



AFRICAN HISTORIES
AND MODERNITIES

Visions of African Unity

**New Perspectives on
the History of Pan-Africanism and
African Unification Projects**

Edited by Matteo Grilli · Frank Gerits

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African Histories and Modernities

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When the two of us spent months and months in Accra researching the history of Nkrumah's Pan-African imaginations and policies at the Bureau of African Affairs archive and the Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD), we became irredeemably enamoured with the topic of Pan-Africanism and the many ways in which Africans tried to put it into practice. Long conversations with old Pan-Africanists such as the late K.B. Asante and younger ones such as Nkrumah's daughter Samia further boosted our interest and enthusiasm for the long history of visions of African unity. While our research on Nkrumah finally took shape in our books *Nkrumaism and African Nationalism* and *The Ideological Scramble for Africa*, we believed that our interest in the question of Pan-Africanism could bear more fruit. We noticed that many authors work on the history of African unity, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the African Union (AU), but very few are brought together in conversation in dedicated collections. That is when the idea for this book emerged. Further proof of the need for such an effort, was our call for contributions which garnered a lot of attention amongst African and non-African academics. When even one of Africa's most important intellectuals, Toyin Falola, demonstrated interest in our project, we knew we were on the right track. We have been lucky enough to find authors who are diverse in terms of gender and geography, ranging from African to European and American universities. When we met the authors face to face in Bloemfontein, South Africa for a workshop we organised in March 2019, we could really grasp the interest surrounding the topic of African unity. In the course of our conversations we

realised the book met a real demand for a more integrated understanding of the varied and comparative interpretations of African unity.

We owe a particular gratitude to Professor Ian Phimister, head of the International Studies Group of the University of the Free State, for believing in our project and funding part of the expenses for the workshop. We also warmly thank the Vice Chancellor of the University of the Free State, Francis Petersen, for providing the rest of the funds for the workshop. Many scholars were helpful along the way, giving us precious advice on theoretical and practical matters surrounding the project. Unfortunately, due to space constraints we cannot mention them all, but we do thank all that have helped us along the way. We particularly thank the authors of this collection for their enthusiasm and their hard work. We also owe gratitude to the wonderful staff at Palgrave Macmillan, who helped us to make this book possible.

Our trips in Nigeria, Lesotho, Ghana, Togo, South Africa, eSwatini, Namibia, Zambia, Senegal and Ethiopia, taught us that Pan-Africanism in its many iterations is still alive in the older as well as younger African generations. This book is dedicated to them. We hope it will serve as an instrument to enhance the understanding of this philosophy, the many interpretations and the impact on African lives.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAPC	All-African People's Conference
AATUF	All-African Trade Union Federation
ACALAN	Academy of African Languages
ACmHPR	African Commission on Human and People's Rights
ACtHPR	African Court on Human and People's Rights
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
ACSRT	African Centre for the Studies and Research on Terrorism
ACtHPR	African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights
AEC	African Economic Community
AEF	<i>Afrique-Équatoriale française</i>
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement
ALC	African Liberation Committee
ALCORA	<i>Aliança Contra as Rebeliões em Africa</i>
ALF	Africa Leadership Forum
ANC	African National Congress
AOF	<i>Afrique-Occidentale française</i>
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASF	African Standby Force
AU	African Union
AUABC	Advisory Board on Corruption
AUC	African Union Commission
BBC	British Broadcast Corporation
BDP	Botswana Democratic Party
BPP	Botswana People's Party
BOSS	Bureau of State Security
CADSP	Common African Defence and Security Policy

CEI	<i>Casa dos Estudantes do Império</i> /Empire's Students House
CELHTO	<i>Centre d'Etude Linguistiques et Historiques par Tradition Orales</i>
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CONCP	<i>Conferência das Organizações Nacionalistas das Colónias Portuguesas</i> /the Conference of the Nationalist Organizations of the Portuguese Colonies
CONSAS	Constellation of Southern African States
COREMO	<i>Comité Revolucionário de Moçambique</i>
CPP	Convention People's Party
CNDD-FDD	<i>Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie-Front pour la Défense de la Démocratie</i>
CSSDCA	Conference on Security, Stability Development and Cooperation in Africa
CWO	Committee on Workers' Organisation
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DREA	Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture
EAC	East African Community
EACSO	East African Common Services Organisation
EAF	East African Federation
EALB	East African Literature Bureau
EAPH	East African Publishing House
ECOSOC	UN Economic and Social Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ESIR	English School of International Relations
EU	European Union
FEANF	<i>Fédération des Étudiants d'Afrique Noire en France</i>
FLN	<i>Front de Libération Nationale</i>
FLS	Frontline States
FMG	Federal Military Government
FNLA	<i>Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola</i>
FO	Foreign Office
FRELIMO	<i>Frente de Libertação de Moçambique</i> / Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
FTYIP	First Ten-Year Implementation Plan
GCTUC	Gold Coast Trades Union Congress
GRAE	<i>Governo revolucionário de Angola no exílio</i> /Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile
IAPSC	Inter-African Phytosanitary Council
IBAR	Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions

ICJ	International Commission of Jurists
IO	International Organization
KANU	Kenya African National Union
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs of Nigeria
MLSTP	<i>Movimento de Libertação de São Tomé e Príncipe</i> /Movement for the Liberation of São Tomé and Príncipe/Social Democratic Party
MPLA	<i>Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola</i> / Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
NEC	National Executive Committee
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NLC	National Liberation Council of Ghana
NLM	National Liberation Movement
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OSPAAAL	Organization of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress
PACA	Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa
PAFMECA	Pan African Freedom Movement for East and Central Africa
PAIGC	<i>Partido Africano da Independência de Guiné e Cabo Verde</i> /African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde
PANVAC	Pan African Veterinary Vaccine Centre
PAP	Pan-African Parliament
PATTEC	Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Eradication Campaign
PPS	<i>Parti Progressiste Soudanais</i>
PRC	Permanent Representatives Committee
PSC	Peace and Security Council
PSS	<i>Parti Socialiste Sénégalais</i>
RDA	<i>Rassemblement Démocratique Africain</i>
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporations
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCC	Southern African Development Coordinating Conference
SAFGRAD	Semi-Arid Food Grain Research and Development
SANNC	South African Native National Congress
SWANU	South West Africa National Union
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation
TFTA	Tripartite Free Trade Area
UAS	Union of African States
UDHR	Universal Declaration on Human Rights
UEA	University of East Africa

UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNFP	<i>Union Nationale des Forces Populaires</i>
UNIA-ACL	Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League
UNO	United Nations Organizations
UPA	<i>União das Populações de Angola</i> / Angola People's Union
UPC	Uganda People's Congress
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions
WTO	World Trade Organization
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Matteo Grilli and Frank Gerits

In 1962 the Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie, and the leader of Guinea, Sékou Touré, met in Asmara to discuss the possible merger of the Monrovia and Casablanca Groups, two competing political alliances on the continent that held different opinions about the relationship with the former coloniser. Eager to utilise this meeting's momentum, Touré sent his principal diplomat and the Organisation of African Unity's (OAU) first Secretary General, Diallo Telli, to 18 African states to propose a conference to be held in Addis Ababa, which could lay the foundation for a new continental organisation.¹ This call for what would become the founding

¹ Scott Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy, 1957–1966: Diplomacy, Ideology, and the New State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 307; Zdenek Červenka, *The Organisation of African Unity and Its Charter*, 2nd edition (London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 1969), 2.

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conference of OAU in May 1963 received a mixed response among African leaders. Even though there was a general agreement about the need to give political expression to the unity of African peoples, what that union had to look like, what the precise responsibilities of such an organisation had to be and to what extent power had to be centralised were contentious issues. Different conceptions of African unity had animated the anti-colonial struggle and once independence had been attained, those differences burst into the open and came to structure inter-African diplomacy.

Pan-African ideas emerged in the late eighteenth century as black intellectuals in Africa and the diaspora debated different visions of African unity. They wrote political and philosophical treatises, established political organisations and came together at Pan-African Congresses. The first Pan-African Conference in London, in 1900, was followed by successive Pan-African Congresses in 1919, 1921 and 1927, in which William Edward Burghardt Dubois played an important role and where the ties with Africa were discussed. In 1937, Afro-American activist Cyril Lionel Robert James, Kenyan resistance fighter Jomo Kenyatta and Trinidadian intellectual George Padmore established an International African Service Bureau in London to increase the impact of their activism by bringing together political activists, trade unionists and intellectuals.² By the time Touré and Haile Selassie launched their proposal, in the early 1960s, Pan-Africanism had matured into a political philosophy while plans for continental and regional integration were omnipresent. The ‘territorial nation-state’ might appear both ‘modern’ and ‘inevitable’ in hindsight, but as—Frederick Cooper’s scholarship reveals—in the early 1960s, ‘to some’, ‘it did not appear [...] to be either’.³

²Penny Von Eschen, *Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 7–11; David Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah. Vision and Tragedy* (Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2007), 33; Jonathan Derrick, *Africa’s ‘Agitators’: Militant Anti-Colonialism in Africa and the West, 1918–1939* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 45–47; British National Archives, London, United Kingdom, (BNA), KV2/1850, top secret report, 18 October 1952.

³Quote taken from Frederick Cooper, “Possibility and Constraint: African Independence in Historical Perspective,” *The Journal of African History* 49, no. 2 (2008): 168; Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 107; Chris Vaughan, “The Politics of Regionalism and Federation in East Africa, 1958–1964,” *The Historical Journal* 62, no. 2 (2019): 519–40; Michael Collins, “Decolonisation and the ‘Federal Moment’,” *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 24, no. 1 (2013): 21–40.

Continental integration therefore had many different iterations. Projects of federation and confederation, such as the short-lived Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union between 1958 and 1963, the Mali Federation between 1959 and 1960 and the East African Community between 1967 and 1977 emerged alongside continental groupings based on political allegiances such as the radical Casablanca Group and the moderate Monrovia Group. These differences were rooted in the strong disagreement among protagonists. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana who advocated the rapid formation of an African union was confronted by Haile Selassie who championed a conservative Pan-African policy from the top down and disliked the socialist implications of Nkrumah's unification plan. He also clashed with gradualists, such as Kenyatta and Tom Mboya of Kenya, as well as the Tanzanian leader, Julius Nyerere who disagreed with Nkrumah on four issues. Nyerere, first of all, advocated a regionalist approach and pushed for an East African Federation, whereas Nkrumah believed regional groupings would reduce the incentive for further integration. Additionally, Kenya and Tanzania wanted a step-by-step plan for unity. Nkrumah's third complaint was that the gradualists were unwilling to commit all their resources and energies to the cause. All the while these statesmen debated ways in which continental prosperity could be attained: with Nyerere's plough and pickaxe or by being jet-propelled towards modernisation as Nkrumah argued.⁴ These disagreements were replicated and further complicated by the pressures of the Cold War at the foundational meeting of the OAU in early 1963.

Drawing together the latest research from young scholars and established academics from Africa, Europe and the United States, this volume presents research papers in the fields of history, law and international relations theory (IR) that discuss past and present visions of African unity. It goes beyond an institutional analysis of the OAU by exploring cultural, economic and non-state aspects of the OAU as well as the different visions of African unity that coexisted or contested the organisation born in Addis

⁴ Archive of the George Padmore Research Library On African Affairs, Accra, Ghana (GPRL), BAA/RLAA/370 Correspondence with the President, 1960: BAA Reports, Correspondence (Nkrumah, Nationalist Organisations), memorandum, "Ghana's Role in Emergent Africa," 25 July 1960; Opoku Agyeman, *Nkrumah's Ghana and East Africa: Pan-Africanism and African Interstate Relations* (Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1992), 79–89; Kofi Buenor Hadjor, *Nkrumah and Ghana: The Dilemma of Post-Colonial Power* (London: Kegan Paul international, 1988), 91–98.

Ababa in 1963. It further examines how ideas of African unity shaped the Cold War and the African liberation struggle. Finally, this collection discusses the transformation of the OAU into the African Union (AU) in 2002. While acknowledging the importance of the diaspora in the history of Pan-Africanism, this book focuses primarily on the African continent and the role played by African intellectuals, leaders and peoples. The following pages should be read as a plea to overcome existing academic hierarchies, which tend to exclude African academics from the scholarly conversation, as well as a call to increase the accessibility of African archives, which allow for a fundamentally new understanding of the project to unify the African continent.

CONTINENTAL VISIONS OF UNITY: AFRICAN HISTORY AND PAN-AFRICANISM(S)

Scholars have provided various definitions and interpretations of ‘Pan-Africanism’ and ‘African unity’.⁵ Already in 1962, South African writer and journalist Colin Legum wrote about the difficulties he encountered when trying to provide a ‘concise definition of this relatively new recruit to the world’s political vocabulary’ because ‘Pan-Africanism’ had been ‘used by both its protagonists and its antagonists as if it were a declaration of political principles’, even though ‘it’ was ‘not’. Instead, Legum talked about a ‘practical expression’, ‘a movement of ideas and emotions; at times it achieves a synthesis; at times it remains at the level of thesis and antithesis’.⁶ Scholars should therefore consider not one, but many ‘Pan-Africanisms’.

In response to this conceptual confusion, historians began to tease out the different meanings assigned to Pan-Africanism. In 1962, George Shepperson introduced the distinction between a Pan-Africanism ‘with a capital letter’ and one ‘with a small letter’. While the five Pan-African

⁵ See for instance, Vincent Bakpetu Thompson, *Africa and Unity: The Evolution of Pan-Africanism* (Harlow: Longman Pub Group, 1977); P. Olanwuche Esedebe, “Origins and Meaning of Pan-Africanism,” *Presence Africaine* 73, no. 1 (1970): 109–27; P. Olanwuche Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism: The Idea and Movement, 1776–1991, Second edition* (Washington, D.C: Howard University Press, 1994); Hakim Adi, *Pan-Africanism: A History* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018); Reiland Rabaka, ed., *Routledge Handbook of Pan-Africanism* (New York: Routledge, 2020).

⁶ Colin Legum, *Pan-Africanism: A Short Political Guide* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1962), 14.

Congresses organised by William Edward Burghardt (W.E.B.) Dubois, the writings of intellectuals like Padmore and political initiatives such as the All-Africa People's Conference in 1958 all represent the capital-letter Pan-Africanism, the lower-case term describes a less 'clearly recognizable movement', 'a group of movements, many very ephemeral' with a predominance of the cultural elements. Lower-case pan-Africanism therefore also included *négritude*, the literary movement which, particularly in the definition of Senegalese writer Léopold Senghor, was a philosophy that wanted to counter the claimed universalism of French culture with its own claim to universalism for black culture.⁷ Similarly, in 1968 Immanuel Geiss distinguished between a 'narrower' and a 'broader' prehistory of Pan-Africanism when he investigated 'different forms according to time, place and historical setting'.⁸ In a narrow sense the first Pan-African Conference in London in 1900 can be seen as a starting point, while in the broader sense Pan-Africanism's origins can be located as far back as the late eighteenth century'.⁹

The broad definition of Pan-Africanism as well as 'lower-case' pan-Africanism are particularly important since they highlight how Pan-Africanism's origins can be located in the abolitionist movements of the late eighteenth century when Africans and people of African descent initiated more organised forms of resistance against their exploitation by people of European descent. Anticolonial intellectuals and leaders in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries consciously positioned themselves in that long line of fighters who had begun their resistance with the fight against slavery. The intellectual genealogy of Pan-Africanism is thus intertwined with profound and long-lasting feelings of dispossession, oppression, persecution and rejection. According to Legum, 'the emotional impetus for' Pan-African 'concepts flowed from the experiences of a widely-dispersed people – those of African stock – who felt themselves either physically through dispossession or slavery, or socially,

⁷ George Shepperson, "Pan-Africanism and 'Pan-Africanism': Some Historical Notes," *Phylon* 23, no. 4 (1962): 346–47; Richard Watts, "Negritude, Présence Africaine, Race," in *Postcolonial Thought in the French-Speaking World*, ed. Charles Forsdick and David Murphy (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), 227–37.

⁸ Immanuel Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, translated by Ann Keep (London: Methuen 1974), 6. Geiss's original work was published in 1968 under the title *Panafricanismus: Zur Geschichte Der Dekolonisation*.

⁹ Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, 8.

economically, politically and mentally through colonialism, to have lost their homeland'.¹⁰

Likewise, Pan-Africanism 'with a capital P' and Geiss's narrow definition further complicate our understanding of the different conceptions Pan-Africanist leaders and intellectuals championed. A total of five congresses between 1919 and 1945 did not lead to a consensus. Tactical differences between leaders such as Nkrumah, who sought immediate and full unifications, and gradualists like Nyerere were further heightened after independence. Even though the OAU was held up by its founding fathers as the synthesis of different Pan-African projects, discussion persisted because the newly minted international organisation had to deal with Cold War crises in proxy war-riddled Southern Africa, economic turmoil and the problem of political refugees. Moreover, after 1960, independent leaders began advocating more forcefully for regional projects, in effect offering a wide variety of alternatives to the straightforward path of continental political unity. Regional groupings such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)—which was founded in 1975 to increase economic cooperation—and the East African Community—an intergovernmental organisation which collapsed after a decade in 1977 and was revived in 2000—have challenged but also confirmed the potential for closer cooperation and unification. Similarly, non-state actors have come together to create alternative Pan-African groupings. Immigrants, refugees and freedom fighters all developed competing rationales behind unification that have shaped and reshaped political agendas in often counter-intuitive ways.

It is therefore important to study these visions as a set of ideas and projects with a historical trajectory while taking institutional structures and contradictory ideological origins and rivalries into account. Much of the new scholarship has begun to analyse the AU's impact on continental politics as well as the many proposals that were launched by nationalist leaders.¹¹ Yet, the transition of the OAU to the AU, the day-to-day politics

¹⁰ Legum, *Pan-Africanism: A Short Political Guide*, 15.

¹¹ For case studies on Kenya, Tanzania and Ghana, see for instance: Poppy Cullen, *Kenya and Britain after Independence Beyond Neo-Colonialism* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Priya Lal, *African Socialism in Postcolonial Tanzania: Between the Village and the World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Matteo Grilli, "Nkrumah, Nationalism, and Pan-Africanism: The Bureau of African Affairs Collection," *History in Africa* 44 (2017): 1–13; Matteo Grilli, *Nkrumaism and African Nationalism: Ghana's Pan-African Foreign Policy in the Age of Decolonization* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

of international relations and the various origins of African unity remain underexplored, something this volume seeks to remedy.¹²

INTERNATIONAL VISIONS OF UNITY: INTERNATIONAL HISTORY AND AFRICA

This collection is also a discussion of the place of African unity within the international system, a topic that is underreached despite the archives revealing how officials in the Global North struggled to understand the Pan-African and Pan-Arab challenges to international relations. In 1957, for instance, the State Department in Washington, D.C., argued it needed to respond to the ‘Pan-African’ propaganda because Nkrumah propagated the idea of ‘his country as a haven for persecuted Negroes’. Salim Yaqub has furthermore argued the Eisenhower doctrine, ostensibly aimed at protecting the Middle East against Soviet encroachment, actually ‘sought to contain the radical Arab nationalism of Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser’.¹³ Generally, however, scholars consider African concerns to be a peripheral element in international relations.¹⁴

Historians of the Global Cold War, for instance, study how communist and capitalist social systems were exported to the so-called developing world in an attempt to acquire global dominance. They regard the interventions of the United States and the Soviet Union into the Global South

Notable are also works on Pan-Arabism and the relationship with Pan-African ideologies and the Cold War such as Matthew J. Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Jeffrey James Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, Decolonization, and the Third World Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

¹² See for instance, Kassim M. Khamis, *Promoting the African Union* (Washington DC: Lilian Barber Press, 2008); Unf Engel and João Gomes Porto, eds., *Africa's New Peace and Security Architecture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010); Ulf Engel and João Gomes Porto, eds., *Towards an African Peace and Security Regime* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013); Tony Karbo and Tim Murithi, eds., *The African Union: Autocracy, Diplomacy and Peacebuilding in Africa* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2018); Konstantinos D. Magliveras and Gino J. Naldi, eds., *The African Union (AU)*, Second edition (Alphen aan den Rijn: Kluwer Law International, 2018).

¹³ Frank Gerits, “Hungry Minds: The Eisenhower Administration and Cultural Assistance in Sub-Saharan Africa (1953–1961),” *Diplomatic History* 41, no. 3 (2017): 618; Salim Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 2.

¹⁴ Frank Gerits, “‘When the Bull Elephants Fight’: Kwame Nkrumah, Non-Alignment, and Pan-Africanism as an Interventionist Ideology in the Global Cold War (1957–66),” *International History Review* 37, no. 5 (2015): 951–69.

to be vital to the political and social developments in postcolonial African and Asian societies. In this scholarship, Pan-Africanism has mainly been approached as a way to close ranks against ‘superpower Cold War politics’.¹⁵ Others have expanded upon that insight by arguing that Pan-Africanism was not a separate ideology, but rather should be viewed as a product of Wilsonianism and Leninism or as an outgrowth of trade union activism. The hegemonic messages of Soviet-Chinese communism and US liberal capitalism helped postcolonial regimes define their domestic policy and gave rise to different types of regimes, defined under the banners of African capitalism, Afro-marxism and African socialism.¹⁶

In a similar fashion, Africanists have found themselves divided between Afro-optimists,¹⁷ who saw the continent’s potential wasted by incompetent leaders, and Afro-pessimists, who argued that Africa’s exceptional link with poverty and corruption eroded the potential for unification.¹⁸ In Nkrumah’s case, the gap between ideals and reality has been explained by blaming him personally or by pointing to a lack of qualified advisers.¹⁹ This divide between Afro-optimists and Afro-pessimists was transcended in the scholarship after 2000 when Nkrumah came to be understood as a charismatic leader whose radical Pan-African experiment was thwarted by the pressures of the Cold War. Scholars such as Jean Allman and Cooper have paid sustained attention to transnational networks and the role of

¹⁵ Mark Philip Bradley, “Decolonization, the Global South and the Cold War, 1919–1962,” in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 483.

¹⁶ Jeffrey James Byrne, “Africa’s Cold War,” in *The Cold War in the Third World*, ed. Robert J. McMahon (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 101–23; Jeffrey James Byrne, “Our Own Special Brand of Socialism: Algeria and the Contest of Modernities in the 1960s,” *Diplomatic History* 33, no. 3 (2009): 427–47; Crawford Young, *Ideology and Development in Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

¹⁷ An excellent critique on afro-pessimism has been written by Waful Okumo, “Afro-Pessimism and African Leadership,” *The Perspective*, 5 April 2001, http://www.theperspective.org/afro_pessimism.html; Goren Hyden, “African Studies in the Mid-1990s: Between Afro-Pessimism and Amero-Skepticism,” *African Studies Review* 39, no. 2 (1996): 1–17; Stephen Ellis, *Season of Rains: Africa in the World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 5.

¹⁸ Emery Roe, *Except-Africa: Remaking Development, Rethinking Power* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1999), 1–12; Manthia Diawara, *In Search of Africa* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); David Reiff, “In Defense of Afro-Pessimism,” *World Policy Journal* 15, no. 4 (1998): 10–22.

¹⁹ See, for instance, Thompson, *Ghana’s Foreign Policy*.

imagined political futures beyond the nation state.²⁰ Cooper—whose subtle writing informs much of the scholarship—argues that outside powers could ‘either provide the sustenance an unpopular regime needed or sponsor alternatives’, a pattern set by the ‘American and Belgian action against Patrice Lumumba’.²¹ Allman argues the first Congolese Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba’s request for Soviet intervention limited Nkrumah’s space to speak from a position of non-alignment. Moreover, Nkrumah himself became disappointed and realised that ‘the space to imagine new worlds’ had become a luxury ‘no one could [...] afford’. The Cold War forced anticolonial leaders to take the real balance of power into account.²² More research into how the African agency shaped international relations, rather than analysing how Cold War machinations impeded upon anticolonial projects, is therefore an important feature of this edited volume.

Historians who study international history have also not engaged in a dialogue with scholars of the OAU. The OAU’s contribution to international norm-making remains unclear even though pertinent questions have been asked about how international norm-making in the United Nations and the League of Nations actually developed and what the links with the imperial project were.²³ For those who want to understand the

²⁰ Jeffrey S. Ahlman, “A New Type of Citizen: Youth, Gender, and Generation in the Ghanain Builders Brigade,” *Journal of African History* 53, no. 1 (2012): 87–105; Jeffrey S. Ahlman, “Road to Ghana: Nkrumah, Southern Africa and the Eclipse of a Decolonizing Africa,” *Kronos* 37, no. 1 (2011): 23–40; Jeffrey S. Ahlman, “The Algerian Question in Nkrumah’s Ghana, 1958–1960: Debating ‘Violence’ and ‘Nonviolence’ in African Decolonization,” *Africa Today* 57, no. 2 (2010): 67–84; Jeffrey S. Ahlman, *Living with Nkrumahism: Nation, State, and Pan-Africanism in Ghana* (Athens, OH: New African Histories, 2017); Jean Allman, “Kwame Nkrumah, African Studies and the Politics of Knowledge Production in the Black Star of Africa,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 46, no. 2 (2013): 181–203; Frederick Cooper, “Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History,” in *The Decolonization Reader*, ed. James D. Le Sueur (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 1516; Cullen, *Kenya and Britain after Independence*; Elizabeth Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 59.

²¹ Cooper, “Possibility and Constraint,” 187.

²² Jean Allman, “Nuclear Imperialism and the Pan-African Struggle for Peace and Freedom: Ghana, 1959–1962,” *Souls* 10, no. 2 (2008): 97.

²³ Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea, 1815 to the Present* (New York: Penguin Books, 2013); Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

OAU's organisational history Klaas van Walraven's *Dreams of Power: The Role of the Organisation of African Unity in the Politics of Africa 1963–1993*, published in 1999, remains the reference work in the field. This book utilised conceptual frameworks developed by IR scholars and sociologists such as stability theory and dependency theory to make sense of the source material such as newspaper articles, OAU documents and interviews. As a product of the cultural turn, the book 'aims at providing important building-stones for a systematic reconstruction of the OAU's ideological ground-work'.²⁴ Earlier scholarship on the OAU is scarce. In 1975 and 1994 Yassin El-Ayouty edited two volumes on the OAU. The volumes he put together in 1971 and 1974, *The United Nations and Decolonization: The Role of Afro-Asia* and *Africa and International Organisations*, not only amassed invaluable empirical data because they brought together lawyers, political scientists and Africanists, but also already indicated the Afro-optimist direction of his scholarship. The central aim of El-Ayouty's work is best captured by Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the UN Secretary General, who contributed to the 1994 volume and wrote how 'ultimately, history, geography and cultural affinity point to the fact that the destiny of Africa and the Arab World are intertwined. Arab and African States should pursue policies that give full recognition of this fact'. Scholarship had to make clear that the path to unification was sensible, logical and rooted in history.²⁵ The question of international norm-making, however, was not explicitly explored.

A fourth group of scholars, postcolonial and political theorists as well as historians who focus on postcolonial norm-making have cast the pan-African project as one of the many postcolonial imaginations and schemes that remained unrealised despite the profound impact Africans had on the formation of post-racial international norms and organisations. For instance, Steven Jensen argues that Ghana, Liberia, Jamaica and the Philippines 'were at the vanguard of universality' despite 'the contradictions' between 'international diplomacy' and the authoritarian and

²⁴ Klaas van Walraven, *Dreams of Power: The Role of the Organization of African Unity in the Politics of Africa 1963–1993* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1999), 13.

²⁵ Yassin El-Ayouty, *The United Nations and Decolonization: The Role of Afro-Asia* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971); Yassin El-Ayouty, *The Organization of African Unity after Ten Years: Comparative Perspectives* (New York: Praeger, 1975); Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "The OAU and Afro-Arab Cooperation," in *The Organization of African Unity after Thirty Years*, ed. Yassin El-Ayouty (Westport: Praeger, 1994), 139–46.

ethnically divisive ‘domestic experiences’.²⁶ Gary Wilder has told the story of ‘opening and foreclosure through unrealized attempts by French African and Antillean legislators and intellectuals’ such as Aimé Césaire and Senghor, ‘to invent forms of decolonization that would secure self-determination without the need for state sovereignty’. Nonetheless, these researchers limit themselves to ‘working through’ rather than ‘resolving’ the contractions between authoritarian nationalist development and the international discourse, which centred on post-racial democracy.²⁷

In short, Cold War historians, Africanists, historians of international history and postcolonial theorists have analysed Pan-Africanism in innovative ways. The relationship between the Cold War and African politics has been deeply studied, and particular attention has been devoted to African leaders who devised Pan-African plans defying the Soviets and the Americans.²⁸ Nonetheless, more work is needed to properly capture how Pan-African ideologies and plans are connected with the history of the Cold War and international history more broadly.²⁹ Specifically, the role of African agency in changing international affairs requires more research and has to be based on newly available sources and approaches.

²⁶ Steven Jensen, *The Making of International Human Rights: The 1960s, Decolonization and the Reconstruction of Global Values* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 227; Tehila Sasson, “Milking the Third World? Humanitarianism, Capitalism, and the Moral Economy of the Nestlé Boycott,” *The American Historical Review* 121, no. 4 (2016): 1196–1224; Oona A. Hathaway and Scott J. Shapiro, *The Internationalists: How a Radical Plan to Outlaw War Remade the World* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017).

²⁷ Gary Wilder, *Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization, and the Future of the World* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2015), 1.

²⁸ On the relationship between Nkrumah’s politics and Cold war powers, see for instance: Ebere Nwaubani, *The United States and Decolonization in West Africa, 1950–1960* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2001); Zach Levey, “The Rise and Decline of a Special Relationship: Israel and Ghana, 1957–1966,” *African Studies Review* 46, no. 1 (2003): 155–77; Dennis Laumann, “Che Guevara’s Visit to Ghana,” *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 9 (2005): 61–74; Sergey Mazov, *A Distant Front in the Cold War: The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956–1964* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010); Alessandro Iandolo, “Soviet Policy in West Africa, 1957–64” (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2011); Alessandro Iandolo, “The Rise and Fall of the ‘Soviet Model of Development’ in West Africa, 1957–64,” *Cold War History* 12, no. 4 (2012): 683–704; Matteo Landricina, *Nkrumah and the West: ‘The Ghana Experiment’ in the British, American and German Archives* (Münster: LIT, 2018).

²⁹ A notable recent endeavour to place Africa at the centre of the study of the history of the Cold War in the continent is Lazlo Passemiers, *Decolonisation and Regional Geopolitics: South Africa and the ‘Congo Crisis’, 1960–1965* (London: Routledge, 2019).