

# Guest Editor's Introduction

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St. Mary's College of Maryland, USA



This is a timely volume highlighting the changing international system. Recall the world system of most of the last century. The system of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century was destroyed after World War II. One of the major international powers, Germany, lost the war. The racist German state was occupied, with its lost territories. Two of the victorious states, the United Kingdom and France, suffered great losses. The former withstood and repelled attacks primarily by air. The latter state was occupied by the Axis Powers. The war ended in 1945. The new system became apparent a few years after the war in 1947. The international system was characterized by conflict between free market countries led by the United States and the Communists led by the Soviet Union and after 1949 joined by the People's Republic of China. The United States was the major victor of the war. The era was called the Cold War.

The decolonization of most African countries occurred in the first few decades of the Cold War. The independence struggles were primarily against the United Kingdom and France. The Second World War was critical in weakening the colonizing states. The article on Nkrumah discusses a period early in the Cold War. Ghana was one of the first African states to win its independence. It was soon recognized that the new states would face unanticipated economic constraints. With the departure of the metropolises, the new states found themselves with an underdeveloped infrastructure. The boundaries of the Africa states were determined in this period. The articles on Nigeria are informed by decisions made at this point in time. The Nigerian boundaries contained large oil fields and it is less well known that large sources of rare earth minerals are within these boundaries.

Advances in civil rights within the United States occurred in the first half of the Cold War. A contributing factor was the liberation of African territories in this early period. The political movements in Africa aided American actors by providing verbal support and demonstrating that blatant forms of inequality could be overthrown. The presence of African diplomats in the United States also put pressure on American administrations to make changes. Within the United States, the major legislative achievements occurred in the first half of the Cold War. Often mentioned is the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Less often mentioned is the Fair Housing Act of 1968. This act restricts discrimination in housing on race, religion and other characteristics. The housing market collapsed in 2008 with the Great Recession. The article on housing and Afro-Latinos/as contributes to our understanding of this period.

The period after the Cold War began in 1992. This is the period after the fall of the Soviet Union. It is characterized by world dominance of the United States. It is sometimes called the unipolar moment. The dominance of a single power meant there were no living examples of an alternative economic structure. It appeared that only market-based economies were likely to prosper. The articles on Nigerian youth and climate justice are within this period. These two

papers show the effects of the period on single states. The article on Frazier's teachings and the policies of the Obama administration analyze events late in the unipolar moment. The paper on the new structural economics from 1995 to 2020 shows broad characteristics of the system. It works as a case study of the economics of the period.

There is a paper conducting an imaginative general analysis of the American system. The paper on the Diectic Fractal Analysis looks for broad features of the American political world.

There is also a general sense that we are leaving the period identified as the unipolar moment, but there is no agreed upon date. Possibly the beginning of the Russian-Ukraine War in February of 2022 marks the end of the unipolar moment. We see the rise of China, the importance of states outside of the central system. The African Union, for example, is part of the G20 states. We see the Western powers succeeding in some places, but not universally as would be expected if one state was dominant.

Overall, the volume looks at various features of the world after the Second World War. Some papers look at the broad international features. Some look at the direct domestic consequences of the period. The papers contribute to our understanding of both African politics and the world system.