

EXCERPTED FROM

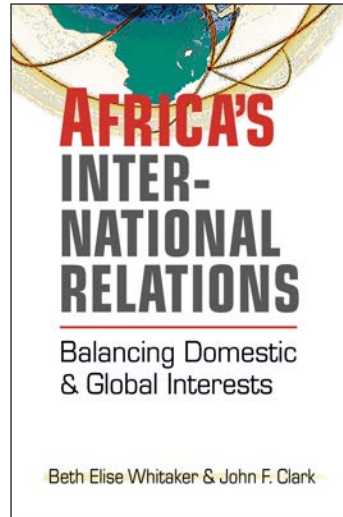
Africa's International  
Relations:  
Balancing Domestic  
and Global Interests

Beth Elise Whitaker  
and John F. Clark

Copyright © 2018

ISBNs: 978-1-62637-734-9 hc

978-1-62637-737-0 pb



LYNNE RIENNER PUBLISHERS

1800 30th Street, Suite 314  
Boulder, CO 80301 USA  
telephone 303.444.6684  
fax 303.444.0824

This excerpt was downloaded from the  
Lynne Rienner Publishers website  
[www.rienner.com](http://www.rienner.com)

# Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
<i>Map of Africa</i>	xiv
<b>1 Understanding Africa's International Relations</b>	<b>1</b>
The Challenge of Understanding Africa's International Relations, 2	
Theoretical Approaches to International Relations and Their "African Agendas," 5	
The Plan of the Book, 16	
<b>Part 1 Historical Context</b>	
<b>2 From Kingdoms to States</b>	<b>23</b>
Precolonial African States, 23	
The Colonial Experience, 27	
Legacies of Colonialism, 31	
The Meaning of Borders, 38	
Case Study: The Durability of Borders in South Sudan, 40	
<b>3 Africa During the Cold War</b>	<b>47</b>
Aspects of the Cold War in Africa, 50	
Africa's International Relations During the Cold War, 55	
Interpreting the Cold War in Africa, 66	
Case Study: Angola in the Cold War, 68	

## Part 2 The Pursuit of Freedom and Development

- 4 Foreign Aid and Economic Conditionality** 79
- The Pursuit of Development, *81*
  - The Donor Prescription, *87*
  - The Nongovernmental Sector, *95*
  - The Debate About Aid Continues, *97*
  - Case Study: Economic and Political Reform in Ghana, *101*
- 5 External Pressures for Political Reform and Human Rights** 105
- Perspectives on the Democratic Opening and Its Trajectory, *108*
  - Strategies for Political Reform in Africa, *111*
  - Prospects for Political Reform in Africa, *123*
  - Case Study: Pressure for Liberalization in Kenya, *126*
- 6 The Elusive Goal of African Unity** 135
- Continent-Wide Cooperation, *136*
  - The Logic of Integration, *143*
  - Experiences with Subregional Integration, *148*
  - Whither Regional Integration in Africa, *158*
  - Case Study: Nigeria as a Regional Power, *160*

## Part 3 The Challenges of Security

- 7 The Regionalization of Conflict** 169
- Causes and Interpretations of Regionalized Conflict, *171*
  - Some Regionalized African Conflicts Since the Cold War, *183*
  - Case Study: The Congo Wars as a Regionalized Conflict, *188*
- 8 Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Operations** 197
- Humanitarian Assistance, *198*
  - Peacekeeping in Africa, *204*
  - Peacebuilding in Africa, *212*
  - Moving Beyond Simple Narratives About African Conflicts, *217*
  - Case Study: Conflict and Intervention in Liberia, *218*
- 9 The Politics of Migration** 225
- Trends in African Migration, *226*
  - Responses to African Migration, *230*
  - Engaging the African Diaspora, *238*
  - Migrants as Political Actors, *244*
  - Case Study: Migration in South Africa, *244*

## Part 4 Engaging with External Actors

<b>10 Africa and the United States</b>	255
Making US Policy Toward Africa, 259	
Continuity and Change in US Policy Toward Africa, 260	
Shaping US Policy Toward Africa, 275	
Case Study: US Policy in Somalia, 278	
<b>11 Africa and Europe</b>	285
Bilateral Engagements Following Decolonization, 289	
The European Union's Engagement with Africa, 308	
Case Study: French Interventions in Côte d'Ivoire, 312	
<b>12 Africa and the Emerging Powers</b>	321
Economic Relations Between African States and Emerging Powers, 323	
Political Relations Between African States and the BRICS, 340	
Interpreting the New Salience of Relations Between Emerging Powers and Africa, 349	
Case Study: Sino-Zambian Relations, 351	

## Part 5 Conclusion

<b>13 International Relations and Domestic Politics Entwined</b>	361
<i>List of Acronyms</i>	369
<i>Bibliography</i>	373
<i>Index</i>	403
<i>About the Book</i>	418

# 1

## Understanding Africa's International Relations

**Understanding Africa's international relations is a daunting challenge.** The continent's fifty-four states and countless nongovernmental organizations are engaged in millions of daily interactions with their citizens, with external partners and rivals, and with one another. No one scholar or student can discern and follow more than a few of the myriad patterns that one finds in these interactions. As a result, even professional students of Africa often feel overwhelmed by the scope of Africa's international relations. Only the immodest would claim any kind of comprehensive knowledge of the subject.

Also striking is how regularly the political focus of Africa's international relations has shifted for Africans themselves and for outside diplomats, scholars, and activists.<sup>1</sup> Beginning in the 1950s, both Africans and outsiders were preoccupied with how Africans could end European colonialism on their continent and what form the new international relations of Africa's new states should take. As formal colonialism came to an end with the agreement of Portugal to liberate its colonies in the mid-1970s, the emphasis for Africans shifted to the struggle to end white minority rule in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and South Africa. This long struggle came to an end only with the election of Nelson Mandela to South Africa's presidency in 1994. Overlapping with these struggles, the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union provided another context for Africa's international relations from 1960 to 1989. Finally, the intra-continental and external focus of Africa's international relations since the early 1990s has been on two other issues: the powerfully renewed role of China on the continent and the role of outsiders in encouraging or battling various forms of radical

political Islam. Meanwhile, development has been perhaps the most constant preoccupation of both Africans and outsiders interested in the continent. Whether and how outside organizations, donors, states, and private capitalists can contribute to economic and social development in Africa remain as important today as in 1960. The stakes of these questions of independence, political alignment, autonomy, and development could not be higher for Africa's peoples.

Because of the wide scope of Africa's international relations, and the changing focus of the continent's major political challenges, this book makes recurrent use of several theoretical lenses. These theoretical lenses help us find our way through the intellectual thickets that Africa's complex and oft-changing international relations present. They help us explore how Africans have perceived their own problems in a global context. They also help us understand how and why outsiders have sought to shape Africa's political trajectories, profit from its resources, and imbue Africans with their economic ideologies, worldviews, and religious interpretations. The concept of "regime security," discussed later, is particularly valuable in understanding how African states engage with each other and with other global actors.

In keeping with these considerations, the remainder of this chapter proceeds in three sections. The first provides an overview of the scope of Africa's international relations; this section underscores the great challenge of finding persistent patterns in the relations of African states and peoples among themselves and with outsiders. The second section presents an overview of four theoretical approaches to international relations (realism, liberalism, constructivism, and neo-Marxism) and examines how they have informed the study of Africa over the years. At the end of that section, we introduce the concept of regime security as a motivating factor underlying various aspects of Africa's international relations. Finally, the last section outlines the remaining chapters of the book.

### **The Challenge of Understanding Africa's International Relations**

The scope of Africa's international relations is strikingly wide. A traditional analyst of international relations might begin by noting the large number of independent African states on the continent: fifty-four in total, as recognized by the United Nations (UN), including forty-nine in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>2</sup> Two other territories, Somaliland and Western Sahara, have sought recognition from the international community.<sup>3</sup> By comparison, Central and South America are composed of only twenty independent states, and the Middle East (delimited by

Turkey in the north, Iran in the east, Yemen in the south, and Egypt in the west) includes only eighteen independent states. Many of Africa's states have borders with a large number of neighbors; the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has borders with nine African states, Tanzania with eight, and several other African states have four, five, or six neighbors. This fragmentation of political authority into so many different states multiplies the sheer number of possible interactions among African states, and between these states and their external interlocutors. It is one of the most important legacies of European colonialism in Africa (see Chapter 2).

Also distinctive is the great cultural and linguistic diversity of Africa's states and peoples. Whereas Arabic is the main language of the Middle East, and Spanish and Portuguese of Latin America, the official languages of Africa's states include four European languages (English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish) as well as Arabic, blended languages like Swahili and Afrikaans, and indigenous languages like Kinyarwanda. South Africa alone has eleven official languages. Even more striking is the large number of ethnic communities of many African states: Nigeria and the DRC have more than 250 distinctive ethnic groups, defined as peoples with a distinctive language and historical territorial home. Large percentages of the national populations of these countries do not speak or read the national languages of their own countries. In a great many cases, however, they do speak the languages of their kin and neighbors living on the other side of an interstate border, another legacy of colonialism.

More typical of other world regions, Africa also has a large number of subregional organizations. Some of the most important of these include the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the East African Community (EAC), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU). This basic set of subregional organizations overlaps with dozens of others, however, and many states belong to multiple organizations with nominally similar purposes. For instance, Tanzania belongs to both EAC and SADC, and Angola belongs to both SADC and ECCAS; several other states have similar overlapping memberships (see Chapter 6). In addition, two monetary unions, one for West Africa and one for Central Africa, control the currencies of the states that use the *Communauté Financière Africaine* (CFA) franc (the "Franc zone"). The activities of these two organizations overlap heavily with those of ECOWAS and ECCAS, respectively. Meanwhile, all of the independent states of Africa are members of the

overarching African Union (AU). The interactions of these overlapping regional and subregional organizations further complicate Africa's international relations, viewed from a purely interstate perspective.

Also typical of other world regions, Africa's states have taken on new activities and faced new responsibilities over the successive decades. The heads of Africa's states naturally worry about the security of their regimes and the people they govern, just as they did in the early years of independence. The nature of African trade relations, on the other hand, has become far more complex than in the 1960s and 1970s. Economic globalization has increased the technical challenges of full and successful participation in the global economy. Likewise, the challenge of pursuing national economic development while simultaneously pursuing subregional integration has become far more complicated. Meanwhile, Africa's human population roughly quadrupled between 1955 and 2010, reaching approximately 1 billion in the latter year. Along with this remarkable expansion of population have come large waves of migration across interstate borders. For instance, hundreds of thousands of Africans migrated from Mali, Burkina Faso, and Guinea into Côte d'Ivoire from the 1950s to the 1990s. This challenge grows ever larger, and African states have managed changing migration patterns in different ways (see Chapter 9).

Other activities of African states are of a newer vintage. In the 1960s, African states had a relatively small role in global struggles against threats such as international drug trafficking, transnational terrorism, or global environmental degradation; their attention to these problems has necessarily increased in more recent decades as the threats posed by such phenomena have grown more urgent and apparent. HIV/AIDS, a disease that has now killed millions of Africans, imposed new responsibilities on many African states. Along with the rest of the world, African states have had to grapple with many new and unwelcome challenges in their international relations over the past thirty years. Yet most African states have had far less capacity to tackle these challenges than those in other regions.

Finally, the rise in power of many nonstate actors has further complicated the nature of Africa's international relations in recent decades. Newly empowered nonstate actors begin with individuals, like business leaders Mo Ibrahim and Aliko Dangote, many of whom are far more capable of international activity than they were in the 1960s. Along with the rise in the continent's population, the size of the middle class also has expanded in most African countries. These millions of modestly wealthier Africans have formed tens of thousands of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), some of which are engaged in international



activities. Many of them receive funding directly from NGOs or governments in the global North or Asia, and they use this funding to pursue a wide variety of agendas, from economic and social development to religious proselytization. As elsewhere in the world, the rise of non-state actors in Africa has made international relations there more complicated than in the past.

These trends make it useful to look for broad patterns in Africa's international relations. Various theoretical approaches to the discipline or field of international relations (IR) help frame debates about Africa's international relations (the phenomena themselves) in several ways. First, they help us sort through a mass of different policies, behaviors, and relationships to identify patterns; unless we think theoretically, we may not "see the forest for the trees." Second, theoretical approaches to IR alert us to the different agendas of observers of Africa's international relations. These various observers come to the study of Africa with different political and intellectual sensibilities and thus look for different issues to study.<sup>4</sup> Third, using theoretical approaches to IR helps us to perceive Africa's international relations in a systematic way; insofar as each theoretical approach provides a distinctive and consistent view of specific problems, each may differ with other approaches on the same issues. Arguably, in studying the social world, our knowledge of the subjects we study advances only through the debates we have with one another. Theoretical approaches provide alternative explanations for the issues we find in Africa's international relations and thereby increase our understanding of them. In the next section, we outline four important theoretical IR traditions that are useful in understanding Africa's international relations. At the end, we introduce the notion of "regime security," a concept we find invaluable in making sense of much of Africa's international relations.

### **Theoretical Approaches to International Relations and Their "African Agendas"**

The first and oldest approach to understanding international relations goes under the label "realism." A central aphorism for realism is that all political units seek survival and that this imperative leads to struggles for power. Most realists consider states to be the central actors in the international setting, and thus, for realists, international politics can most usefully be understood as a struggle for power among independent states. Since the global setting is anarchical, or without any supreme authority to make and enforce rules, the struggle for power often becomes violent. Domestic politics may be circumscribed by rules enforced by an accepted, legitimate authority, but international politics

involve threats, broken promises, unstable periods of peace, competition, tragic misunderstandings, and violent encounters.

Arguably, the foundational text of realism in the twentieth century was Edward Hallett Carr's *The Twenty Years' Crisis: 1919–1939*, originally published in 1939 and appearing in a revised version in 1946. Carr blamed the emergence of Nazi Germany and the tragedy of World War II on "Utopian" ideas, such as the stabilizing influence of disarmament and institutions like the League of Nations. Ultimately more influential, especially in the United States, however, was Hans J. Morgenthau's classic study *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. Morgenthau's text systematically covered the central problems of international politics of the era and made realism more systematic, reducing it to a number of specific "principles."

Two concepts are central to Morgenthau's work: the national interest and the balance of power. Yet Morgenthau used each concept in a way that undermined its explanatory value, namely, he used each both to describe international behavior and to prescribe how states ought to behave. In his analytical mode, Morgenthau insisted that states' pursuit of their national interests, "defined as power," was a signpost that "helps political realism find its way through the landscape of international politics" (Morgenthau 1973: 5). In his policy advisory mode, however, Morgenthau often insisted that leaders should eschew ideology or ideals in favor of the national interest, implying that national interest was not in fact always their guide.

In his descriptive mode, Morgenthau noted that weaker states regularly resist the imposition of hegemony (control) over them by their more powerful neighbors. Weaker states also make alliances with one another to resist the hegemony of a dominant state, both regionally and in the global setting. "Balances" of power, or roughly equal coalitions of states, thus typically emerge within regions and across the globe as a result of the natural tendency of states and groups of states to "check" the expansion of would-be dominators ("hegemons"). In his prescriptive mode, however, Morgenthau sometimes called upon leaders to pursue policies to check rising power, leading his readers to wonder whether the balance of power was the automatic mechanism in international relations he described.<sup>5</sup>

Alas, neither of these two central realist concepts from the mid-twentieth century seems to have much to tell us about Africa's contemporary international relations (Clark 2001c). Within the African continent, no state has made any serious efforts to conquer and dominate its neighbors. Although South Africa did try to keep its antagonists at bay during the latter decades of apartheid, its efforts were more about trying to main-

tain its domestic system than to conquer its neighbors. The few interstate wars in Africa have been fought mainly over competing irredentist claims rather than for subregional or regional hegemony.<sup>6</sup> As a result, alliances designed to prevent subregional hegemony have not formed on the continent, except against South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s. It is open to debate whether “balances of power” have formed in intra-African international relations; Errol Henderson (2015) believes so, but others would demur. Likewise, it does not appear that African rulers have often pursued national interests at the expense of their neighbors. This is not surprising, since almost all African states are multiethnic polities rather than nation-states. In general, African rulers have been much more preoccupied with regime security than they have been with national interests (Clapham 1996; Clark 2001c), a point to which we return later.

Does this mean that “classical” realism makes no claims that can help us understand contemporary African international relations? Perhaps not. Realists like Niccolò Machiavelli of Renaissance Italy did not make the same stark distinctions between domestic politics and international politics as did the twentieth-century realists. For Machiavelli, domestic rulers pursued strategies designed primarily to secure themselves in power, and such strategies encompassed foreign as well as domestic policies. In cynical terms, state rulers often preyed upon their neighbors in order to seize booty and resources; these were used to reward domestic loyalists and to intimidate domestic rivals. In Machiavelli’s era of Italian city-state politics, military force was used against domestic and “foreign” foes alike and without discrimination between them. Such strategies of power maintenance, involving both domestic repression and foreign adventure, would not seem at all alien to current and former African autocrats such as Omar al-Bashir (Sudan), José Eduardo dos Santos (Angola), Paul Kagame (Rwanda), or Muammar Qaddafi (Libya). In Italian city-states, rivals for power often hatched conspiracies from abroad, leading the princes, emperors, and dukes of that era to intervene in the affairs of their neighbors. This behavior, too, would be quite familiar to these rulers, and to many other African leaders as well.

One scholar of realism, Richard Ned Lebow (2003), has tried to argue for a continuity of this classical realist tradition, from the ancient Greek Thucydides to Morgenthau. Lebow claims that classical realists have consistently been interested in concepts that span the domestic-foreign divide. In both the foreign and domestic realms, he insists, prudent leaders have craved order and stability and tried to secure these values; they have tried to cultivate a sense of community with their fellow “statesmen” in search of such values; they have understood that interests cannot be defined without reference to values, and that credible

claims of justice are crucial to successful foreign and domestic policies. Finally, realists from ancient times to the present have appreciated the dynamism of domestic and international politics; power relations within states can change rapidly due to shifts in public opinion, and power relations among states change due to differential rates of economic growth and to modernization.

Understood in this way, classical realism has a good deal to tell us about contemporary African international relations. African leaders, whether authoritarian or democratic, worry about getting and keeping power. In turn, some of the threats to their power come from rivals who may organize in neighboring states and sometimes launch insurgencies from across international borders. Such threats have led some African leaders to intervene in neighboring states. Meanwhile, foreign antagonists outside the African continent have posed related threats to the power of African rulers. Extra-continental antagonists can withhold aid from regimes that they dislike and provide both aid and encouragement to rivals. Yet extra-continental states and other actors can also provide useful support to African rulers. Such support ranges from rhetorical approval of domestic policies, to economic or military aid, to outright intervention against domestic rivals in times of crisis. External patrons have sometimes served as “guarantors” for the security of African regimes, past and present.

A more contemporary form of realism goes under the name “neorealism” or “structural realism.” The foundational text of this form of realism is Kenneth Waltz’s celebrated study *Theory of International Politics* (1979). Waltz argues not only for a strict separation between domestic and international politics but also for a sharp focus on the structure of the international system. Waltz begins by underscoring the fundamental anarchy of the global system. He then goes on to define varying systems in terms of the number of great powers, or superpowers, present in a given historical era. In essence, the international system may be either unipolar (under the hegemony of a single state), bipolar, or multipolar, with any number of relatively equal great powers. Waltz’s theory is primarily about the likelihood of “central wars,” or wars between great powers; in particular, he wishes to determine whether bipolar or multipolar systems are more likely to generate central wars. As such, neorealism would not seem to have much to say about the international relations of African states, which are all peripheral actors of the world political stage.

Yet neorealism does usefully direct our attention to how the structure of the international system might affect Africa’s international relations. All African countries except Eritrea, Namibia, and South Sudan became independent during the Cold War, when the United States and

the Soviet Union dominated world politics. By the time of the independence of Sudan (1956) and Ghana (1957), the two superpowers were involved in an intense competition for influence and clients in developing regions of the world, including Africa (see Chapter 3). In 1989, with the accelerating collapse of Soviet power at home and abroad, the Soviet Union withdrew from Africa politically, leaving its former clients with no patron. The former Marxist client regime in Ethiopia quickly fell apart in 1991 after the withdrawal of Soviet support in the previous year. For the next decade or so, the world was effectively unipolar, leaving African states little option but to seek the favor of the United States, its European allies, and the international financial institutions (IFIs) that it dominated. By the early 2000s, however, the People's Republic of China (PRC) had emerged as an important economic player on the continent (see Chapter 12). Although the nascent Sino-American rivalry in Africa is not yet as intense as the former Soviet-American rivalry, countries such as Sudan and Zimbabwe have effectively aligned themselves with China (see Chapter 12). If Sino-American hostility continues to mount, Africa could again become a setting for superpower rivalries to play out. Yet another possibility is that the world might become more obviously multipolar if other states (or the European Union [EU]) increase their power. In that eventuality, African states might enjoy more "freedom of movement" in their international relations.

Liberalism, a second major theoretical approach, is the main competitor to realism in IR. The aphorism of liberalism might be that "international relations is a struggle for freedom, justice, and prosperity." Liberalism assumes that all people want to live in freedom and prosperity and that we have enough will (or "agency") in the world to bring about these outcomes. Like realism, liberalism comes in two major variants: traditional liberalism, with an analytical focus on domestic politics and its consequences; and neoliberalism, which emphasizes the power of international interactions to shape and constrain behavior. The central claim of traditional liberalism is that democratic states do not fight one another militarily, although they may well go to war with nondemocratic states (Russett 1993; Doyle 2011). Rather than going to war, democratic states negotiate with their peers to resolve disputes peacefully; neither citizens nor governments of democratic states find it acceptable to engage in war with other democracies. Due to this phenomenon of the "democratic peace," communities of stable, war-eschewing democracies can evolve in world regions, including Europe and North America.

This approach had little relevance to continental Africa before the end of the Cold War. In 1989, there were only five multiparty democracies that held regular free and fair elections on the continent:

Botswana, Gambia, Mauritius, Senegal, and Zimbabwe.<sup>7</sup> From the 1960s through the 1980s, the *de jure* one-party state was the norm in African politics, though this situation did not lead to as many interstate wars as liberals might have expected. Since 1990, however, the picture has changed dramatically (see Chapter 5). In the early 1990s, a wave of political reform swept across the continent, transforming almost all African states into nominally multiparty states. Whereas the majority remained *de facto* dictatorships, with many of the old rulers surviving the change to “multipartyism,” at least sixteen states had certifiable democratic transitions to new leaders and parties between 1990 and 1994 (Bratton and van de Walle 1997). In the following years, still other African states (like Ghana and Kenya) began experiments with multiparty democracy following transitions, while many of the early experimenters reverted to authoritarianism. As of 2014, only ten sub-Saharan African states were ranked “free” by the organization Freedom House (2014), whereas twenty were ranked “not free,” and nineteen were rated “partly free.” Despite this mediocre record of the spread of democracy in Africa over twenty-five years, one important Africanist scholar (Schraeder 2012) finds evidence that Africa’s new democracies behave differently in their foreign relations than their authoritarian peers.

Neoliberalism focuses not on domestic politics but on how the nature of international institutions and states’ participation in them affect interstate relations (see, e.g., Koremenos, Lipson, and Snidal 2003). Neoliberals assume that states want to collaborate for their mutual benefit—for instance, to engage in free trade—but are often stymied by “collective action problems.” That is, each participant in various international “games” fears that its peers will cheat and obtain special advantages or that they will behave as “free riders” and not pay their fair share for collective goods, like an open trade regime, the orderly movement of citizens across international borders, a clean environment, or transnational infrastructure links. Neoliberals believe that the right kind of international institutions can lead states in a community to overcome such problems.

It is easy, then, to see what the main agenda should be for neoliberals who are studying Africa: to configure African regional and sub-regional institutions in such a way as to mitigate Africa’s domestic and interstate problems. Africa has a plethora of subregional organizations, but their effectiveness in addressing regional problems is dubious. Africans were deeply disappointed in the performance of the Organization of African Unity (OAU, 1963–2002) and accordingly replaced it in 2002 with a more robust institution, the African Union. The two main purposes of Africa’s regional and subregional organizations have been

to resolve conflicts peacefully and to promote interstate economic integration. Recently, however, Africa's regional organizations have had to grapple with more specific problems such as transnational terrorist groups and insurgencies, the collapse of African states, the international consequences of domestic turmoil (including that caused by coups d'état), the trade in illicit drugs, and the spread of communicable diseases across borders. Most Africans, and neoliberals, believe that their regional organizations could do better in managing such problems.

The English School in IR could be seen as yet another variety of liberalism. Associated particularly with Martin Wight and Hedley Bull, this approach accepts the realist assumption that states are the main actors but is interested in the strength and quality of the norms that characterize "international society" at any historical juncture. Although Bull recognized that the balance of power and even war can be instruments for maintaining a (pluralistic) world order, his emphasis in *The Anarchical Society* (1977) is on international law and diplomacy. The level of commitment of diplomats to the norms of conduct embodied in international law and to the peaceful resolution of disputes through diplomacy corresponded to the strength of international society. When such common commitments were weak, the balance of power and war were the only other methods available for avoiding the domination of ambitious great powers.

Constructivism represents a third major theoretical approach in IR. In a broad sense, constructivism is not mainly a way to understand patterns of international relations; rather, constructivism is a position in the great debates over epistemology (the study of knowledge). To what extent can we demonstrate facts about the social world? To what extent can we be objective? To what extent are the concepts of the social world stable and comprehensible by all? Positivists are quite optimistic on these questions: they generally believe that we can objectively identify patterns that consistently characterize the social world. Positivists believe that change in the social world is predictable, in principle, based on the fundamental rationality of human beings. At the opposite end of the spectrum, post-structuralists are radically skeptical about our ability to separate ourselves from the social world or to identify any consistent patterns. They believe that all knowledge is socially constructed, as is human rationality. According to one trenchant view (Adler 1997), constructivism represents the middle ground between positivists and post-structuralists.<sup>8</sup> For constructivists in general, social knowledge is neither objective (as positivists believe) nor starkly subjective (as many post-structuralists believe), but rather "inter-subjective." That is, we human beings can agree among ourselves on the meaning of certain



social concepts (consider “democracy” or “conflict”), though these phenomena cannot be defined objectively, or outside of the human experience. Fierce academic debates are currently ongoing within constructivism, mostly among those who lie closer to one end or the other of Adler’s continuum. This is not the place to rehearse these debates.

Rather, let us draw out one application of constructivist epistemology to IR that has some utility in the study of Africa’s international relations. Alexander Wendt applied constructivism to IR by insisting on the relative agency (free will) of the actors who create the normative context in which international politics take place. International structures do not force actors to behave in certain ways, but instead the choices of autonomous agents determine those structures. The title of a seminal Wendt article (1992) serves as an excellent aphorism for the approach: “Anarchy is what states make of it.” That is, international actors are free to shape the fundamental anarchy of the global setting in ways that make violent conflict, among other outcomes, more or less likely. As a community of international actors interacts, chiefly through discussions, their communications create specific “cultures of anarchy,” in Wendt’s useful phrase. That is, they create varying kinds of communal norms and cultural patterns, which then shape future behavior. These cultures condition, but do not determine, the behavior of those who create them and their successors; moreover, diplomatic actors are perfectly capable of altering these cultures over time, through their actions and speech. Thus, Wendt’s version of constructivist IR has a good deal in common with the English School, as others have noted (Lacassagne 2012).

Given these perspectives, English School thinkers and constructivists like Wendt are especially interested in norms within Africa and between African states and the external environment. One scholar (Pella 2014) has recently studied how interactions between European and African leaders beginning in the fifteenth century led to the development of new international norms that shaped future Euro-African relations. Studying the nature and quality of African diplomatic society at the continental level is an even more obvious agenda for such scholars. For instance, what critical norms and transnational identities emerged from the pan-Africanist conferences that took place during the colonial era (see, e.g., Persaud 2001)? What new norms emerged with the independence of the first African states and the inaugural meeting of new African leaders in Addis Ababa in 1963? What patterns of behavior governed the “society of African regimes” during the Cold War period (see, e.g., Clark 2011)? Has the culture of African diplomacy changed with the end of the Cold War, or with the foundation of the African Union in 2002? Further, how have recent developments in Africa’s



international relations changed the worldviews of Africans and their leaders? For instance, has Africa's recent economic growth changed ideas about the Western world or the global South? If we can document any such changes in attitudes, have they led to parallel changes in the international behavior of African states? Finally, how do we account for changing African attitudes about the critical issue of African states' interventions into one another's affairs? Whereas the OAU Charter did not countenance any interstate interventions among African states, the AU Constitutive Act does so, under specific circumstances (see Chapter 6). Constructivists want to know what critical encounters, declarations, or statements of principle lead to these changes of culture and norms.

Neo-Marxism is a fourth major approach in IR, and one with enduring relevance to Africa.<sup>9</sup> As with realism and liberalism, there are two distinctive traditions in neo-Marxist thought. The first follows Marx's own focus on the exploitative nature of capitalism but applies the logic to the global setting. Neo-Marxian materialists chiefly argue that underdevelopment in peripheral parts of the global economy is a function of capital accumulation and development in the global North. Their slogan might be, "Global politics is a struggle for economic justice and equality against the forces of capitalism." One early variant of this approach was the dependency theory of the 1960s. This theory blamed Latin America's relative lack of development on declining terms of trade<sup>10</sup> for developing countries, which exported mostly commodities, and the economic domination of industrialized capitalist countries (see, e.g., Frank 1967). Building on this approach, world systems theory made the scale of the analysis more global, notably including Africa in its exploration of the widening economic gap between the West and developing countries (see, e.g., Amin 1974, and especially Wallerstein 1979). These scholars predicted a full-scale global economic crisis of capitalism that has not yet come, despite such shocks as the Asian financial crisis of 1997–1998 and the Great Recession of 2008–2010.<sup>11</sup> They implicitly prescribed a revolution in the structure of the world economy and a radical redistribution of global wealth.

A second strand of neo-Marxists have focused their attention on the oppressive power of ideas and ideologies, following the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci. Among those studying Africa in particular, Frantz Fanon (1963) wrote the most powerful and enduring study of how Europeans used ideologies of superiority to oppress Africans, both before and after formal independence. There is nothing fundamentally contradictory about these two strands of neo-Marxist thought, and Marx himself was keenly attuned to the power of ideological indoctrination to reinforce the domination of the capitalist class.

Neo-Marxists have had to adapt their theories to important world developments since the late 1980s: the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the rapid rise of China and other East Asian economies, and the quickening pace of economic globalization. The first of these events was surprising to nearly everyone but did not especially perturb neo-Marxists, who typically viewed the Soviet Union as a “state capitalist” economy (Amin 1992). The rise of the East Asian economies was far more surprising for radicals, as they expected countries of the global periphery to become ever poorer, just as Marx expected the proletariat to become increasingly impoverished. When instead the East Asian economies showed they could outpace the industrial West in their growth over decades, neo-Marxists tweaked their theories to account for this unexpected development (Frank 1998). Neo-Marxists had an easier time incorporating the reality and language of globalization into their theories. For instance, Amin (e.g., 1997) rapidly assimilated the language of globalization into his analysis of global capitalism. To the extent that economic globalization involves a greater concentration and freer movement of global capital, materialist neo-Marxists can easily claim that globalization is precisely what their theories predicted. Likewise, the notable rise in global inequality in recent decades (see, e.g., Milanovic 2012) conforms neatly to the predictions of many neo-Marxists.

The relevance of neo-Marxist thinking to contemporary Africa is obvious. By the twentieth century, Africa was already the poorest continent in the world, even as colonialism was in its early years. The Atlantic slave trade and later the colonization of Africa (see Chapter 2) clearly disrupted the trajectories of African development ongoing before 1500 (Rodney 1972).<sup>12</sup> Moreover, following the first wave of independence of African states in the late 1950s and early 1960s, most Africans remained grievously impoverished. During the 1960s, many African elites, including some rulers, attributed the failure of Africa to experience a rapid takeoff in economic development to the residual influence of the former colonizers, who were accused of continuing to control African economies (Nkrumah 1965). This view accorded perfectly with the dependency school thinking prevalent in the era. By the 1980s, the focus of radical economic thinkers was on African debt and its consequences, namely, the structural adjustment programs of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (see, e.g., Onimode 1989). The economic crisis of structural adjustment continued well into the 1990s for most African countries and remained a preoccupation of most scholars during that decade. From the 1960s through the 1980s, the scholarly agenda of the neo-Marxists seemed well-suited to explain Africa’s relative eco-

conomic stagnation, and their calls for a global economic revolution resonated with the African left.

Yet right around 1990 an acceleration in the average growth rate of African economies began. From an average of below 3 percent per year in the 1980s, the average rate of growth of African economies steadily rose to over 5 percent per annum by 2011, catching up to the average rate in Asia (*The Economist* 2011). Most of the improvement in growth rates was attributed to two key factors, neither entirely positive: the rise in the relative value of commodities on world markets, and rapid rises in Chinese trade and investment with Africa (Carmody 2010). In the fifteen-year period from 2000 to 2015, most African economies grew faster than those of Europe or North America. To some extent, this positive development muted the apparent relevance of neo-Marxist analysis to Africa. Along with faster economic growth, however, came growing investment from the outside world (especially in oil and minerals), and more important, rising inequality on the continent. These realities gave a new impetus to the research agendas of many radicals, encouraging them to again demonstrate how Africa was being exploited by the outside world, including China and the West (Bond 2006). Given the continuing destitution of millions throughout Africa and rising economic inequality fostered by the emergence of a larger middle class, the neo-Marxist economic research agenda for the continent is far from exhausted.

Although we draw insights in this book from each of these grand paradigms (realism, liberalism, constructivism, and neo-Marxism), we find the mid-level concept of “regime security” more consistently valuable in helping to understand Africa’s international relations. Consistent with other scholars (compare Clapham 1996), we find that regimes rather than states are the right analytical focus. The history of Africa’s international relations demonstrates that African rulers have considerable agency or ability to negotiate the terms of their international engagements. Further, the imperatives of domestic politics fundamentally condition the kinds of international engagements that African leaders seek. Above any other goals they may have, African rulers want to make their regimes, and themselves, secure in power. Unlike most Western leaders, they cannot take the security of their governments for granted. Most African leaders, even those who have achieved power through free and fair elections, face the dual threats of coups d’état from within their regimes and insurgencies from without (Roessler 2011). A related source of insecurity is popular dissent, which can lead to either civilian coups or electoral defeats. Although authoritarian regimes (and even some nominally democratic ones) usually try to manipulate elections, this becomes more difficult when outsiders are involved.

In general, all of these domestic risks can be mitigated by the right kind of international relationships. African regimes benefit from good relations with their neighbors (whence insurgencies may be organized) and from the patronage of powerful international partners, who may provide ideological support, domestic financing, arms, and explicit or implicit security guarantees. Whether negotiating the conditions of loans from lenders, developing subregional institutions to promote development, responding to violence in neighboring countries, or fostering ties with traditional Western powers or emerging ones like China, therefore, African leaders are motivated by the desire to sustain themselves in power. Although the specifics vary by country, this underlying need fundamentally influences the types of international actors with whom African leaders seek to partner and the terms of the resulting relationships.

The concept of regime security is related to classical realist ideas about the exigency of maintaining domestic power through favorable foreign relations, but we use it with deep awareness provided by other perspectives. Following classical liberalism, we acknowledge that the challenges of regime security are different for elected democratic regimes than for personalist dictatorships; we also take to heart the neoliberal idea that stronger regional and subregional institutions can mitigate the risks that African regimes face. Constructivism reminds us that identity politics are crucial for security at both the domestic and regional levels, and that the rhetoric of powerful leaders can shape the normative framework of Africa's international relations. Finally, we acknowledge that the global (capitalist) political economy is yet another framework within which African regimes operate. Regimes that defy international capital make powerful external enemies, but even those that align themselves with international capital may face greater domestic dissent when inequalities caused by development become too obvious.

### **The Plan of the Book**

Part 1 of this book provides the historical context for Africa's international relations. Chapter 2 examines the transformation of Africa from a continent of diverse kingdoms, empires, and other political entities in the precolonial era to the system of independent states that was left behind after more than seven decades of European colonialism. Although the imposition of colonial rule was achieved with great brutality, and maintained with violence when necessary, many Africans cooperated with European colonizers to enhance their own power and influence at the local level. Nationalist leaders fought against colonialism not only to achieve self-determination but also to exercise control

over their respective states thereafter. A case study of Africa's newest country, South Sudan, illustrates many of these points. Chapter 3 turns our attention to a critical aspect of Africa's international relations immediately following independence: the Cold War. Most African countries were officially nonaligned in the epic contest between the superpowers, but many embraced close engagement with the United States or the Soviet Union anyway. Some of these engagements fueled civil and interstate wars, as seen in the case study of Angola. Far from being pawns in the superpower struggle, African leaders often pursued these external alliances to secure the resources and support necessary to perpetuate their own regimes.

Part 2 explores the pursuit of freedom and development in Africa, and particularly the role of international actors in those quests. The question of foreign aid and its impact has been crucial in Africa from the 1960s to today, as examined in Chapter 4. In hopes of promoting economic development, though also motivated by their own political and economic interests, Western donors have provided billions of dollars in foreign assistance to African countries over the years. Despite the increasing imposition of policy conditions, critics note that Western aid has done little to promote the welfare of individual Africans, in part because many leaders have redirected these funds for their own purposes. Even so, recent economic growth in countries like Ghana gives reason for cautious optimism. Along similar lines, Chapter 5 examines external efforts to promote democracy and human rights in Africa. Such efforts have increased since the end of the Cold War and are fundamentally liberal projects, but even advocates realize that the consolidation of democracy will take more than the staging of one or two relatively free and fair elections. Excitement about democratic transitions in many African countries has been dampened by reversions in some, as illustrated by the case of Kenya, and authoritarian persistence in others. Chapter 6 explores the elusive quest for unity within Africa. Partly to reduce dependence on outside actors, African states created the Organization of African Unity (now the African Union) and various subregional bodies to promote economic development and political stability. Although these organizations generally have fallen short of their ambitious goals, at times because of the dominance of countries such as Nigeria, renewed enthusiasm for regional cooperation in recent years has spurred progress and innovations with respect to economic integration, trade and travel among African countries, and peacekeeping.

Part 3 explores security challenges in Africa, including causes and consequences of political violence. The regionalization of conflict, taken up in Chapter 7, reveals most vividly how African regimes try to

protect their security at all costs. Domestic and interstate security concerns are inextricably interconnected as conflicts become regionalized through the sponsorship of insurgencies in neighboring states, the cross-border movement of refugees and militants, and the illicit smuggling of lucrative resources such as diamonds and gold, among other processes. A case study of the Democratic Republic of Congo illustrates the complicated dynamics of regionalized conflicts. Chapter 8 discusses humanitarian assistance and peace operations in Africa. Although generally designed to be neutral, such interventions often are motivated by political interests, including those of states that contribute troops, and can have very political consequences. In conflict situations, armed groups on all sides frequently seek to manipulate humanitarian interventions to their own benefit, as seen in the case of Liberia. Chapter 9 discusses the politics of migration, focusing especially on migration within the continent but also looking at the smaller numbers of Africans who migrate to other regions. The responses by African states often reflect regime interests, with leaders portraying migrants as a security threat and scapegoating them for economic problems. Meanwhile, African governments have sought to cultivate political and economic support from their own diaspora communities. Migration—both internal and external—has been central to the history of South Africa, as examined in this chapter's case study.

In Part 4 we turn to Africa's relations with external actors. Chapter 10 takes up the essential question of US policies in Africa and the relations that have resulted from them. Because of the nature of foreign policy making and the low prioritization of the region, US policy toward Africa tends to change only marginally from one presidential administration to another, as shown by an examination of various recent economic and security initiatives. It is typically only in crisis situations that Africa attracts high-level US attention, as with Somalia in the early 1990s and again more recently, but such attention does not necessarily benefit the target country. Relations between Europe and Africa are studied in Chapter 11. Former colonial powers have had complicated relations with African countries since independence. France has remained the most involved with its former colonies, often working to protect the regime security of its clients in the region. This has had long-term political implications, both within France and in countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, as explored in the case study. Chapter 12 examines Africa's international relations with emergent powers around the world, and China in particular. Other non-European powers with new or renewed interests in Africa include Brazil, India, Iran, and Turkey, among others. While these rising powers have provided African states with new sources of foreign aid and loans, contributing to a wave of

infrastructure projects across the continent, their emphasis on economics over politics and relative lack of attention to democracy, human rights, and corruption have prompted criticism from human rights activists and growing political debate in countries such as Zambia.

In Part 5 we conclude the volume with a reflection on how domestic politics and international relations are intertwined for African states and people and a summation of key themes. All African regimes, even the more authoritarian ones, want to maintain their domestic legitimacy as a high priority. To do so, they strive to provide citizens with physical security, economic well-being, and a sense of national identity and purpose. Interstate wars in Africa have been rare, but cross-border support for rebel groups is all too common; these have threatened both African regimes and local communities. Many African regimes have tried to mitigate these risks through connections with extra-continental powers, including the United States, former colonizers, and more recently China. African regimes likewise look for markets in the larger global environment, improving their prospects for delivering economic sustenance to their people. Finally, Africans are no different from others in defining themselves in relation to others. Internally, identity politics have been salient in the African regimes that have opened their politics to political competition. In their international relations, too, Africans often have defined themselves in contradistinction with their neighbors, both near and distant. African regimes have used the construction of national identities, achieved through their rhetoric about the nature of the outside world, as an indispensable tool for the maintenance of legitimacy and power.

## Notes

1. By contrast, it is striking how the questions of Palestine and the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories have dominated the international relations of the Middle East since 1948. Although other political questions regarding the Middle East have surely been of great interest to the international community in the past seven decades, the failure to resolve this central question has given the study of the region a comparably more stable focus.

2. The five states of North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt) are often treated as part of the Middle East. In this book, we focus on the forty-nine states of sub-Saharan Africa, while occasionally alluding to North African states. Unless otherwise noted, we use the label "Africa" to refer to sub-Saharan Africa.

3. The former of this pair enjoys *de facto* autonomy from any external control, whereas the latter is controlled by Morocco.

4. We have no single overriding political agenda, but we are acutely aware that many observers of Africa begin with strong ideological and intellectual convictions.

5. For a particularly trenchant critique of Morgenthau's use of the concept "balance of power," see Claude 1962: chaps. 2–3.



6. For instance, this is true for the clashes between Libya and Chad beginning in 1978, the Tanzania-Uganda war of 1979, the Ethiopia-Somalia war of 1977–1978, and the Eritrea-Ethiopia war of 1998–2000.

7. Two of these states (Gambia and Zimbabwe) subsequently devolved into authoritarian states.

8. Virtually all the cognoscenti in these epistemological debates will object to the exceedingly brief characterizations and labels of their schools of thought mentioned here; most of the terms associated with constructivism in IR, not to mention the meanings of positivism and especially post-structuralism, are highly contested and endlessly debated.

9. Neo-Marxists with a material focus also go under more generic labels such as “economic radicals” or “globalists,” and those with a focus on the repressive power of ideas are usually called “critical theorists.” We find the label that draws attention to Marx’s original critique of capitalism (“neo-Marxist”) as a system most useful and descriptive of the set, though we sometimes use the shorthand “radical” in the text.

10. “Terms of trade” refers to the relative value of commodities (including minerals, oil, and cash crops, like cotton) versus the value of manufactured goods. The claim of dependency theorists was that the relative value of commodities was in perpetual decline, trapping developing countries in a cycle of receiving ever less income for ever more commodity production.

11. Despite the severe impact of the Great Recession in Western Europe and the United States, gross world production declined in just one year, 2009, and then only by less than 1 percent.

12. This classic work, whatever its shortcomings and misperceptions, is one of the most widely read texts on the sources of Africa’s underdevelopment in anglo-phone Africa, particularly in university settings.