"Open Doors" and "Stranger Natives": white supremacy, racialisation and governing im/mobilities in African Trusts

Polly Pallister-Wilkins
University of Amsterdam

WORK IN PROGRESS: PLEASE DO NOT CITE WITHOUT PERMISSION

This article explores how processes of white supremacy and racialisation coalesce in governing differential im/mobilities in mid-twentieth century African Trusts administered by the British under the League of Nations Mandate System and later UN Trusteeship Council. Based on archival research of League of Nations, United Nations and British Foreign and Commonwealth Office communications it explores two seemingly contradictory yet complementary concerns: "open doors" and "stranger natives" that illuminate dynamics of white supremacy and processes of racialisation in governing im/mobilities. Both the Open Door policy promoting the free movement of western, specifically understood as white, (extractive) capitalist interests across African Trust territories and the ongoing British concern with "stranger natives" considered to be people 'out of place' in their 'native' land based on an absence of capitalist property relations worked to produce highly racialised relations of im/mobility. At the same time "open doors" and "stranger natives" continued colonial processes of racialised differentiation and Indigeneity based on relations to ownership of and access to both capital and property working to maintain white supremacy within British African Trust territories.

KEYWORDS: Trusteeship; Mandates; Property; Development; Racialisation; Indigeneity; White Supremacy; Mobility

> The settler and the native are old acquaintances. In fact, the settler is right when he speaks of knowing 'them' well. For it is the settler who has brough the native into existence and who perpetuates his existence. The settler owes the fact of his very existence, that is to say his property, to the colonial system. (Fanon, 1961/2001: 28)

INTRODUCTION

This article is driven by an overriding question: what is a trust in international relations? It forms

part of a wider project on the European externalisation of mobility controls in Africa through

the 'EU Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration

and displaced persons in Africa' (EUTF for Africa) that aimed to govern and ultimately restrict

migration to Europe through interventions across several intersecting sectors: security,

humanitarian, developmental and juridical (Kipp, 2018; Pacciardi and Berndstsson, 2022; Szent-

Ivanyi, 2021) with geopolitical space-making (Zardo, 2022), normative (Spijkerboer, 2021) and epistemological effects (Welfens and Bonjour, 2022). Recent scholarship in International Relations has urged us to consider how processes of bordering, policing, alongside forms of incarceration and surveillance are "rooted in a set of geographically interlinked colonial and racial capitalist histories, from the enclosures in Europe to the (settler) colonies and slave plantations" (Axtser et al., 2022: 417). This work has stressed the need to forge links between contemporary policy practices, such as the EUTF for Africa and their global-colonial origins in what Aime Césaire has called "imperial laboratories of governance" (2000). Beyond International Relations work across a number of disciplines have called attention to the myriad ways in which colonialism has shaped unequal regimes of mobility, through the movement and exploitation of racialised migrant labour (see Monghia, 2018; Sharma, 2020) With this literature in mind, as part of this project, and in order to understand the present through processes of historical sociology, I have been interested in the history and everyday administrative practices of trusteeship in Africa with a particular focus on how trusts approached questions of mobility governance. To do this I have focused on British administered Mandate Territories (territories held in "sacred trust") under the League of Nations and later Trust Territories under the UN Trusteeship system that replaced the Mandate system in 1948.

Here a system of trusteeship was put into place to govern former German and Turkish imperial possessions through Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations that declared "advanced nations" would administer "peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world" and in accordance with the principle that "the well-being and development of such peoples form a scared trust of civilisation." (League of Nations, 1920) This system was replaced in 1948 with the United Nations Trusteeship system upon the dismantling of the League of Nations. These British administered African territories are: British

Togoland (now part of Ghana), British Cameroon (now part of unified Cameroon), and Tanganyika (now Tanzania).[1]

This project has utilised archival research to learn more about how im/mobility in trusts was considered and governed with a focus on high-level policies concerned with administration and development alongside concerns arising from the everyday administration of territories and populations held under "sacred trust". Through reading the archives in this way I have identified the Open Door policy, and concerns over the seemingly oxymoronic category of "stranger natives" as illustrative of a number of concerns relating to the governance of im/mobility. Under both the League of Nations and the UN the Open Door policy formed a central pillar of trusteeship aimed at ensuring the free movement of capital and capitalists to nurture the economic development and well-being of territories and people not yet able to "stand by themselves" (Anonymous Colonial Official, 1934: 732). Meanwhile "stranger natives" were considered by British administrators to be people out-of-place in their native land, residing on land they, according to the British administering authority, had no proprietary claim to. Both the Open Door policy and concerns over "stranger natives" point to the centrality of proprietary relations in the administration of Mandate/Trust territories, and as I show in this article, the central role of proprietary relations in governing im/mobilities alongside the consolidation of white supremacy, coloniality, and the production of racialised hierarchies of subjecthood. But to return to my opening question, what is a trust?

---

[1] I have chosen not to include South West Africa (now Namibia), originally conceived of as a British trust territory but administered by South Africa on behalf of the British that caused considerable conflict within the Permanent Mandates Commission and even more so when South Africa attempted to annexe the territory.

WHAT IS A TRUST?

The Mandate system and the Trusteeship system that replaced it intended to signal a non-colonial relationship even if the administering powers were also colonial powers. In official discourse the Permanent Mandates Commission repeatedly stressed the differences between colonial possessions and those held under trust. Meanwhile the later Trusteeship system removed civilisational rhetoric from its founding documents following its American architect Ralph Bunche's assertion that the previous Mandate system was racist (Vitalis, 2005). This supposed non-colonial form of government was heralded through the centrality of future self-determination as one of the aims of trusteeship. Here reference to a time when territories and people would "stand by themselves" (League of Nations, 1920) signalled a nascent liberal internationalist recognition of, and commitment to, a postcolonial future. In addition, the official stipulation that territories should be administered for the benefit of the inhabitants rather than that of their overseers was seen as another difference from, and a move towards an end to, colonial rule.

However, recent scholarship on the creation of the League of Nations has carefully shown how the League's apparent liberal internationalist commitment to self-determination in fact masks anti-revolutionary, white supremacist ideas about a racialised world hierarchy and who exactly should be afforded self-determination and on what grounds. As Adom Getachew has argued, those architects of the League of Nations, the South African Prime Minister and believer in the need for, and supremacy of, White Men's Countries, Jan Smuts, and the liberal internationalist US President Woodrow Wilson, "recast self-determination in the service of empire," as a "racially differentiated principle which was fully compatible with imperial rule." (2019: 40) Meanwhile, the official stipulation that territories held in "sacred trust" be administered for the benefit of the 'native' population is undermined by the central figure of Lord Frederick Lugard — former Governor General of Nigeria, 1914-1919 and the British member of the Permanent

Mandates Commission (PMC), 1923-1936 — who according to Susan Pedersen's comprehensive history of the Mandate system quintessentially articulated the system's "civilising mission" and "right to rule" while "honing its practices" (2015: 107). Lugard, Pedersen argues, as one of the central, if not the central figure on the PMC, viewed trusteeship, like other forms of colonial administration, as a "*reciprocally* beneficial practice, one that raised European living standards and 'native' civilisation alike" (2015: 318, italics in the original).[2]

Furthermore, as Thorsten Bonacker (2022) has recently argued the UN Trusteeship system that replaced the Mandate system, continued colonial forms of government while appearing to transfer them to the international level, creating a form of international colonial governmentality. Under the direction of Ralph Bunche, the Trusteeship system removed the overt racism around civilisational and racial difference from official discourse grounding the legitimacy of the Trusteeship system not in the civilisational and racial hierarchies that shaped colonial relations and the Mandate system, but in the more liberal internationalist and universalist language of human rights, development, and international security. But as David Theo Goldberg has cautioned, "in disappearing, race reappears under other, less recognisable terms of reference." (2017: 113) As Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds (2008) argue in their history of the global colour line's consolidation during the birth of liberal internationalism premised on supposedly universalist ideals, overt white supremacy and civilisational racism were replaced with less overtly racialised ideas around (under)development. This shift away from the civilisational racism that talked, in the language of some the PMC members of 'backward, savage natives' and its replacement with concerns over (under)development works as a form of what Kerem Nişancıoğlu has recently identified as a form of "redemption, containment and closure" (2020: 45) with in this instance the liberal universalism underpinning and used to legitimate the UN

---

[2] According to Pedersen, Lugard was also a man who had dinner conversations about how to defend, according to his wife "the best results of western civilisation from the attacks likely enough to be made by degenerate Europeans and inferior races." (Lady Flora Lugard to Major E.J. Lugard, 22 July 1923, quoted in Pedersen, 2015: 107)

system working to redeem colonial powers and contain and close off colonial injustices assumed to now be in the past. Meanwhile, if the UN Trusteeship system introduced concerns about peace and security, the security concerns of administering powers were "allowed to trump indigenous interests" (Pedersen, 2015: 401).

In understanding colonial ruptures and hauntings in this period it is helpful to pause and consider Nelson Maldonado-Torres' outlining of the differences between colonialism and coloniality:

> Colonialism denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation, which makes such a nation an empire. Coloniality, instead, refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labour intersubjectivity relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administration. Thus, coloniality survives colonialism. (2007: 243)

With these differences in mind and recognising that the move from colonialism to coloniality is not necessarily a linear one, during this period we can identify both the continuation of colonial relations and the emergence of coloniality through new forms of governing introduced by trusteeship and the continued slow consolidation of a westerncentric and white supremacist, liberal world order, built on advancing liberal forms of governance at an international level.

Mandates and later Trusts while officially stated as a non-colonial form of government were nevertheless defined by coloniality, perhaps even signalling the production of coloniality in real time premised as they were on a mistrust concerning the "natives" ability to govern themselves upon formal independence, assumptions about white supremacy and the superior governing abilities of White Men's Countries.[3] Meanwhile, the paternalist aims of upholding the "well-being" and fostering the "development" of those not yet ready to govern themselves failed in

---

[3] I use this term purposefully as those charged with trust administration included not only the European powers of Britain and France, but also the settler colonies of Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa (and later the US during the UN Trusteeship system) built on violent histories of white supremacy.

many instances to materialise on-the-ground with distinctly colonial relations of domination, labour and otherwise, and extraction continuing to shape everyday administration. However, we can also identify liberal internationalism in the general commitment to furthering international peace and security; economic development and the creation of markets through (free) trade and mobility; the production of knowledge about societies and territories under trusteeship; a focus on implementing 'modernising' projects (even if such projects never came about); and attempts at breaking colonial monopolies by promoting freedom for all League and then later UN member states to engage in (free) trade in Trust territories. Such commitments speak to the trusteeship system as being one invested in what we could call the furtherance of a distinctly liberal form of coloniality. While the Mandate and Trust systems were always keen to declare that trusteeship was not the same as colonial rule —and various clauses and limits were placed on trusteeship governance as a result, including a restriction on formal annexation by their colonial administrators — trusteeship continued a number of pre-existing liberal, paternalist, and racist forms of government characteristic of British colonial rule. These include how the Open Door policy fostered a racialised regime of im/mobility through liberal modernist ideas about the relationship between property ownership and political subjecthood that also created the "stranger native" as a racialised subject.

Therefore, in this article I am concerned with firstly, how British trusteeship attempted to foster development and ensure well-being through western investment and the Open Door policy (re)producing what Brenna Bhandar (2018) would call a "racialised regime of ownership". Secondly, I am concerned with how British trusteeship aimed at fostering distinctly "native" forms of development designed to 'preserve' "native" cultures and prevent the emergence of a "Europeanised", urbanised, intellectual middle class capable of fostering anti-colonial, pro-independence, socialist sentiments (see Pedersen, 2015). I focus on one way in which this commitment to "native" development was enacted through the use and ownership of abandoned

German imperial property. This property was at different times resold into German ownership and denied either transfer to other white ownership or return to Indigenous ownership. In addition, this property was not held as 'Crown Land' making it a clear colonial possession, but instead it was held in trust as 'public land' and it is within this context that the "stranger native" as a category of trusteeship population governance emerges. In both the Open Door policy and administrative concerns for the unsettling presence of "stranger natives" I show how property relations were tied to political subjecthood, working to structure regimes of im/mobility with racialising effects. In doing this I highlight the co-constitutive work of proprietary relations in racial capitalism and im/mobilities into and across British African trust territories. The article proceeds as follows: firstly I discuss the interdisciplinary literature that has mapped colonial proprietary relations and their effects, secondly I discuss the archives utilised in more detail, before attention moving to a discussion of how the dynamics of the Open Door policy and "stranger natives" can be examined in particular archival documents.

THE CENTRALITY OF PROPERTY RELATIONS

In investigating racial regimes of ownership, and their creation and consolidation through processes of colonial rule, the work of Brenna Bhandar is highly instructive. In this work Bhandar traces "how modern forms of legal property ownership emerge in colonial capitalist contexts, articulated with and through modern concepts of race and racial difference that appear as specific juridical formations" (2018: 11). As she writes:

> Being an owner and having the capacity to appropriate have long been considered prerequisites for attaining the status of the proper subject of modern law, a fully individuated citizen-subject. In the colonies specifically, one had to be in possession of certain properties or traits, determined by racial identity and gender, to own property. In this way, property ownership can also be understood as complicit in fabricating racial difference and gender identities. (2018: 5)

As already discussed, those officials tasked with administering trust territories and those serving on the League's Permanent Mandate Commission and later the UN's Trusteeship Council, were

keen to stress that trusts, were not colonial, even as some British officials in situ argued otherwise (Pedersen, 2015) and the Soviet Union routinely condemned the practice as colonialism by the back door. However, the central role of property relations is crucial to understanding the interrelationship between trust administration, im/mobility, and racialisation in the two seemingly disparate concerns of the Open Door and "stranger natives". As Bandhar articulates, building on but complicating Cheryl Harris' ground-breaking work on "whiteness as property" (1993), race and importantly whiteness does not solely determine proprietary relations. Instead, as Bandhar argues "the types of use and possession of land that justified ownership were determined by an ideology of improvement." Here "those communities who lived as rational, productive economic actors, evidenced by particular forms of cultivation, were deemed to be proper subjects of law and history," while "those who did not were deemed to be in need of improvement as much as their waste lands were." (2015: 8) It is through these capitalist relations to production and land use Bandhar argues, that ideas about racial superiority were forged, rendering race contingent on specific forms of labour and proprietary relations (Ibid).

Within these proprietary relations, specific, modernist understandings of ownership were tied to development and land use, meaning ownership was determined by processes of improvement and evidence of recognised forms of cultivation over measurable and accepted temporal periods. (Ibid.: 35-36) Here ownership understood in capitalist, profit driven terms, was seen as the necessary driver of development that had both the ability to generate extractable profit and improve the well-being of the "native" under colonial rule. Alongside this, ownership of land, or the recognised right to the ownership of land was tied to specific forms of cultivation. Those who maintained subsistence modes of cultivation or forms of cultivation not recognised as such were considered as in need of improvement, but additionally as potentially lacking property rights to live on said land, with subsequent effects on im/mobilities. As Bhandar explains, those who are either not settled on the land or those who are not engaged in marketised forms of

cultivation form an expellable class as "illegal trespassers" (Ibid.: 187). Furthermore, ideas around the meaning of indigeneity developed, linked to land tenure and forms of sedentarisation, meaning that processes of cultivation and relations to such were also racialising processes. As Bhandar makes clear:

> The historical emergence and contemporary dominance of markets in land-as-commodity that work to articulate a racial concept of the human in conjunction with modern laws of property. This conjuncture is continually renewed through the persistent but differentiated reiteration of a racial concept of humanity defined in relation to logics of abstraction, ideologies of improvement, and an identity-property nexus encapsulated by legal status. (2018: 13-14)

Meanwhile, focusing on the central role of proprietary relations in processes of racialisation and in structuring im/mobilities helps to push back against what Jodi Byrd (2011) has identified as the easy conflation of colonisation with racialisation. Instead thinking about the work of proprietary relations helps us to uncover in greater detail the racialised and racial capitalist dynamics of im/mobility through attention to the role of territoriality, movement, and settlement at different scales, global and local. Importantly the relationship between race and property or the racialising effects of proprietary relations are contingent and produced through complex interrelations. This means that experiences are not uniform across time and space, nor across British administered African trust territories. What such an understanding enables however is an exploration of both the white supremacy and racialising effects of the free trade and free movement logics of the Open Door policy that encouraged modernist capitalist development through private investment and white ownership *and* the production of and concern over the seemingly oxymoronic category of the "stranger native" as a person out of time and place unable to demonstrate sufficient attachment rooted in cultivation to the land.

ENCOUNTERING THE ARCHIVES

I have focused my attention on British administered trusts in Africa as opposed to those administered by the French for reasons of language accessibility.[4] I have drawn on archival material available online and in physical form at the UK National Archives to which a research trip was made in October 2021 including material from the following:[5] League of Nations archival material concerning the Mandate system including all yearly reports for each Mandate territory and the minutes of the Permanent Mandates Commission (PMC). United Nations archival material concerning the UN Trusteeship Council (UNTC). Confidential diplomatic cables and correspondence from UK representatives on the PMC and UNTC and with Commonwealth members e.g. the Union of South Africa, but also France and the USA and confidential diplomatic cables and correspondence from British diplomats in British administered Mandate/Trust territories in Africa and with neighbouring states, some of them trusts e.g. Belgian administered Ruanda-Urundi, or British colonies, e.g. Uganda and Ghana. And finally, confidential diplomatic correspondence from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). Overall, I collected over 5,000 pages of archival material relating to the normative, policy aims of Britain's African Mandates and later Trust territories — Togoland, Cameroon, and Tanganyika — insights into their everyday administration, and exposure to political tensions in how the territories were governed.

In reading and interpreting these archival resources I am, guided by Lisa Lowe's work on imperial archives, aware that my material, like the archives themselves is only partial and cannot account for the full complexity of life under British trusteeship. As Lowe argues regarding state archives, "the archive… mediates the imperatives of the state [and] subsumes colonial violence

---

[4] That said it is possible to access the 'official' narrative concerning French administered trust territories via the yearly reports of the League of Nations Mandate Commission and UN Trusteeship Council published in English as well as French.

[5] This trip was undertaken was repeatedly delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

within narratives of reason and progress" (2015: 2) which I contend is also applicable to the archives of the League of Nations and United Nations that I have encountered alongside the state archives of the United Kingdom. Furthermore, as Lowe argues of The National Archives in particular, these "are organised to preserve government records and information for the public; its imperatives are classification, collection, and documentation, rather than connection or convergence." This means that "there is scarce attention to the *relations between* the matters classified within the distinct stores; the organisation of the archives discourages links… one must read *across* the separate repositories organised by office. Task, and function." (Lowe, 2015: 5, italics in original) With this in mind I intended to extend such a partial reading by undertaking archival work in Ghana, Cameroon, and Tanzania, however, the Covid-19 pandemic and continued political violence in the English speaking region of Cameroon prevented such visits.

I encountered the archives having undertaken preparatory reading around the politics of Mandates and Trusts during the period under investigation (e.g. Anonymous Colonial Official, 1934; Bentwich, 1946; Gilchirst, 1947) but with no prior knowledge of what details I would find within them. Therefore, the collection of archival material at the UK National Archives that holds British records as well as those of the League of Nations can be understood as initial scoping research. Following this and having identified the Open Door policy and the category of "stranger natives" as speaking to my guiding research questions of what a trust is/was and how im/mobility was governed in British trust territories, further research on the specifics of the Open Door and "stranger natives" was undertaken including further archival work in the online archives of the United Nations.

THE OPEN DOOR

The Open Door policy might at first glance appear to be one premised on the free movement of capital alongside people. A textbook example of the fostering of liberal internationalist ideas

about peace and prosperity through the free movement of goods and people under capitalism.

However, Lowe has argued in the context of British imperial rule in Asia that ideas about "liberty did not contradict colonial rule but rather accommodated both colonialism as territorial rule, and colonialism as the expansion of imperial trades." Meaning that "in other words, one does not observe a simple replacement of earlier colonialisms by liberal free trade, but rather an accommodation of both residual practices of enclosure and usurpation with new innovations of governed movement and expansion." (2015: 15) Through exploring the Open Door policy it is possible to expand Lowe's argument to British trusteeship in Africa whereby, the tethering of free mobilities for investment capital and capitalists to the mandated forms of improvement and development under the "sacred trust" instead sowed the seeds of coloniality, and (re)produced privileged forms of white supremacist mobility as the following discussion will show.
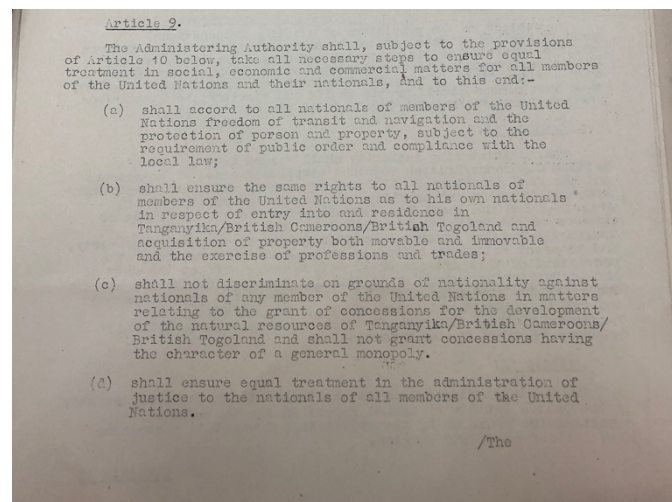

Figure 1 Article 9 of the Trusteeship Agreement for B Mandates outlining the Open Door policy (CO 537/1444)

The Open Door policy extended across both the League's Mandate system and into the UN's Trusteeship system. Nationals of all League and later UN member states were to have "an equal right to work, travel, reside, and hold property" along with "complete economic, commercial and industrial equality" while "concessions for the economic development of the territory were to be

granted 'without distinction on grounds of nationality'." (see Figure 1 and Pedersen, 2015: 233) According to Pedersen 'long-standing British assumptions about the role of free trade in easing global tensions underwrote the Open Door obligation' (Pedersen, 2015: 234). Here free market capitalism was assumed to be an engine of peaceful development that would ensure the necessary improvement of those territories under trust and the well-being of the population. However, the problem of encouraging investment in territories that had just seen previous German holdings seized in the shadow of military defeat caused consternation for the members of the Mandates Commission. As Pedersen argues "the mandated territories needed capital for infrastructural development and commercial enterprises, but who would wish to put their money in a territory that could be transferred at any moment to another power" (Idid.) as had just occurred following Germany's defeat in World War One? The solution was that property rights would hold beyond any end of the mandate.

The decision to declare all property rights immutable beyond trusteeship was seen as necessary for securing western investment. But it meant the maintenance of a hierarchical regime of ownership post-independence. A commitment to the "open door" was a central feature of Mandates and Trusts and this commitment was used to argue that Mandates and Trusts were simply colonialism by another name with the decision to secure future property rights "laying the foundations of a neo-colonial order that would claw back through economic entanglements the sovereignty conceded at independence." (Pedersen, 2015: 235) Questions then arise around whose interests the Open Door policy served? Again, nodding to the coloniality of the "open door" Pedersen suggests that rather than liberalising international trade and investment, trust territories were "drawn everywhere into their guardian's imperial economic network" (2015: 259). In addition, the "open door was imposed to ease great-power rivalries, not to benefit local populations (Ibid.) undermining arguments that the "open door" was necessary for securing the well-being of the "native" population.

Further questions around the coloniality of the Open Door policy are raised by examining who had access to the future-proofed property rights alongside asking if the "open door" was as open as its name suggests? The short answer is no. Commercial equality, freedom to own property and the freedom of movement to travel and reside in trust territories 'without distinction on grounds of nationality' applied only to those who were nationals of League and later UN members. This was good news for Germans keen to recapture their former colonial property and re-establish economic relations, who when Germany joined the League of Nations in 1926 could enjoy freedom of movement and investment 'without distinction on the grounds of nationality'. It was also good news for British administrators who had staked the aims of development and native "well-being" on the Open Door policy but who had before German membership of the League struggled to attract investment even with the future-proofing of property rights. Auctions of former German plantations in London had failed to find buyers prior to 1926 meaning that previously productive land failed to generate profit until that land returned to German ownership.

But why this reliance on German ownership of plantations? Could this previously profitable land not be returned to native ownership meaning the "natives" working to secure their own well-being? Again, the short answer is no. The stipulation that trust territories generate their own income, rather than rely on the economies of the administrators — an attempt to break from earlier forms of colonial rule — meant that property had to be sold for profit as a form of generating income. In addition, and importantly for the (re)production of racialised hierarchies of ownership and their intersections with im/mobility, the freedoms of the "open door" applied only to those who were nationals of League and later UN members. This meant that the 'protected persons' of the trusts themselves e.g. those from Tanganyika, Togoland or Cameroon,

or those from elsewhere[6] who were designated protected persons, were denied the freedoms of the "open door". Here the initial concerns raised by the South African Prime Minister Jan Smuts in 1946 over the continuance of the "open door" policy as the Mandate system transformed into the Trusteeship system and what it would mean for the maintenance of White Men's Countries and British imperial power on the African continent are highly revealing. UK officials summarised Smut's concerns thus: "The provisions of the draft agreements for non-discrimination between nationals of members of the United Nations in regard to immigration, economic rights etc. are, in their [South Africa's] view, too wide." (CO 537/1445)

In Smuts' concerns over free Black African mobilities and British efforts to alleviate his concerns we can see how freedoms and unfreedoms were racialised even while race was invisiblised in the policy itself and subsequent correspondence through being replaced with reference to citizenship, nationality and the liberal, apparently inclusive language, of the policies themselves. This will be expanded upon in more detail below through a close reading of particularly revealing archival material.

---

[6] British Protected Persons included those from Aden, Beuchanaland, Brunei, Gambia, the Gold Coast, Kenya, Malaya, the Maldives, Nigeria, Uganda, Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somaliland, Swaziland, Tonga, the Trucial States, Uganda, and Zanzibar.
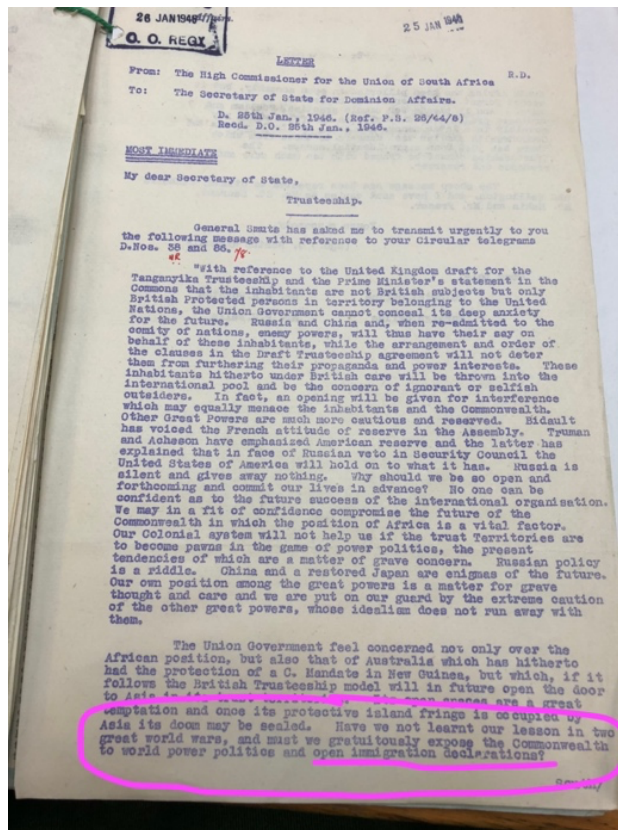
Figure 2 Correspondence from The High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa to The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs outlining General Smuts' concerns over Trusteeship (CO 537/1445)

Smuts had several concerns with the Open Door policy. One of these, as can be seen in Figure 2, was what he saw as "open immigration declarations". To Smuts the Open Door policy hinted at "open immigration", and this was a problem. But it is in The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs' response to Smuts that we come to understand that this "open immigration" is nothing of the sort as can be seen in Figure 3, where the Secretary of State says:

> As regards migration aspect [sic], I should like to emphasise that in drafting agreement [sic] we have had question [sic] of immigration very much in mind. We regard it as essential that immigration policy should be framed in interest [sic] of inhabitant so that their future avenues of advancement and economic and social development may not be blocked. As I indicated in my telegram 16 January No.5 we consider that Article 10 of draft agreement provides safeguard against abuse of non-discrimination provisions of Article 9.

This response from The Secretary of State does two things. One it reaffirms the commitment to development through capitalist investment and ownership alongside the important role of immigration in promoting such development for the benefit of territories' populations. Two, however, in referring to Article 10 and the "safeguard" it provides "against abuse of non-discrimination provisions of Article 9" we can see how the "open door" was not open, that immigration was selective and not free and that in fact non-discrimination provisions were discriminatory, being a way to advance and secure the mobility of non-colonised people, e.g. white, at the expense of the colonised.
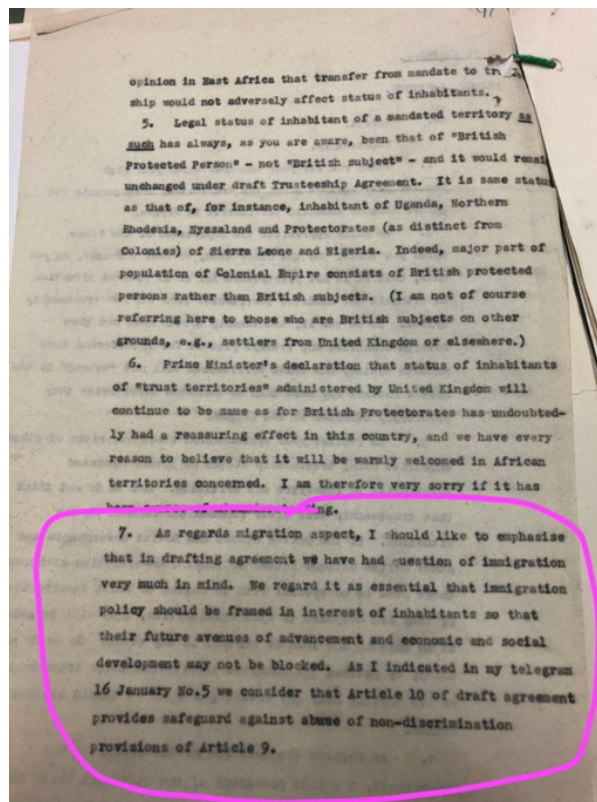

Figure 3 The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs response to Prime Minister Smuts' concerns over immigration under the "open door" (CO 537/1445)

Importantly Article 10 makes clear that the Open Door policy is for the benefit of the trust itself and that ultimate administrative power remains with the administrative authority, meaning that

the trust administration could exercise sovereign authority over investment and immigration, something the French chose to do with German mobility post 1926 (unlike the British), choosing to restrict it and the investment it brought with it.[7] Meanwhile, it is earlier in the Secretary of State's response to Smuts that we see how im/mobility was racialised. Article 9 is clear that the "open door" applies to "all nationals of members of the United Nations". At first glance, this seems inclusive, however, it is in fact exclusionary as is made clear from the response in Figure 4 where reference is made to the legal status of inhabitants of mandate territories which have always "been that of "British Protected Person" – not "British subject" – and it would remain unchanged" under trusteeship. Here it stressed that a "major part of population [sic] of Colonial Empire consists of British protected persons rather than British subjects" however, such a status does not apply to those who are "British subjects on other grounds e.g. settlers from the United Kingdom or elsewhere." What this meant in practice was that nationals of British Cameroon, British Togoland and Tanganyika were neither nationals of the United Nations as they were not considered UK nationals, nor "British subjects" in the language of the time. As British Protected Persons they were not British subjects or citizens of UN member states unlike those in white settler colonies, such as South Africa, because Trust territories were not independent UN members. Meaning therefore, that Trust populations were excluded from access to the capital accumulation and mobility guaranteed by the Open Door policy. But more than this, the distinction subtly outlined between British Protected Persons and British subjects "e.g. settlers" are racialised and racialising distinctions as British Protected Persons were nationals of, meaning indigenous to trust territories, rather than colonial settlers.

---

[7] These restrictions and lack of investment led to domestic unrest in France's Gold Coast trust territories fuelled by unemployment and resulting harsh security measures that limited the internal mobility of the native populations.
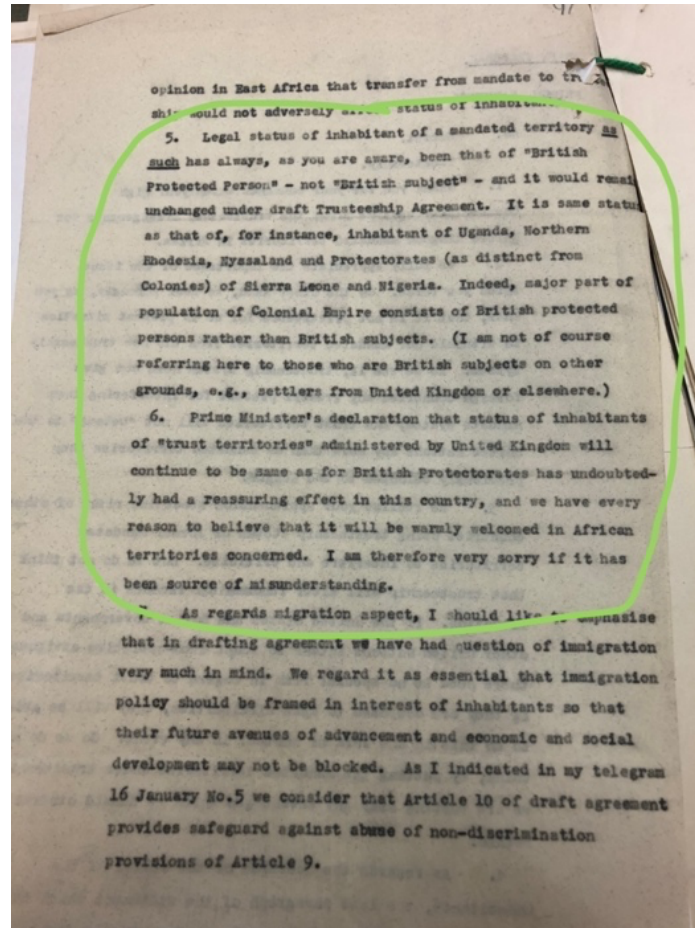
Figure 4 The Secretary of State for the Dominion Affairs" response to Smuts outlining the subtle racial hierarchies in the "open door" policy (CO 537/1445)

Through the above exploration of Prime Minister Jan Smuts' discomfort over what he saw as "open immigration declarations", the racial discomfort they suggest and the coded reassurances of the British authorities aimed at assuaging such racial discomfort, we can learn how the Open Door policy while initially presenting as a pro-immigration policy and one encouraging non-discriminatory mobility into and within African trust territories, was instead a policy that elevated — and consolidated — the mobility of white capitalist citizenry and enabled their ability to extract profit from trust territories under the umbrella of development while excluding the native populations from such privileges, denying them mobility and access to the economic resources of their own communities. This of course was nothing new within the context of South Africa. The need to maintain a White Men's Country and white extractive capitalism conflicted with the

demand for labour, creating racialised hierarchies of mobility in the process through regulating

Black labour, and temporally limiting Asian mobility. This continued long running attempts by

South Africa (along with other white settler colonies) to prevent Black mobility often in concert

with white socialist labour activists (Valdez, 2021). Furthermore, reading the "open door" policy

through Bhandar's work on the relationship between proprietary relations, modernity and the

encouragement of rational, productive economic subjects, we see how access and rights to

property, as both real estate and profit under the not-so open door came to consolidate racial

capitalism and white supremacy while being an example of, according to Walter Rodney

(2018/1972), how Europe underdeveloped Africa even during supposedly postcolonial times of

international administration (Bonacker, 2022).

THE STRANGER NATIVE

The ownership and use of German plantations was not only a disruptive issue for the "open

door" on which British administrators had staked the aims of development and native "well-

being". The ideals of the "open door" and the concerns over "stranger natives" met in the

former German plantations in British administered Cameroon. The reclamation of land by those

considered to be non-Indigenous "stranger natives" fostered unease amongst the administering

authority when the Open Door policies intended to generate white investment for the purposes

of development and the well-being of the "natives" failed to materialise at a level that would

mean productive land being brought back into profitable, commercial use, and when former

German plantation owners could no longer be called upon to fill the need for white investment

and ownership. This unease was rooted in the nexus of proprietary relations, attendant political

subjecthood, and ideas about improvement and cultivation, and resulted in the (re)production of

white supremacy, the production of racialised identities of (non)Indigeneity, the consolidation of

racial capitalist modes of production and concomitant racialised regimes of im/mobility.

But what is a "stranger native"? It appears at first to be an oxymoron. How can someone be both a native and a stranger at the same time, simultaneously in and out of place. Questions arise therefore around issues of scale and accompanying political administration, about native and stranger to where and to what? The category or problem of the stranger native emerges in the administering of British Cameroon, and while according to the archival material in which it is recorded it is not an issue on which the administration spent considerable time, the construction of the stranger native as a problematic category is enlightening on the relationship between proprietary relations, im/mobility and race or more specifically Indiegneity.
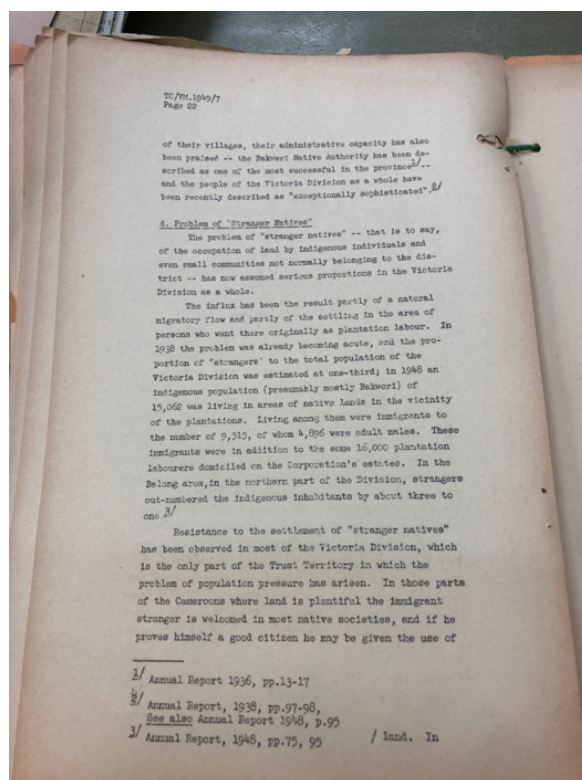

Figure 5 Discussion of the problem of the "Stranger Native" in the Observations of the Administering Authority accompanying the official Report on the Cameroons under British Administration (T/461) submitted to the UN Trusteeship Council, 1949 (CO 537/4601: 22)

In short "stranger natives" were a category of landless internal migrant, former plantation labourers or those who had relocated to abandoned German plantations in British Cameroon

that had either not been repurchased by German investors during the mandate years or formerly productive plantations that were now abandoned again following the Second World War. Considered to be "indigenous individuals… not normally belonging to the District" (CO 537/4601: 22) the "stranger native" comes to be considered a problem for administering authorities in British Cameroon in relation to land access and land resources around Mount Cameroon specifically (see Figure 6). In areas of British Cameroon with productive white owned commercial plantations relying on native labour or where fallow land for subsistence farming for the natives was plentiful the stranger native was not considered a problem, or did not exist as a category at all, as archival correspondence makes clear. However, where fallow land was a scarce resource, such as around Mount Cameroon they came to be considered a threat to the security and well-being of communities the British administering authority considered, truly, Indigenous (CO 537/4601: 19). Furthermore, the stranger natives' migratory presence threatened what the British understood to be the fair settlement of 'public land', e.g. former German plantations around Mount Cameroon, to those considered truly Indigenous through a long-term presence on and cultivation of the land.
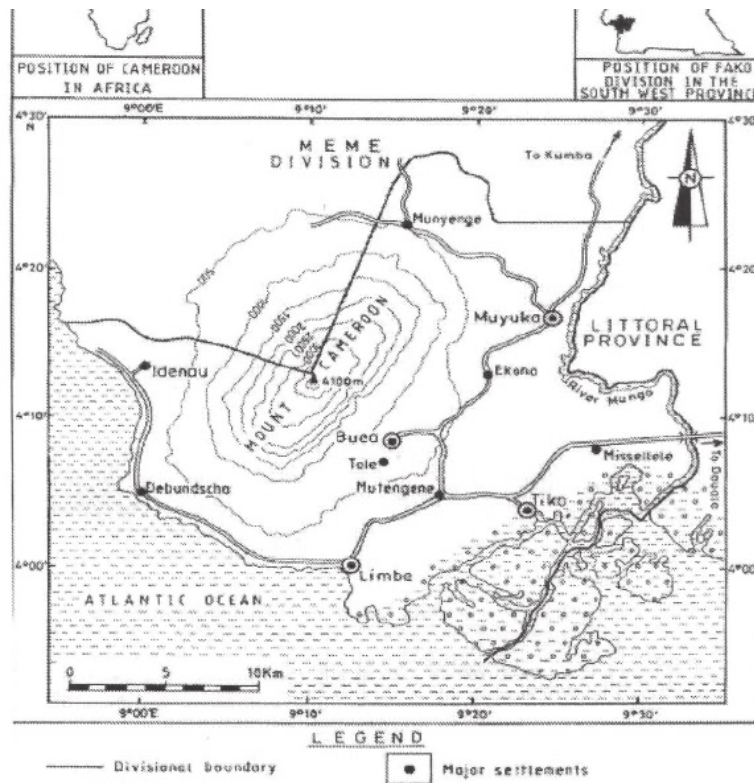
Figure 6 A map of Mount Cameroon

As the British administration makes clear in their Observations of the Administering Authority

that accompanied their official report to the UN Trusteeship Council:

> The right of property in land is derived either from right of conquest or from first
> occupation of a hitherto uninhabited country or through long-continued or uncontested
> use… It is the native village community or state that is the one and only owner of the
> whole territory, and this village community or state concedes the enjoyment and use of
> its lands to families and to individuals.

> The absolute and irrevocable alienation of land ownership to a stranger is not allowed,
> and individual ownership can only be acquired over the results of a man's labour or that
> of his family and dependents, and over an area of land which does not include the soil
> itself. The ownership of the land remains collective, the representatives of the
> community whether a single chief or several heads of families, being the trustees. (CO
> 537/4601: 4-5)

So, in thinking about the "stranger native" as a colonial category of administration Bhandar's

work on the 'identity-property nexus' (2018: 14) where proprietary relations in conjunction with

subjecthood come to shape legal and political status in a community is invaluable. Through a

close reading of the Observations of the Administering Authority that expand on what Britain saw as the stranger native problem, discussion of which was kept out of the 1949 official Report to the Trusteeship Council, the category of the "stranger native" emerges through being intimately tied to British colonial ideas about Indigeneity and Indigenous sovereignty based on labour, land tenure, land use and subsequent property rights. Meaning that the 'problem' of the "stranger native" is a problem of colonial government, forged in colonial encounters and rooted in westerncentric, modernist ideas about land as a commodity, the role of land use, cultivation and property and their roles in forming political subjects and citizenship.

But more than this, the category of the "stranger native" and its problematisation by the British (re)produces racialised categories of belonging, bolstering Indigenous identities in some instances, e.g. that of the Bakweri in Cameroon, while also severing connections and claims to Indigeneity based on proprietary rights and modernist colonial, racialised logics of land tenure and use on the other. The production of recognised Indigeneity in some instances and the denial of the same in others, has important ramifications for the economic and socio-political rights attached to such a politics of recognition. At the same time, it reaffirmed plantation capitalism rooted in white supremacist attitudes to land ownership and productivity operating as it did within a land economy shaped by the "open door" that promoted foreign white investment that had reinstated former colonial relations of labour, cultivation, and extraction under the Mandate system. Alongside this the issue of the stranger native was imbedded in and helped transpose colonial ideas about the need for a white hand to guide processes of improvement and development and the 'backwardness' of the "natives" that were supposed to have been erased under the Trust system on the insistence of Ralph Bunche who had called attention to the racism underpinning such ideas during the Mandate era (Vitalis, 2005). Meanwhile, as an example of the governance of im/mobilities in African trusts the problem of the "stranger native" on the one hand promoted policies of internal expulsions and resettlement for those deemed strangers and

on the other hand reaffirmed the sedentarisation of those assumed to be Indigenous. It thereby practiced a politics of recognition (Coulthard, 2014) based on proprietary relations determined by modernist understandings of land tenure and productive cultivation.

CONCLUSION

What does a historical sociology of "open doors" and "stranger natives" in the governing of Trusteeship illuminate about international politics over time? Alongside a more general exploration around the consolidation of liberal internationalism and trusteeship as an instrument of coloniality, the exploration provided here highlights the inclusion of racialised mobility concerns and proprietary relations in this emerging order. Although not always explicit and formulated in differing discursive registers than present political discussions and policies such as the EUTF with their clear focus on preventing mobility to Europe, the governance of im/mobility was central to both the Open Door and the concern over "stranger natives". In both cases international mobility was privileged for the purposes of capitalist accumulation and supposed economic development with the consequence of consolidating racial capitalism. While with the problem of the "stranger native" we can see how internal mobility for the purposes of claiming land for subsistence living produced racialised legal identities of (non)Indigeneity reaffirming a politics of colonial recognition and (re)producing white supremacy on the one hand and categories of protected persons and "natives" on the other. Through the imposition of policy instruments such as the Open Door and identification of policy problems such as the "stranger native" it is possible to trace the emergence of im/mobility regimes in African space-time and geopolitical space-making at multiple scales (see Landau, 2019). Furthermore, by examining the historical construction of a coloniality that continues into the present through interventionist attempts aimed at upholding global north privileges and curtailing African futures, contemporary policy instruments such as the EUTF are de-exceptionalised and better understood within histories of racial capitalist control and geopolitical space making.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anonymous Colonial Official (1934) 'The Future of Colonial Trusteeship,' *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs* 24(96): 732-745.

Axster, Sabrina, Ida Danewid, Asher Goldstein, Matt Mahmoudi, Cemal Burak Tansel, Lauren Wilcox (2021) 'Colonial Lives of the Carceral Archipelago: Rethinking the Neoliberal Security State,' *International Political* Sociology 15(3): 415-439.

Bentwich, Norman (1946) 'Colonial Mandates and Trusteeships,' *Transactions of the Grotius Society* 32: 121-134.

Bhandar, Brenna (2018) *Colonial Lives of Property" Law, Land, and Racial Regimes of Ownership.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Bonacker, Thorsten (2022) 'Reporting Security: Postcolonial Governmentality in the United Nations' Trusteeship system,' *International Political Sociology* 16(1): 1-19.

Byrd, Jodi (2011) *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonisalism.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Césaire, Aime (2000) *Discourse on Colonialism.* New York: Monthly Review Press.

CO 537/1444 (1946) International Trusteeship: Policy, 25150 Part 1.

CO 537/1445 (1946) International Trusteeship: Policy, 25150 Part 2.

CO 537/4601 (1949) International Trusteeship: Trusteeship Council Visit to West Africa, 25165 Part 2.

Coulthard, Glen Sean (2014) *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Fanon, Frantz (1961/2001) *The Wretched of the Earth.* London: Penguin Books.

Getachew, Adom (2019) *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Gilchrist, Huntington (1947) 'Trusteeship and the Colonial System,' *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 22(2): 95-109.

Goldberg, David Theo (2017) 'Parting Waters: Seas of Movement,' pp. 99-114 in Andrew Baldwin and Giovanni Bettini, eds., *Life Adrift: Climate Change, Migration, Critique.* London: Rowman Littlefield.

Harris, Cheryl (1983) 'Whiteness as Property,' *Harvard Law Review* 106(8): 1707-1791.

Kipp, David (2018) 'From Exception to Rule — the EU Trust Fund for Africa,' *SWD Research Paper* 13, https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/eu-trust-fund-for-africa

Lake, Marilyn and Henry Reynolds (2008) *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Landau, Loren B (2019) 'A Chronotope of Containment Development: Europe's Migrant Crisis and Africa's Reterritorialisation,' *Antipode* 51(1): 169-186.

Lowe, Lisa (2015) *The Intimacies of the Four Continents.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Maldonado-Torres (2007) 'On the Coloniality of Being: Contributions to the Development of a Concept,' *Cultural Studies* 21(2-3): 240-270.

Mongia, Radhika (2018) *Indian Migration and Empire: A Colonial Genealogy of the Modern State.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Nişancıoğlu, Kerem (2020) 'Racial sovereignty,' *European Journal of International Relations* 26(1): 39-63.

Pacciardi, Agnese and Joakim Berndtsson (2022) 'EU Border Externalisation and Security Outsourcing: Exploring the Migration Industry in Libya,' *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 48(17): 4010-4028.

Pedersen, Susan (2015) *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rodney, Walter (2018/1972) *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa.* London: Verso.

Sharma, Nandita (2020) *Home Rule: National Sovereignty and the Separation of Natives and Migrants.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Spijkerboer, Thomas (2021) 'Migration Management Clientelism: Europe's migration funds as a global political project,' *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 48(12): 2892-2907.

Szent-Ivanyi, Balazs (2021) 'Practising what they preach? Development NGOs and the EU's Emergency Trust Fund for Africa,' *Third World Quarterly* 42(11): 2552-2571.

Valdez, Inés (2021) 'Socialism and Empire: Labor Mobility, Racial Capitalism, and the Political Theory of Migration,' *Political Theory* 49(6): 902-933.

Vitalis, Robert (2005) 'Birth of a Discipline,' pp. 159-181 in David Long and Brian C. Schmidt, eds., *Imperialism and Internationalism in the Discipline of International Relations.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Welfens, Natalie and Saskia Bonjour (2022) 'Seeking Legitimacy Through Knowledge Production: The Politics of Monitoring and Evaluation of the EU Trust Fund for Africa,' *Journal of Common Market Studies* https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13434

Zardo, Federica (2022) 'The EU Trust Fund for Africa: Geopolitical Space Making through Migration Policy Instruments,' *Geopolitics* 27(2): 584-603.