for representation in the legislative council by the Africans.

## 2.2 *The Post-Independence Phase*

Most newly independent states hastily established western-style political arrangements modelled along with the Montesquieuian ideal of checks and balances and separation of power to counter the rise of authoritarianism (Schraeder 2005: 342). The institutional expression of African legislature predominantly exhibited colonial transplants throughout the region (Barkan et al., 2004). Opalo (2019: 31) notes that many African legislatures displayed similar institutional forms and functions as European legislatures. Unfortunately, the much-desired legislative autonomy did not last. The consolidation of the executive power became the main agenda for most governments leading to autocratic governing systems. The newly established legislatures could not effectively oversee the executive, thus providing a window of opportunity for the executive to take extra measures such as embracing a single-party regime for political survival.

According to Opalo (2019: 5), the executive "inherited nearly all of the autocratic colonial governors' powers – that fused executive, legislative, and judicial functions". Consequently, there was a rise of presidential regimes similar to the Governor-General of colonial and one-party states. In many countries, political parties were abolished altogether when the military took over the formal functions of the state (All Party Parliamentary Group, 2008: 17). This reality, according to scholars like Joel Barkan and Ken Opalo, condemned post-colonial African legislatures to develop in the shadow of much stronger chief executives (e.g., Opalo, 2019: 5).

Consequently, the contingencies of political development under colonial rule and postcolonial autocratisation partly explain contemporary legislative strength and institutionalization variation in Africa. Some legislatures, therefore, did not survive, while others became an extension of the executive in the 1970s and 1980s (Tordoff, 1977; Barkan et al., 2004; Barkan, 2009). Thus, legislative development in Africa became hectic under autocratization and sometimes under the threats of political instability like civil wars (e.g., Osei, 2020). In most regions of Sub-Sahara Africa, legislatures slowed down in growth occasioned by others, the dominance of one-party rule in many African countries except Botswana and Mauritius that have enjoyed a post-independence record of unbroken multiparty democracy in Africa. The subsequent different experiences with political transitions and state-building projects or development ideologies pursued by different states across countries would ultimately

inform the varied performances of legislatures in Africa, with some performing or developing better than others, especially, in terms of their institutionalization (Barkan et al., 2004; Barkan, 2009; Nijzink et al., 2006).

### 2.3 *Return of Multiparty Phase*

The widespread civic discontent prompted the agitation for multiparty politics in Africa with deteriorating economic situations and governance by the postcolonial governments (Bratton and Walle, 1997). This dissatisfaction was manifested through protests by civil society organizations demanding lifting of the ban on multiparty politics, expanding legislative authority, and accountable government. This pressure for Democratization and Liberalization culminated into the reintroduction of multipartism in the 1990s (Barkan et al., 2004). This tortuous path to successful legislative development in Africa would later change with the return of multiparty politics in the early 1990s, providing an opportunity for opposition leaders to question the executive, increasing the legislators' "collective bargaining power and the possibility of legislative, institutional independence" (Opalo, 2019: 2).

Multiparty politics would then signal the gradual erosion of most authoritarian regimes in some African countries and the beginning of the development of most African legislatures with a more invigorated role. However, Barkan (2009: 2) notes that the extent of increased legislative capacity and power resulting from multiparty politics nevertheless varied greatly from country to country. A view that Opalo (2019: 3) would later agree with, noting that the reintroduction of competitive multiparty politics and elections only strengthened the legislatures in some cases but not in all cases and perhaps in some legislative functions than in others (e.g., Nijzink et al., 2006; Osei, 2020). After independence, the first wave of African constitutions primarily transferred power to elites, who then consolidated power through constitutional amendments (e.g., Ndulo, 2019). Thus, legislative development in Africa during the multiparty phase accelerated, demonstrating various progressive piecemeal reforms embedded primarily on the broader good governance agenda that characterized this period in Africa and beyond (e.g., Onyango and Hyden, 2021).

### 2.4 *Constitutional Reforms Phase*

The other historic critical juncture in the development of African legislatures is the clamour for constitutional reforms that saw many African countries' focus on major legislative reforms. These reforms were either constitutional overhaul or significant amendments towards the legislature's independence

in many African countries. In Africa, the constitutional reform phase was directed at amending the independence constitutions imposed by the colonial powers in the 1960s (e.g., Ndulo, 2019). Therefore, the reforms aimed to respond to the broad challenges of inclusion, peacebuilding, reconciliation, and socio-economic development in a legitimate way.

According to Barkan (2009), most African legislatures improved policymaking due to the constitutional reform processes. Apart from the post-independence, resumption of multiparty politics, and reform era politics, other country-specific events or critical junctures largely contributed to legislative development in Africa. For instance, the change of military rule to civilian rule in Nigeria, the shift of the system of government from parliamentary to presidential, and the adoption of the various electoral system from either proportional representation to a single-member constituency, among others, played a significant role in the development of African legislature.

From the phases discussed, the life cycle of African legislatures has travelled through punctuated equilibrium and the politics of consolidation (Onyango, 2021). These phases have also informed African legislative scholarships reviewed as summarised in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1 Phases of legislative development in Africa since 1960s–2020s

Phase	Status of legislative development in Africa	Key events
Pre-independence	Non-representation of Africans	Consolidation of power the colonial executives
Post-independence	De-escalated growth	Consolidation of power the African executives
Multiparty	Accelerated growth	Lifting of the ban on multiparty politics increased donor support and civil society agitation for legislative reforms,
Constitutional reforms	Increased focused growth and more liberalized African legislature	Constitutional overhaul and major legislative reforms

### 3 Methodology

We are reviewing research topics on African legislature between the 1960s and 2021. These are drawn on African legislatures in the leading legislative journals, namely, *Journal of Legislative Studies* (JLS) and *Legislative Studies Quarterly* and African-based journals, mainly, *African Affairs*, *Journal of Modern African Studies*. We are also widening our search for published books and book chapters. In our search strategy online, we used the keywords “African legislatures.” The inclusion criteria included studies on African legislature in a comparative perspective with legislatures outside Africa. We gathered more than 100 items that were published in the last 60 years. Each item was labelled for its type: a research article, a research note, a book review, a book, or student theses. Also, we classified topics in African legislative research into four generations of studies: The first generation of studies (the 1960s–1980s); the second generation of studies (1990s); the third generation of studies (1990s–2000s), and the fourth generation of studies (2010 to 2021).

The general approach used in the description is an appreciation of the growth and development of African legislatures with regard to their ability to perform core functions like oversight and representation. However, one caveat is important in sequencing the historical development of the review. The periodization is not cast in stone, as there could be some overlap in the years. For example, in some African countries, clamour for the return of multiparty politics began in the late 1980s, while in some countries, constitutional reforms were implemented simultaneously with multipartyism but took a decisive path in the mid-1990s. Despite having collected a significant number of articles on African legislatures, many more outlets might have published African legislatures than the work surveyed here. Although this review article is a stand-alone work, it is part of an ongoing doctoral research project titled “Capacity of Legislative Committee on Legislative Oversight in Africa: Comparative Case of Kenya and South Africa”. A summary of reviewed publications is presented in Tables 2–10 below.



TABLE 2 Contribution of journal articles in each generation of studies reviewed on African legislatures

No.	Journal	Generation of studies			
		Number of articles reviewed per journal and contribution to the 1st generation of studies (the 1960s–1980s)	Number of articles reviewed per journal and contribution to the 2nd generation of studies (the 1990s)	Number of articles reviewed per journal and contribution to the 3rd generation of studies (the 1990s–2000s)	Number of articles reviewed per journal and contribution to the 4th generation of studies (2010 to 2021)
1.	<i>Legislative Studies</i>	0	0	3	6
2.	<i>Modern African Studies</i>	3	1	0	0
3.	<i>Parliamentary Affairs</i>	3	0	0	0
4.	<i>Contemporary African studies</i>	0	1	0	1
5.	<i>Democratization Journal</i>	0	1	0	1
6.	<i>Legislative Studies Quarterly</i>	1	0	0	0
7.	<i>Southern African Studies</i>	0	1	0	0
8.	<i>Developing Areas</i>	1	0	0	0
9.	<i>International Journal of Public Administration</i>	0	0	0	1
10.	<i>Africa Evaluation Journal</i>	0	0	0	1
11.	<i>East African Studies</i>	0	0	0	1
12.	<i>Journal of Democracy</i>	0	0	0	1
13.	<i>American Political Science Review</i>	1	0	0	0

TABLE 2 Contribution of journal articles in each generation of studies reviewed (*cont.*)

No.	Journal	Generation of studies			
		Number of articles reviewed per journal and contribution to the 1st generation of studies (the 1960s–1980s)	Number of articles reviewed per journal and contribution to the 2nd generation of studies (the 1990s)	Number of articles reviewed per journal and contribution to the 3rd generation of studies (the 1990s–2000s)	Number of articles reviewed per journal and contribution to the 4th generation of studies (2010 to 2021)
14.	<i>International Journal</i>	1	0	0	0
15.	<i>Indian Public Administration</i>	1	0	0	0
Total number of articles reviewed per generation of studies		11	4	3	12

TABLE 3 The first generation of studies (the 1960s–1980s) – Journal articles reviewed

No.	Title of the article(s)	Author and year of publication	Journal
1.	The Legislative Activity of the Egyptian National Assembly	Proctor, J. (1960)	<i>The Journal of Parliamentary Affairs</i>
2.	The Role of the Senate in the Kenya Political System	Proctor, J. (1965)	<i>The Journal of Parliamentary Affairs</i>
3.	The Westminster Model in Uganda	Engholm, G. F. (1963)	<i>International Journal</i>
4.	Regional Administration in Tanzania.	Tordoff, W. (1965)	<i>The Journal of Modern African Studies</i>
5.	Parliaments in Former British Black Africa	Stultz, N. (1968)	<i>Journal of Developing Areas</i>
6.	The Role of MP in Tanzania	Hopkins, R. (1970)	<i>American Political Science Review</i>

TABLE 3 The first generation of studies (the 1960s–1980s) – Journal articles reviewed (*cont.*)

No.	Title of the article(s)	Author and year of publication	Journal
7.	The Functions of Legislatures in the Third World	Mezey, M. (1983)	Legislative Studies Quarterly
8.	Parliament in a One-Party State – The Bunge of Tanzania	Kjekshus, H. (1974)	<i>Journal of Modern African Studies</i>

TABLE 4 The first generation of studies (the 1960s–1980s) – Books reviewed

No.	Title of the book(s)	Author and year of publication	Publisher
1.	The Politics of Independent Kenya 1963–1968	Gertzel, C. (1970)	East African Publishers
2.	The National Assembly in the Politics of Kenya, in A. Kornberg and L. D. Musolf, eds, <i>Legislatures in Developmental Perspective</i>	Stultz, N. (1970)	Durham: Duke University Press
3.	Bargaining and Parliamentary Behavior in Africa: A Comparative Study of Zambia and Kenya, in A. Kornberg, ed., <i>26 Legislatures in Comparative Perspective</i>	Hakes J. & Helgerson, J. (1973)	New York: David McKay Company
4.	Parliaments in Francophone Africa: Some Lessons from the Decolonization Process, in J. Smith and L. Musolf, eds, <i>Legislatures in Development</i>	Le Vine, T. (1979)	Durham: Duke University Press

TABLE 4 The first generation of studies (the 1960s–1980s) – Books reviewed (*cont.*)

No.	Title of the book(s)	Author and year of publication	Publisher
5.	Political Linkage in Kenya: Citizens, Local Elites, and Legislators	Barkan, J. & Okumu, J. (1974)	Comparative Legislative Research Center, University of Iowa
6.	Linkage without Parties: Legislators and Constituents in Kenya, in K. Lawson, ed., <i>Political Parties and Linkage</i>	Barkan, J. & Okumu, J. (1980)	New Haven: Yale University Press
7.	The Rise and Fall of Kwame Nkrumah: A Study of Personal Rule in Africa	Bretton, H. (1966)	New York: Praeger
8.	Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument	Chabal, P. & Daloz, J. (1999)	Oxford: James Currey

TABLE 5 The second generation of studies (the 1990s) – Journal articles reviewed

No.	Title of the article(s)	Author and year of publication	Journal
1.	Parliamentary Committees in Zambia's Third Republic: Partial Reforms; Unfinished Agenda	Burnell, P. (2002)	<i>Journal of Southern African Studies</i>
2.	Legislative-Executive Relations in Zambia: Parliamentary Reform on the Agenda	Burnell, P. (2003)	<i>Journal of Contemporary African Studies</i>
3.	Liaison Legislature: The Role of the National Assembly in Senegal	Thomas, A. & Sissokho, O. (2005)	<i>Journal of Modern African Studies</i>
4.	Democratization and Women's Legislative Representation in Sub-Saharan Africa	Yoon, M. (2001)	<i>Democratisation Journal</i>

TABLE 6 The second generation of studies (the 1990s) – Books reviewed

No.	Title of the book(s)	Author and year of publication	Publisher
1.	Emerging Legislatures: Institutions of Horizontal Accountability, in B. Levy & S. Kpundeh, eds., <i>Building State Capacity in Africa</i>	Barkan, J. D., Ademolekun, L., & Zhou, Y. (2004)	World Bank Institute
2.	The National Assembly and Zambian Democracy: A Baseline Assessment for USAID/Zambia and PACT Zambia	Mattes, R. & Chiwandamira, L. (2004)	Cape Town: Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA)
3.	Women in the South African Parliament: From Resistance to Governance	Britton, H. (2005)	Urbana: Chicago: University of Illinois Press
4.	Opposition in the New South African Parliament, in R. Southall, ed., <i>Opposition and Democracy in South Africa</i>	Nijzink, L. (2001)	London: Frank Cass
5.	Building Representative Democracy: South Africa's Legislatures and the Constitution	Murray C., & Nijzink, L. (2003)	Cape Town: Parliamentary Support Programme
6.	Emerging Legislature or Rubber Stamp? The South African National Assembly after Ten Years of Democracy	Barkan, J. (2005)	University of Cape Town, Faculty of Humanities, Centre for Social Science Research (CSSR)
7.	Parliament and the Electoral System: How Are South Africans Being Represented?, in J. Piombo & L. Nijzink, eds., <i>Electoral Politics in South Africa: Assessing the First Democratic Decade</i>	Nijzink L., & Piombo, J. (2005)	New York: Palgrave/MacMillan

TABLE 7 The third generation of studies (the 1990s–2000s) – Journal articles reviewed

No.	Title of the article(s)	Author and year of publication	Journal
1.	Parliaments and the Enhancement of Democracy on the African Continent: An Analysis of Institutional Capacity and Public Perceptions	Nijzink, L., Mozaffar, S. & Azevedo, E. (2006)	<i>The Journal of Legislative Studies</i>
2.	Legislative Strengthening Meets Party Support in International Assistance: A Closer Relationship?	Burnell, P. (2009)	<i>The Journal of Legislative Studies</i>
3.	Legislative Oversight under the Nigerian Presidential System	Fashagba, J. (2009)	<i>The Journal of Legislative Studies</i>

TABLE 8 The third generation of studies (the 1990s–2000s) – Books reviewed

No.	Title of the book(s)	Author and year of publication	Publisher
1.	Legislative power in Emerging African Democracies	Barkan, J. D. (Ed.) (2009)	Lynne Rienner Publishers.
2.	The Parliament and the Crisis of Democratisation in Nigeria	Omoweh, A. (2006)	Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA Democratic Institute
3.	Legislative Oversight and Cost of Governance in Nigeria, in Akpotor, A. S. Afolabi, A. O, Aigbokhaevbolo, M. O., Iganiga, B. O. & Odiagbe, O. S., eds, <i>Cost of Governance in Nigeria. An Evaluative Analysis</i>	Lafenwa, A. & Gbervbie, D. (2007)	Ekpoma: Ambrose Ali University Publishing House
4.	The Legislature and the Challenges of Democratic Governance in Africa: The Nigerian Case (A seminar paper delivered at a conference on Governance and Development on Democratization in Africa: Retrospective and Future)	Lafenwa, A. (2009)	University of Leeds, UK

TABLE 9 The fourth generation of studies (2010 to 2020) – Journal articles reviewed

No.	Title of the article(s)	Author and year of publication	Journal
1.	Oversight Effectiveness and Political Will: Some Lessons from West Africa	Pelizzo, R. & Stapenhurst, R. (2014)	<i>The Journal of Legislative Studies</i>
2.	Legislative Oversight in Nigeria: An Empirical Review and Assessment	Stapenhurst, R., Jacobs, J. & Olaore, O. (2016)	<i>The Journal of Legislative Studies</i>
3.	Oversight of the Executive in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa	Obiyo, R. (2013)	<i>Journal of Contemporary African Studies</i>
4.	Challenges of the Public Accounts Committee of Ghana's Parliament in Ensuring an Efficient Public Financial Management	Hambali D., Suhuyini, S. & Antwi-Boasiako, J. (2020)	<i>The Journal of Legislative Studies</i>
5.	Legislative Functions in Newly Democratized Countries: The Use of Parliamentary Questions in Kenya and Zambia	Wegmann, S. & Evequoz, A. (2019)	<i>The Journal of Legislative Studies</i>
6.	Collecting Evidence on the Use of Parliamentary Oversight Tools: A South African Case Study	Rensburg, W., Vreÿ, F. & Neethling, T. (2019)	<i>African Evaluation Journal</i>
7.	African Elections: Two Divergent Trends	Opalo, K. (2012)	<i>Journal of Democracy</i>
8.	The Long Road to Institutionalization: The Kenyan Parliament and the 2013 Elections	Opalo, K. (2014)	<i>Journal of Eastern African Studies</i>
9.	Legislators' Pathway to Power in Ghana: Intraparty Competition, Clientelism and Legislator – Constituents' Relationship	Acheampong, M. (2020)	<i>The Journal of Legislative Studies</i>
10.	Legislative Oversight and Policy-Reforms in "Unsettled" Political Contexts of Public Administration	Onyango, G. (2020)	<i>International Journal of Public Administration</i>
11.	The Effects of Political Parties on Roll-Call Voting in Kenya's Parliament	Jensen, B., Kuenzi, M. & Lee, D. (2020)	<i>The Journal of Legislative Studies</i>

TABLE 10 The fourth generation of studies (2010 to 2021) – Books reviewed

No.	Title of the book(s)	Author and year of publication	Publisher
1.	Parliamentary Oversight Tools	Pelizzo, R. & Stapenhurst, R. (2012)	London: Routledge
2.	The Overseers. Public Account Committees and Public Spending	McGee, D. (2002)	London: Pluto Press
3.	Democracy and oversight. Research Collection School of Social Sciences	Pelizzo, R., & Stapenhurst, R. (2006)	Singapore Management University
4.	Legislative Development in Africa: Politics and Postcolonial Legacies	Opalo, K. (2019).	Cambridge University Press
5.	Legislative Policymaking in Kenya, in Onyango, G. & Hyden, G., eds., <i>Governing Kenya: Public Policy in Theory and Practice</i>	Onyango, G. (2021)	London: Palgrave MacMillan

#### 4 The First Generation of Studies (the 1960s–1980s)

The first line of research in this category emerged during the first decade of the newly independent African states (e.g., Proctor, 1960, 1965). These studies focused on the constitutional structure, powers, and internal operations of legislatures and compared newly created legislatures with the established legislatures in Europe and the USA. The second line of research in this category examined key factors influencing the parliament's performance. These include colonial legacies that imposed constraints by limiting the constitutional powers of the legislature, especially concerning the budgetary processes and acquisition (Mattes et al., 2012: 8–10), the role of ruling parties, the dominant executive and role perceptions of legislators (Stultz, 1968, 1970; Hopkins, 1970; Hakes and Helgerson, 1973; Le Vine, 1979). For example, Stultz (1968) examined 12 legislatures in Anglophone countries and identified limited policy roles attributed to the following variables: popular election of legislators, presidentialism, constitutional supremacy, impotent second chambers or unicameralism, weak opposition parties in the legislatures, weak civil society, parochialism among legislators, lack of technical capacity by legislators to debate effectively.



On the other hand, Le Vine (1979) did a comparative study of the growth and development of legislatures in 14 former French colonies between independence and 1975 and observed that legislatures in Francophone countries played a role in nation-building as opposed to policymaking. Altogether, these studies concluded that structural and performance variables attributed to the institutional weakness of the newly established legislatures, thereby limiting their roles in policymaking. Focusing on the executive-legislature relations and the partisan role of politics, in his analysis of Kenya's case, Stultz (1970: 303–333) concluded that the policymaking function of the legislature was considered less important since “MPs ... [lacked] ... a sense of meaningful participation in decision making”. This was carried further in a comparative study of Kenya and Zambia, where Hakes and Helgerson (1973) demonstrated how the executive uses state resources as patronage to compromise the performance of individual legislators.

Similarly, Hopkin (1970) shows how single-party dominance exerted undue pressure on MPs in Tanzania's first parliament, rendering them ineffective. Legislators were generally passive in the house and always supported the executive's interests. Legislators demonstrated loyalty to the executive with the hope of being appointed to the executive. Overall, these studies conclude that the systematic amendment of the constitution, have contributed to the weak capacity of the African legislatures, thereby limiting their role in policymaking (Brierley, 2012). Later studies reveal that to suppress opposition, post-independence executives initiated and adopted constitutional frameworks that empowered the executive at the expense of legislature, especially in Ghana in 1960, Kenya in 1964, and Zambia in 1964 (e.g., Salih, 2005). Salih (2005: 12) describes parliaments' governance responsibility in the post-independence regime as “at best and oppressive at worst”. These scholars agreed that most of the legislatures “were at best marginal to the law-making processes of the nations in which they existed” (Mezey, 1983: 512). This view was influenced by the structural and legal analysis of data or, in some instances, based on “highly impressionistic evidence ... heavily influenced by a narrow, culture-bound view of what an effective legislature should be” (ibid). Despite the shortfall, this foundational research paved the way for subsequent analysis in Africa's legislature.

The third line of research in this category looked at African legislatures in a much broader cross-national comparative design focusing “on the informal and alternate roles that legislators play”. The legislatures' role was analyzed from behind-the-scenes manoeuvring where the legislature is constrained intra-party dynamics instead of legislative procedures, practice, and processes.

However, the legislatures also recruited politicians, approved executive actions, acted as a link between the executive and citizens, and channelled development resources to their local constituencies (e.g., Kim et al., 1984; Mezey, 1983). In his comprehensive analysis of functions of Third World legislatures focusing on decision-making and representative functions and how they influence changes state-society relation, Mezey (1983: 541) opines that although legislatures may influence policy development, the nature of this effect has not been demonstrated. Legislators acting as links between their constituents and central authorities may significantly impact development schemes' success.

The fourth line of research in this category coincided with the rise of single-party regimes and the emergence of personal rule in the continent. Whereas scholarly interest in African legislature declined considerably, a few scholars examined legislatures within the context of the one-party regime (e.g., Kjekshus, 1974; Barkan, 1976, 1979, 1984; Barkan and Okumu, 1974, 1980). Examining legislature in a one-party state in Tanzania, Kjekshus (1974) observed that the Tanzanian legislature was under the tight control of the governing party, concluding that strong parties tend to undermine the role of legislatures in Africa. While using the case study of the Kenyan parliament, Barkan's essential contribution to the literature was that African legislatures acted as a link between the local constituencies and the state in largely agrarian societies. Barkan established a relationship between legislators and their constituents organized by the electoral system, mainly the single-member district (SMD) and first-past-the-post (FPTP). Barkan's cross-cutting argument was threefold. First, one would have expected voters to be detached from the state in predominantly agricultural polities with voters in far-flung rural areas away from the centre. However, legislators acted as conveyor belts linking the centre to the periphery, thereby infusing citizenry into the political system. Two, the reality of the SMD causes legislators to travel to their home constituencies and spend some time helping them on issues such as fundraising for local self-help projects to secure their re-election. The two factors were configured to produce a weak legislature as few legislators had time to oversee the executive.

## 5 The Second Generation of Studies (the 1990s)

The second generation of studies is rooted in multiparty politics in Africa following the third wave of democratization. Akin to the first generation of studies, the first line of research in this category utilized case studies to emphasize the weakness of legislative capacity and limited policymaking role (e.g., Burnell, 2002, 2003; Thomas and Sissokho, 2005). In his examination of

parliamentary committees in Zambia's third republic, Burnell (2002) observes that multiparty politics notwithstanding, the Zambian legislature had marginal policy influence due to lack of internal and external mechanisms to oversee parliament's oversight directives. Burnell (2003) looks at legislative-executive relations in the same country and notes an imbalance in power favouring the executive.

The author like most studies on African legislatures, observed that the legislative culture is inherently clientelistic. Given that the integrity of the electoral process had watered down the ideals of democracy, and that "whilst care is taken to respect the dignity of the House – the National Assembly in the Third Republic – legislators have not been encouraged to believe their contribution there counts" (Burnell, 2003: 58). To reform the legislature, Burnell suggests that African legislatures need to have full control of their agenda, the calendar and enforce their recommendations on the executive. Achieving this involves reforming the legislature-executive power structure, intra-party dynamics of legislature-executive relations to legislative oversight. In Senegal, Thomas and Sissokho (2005) concluded that despite making democratic advances, the Senegalese parliament did not play a substantial role in legislations, appropriations or executive oversight. Instead, it played marginal roles like constituency service and lobbying the executive for more resource allocation.

In so far as the committee system is concerned, Senegal's architecture aptly fits Barkan's characterization of a weak legislature, in which "the committee system is either non-existent or lacks any practical capacity to participate in the initiation of a legislation or oversight of the executive". Thus, the duo concludes that Senegal's "a strong presidency characterizes political system, a weak legislature and clientelistic politics since their legislature does not initiate legislation, play a role in budget appropriations, or exercise substantial oversight of the executive branch" (Thomas and Sissokho, 2005: 113).

The second line of research in this generation focuses on the public perception of the legislature's role (e.g., Barkan et al., 2004; Mattes and Chiwandamira, 2004; Afrobarometer, 2006). To be precise, the World Bank requested Barkan and his associates to examine African legislatures as an "institution of horizontal accountability" (Barkan et al., 2004). The authors conducted surveys in Kenya, Senegal, Benin, and Ghana among parliamentary staff to determine variation in a legislative capacity, concluding that even though African legislatures are generally viewed as weak, there are significant cross-national differences. They discovered that "the legislature's authority ranged from being very weak in Senegal, to moderately strong in Kenya with Benin and Ghana falling somewhere in between" (Barkan et al., 2004: 211–256). In this way, the variation could be explained by contextual factors linked to the societal structure,

constitutional provisions and related laws and regulations and the internal structure of the legislatures, and resources at the disposal of MPs.

Subsequently, the World Bank project expanded with new cases resulting in the publication of *Legislative Power in Emerging African Democracies* (2009), covering legislatures in Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, and Uganda. A survey conducted by Mattes and Chiwandamira (2004) to both parliamentary staff and the public concluded that the public widely viewed the Zambian legislature as unresponsive to public demands. However, MPs reported that they were responsive to citizens' demands, including dealing with their concerns at local levels. In 2006, an Afrobarometer survey found that a majority of Africans expected their legislators to be responsive to their demands, pay a visit to their constituencies and implement development projects. Later studies such as Barkan (2009) and Romero (2009) have also examined the conceptualization of representation by African legislatures. Accordingly, Barkan has occasioned a scholarly mainstreaming of 'constituency service' as a legislature function. In Kenya, Romero observes that the perception of citizens and legislators on legislative oversight can be tied to the push toward and establishment of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in 2003 to help legislators address their constituency demands. In summary, African legislatures are perceived as weak and unresponsive to public demands. This is, however, varied as a result of how contextual factors play in different countries.

The third line of research in this category focuses on the representation of women in African legislatures (Yoon, 2001; Schwartz, 2004; Britton, 2005; Osei, 2020). Utilizing comparative research design to analyze the degree of representation of women in sub-Saharan Africa between 1990 and 1999, Yoon identifies proportional representation electoral systems, gender quotas, and patriarchal culture as key variables influencing the representation of women in African legislature. Schwartz (2004) also alludes to the same in the Rwandese parliament. Finally, Britton (2005) analyses elected women MPs in the first two parliaments in the post-apartheid regime in South Africa. The author observes that whereas the first parliament comprised women from diverse professional backgrounds, the women in the second parliament were unrepresentative in terms of the socio-economic diversity of South African women than the first one.

Other studies like Stockemer (2011) focused on gender representation in Africa. They concluded that apart from the electoral system, affirmative action, and the country's economic development, other factors include a country's degree of democracy. In addition, the level of corruption affects gender representation in Africa. The final line of research in this category focuses exclusively on the South African parliament highlighting its challenges in oversight

and representation (Nijzink, 2001; Murray and Nijzink, 2003; Barkan, 2005). In his examination of the opposition in the new South African Parliament, Nijzink (2001) recommends that accommodation-consociational democracy is the most suitable institutional arrangement for most African democracies largely represented by segmented societies. Nijzink (2001) further attributes challenges facing oversight in South Africa to the one-party dominant political system. The critical contribution made by this literature is that the South African parliament is different from other African parliaments in some ways largely informed by its historical pasts and transition to democracy that led to different institutional arrangements of party systems and electoral systems as invited political spaces, among others. These define the degree to which the legislature asserts its authority and how the opposition legislators relate to the executive.

## 6 The Third Generation of Studies (the 1990s–2000s)

This category also links to the third wave of democratization. Many African states reintroduced multiparty elections to attract international donors' financial support for the capacity building of their legislatures. These efforts sparked scholarly interests to explore the extent to which legislative strengthening programs contributed to parliamentary performance (AAPPG, 2007). Consequently, many comparative studies sought to explain why some legislatures were performing well while others were dismal (e.g., Nijzink et al., 2006; Barkan, 2009). These studies partly informed the African Legislatures Project covering several countries such as Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, and South Africa, concluding that legislatures started to develop a capacity to measure to the executive after the multiparty elections held in the 1990s.

Conceptualizing the institutional capacity of legislatures as “the instruments that give parliaments the potential to exert influence and perform their main responsibilities”, Nijzink et al. provide a detailed description of one, “the relative powers” and “level of autonomy of the legislatures” and two “the infrastructural, financial and human resources available to legislatures.” This provides a comprehensive set of African countries and reveals various situations in the legislative-executive relations and the legislature's institutional capacity to oversee the executive. The authors concluded that “Africa's legislatures generally lack the institutional capacity to be influential in law-making or oversight” (Nijzink et al., 2006: 326). Barkan's (2009) edited volume makes two significant contributions. First, relating his findings to his past research findings in the 1970s and 1980s, he established that some African legislatures had developed institutional capacities that positively influenced the democratic

trajectory in Africa. Second, the legislative development was linked to young, energetic, and reform-oriented legislators interested in legislative strengthening to check executive dominance.

Nijzink et al. (2006) and Barkan (2009) accounted for national variations in the strength of African legislatures based on national institutional arrangements. These included the constitutional design, the political system, and the formal powers given to the legislature. The influence of the structure of the society on the legislature was also crucial in their analysis. Conversely, Burnell (2009) locates the recommendations that development partners' initiatives to strengthen legislature in emerging democracies should harmonize with strengthening political parties and competitive party systems. He further argues that although an issue-based approach towards legislative strengthening and partnership with civil society would be practical, that may promote good governance. Other studies such as Hubli and Schmidt (2007: 25) also substantially contribute to the role of international assistance on legislatures and the impact of a strong political party in the strength of a legislature.

The second line of research in this category draws hue from the broader literature on the institutionalization of political power in Africa (e.g., Posner, 2005; Salih, Posner and Young, 2007). Some groundbreaking studies on the institutionalization of African legislatures were accomplished by Omoweh (2006), Lafenwa and Gberevbie (2007), Lafenwa (2009), Fashagba (2009). Omoweh (2006) and Lafenwa and Gberevbie (2007) observe that the decline in power by African legislatures necessitated the need to focus on factors that would institutionalize them. Indeed, Opalo (2012, 2014) builds further on this institutionalization foundation; a theme that runs through Barkan (2009), especially in the chapter with Matiangi. Here constitutional changes between 1963 and 1967 had an intense impact on the development and institutionalization of the legislature in Kenya. Some of the developments and institutionalization milestones noted by the authors were the establishment of the Parliamentary Service Commission (PSC) and the Constitution of Kenya Review Act, 2000, which saw the legislature play a lead role in budget making. Altogether, these studies capture factors that played a significant role in the institutionalization process of African legislatures that scholars would later improve on (e.g., Opalo, 2019). In examining legislative development in Africa, Opalo (2019) presents standard legislative strength and institutionalization measures in Africa.

## 7 The Fourth Generation of Studies (2010 to 2021)

The fourth generation of studies concentrated on understanding legislative oversight in general and reviewing oversight tools in Africa. The first line

of research in this category focuses on legislative oversight in general (e.g., Fashagba, 2009; Stapenhurst, 2011; Pelizzo and Stapenhurst, 2012, 2014) and oversight of Ghana and Nigeria. Fashagba (2009), concerning the Nigerian National Assembly, concluded that the legislature did not perform constitutionally due to internal conflicts, executive dominance, inexperience, and high turnover. Pelizzo and Stapenhurst (2014) provide two dimensions in understanding the capacity of legislative oversight. The first dimension argues a positive impact between oversight capacity and oversight effectiveness (Pelizzo and Stapenhurst, 2012). The second dimension holds that oversight effectiveness is influenced by the constitutional mandates of the legislature and the available resources (Stapenhurst, 2011), the political will of legislators to utilize oversight tools (Pelizzo and Stapenhurst, 2014), and the importance of contextual factors which oversight tools interact with (Stapenhurst, 2011).

Further, Stapenhurst (2011) and Pelizzo and Stapenhurst (2012) conducted a comparative analysis of parliamentary oversight in Ghana and Nigeria, establishing that, although in contrast, the two countries had comparable oversight tools, the efficacy of these oversight tools was much better in Ghana than in Nigeria. This was attributed to the variations of contextual factors such as the electoral systems, constitution, political parties, and public trust in the legislature. Building on this line of work, Stapenhurst et al. (2016) conducted an in-depth legislative oversight in Nigeria. It established that the Nigerian legislature has the necessary constitutional powers and tools to conduct oversight. However, they are not sufficient because of the absence of political will among individual legislators to utilize the tools. In conclusion, these studies demonstrate that both internal and external factors impact the oversight effectiveness of African legislatures.

The second line of research in this category adopts a narrower scope focusing on specific oversight tools such as legislative committees (Obiyo, 2013; Stapenhurst et al., 2019; Hambali et al., 2020) and parliamentary questions (Wegmann and Evequoz, 2019). While exploring the dynamics of oversight and experiences of legislators of the governing and opposition parties in South Africa, Obiyo (2013) observes that legislative committee procedures of South African legislature provided committees with powers to summon any individual or institution to appear before them and give evidence under oath upon request. Obiyo also notes that the executive first introduces bills through the cabinet minister, then referred to the relevant portfolio committee whose role is to review the text and draft any potential amendments to it based on the committee's observation (Obiyo, 2013: 95). At the same time, Rensburg et al. (2019) reveal that the utilization of parliamentary oversight tools is not optimal in the South African legislature. Rensburg et al. further note that South African legislative committee debates showed a declining trend in executive

inquiries. Stapenhurst et al. (2019) also contributed to the study of oversight tools in African legislatures and identified four internal oversight tools: a review of appointments and power to censure/impeach/dismiss; committees and special commissions of inquiry (including field visits); questions and interpolations; and house debates.

Advancing earlier works on Parliamentary Accounts Committee (McGee, 2002; Pelizzo and Stapenhurst, 2006), Hambali et al. (2020) examine Ghana's Parliament's challenges in ensuring efficient public financial management. Utilizing a qualitative case study, the authors established that factors challenging the PAC work ranged from the late submission of Audit reports, ineffective follow-up mechanisms, extreme partisanship of the committee members, and inadequate technical support to look at the audited reports. Comparing the utility of parliamentary questions in Kenya and Zambia, Wegmann and Evequoz (2019) reveal that legislators actively use question time as an avenue of obtaining information from the executive, thereby performing constituency service. These studies demonstrate two critical developments in Africa's legislative studies: authors gravitate towards legislative committee research and second parliamentary inquiries as an emerging study area.

The fourth line of research in this category focused on the strength of the legislature in relation to the executive, with a specific focus on the oversight role of the legislature (Oni, 2013; Ambasa, 2019). Most of these studies focused on how African legislatures transacted business touching on the executive proposed policies, Bills, and nominees to state or public offices. For example, while examining legislature-executive relations in the presidential system in Nigeria, Oni (2013: 164) observes the existence of a conflictual relationship between the legislature and executive on matters budget and electoral reforms. Nonetheless, Oni notes that the conflictual relationship between the executive and the legislature in Nigeria was more pronounced during the civilian governments than during military regimes.

Similarly, Ambasa (2019:3) argues that executive-legislature relations in Kenya are mainly conflictual and attributes this relationship to fluctuating strong and weak committee systems. Particularly, Ambasa notes that Kenya's legislature is conflictual, especially when dealing with executive nominees for appointments to state offices than during debate and deliberation on proposed legislation. According to the author, this behaviour by legislative committees in Kenya is partly due to intense and deep-seated inter-branch interest in matters appointments and somewhat the growth of legislative oversight tools in Kenya. Like the second group of this category, these studies contributed to the development and capacity of African legislatures and their oversight tools by delving into the indicators of legislative strength.



Further, building on the works of institutionalization of political power in Africa, the fifth line of research in this category focuses on the structure of the legislature. It looks into the executive and how the structure contributes to institutionalization and legislative oversight. According to Opalo (2019: 2), the post-independence regimes in Africa are characterized by “overdeveloped executive” that overwhelmingly undermine the independence of African legislatures. Opalo, like Barkan, provides a panoramic view of the African legislative system, extending back to the immediate post-independence epoch. Opalo generally categorizes two typologies within which legislatures broadly fall: Legislatures with means independence (and without) and those with ends independence (and without). Opalo avers that the African legislature has the latitude to establish internal structures to guide its operations, although with a predetermined output customarily reflective of the executive inclination.

Nearly all African legislatures are either with or lacking in means of independence. They are deplorably bound to the same difficulty producing output, not in conflict with the executive proposals. Apart from the challenge of overdeveloped executive, Opalo also attributes Africa’s weak legislative oversight to a high turnover of legislators every electioneering period in Africa. Opalo posits that the high turnover deprives the legislature of career politicians required to provide institutional memory from one parliament to the next with the potential of providing the expertise needed for a robust legislative oversight (Opalo, 2013: 66). These studies contributed to the growth and reform of the African legislature in relation to the executive.

The final research in this category focuses on the role of patron-client networks in facilitating legislators’ pathway to power (Acheampong, 2020), how formal and informal structures influence legislators’ behaviour regarding their oversight roles at the national and sub-national legislative assemblies (Onyango, 2020), and the effect of parties on the voting behaviour of African legislatures (Jensen et al., 2020). Somewhat close to Barkan’s studies of the 1970s in Kenya, Acheampong (2020: 300) looks at the informal structure on the recruitment of legislators in Ghana, arguing that “the relationship between legislators and their constituents in Ghana is mediated by the strong presence of clientelistic networks in intra-party primaries that tamper with the constraining effects of formal electoral rules.”

Given that candidates have to undergo a series of selection, this creates an avenue for patron-client relations with the party bosses, constraining legislators’ performance once they are elected. Jensen et al.’s (2020) study on parties and party coalitions and the legislative behaviours in Kenya show that clientelism continues to shape legislative development despite its institutionalization. The majority of legislators affiliated with the President’s coalition or party

tend to be loyal to the position taken by the executive than do other legislators. These findings are consistent with Lindberg (2010) and Paller (2014) in Ghana. These studies raise the consciousness of the impact of contextual variables in the performance of African legislature, a prospective scholarship in African legislative studies.

## 8 Conclusion

This review article reveals several topics covered by researchers on African legislatures between the 1960s and 2021. The first-generation studies covered legislatures' constitutional architecture, powers, and internal procedures and compared nascent African legislatures with the established legislatures in Europe and the USA. On the other hand, the second-generation studies covered multiparty politics in Africa, public perception of the legislature's role, women's representation in African legislatures, and how they impacted the growth and development of African legislature. The third generation of studies explored how legislative strengthening programmes by international donors contributed to parliamentary performance in Africa. Lastly, the fourth generation of studies had a wide spread of concentration on the understanding of legislative oversight in general, review of oversight tools, the strength of the legislature concerning the executive, and institutionalization of the legislature.

The obtainable studies demonstrate a slow but steady trend in Africa's legislative research. Notably, most studies focused on the architecture of African legislature in the 1960s in the wake of the independence of many African countries. The preoccupation by scholars here was how to make African-run legislatures better effectuated by the independence of African states. The other factor that occasioned significant scholarship on African legislature was Multiparty politics. African legislatures comprised more than one political party, hence the assumption that it will impact the strength and structure of the legislature. The other distinguishable trend in African legislative studies is the influx of international donors supporting African legislature. During and after multiparty politics, international donors such as the World Bank splashed resources towards developing and sustaining African legislatures' growth. The final trend of studies was influenced by the individual countries' constitutional reforms that impacted the performance of African legislatures in one way or the other. Overall, African legislative studies are prompted by critical political events anticipated to affect the legislature's operation.

Despite the extensive literature on African legislature reviewed, there is a dearth of scholarly work on legislative committees and, in particular, the

capacity of such committees on oversight in Africa. This is unlike the abundance of the same touching on the United States, Europe, Latin America and Asia. This paucity of literature portrays African legislatures as generally weak and unimportant. The literature reviewed also demonstrates that previous studies on African legislatures primarily focused on generating comparative frameworks. These only highlighted the institutional and policymaking weaknesses of the legislature while stressing their legitimizing role in executive policymaking. They also highlighted the legislature's recruitment and mobilization roles of citizens supporting political and elite regimes. Thus, there is a need for a more strategic focus on comparative studies on African legislatures as a basis for learning from one another.

While the obtainable studies offer insights into the structure and operation of African legislatures, most fail to delve deep into the design and utility of various legislative oversight tools. That is to say that the virtually unvarying finding that African legislatures are weak is premised on the concept of a strong legislature, yet, the existing literature offers little information on the design and capacity of legislative committees as an essential oversight tool. This calls for a more focused study on the capacity of legislative committees. This review demonstrates a deficiency of scholarly work on African legislative committees, particularly the committee's capacity for legislative oversight. Additionally, the emerging democratic legislatures in Africa have brought fresh dimensions and challenges to legislative research in areas such as the vibrancy and dynamism of oversight tools in Africa. Hence, African research on legislative studies should also strengthen existing oversight tools such as the legislative committees. This review generates insightful developments that inform the recent comparative discourses for African legislative studies.

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