INTERSECTIONAL ECHOES: ANGELA DAVIS' FRAMEWORK AND AFRICAN FEMINIST LIBERATION STRATEGIES

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Abstract
This research article examines Angela Davis' theoretical framework and analysis of capitalist exploitation, racial oppression, and patriarchal systems; and its profound, yet complex, impact on feminist liberation strategies in Africa. The central problem addressed is the systemic and mutually constitutive nature of these oppressions, which disproportionately marginalize Black women and women of color, and the challenges inherent in translating Davis' unified, intersectional approach across the diverse socio-political landscapes of African feminist movements. The paper aims to explore how Davis' ideas have fundamentally shaped contemporary African feminist strategies, with key objectives including analyzing her theoretical contributions, assessing their influence on distinct African feminist activisms, and evaluating the controversies surrounding the applicability of the framework. Methodologically, this paper employs a historical-materialist and comparative textual analysis, drawing on Davis' primary texts alongside secondary critical literature on African feminist movements. Case studies are selected on the basis of regional representativeness and the salience of Davis' three core analytical categories, namely racial oppression, capitalist exploitation, and patriarchal systems, within their distinct socio-political contexts, in order to assess cross-contextual applicability. Key findings reveal that Davis' intersectional approach provides a crucial critical lens for understanding overlapping oppressions, inspiring holistic, rather than fragmented, liberation strategies. However, debates persist regarding the framework's direct applicability in addressing the distinct material realities of African women, particularly the tension between local, anti-neoliberal organizing and global, anti-imperialist solidarity. The paper positions Davis' work as foundational yet contested, emphasizing its enduring relevance in contemporary feminist and abolitionist movements while underscoring the necessity for adaptive, context-sensitive African feminist strategies that draw inspiration from, but are not limited by her insights.

Keywords: Angela Davis, capitalist exploitation, racial oppression, patriarchal systems, feminist liberation strategies, African feminism, intersectionality, abolition feminism

1. INTRODUCTION

Angela Davis' approach to analyzing the triumvirate of capitalist exploitation, racial oppression, and patriarchal systems has fundamentally re-oriented feminist liberation strategies globally, with a distinct and palpable resonance across Africa. While integrating a rigorous Marxist-informed critique of capitalism with a Black feminist analysis of intersectional oppression, Davis offered a comprehensive framework that highlights the distinct, often-overlooked, experiences of Black women and women of color, those who stand at the crossroads of systemic injustice (Bhatt, 2017; White, 2005; Ford, 2016; Hopp, 2019). Her work made intersectionality a necessary critical lens and catalyzed both historical and contemporary feminist movements across the African continent and the diaspora.

Davis' scholarship offers an unrelenting critique of capitalism as a structural oppressor. She asserts that the system's reliance on the extraction of surplus value is intrinsically linked to the exploitation and subjugation of marginalized populations, particularly women, whose uncompensated labor is often the bedrock of economic stability. For Davis, the liberation of the working class is therefore inseparable from the dismantling of racial and gendered oppression, necessitating a unified, three-dimensional approach to activism (Post, 2023; Smith, 2021). Furthermore, her powerful articulation of abolition feminism illustrates her belief that effective feminist praxis must holistically address state violence, carceral systems, and systemic inequality, thereby challenging conventional, often myopic, feminist narratives that fail to center the realities of women of color (Davis, 2016; Harvard Radcliffe Institute, 2020).

Despite the undeniable force of her ideas, Davis' framework has generated a robust academic and activist debate concerning its application within African feminist movements. Critics often question whether a unified, global liberation perspective, born from a specific African American struggle, can adequately represent the profoundly diverse experiences, needs, and material conditions of women across a continent characterized by vast geopolitical, ethnic, and economic differences. This challenge is amplified by her advocacy for international solidarity, a stance that sparks ongoing discussions about the appropriate balance between urgent local activism (e.g., against land grabs or domestic violence) and broader global movements (e.g., anti-imperialism, Palestinian solidarity) (Keeanga, 2019; Quan, 2022). These critical discussions underscore the complexity faced by African feminists as they seek effective resistance strategies against centuries of intertwined oppression.

1.1 Methodology

This paper employs a historical-materialist and comparative textual analysis as its primary methodological approach. The analytical framework draws on Davis' primary texts, including Women, Race & Class (1983), Are Prisons Obsolete? (2003), and Freedom Is a Constant Struggle (2016), alongside secondary critical literature on African feminist movements. Case studies are selected on the basis of regional representativeness across the sub-Saharan African sub-regions of Southern, West, and East Africa, and on the degree to which Davis' three core analytical categories—racial oppression, capitalist exploitation, and patriarchal systems—manifest saliently within each context. The comparative analysis proceeds by mapping Davis' theoretical categories onto distinct post-colonial African political economies, assessing both the explanatory power and the limitations

of the framework across those varied contexts. This approach is explicitly positioned as theoretical synthesis and critical hermeneutic rather than empirical fieldwork, a limitation that the paper acknowledges and addresses by grounding its claims in established specialist scholarship on African gender and political economy.

2. ROOTED IN RESISTANCE AND REVOLUTION

The historical context of Angela Davis' intellectual and political approach is not merely academic; it is deeply rooted in a praxis of historical resistance, drawing heavily on her direct involvement in the radical political movements of the mid-20th century (Basak, 2025). Her framework emerged from the crucible of the Civil Rights Movement and the subsequent, more radical demands of Black Power, specifically through active membership in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Black Panther Party (BPP), and the Che-Lumumba Club of the Communist Party USA (Crutchfield, 2024). This personal history is vital for understanding her theoretical synthesis. While the Black Panther Party provided a militant, community-oriented critique of racist policing and state violence which was a precursor to her abolitionist work, the Communist Party supplied the robust Marxist-Leninist language necessary for a systemic critique of capitalism and class exploitation. Her synthesis was a deliberate attempt to reconcile the BPP's anti-racist, anti-police focus with the Communist Party's anti-capitalist, class-first analysis, using the lens of Black feminism to critique the gendered limitations of both (Lee, 2025). This activist triangulation allowed her to develop the argument that the liberation of the working class must be intrinsically linked to the dismantling of racial and gendered oppression, and necessitated a unified, anti-capitalist approach.

Davis' historical context extends to a transnational comparative analysis that directly influences African feminist thought. Her work draws powerful structural parallels between the Jim Crow segregation in the United States and Apartheid in South Africa, systems engineered to uphold white supremacy, by regulating Black labour and social life. Both systems relied heavily on racialized state violence and policing to enforce a labor-control regime, a feature that laid the groundwork for her later analysis of the prison-industrial complex (PIC) as a direct inheritor of slavery and racial capitalism (Davis, 2003). This comparative lens finds resonance in the historical struggles of African women during anti-colonial movements. Like their African American counterparts, women across the continent, from the Aba Women's War of 1929 in Nigeria to women's participation in the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya, were central to political mobilization. However, their efforts were frequently undermined by both colonial patriarchy and the post-independence patriarchy of male nationalist leaders, who often relegated women to essentialist roles focused on biological or cultural reproduction of the nation (Woo, 2024; Mama, 2007). Davis' framework provided a critical tool for African feminists to analyze how their anti-colonial and nationalist struggles were simultaneously struggles against capitalist exploitation (by the colonizer), racial oppression (by the colonizer), and patriarchal systems (by both the colonizer and their own male leaders).

To fully understand Davis's impact on African feminist strategies, one must contextualize it alongside the indigenous development of African feminist thought. Scholars like Obioma Nnaemeka have championed "Nego-Feminism," emphasizing the strategy of negotiation and consensus-building inherent in many African women's traditional power structures (Zhang, 2025). Similarly, Molara Ogundipe-Leslie's "Stiwanism" in social transformation in women in Africa demanded that

feminist analysis prioritize the specific needs of African women's daily lives under material deprivation (Ogundipe, 2020). These African-centered theories often questioned the universality of Western-derived 'feminism', including Black American feminism, because they feared it failed to address the primacy of anti-imperialist struggle and the nuances of non-Western gender systems. Davis' framework, however, often succeeded where others failed because its core premise, the inseparable link between anti-capitalism, anti-racism, and anti-sexism, was easily adaptable to the African reality, including neoliberal exploitation, the legacy of colonial racial subjugation, and entrenched post-colonial patriarchy. Davis' historical positioning thus provided a radical, materialist bridge between the Black diasporic experience and African post-colonial realities, one that was both globally informed and locally applicable.

3. DAVIS's FRAMEWORK: INTERSECTING THE OPPRESSOR AND THE STATE

The theoretical framework of Angela Davis is a powerful and integrated critique structured around three specific concepts that extend far beyond general observations of inequality. These include the unwaged labour of housework, the prison-industrial complex, and an expansive vision of intersectionality.

3.1 The Unwaged Labor of Housework and Capitalist Reproduction

Central to Davis' critique of capitalist exploitation is the analysis of housework and unwaged domestic labor detailed in *Women, Race & Class* (1983). She refutes the notion that women's oppression is merely an ideological byproduct of male dominance. Instead, she argues that the unpaid labor performed overwhelmingly by women, cooking, cleaning, childrearing, and emotional maintenance, is a material condition crucial for the reproduction of the capitalist labor force. This labour allows the worker (male or female) to be cheaply and efficiently prepared for work each day, effectively subsidizing the capitalist system by lowering the value of labour-power and increasing the rate of profit. Crucially, Davis connects this mechanism to racial oppression, demonstrating how the historical exploitation of Black and immigrant women's domestic and reproductive labour (from slavery to paid domestic work) was specifically racialized and instrumentalized to enforce both class hierarchies and white supremacy. This analytical move is critical for African feminist movements, as it allows them to link the demands of local markets, export-processing zones, and global supply chains directly to the invisible, unpaid labor performed in the homes of the working poor.

3.2 The Prison-Industrial Complex and Abolition Feminism

Perhaps Davis' most influential and enduring theoretical contribution is her critique of the prison-industrial complex (PIC), detailed in her seminal work *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (2003). Davis argues that the PIC is a collection of isolated institutions and a set of interlocking political, economic, and ideological interests that depend on and benefit from incarceration, surveillance, and policing (Potter, 2025; Davis, 2016; Jackson, 2019). She explicitly positions the PIC as a direct historical successor to slavery and racialized state control, designed to manage populations rendered 'surplus' or 'unnecessary' by post-industrial capitalism.

The resulting philosophy of abolition feminism demands, first de-carceration. This is the radical reduction and eventual elimination of the carceral state. Second, redefinition of safety. This involves

shifting resources away from policing and punishment toward social programs, housing, mental health care, and education which are the foundational elements of true community safety. Third is link to intimate violence. Alongside collaborators like Gina Dent, Erica Meiners, and Beth Richie, Davis argues that feminist struggles against intimate and domestic violence must also oppose state violence, because relying on the police (agents of the carceral state) to solve intimate violence only reinforces the systems of oppression that cause the violence in the first place (Davis, et al., 2022). This abolitionist framework has offered African feminists a potent lens to critique the authoritarian and militarized police/prison systems inherited from colonial regimes, institutions designed for justice, but performs resource extraction and population control, and to argue for revolutionary, community-based restorative justice models instead.

3.3 African Feminist Theoretical Scrutiny and Adaptation

The reception and adaptation of Davis's framework in Africa have been highly constructive, leading to its theoretical scrutiny and expansion by African scholars. For example, Oyěwùmí (1997) critiques the concept of universal patriarchy. Oyèrónkẹ́ Oyěwùmí, in *The Invention of Women* (1997), critiqued the universal application of "gender" and "patriarchy" as Western conceptual tools. Analyzing the Yorùbá concept of personhood, she argues that pre-colonial Yorùbá society was largely non-gendered in its social structures. This challenges the universality of Davis' patriarchal system critique, forcing African feminists to adopt a more nuanced approach that differentiates between pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial forms of gender oppression. On the other hand, Mama (2007) critiqued the neocolonial state and militarization. Amina Mama (2007) has provided a context-specific application of Davis' state critique through her work on the militarization of gender in Africa. Mama argues that the neocolonial state, propped up by global capitalism and debt, uses militarism and internal conflict to manage dissent. Her work, echoing Davis' critique of the PIC, shows how violence against women is directly linked to the pathology of a weak, corrupt, and overly-militarized state, thereby reinforcing the need for an abolitionist-style, anti-state violence approach.

Hence, Davis' theoretical framework functions as a materialist-intersectional foundation upon which African feminist scholars have built context-specific critiques, validating the need for a unified strategy while rigorously adapting the concepts of patriarchy, state violence, and capitalist exploitation to the distinct historical and contemporary realities of the continent.

4. APPLIED INTERSECTIONALITY: CASE STUDIES IN AFRICAN FEMINIST LIBERATION

The theoretical framework articulated by Angela Davis, one that rigidly connects racial oppression, capitalist exploitation, and patriarchal systems, has served as a crucial methodological tool for African feminist movements, providing the intellectual scaffolding for activists to develop holistic liberation strategies. Rather than a direct adoption of U.S.-specific politics, Davis' ideas are typically absorbed as a lens of intersectional analysis, enabling local movements to define their specific challenges in transnational and materialist terms and continued influence (Irakoze, 2020)

4.1 Southern Africa: Intersectionality in the Post-Apartheid Context

The influence of Davis' thought is arguably most palpable in South Africa, where the struggles against Apartheid and Jim Crow shared profound structural similarities (Aziz, 2012). Black women's organizing in this region has consistently wrestled with the interlocking nature of race (Apartheid's classification), class (the migrant labour system), and gender (patriarchal control within townships and liberation movements).

To begin with, the legacy of black consciousness and feminist scholars. Davis' critique of racism and state violence resonated deeply with the principles of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), which, like the Black Power movement, insisted on a psychological and political self-reliance that transcended the limitations of multiracial liberalism. Activists and scholars associated with this era, such as Fatima Meer (a contemporary of Mandela and a prominent scholar), utilized an implicit intersectional analysis to critique the gendered experience of Apartheid. Additionally, post-Apartheid feminist scholars, directly referencing Davis, utilized intersectionality to challenge the failure of the initial transition to fully address economic and gender inequality (Nothomb, 2024). They argued that the new democracy merely addressed the "race" component of oppression while leaving patriarchy and the deep structures of racial capitalism (especially land and wealth distribution) intact.

This analysis provided the foundation for specific campaigns such as gender and land rights and the post-apartheid women's charter. Movements advocating for rural women's land tenure rights linked capitalist exploitation (commercial farming, mining) with patriarchal power (customary law that denies women ownership), a structure directly reflecting Davis's tripartite analysis. Also, while not solely Davisian, the push for the 1994 Women's Charter and subsequent legislative reforms was guided by an understanding that formal political equality (ending racial exclusion) was insufficient without economic and social justice (challenging class and gender exploitation). The continued high rates of gender-based violence (GBV) and economic disparity in post-Apartheid South Africa are framed by feminists as a failure to enact a full Davisian liberation, a failure to abolish the remnants of the carceral and capitalist state structures.

More recently, the rise of South African movements against xenophobia and high rates of GBV have seen a direct, albeit localized, adaptation of Davis' Abolition Feminism. Activists critique the police and judicial system, still largely reliant on colonial-era structures, for their failure to protect Black women and their tendency to criminalize victims and poor communities. This critique is a direct echo of Davis' insistence that state violence and intimate violence are fundamentally connected and that true safety lies in communal resource redistribution, not carceral expansion.

4.2 West Africa: Intersectional Organizing in Labor and Politics

In West Africa, Davis's influence has been critical in providing a theoretical language for labor union and political organizing efforts that must navigate the unique blend of colonial institutional legacies, rapid neoliberal economic shifts, and complex ethnic and religious patriarchies.

The case in point is Ghana's critique of neoliberal exploitation. In Ghana, feminist and women's organizing efforts often apply Davis's critique of capitalist exploitation by targeting the country's high reliance on resource extraction and the informal economy. Organizing among market women

and informal sector workers, for instance, adopts a Davisian intersectional lens by linking class and gender, and challenging state policing. In terms of linking class and gender, the failure of the state to provide social protection for market women is not accidental, but a calculated decision by the global capitalist system and its local agents to benefit from unregulated female labor. This exposes the gendered exploitation inherent in the informal economy, a structure that profits from the very lack of safety nets that patriarchy and poverty enforce. Furthermore, these women often face harassment and violence from municipal authorities, a form of localized state violence. Their resistance strategies implicitly follow Davis' abolitionist critique by demanding an end to police harassment and structural support (better markets, cheaper credit) that eliminates the conditions necessitating such informal, exploited labor in the first place (Tsikata, 2009; Pereira, 2002).

In Nigeria, feminist organizing, particularly the work of groups promoting political participation and challenging religious and ethnic extremism, demonstrates Davis' impact on political strategy. Nigerian feminist movements, which have long been critical of male dominance in state politics, use intersectionality to highlight the distinct vulnerability of women in the North (due to fundamentalism and conflict, linking religious patriarchy and political oppression) versus women in the South (due to environmental degradation from oil extraction, linking capitalist exploitation and patriarchal disregard for life) (Pereira, 2002). This nuanced, multi-front strategy reflects the sophistication of Davis' framework, the understanding that the primary forms of oppression (race/ethnicity, class, gender) shift in prominence and specific manifestation across regions.

4.3 East Africa: Reproductive Justice and Environmental Justice

East African movements, particularly those dealing with the immediate consequences of land dispossession and climate change, have found Davis' framework essential for connecting economic exploitation to patriarchal violence on a profound, ecological level. Key examples include anti-land-grabbing movements and reproductive justice campaigns.

On the anti-land-grabbing movements, in countries like Uganda and Kenya, large-scale land acquisitions for agribusiness (a direct form of capitalist exploitation) often result in the displacement of indigenous or peasant communities as recently seen in Hoima, Uganda. Local women's organizations resisting these "land grabs" use a Davisian lens to frame their struggle of intersection of land and body, and challenging the state as agent of capital (Tsikata & Yaro, 2011). Regarding the intersection of land and body, the loss of communal land (class/capitalist exploitation) leads directly to the collapse of traditional social structures, which often increases women's vulnerability to violence and food insecurity (patriarchal violence). Davis' emphasis on the material basis of oppression allows them to link the global demand for biofuels or cash crops to the individual woman's experience of hunger and violence. Further, the state police or military are not seen as neutral peacekeepers but as the violent agents of international capital, enforcing evictions and silencing dissent which is a clear application of Davis' critique of the carceral state in service of capitalist interests.

For the reproductive justice campaigns, East African reproductive justice movements have moved beyond advocating solely for family planning and have adopted the holistic, intersectional demands inherent in Davis' work. These movements belief reproductive injustice includes lack of access to contraception (a gender issue) as well as the high maternal mortality rates in rural areas (a class

issue, reflecting underfunded public health due to neoliberal cuts), and the forced displacement of communities due to climate change (an environmental/capitalist exploitation issue that compromises the ability to parent safely). By connecting these disparate threads, the womb, the wallet, and the land, these activists demonstrate a profound and practical application of Davis' integrated approach to liberation (Kamau, 2010; Tsikata & Yaro, 2011).

5. CRITIQUING DAVIS' UNIVERSAL INTERSECTIONALITY

While Angela Davis' intersectional approach provides a potent analytical lens, its direct application within the diverse landscapes of African feminist movements has generated significant scholarly critique and practical controversy. These debates primarily center on the universal applicability of a framework rooted in the specific history of U.S. racial capitalism, challenging its ability to adequately capture the nuances of African socio-political and economic realities.

5.1 The Challenge of Cultural Essentialism and Indigenous Knowledge

A major critique raised by African feminists concerns the implicit cultural essentialism of translating Black American feminist theory without adaptation. Critics argue that concepts of 'race' and 'gender,' central to Davis' framework, do not translate uniformly across all African cultures, particularly concerning pre-colonial social structures. Oyěwùmí (1997), presents a foundational challenge. She argues that the rigid, binary conceptualization of "woman" and "gender" is an imposition of Western epistemology, one reinforced by colonialism. Analyzing the Yorùbá concept of personhood, Oyěwùmí contends that pre-colonial Yorùbá society was structured by factors like seniority and birth order rather than a rigid sexual hierarchy. When a framework like Davis' is imported, it risks essentializing the African "woman" as universally oppressed by a monolithic patriarchy, obscuring the indigenous power structures and resistance mechanisms that existed before and alongside colonialism. This calls for an adaptation of intersectionality that recognizes indigenous systems of power and subordination that may not strictly adhere to the Western "gender" paradigm.

5.2 The Primacy of Anti-Colonial and Anti-Imperialist Struggle

Another central controversy involves the prioritization of oppression. While Davis insists on the simultaneous and equal weight of the race-class-gender trinity, many African feminist scholars argue that in post-colonial contexts, the struggle against neo-colonialism and global economic imperialism must sometimes take analytical or strategic precedence. Mama (2007) argues that African feminism must fundamentally address the crisis of the neocolonial state. This state, propped up by global capitalism and debt, is often the primary agent of oppression, utilizing militarization to manage internal conflict and dissent. For Mama, the struggle is both against a race-class-gender matrix and the neocolonial political economy that exacerbates all these oppressions. While Davis' critique of the carceral state is useful, Mama emphasizes that in many African nations, the state's violence is fundamentally tied to its function as a facilitator of Western capitalist extraction (e.g., resource wars, land grabs), making the anti-imperialist struggle the most immediate and defining facet of liberation. Regarding debt crisis and structural adjustment, Davis' framework often points to the devastating impact of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) imposed by global financial institutions

(IMF/World Bank). These policies, which demand cuts to social spending, disproportionately harm African women (class/gender) and are the modern face of capitalist exploitation. However, the activist strategy resulting from this analysis often demands debt cancellation and the dismantling of neoliberal global governance, a focus that sometimes subordinates the gender struggle to the broader need for economic sovereignty. This is a necessary strategic choice not fully captured by the U.S. historical focus on domestic racism.

5.3 Political Economy and Strategic Localization

The third set of critiques focuses on the specific political economy of African nations, which complicates the direct import of Davis' focus on the prison-industrial complex (PIC) and formal labor. While Davis' call for Abolition Feminism resonates with critiques of inherited, authoritarian colonial police and prison systems, one questions the direct analogy of the PIC. In many African countries, the dominant mode of capitalist exploitation is often informal, unregulated labor and resource extraction, rather than the hyper-developed mass incarceration system seen in the U.S. While corruption and state violence are rampant, the prisons may be more a symbol of state neglect and dysfunction than a massive, profitable industry of the kind Davis describes. Rita Abrahamsen's (2000) analysis of African security governance demonstrates that policing and incarceration on the continent are better understood as instruments of a weak, donor-dependent state exercising erratic coercive authority than as a coordinated, profit-driven industrial complex. Similarly, Jonny Steinberg's (2008) ethnographic work on the South African prison system reveals an institution defined by chronic underfunding, gang domination, and state abandonment—a configuration structurally distinct from the U.S. mass incarceration model Davis critiques. These analyses suggest that while Davis' abolitionist politics remain strategically relevant, African feminists must adapt the framework to address failed states, conflict zones, and systemic poverty as forms of state violence, rather than simply prison profitability. The task is to develop what might be called an "abolitionist African feminism" attuned to the specific modalities of state violence, resource-extraction capitalism, and racialized neglect that characterize the African post-colonial condition.

Further, balancing of local vs. global activism is critical. Davis' strong emphasis on transnational solidarity, including her high-profile support for the Palestinian struggle, while intellectually inspiring, sometimes generates practical controversy. African feminist movements must devote scarce resources to local, immediate crises such as high maternal mortality, localized conflicts, or domestic violence. Thus, it is little wonder whether a unified global framework, which necessarily involves aligning with distant geopolitical struggles, risks overshadowing the immediate, localized demands of African women, particularly those in grassroots organizations with limited capacity (Keeanga, 2019). The challenge is achieving solidarity without sacrificing the strategic urgency of the local.

6. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: PATRIARCHY, CAPITALISM, AND AFRICAN REALITIES

The utility of Davis' framework in African contexts is maximized when used to dissect the distinct, historical layers of patriarchy: pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial; and how Davis' focus on racial capitalism and unwaged labor helps uncover the material mechanisms linking these different

patriarchal systems to global economic exploitation, while also highlighting where her framework requires adaptation.

African societies exhibited varied social organization, some featuring "gender-flexible" systems (as noted by Oyěrónkẹ́ Oyěwùmí) and others possessing explicit patriarchal structures. In the latter, power often revolved around seniority, communal land access, and control over reproductive labor within kin-based economies. Davis' analysis of patrilineal control over women's reproductive and productive labor in her critique of US slavery proves useful here (Davis, 1983, 2003, 2016). Even in the absence of Western-style racial capitalism, traditional African patriarchies functioned through the material control of bodies and labor to secure wealth and lineage. Her work helps theorists identify the material, economic function of customary laws, linking the control of women's bodies and fertility to the accumulation of community or clan wealth. However, Davis' framework tends to categorize this control strictly as "patriarchy" without sufficient nuance for indigenous African concepts of complementary gender roles or female leadership (e.g., *Iyalode* titles in *Yorùbá* culture). Thus, African feminists must carefully apply Davis to isolate genuine exploitation from culturally specific, non-Western gendered power dynamics.

Furthermore, colonialism fundamentally restructured both African patriarchy and its relationship with global capitalism. Colonial authorities often codified and intensified existing patriarchal structures (through Customary Law) while simultaneously imposing new ones to facilitate the extraction of labor and resources. Particularly in Southern and East Africa, colonial capitalism relied on the migrant labor system. Men were forcibly drawn into mines and plantations (wage labor), while women were effectively confined to "homelands" or reserves, becoming responsible for the entirety of subsistence farming, childcare, and elderly care (unwaged labor). This scenario is a perfect illustration of Davis' analysis of unwaged domestic labor (Davis, 1983, 2003, 2016). The colonial state and the capitalist enterprise externalized the cost of reproducing the male labor force onto African women. Her framework provides the necessary tool to analyze this as a racialized, class-based, and gendered exploitation where the African woman was forced to subsidize the profits of the colonial mining and agricultural enterprises. Davis' critique moves the analysis beyond simple discrimination to a structural critique of profit generation. In the post-independence era, African states inherited both the colonial legal structures and their integration into the global capitalist system. This period is characterized by neoliberalism, privatization, deregulation, and the rollback of social services, which creates a new form of patriarchal-capitalist synergy. As African states cut social spending under SAPs (a form of capitalist restructuring), the burden of care (health, education, water provision) falls disproportionately back onto women. Davis' work helps African feminists frame this both as state neglect and as the global capitalist system exploiting female labor to fill the gaps created by market deregulation. Davis' analysis of the PIC helps expose the role of the post-colonial state. When women activists protest land grabs or lack of social services, they often face violence from police or military forces (Davis, 2003, 2016). Her framework allows feminists like Amina Mama to analyze these security forces as agents of a neocolonial, patriarchal state that uses violence to protect capitalist interests (e.g., foreign investors, corrupt elites) and suppress dissent, thereby linking state-sanctioned violence directly to economic exploitation and gendered silencing.

Finally, Davis' framework serves as a powerful analytical architecture for African feminists. It forces the sustained linking of patriarchy's manifestations from customary law to state violence, with the

global imperative of capitalist profit, thereby moving the struggle from isolated gender demands to a holistic revolutionary project.

7. CONCLUSION

Angela Davis' theoretical and activist contributions have shaped the landscape of feminist liberation strategies, particularly in Africa, by providing tools for understanding the intersections of capitalism, race, and patriarchy. However, the power of her framework lies both in its function as a prescriptive blueprint and a methodological provocation. African feminist praxis has revealed both the transformative potential and the necessary limitations of translating U.S.-rooted theories across vastly different socio-political realities. African feminists must continue to adapt foreign frameworks, recognizing that the roots of oppression in Africa often extend into distinct historical, colonial, and material conditions that require context-specific, localized resistance and innovation. In addition, the enduring relevance of Davis' scholarship lies in its methodology. The insistence on linking theory to organized struggle, the centering of marginalized voices, and the refusal to concede to fragmented activism. The path forward for African feminists is to build emancipatory strategies that are as intersectional in practice as they are in theory, whether through grassroots labor organizing, reproductive justice campaigns, or anti-imperialist coalition-building. Therefore, Davis' legacy demands a critical adoption and continual re-engagement and reinvention in the ongoing fight for collective liberation.

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