



# **The Postcolonial State in Africa: Fifty Years of Independence, 1960-2010 (Africa and the Diaspora)**

*Crawford Young*

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In *The Postcolonial State in Africa*, Crawford Young offers an informed and authoritative comparative overview of fifty years of African independence, drawing on his decades of research and first-hand experience on the African continent.

Young identifies three cycles of hope and disappointment common to many of the African states (including those in North Africa) over the last half-century: initial euphoria at independence in the 1960s followed by disillusionment with a lapse into single-party autocracies and military rule; a period of renewed confidence, radicalization, and ambitious state expansion in the 1970s preceding state crisis and even failure in the disastrous 1980s; and a phase of reborn optimism during the continental wave of democratization beginning around 1990. He explores in depth the many African civil wars—especially those since 1990—and three key tracks of identity: Africanism, territorial nationalism, and ethnicity.

Only more recently, Young argues, have the paths of the fifty-three African states begun to diverge more dramatically, with some leading to liberalization and others to political, social, and economic collapse—outcomes impossible to predict at the outset of independence.

“This book is the best volume to date on the politics of the last 50 years of African independence.”—*International Affairs*

“The book shares Young’s encyclopedic knowledge of African politics, providing in a single volume a comprehensive rendering of the first 50 years of independence. The book is sprinkled with anecdotes from his vast experience in Africa and that of his many students, and quotations from all of the relevant literature published over the past five decades. Students and scholars of African politics alike will benefit immensely from and enjoy reading *The Postcolonial State in Africa*.”—*Political Science Quarterly*

“The study of African politics will continue to be enriched if practitioners pay homage to the erudition and the nobility of spirit that has anchored the engagement of this most esteemed doyen of Africanists with the continent.”—*African History Review*

“The book’s strongest attribute is the careful way that comparative political theory is woven into historical storytelling throughout the text. . . . Written with great clarity even for all its detail, and its interwoven use of theory makes it a great choice for new students of African studies.”—*Australasian Review of African Studies*

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