

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In 2020 we are beginning what we hope will become a new tradition, the guest editorial. The *African Studies Review* has an enormous reach, and we seek to expand this audience by offering a podium for our editors and editorial board members to share some of their thoughts and concerns. I'm delighted this issue begins with a thoughtful reflection on perhaps the greatest challenge of our time, climate change, and what we as Africanists can do about it, by our editor Benjamin Talton.

The Climate Crisis: The Challenge for A New African Consensus

In 2019, Mozambicans endured two devastating cyclones within a span of five weeks. Both storms hovered nearly stationary for days and left historic floods in their wake. The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees reported that the storms internally displaced 146,000 people, leaving 1.85 million in need of humanitarian assistance.

Following a worldwide spike in extreme climate events in recent decades, Africa has experienced some of the world's most intense climate extremes, including heat waves, floods, and intense storms, as recent events in Mozambique highlight, which have contributed to droughts, crop failures, and displacement. In 2017 alone, climate shocks displaced over 68 million people globally, a figure higher than in any previous year. Yet, international law does not recognize the refugee status of those displaced by climate crises. The rising number of "climate refugees" with little to no legal recourse within their own countries and no legal right to asylum abroad are among the increasingly urgent ramifications of the climate crisis.

The dangerously high carbon emissions that contribute to climate change and precipitate climate shocks are well beyond the control of African leaders. Indeed, they reflect the detrimental global economic and political imbalance that has left the people of the poorer nations of the world literally dying as a direct consequence of wealthier nations' long history of privileging economic growth over good stewardship of the environment. The recent

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2019 United Nations Emissions Gap Report reminds us that the world's 20 richest countries are responsible for more than three-fourths of worldwide emissions, whereas African nations collectively account for little more than 3 percent of global emissions.

How might stakeholders mitigate the effects of the climate crisis, address its causes, and ensure that individuals, communities, and governments are prepared to adapt to the social, environmental, and economic changes that the worsening crisis will undoubtedly bring? Ideally, climate refugees and the foreboding size and growing regularity of "irregular" climate events in Africa will galvanize collective action beyond policymakers and scientists, to include artists, activists, and scholars in the humanities and social sciences. But this will only happen with increased awareness. The enormity of the climate crisis for Africa's present and future means we must confront it as the consensus priority in African affairs.

The integral role of African leaders in ending white-minority rule in southern Africa, namely Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa, which became the consensus African affairs priority during the 1970s and 1980s, demonstrates how current leaders, artists, and scholars might join together to shift the dominant paradigm on the climate crisis. The global movement against white-minority rule in southern Africa provides an important lesson in economic and political solidarity and its capacity to foment course-shifting changes in global relations.

Like the climate crisis, white-minority rule in southern Africa was generally accepted in the West as the status quo, until a consensus emerged from within the continent against imperialism that clearly defined the moral lines. Given Zambia, Tanzania, and, after 1980, Zimbabwe's proximity to white-minority ruled South Africa, it was natural for those countries to lead in providing military and political assistance to the African National Congress's military campaigns. But ending Portuguese rule, until 1975, and then white-minority rule in South Africa and Rhodesia were the consensus foreign affairs issues among African leaders throughout much of the continent, global south, and among African Americans. It took African political leaders, artists, and intellectual allies during the 1970s and 1980s to redefine the narrative on white-minority rule in Africa through their savvy use of protest, the media, and coalition building.

In the spirit of the African consensus, then-president Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria expressed unequivocal faith in the capacity for African self-determination in the absence of white supremacy on the continent during a visit to the United States in October of 1977. Speaking before students at Howard University, he called on black Americans to use their lobbying power to push their government to sever ties to the "illegal governments" in southern Africa. "There is no greater area for this lobby than the explosive situation in southern Africa," he said. He again drew attention to southern Africa during his speech to the United Nations General Assembly.

Fidel Castro's stance against South Africa's incursions into neighboring countries and his opposition to U.S. support for white-minority regimes in

southern Africa reflects the breadth of the consensus on Africa at the time. In 1966 at the Tricontinental Conference in Havana, Cuba, Castro outlined the consensus that southern Africa represented white supremacy's final stand in Africa. "What the peoples have most in common to unite the people of three continents and all of the world today is the struggle against imperialism," he said.

This rising chorus of condemnation of white-minority rule in southern Africa compelled white political leaders in Europe and North America to re-evaluate their policies, positions, and relationships with the remaining racist regimes on the continent. When U.S. president Jimmy Carter traveled to Nigeria and Ghana in March of 1978, the first state visit by a sitting U.S. president to a "black African" country, as it was presented at the time, he expressed his unequivocal opposition to apartheid in South Africa. In Accra's National Theatre, Carter said that he had warned the South African government "that future relations depend on ending discriminations against that nation's majority of blacks." He described his policy toward southern Africa as built on majority rule, economic growth, and human development, and insisted that Africa must be "free from colonialism, racism, and military interference by outside nations." Carter's position marked a major policy shift, which can be credited to the activism and lobbying of those African Americans who had embraced the Africa consensus. It is worth noting, however, that President Ronald Reagan shifted U.S. policy toward South Africa dramatically back toward aligning with the apartheid regime during the 1980s.

A coterie of Caribbean political leaders, activists, and intellectuals, in addition to Castro, elevated events in southern Africa during the 1970s and 1980s as consensus issues for African affairs. During the 1980s, Michael Manley, former prime minister of Jamaica, criticized President Ronald Reagan's close ties to the white South African regime and his policies toward Angola, Namibia, and Mozambique. A particularly thorny issue for Manley was Reagan's effort to force Angola to expel Cuban soldiers and military advisors. Namibia's right to political autonomy, he argued, had been universally acknowledged as fact. "The entire world community agrees that South Africa's occupation of the country is illegal, to say nothing of immoral and unwarranted," he wrote in 1982. The Cubans stood in the way of South Africa's expanding white dominance north to Luanda, the Angolan capital. "If this invasion had succeeded, South Africa's racist dominance would have extended itself a thousand miles north completely altering the balance of forces in the region in favour of South Africa."

Manley's challenge did not change Reagan's approach to southern Africa. But his efforts were an essential part of the attempt to shape the global political narrative toward and build solidarity around ending white rule by adding to the pressure for European and North American powers to economically and politically isolate South Africa. Musicians throughout the world, from hip-hop to R&B, jazz, reggae, and rock, composed songs decrying the injustice of white-minority rule in southern Africa.

Again, no other region and issue in Africa before or since has attracted such widespread attention.

Among activists and academics in the U.S. as well, southern Africa was the centerpiece of their involvement in foreign affairs. Robert Van Lierop's film "A Luta Continua," which he produced in 1971 at the invitation of Eduardo Mondlane in an effort to generate African American support for FRELIMO, exemplifies the importance that many African American activists ascribed to ending white rule in southern Africa. Van Lierop and Bob Fletcher, an African American photographer, spent four months filming in FRELIMO's liberated zone. "A Luta Continua" was shown hundreds of times to community groups, black studies classes, and church groups throughout the United States. Similarly, TransAfrica Forum, the largest African American foreign policy lobbying firm, and the Free South Africa Movement both rose to prominence through their steadfast activism and organizing around issues in southern Africa.

Part of the advantage of a multi-layered attack on minority rule in southern Africa was that it became self-leveraging. The African consensus also had an impact on African affairs in the United States Congress during the 1970s and 1980s, which, in turn, enabled the African Americans in the U.S. Congress to exercise an outsized voice in U.S. domestic affairs. Congressman Charles Diggs, throughout his tenure from 1955 to 1980, spoke consistently and forcefully for a U.S. foreign policy toward the continent that would address specific issues within African countries, rather than a policy that was filtered through U.S. Cold War interests. In the early 1970s, he declared ending white-minority rule in southern Africa as the consensus foreign policy issue for African Americans and organized numerous conferences on African affairs. His organizing, activism, and legislating aimed at southern Africa became the model for African American lawmakers throughout the 1980s, which culminated with the Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 that imposed economic sanctions on South Africa.

The last vestiges of formal white rule in Africa were removed primarily through the tenacious activism, organizing, and military success of the people of southern Africa. But the international consensus that southern Africa was a priority made it easier for collective pressure to redefine the international narrative around white minority rule and European imperialism more broadly.

This history of global south unity in opposition to white-minority rule suggests that it is essential and eminently possible to define the climate crisis as a consensus priority in African affairs. In fact, the climate crisis is among the most viable of consensus issues for African leaders and intellectuals, activists, and scholars in the diaspora working on Africa's behalf. The African Union has taken notable early steps toward consensus-building that include coordinating a united negotiating position through the Conference of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change that they brought to the 2015 Paris Agreement. It proved a successful move, as a

majority of African countries signed onto the Paris Agreement, establishing a ready platform for coalition building.

During the Climate Chance Africa Conference held in Accra in October of 2019, delegates debated economic strategies to confront the consequences of climate change. At the African Climate Risks Conference in Addis Ababa, which took place in the same month, delegates endorsed the Green Climate Fund to support governments' efforts to implement their climate initiatives. While these actions represented important continental discourses on the climate crisis, the African-specific elements of the discussion on the climate crisis and the case for deliberate action must be more purposefully brought to the international community. Ghana, Ethiopia, Morocco, and South Africa have proven to be the most proactive and innovative in developing national plans to address climate change and might be effective focal points for international activism.

President Donald Trump might also provide an important galvanizing force for an African consensus. If he succeeds in his iniquitous plan to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, he will undermine the capacity of African nations to build toward adaptability, as the U.S. was among the countries that pledged to contribute to a USD100 billion annual fund for vulnerable countries by 2020. African and African Americans in the U.S. could develop a lobbying effort similar to that of TransAfrica in the 1980s, which became a powerful force in U.S. policies toward southern Africa. African leaders might also capitalize on their numeric strength in the United Nations General Assembly to incorporate climate refugees into international law. The African consensus on climate change must also take note of the fact that the climate crisis has the potential to most severely affect women and girls by limiting their access to maternal healthcare; furthermore, social instability renders them more vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence.

In short, the climate crisis is both an opportunity and an imperative for solidarity on an African affairs issue. The history of vanquishing white-minority rule in southern Africa serves as an important guidepost as Africa confronts a similar yet potentially more potent existential threat.

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This first *African Studies Review* issue of 2020 contains fascinating new research from across the continent, with particular attention to the Horn of Africa, but also covering China, Guinea, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Tanzania. This latest issue is replete with engaging disciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship, from health sciences, history, anthropology, political science, art and art history, visual ethnography, and digital media communications. We are thrilled to have a timely forum on Somali migratory experiences, comprising an introduction, four articles, and a commentary by a distinguished Kenyan Somali scholar. We are also pleased to bring you a number of provocative reflections on new book publications and cinema, including a review essay by Dawne Curry [<https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2019.61>] on current scholarship on street-life, homelessness, and destitution in urban South Africa.

Somalia is one of the largest refugee-producing countries in the world. In an introduction to their forum, “Migration in sub-Saharan Africa: The Somali refugee and migrant experience,” [<https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2019.68>] co-editors Ahmed Ibrahim, Aditi Malik, and Cori Wielenga, explain that their goal in conceiving of this forum was to contribute to African studies debates about migration, displacement, and place-making by using the Somali state and the global Somali diaspora as a case study. This interdisciplinary cluster of articles offers a rich and granular exploration of the causes and consequences of displacement.

The first article, by Beth Elise Whitaker, entitled “Refugees, Foreign Nationals, and *Wageni*: Comparing African Responses to Somali Migration,” [<https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2019.52>] compares how various African host nations respond to the arrival of Somali refugees. Whereas in Kenya Somalis are often viewed as a security threat, and in South Africa they are targets of xenophobic violence, Somali Bantus are welcomed and enfranchised in Tanzania. Whitaker’s comparative analysis reveals the tensions between security, economics, and politics in host government policies.

The second article, “Navigating Patchwork Governance: Somalis in Kenya, National Security, and Refugee Resettlement,” [<https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2019.53>] by Sophia Balakian, investigates competing claims and interests in Kenyan refugee settlements. On the one hand, the administration recognizes the broader humanitarian imperatives to assist the most vulnerable, while on the other hand, there is pressure to safeguard borders against the arrival of so-called “undesirables.” Her ethnographic research reveals how the multiple competing administrative agencies and policies contribute to Somali statelessness.

Nereida Ripero-Muñiz’s essay, entitled “Agency of Somali Migrant Women in Nairobi and Johannesburg: Negotiating Religious and Cultural Identifications in Diasporic Spaces,” [<https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2019.85>] employs a gendered lens to analyze two interconnected Somali diasporic cities—Nairobi and Johannesburg—to uncover how Somali women renegotiate their identities. Marriage practices and female circumcision rituals are venues for migrant women to re-negotiate their “Somaliness” and

Islamic identity in the “little Mogadishus” of Eastleigh in Nairobi and Mayfair in Johannesburg.

The final essay, “Somali Ventures in China: Trade and Mobility in a Transnational Economy” [<https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2019.54>] by Emma Lochery, investigates a more recent development in Somali mobility, the journeys of Somali traders to China. Against the preponderance of studies on Somalis in Europe and North America, she maps the growth of a transnational trading economy that has given rise to wealth accrual opportunities and alternative pathways to evade war and displacement.

In a revealing commentary concluding the forum, Fatuma Ali connects a number of these findings with her own experiences as a Kenyan ethnically Somali scholar. She opens her reflection with an unsettling anecdote about how, while picking up her Kenyan passport, an officer, directing her to the reception desk, told a colleague to “attend to this Somali migrant/refugee.” Ali finds that the four richly empirical studies contribute importantly to debates about the impacts of host migration policies and bureaucracies, the capacity of Somali women to navigate multiple identities, and the nexus of diaspora migration/mobility and entrepreneurialism.

The final three articles in this issue take us to Guinea, Eritrea, and Nigeria. In “From Street Corners to Social Media: The Changing Location of Youth Citizenship in Guinea,” [<https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2019.3>] Clovis Bergère explores how Facebook and Twitter can be situated against the history of youth citizenship. Whereas dominant discourses in Guinea and the wider circles in academy may decry Guinean youth social media practices as deficient or puerile, young Guineans are actually politically productive and highly engaged.

In “Healthcare of the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front and its Politicization, 1970–1991: Treating the Body Politic” [<https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2019.6>], Clarissa Hjalmarsson reconsiders the health services provided by the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF) during the liberation. Healthcare was a vehicle for political definition, and the EPLF employed it ideologically to incorporate the population into the greater struggle while at the same time constructing a nation. By coopting existing power structures, liberation-era healthcare is revealed to be simultaneously progressive, dynamic, and coercive.

In our final essay, “Lagos Art World: The Emergence of an Artistic Hub on the Global Art Periphery” [<https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2019.24>], Jess Castellote and Tobenna Okwuosa investigate changes in the global geography of art whereby global art hubs now exist in Africa. The Lagos art world, an example of an “art system,” reflects globalizing dynamics as well as local ambition and entrepreneurial collecting. Art fairs, photography festivals, auctions, galleries, new publications, museums, symposia, foundations, residencies, and competitions all contribute to the new identity of Lagos as a “global art hub.”

The editors would like to dedicate this issue to our recently departed Editor Emeritus, Miriam “Mitzi” Goheen. Mitzi was born in 1942 in

Bellingham, Washington, on her grandparents' farm, Arborcourt. After graduating from Oregon State University, Mitzi received her PhD in Anthropology from Harvard University. Her fieldwork brought her to the Nso Kingdom in Cameroon, where she undertook her life's work, living in Nso periodically for sixteen years. A respected and dedicated scholar, her book *Men Own the Fields, Woman Own the Crops: Gender and Power in the Cameroon Grassfields* (University of Wisconsin, 1996) is a classic in economic anthropology and gender studies. Mitzi retired in 2016 from Amherst College in Amherst, Massachusetts, where she was chair of Anthropology and Black Studies. She served as co-Editor of the *African Studies Review* with Ralph Faulkingham from 1997 to 2010 and with Elliot Fratkin and Sean Redding from 2010 to 2013. Mitzi was a brilliant scholar, a great friend, and a caring mother. Among those surviving Mitzi are her husband Steve Fjellman, brothers Mark and David Goheen, son Patrick Mahaffey, daughter-in-law Debbie, stepdaughter Melina, and grandchildren Harry, Siobhan, Alfred, Tynan, and Tate.

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