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Frank Gerits. *The Ideological Scramble for Africa: How the Pursuit of Anticolonial Modernity Shaped a Postcolonial Order (1945–1966)*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2023. ISBN13: 9781501767913.

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Introduction by Tony Chafer, University of Portsmouth (UK)

Frank Gerits' *The Ideological Scramble for Africa* is without doubt an ambitious undertaking. Its geographical scope, covering Anglophone, Francophone, and Lusophone Africa, the forty-six archives visited across Africa, Asia, Europe, and the United States, as well as the effort to encompass all the regions of Africa except North Africa, testify to the ambition of the project. The book is also ambitious in its effort to stake out a new historiography of Africa's decolonization. It shifts attention away from the globalization of the Cold War brought about by decolonization, and focuses instead on exploring the African "liberationist" project to forge an "anticolonial modernity" after the Second World War. The author traces the intellectual roots of this back to the eighteenth-century Haitian leader Toussaint Louverture. The reviewers, Emma Hunter, Alex J. Marino, Emily Marker, and Geraldine Sibanda, praise Gerits's effort to place Africa and Africans at the heart of international relations history in the twentieth century, with the aim of demonstrating that anti-colonial modernity was an ideological force with its own intellectual project that competed against American liberalism, Soviet socialism, and European imperialism. They also offer positive comments on his aim to shift the narrative away from the Cold War tensions that were dominant during the period studied by showing that Africa was not merely one of several Third World theatres where the Cold War played out. Rather, Gerits emphasizes African agency, with Africans seeking to compete with Europeans, Americans, and Soviets for hearts and minds on the continent after 1945. As such, this book represents an invitation to rethink the history of the twentieth century from the perspective of the liberationist project.

Of course, a work on this scale—although it is worth noting that, at under 200 pages, not including over 90 pages of endnotes, the text itself is not especially long—inevitably has gaps, and the reviewers have identified several. Gerits, in his response to the reviews, acknowledges that multi-centric historians, such as himself, must make explicit choices about what he calls "prime movers": who or what is the "motor" or "driver" of historical change? This is absolutely right, but the choice to prioritize first president of independent Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, as Hunter points out, leaves one wondering where the generation of African leaders who came to power in the early 1960s fits within this framework.

Marino points to the lack of coverage of key leaders from Lusophone Africa, who had their own influential visions of anticolonial modernity, to which one could also add leaders from Francophone Africa. In each case one wonders to what extent the visions of anticolonial modernity of these leaders may be traced back to Toussaint Louverture, given that, as Marker points out, twentieth-century African nationalism differs markedly from its nineteenth-century Haitian precedent. A clearer definition of what the author understands by "anticolonial modernity" would have been useful in this respect. Or should we perhaps talk of anticolonial modernities rather than anticolonial modernity, a term which perhaps suggests more of a shared intellectual and political project among African leaders than was the case? Moreover, as Sibanda reflects, there were other ideologies, such as African socialism and Marxism-Leninism, that were as important as pan-Africanism. It would have been interesting to explore the points of divergence and convergence of these different ideologies in their quest for anticolonial modernity.

A different set of questions raised by the reviewers revolves around the conceptualization of decolonization. As already noted, the author seeks to stake out a new historiography of Africa's decolonization. Gerits is not the first historian to attempt this.¹ Nor is he the first to place African agency at the center of his analysis.² One is nonetheless left wondering, as Hunter notes, where Gerits stands in relation to debates about African agency. African leaders were not completely free agents who operated in a vacuum cut off from other global events and systems. The question then arises: how did these structural constraints feed into, and shape, their projects for anticolonial modernity and with what impact? Another related question is that of federations. In his response, Gerits sees them as part of a liberationist project that by the 1960s had lost its liberationist potential, reflecting the fact that “cultural liberation had failed.” However, federations can be both part of a liberationist project and a product of concern with achieving rapid socio-economic modernization to deliver on the socio-economic expectations of independence. Could the question of how we understand these projects be in part, as Hunter suggests, a question of whose federation projects we are exploring?

Gerits explains in his response that he chose to place Kwame Nkrumah at the center of his text because he “transformed his newly independent country of Ghana into a platform to promote his version of pan-Africanism.” This is no doubt true, but begs the question of how far other African leaders—especially beyond Anglophone Africa—shared this vision of anti-colonial modernity. In reality, many, particularly in Francophone and Lusophone Africa did not. Yet their diverse visions were also part of the “ideological scramble for Africa.” Perhaps future researchers will take up Gerits's challenge to stake out a new historiography of decolonization by exploring what anti-colonial modernity looked like from a range of other perspectives.

In conclusion, both the author and reviewers share the hope that international historians and scholars of international relations will respond positively to the invitation Gerits's book offers to rethink the history of the twentieth century from the perspective of the liberationist project, and to explore its implications for how we think about contemporary challenges and debates. They are also agreed—not surprisingly, given its ambitious scope—that there are aspects of the book that require more research. For example, Gerits agrees that a tighter definition of some of the underpinning concepts, such as “psychological modernization,” is required. Finally, an intellectual history of the liberationist project that is at the center of this book—which

¹ See for example Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge University Press, 1996) and Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge University Press, 2002); Martin Shipway, *Decolonization and its Impact: A Comparative Approach to the End of the Colonial Empires* (Blackwell, 2008); Martin Thomas, *The End of Empires and a World Remade: A Global History of Decolonization* (Princeton University Press, 2024).

² See, for an earlier period, Mahir Şaul and Patrick Royer, *West African Challenge to Empire: Culture and History in the Volta-Bani Anticolonial War* (Ohio University Press, and James Currey, 2002). For the contemporary period, see Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton University Press, 2020); Olufemi Taiwo, *Against Decolonisation: Taking African Agency Seriously* (Hurst, 2022); Nathan Andrews and Nene Ernest Khalema, eds., *Decolonizing African Studies Pedagogies: Knowledge Production, Epistemic Imperialism and Black Agency* (Springer, 2023).

would explore the convergences and divergences within the anticolonial modernity projects that came to the forefront after the Second World War—would be a valuable addition to the literature.

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Why was so much international attention from across both the Global South and the Global North concentrated on the Congo in the early 1960s? For Frank Gerits, the answer does not lie in the globalization of the Cold War brought about by decolonization. Rather, it lies in what he terms the “ideological scramble for Africa” (2). In contrast to the late nineteenth-century geopolitical transformation once termed the “Scramble for Africa,” which saw much of the African continent come under colonial rule, this was a scramble of competing ideas in which those propounded by newly independent and soon to be independent African states were as important as those of Global North powers. Crucially, this was not an ideological scramble which could be reduced to capitalism versus Communism. Gerits seeks to refocus attention instead on a “liberationist” project to forge an “anticolonial modernity,” the intellectual genealogy of which can be traced to the eighteenth-century Haitian leader Toussaint Louverture (2). Gerits highlights the importance of this project, and the impact it had on international relations. The central argument of this book is that “[t]he liberationist mission to rework colonial modernity, not the anticolonial engagement with the Cold War, shaped the postcolonial global order” (2).

In making this argument, Gerits’s book poses a direct challenge to international historians who have put the Cold War at the centre of their narratives of the second half of the twentieth century.¹ He invites a rethinking of the nature of the ideological struggle in the middle twentieth century, putting the liberationist project back at the centre of struggle in those years. This in turn has implications for broader chronologies of the twentieth century, which take 1989 as the critical turning point of the later twentieth century.

But Gerits also addresses historians of Africa and of the wider Global South who, in recent years, have often written about decolonization in terms of roads not taken or failed utopias.² By shifting the focus away from intellectual projects to the world of public diplomacy and statecraft, Gerits makes the case that “[p]ostcolonial statesmen did not only redefine Marxism or capitalism for ‘their own purposes.’” (14) Gerits argues instead that “their understanding of nation-building and race was exported to the non-colonized world, where it reshaped interpretations of the decolonizing world” (14).

Gerits is able to make this argument because he has steeped himself in the archives of an impressively broad range of countries of both the Global North and the Global South, and can therefore trace the impact of postcolonial diplomacy in practice. The result is a powerful book which deserves a wide readership. The overarching argument is a compelling one. I hope that international historians, and international relations scholars, will take its argument seriously and respond to the invitation it offers to rethink the history of the twentieth century from the perspective of the liberationist project, with all the implications this has for how

¹ See, for example, Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).

² See, for example, Frederick Cooper, “Possibility and Constraint: African Independence in Historical Perspective,” *Journal of African History*, 49:2 (2008): 167-196; Gary Wilder, *Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization, and the Future of the World* (Duke University Press, 2015).

we think about contemporary challenges and debates (187). But I hope that the book will reach a wider audience. I focus my comments below on the implications of the book for scholars of decolonization, federation, and the history of political ideas in Africa. After reading the book I was left with three questions.

The first concerns the implications of the book for histories of decolonization. One of the most striking aspects of this book is the way that it moves beyond any one imperial or national context, and restores the multiplicity of projects that were at play in the international diplomacy of the 1950s and 1960s. This allows Gerits to see the moments at which former imperial powers worked together, and sought to shield each other from criticism, and the moments at which they broke ranks. For example, Gerits's account of the controversies around French atomic bomb testing in the Sahara Desert in 1959 brings out the ways in which, by that point, diplomats from the United Kingdom were navigating a difficult tightrope between their loyalty to European allies and their desire to create and sustain positive relationships with Ghana and Nigeria.

This wide geographical reach offers the potential to offer a new perspective on the role of the imperial metropole in political decolonization. In recent years, an important new vein of scholarship, often written by international historians or global historians, has challenged older narratives of political independence which focused either on a metropole-colony process of decolonization or on the individual nationalist movements that demanded independence from colonial rulers.³ Historians of anti-colonialism have traced the networks of activists who worked together across a series of hubs, from London to Accra to Cairo, while others have internationalised the story of decolonization by putting international organisations such as the United Nations more firmly into the story than ever before.⁴

One consequence has been that less attention has been paid to the perspective of political leaders and officials in the metropole than was the case for an earlier generation of scholars, and it is striking that when discussing the historiography of political decolonization, it is to an older literature that Gerits turns, a historiography which took colonial officials at their word when they presented the end of empires and the birth of independent states as the outcome of a process they had long envisaged and planned for (78).

In taking us back into the archives of the metropole, Gerits performs a valuable service. But what then does this mean for how we understand the process of decolonization and independence as a political event, and where, for Gerits, does agency lie in that process? One area where scholars have, in recent years, been very interested in activities at the high political level in the metropole is in relation to development policy and its relationship to concepts of modernization.⁵ I would have been interested to see a more explicit engagement

³ See, for example, John Flint, "Planned Decolonization and its Failure in British Africa," *African Affairs* 82:328 (1983): 389-411; Robert Pearce, "The Colonial Office and Planned Decolonization in Africa," *African Affairs* 83:330 (1984): 77-93; Thomas Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa* (New York University Press, 1957).

⁴ See, for example, Ismay Milford, *African Activists in a Decolonising World: The Making of Anticolonial Culture, 1952-1966*, (Cambridge University Press, 2023); Lydia Walker, "Decolonization in the 1960s: On Legitimate and Illegitimate Nationalist Claims-Making," *Past and Present* 242:1 (2019): 227-264.

⁵ See, for example, Joseph M. Hodge, Gerald Hoedl, and Martina Kopf, *Developing Africa: Concepts and Practices in Twentieth-Century Colonialism* (Manchester University Press, 2015).

with that literature. A tighter definition of some of the underpinning concepts, such as that of “psychological modernization,” would, I think, have helped in this regard.

The second question concerns chronology and how far this is a story about Ghana and its leader Kwame Nkrumah. Ghana’s public diplomacy plays a critical role in this book, in terms of the agents of public diplomacy from the Global South whose activity Gerits traces. The chronological arc of the book follows that of Ghana’s trajectory from independence in 1957 to the overthrow in 1966 of Nkrumah. For me, the empirical heart of the book begins in 1955 with the Bandung Conference of that year. Far from marking the birth of a new Afro-Asianism, for Gerits the Bandung Conference prompted Nkrumah’s turn to develop a new “pan-African modernity,” rejecting what he identifies as Asian paternalism (53). The independence of Ghana in 1957 means that subsequent foreign policy crises, such as the Saharan nuclear tests which are explored in Chapter 4, took place in a changed world in which an independent Ghana was a force to be reckoned with in foreign ministries and international organisations across the world. The Congo crisis and the assassination of Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba in 1961 are often presented as a turning point in the history of the middle twentieth century. Gerits understands these events as a turning point too, but not for the conventional reasons of marking the arrival of the Cold War in Africa. Rather, the events in Congo constituted a turning point in prompting a shift away from a vision of modernization as a psychological project to one of modernization as a socio-economic project. The result, for Gerits, was a move away from a “liberationist path to modernity” towards “communist or capitalist modernization programmes” instead (180). The book ends in 1966, the year in which Nkrumah was overthrown in a coup and the year “when the anticolonial modernization project collapsed” (16). The next generation of nationalist leaders, Gerits argues, approached global politics in a different way from Nkrumah and his contemporaries, accepting Cold War binaries in a way their predecessors had not.

This argument makes sense in a narrative in which Ghana is the main driver of the liberationist project the book traces. But I wonder where the generation of statesmen who won independence in the early 1960s fits within this chronology. The Tanzanian leader Julius Nyerere’s policy of *ujamaa*, and Zambian leader Kenneth Kaunda’s humanism, are discussed in the book. Gerits’s analysis of the differences between Nyerere and Nkrumah in their approach to federation is astute and persuasive. But would Gerits see the Arusha Declaration of 1967, which marked Tanzania’s decisive turn to a policy of *ujamaa* or “African socialism,” as constituting an attempt at a liberationist anticolonial modernity, or rather as marking an acceptance of Cold War binaries?

The final question involves federation. Over a number of years, my colleagues and I have been researching the history of regionalism in East Africa.⁶ I fully agree with Gerits’s determination to take the “federal moment” seriously as a critical part of the postwar international order as opposed to simply as “a fleeting feature of decolonization or a failed utopian project” (183). However, I wonder how neatly the history of federation projects fits into Gerits’s overarching narrative of a shift from psychological to socio-economic

⁶ See for example, Emma Hunter, Julie MacArthur, Gerard McCann, and Chris Vaughan, “Thinking East African: Debating Federation and Regionalism, 1960–1977,” in Frank Gerits and Matteo Grilli, eds., *Visions of African Unity: New Perspectives on the History of Pan-Africanism and Unification Projects* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2021) 49–75.

modernization. Gerits argues that “[i]n the 1960s, federations lost their liberationist appeal and became modernization tools” (184). On one level, the history of federation in East Africa could indeed be read in this way. An early 1960s vision of pan-African federation as the basis for an East African Federation failed when it ran up against hard political reality and the demands of sovereignty. What was created instead was a less ambitious mode of federation in the form of the East African Community, established in 1967, which focused on the economic relationships between East Africa’s states as a means of delivering socio-economic change. But viewed from East Africa, building federations was always both part of a liberationist project and a product of concern with achieving rapid socio-economic modernization to deliver on the socio-economic expectations of independence. Could the question of how we understand these projects be in part a question of whose projects we are exploring? More specifically, could it be a question about the relationship between the pronouncements of leaders and the day-to-day activities of the civil servants and officials who made such institutions work in practice?

Odd Arne Westad's *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* encouraged a generation of doctoral students to adopt multi-lingual, multi-archival research to explore the Cold War's impact on Africa and on decolonization.¹ Amidst calls for a renewed emphasis on American sources and on "recentering the United States" in diplomatic history, one might wonder whether the era of the international and transnational turns is coming to an end.² *The Ideological Scramble for Africa: How the Pursuit of Anticolonial Modernity Shaped a Postcolonial Order, 1945–1966* by Frank Gerits firmly makes the case for historians to continue along the path laid out by Westad and others. This new book may yet inspire the next generation of scholars to study international history.

Gerits centers Africa and Africans at the heart of international relations history in the twentieth century. He argues that the Cold War was not the driving force of twentieth-century international relations, but rather a process that "unfolded alongside another struggle with nineteenth-century roots: the fight between imperial modernity, characterized by racial difference and technocracy, and anticolonial modernity, which embraced culture and history and rejected the psychological intrusion of the colonial project" (182). Anticolonial modernity was a powerful ideological influence of its own that competed against American liberalism, Soviet socialism, and European imperialism. African leaders wanted decolonization to not simply sever relations between colony and metropole, but to create new African international organizations that were free of the racism and structural inequities offered by competing Global North ideologies. African leaders conceptualized anti-colonial modernity as an interventionist ideology and crafted diplomatic initiatives, informational campaigns, military campaigns, and economic development projects to secure their goals—using all the tools of modern statecraft. These anti-colonial interventions upended European, American, and Soviet attempts to influence decolonization and to control Africa's interactions with the world. Recasting the second half of the twentieth century as a four-way ideological struggle highlights the ways in which both decolonization in Africa and anticolonial leaders dominated global affairs during this period.

Using a dizzying number of archival sources and secondary materials, Gerits makes his arguments with a preponderance of evidence. He has incorporated significant research in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, and Zambia in Africa; Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy,

¹ Gerits's work clearly contends with Westad and the other groundbreaking works of the early 2000s on the Cold War in Africa and race in American foreign policy, including: Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton University Press, 2000); Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Harvard University Press, 2001); Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Matthew Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford University Press, 2002); James H. Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1935–1961* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).

² Daniel Bessner and Fredrik Logevall, "Recentering the United States in the Historiography of American Foreign Relations," *Texas National Security Review* 3:2 (Spring 2020): 38–55.

Portugal, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom in Europe; as well as in four US presidential libraries, the National Archives and Records Administration, and almost a dozen other North American archives. His footnotes serve as an invaluable roadmap into the diplomatic archives of three continents; this alone makes the book a must-have for diplomatic historians, particularly for early-career scholars. In addition to his rich collection of textual evidence, Gerits also engages deeply with the current state of the historiography. He is mindful of the many historiographical interventions he makes, yet the book's length is manageable and the prose is accessible to a non-specialist audience.

The Ideological Scramble for Africa covers African, European, American, and Soviet information campaigns with great detail, making an incredibly important contribution to the history of public diplomacy as well as to the history of decolonization.³ In the years immediately after World War II, leaders from across the globe viewed the “African mind” as the key ideological battlefield of the twentieth century. As anti-colonial politicians pushed for independence, “policymakers and intellectuals in the North as well as the South thus all spoke the language of psychology and culture when they reflected on decolonization” (6). African leaders like Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Léopold Senghor of Senegal, and Martinique-born Frantz Fanon focused on the psychological aspects of decolonization, just as colonial empires and the Cold War superpowers searched for psychological solutions to their public relations challenges. Gerits shows how nearly a dozen nations adapted and modified their foreign policies and public diplomacy efforts over two decades.

European, American, and Soviet leaders often completely misunderstood African positions on international events. Representatives from governments in the Global North believed that the 1955 Bandung Conference represented a coordinated call for better development programs rather than one to form a new kind of Afro-Asian anticolonial modernity (49-51). More strikingly, the French government appeared to not comprehend that testing atomic bombs in Africa harmed its efforts to stall decolonization in Algeria and to build strong post-colonial relations with France's former colonies. Led by Nkrumah and others, African nations took concerted action to pressure France to end its testing. The United States and the United Kingdom rightly understood that France's detonation of nuclear devices on African soil was a nightmare for their own relations with African countries. Gerits argues that French officials could not accept the fact that the United States and Britain were angry at them for testing nuclear weapons in Africa and not for crashing the nuclear club (97-102).

³ On public diplomacy, see: Andrew Johnstone, “Spinning War and Peace: Foreign Relations and Public Relations on the Eve of World War II,” *Journal of American Studies* 53:1 (February 2019): 223–51; Jason C. Parker, *Hearts, Minds, Voices: US Cold War Public Diplomacy and the Formation of the Third World* (Oxford University Press, 2016); Justin Hart, *Empire of Ideas: The Origins of Public Diplomacy and the Transformation of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Oxford University Press, 2013); Laura A. Belmonte, *Selling the American Way: U.S. Propaganda and the Cold War* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Nicholas J. Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945-1989* (Cambridge University Press, 2008); Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (University Press of Kansas, 2006); Brian Angus McKenzie, *Remaking France: Americanization, Public Diplomacy, and the Marshall Plan* (Berghahn Books, 2005); Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, *Transmission Impossible: American Journalism as Cultural Diplomacy in Postwar Germany, 1945-1955* (Louisiana State University Press, 1999).

Despite ample attention given to American, Soviet, and European decisionmakers, the book centers upon African political leaders and their ideologies. Gerits makes it clear that “people and leaders in the Global South were not forced to ‘take what was available’—Communism or capitalism—but had a wider range of ideological options to reach the highly coveted horizon of modernity” (183). Leaders from across the continent pursued anti-colonial modernity in their own ways given that they were interested in creating independent nation-states and international organizations in their own image. Gerits shows that there were substantial disagreements between African intellectuals and statesmen over the role of state intervention in the economy, the freedom of individuals, the role of race, especially about whether to pursue racial justice or a colorblind society, and over the use of violence to secure an anti-colonial future.

These disagreements over policy and theory led to the creation of what Gerits calls “a world of federations that jockeyed for the loyalty of other countries” (183). These federations took many forms, including state mergers like Tanganyika and Zanzibar to create Tanzania, loose federal groupings such as the Ghana-Guinea Union, and the continent-wide Organization of African Unity (OAU) (164, 79, 170). The Casablanca Group often clashed with members of the Monrovia Group over the role of the OAU and the general contours of Pan-African cooperation (121). In these clashes, anti-colonial leaders were just as interventionist in African affairs as the superpowers, using their militaries to support like-minded politicians and independence movements. Newly independent African states provided arms, training, and funding to anti-colonial revolutionaries, and in the Congo Crisis many even deployed conventional military forces (73-75, 116). This fierce competition between African states meant that “instead of a superpower competition for the allegiance of newly independent nation states, international relations constituted a situation in which old and new empires were competing with many different federations of liberation” (183).

Perhaps no leader typified the interventionism of Pan-Africanism more than Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana. The All-African People’s Conference (AAPC), hosted by Ghana in 1958, was Nkrumah’s attempt not only to aid independence movements, but to control their political strategies. Nkrumah pushed back strongly against Fanon and others who advocated for a violent liberation struggle, in direct contradiction to the gradual reformist approach taken in Ghana (73-74). Ghana’s Bureau of African Affairs worked overtime during crises in Guinea in 1958, during the French nuclear tests, and Congolese independence, crafting foreign interventions and encouraging others to join. Despite Nkrumah’s firm stance against armed confrontation with the colonial powers at the AAPC, by 1960, Ghana had stationed troops on the ground in Congo (116).

In his discussion of the policymaking processes of several African states—in particular Nkrumah’s Ghana—Gerits has written a remarkable work of African diplomatic history that is a clarion call for expanding the field. Diplomacy in Africa has been relegated to a small sub-field within the African Studies Association and a related group of scholars focused on US-Africa relations within the Society of Historians of American Foreign Relations. As Gerits and other scholars have recently shown, post-independence African states pursued policy objectives through all the tools of modern statecraft—diplomatic, informational, military,

and economic power (DIME).⁴ Perhaps it is time for the creation of a dedicated journal for African diplomatic history, akin to the relatively new *Journal of African Military History*, which has led to an impressive growth within the field of African military history.⁵

For all that is included in *The Ideological Scramble for Africa*, there is relatively minor attention to Lusophone Africa, where anti-colonial revolutionaries fought for over a decade to win independence from Portugal. Based upon an impressive amount of work in Portuguese archives and from secondary sources, Gerits includes the Portuguese perspective quite well before the beginning of the liberation struggle in Angola in 1961. However, the wars in Lusophone Africa dominated African diplomacy in the early 1960s, complete with continent-wide military, diplomatic, and informational campaigns that were designed to destroy Portuguese imperialism. Anti-colonial revolutionaries in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau continued to promote liberation as a kind of utopia project to the very end of the anti-colonial struggle in 1975, well after Gerits asserts that “a new generation of African leaders” turned to “Communist or capitalist modernization programs over the liberationist path to modernity” (178-180). This omission is understandable given the sheer magnitude of the project and the complexity of decolonization in Lusophone Africa, which has received much scholarly attention in recent years.⁶

Frank Gerits’s *The Ideological Struggle for Africa* is an impressive and ambitious book that should be required reading for historians of international history, African history, European history, and American foreign relations. African anti-colonial modernity was its own interventionist ideology that competed against American capitalism, Soviet socialism, and European imperialism. Gerits’s work shows the promise of multi-archival, multi-language research, and makes clear that more work is needed in African diplomatic history. By dislodging the centrality of the Cold War in the twentieth century, Gerits forcefully supports

⁴ See: Brooks Marmon, *Pan-Africanism Versus Partnership: African Decolonisation in Southern Rhodesian Politics, 1950–1963* (Springer, 2023); Marco Wyss, *Postcolonial Security: Britain, France, and West Africa’s Cold War* (Oxford University Press, 2021); Timothy Lewis Scarnecchia, *Race and Diplomacy in Zimbabwe: The Cold War and Decolonization, 1960–1984* (Cambridge University Press, 2021); Lazlo Passemiers, *Decolonisation and Regional Geopolitics: South Africa and the ‘Congo Crisis,’ 1960–1965* (Routledge, 2019); Alanna O’Malley, *The Diplomacy of Decolonisation: America, Britain and the United Nations During the Congo Crisis 1960–1964* (Manchester University Press, 2018); Elizabeth Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa after the Cold War: Sovereignty, Responsibility, and the War on Terror* (Ohio University Press, 2018); Jean Martial Arsene Mbah, *As Rivalidades Políticas Entre a Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FNLA) e o Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA): 1961–1975* (Mayamba, 2010).

⁵ See: Charles G. Thomas and Roy Doron, “Out of Africa: The Challenges, Evolution, and Opportunities of African Military History,” *Journal of African Military History* 1:1-2 (10 July 2017): 3-23. There are several multi-disciplinary journals on African security issues, such as *African Security*, *African Security Review*, and *African Affairs*, but no dedicated history journal.

⁶ For recent works on the anti-colonial project, ideology, and the Cold War in Lusophone Africa, see: Natalia Telepneva, *Cold War Liberation: The Soviet Union and the Collapse of the Portuguese Empire in Africa, 1961–1975* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2022); R. Joseph Parrott and Mark Atwood Lawrence, eds., *The Tricontinental Revolution: Third World Radicalism and the Cold War* (Cambridge University Press, 2022); Jeremy Friedman, *Ripe for Revolution: Building Socialism in the Third World* (Harvard University Press, 2021); Passemiers, *Decolonisation and Regional Geopolitics*; Marissa J. Moorman, *Powerful Frequencies: Radio, State Power, and the Cold War in Angola, 1931–2002* (Ohio University Press, 2019).

W.E.B. Du Bois's 1903 claim that "the problem of the Twentieth Century" was not the conflict between capitalism and socialism, but "the problem of the color line," a problem we still face in our times.⁷

⁷ W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Hazleton: PSU-Hazleton, 2006), 16.

Africa was not merely one of several Third World theaters where the Cold War played out. Africans were themselves active and creative participants who were eager to compete with Europeans, Americans, and Soviets for hearts and minds on the continent after 1945. Drawing on a much longer Black radical tradition rooted in new world colonization, transatlantic slavery, and colonial capitalism, postwar African leaders developed their own anticolonial modernization projects. Pan-Africanists like Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of independent Ghana, rejected empire in all of its forms—Europe’s “empire of exploitation,” the United States’ “empire of liberty,” and the USSR’s “empire of equality”—and countered with “federations of liberation” and African unity as bulwarks against political, economic, and cultural domination from the outside (10). While robust African federalism did not come to pass, its pursuit and prospect throughout the 1950s and 1960s pushed Western leaders from London and Paris to Washington and Moscow to adjust their strategies, tactics, and goals. In this way, African leaders, intellectuals, and diplomats helped shape the postcolonial world order.

These are the central arguments of Frank Gerits’s important new book on postwar international relations. As Gerits notes in the acknowledgements, this is a big book—the kind of book that contemporary academia actively discourages, as “the pressures of an academic job market shackled by neoliberal ideas” push us to think small and produce fast (x). Gerits has defied those pressures spectacularly, having consulted 46 archives on three continents, the majority in Africa. In and of itself, this is a major methodological intervention. Gerits models “an Africa-centered methodology in which African archives, rather than repositories in the metropole, are taken as a starting point.” He stresses the fact that this choice is not only about volume: “Rather than the amount of African sources, what is important is the sustained reflection on how postcolonial archives alter the findings that stem from depositories in the metropole” (14). This approach mitigates the risk of confirmation bias when scholars working primarily in the Global North consult just a handful of postcolonial archives (15). The approach is not without its pitfalls—more on that below—but the book makes clear that simply by prioritizing African archives and decentering Euro-American ones, it becomes possible to shed new light on African agency in the postwar international system, the global Cold War, and decolonization. That is no small achievement given the tremendous outpouring of scholarship since the early 2000s on postwar empire and “late colonialism,” decolonization and the Cold War, post/colonial development and global capitalism, Pan-Africanism and Black anticolonial thought, and South-South relations and Third World solidarity.¹

¹ This literature is now far too vast to do justice to in a single footnote. I only flag touchstone monographs and/or representative edited volumes for each subfield here. On postwar empire and late colonialism, see Martin Shipway, *Decolonization and Its Impact: A Comparative Approach to the End of the Colonial Empires* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2008); Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship Between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa* (Princeton University Press, 2014); Andrew W.M. Smith and Chris Jeppesen, *Britain, France, and the Decolonization of Africa: Future Imperfect?* (University College London Press, 2017). On decolonization and the Cold War, see Matthew Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria’s Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford University Press, 2002); Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge University Press, 2005); Alessandro Iandolo, *Arrested Development: The Soviet Union in Ghana, Guinea and Mali, 1955-1968* (Cornell University

Gerits's analysis is especially exciting in his emphasis on homegrown African interventionism. He characterizes Pan-Africanism as a "liberationist, interventionist ideology with universalist aspirations" and suggests that it was precisely those features that made Pan-Africanism a serious competitor to Western development models (2). For Nkrumah, African liberation depended on reversing the psychological destruction of colonialism. That entailed shoring up the "African personality," prioritizing cultural integrity, and charting a model of development that drew on the precolonial African past. Nkrumah's insistence on African authenticity was at odds with the "Brown man's burden" sentiment that prevailed among many Asians towards Africa at the "Afro-Asian Conference" in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955. As Gerits notes, appeals for Asian countries to help their "less developed" African brothers at Bandung reflected a form of "Afro-Orientalism" that alienated Nkrumah and other African leaders (44). Subsequently, Nkrumah proclaimed a "Monroe Doctrine for Africa" to insulate and protect the continent from outside interference (65). In 1959, in order to promote his vision of African culture as an engine of anticolonial modernity, he established a Bureau for African Affairs, which was endowed with a research department, printing press, library, conference hall, and publications department (75). By 1961, Ghana's technical assistance programs to other African nations were explicitly used to project an image of the country as the principal guide on the continent's path to anticolonial modernity (117).

Gerits underscores that Ghana's "enthusiastic adoption of propaganda as a diplomatic weapon to spread its anticolonial modernization model affected old alliances in North and South alike" (101). His examples include frayed relations between the Anglo-Americans and French officials over France's atomic tests in the Sahara Desert, tensions between the Belgians and Britain and Portugal over the Congo Crisis, and, in the South, Nkrumah's focus on African unity led him to break with the international peace movement, the Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organization (AAPSO), and Egyptian President Gamal Nasser. Gerits stresses that both Ghanaian and Egyptian nationalisms mobilized interventionist ideologies and that Nasser, like Nkrumah, sought to direct the development process in other African countries and to build federations (11). However, I was surprised not to see more sustained attention to Nasser's drive for primacy in African affairs and the currents coming from elsewhere in the Muslim world that drove Nasser's interventionist agenda, which also had long-term impacts on vast swaths of Muslim sub-Saharan Africa.² Nonetheless, this line of analysis supports Gerits's overarching claim that African liberation shaped the international system.

Press, 2022). On development, see Stephen J. Macekura and Erez Manela, eds., *The Development Century: A Global History* (Cambridge University Press, 2018). On Pan-Africanism and Black anticolonial thought see Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking After Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton University Press, 2019); Annette Joseph-Gabriel, *Reimagining Liberation: How Black Women Transformed Citizenship in the French Empire* (University of Illinois Press, 2020); Musab Younis, *On the Scale of the World: The Formation of Black Anticolonial Thought* (University of California Press, 2022). On South-South relations, see Christopher J. Lee, ed., *Making A World After Empire: The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlives* (Ohio University Press, 2010); Jeffrey Byrne, *Mecca of the Revolution: Algeria, Decolonization and the Third World Order* (Oxford University Press, 2016); Michele Louro, Carolien Stolte, Heather Streets-Salter, and Sana Tannoury-Karam, eds., *The League Against Imperialism: Lives and Afterlives* (Leiden University Press, 2020); Carolien Stolte and Su Lin Lewis, eds., *The Lives of Cold War Afro-Asianism* (Leiden University Press, 2022).

² On Nasser's bid for influence south of the Sahara, see James Brenan, "Radio Cairo and the Decolonization of East Africa, 1953-1964," in Lee, ed., *Making a World After Empire*; on Nasser's competition with the Saudis for influence in

This analysis is also the basis of his intriguing reinterpretation of the failure of Pan-Africanism, and Third Worldism more broadly, not as the result of Cold War constraints but rather of the internal contradictions of the liberationist project itself. That is a key insight. As Gerits writes in the introduction, “[a]nticolonial leaders were committed to the principle of nonintervention while simultaneously also spawning their own interventionist projects, leading to fights in which they branded one another as neocolonialists” (9). Put another way, anticolonial modernization failed because “nationalists sought to remake other societies and thus violated their own basic principle of ideological non-interference, which harmed Afro-Asian and inter-African solidarity as well as African’s relationship with Latin America” (184).³

In a similar vein, Gerits reframes the pivot of East and Southern African leaders away from continental unity and towards narrower regional economic federation in the mid-1960s as a response to Nkrumah’s particular brand of interventionism and to his “emotional” anticolonial discourse not to external Cold War factors. Gerits likewise repositions Tanzanian leader Julius Nyerere’s African socialism and the New International Economic Order (NIEO) as a counter not only to the existing configuration of the global economy but also to certain Pan-Africanist ideas, which Gerits loosely connects to generational change. In his reading, a rising generation of African leaders turned away from Nkrumah’s focus on reversing the psychological and cultural destruction of colonialism because they were disappointed with their predecessors’ meager results. Instead, Nyerere and others prioritized socioeconomic transformation, living standards, and material conditions (7).

Nkrumah and Nyerere certainly had very different visions for African liberation, but I am not wholly persuaded by Gerits’s gloss on their differences as a shift from a “Third World ideological project” based on “ideas,” to the NIEO, which was concerned with “global economic structures” (12). This elides the interesting generational analysis suggested above.⁴ More importantly, though, throughout the book Gerits starkly opposes the political and the economic in ways that run counter to the thinking of some of the key figures in his narrative. For instance, in fleshing out the initial primacy of culture in Pan-Africanist thought, Gerits cites Martinican poet and politician Aimé Césaire’s celebrated treatise, *Discourse on Colonialism*. But

Muslim Black Africa in the late 1950s and early 60s, which Reinhard Schulze has characterized as an “inter-Arab Cold War,” see Reinhard Schulze, “La Da’wa saoudienne en Afrique de l’Ouest,” in René Otayak, ed., *La radicalisation islamique au sud du Sahara: Da’wa, arabisation, et critique de l’Occident* (Karthala, 1993).

³ In this way, mid-twentieth century African anticolonial nationalism differed markedly from its nineteenth-century Haitian precedent, which Gerits cites repeatedly as a model for figures like Nkrumah. As Marlene Daut has shown, independent Haiti was singular not only for its rejection of anti-Black racism but also for its commitment to never become an empire and to eschew any and all expansionist or imperialist ambitions. See her “Beyond ‘America for the Americans’: Race and Empire in the Work of Dumesnil Delorme,” *J19* 6:1 (2018): 189-197, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/jnc.2018.0014>.

⁴ Many scholars, including myself, have found a focus on generational politics and “generation” as a category of analysis useful in making sense of the global transformations in the postwar era, especially in late colonial and post-independence Africa. See Joseph-Gabriel, *Reimagining Liberation*; Daniel Tödt, *The Lumumba Generation: African Bourgeoisie and Colonial Distinction in the Belgian Congo* (De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2021); and Emily Marker, *Black France, White Europe: Youth, Race, and Belonging in the Postwar Era* (Cornell University Press, 2022).

Césaire wrote the *Discourse* when he was still a member of the French Communist Party (PCF); indeed, the first edition was published by the PCF in 1950 before its re-issue with the Pan-Africanist imprint, *Présence Africaine*, five years later. Gerits cautions in the book's introduction that "[p]rivileging the struggle for economic justice ignores the long shadow of the Haitian Revolution and the disagreements about the appropriate role of precolonial culture in postcolonial modernity" (7). But that concern does not square with the inextricable relationship Césaire posits between colonialism, fascism, and capitalism, the crux of his polemic. For Césaire, to be anticolonial was perforce to be anticapitalist, and precolonial African culture held radical emancipatory potential precisely insofar as it was *antecapitalist*.⁵ This line of reasoning also obtained for other Black Atlantic thinkers Gerits includes in his genealogy of Pan-Africanism, like C.L.R. James and W.E.B. Du Bois. Cedric Robinson's seminal *Black Marxism* is curiously absent from those discussions. Some engagement with his work would have helped draw out the complexity of Black anticolonial thought on the interconnectedness of political and economic forms of domination and nuance Gerits's rigid dichotomy between liberationist visions of political and economic autonomy.⁶

While that rigid dichotomy may reflect disciplinary conventions in International Relations, it also underwrites the book's reduction of the analytical and causal significance of the Cold War in postwar African diplomatic history. I am certainly sympathetic to that impulse and make similar moves in my own work.⁷ However, at times Gerits stakes out a maximalist position that distinguishes "East-West" and "North-South" dynamics in such stark terms that he seems to disaggregate the Cold War and decolonization almost completely. He asserts that his book offers "a reconfiguring of our understanding of twentieth-century international affairs from East-West to North-South" (4). I am not sure what to make of that claim in light of Matthew Connelly's work, now over two decades old, that did such a thorough job of illuminating the multiaxial nature of global conflict in the postwar era—that is, as both East-West and North-South, not either/or.⁸ Indeed, throughout the book there is a certain nebulosity in how Gerits positions his findings in relation to existing scholarship. I found this to be the book's main weakness, which, I suspect, is paradoxically tied to one of the book's greatest strengths: Gerits's exhaustive, African-centered archival research. The historical narrative is so jam-packed with rich archival detail that substantive engagement with other's scholars' work often takes a back seat. Without a more incisive dialogue with other scholarly arguments and analyses, it is difficult to see why Gerits's frames the book in opposition to so much of the existing literature, especially Connelly's work, and, still more puzzlingly, Adom Getachew's. In *Worldmaking after Empire*, Getachew traces the efforts of many of the same thinkers

⁵ Aimé Césaire and Robin D.G. Kelley, *Discourse on Colonialism* (Monthly Review Press, 2000). Kelley's introductory essay, "The Poetics of Anticolonialism," offers an excellent, sophisticated analysis of the role of Marxism in Césaire's thought and his involvement with communist politics in the 1940s and 1950s.

⁶ Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, Revised Third Edition (The University of North Carolina Press, 2020). For a long-durée history that ties the freedom struggles during the Haitian Revolution to postwar African liberationist politics, see Lorelle Semley, *To Be Free and French: Citizenship in France's Atlantic Empire* (Cambridge University Press, 2017).

⁷ Marker, *Black France, White Europe*.

⁸ Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution*; Connelly, "Taking Off the 'Cold War Lens': Visions of North-South Conflict during the Algerian War for Independence," *The American Historical Review* 105: 3 (June 2000): 739-769, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr/105.3.739>.

and postwar African leaders to undo Black nations' unequal integration in the global order. She identifies a similar evolution in their strategies of liberation, from prioritizing self-determination as the surest guarantee of political, cultural, *and* economic non-domination to more capacious attempts at global restructuring. I do not think this interpretation necessarily contradicts Gerits's claims, and I was left wondering why he seems to imply that it does.

With a book of this scope and ambition, pulling together all the historical and conceptual crosscurrents, archival resources, and extensive scholarship is a gargantuan task; there are bound to be some loose threads. Overall, Gerits has managed the challenge with skill and ingenuity. *The Ideological Scramble for Africa* is a remarkable achievement and a reminder to us all that we can still write "big books," even from within the neoliberal university. The headwinds may be strong, but Gerits shows us that the breakthroughs are worth the effort.

“Pressures of Presenting a Transnational Narrative”

In addition to the publish-or-perish mantra, which is explicitly or implicitly implied as *the* survival strategy for the present-day academic, the present-day historian contends with two other pressures. The first is the obsession with connecting the past to the present. While there is undoubtedly value in connecting the two, not all historical accounts can be immediately linked to the present; should history cease to be history for history’s sake? The second pressure is the transnational compulsion. The historian is often subtly compelled to prove that the story they are telling transcends the boundaries of the nation (and the) state. Transnational histories are a deviation from the norm where the nation is the “basic unit of historiography.”¹ Gaining prominence in the 1980s, transnational history received one of its major endorsements in 2009, when Akira Iriye and Pierre-Yves Saunier edited a transnational history dictionary with contributions from approximately 350 academics, primarily drawn from leading institutions in the global North.² While the value of transnational histories is indisputable due to the reality of globalisation, the perhaps unintended consequence of the transnational methodology is the pressure it puts upon historians to make transnational connections even in instances in which they are minimal or non-existent. This begs the question of whether all historical themes/subjects/processes should be transnational.

In eight chapters and 290 pages consisting of research drawn from an impressive pool of 46 archives, Frank Gerits fulfils the unwritten expectation to provide a transnational account whose intention is to examine ideologies in Africa from the end of the Second World War to 1966. Due to its transnational approach, the book is dense and ambitious in so far as it seeks to cover the continent of Africa, but also in terms of its aim to examine how several “superpowers” and “liberationists” (2) perceived the decolonisation processes and the crafting of postcolonial modernity. The book derives its relevance from its ability to tackle an array of subjects and events unfolding on the continent during the period under review. These include the significance of Bandung (1955) and Belgrade (1961) Conferences, the Congo crisis, Pan-Africanism, aid, education, psychological perceptions that shaped decolonisation, decolonial propaganda, and postcolonial modernisation policies.³ Its second and most important contribution lies in its ability to transcend the conventional cold-war tensions narrative that dominates most historical accounts examining developments between 1945 and 1989. It seeks to demonstrate that liberationist ideology and “liberationist” perceptions of postcolonial modernisation policies were free from the influence of the Cold War as “liberationists” shared a “common ideological ambition to attain anticolonial modernity” (3, 11, 14, 86), thus successfully shifting the narrative away from the Cold War tensions that were dominant during the period under review.

¹ See, for example, Pierre-Yves Saunier, *Transnational History* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 7; and Fiona Paisley and Pamela Scully, *Writing Transnational History* (Bloomsbury, 2019)

² Akira Iriye and Pierre-Yves Saunier, eds., *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History: From the Mid-19th Century to the Present Day* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

³ The author uses ideologically loaded terms such as modernisation and development interchangeably. This review does the same.

In pursuit of its primary objective, the book makes a compelling case for identifying Pan-Africanism as the most prominent ideology of the early generation of nationalists in Africa. It also successfully demonstrates that Kwame Nkrumah, first Ghanaian president, steered the Pan-African agenda on the continent. Nkrumah believed Pan-Africanism to be the antidote to Western ideology and capitalism. He also thought that it was the cure for the inferiority complex instilled in Africans following decades of colonial rule. However, because the book positions itself as providing an account of *ideologies in Africa* and not just an account on Pan-Africanism, it falls short in paying as much attention to other ideologies that were dominant on the continent during the period under review. It pays much less attention to African socialism and Marxism-Leninism, ideologies that were equally dominant as Pan-Africanism (e.g., 145-146).

Most glaring is the cursory approach towards the ideological contributions of Julius Nyerere, the first Tanzanian president. Apart from mentioning in passing the existence of “*ujamaa*,” Nyerere is mostly portrayed as being in constant conflict with Nkrumah (e.g., 66, 131, 145-146, 164). The recurring theme of “self-reliance/self-determination” ignores Nyerere’s ideological contribution in his unpacking of the notion of economic self-reliance, even though this was the basis of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU)’s Arusha Declaration.⁴ Perhaps because it is limited by the period under review, the text is equally silent about the “liberationists” in Southern Africa, concentrating, instead, on the antagonists during the Unilateral Declaration of Independence and apartheid regimes (chapter 7). Apart from mentioning the “warring factions of ZANU [Zimbabwe African National Union] and ZAPU [Zimbabwe African People’s Union] in Southern Rhodesia,” there is no discussion of the “liberationists” of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia (153).⁵ And save for its comments on Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, the book does not provide a detailed discussion of “liberationists” in the region, particularly Samora Machel, the leader of the Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO), and how they perceived decolonisation, and the crafting of postcolonial modernity.⁶ This represents a missed opportunity to examine the points of divergence and convergence of these different ideologies, while also justifying the book’s choice of Pan-Africanism as the continent’s most dominant ideology.

Despite its examination of a plethora of interlinked themes, events, and people, what the book articulates exceptionally well is the nexus between Pan-Africanism and decolonisation, while also showing how Nkrumah championed Pan-Africanism in a bid to forge postcolonial modernisation policies that were free from Cold War influence in Ghana. That the inspiration for the title of the book is derived from Nkrumah (ix) and that the period of analysis ends with the ouster of Nkrumah from government and not the end of colonial rule on the continent, suggests that the book is more about Ghana than Africa as a whole. In this

⁴ Tanganyika African National Union, The Arusha Declaration and TANU’s Policy on Socialism and Self-Reliance, 1967, <https://www.marxists.org/subject/africa/nyerere/1967/arusha-declaration.htm>, accessed 13 June 2023. Priya Lal, “Self-Reliance and the State: The Multiple Meanings of Development in Early Post-Colonial Tanzania,” *Journal of the International African Institute* 82: 2 (2012), 212-234, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0001972012000022>.

⁵ Southern Rhodesia’s Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU).

⁶ Allen F. Issacman and Barbra S. Issacman, *Mozambique’s Samora Machel: A Life Cut Short* (Ohio University Press, 2020).

respect it is like the work of Ama Bailey and others who also unpack Nkrumah's ideology.⁷ Unlike other accounts that view Nkrumah as a Communist, *The Ideological Scramble for Africa* concentrates only on Nkrumah's Pan-Africanist aspirations, the positive tenets of his administration, as well as his relationship with other "liberationists" in a bid to expand his ideals for Pan-African anticolonial modernity.

"Modernity on the Global-South's Terms"?⁸

The monograph's examination of the nexus between ideology and the crafting of modernisation policies causes this Africanist to ponder upon three interlinked questions. First, in what global/international environment were African modernisation policies created? Second, on which platform, the bilateral or the multilateral, were these perceived and crafted? Third, to which ideology did these platforms adhere? While the aim of demonstrating that "liberationists" sought to create a postcolonial modernity that was devoid of influence from the North in the belief that colonial modernity was "inherently racist and unjust," (2) is noble, contradictions and questionable conclusions that are at odds with the objective arise. In particular the numerous assertions that excuse the disequilibrium of the international system skewed against the global-South, a structure that was already present during the period under review. The argument that it is the "struggle for liberation" that "created an international system in which Pan-African or Pan-Arab structures were erected to protect against the dominance of the global North" and that "African leaders did not face a hostile international system but participated in its constant reimagining and restructuring" (11, 14) is a problematic conceptualisation of the relationship between the North and South. African countries joined a well-established international system that was biased in favour of the global North. The dependency, world systems, and decolonial theories exist on the very basis of this unequal international system.

Similarly, the New International Economic Order (NIEO) that is discussed in the book gained traction precisely because Africa joined an intact international system that impeded its economic development and demanded unity amongst the so-called underdeveloped countries (12, 166, 179-180). The NIEO was a way of thinking which was pronounced loudly in the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA/ECA) and discussed in other economic platforms that proposed an overhaul of the existing global economic order, emphasising alternative policies hinged upon economic self-reliance and "trade not aid."⁹ According to former Secretary General of the UN, Kurt Waldheim, "developing countries tried to get

⁷ Ama Bailey, *The Political and Social Thought of Kwame Nkrumah*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 3-5; Crawford Young, *Ideology and Development in Africa*, (Yale University Press, 1982). Tony Killick, *Development Economics in Action: A Study of Economic Policies in Ghana*, (Routledge, 1978).

⁸ This comment is derived from a statement in the book: "ideological deliberations between anticolonial leaders also created a liberationist international system, since third world nationalists built different types of federative and cooperative structures beyond their own postcolonial state to marshal the economic, cultural, and political capacity required to attain modernity on the Global South's terms" (3).

⁹ Columbia Centre for Oral History, United Nations Intellectual History Project, Transcript of Interview of Adebayo Adedeji by Thomas G. Weiss, New York, 6-7 2001, 49-51. The interviews are not available online; for a list of them see Oral History Interviews Portal: Search Results (columbia.edu).

acceptance from the rich, industrialised countries of a NIEO. The efforts on both sides to overcome the difficulties and to agree on the principles of that economic order did not work,” thus the inequality persisted.¹⁰

The book erroneously pegs the internationalisation of the “African development problem” on 20 September 1960 at the 15th UN General Assembly (108). On the contrary, the intact international system had been discussing the “African development problem,” especially within the confines of the United Nations (UN) system, for years before 1960. Despite the author’s consultation of UN sources, the narrative does not discuss the influence of the development and technical-orientated arms of the institution, namely, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the UN Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance (1949), and the UN Special Fund for Economic Development (1958)—the latter two institutions were merged to create the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in 1965.¹¹ In 1951, the establishment of an economic commission for Africa was discussed within the ECOSOC. It was envisioned that such a regional commission would help solve the African “development problem,” triggering the eventual creation of the ECA in 1958.¹² Admittedly, the 15th Session contained approximately 10 Resolutions on the economic development of less-developed countries. Worth noting is “Resolution 1527 (XV) Assistance to Former Territories and Other Newly Independent States,” which called for the establishment of regional and sub-regional institutes of economic institutions, eventually contributing to the creation of the African Institute of Development and Planning (IDEP) in 1964.¹³ The UNECA and the IDEP became the leading platforms that shaped modernisation/development ideology and policies, thus outstripping the bilateral influence emphasised in the book under review.

The downside of the significant intervention of the text to decenter the narrative from the Cold War, therefore, is its reliance on the premise that the ideological battle of postcolonial modernity was fought on the bilateral platform, which leads to negating of the multilateral platform.¹⁴ A transnational account encompassing the postcolonial modernisation trends in Africa in the 1960s is incomplete without a

¹⁰ Columbia Centre for Oral History, United Nations Intellectual History Project, Transcript of Interview of Kurt Waldheim by Thomas G. Weiss, 20 November 2000, Vienna, Austria, 9-10.

¹¹ Arthur Lewis became deputy director of the Special Fund following his stint in Ghana in 1958; see Robert Tignor, *W. Arthur Lewis and the Birth of Development Economics*, (Princeton University Press, 2020), 172.

¹² The ECA was created against the existence of other regional economic commissions created before it, namely, the Economic Commission for Europe (1947), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (1947), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (1948). United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) Archives, GX 29/4/30/2, United Nations General Assembly 12th Session: Second Committee Provisional Summary Record of the 417th Meeting – Report of the Economic and Social Council, New York, 23 October 1957, 10.

¹³ See Resolutions of the 15th Session of the General Assembly, <https://research.un.org/en/docs/ga/quick/regular/15>, accessed on 13 July 2023. UNECA *Resolution 58 (IV)* of 1 March 1962 established the IDEP. UNECA *Resolution 93 (VI)* identified IDEP mandate as training specialists and senior government officials, agencies, and institutions responsible for economic development and planning on the continent. UNOG Archives, GX 18/8/1/59, 18/8/1/87, ECA, Statute of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning: Resolution 93 (VI) Adopted by the ECA at its 109th Plenary Meeting on 27 February 1964, 1-2.

¹⁴ Also see Thandika Mkandawire, “The Spread of Economic Doctrines and Policymaking in Postcolonial Africa,” *African Studies Review*, 57; 1, (2014), 171-198. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2014.12>.

discussion of the activities of the UNECA and the IDEP, which were created specifically to lead the development agenda on the so-called least developed continent. This built upon the already existing international agenda of seeking solutions to the so-called “African development problem.” The 16th Session of the UN General Assembly, which was held on 19 December 1961, passed *Resolution 1710 (XVI)*, which declared the first development decade to “accelerate progress towards self-sustaining growth” and pegged the national income of developing countries to five per cent by 1970.¹⁵ This declaration was accompanied by an acceleration of the involvement of the UN and its agencies on the continent, thereby influencing economic thought and development beyond the individual countries such as the US and the Soviet Union.

The book’s portrayal of academic and international civil servant Arthur Lewis and his role in Ghana is worth highlighting. Notably, prior to being adviser to Ghana, Lewis served on the Committee of Experts that looked into the Creation of the ECA (1951) and in the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)’s Pearson Commission on development aid (1968).¹⁶ The book presents Lewis and Nkrumah as having had a merry relationship, being ideologically in sync while also bent on crafting a postcolonial modernity path hinged on Pan-Africanism. Gerits notes that Lewis “did not believe in one single theory of economic growth and attached more weight to the sociological and historical characteristics of underdeveloped societies” (65). This may well have been the case, but missing in the narrative are the contradictions between Lewis’ portrayed fluid view of economic development and the perceptions of the organisation under the auspices of which he became economic adviser to Ghana, the UN.¹⁷ Lewis was not the only UN technocrat to serve as an adviser in an African government following the end of colonial rule. For example, Tanzania had Reginald Humboldt Green, Nigeria had Roy Stople, and in Zimbabwe, the most prominent international civil servant, Bernard Chidzero, became Minister of Finance and Economic Planning for 15 years. Referring to *Zimbabwe Towards a New Order (ZTNO)*, the country’s first attempt at postcolonial modernisation policy formulation, Chidzero admitted that “UNCTAD influenced the paper decisively.”¹⁸ Did Lewis make any such admissions? Is it the author’s contention that these episodes or ideologies did not influence Lewis and, by extension, Ghana because it had a Pan-African ideology and established anticolonial modernity? Overall, newly independent countries on the continent joined an intact international system and had most of their development planning drawn by “experts” who were often aligned to the UN system. Even the most socialist countries in outlook, like Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and Mozambique, to some extent eventually bowed down to the largely pro-capitalist path prescribed by the far-reaching arms of the UN system.

¹⁵ United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), Resolution 1710 (XVI): A Programme for International Economic Cooperation, 19 December 1961.

¹⁶ World Bank (WB) Archives, IBRD/IDA ADMCF-04, Statement: The Pearson Commission, Issued by Lester B Pearson in Ottawa, 23 October 1968. Also see, D O’Brien, “Review Essay: Partners in Development Report of the Commission on International Development”, *International Journal* 65(2), 2010, pp. 532–539.

¹⁷ Robert Tignor, *Arthur Lewis*, 147–48, 167–173.

¹⁸ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was Chidzero’s last international posting where he was Deputy Secretary General. It was also the major donor of the ZTNO. Columbia Centre for Oral History, United Nations Intellectual History Project, Transcript of Interview of Bernard T. G. Chidzero by Thomas G. Weiss, Harare, 11 May 2000, 75.

Development Aid

One other recurring theme in the book that is worth examining is that of development aid. The roots of development aid to Africa provides the most glaring examples of isomorphic mimicry.¹⁹ In *The Meddlers*, Jamie Martin demonstrates that the birth of the notion of multilateral development aid was the unintended consequence of two League of Nations projects, one in Greece (1923–1930) and another in China (1931–1935).²⁰ On the bilateral front, the geneses of official development aid are infinite.²¹ The outcome of the League loans and the acts governing bilateral aid in the US and Britain is their export, in varying degrees, to Africa. The Foreign Assistance Act (1961), for instance, mandating the creation of the United States Agency for International Aid (USAID) was built on the successful implementation of the Marshall Plan that provided financial and technical assistance to post-war Europe and US President Henry Truman’s Point IV Plan of 1950. The goals of the Point IV plan and USAID were two-pronged; first, to create markets for the US through capitalist-led poverty reduction across the globe, and second, “diminishing the threat of communism by helping poor countries prosper under capitalism.”²² *The Ideological Scramble for Africa* does not discuss these goals in its examination of the Point IV Plan and the operations of USAID on the continent. Both supported other initiatives on the continent, which are ably outlined in the text (e.g., 4–26, 30, 39, 166). However, the overall objective of these programmes aligned with those of the America winning the Cold War. Similarly, the Partners in Development Report by the Pearson Commission lamented the general decline of aid in the 1960s, conditionalities attached to it and cold-war funding by both the Western and Eastern blocs. It emphasised that “aid should not be provided to cement a political alliance or for short-term political advantage....”²³

The manuscript suggests that Nkrumah and other “liberationist” “leaders established a Pan-African anticolonial modernisation project that accepted technocratic aid but resisted the import of ideas,” which implies that foreign aid was used to implement pan-African modernisation policies in Ghana and other parts of the continent (185, 137, 181). This line of argument is problematic. First, it creates a false dichotomy between technocratic aid and ideology as though technical advice is neutral and free of ideological baggage. Technocratic aid provided by “experts,” who were often seconded by the UN, were mainly concerned with economics, statistics, demography, and health. These are not neutral subjects—the sanctity of the market, the theory of comparative advantage, the UN System of National Accounts, the increase in family planning and population control, etc., loudly pronounced in most development plans of newly independent

¹⁹ For more on the notion of isomorphic mimicry, see Matt Andrews et al., “Looking Like a State: The Seduction of Isomorphic Mimicry,” in Matt Andrews, Lant Pritchett and Michael Woolcock, eds., *Building State Capability: Evidence, Analysis, Action* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 29–52.

²⁰ Jamie Martin, *The Meddlers: Sovereignty, Empire, And the Birth of Global Economic Governance* (Harvard University Press, 2022), 134–137, 176.

²¹ George C Abbott, “A Re-Examination of the 1929 Colonial Development Act,” *The Economic History Review* 24:1 (1971): 68–81.

²² United States International Agency for Development (USAID), USAID History: Celebrating 60 Years of Progress, <https://www.usaid.gov/about-us/usaaid-history>, accessed 13 June 2023. Also see USAID, USAID: A History of Foreign Assistance, 3 April 2002, https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnacpo64.pdf, accessed 13 June 2023.

²³ Quoted in Mark-Arnold-Forster, “Aid Without Strings—a World Formula,” *The Guardian*, 2 October 1969.

countries, are pro-capitalist ideological positions. Second, it negates the role of international institutions, whose experts made up the bulk of the technocrats and who, at various levels, passed Resolutions regarding the form and content technical aid should take. UNGA-15, for example, passed *Resolutions 1534 (XV) Preparation and Training of Indigenous Civil and Technical Cadres in Non-Self-Governing Territories, 1532 (XV) United Nations Programmes of Technical Assistance: Arrangements to Facilitate the Prompt Supply of Technical Assistance Personnel, and 1529 (XV) Contributions to the Special Fund and to the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance*. UNECA had the same array of Resolutions on funding and technical assistance spread to African countries, national ideologies, notwithstanding. Third, while the book suggests that during the period under review, aid was unconditional and became conditional in the 1970s (186), conditional aid was a phenomenon of the earlier decades, as exemplified by the findings of the Pearson Commission referred to in the previous paragraph. The report lamented that “the volume of aid has stagnated, the terms have hardened, and the conditions have become more restrictive.”²⁴ In that regard, it recommended the removal of conditionalities, including those beyond ideology, to include those attaching aid to trade. Finally, not all “liberationists” were proponents of development aid. In the Arusha Declaration, Nyerere expressed a different view by lobbying instead for domestic-resource mobilisation and refusing unnecessary loans and debt accumulation to kick-start the development process.

As is clear, the book examines numerous complex themes that are subject to much academic debate. Time and space impede this review from interrogating the cross-cutting theme of the psychological beliefs and strategies implemented to change it, which are interestingly conceptualised as the “foreign policy of the mind” (chapter one) and the “psychological modernisation” (chapter five). The narrative’s ambitious scope, the transnational approach applied, and the aim centred around the uphill and noble battle of removing agency from the Cold War to demonstrate that “Africa was a distant front in the Soviet Cold War struggle” (19), allow for criticism. Even Kurt Waldheim admitted that both the US and the USSR tried to “gain influence in the developing countries during the period of the Cold War. Our work in the UN was dominated by this confrontation. It was not only a military confrontation, but also an ideological one.”²⁵

Even so, the book’s contribution to African historiography cannot and should not be ignored or underestimated. It may well be the genesis of a useful school of thought that reveals the centrality of non-Cold War related ideologies on the continent as the most influential in crafting postcolonial modernity. The author skilfully makes use of a colossus of archival material and clearly articulates his arguments. The manuscript passes the introduction of new knowledge test by providing new information, particularly that regarding the Bandung and Belgrade Conferences and in articulating, exceptionally well, Nkrumah’s Pan-African drive across different fora while also showing Nkrumah’s relationship with some “liberationists” on the continent. *The Ideological Scramble for Africa*, which must be read by all scholars who seek to understand multiple perspectives on the ideological contestations in Africa, can only answer some of the questions on this complex subject, some of which are posed in this review. There is, therefore, a need for more research, even more so along the lines of an “Africa-centred methodology,” (14-15) as acknowledged by the author.

²⁴ Mark-Arnold-Forster, “Aid Without Strings—a World Formula.”

²⁵ Waldheim interview, 7-8, 12-13.

As a PhD student I was always fascinated by H-Diplo roundtable reviews because they put to paper what I value most as a scholar: academic debate. I am very grateful to the reviewers that Liliane Stadler brought together at this table. They read *The Ideological Scramble for Africa* from the standpoint of their own expertise and have given me the highest kind of praise: substantiated criticism and intellectual disagreement. With Alex Marino's knowledge of Lusophone Africa, Emily Marker's firm grasp of French Africa, Emma Hunter's extensive knowledge of East African history, and Geraldine Sibanda's work on Southern Africa, we get to read a multi-centric review of a multi-centric book which is rooted in archives that span three continents. The international scale of this book, and the ambition of the argument, have raised questions among these researchers who took time out of their busy schedule to read my words closely. What I want to do, therefore, is explain why I made certain methodological and topical choices and point out where I agree and disagree with some of their points.

In his epoch-making *The Birth of the Modern World*, C. A. Bayly already raised the challenges that confound global and international historians. Multi-centric historians—more than those who remain confined to the national or local level—have to make more explicit choices about what he calls “prime movers”: who or what is the motor or “driver” of “historical change?”¹ Historians have to make explicit choices and prioritize certain actors and events over other actors and events.²

I therefore made a clear choice for Kwame Nkrumah because as prime minister and then president he transformed his newly independent country of Ghana into a platform to promote his version of pan-Africanism. President Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya and President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania were important actors who made independent decisions, but in political terms they were forced to respond to the agenda-setter of intra-African politics who resided in a castle in Accra. African political debate in the 1950s and 1960s was not about Cold War allegiances. It was about the type of federation that would most effectively liberate the continent: complete and immediate union, regional blocs, or federations of legal equality with the metropole. Nevertheless, I do not argue—as Sibanda and Hunter suggest I do—that Nyerere and Kenyatta's ideologies only acquired meaning in relation to Nkrumah. In chapter seven, I explore how the ideologies of President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and Kenyatta can only be really understood if they are approached as products of a struggle to dismantle the settler society, which had twisted concepts such as democracy and modernity beyond recognition (145). Humanism and *ujamaa*, (“fraternity”) were philosophically much broader than the pan-Africanism of the early 1950s, even tackling questions of human nature. My objective in highlighting Afro-Asian and African-African disagreement was to convey that the Global South and Africa were never a monolith, but were made up of different ideas, despite a shared experience of imperial modernity and colonial oppression. Hunter is right to assert that “how we understand” projects of federations is “a question of whose projects we are exploring.” Civil servants may have had a different understanding of the goal and logic behind federation than the top politicians who

¹ C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 7.

² For another example of multi-centric writing, see: Ryan Irwin, *Gordian Knot: Apartheid and the Unmaking of the Liberal World Order* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

were confronted with demands for a better standard of living. My claim that federation lost its liberationist potential by the 1960s therefore is another way of saying that cultural liberation failed. It is not a value judgement over what type of anticolonial modernity was more genuine or significant (162). In that light, the Arusha Declaration of 1967, which fell outside of the chronological limits of my book, could indeed be seen as a last—rather successful—gasp of anticolonial modernity. In the 1970s, Europe was gripped with “Tanzaphilia” when Tanzania’s African Socialist model inspired European social democrats in search of a revival.³

I made a clear choice to look at old-fashioned politicians and diplomats in places like Accra, Dakar, Whitehall, the Élysée, and the White House. I was surprised, when working on this book, that I was forced to—in the words of Hunter—return to an “an older literature” when “discussing the historiography of political decolonization” in Britain and France. As Hunter points out, historians have redirected their attention towards the question of how development expertise influenced foreign policy.⁴ The follow-up question, of how that expertise-soaked diplomacy played out on the international stage and how other diplomats and politicians adopted, adapted, and misinterpreted what they saw colleagues doing, is hardly ever asked.

The Cold War is often used as a shorthand for “state diplomacy” in order to then move on to other interesting aspects of the historical story. While Mathew Connelly pushed historians to “take off the Cold War lens,” many books that followed his call to action still struggle to make sense of how decolonization and the Cold War fit together.⁵ In keeping with the metaphor, what we see once the Cold War is taken out of the picture is often blurrier. Postcolonial sensitivities, concerns, and diplomatic strategies are often seen as inconsequential. Contrary to what I do in the book, anticolonial and imperial state building are not defined as modernization programs, which remained highly influential after 1945. Much postcolonial theory relegates the bipolar story to an analytical margin, turning an ahistorical nineteenth century colonial Europe into the object of their criticism.⁶ This is why the book also contains many new arguments about Global North diplomacy: President Dwight Eisenhower had an Africa strategy that was about much more than counterinsurgency. President John F. Kennedy did not care about public relations and saw anti-colonialism not as a worthy political cause, but as the expression of a mentally unstable postcolonial population.⁷ The Belgian empire was sustained by a colonial ideology, not cynical violent corporate profit-seeking. The French remained in Guinea, even after their theatrical retreat. The British were not interested

³ Ali Mazrui, “Tanzaphilia,” *Transition* 31:6 (1967): 20-26, DOI: 10.2307/2934403.

⁴ Joseph Morgan Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert: Agrarian Doctrines of Development and the Legacies of British Colonialism* (Ohio University Press, 2007).

⁵ Matthew Connelly, “Taking Off the Cold War Lens: Visions of North-South Conflict during the Algerian War for Independence,” *American Historical Review* 105:3 (2000): 739-769, DOI: 10.2307/2651808.

⁶ Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton University Press, 2007); Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Harvard University Press, 1999).

⁷ Philip E. Muehlenbeck, *Betting on the Africans: John F. Kennedy’s Courting of African Nationalist Leaders* (Oxford University Press, 2012); Ebere Nwaubani, *The United States and Decolonization in West Africa, 1950-1960* (University of Rochester Press, 2001).

in maintaining an alliance with the French once Ghana became a loud voice in international relations, and Portugal was fairly late to the propaganda game in postcolonial Africa.

What I do is ultimately quite straightforward: I stress how the twentieth century was ultimately about four, not two, big ideological projects. The book problematizes the equation of Cold War concerns with state-level diplomacy and the spread of the Cold War to the Global South. It does not negate the Cold War or the attraction of Marxism to anticolonial leaders. However, it does question the centrality of the Cold War to the story of African decolonization. Sibanda's claim that US intervention was ultimately still about the Cold War is not supported by what I found during my research in the archives. People like Eisenhower and Joseph C. Satterthwaite, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, emphasized that independence and the chaos it entailed, not communism, was the main problem at hand (105). Additionally, Marker raises an important issue: the book could indeed have reflected a bit more on the relationship between Marxism and anticolonialism. While there are pages on how socialism was defined in "African Socialism" and how pan-African activists already at the International Congress against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism in Brussels in 1927 were struggling with the correct position of race and class struggle, the book does not make a clear argument on how to exactly understand that relationship.

This is due in part because my historical actors themselves did not have an answer to that question. Nevertheless, what they did know was that they wanted to chart their own route to modernity. As Robert Kelly writes, Francophone Martinican poet, author, and politician Aimé Césaire increasingly came to believe that "the anticolonial struggle supersedes the proletarian revolution as the fundamental historical movement of the period."⁸ At any rate: the question about the applicability of Marxism to African decolonization only returned in the 1970s and 1980s when—as I write in the book—the Cold War framework became more compelling. This is also why I do not include Cedric J. Robinson's work on racial capitalism: I did not want to conflate civil rights activism with anticolonial activism.⁹ In my interpretation the period after 1966 is a different era altogether. While more research is required, it is clear in some of my own work that in the 1970s and 1980s African economic development theories became more diversified. Theorists in South Africa, such as Neville Alexander who in 1979—four years before Robinson publishes *Black Marxism*—employed a racial capitalist framework, rejected the liberal analysis which claimed apartheid's racial inequalities could be reformed through the establishment of a better type of capitalism.¹⁰ Theorists in West Africa—particularly Ghana—such as Jonathan H. Frimpong-Ansah in contrast, believed

⁸ Robin D. G. Kelley, "Monthly Review | A Poetics of Anticolonialism," *Monthly Review* 1 November 1999, <https://monthlyreview.org/1999/11/01/a-poetics-of-anticolonialism/>.

⁹ Cedric J. Robinson, *Cedric J. Robinson: On Racial Capitalism, Black Internationalism, and Cultures of Resistance*, ed. H.L.T. Quan, 2nd ed. (The University of North Carolina Press, 2019).

¹⁰ Neville Alexander, *One Azania, One Nation: The National Question in South Africa by No Sizwe* (Zed Press, 1979), 38; Cedric J. Robinson, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Tiffany Willoughby-Herard, *Black Marxism, Revised and Updated Third Edition: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, 3rd edition (The University of North Carolina Press, 2020).

successful development and a better position in the global economy could only be attained if an anticolonial capitalist economy was created.¹¹

Likewise, the diplomatic history of the “great men” of Africa is purportedly already known. Books that tackle the strategies and tactics of African diplomats and politicians are only now emerging.¹² I would not want to make a plea to return to state-to-state diplomatic history, but do support Marino’s suggestion for the creation of a journal dedicated to African diplomacy which could highlight the multifaceted nature of this history.

Some of these choices were also governed by archival access. The foreign affairs archives in Tanzania remain inaccessible, while it is no coincidence that books that address Gamal Abdel Nasser’s Africa policy have focused on publicly available sources like the transcripts of Radio Cairo or newspaper stories.¹³ It also explains why I did not make Nasser a protagonist in the book. Nasser’s African and Arab overtures warrant a book of their own. Elsewhere I have grappled with the uncomfortable idea that our international histories of Africa might have looked very different if archives were more accessible and better maintained in Nigeria, which is a massive economic and military power in Africa.¹⁴

When it comes to levels of diplomacy, I have to disagree with Sibanda’s assertion. The book does not suggest that the “battle for modernity was fought on the bilateral platform.” On the contrary, each topic in the book—the Congo crisis, the Sahara atomic bomb or the Bandung conference—is studied from multiple perspectives with attention to how the interpretations of actors shaped and reshaped decision-making. International institutions could have played a bigger part in this book. However, I thought long and hard about how to include the United Nations (UN) or the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), but ultimately concluded these were arenas where different ideological models for the future clashed. They did not develop coherent versions of the future that were completely their own. Disentangling the objectives of institutions like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) from decisions that are the product

¹¹ Frank Gerits, “Anticolonial Capitalism: How Ghana Came to Embrace Market-Led Development Theory (the 1970s–1990s),” *Southern Journal for Contemporary History* 47:1 (2022): 4–26; J. H. Frimpong-Ansah, *The Vampire State in Africa: The Political Economy of Decline in Ghana* (Africa World Press, 1991); Jonathan H. Frimpong-Ansah, “Sub-Saharan Africa and the International Trade System: Perspectives of Policy,” in *Trade and Development in Sub-Saharan Africa*, ed. Jonathan H. Frimpong-Ansah and Ravi S.M. Kanbur (Manchester University Press, 1991), 35–73.

¹² Some historians have argued there already is a grand narrative of the Global South, but only point to episodic political clashes at Bandung or Belgrade, see: Pamela Gupta et al., “Editors’ Introduction,” *Radical History Review* 2018, 131 (2018): 3–4, DOI: 10.1215/01636545-4355069.

¹³ See Zoe LeBlanc, *Circulating Anti-Colonial Cairo: Decolonizing Information and Constructing the Third World in Egypt, 1952–1966* (Vanderbilt University, 2019); James R Brennan, “Radio Cairo and the Decolonization of East Africa, 1953–1964,” in *Making a World after Empire: The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlives*, ed. Christopher J. Lee, 1st ed. (Ohio University Press, 2010), 173–196; Fawaz A. Gerges, *Making the Arab World: Nasser, Qutb, and the Clash That Shaped the Middle East* (Princeton University Press, 2018); On access to archives in Cairo see: Gert Huskens, “The Lion and the Sphinx: An Entangled History of Belgian Diplomacy in Egypt, 1830–1914,” PhD diss (Ghent University, 2023).

¹⁴ Frank Gerits, “Introduction to H-Diplo Roundtable XXIII-36 on Marco Wyss. Postcolonial Security: Britain, France, and West Africa’s Cold War. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021. ISBN: 9780198843023 (Hardcover, \$100.00).,” *H-Diplo*, 22 May 2023, <https://issforum.org/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-XXIII-36.pdf>.

of multilateral compromise is a herculean task that still requires triangulation with national archives. There are also more fundamental questions about agency: what or who is the UN system? Is it the Secretary-General? The different UN agencies? The loudest voice in the General Assembly? The most intriguing histories of the UN are not coincidentally those that focus on individuals like Prime Minister of South Africa Jan Smuts, First Lady of the United States Eleanor Roosevelt, or UN Secretary-General Dag Hammerskjold, who sought to remake international institutions into their own image. The UN is where ideologies were smothered by a discourse of technocracy and objectivity. Yet acknowledging the existence of a discourse on technocracy does not mean that I see an opposition between technocracy and ideology. Technocracy was the basis of imperial, Communist and capitalist visions of the future: tradition needed to be destroyed in the service of “reason.” What anticolonial modernization models exposed was precisely the deeply ideological nature of the so-called neutral solutions of imperial, capitalist or Communist development.

Emily Marker zeroes in on my claims for novelty. She is “not sure what to make” of my claim that I want to “reconfigure” our understanding from “East-West” to “North-South.” She points out that scholars like Matthew Connelly already did “a thorough job.” However, in the book I am explicit about how my interpretation differs from the work these scholars have produced.

While Connelly and other Global Cold War historians emphasize the fact that postcolonial diplomats were not mere pawns of the superpowers, non-Western actors remain subaltern in character. They engage the rest of the world on Cold War terms, have no ideological projects of their own, and are only able to resist or utilize Cold War pressures. Jeffrey Byrne is clear on this when he talks about the Algerian *Front de Liberation National* leaders as “less the product of ideologies, than of methodologies.”¹⁵ I disagree. I argue that anticolonial actors had an interventionist ideology of their own and did much more than simply play off different powers against each other. The agency of actors in the Global South is not limited to harnessing “the dominant international reality of their age, the Cold War, to maximize potential benefits.”¹⁶ Instead, I claim that postcolonial understandings of nation-building and race were exported to the non-colonized world, where it reshaped interpretations of the decolonizing world. African leaders did not face a hostile international system, but participated in its constant re-imagining and restructuring. The ideological work done to create a newly independent state—who are we? What society do we want to create? What is our history—did not just vanish when postcolonial statesmen entered into negotiations on the international stage. Like anybody else, they saw the world through an ideological lens which guided their actions and compelled them to spread their own gospel.

¹⁵ Quoted in: Jeffrey James Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, Decolonization, and the Third World Order* (Oxford University Press, 2016), 293; Matthew Connelly, “Rethinking the Cold War and Decolonization: The Grand Strategy of the Algerian War for Independence,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 33:2 (2001): 239, 222, DOI: 10.1017/S0020743801002033; Jeffrey James Byrne, “Our Own Special Brand of Socialism: Algeria and the Contest of Modernities in the 1960s,” *Diplomatic History* 33:3 (2009): 429, DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-7709.2009.00779.x.

¹⁶ Quote from Robert J McMahon, “Introduction,” in *The Cold War in the Third World*, ed. Robert J McMahon (Oxford University Press, 2013), 9; Natasa Miskovic, “Introduction,” in *The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War: Delbi-Bandung–Belgrade*, ed. Natasa Miskovic, Harald Fischer-Tiné, and Nada Boskowska (Routledge, 2014), 1-18.

Adom Getachew's book is important for the academic disciplines of political theory and International Relations (IR) theory because classical IR theory has for decades acted as if entire parts of the globe do not exist. Nevertheless, *Worldmaking after Empire* is not a history book.¹⁷ It projects the ideas of the New International Economic Order (NIEO) and the Thirdworldism of the 1970s and 1980s back into the 1950s and 1960s. The 1950s and 1960s, I argue, were a fundamentally different period in which the psychological and cultural impact of colonialism was a much bigger part of the struggle against empire. This is why the book—as Marino points out—also deals with forms of public diplomacy that evolved into cultural assistance or cultural liberation. Africa's postcolonial order in the 1950s and 1960s was never solely a political or economic undertaking with “Third World solidarity as a form of international class politics.”¹⁸ That evolution is captured on a micro-level by the intellectual biography of Immanuel Wallerstein, who started out as an Africanist in the 1960s and believed pan-Africanism was a weapon of the modernizers. By the 1970s, however, he became disappointed by the results and in response he developed his World Systems theory, which highlights the intractability of unequal international economic structures.¹⁹ By only looking at the struggle for economic justice, Getachew's book ignores the long shadow of the Haitian revolution and the disagreements about the appropriate role of precolonial culture in postcolonial modernity.²⁰ Moreover, *Worldmaking after Empire* looks only at Anglophone anticolonial thinkers. While Getachew's book is incredibly valuable, a value I have highlighted elsewhere, my book also differs in terms of scope and approach: it also includes the history of French, Portuguese, and Belgian Africa.²¹ I am also interested in how “worldmaking” ideas seeped into diplomacy and international politics, beyond the world of ideas.

Marker notes the absence of a “more incisive dialogue with other scholarly arguments and analyses.” What is more, “throughout the book there is a certain nebulousness in how Gerits positions his findings in relation to existing scholarship. I found this to be the book's main weakness.” This comment hits home, because deciding on the balance between argument and historiography was a big problem from day one. There are versions of the manuscript that exist on my laptop and in which I do a deep dive into multiple historiographies. However, those chapters—as confirmed by colleagues who read them—are completely unreadable, because of the sheer number of debates involved. I therefore choose to forefront clear arguments at the beginning and end of each chapter, while making short references to competing

¹⁷ Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton University Press, 2019).

¹⁸ Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire*, 145.

¹⁹ Immanuel Wallerstein, *Africa, The Politics of Independence: An Interpretation of Modern African History* (Random House, 1961); Immanuel Wallerstein, *Africa the Politics of Unity: An Analysis of a Contemporary Social Movement* (Random House, 1967); Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Politics of the World-Economy: The States, the Movements and the Civilizations* (Cambridge University Press, 1984).

²⁰ Christopher R. W. Dietrich, *Oil Revolution: Anticolonial Elites, Sovereign Rights, and the Economic Culture of Decolonization* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), 4; Christopher Dietrich, “Strategies of Decolonization: Economic Sovereignty and National Security in Libyan-US Relations, 1949–1971,” *Journal of Global History* 17:1 (2021): 1–20 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740022821000140>.

²¹ Frank Gerits, “*Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination*. Edited by Adom Getachew. Princeton University Press. 2019. xii + 271pp. £27.00,” *History* 105:366 (2020): 540–542, DOI: 10.1111/1468-229X.12993.

interpretations throughout the text while spotlighting the names of authors as little as possible. Chapter one is a good example of this. The debate between orthodox, revisionist, post-revisionist, and global Cold War historians over the legacies of presidents Harry Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower is a discussion that mainly focusses on their Cold War policies in Europe. This has implications for how historians have evaluated their Global South decisions and is detailed in an article I wrote for *Diplomatic History*.²² In the book, that entire debate is captured in 3 lines: “Truman and Eisenhower have at various times both been seen as presidents who buckled under domestic opposition and lost battles to increase aid, described as leaders who conflated nationalism with communism, and seen as men who were driven by the necessity to contain communism” (20).

One day I might need to do a director’s cut of the book, but I chose to focus on the tree and not on its many roots. Readers are more than welcome to look at the sprawling roots of the argument in 100 pages of endnotes, at the different articles I published, as well as at the dissertation on which the book is based.²³ These publications include long reflections on transnational, cross-national, and global history, as well as on public diplomacy history, diplomatic history, African history, and the history of development.

I agree with reviewers who have identified aspects of the book that require more research. A tighter definition of some of the underpinning concepts, such as that of “psychological modernization,” as Hunter points out, is definitely required because my own interests lay primarily in the relationship between ideology and (state) power. An intellectual history that is a Global South version of Nils Gilman’s *Mandarins of the Future* is an almost inevitable new project.²⁴ A book that focuses on how Portuguese colonial ideas of Lusotropicalism were renegotiated with new tactics that drew more on violence and on so-called scientific interpretations of Marxism in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and on how the struggle in Southern Africa affected diplomacy in North and South, would be important as well. A forthcoming book by Joseph Parrot goes a long way in providing those insights.²⁵ Many archives on the African continent are easily accessible until the period of the mid-1960s, while archives in the Global North increasingly just require a security review to see materials dated from the 1970s to the 1990s. While books like Margot Tudor’s *Blue Helmet Bureaucrats* already address the expertise and ideas of lower-level workers that went into the making

²² Gerits, “Hungry Minds: Eisenhower’s Cultural Assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa, 1953–1961,” *Diplomatic History* 41:3 (2017): 594–619.

²³ Gerits, “Taking Off the Soft Power Lens: The United States Information Service in Cold War Belgium,” *Journal of Belgian History* 42:4 (2012): 10–49; Gerits, “‘Défendre l’Oeuvre Que Nous Réalisons En Afrique’: Belgian Public Diplomacy and the Global Cold War (1945–1966),” *Dutch Crossing: Journal of Low Countries Studies* 40:1 (2016): 68–80; Gerits, “Bandung as the Call for a Better Development Project: US, British, French and Gold Coast Perceptions of the Afro-Asian Conference (1955),” *Cold War History* 16:3 (2016): 255–72; Gerits, “The Postcolonial Cultural Transaction: Rethinking the Guinea Crisis within the French Cultural Strategy for Africa, 1958–60,” *Cold War History* 19:4 (2019): 493–509; Gerits, “The Ideological Scramble for Africa: The US, Ghanaian, French and British Competition for Africa’s Future, 1953–1963” (Ph.D. Diss, Florence, European University Institute, 2014).

²⁴ Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

²⁵ R. Joseph Parrott, “A Luta Continua: Radical Filmmaking, Pan-African Liberation and Communal Empowerment,” *Race & Class* 57:1 (2015): 20–38, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306396815581781>.

of international organizations, the question of how international organizations navigated the ideological scramble for Africa requires more analysis.²⁶ It is a challenge that Sibanda is tackling in her ongoing research. While these histories exist for Latin America, as a consequence of Raul Prebisch's pivotal role in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), historians still need to better understand how experts in international organizations felt pressured to adopt the language of technocracy as they tried to transform that language for their own purposes.

At the same time, I am hesitant to encourage PhD students to undertake the projects that my colleagues have identified in their reviews. A lot of readers have picked up on my harsh critique of the neoliberal hell into which academia has transformed in the past two decades. For all intents and purposes, my generation has been shaped by the financial crisis of 2008 and the collapsing job market in the years that followed. Applying for hundreds of jobs to the soundtrack of pings from rejection e-mails nearly destroyed this project. I was very lucky to finally end up in a permanent position in the Netherlands, even though my concerns about productivity and ever-changing external definitions of "success" remain. Marino is incredibly generous in stating that my book might "inspire the next generation of scholars to study international history," but if they are to do so it is imperative they encounter job committees and publishers—like my own editors at Cornell University Press, Sarah Grossman and Michael McGandy—who understand that large-scale research projects are not to be avoided. They deserve our support.

²⁶ Margot Tudor, *Blue Helmet Bureaucrats: United Nations Peacekeeping and the Reinvention of Colonialism, 1945-1971* (Cambridge University Press, 2023).