

**ТЕМАТИЧЕСКОЕ ДОСЬЕ:  
Декolonизация, неокolonизм и реколонизация:  
к 60-летию Года Африки**

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*Research article*

**The Cold War and Africa's Political Culture\***

**K. Kalu**

Ted Rogers School of Management, Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada

**Abstract.** Leadership and political systems in most of Africa have been described in several negative ways. Paternalism, clientelism, dictatorship, corruption and such pejorative labels have been used to describe the type of politics prevalent in most of Africa today. A number of studies have explained Africa's political challenges in the context of the choices of postcolonial African leaders. Others have pointed to European colonial exploitation and its destructive legacies as the foundations of the perverse political culture that define contemporary Africa. While these factors play important roles in defining the type of politics that has endured in the continent during the past half century, this paper takes a look at another epoch that had significant impacts on Africa's political culture.

The paper argues that the foreign policies of the United States and USSR — two major actors in Africa during the Cold War — had some of the most significant impacts on the political culture that evolved in postcolonial Africa. In pursuit of ideological supremacy, these foreign actors focused on undermining each other, with little consideration on how their actions in Africa were shaping the continent's political development. By providing military support to opposing forces in African countries, the Cold War actors institutionalized a violent political culture in postcolonial Africa.

**Key words:** Africa, Cold War, colonialism, USA, USSR, foreign policy, politics

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## Холодная война и политическая культура Африки

К. Калу

Школа менеджмента Теда Роджерса, Университет Райерсон, Торонто, Канада

Лидерство и политические системы в большинстве стран Африки описываются, как правило, в негативном ключе. Патернализм, клиентелизм, диктатура, коррупция и подобные уничижительные ярлыки используются для описания политических практик, получивших распространение в большинстве стран Африки сегодня. В ряде исследований политические проблемы Африки объясняются в контексте выбора постколониальных африканских лидеров. Другие исследователи указывают на европейскую колониальную эксплуатацию и ее разрушительное наследие как основы порочной политической культуры, определяющей современную Африку. Хотя эти факторы играют важную роль в определении типа политики, которая проводилась на континенте в течение последних 60 лет, в данной статье рассматривается еще одна эпоха, которая оказала значительное влияние на политическую культуру современной Африки.

В статье показано, что внешняя политика Соединенных Штатов и СССР — двух основных действующих лиц в Африке во время холодной войны — также оказала значительное влияние на политическую культуру, сложившуюся в постколониальной Африке. Стремясь к идеологическому превосходству, эти внешние акторы сосредоточились на том, чтобы подрывать влияние друг друга, и мало думали о том, как их действия в Африке формируют политическое развитие континента. Предоставляя военную поддержку противостоящим силам в африканских странах, участники холодной войны институционализировали насильственную политическую культуру в постколониальной Африке.

**Ключевые слова:** Африка, холодная война, колониализм, США, СССР, внешняя политика, политика

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### Introduction

Several African countries have been embroiled in economic and political challenges throughout most of the postcolonial period. Although Africa's nationalists who fought for independence from European imperialists had assumed that political independence would generate political, economic and social stability for Africans, current evidence shows that the expected gains from self-government have been a mirage. The results of Africa's almost perennial economic and political struggles have been poverty and destitution, with the region gaining the unenviable position as the poverty capital of the world<sup>1</sup>. Several studies have examined some of the causes of the continent's woes, with many pointing at an institutional explanation, implicating a unique political and

leadership culture that has been anti-development [Acemoglu, Johnson, Robinson 2001; Kalu 2017].

Leadership and political systems in most of Africa have been described in several negative ways. Paternalism, clientelism, dictatorship, corruption and other such pejorative labels are often used to describe the type of politics prevalent in most of Africa today [Osaghae 2006; Adebaniwi, Obadare 2013; Falola 2016]. These negative descriptions connote a system that has failed to create the environment for citizens to thrive. Existing economic and political institutions have excluded majority of the citizens from playing meaningful roles in the economic and political affairs of their respective states, and have brought poverty and destitution in the general population. Similarly, a number of studies have explained Africa's perverse political arrangements on the characters and personalities of the leaders who have ruled the continent since the 1960s. For example, David Wallechinsky documents some of the world's leading dictators

<sup>1</sup> Accelerating Poverty Reduction in Africa: In five charts // World Bank. 2019. URL: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/afrr/publication/accelerating-poverty-reduction-in-africa-in-five-charts> (accessed: 17.02.2020).

as at 2006, with majority of them being African leaders [Wallechinsky 2006]. Other scholars have pointed to European colonial exploitation and its destructive legacies as the original foundations of the perverse political culture that define contemporary Africa [Acemoglu, Johnson, Robinson 2001; Acemoglu, Robinson 2010].

In this regard, colonialism have been implicated for creating extractive institutions in the continent, as all organs of the colonial state were designed as instruments of exploitation during the colonial period. Unfortunately, the instruments of exploitation such as the colonial Police Force, the bureaucracy, and the entire political system remained the same after colonial rule. The result of retaining the colonial political structures has been continuation of bad governance records that create conditions for poverty and instability in most of the continent. This paper focuses on another important era — the Cold War. The paper argues that intrigues of the Cold War, specifically the activities of the major Cold War actors, had significant influence on the political culture that evolved in postcolonial Africa.

The Cold War (1945 to 1991) can be seen as a period of intense battle for ideological supremacy between proponents of free market led by the United States, and the forces of communism led by the old Soviet Union [Westad 2007]. The foreign policies of these major actors towards Africa had important impacts on the political culture that evolved in the continent. Specifically, through financial and military support provided to domestic actors in African countries, the major Cold War actors helped to create and sustain crises that would eventually become a permanent feature of Africa's politics [Kalu 2018].

Suri [2006] rightly isolated two distinguishable strands of literature on the Cold War and international relations at the end of the Second World War. The first strand of literature argues that the Cold War had a tremendous impact on foreign relations and the global political economy. To this end, American foreign policy during the Cold War is seen as some form of continuation of imperialism on several respects [McCormick 1995; Grandin 2004].

According to this view, the major Cold War actors — the free market ideologues led by the United States and its Western allies; and the Soviet Union with its allies who were inspired by communism — played the most important roles in shaping international relations and the global political economy shortly after the Second World War.

On the other hand, the second strand of argument contends that the place of the Cold War in the global system often give undue primacy to the United States and Europe, and in the process, undermines the critical contributions of local actors in places like Africa, Asia, and Latin America [Chakrabarty 2000; Connelly 2000]. According to this argument, it is important to equally emphasize the contributions of the nationalist movements in Africa and in other parts of the developing world, because the actions and sacrifices of these non-Western actors had significant impacts on the decolonization process.

Recent studies have also explored international relations and foreign policy in non-Western nations. For example, Yasmin [2019] examines how international relations have evolved in Bangladesh during the past several years, and notes that the developmental strides made by Bangladesh have contributed to the rising significance of the country after its unpleasant experiences during the Cold War.

This paper argues that given the precarious place of Africa within the global political economy in 1945, and up to the present, most of Africa had been and continue to be at the receiving end in terms of policy directions from advanced countries who are often providers of loans and development aid, buyers of Africa's commodities, sources of supply for industrial goods, and providers of technical/policy assistance to the continent. In effect, while one cannot discount the contributions and sacrifices of domestic actors in the fight for independence, political and economic development in African states were defined, in large parts, by a constellation of external forces. The rest of this paper proceeds as follows: the next section presents an overview of the influence of foreign actors on Africa's political development during

the periods of Atlantic slave trade and colonial rule. Section 3 focuses on how the Cold War shaped Africa's decolonization as well as the political culture that evolved in Africa. Section 4 concludes the paper.

### **Foreign Actors and Africa's Political Development**

Africa has always been integrated into the global political economy in one form or another. Prior to colonial rule, Africa's main routes of engagements with the rest of the world was through Atlantic slave trade. During the period of Atlantic slave trade, Africans were grossly exploited, as millions of Africans were sold to slave merchants in some of the most inhuman conditions [Lovejoy 2000; Manning 1990]. The literature on Atlantic slave trade is very clear on the negative effects of slavery on Africa's economic and political development [Inikori 2000].

Besides its negative impacts on Africa's economy, slavery created a unique culture and sociology that continues to hinder Africa's development [Kalu 2017]. For example, similar to the master-servant mentality which existed during the period of slave trade, in contemporary Africa the principle of accountability is often lacking in the worldview of many political leaders [Wallechinsky 2006; Adebaw, Obadare, 2013].

This reality means that the citizens are most times treated as slaves or servants by the political leaders who control the instruments of power. It is important to acknowledge that changes are taking place across the continent, with enhancements in democratic accountability as many countries have embraced regular elections. However, even the frequency of democratic elections has not yet produced real transparency in the political process, leading N. van der Walle [2003] to conclude that the institutionalization of democratic elections across many African states have not yet produced liberal democracies.

At the end of Atlantic slave trade, African societies entered yet another era of exploitation through European colonial rule. Following a self-styled mission to bring civilization to the “dark

continent”, European colonial masters invaded most of Africa beginning in the early 19th century. At the Berlin Conference of 1844–1845, European imperialists divided up African societies to contending colonial powers for the economic interest of Europe. Like Atlantic slave trade, colonialism was another dark history of exploitation, as the colonial enterprise was designed to exploit Africa's natural resources to feed Europe's industrial needs of that era [Young 1994; Reid 2012]. Although, imperial Europe argued that colonialism carried a “dual mandate” to develop the colonies and to create economic benefits for the metropole, in reality, colonialism represented exploitation of Africa's resources [Rodney 1981; Acemoglu, Johnson, Robinson 2001].

It is important to acknowledge that different colonial powers such as Britain, France, Portugal, and others had different systems of colonial administration. However, all forms of European colonial rule entailed exploitation of Africa for the benefits of the colonial powers. Any ancillary benefits that accrued to African societies were merely secondary and can be contextualized as externalities that arose as the colonialists worked to satisfy Europe's interests. For example, the railways built in parts of the continent by colonial administration were basically designed to facilitate the transportation of commodities produced in the hinterland to the nearest coastal city for onward shipment to Europe [Reid 2012]. In the same vein, Western education that was introduced in Africa during colonial rule were essentially meant to train a few Africans on the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic, so that these Africans could work for the colonial government as junior clerical assistants.

Colonialism brought dislocation, as it made it impossible for African societies to follow its own natural growth and development path. In addition, the artificial bifurcation of African societies by European imperialists with no regards to the histories and cultures of the people meant that colonialism created permanent damage on the people. Perhaps one of the enduring legacies of colonial rule is the type of political and economic institutions it created in

the continent. From King Leopold's Belgium, to British West Africa; and from the assimilation experimentation of colonial France to Italy's fascism in its African colonies, colonialism created a system of government where government machinery primarily served the interests of the colonialists.

In a seminal paper, Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson [2001] examined the colonial origins of comparative development. They conclude that European colonial administration created extractive institutions in African societies, and these institutions which focus on sapping resources away from the system and for the enjoyment of a few, cannot produce broad-based economic development. This is because extractive institutions are not inclusive — they do not create opportunities for the general population to participate gainfully in the economy and politics of the society. Because colonial administration was all about satisfying the interests of the colonial masters, the governance system put in place, as well as the economic system that endured during the colonial period were extractive in nature. Unfortunately, as Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson [2001] argue, these institutions persisted in African societies even after the end of the colonial rule.

By putting in place political and economic institutions that cannot bring about broad-based economic development, colonialism created permanent dysfunctions in African societies. Although colonial apologist may argue that colonialism brought about modern systems of government and bureaucracy to Africa, the reality is that these institutions were not necessarily good for the African society at that time. The government system bequeathed to African countries at the time of independence was a classic study in exclusionary politics. In many African countries, only few Africans had received Western education at the time of independence. Because elections and government bureaucracy were run in the colonizers' language, only those who had received Western education were able to play. What this means is that the governance arrangements introduced in African colonies

were exclusionary, as it excluded majority of the citizens from playing active roles in the political economy.

### **Africa's Political Culture in the Cold War Era**

In their seminal work, Almond and Verba define political culture as “the particular distribution of patterns of orientation toward political objects among the members of the nation” [Almond, Verba 1963/1965: 13]. Based on this definition, one sees that political culture is connected with the feelings, responses, and attitudes of the citizens to the politics of their society. Because citizens hold different views and orientations towards political objects, we have different political cultures in different societies. Almond and Verba identify the typology of subcultures within a political culture to include those based on orientation towards the system in general, output/performance of political subjects, as well as those based on the role of the self in the political system [Denk, Christensen, Bergh 2015]. A measure of how politics is played in a given society and/or how citizens react to political issues gives a simple description of the political culture in that society. Therefore, we may have different descriptions of sub-cultures, such as *participation culture*, which reflects the general attitude of citizens towards the political affairs of their society, or *service culture*, which shows the orientation of political leaders towards providing services to the citizens, among others.

As the discussion in the previous section shows, African countries embraced or were forced to embrace Western political system at the time of political independence. A major challenge with the political system at that time was that majority of African citizens were not familiar with the Western democratic form. One consequence of this, is that the political actors were few and the political space was not really open to majority of the citizens. Therefore, from the inception, Africa's political system was exclusionary. It was exclusionary because the concept of democratic elections was foreign — based on the colonial powers' conception of

government and its language was foreign as well, because politics and governance were conducted mainly in the colonial-imposed “official language” of the respective colonies. Although the nationalist leaders made attempt to educate the citizens and garner grassroots support, in reality, major political leadership positions were not open to those who had not received some form of Western education.

One must acknowledge that a citizen does not necessarily have to contest for political office in order to be an active participant in the political process. However, an open and inclusive political system grants every citizen the opportunity to aspire to the highest political office of the land. But the political space in the immediate postcolonial era did not grant such opportunity to majority of Africans. It has been suggested that the foundations of exclusionary politics, where only the elite had the privilege to run for political positions created an environment conducive for dictatorship, as those with political powers felt they were superior to the citizens to whom they should otherwise be answerable [Kalu, Yacob-Haliso, Falola 2018].

The roles played by Africa’s nationalists in the independence struggles and decolonization processes are well documented in the literature [Reid 2012; Falola 2016]. It must be emphasized though that Africa’s independence movements took on a different and expanded dimension after the Second World War. The establishment of the United Nations, with the mandate to create a more peaceful world brought about a new world order. Terms like the principles of self-government and self-determination — that stand in contrasts to imperialism — began to gain currency in global discourses.

During the Cold War, the two major actors in the ideological warfare, focused on ensuring that the opposing force did not have an upper hand or did not succeed in spreading its ideology in African countries. In pursuit of these objective, the two major Cold War actors began to take more than passive interest in African countries, with different forms of aids and grants flowing into these countries. The United States provided support to African leaders who were seen as being sympathetic to free market ideas.

On the other hand, USSR, and to some extent, China and Cuba provided different forms of aids to African nationalists who were sympathetic to communism. It was in pursuit of these ideological battle that USSR extended assistance to nationalist movements in Algeria, Angola, Congo, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Mali and Mozambique, among others [Schmidt 2013].

Through the flow of financial and other material support, as well as training and scholarship, the major actors in the Cold War brought significant changes to Africa’s politics and nationalist movements. In some way, these foreign actors altered the trajectories of Africa’s nationalist movements, as they brought in foreign support, often in a competitive manner with one actor competing to outdo the other. While these changes may have facilitated Africa’s decolonization, concerns for economic and ideological domination by the superpowers turned Africa into a center for a proxy war. With financial and organizational support, the nationalists became more effective at home, and with the constellation of global forces against colonialism, the imperialists knew that the end of colonialism was near.

In all of the changes, Africa’s nationalists were not free to choose their own path to modernity or self-government, rather the major Cold War actors were preoccupied with promoting their respective ideologies to the independence movements. Consequently, nationalist leaders who were seen to be sympathetic to free market principles would receive unconditional support from the United States, while those seen as embracing or sympathetic to communism would be despised by the United States and its allies, but embraced by Communist Russia and its own allies. When this dynamic of contest between the two Cold War actors is viewed from the standpoint that African states were just emerging from decades of colonial exploitation with little or no financial resources, one can see the vulnerability of these countries. In some way, African countries and the nationalists were like commodities available to be bought with financial and military support from the United States and its Western allies or from USSR and its communist followers.

Perhaps the most enduring impact of the Cold War on Africa is not necessarily the financial and material support provided to the nationalist movements, nor its effects in quickening the independence process. Activities of the major Cold War actors in Africa laid the foundation for a violent political culture in the continent. The supply of arms to African countries by the major Cold War actors led to intensified crises, violence, and avoidable civil wars. According to Schmidt, “from Kennedy through the Nixon administrations, American weapons, tanks, planes, ships, helicopters, napalm, and chemical defoliants were used against Africans in the Portuguese colonies...” [Schmidt 2013: 82], because the Portuguese colonies were seen as being more inclined to communist ideals. This was not restricted to the Portuguese colonies, but was the case in many countries where the American government felt that domestic actors may be receiving support from Soviet Union and its allies.

By providing arms as well as direct military interventions, the Cold War actors militarized African countries. For emerging nations suffering from series of exploitations, weak foundations and exclusionary politics, one can imagine the damage caused by militarization of the political space at that early stage of Africa’s attempt at self-government. Like colonial administration which created extractive and anti-development institutions in African colonies, the Cold War actors institutionalized a violent political culture that became a prelude to dictatorship, persistent crises and civil wars.

While assisting African nationalist movements to push for and gain political independence, the Cold War actors precipitated increased conflicts, especially by providing arms to state and non-state actors alike. In the process, the Cold War created an environment for social and political instability in Africa — a situation that does not make for sustained economic and political development. Instead of bringing stability, political independence heralded more conflicts, wars, banditry and general crisis in the continent. However, one must note that the United States and USSR, with their respective

allies, did not set out to create violent conflicts in Africa. Rather the pursuits of their respective ideological interests led to the supply of funds and military hardware to these countries, and unfortunately created the negative externality represented in increased violence, crises, civil wars and a violent political culture in general. For example, between 1960 and 1970 (the first decade of political independence for some African countries), the continent experienced 27 military coup d’états that led to change of government, and 12 failed coup attempts, making a total of 37 military coup [Barka, Ncube 2012].

While one may not blame the Cold War for all the troubles in the continent, activities of the major actors had significant impacts on the evolution of Africa’s political culture. In a number of African countries, it was common to see two opposing political factions, with one group receiving support from the United States and the other from Soviet Union or its allies. The grooming of political actors sympathetic to America was a major foreign policy strategy of the United States during the Cold War. In many ways, this strategy had significant negative effects on Africa’s political evolution. While no attempt is made to blame foreign actors for all the political problems in the African continent, one cannot discount the overwhelming influence of foreign actors in Africa’s history and political economy. The Cold War was simply one of the many moments in world history where global events had debilitating impacts on Africa’s development.

While engaged in an intense ideological warfare, the United States and USSR and their allies paid little or no attention to what should have mattered most to African societies at the time of decolonization. The Cold War should have been a time for the world to develop strategies to dismantle the weak political and economic foundations to which colonial Europe had dragged African societies using colonial policies that treated Africans as subjects, and not citizens. Just like the Marshal Plan, which the United States used to rebuild Europe following the devastation of the Second World War, foreign policy towards Africa should have

focused on how to rebuild the continent from the ruins of colonialism and how to create inclusive economic and political spaces in African countries.

The principle of self-determination should have entailed giving the new independent countries an opportunity to organically develop on their own terms and create their own unique paths to modernity and progress. Global forces should have rallied around Africans to preach peace and stability instead of war and destabilization; and to emphasize inclusive political space instead of a political culture characterized by violence and wars. Unfortunately, as the world missed that opportunity, Africa became a site for proxy wars between the two superpowers and their allies [O'Sullivan 2005], causing permanent damage to an already weak political and economic system.

With the imminent end to formal colonial rule, the United States was apprehensive of Soviet Union's role in Africa, as America expressed fears that USSR may entice the newly independent African states to embrace communist ideas. Consequently, the United States government focused on strategies to ensure that African states did not gravitate towards communism.

Pandering to fears of imminent indoctrination of African states into communism, President J.F. Kennedy made the following statements in 1961: "We live in a world which has changed tremendously in our lifetime — history only will secure a full perspective on that change. But there is Africa, which was held by Western European powers for several centuries, now independent — which holds within its countries masses of people, many of them illiterate, who live on average incomes of 50 or 60 or 75 dollars a year, who want a change, who now are the masters of their own house but who lack the means of building a viable economy, who are impressed by the example of the Soviet Union and the Chinese, who — not knowing the meaning of freedom in their lives — wonder whether the Communist system holds the secrets

of organizing the resources of the state in order to bring them a better life"<sup>2</sup>.

The foreign policy of the United States during the Cold War focused on advancing America's free market ideology only, and ignored the preferences of Africans. In effect, it did not matter whether majority of African citizens perceptibly prefer socialist ideas, but what was more important was what America wanted for Africa. In a way, intrigues of the Cold War meant that for African countries, it was either America's ways or nothing. Ironically, while presenting itself as the land of the free and vanguard of self-determination, the American government seem not to have realized that it was in the spirit of freedom to allow countries, especially newly independent countries, to choose their own path to progress and modernity. With time, African leaders realized that American foreign policy during the Cold War was not necessarily premised on promoting Africa's long-term interests despite the grants and aid provided by the American government, and despite the rhetoric of freedom and self-determination<sup>3</sup>. With the realization that America was primarily promoting its ideology over the long-term stability of African countries, many African leaders developed apprehension and distrust to the Western forces. However, the enormous cost of building their new nations and the challenges of poverty left African countries with little option than to continue to go to foreign actors for loans and foreign aid.

## Conclusion

At the end of the Second World War, a number of forces combined to weaken the future of colonial rule. The devastation that Europe

<sup>2</sup> John F. Kennedy Special Message to Congress on Foreign Aid. March 22, 1961 // Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States. Vol. 1. P. 340—343 [Westad 2007: 134—135].

<sup>3</sup> It is important to state here that the United States government believed that free market principles were in the best interest of African societies. Perhaps the problem was the mode of projecting the idea of free market, such as arming domestic forces that were sympathetic to free markets and against communist ideals.

suffered during the war, the establishment of the United Nations, and the emerging rhetoric of freedom and self-determination, all combined to make colonial rule out of tune with the global reality of that time. As colonial rule was gradually coming to end in Africa, the two major ideological superpowers of that era — the United States and USSR with their respective allies — saw an opportunity to inculcate their respective ideologies on African nations. While the United States and its Western allies promoted free market principles and democratic governance, Soviet Union preached communism. Apart from spreading free market ideas to Africa, the United States also wanted to make inroads into Africa's economies and markets. In the same vein, the then USSR and its allies were interested in spreading communist ideas in the newly emerging African nations. In the views of Soviet Union, Africa's struggles against colonialism as well as the struggles of liberation by other Third World populations were natural tenets of communism. Perhaps the United States and USSR believed that Africa would be better off embracing the free market principles or communism, respectively. However, the challenge with the activities of each of these forces was in the intensity of the pursuits and the mode of engagements with African domestic actors. The United States and its allies provided financial and military supports to domestic actors who were considered loyal to America's interests and ideologies and who were fighting communist forces. On the other hand, Soviet Russia and its allies provided support to those other actors that were not supported by the United States. It was therefore common to see opposing forces within one African country that were supported by different international actors.

Generally, international relations during the Cold War were dominated by ideological contests between the superpowers. In Africa, the foreign actors were focused on undermining each other, with little consideration on how foreign actions were shaping the fragile nations. While many African countries had access to finance and military support of one or all the opposing Cold War actors, the continent suffered long

term defects due to a convoluted political development process. The activities of the major Cold War actors laid the foundation for violent political culture and institutions in African states. By providing military support to opposing forces in the region, the Cold War actors in some way institutionalized the use of force in Africa's political process. Given that African countries were already struggling to adapt to the "foreign" political system imposed on the continent by imperial Europe, the United States and USSR created additional layer of problem through "ideology-driven support" to domestic forces. The financial and military support provided to domestic forces — from either side of the divide — created tensions, led to more conflicts and civil wars, and eventually laid the foundations for a violent political culture in many African countries. Perhaps without the activities of the Cold War actors, the protracted wars in Algeria between 1954 and 1962, and the conflict in the Congo that ousted Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba in 1960 and that installed one of Africa's worst dictators would have been avoided.

Africa's political independence should have been an opportunity for the world to support the continent to dismantle the exploitative institutions and legacies of colonialism, to help African societies develop its own economic and political systems, and to support the continent to carve its own path to progress and modernity. Unfortunately, the contest of ideological supremacy blinded the major Cold War actors to what was most important for Africans at that time — orchestrating organic growth and development that is supported by inclusive political and economic systems.

By creating an environment for violent political culture, the Cold War actors made Africa's decolonization and political independence less meaningful. Perhaps the persistent crises, civil wars and general political instability that have come to define postcolonial Africa could have been avoided or at least reduced, had the world focused on how to assist African states to create and follow their own path to progress. During the Cold War, American foreign policy

was anchored on the principle of: “my enemy’s enemy is my friend” and vice versa [Westad 2007: 399]. This was certainly not the right way to promote self-determination, but was a highway to create more real and perceived enemies, and to stoke up crises instead of building stable and peaceful societies.

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**About the author:** *Kalu Kenneth* — PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Global Management, Ted Rogers School of Management, Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada (e-mail: [kenneth.kalu@ryerson.ca](mailto:kenneth.kalu@ryerson.ca)).

**Сведения об авторе:** *Калу Кеннет* — доктор философии, доцент, департамент глобального менеджмента, Школа менеджмента Теда Роджерса, Университет Райерсон, Торонто, Канада (e-mail: [kenneth.kalu@ryerson.ca](mailto:kenneth.kalu@ryerson.ca)).