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Abstract

The paper presents the history of the contribution of two American economists to a radical cause: the establishment of a socialist and politically united Africa. The setting is 1960s Ghana which under Kwame Nkrumah, the man who led the country to independence from British colonial rule, emerged as the epicentre of this Pan-African vision. Ann Seidman and Reginald H. Green became, as members of the research team on 'The Economics of African Unity' established at the University of Ghana in 1963, the most sophisticated and systematic advocates of Nkrumah's economic argument for continental planning and political union. The paper argues that Green and Seidman's support for Pan-Africanism was rooted in an attempt to question radically the applicability of mainstream economic theory to African conditions, and find an alternative framework to conceptualise African trade, institutions and economic integration. Ultimately the vision associated with Nkrumah and economists like Green and Seidman failed to gain any significant political legitimacy and ended in 1966 with Nkrumah's overthrow. Yet, it is argued that the story of the 'economics of African unity' is a useful departure point to deepen our understanding of the relationship between economics and political imagination in postcolonial Africa.

JEL classification: B24, B29, B31, 020, P41.

Keywords: Ann Seidman, Reginald H. Green, Ghana, Pan-Africanism, Kwame Nkrumah.

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‘utopianism – the notion of the broken unit and its restoration’
Isaiah Berlin *‘The Decline of Utopian Ideas in the West’*

‘Theory best serves practice when it is unrealistic in a certain sense: when it is ahead of reality, not just following it’
Otto Neurath ‘*Economics in Kind, Calculation in Kind and Their Relation to War Economics’*

Introduction

In writing the history of Africa in the twentieth century it is all too tempting, and ultimately misleading, to ‘read history backwards from the 1960s, when the territorial nation-state emerged as the modal end-point of the evolution of colonial empires’ (Cooper 2011, 197). In considering the nation-state as the only possible outcome of the end of colonial domination what gets lost is a sense of *process*, in which different visions for parts of Africa, or for the continent as a whole, emerged and competed for political legitimacy. African attempts to question the political and institutional heritage of colonialism, re-shape their relations with other former colonies, and re-define the realm of their economic and political possibilities were mostly associated to Pan-Africanism, arguably ‘the strongest indigenous political force on the continent’ in the 1950s and 1960s (Wallerstein 1968, ix). This paper argues that there was a connection between Pan-Africanism and economic ideas, and that some professional economists based in Africa played a so far unnoticed role in the re-definition of African supra-national visions.

The neglect of this connection is perhaps explainable by looking at what different communities of historians have seen as their legitimate domain of inquiry. Historians of Africa and the diaspora have mostly understood the intellectual evolution of Pan-Africanism through the lens of the speeches and pronouncements of political leaders and militants (for example Geiss 1974 and Esedebe 1994). On the other hand historians of economics have paid only marginal attention to the African setting.[1] In this they are falling behind historians of other sciences (especially medicine and anthropology), who have already come to see Africa as a ‘living laboratory’ (Tilley 2011) in which theories originated elsewhere were tested, and new ways of producing and applying knowledge emerged from the interaction with local settings.[2] The work of Reginald Green and Ann Seidman in 1960s Ghana provides such an example: the support for Kwame Nkrumah’s Pan-African vision led the two American economists to embark in a struggle to redefine the applicability of economic theory to African conditions. After introducing the idea of Pan-Africanism, the context in which Kwame Nkrumah became the most vocal proponent of African Unity, most of the paper is devoted to

[1] One pioneer exception is Goodwin (1967)’s appraisal of nineteenth century West African economic thinkers.
[2] Again, there are exceptions: this is for example the approach taken by Mary Morgan (2011) in her study of Phyllis Deane’s attempt to adapt national income accounting to the economic reality of 1940s Northern Rhodesia (today’s Zambia).

a detailed account of Green and Seidman's work on the 'economics of African Unity' at the University of Ghana in the last years of Nkrumah's rule. The failure of the call for political union and continental planning to find legitimacy in the African political arena, and Nkrumah's fall in a coup d'état in 1966 are also discussed. Green and Seidman's *Unity or Poverty? The Economics of Pan-Africanism*, published shortly after their Ghanaian experience, expanded their work on the theme of African Unity while trying to detach it from its 'Nkrumaist' imprint. After some concluding remarks, the paper is followed by a post scriptum, briefly describing the two economists' lives and careers after Nkrumah's fall.

Setting the context: Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana and Pan-Africanism

Pan-Africanism has a long and complex intellectual history, beginning in the United States as a set of disconnected ideas about race, Negro rights and the African diaspora in the late eighteenth century, and eventually becoming an institutionalised movement at the beginning of the twentieth century, with the 1893 Chicago Congress and the 1900 1st London Pan-African Congress (Esedebe 1994). However, it was only with the end of World War II, in the context of decolonization, that the claims associated to Pan-Africanism became less concerned with Afro-American diaspora (Duffield 1984, 101), and more directly an expression of the will of Africans to gain independence from colonial rule and imagine alternatives to the nation-state.[3] This transition was epitomized by the 1945 Pan-African Congress which took place in Manchester. Among the participants to the Congress were many future African leaders: Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Hastings Banda of Malawi, and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana. It was in the context of the 1945 congress that Kwame Nkrumah 'emerged as a star figure' of the Pan-African movement: not only he helped setting up the conference, but 'he infused it with his own rhetoric' (Falola 2001, 155).[4] However it should be noted that Nkrumah's declared aim in the 1940s was less ambitious: while already willing to re-imagine the boundaries imposed from colonial rule and imbued with Marxist rhetoric, his aim was circumscribed to the constitution of a Union of West African Socialist Republics.

Even if the struggle for decolonization was fought at the level of single colonies, rather than in any way which could be directly associated to the claims of the Pan-African movement, the independence of Ghana in 1957, as the first black colony in Sub-Saharan Africa to emancipate itself from British rule, was an element of great significance in bringing African leaders together in imagining alternatives to the nation-state.[5] Nkrumah saw a strong connection between the

[3] On the other hand is should be noted that the 1940s saw significant ideological and policy changes also on the side of colonial regimes, when 1920s proposals for the merging of territorial entities that were too small to be economically viable acquired new significance as a partial answer to the economic and social problems faced by Empires in the postwar world. This is when colonial administrators started believing that 'larger territorial units would be able to diversify their economies and build a more stable fiscal base', as well as being able to provide public services in a more efficient way (Gardner 2012, 222). But ultimately the expansion of welfare provisions and attempts to make the colonies more economically viable in the 1940s could delay independence but not prevent it: the British and the French in Africa 'were both planning for futures that did not exist' (Cooper 1996, 110).

[4] However it should be noted that Nkrumah's declared aim in the 1940s was less ambitious: while already willing to re-imagine the boundaries imposed from colonial rule, his aim was circumscribed to the constitution of a Union of West African Socialist Republics.

[5] Significantly W.E.B. DuBois, the president of the Pan-African congress wrote to Nkrumah:

achievement of independence at the national level and the possibility to plan for a more inclusive future: significantly in the midnight independence speech, between the 5th and the 6th March 1957, he famously declared 'our independence is meaningless unless it is linked up totally with that of the African continent' (Nkrumah [1957] 2001, 29). Following the First Conference of Independent African States taking place in Accra in 1958,[6] attended by only eight (mostly North African rather than Sub-Saharan) countries,[7] and the achievement of independence for most African nations south of the Sahara around 1960, three blocs embodying different visions for the continent or for parts of it emerged. The ideological identity of the three groups can be understood along three main lines: identity of the colonizer, Cold War positioning, and notion of optimal unity. The Casablanca Group, comprising Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Morocco, Algeria and Libya gathered the more 'radical' and usually pro-socialist states which were calling for the immediate formation of a Pan-African Government, and included the strongest critics of imperialism. The most significant 'experiment' in supra-national integration which emerged from this group was the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union. The Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union was on one hand a partial embodiment of the dream associated to the West African National Secretariat in the 1940s to establish a group of West African Socialist Republics. On the other hand, given the shift in the focus of Nkrumah's ideology from West Africa to the unification of the whole continent the Union was supposed, according to Nkrumah ([1963] 1985, 142), 'to form the nucleus of the United States of Africa'. Yet, in the increasing polarization brought in the African continent by the Cold War, only the Soviets recognised the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union as a truly progressive enterprise. Indeed between 1961 and 1963 the leaders of the three countries were all to be awarded Lenin Peace Prizes: Sèkou Tourè' of Guinea in 1961, Nkrumah in 1962, and Modibo Keita of Mali in 1963 (Klinghoffer 1969, 53). But the Union did not manage to coordinate economic policy among its members, nor to adopt a common currency, and died of natural death in 1963 without having had any real impact on economic or political integration.[8]

The Brazzaville group comprised all the former French colonies (with the exceptions of Algeria, Mali and Guinea). Rather than offering a vision for the whole continent, the scope of their thinking about supra-national integration was limited to the former French colonies, with which they shared language, currency and institutions. The third group was the Monrovia group, comprising African countries from very heterogeneous historical backgrounds (including former Italian Somalia, Nigeria, Liberia but united to some extent by a more pro-capitalist stance, and a gradualist approach towards Pan-Africanism (Nugent 2004, 79). It was in this uncertain context, with the new African nations torn apart between forward-looking dreams of economic independence, old colonial ties and new alliances dictated by the Cold War, that Kwame Nkrumah rose as the most radical and loud voice calling for African Unity.

'I hereby put into your hands, Mr. Prime Minister, my empty but still significant title of President of the Pan-African Congress to be bestowed on my duly-elected successor who will preside over a Pan-African Congress due, I trust, to meet soon and for the first time on African soil, at the call of the independent state of Ghana' (quoted in Wallerstein 1968, 26).

[6] 1958 is also when France proposed a referendum, asking her colonies to choose between maintained adherence to the system of the CFA and the French Community, and immediate independence. Only Sèkou Tourè's Guinea refused the French offer (followed in 1962 by Mali under the leadership of Modibo Keita).

[7] The eight countries were Libya, Morocco, Ghana, Ethiopia, Liberia, Tunisia, Sudan and Egypt.

[8] Perhaps it is fair to say that one of the most long-lasting impacts of the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union was in the realm of music: to celebrate its formation Ghanaian artist E.T. Mensah recorded in the early 1960s a tune called 'Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union', which is still considered one of the classics of West African highlife.

Nkrumah's vision: neo-colonialism, African unity and continental planning

Kwame Nkrumah was born in 1909 in Nrkroful, a small village in the Western Region of what was then the Gold Coast.[9] After having received religious education in a missionary school and having worked for several years as a teacher, he studied economics and sociology, gaining a B.Sc. in 1939 from Lincoln University (Pennsylvania). After starting a PhD in philosophy (never completed) on 'The Philosophy of Imperialism', he moved to Britain and became very much active in the Pan-African scene emerged with the Manchester congress. In 1947 he went back to the Gold Coast to fight the struggle for decolonisation, founding his own Party, the CPP (Convention People's Party), and eventually leading the country to independence in 1957.[10] In the early 1960s Nkrumah became a key figure of African socialism, and the strongest proponent of a continental political and economic union ruled by a Pan-African government. In 1963 he published *Africa Must Unite*, to which this section is devoted, which represents the most systematic account of his thought on the problem of African Unity.

Although Nkrumah's intellectual influences were several and very different, including Karl Marx, the Italian patriot Giuseppe Mazzini and Pan-African intellectuals like Marcus Garvey, the most natural departure point to understand the economic soul of his Pan-African ideas is certainly Lenin ([1917] 2012)'s *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism, A Popular Outline.*[11] It should be noted that the 'imperialism' described by Lenin was partly different from the one that Nkrumah saw as the one hindering African development: as remarked by Lord Meghnad Desai (1989, 21), 'by imperialism Lenin means not so much the metropolis-colony relation but more the relations of financial and industrial penetration within similarly developed countries'.[12]

The scramble for Africa, which Lenin noted but not discussed in detail,[13] became in Nkrumah's account *the* necessary condition for the further development of European capitalism, 'which had by then reached the stage of industrial and financial monopoly that needed territorial expansion to provide spheres for capital investment, sources of raw materials, markets, and strategic points of imperial defence' (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, xiii). In fact in analytical terms Nkrumah's

[9] There are several biographies of Kwame Nkrumah. A useful and concise introduction is Rooney (2010).

[10] This is of course the simplistic summary of a very complex story. The best work on this possibly remains the classic Austin (1970).

[11] On the other hand according to Brewer (1980, 108) Lenin's essay, arguably 'the most famous Marxist work on imperialism' did little besides gathering and synthesising material and ideas from Rudolph Hilferding, Nikolaj Bukharin and John A. Hobson.

[12] On the other hand even if Nkrumah was more directly concerned with the metropolis-colony relationship, he saw much truth in the argument that 'imperialism is the development of the capitalist system to its highest stage. Its most important feature is that of monopoly. The concentration of production and capital has developed to such a degree that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life. National monopolies have linked up internationally to share the world among themselves, and the territorial division of the globe is complete. Banking capital has reached the stage where it dominates production capital' (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 22).

[13] In chapter 5 for example Lenin stressed that in 1876 only 10.8% of African territory belonged to a European country and that already by 1900, 90.4% of it was part of a European colonial Empire (Lenin [1917] 2012, 93).

analysis does not seem to differ in any significant aspect from Lenin's treatment of imperialism.[14] Nkrumah simply thought that independent Africa was living a phase in the history of capitalism subsequent to the one described by Lenin. The choice of the word 'neo-colonialism' well represents the continuity as well as the novelty of the phenomenon that Nkrumah wanted to explain: while acknowledging the persistence of Western monopolistic domination of Africa, Nkrumah identified in the gap between political independence and economic dependence the *main feature* of neo-colonialism as a stage in the history of imperialism.[15] As a consequence the closure of the gap between political and economic independence should have been the main aim of the African struggle that lay ahead:

> We have had enough of European monopoly domination of our economy. We have emancipated ourselves politically, and we have now to shake off the economic monopoly that was the objective of foreign political control. This is the crux of our economic policy, and the essential heart of our endeavours. For unless we attain economic freedom, our struggle for independence will have been in vain, and our plans for social and cultural advancement frustrated (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 102).

The capacity of foreign monopolies to exploit Africa's resources in spite of political independence was made possible by decisions taken at the time of the scramble for Africa and the beginning of colonialism. The division of Africa into small, fragmented units was precisely what allowed, even after the granting of political independence, neo-colonialism to act 'covertly, maneuvering men and governments, free of the stigma attached to political rule', and to keep the continent in a state of underdevelopment in spite of her great natural resources:[16] Nkrumah maintained that the economic freedom associated to the possibility of deploying these resources in the age of neo-colonialism could not be achieved under the present institutional framework, composed by a series of small, weak states; the only viable solution relied in a full political and economic union. The economic argument for African Unity was grounded in a deterministic philosophy of history: in the same way in which the balkanization of Africa was necessary to the further expansion of European capitalism, a union of African states emerged as 'an inescapable desideratum' (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 221) for the achievement of African economic development:

> A continental merging of our land areas, our populations and our resources, will alone give full substance to our aspirations to advance from our pre-industrial state to that stage of development

[14] The two books are remarkably similar even in their rhetorical strategies: both Lenin and Nkrumah largely employed evidence which 'was drawn, deliberately, from unimpeachably bourgeois sources, so as to condemn the bourgeoisie, so to speak, with their own words' (Brewer 1980, 109). In the same way in which Lenin quoted Sir Cecil Rhodes saying that the British Empire was 'a bread and butter question', Nkrumah quoted Jules Ferry, the French premier at the time of the Scramble, stating 'And can we say that this colonial policy is a luxury for modern nations? Not at all, gentlemen, this policy is, for all of us, a necessity, like the market itself'. The two quotes come respectively from Lenin ([1917] 2012, 97) and Nkrumah ([1963] 1985, 20).

[15] The fact that political independence could coexist with economic dependence is something that Lenin ([1917] 2012, 105) noted with reference to Portugal's and South America's dependence on British capital, but does not play an important role in his account.

[16] Quoting United Nations reports, Nkrumah listed them at great length, claiming that Africa possessed 'the greatest water power potential in the world', 'some of the greatest known reserves of uranium ore', 'coal reserves estimated at 4,500 million tons', and accounted for 96%, 69% and 63% of gem diamonds, cobalt and gold's world output respectively' (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 151).

> that can provide for all the people the high standard of living and welfare amenities of the most advanced industrial states (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 168).

The history of other countries appeared rich in political and economic lessons that Nkrumah was eager to learn and apply to Africa. Unity embodied a progressive political vision: for example in Nkrumah's simplistic reading of the history of the United States, America's evolution was paradigmatic of a people willing to undertake a civil war to 'maintain the political union that was threatened by reactionary forces'. (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 216). On the other hand the call for unity was strongly built on an economic argument. Perhaps not surprisingly with respect to this the model to be followed, rather than the United States, was the Soviet Union, showing 'how immensely superior planning on a continental scale, allied to a socialized objective, has proved for the giant latecomers into the realm of modern statehood over the fragmented discordant attempts of disunited entities'(Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 165). It is at this point that Nkrumah introduced the notion of continental planning that would have recurred in Green and Seidman's work, and can therefore be legitimately included among the main elements of the 'economics of African Unity'. Nkrumah's faith in a continental plan as a tool of development did not only consider it as a tool of modernization and structural transformation, but also a redistributive device, coordinating 'all existing resources, economic, agricultural, mineral, financial, and employ them methodically so as to improve the over-all surplus, to assist a wider capital development'(Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 168).

Yet besides claiming that African continental planning should have taken place 'centrally and scientifically' (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 170), Nkrumah never specified the features of the 'right' planning for Africa: its distinctive character arose exclusively from its continental scale.[17] But Nkrumah was not interested in matters of detail. Instead, he was proposing a broad, all-encompassing vision of political and economic transformation. What was expressed in the messianic tone of a revolutionary leader, supported by a Leninist interpretation of history and political economy, represented Nkrumah's challenge to contemporary economic relations between Africa and the West, to the recently acquired national sovereignty of African states and indirectly, as it will be shown in the next section, to the conventional wisdom of economic theory.

Ann Seidman, Reginald H. Green and 'The Economics of African Unity'

The Context of 'The Economics of African Unity' at the University of Ghana

According to Malawian economist and development expert Thandika Mkandawire (1997, 17) 'In many ways African universities, for all the joyous celebrations at their birth, were born in chains. [...] In the postcolonial period one set of chains was created by the dominant perceptions of the new authorities of what were the imperatives and exigencies of nation-building and development'.

[17] Nor did Nkrumah ever addressed the specific problems that the designers of a continental plan would have encountered in Africa, most notably the paucity of statistical information and the notable divergences in statistical practices and standards inherited from the different colonial regimes. This instead was a concern animating the proposals for economic integration advanced by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa from 1958 on.

Although with reference to imperatives which went beyond nation-building, and somehow aimed at providing a template for the whole continent, this was certainly the case in Nkrumah's Ghana, where the new country was quickly assuming the features of a socialist one-party state.

In the economic realm, the years between 1960 and 1966 envisaged an extended and rapid expansion of the role of the state: 'the modernization of agriculture and the rapid expansion of the industry' came to be seen as 'the foundation of a socialist society' (Jones 1976, 149). In 1963 the State Farms Corporation was established, in charge for developing large, government-owned, mechanised farms to increase the output of rubber, cotton, tobacco, palm oil and food crops. In the industrial sector, impressive investments were made in order to create large state enterprises producing iron and steel, as well as controlling to an unprecedented extent mining, commerce, construction and manufacturing (Rimmer 1992, 91). The economy came to be directed through an extensive use of price and capital controls. In a rhetorical atmosphere characterised by increasing hostility towards indigenous private business, administrative mechanisms largely replaced the market. As put by Tony Killick (2010, 53) at the time Professor of Economics at the University of Ghana and author of a classic study on Ghanaian economic policy, there was 'a real sense in which Nkrumah was turning Ghana into a "command economy"'. The structural transformation envisaged in the economic sphere was matched by shifting Cold War alliances (with the Soviet Union, Poland, Yugoslavia and China becoming an increasingly important source of aid and technical assistance) and by dramatic changes in politics. Article 55 of the new constitution passed in 1960, titled 'Special Powers of the First President', gave Nkrumah the power to 'give directions by legislative instruments', de facto allowing him 'to rule by decree' and thus bypass the Parliament (Omari 2000, 82). Also a Preventive Detention Act was passed, allowed the government to imprison without trial those found guilty of subversive and anti-government activities, [18] while paramilitary organizations were created to mobilise children (the Young Pioneers, formed along the lines of the Soviet organisation with the same name) and the unemployed youth (the Workers Brigades) for propaganda purposes. [19]

In 1963, the same year that Nkrumah published *Africa Must Unite*, the Department of Economics of the University of Ghana, the oldest in British-speaking Africa, instituted a research unit on 'The Economics of African Unity'. Not only the institution of the research unit was a signal of the fact that professional economists had to engage directly with the challenges raised by the Pan-African movement, but in the Ghanaian context, this specifically meant that Nkrumah's ideas about the possibility of creating a continental union had to be supported with the tools of economic science. The main aim of the research group was 'to make a contribution towards a better understanding of conditions and economic consequences of the political integration of Africa' by addressing a sub-set of problems like

a) General economic conditions of African integration
b) Studies in the Structure of African Economies

[18] Kwola Gdebemah, the man who served as Minister of Finance until 1960, following the deterioration of his relationship with Nkrumah left the country in voluntary exile in 1961 to avoid being jailed. However the most famous victim of the Preventive Detention Act was J.B. Danquah, a distinguished patriot, intellectual, and former political mentor of Nkrumah in the nationalist struggle in the late 1940s. Following Nkrumah's victory and the approval of the Detention Act, Danquah died in jail aging 70.

[19] The most exhaustive study of the Young Pioneers and the Workers Brigade remains Ahlman (2011).

c) A comparative study of economic plans in West Africa
d) Import Substitution in West African economies (No Author 1964, 49).[20]

The Research team on 'The Economics of African Unity' comprised Jan Drewnowski,[21] at the time director of the department, R. Bellamy, J. E. A. Manu, G. M. Adamu, P.P. Van, Reginald H. Green and Ann Seidman. The most systematic outcome of the activities of the research team was the publication, in 1968, of *Unity or Poverty? The Economics of Pan-Africanism*., co-authored by Green and Seidman. The volume represents the most sophisticated version, from an economic point of view, of the call for African political and economic unification and continental planning. As it is claimed in the acknowledgments, the volume was truly the result of a co-operative team effort, with Drewnowski drafting the original prospectus, Van der Wel preparing 'the first draft of the section on joint industrial location', Manu writing partial drafts of the section on intra-African trade and transportation, and Adamu and Bellamy contributing with comments at different stages of writing (Green and Seidman 1968, 19). However, following the presentation of a first draft of the book as background paper at the 1964 Cairo Heads of State Conference of the Organisation of African Unity, further revisions of the initial material and refinement of the ideas expressed became the sole responsibility of Green and Seidman. This section presents an historical reconstruction of Green and Seidman's contribution to the economics of African unity, by analysing its evolution between the early 1960s, when the two American economists joined the University of Ghana, and the publication of *Unity or Poverty*. It is argued that Green and Seidman were trying to create a new theory of market integration and a series of policy measures which truly reflected the characteristics and the needs of the African continent, and at the same time could support Nkrumah's call for continental planning and political union. Before turning to their work, it is perhaps apt to introduce the main characters of this section (figure 1).

[20]The institution of the research team on 'The Economics of African Unity' was part of a larger process of reorganisation of the Department of Economics, which instituted three more research areas: 'Econometric Model and National Income Studies of Ghana', 'Economy of Ghana I: Special Problems', focusing on fiscal and monetary policy, and 'Economy of Ghana II: Miscellaneous Problems', focusing on planning methods, the cocoa industry, labour issues and consumption expenditures (No Author 1963, 49-50).

[21] Drewnowski is a crucial figure to understand the orientation of the department of economics at the University of Ghana in the 1960s. A Polish economist, during his time at the University of Ghana Drewnowski not only asked (and obtained) the separation of economics from politics (leading to the establishment of a Political Science department), but played an important role in innovating the teaching, by calling for the introduction of a special section on the economy of Ghana in every course that was offered by the Department, making the teaching of statistics compulsory, and paying increasing attention to Marxist economics (Agbodeka 1998, 262).

Figure 1: Reginald H. Green and Ann Seidman. Source: Green and Seidman (1968).

Ann Seidman was born in 1926, and graduated with a Master in Economics in 1953 from Columbia University, with a thesis on 'Economic Concentration and Economic Theory'. Between 1958 and 1962 she was employed as Lecturer in Economics at Bridgeport University (Connecticut). After this experience, she moved to Ghana with her husband Robert Seidman, who would become a Professor of Law at the University of Ghana, and took a position of lecturer in economics at the University of Ghana, where she remained until 1966. Reginald H. Green was born in 1935 in Walla Walla, in the Washington state. After obtaining his PhD in economics from Harvard in 1960, Green had cumulated by the end of the decade experience as university lecturer in former colonies such as Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania, and Singapore, besides academic positions at prestigious American universities like Yale and Harvard[22]. His experience in Ghana began in 1960-61, when he travelled to West Africa as a Ford Foundation Area Studies fellow (Green 1963 163).

Ann Seidman on neo-colonialism, Reginald H. Green on institutions: the beginning of the 'Economics of African Unity'

The earliest explicit reference to Nkrumah's brand of Pan-Africanism within the economics community can be found in the second article ever published by Ann Seidman in *The Economic Bulletin of Ghana*. Founded in 1959, *The Economic Bulletin of Ghana* was the only Ghanaian academic economics journal, published under the auspices of the Economic Society of Ghana (formerly Economic Society of the Gold Coast), whose aim was 'the advancement of knowledge in the field of economics, especially as it relates to the problems of the Gold Coast' (letter of Barbu Niculescu on behalf of the Sponsoring Committee, 27th December 1958, PRAAD RG 3/5/834/1). Seidman's article was a book review of Walter Birmingham's *Introduction to Economics.* Walter Birmingham[23] had been a Professor of Economics at the University of Ghana (formely University College of the Gold Coast) since its foundation in 1948, and decided to put his experience into writing a textbook which would suit the specific needs of African economics students.[24] Seidman

[22]These biographical information are quoted from the back cover of Green and Seidman (1968).

[23] There is no biography of Birmingham, but the obituary published by *The Guardian* in 2004 provides a useful overviewof his life and work (Moonman 2004).

[24] The teaching of development economics, given the special problems arising from adapting knowledge to developing countries and the policy-oriented nature of the discipline, attracted much attention from

was very critical of Birmingham's work: she claimed that 'because his consideration of economic principles is limited by the underlying assumption of capitalist enterprise, it is not adequate a textbook for students in Ghana today' (Seidman 1963a, 39).[25] By criticising the adequacy of one of the leading figures in the research and teaching of economics in late colonial Ghana, Seidman was stressing the discontinuity brought by Nkrumah's attempt at socialist transformation of Ghana, which in turn required new tools of economic analysis.[26] More importantly Seidman thought that Birmingham's analysis of trade, based on orthodox economic theory, was contradicted by the historical experience of colonialism, and this kind of analysis might eventually lead to the repetition of past mistakes:

> Birmingham's last chapter on international trade seems to accept uncritically the dictum that each nation should specialize 'on those products for which it has the lowest opportunity costs' (p. 110). He does not point out that historically the particular kind of 'specialization' has created colonial economies which provide raw materials and products for capitalist industries of Europe and the United States. To disregard this historical reality might lead to the perpetuation of old economic relationships which have in the past chained the nations of Africa to the instability of world markets and condemned them to underdevelopment (Seidman 1963a, 39).

The context of Seidman's call for Pan-Africanism was once again Birmingham's misleading understanding of African trade:

> He [Birmingham] does not, however, examine the problems of reconstructing the economies of former colonies to build the foundations of mutually beneficial trade between equal nations, each specializing to a degree in production of goods in accordance with their resources – a kind of trade which might become the cornerstone of Pan-African cooperation. The possibility that such a fundamental reconstruction might best be undertaken through planning within the framework of socialist ownership tends […] to be precluded by Birmingham's underlying assumptions (Seidman 1963a, 39).

While this claim was not followed by anything as explicitly in line with Nkrumah's call for a socialist Pan-African union until Green's 1965 paper on 'African Unification: Some Perspectives, Paths and Problems', the theme of neo-colonialism recurred in all the following publications by Seidman on *The Economic Bulletin of Ghana* in the 1960s. For example in her study of the impact of foreign capital on Brazil's economic development she pointed out that Brazil, given its reliance on

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development economists in the 1960s. For an introduction to the debate surrounding the teaching of development economics, see the collection of essays edited by Martin and Knapp (1967).

[25] A similar critique was expressed by Seidman (1962) in an earlier review of an undergraduate economics textbook. The fact that Seidman strongly believed that African students needed a different kind of textbook is proved by the fact that she set such a task for herself, leading to the publication of *An Economics Textbook for Africa* (Seidman 1972). Interestingly shortly before Seidman's textbook came out, a collection of essays dealing with the problems of teaching economics in Africa was published, based on a conference which took place at the University of Dar Es Salaam in Tanzania (where Seidman went to teach in 1972). The volume hosts, among other contributions, a paper by Reginald Green (1973), who at the time was working for the Tanzanian Treasury. Many thanks to Bob Dimand for making me aware of this volume.

[26] However, this claim can be read more broadly as an attempt to question the applicability of orthodox economic analysis in African conditions. See next section.

coffee, was exposed to price fluctuations on primary product markets, and therefore, in spite of having achieved political independence in the nineteenth century, in fact shared the features of a colonial economy (Seidman 1963b, 19).[27] Her 1964 study on 'The economics of neo-colonialism in West Africa' significantly begins with a quote from *Africa Must Unite*: 'The greatest danger at present facing African countries is neo-colonialism and its major instrument, balkanization' (Seidman 1964, 3). The lack of fruitful economic cooperation in West Africa following from balkanisation was imputed to several factors, and therefore represented a further elaboration of Nkrumah's monolithic argument. For example the co-existence of different monetary zones 'posed a serious obstacle to the growth of trade between West African nations' (Seidman 1964, 4). At the time when Seidman was writing over half of the population of West Africa lived in the sterling area, with the exceptions of Liberia, which used U.S. dollars as its currency, and the former French colonies. Although Mali and Guinea had established, like previously Ghana and Nigeria,[28] their own central banks, the remaining former French colonies were still under the CFA Franc zone, and therefore had their foreign exchange reserves 'still pooled and allocated from Paris, sharply limiting the possibility of diversifying their trade and affecting their purchase of capital equipment essential for development' (Seidman 1964, 4). Finally, and very much in line with Nkrumah's analysis, Seidman paid more emphasis on the reliance on foreign private firms for investment which, as already argued with reference to Brazil, made West African states vulnerable to the predatory action of foreign companies: 'divided, they [the West African states] have permitted large foreign firms, mainly from the United States, to gear the commercial sectors of their economies to the profitable export of raw materials' (Seidman 1964, 12-13).[29] With Nkrumah Seidman also shared the conviction that Africa was particularly well suited for industrial development, given the impressive amount of resources scattered on the continent, and that Western imperialism was the main force perpetuating poverty (Seidman 1964, 9-10).

But how to formulate a policy capable of re-directing patterns of trade and shape significantly resource allocation? This is where Green's institutional analysis and thought about policy-making in Africa comes in, providing a partial answer to this question. These concerns can be traced back to a paper on 'Multi-purpose Economic Institutions in Africa', published in 1963 on *The Journal of Modern African Studies*. Although he stated that part of his argument for multi-purpose economic institutions could be used to favour 'the development of economic relations with countries of equal economic strength' (Green 1963, 180) and that 'Increasing regional or continental unity of interests and practical co-operation may also be regarded as furthering Pan-African objectives' (Green 1963, 181) at this point Green's focus was, rather than on African unity as such, on the relationship between policy goals and policy instruments. The relationship between policy goals and policy instruments had been formalised by the econometrician Jan Tinbergen in his 1952 *On the Theory of Economic Policy*. Tinbergen had produced a formal model of economic policy in which a set of equations represented the relationship between policy instruments and policy goals. In contrast, Green's analysis differed from Tinbergen's in findings and methods. Green contradicted Tinbergen's univocal association between policy tools and policy goals by claiming that in Africa institutions as

[27] As it has been shown in the previous section, the gap between 'merely' political and 'real' economic independence was a pervasive theme in Nkrumah's argument for Pan-Africanism.
[28] Sierra Leone was in the process of developing its own currency.
[29] This is also, to the best of the author's knowledge, the first explicit criticism of United States' 'economic imperialism' in the *Economic Bulletin of Ghana*.

policy instruments could be, and should be, used for the *simultaneous* achievement of several economic policy objectives. According to Green the tendency characterising most economic analysis of policy à la Tinbergen[30]

> to stress the need for at least as many instruments of policy as aims to be promoted, and the implicit belief that single institutions should normally concentrate on one aim, are highly unrealistic and operationally undesirable in many African situations (Green 1963, 164-165).

Whereas Tinbergen was providing a formal model of policy-making, Green turned to the history of economic institutions to prove his point. By drawing on his previous work on the Ghana cocoa industry (for example Green 1961), and basing his argument on the case Ghanaian Cocoa Marketing Board between 1938 and 1960, Green tried to show that the use of a single economic institution to fill different policy objectives was not only possible in theory, but in fact it had already been a pervasive phenomenon in recent African economic history.[31] The Cocoa Marketing Board was a cartel of cocoa buyers, aiming at keeping the prices of cash crop stable. He claimed that the Cocoa Marketing Board in the period under consideration was a successful device in pursuing policy objectives as different as short- and long-run price stabilisation, income stabilisation and redistribution 'to the advantage of Ghanaians and at the expense of expatriate buyers and agents', and had in fact fostered the implementation of fiscal and monetary policy, by making the collection of revenue easier and by favouring the release of aggregate purchasing power, respectively (Green 1964, 170-171).[32] Furthermore, the Marketing Board had contributed to the creation of 'the confidence necessary for long-run improvement and extension of cultivation' and, more generally, had helped the government achieving other 'general' policy objectives such as Africanisation and the mobilisation of foreign exchange reserves for domestic purposes (Green 1963, 171). While the extent to which the contribution of the Marketing Board to these policy objectives was varied, Green's point was that the evolution of the Marketing Board took place in a relatively spontaneous way, and that only a more conscious design of institutions, incorporating the empirical observation that a single institution could be used to achieve simultaneously several policy goals, could lead to effective reform in Africa.

Methodological Tenets of Seidman and Green's Work

The dissatisfaction shared by Green and Seidman towards the way in which economists conventionally understood African realities was crucial in the construction of an economic argument for Nkrumah's brand of Pan-Africanism: an 'economics of African Unity' was emerging: not only as a set of policy implications in line with Nkrumah's political aspirations but, more importantly, as a distinctive way of thinking about economic theory and market integration in Africa.

[30] He explicitly referred in a footnote to Tinbergen (1958).
[31] For further discussion on beginning of the Ghana cocoa marketing board see Alence (2001).
[32] Recent assessments have tended to adopt a more critical stance towards the Ghana marketing board. For example Robert Bates (2005, 27-28) noted that given its monopsonistic position, the Ghana Marketing Board was highly inefficient, and was able to transfer the burden of its inefficiency to farmers, through lower prices paid for the crop.

The first crucial element in Green and Seidman's critique was the tenet that mainstream economic theory required several substantial modifications before it could be fruitfully applied to Africa.[33] At the policy level this implied that both the call for economic planning and the plea for free markets required substantial qualifications before they could be advocated in the context of underdeveloped economies. In his paper on 'Multi-purpose economic Institutions' Green significantly wrote:

> The gap [in policy recommendations] between P.T. Bauer and Paul Baran is certainly wide – but the nineteenth century *laissez-faire* prescription of Bauer is as devoid of significant modification for African or Asian conditions as is the centralised, Lenin-Luxemburg mode which Baran assumes as a goal (Green 1963, 171).

The mention of Bauer and Baran, considered representative of two ideological extremes, prefigures the attempt to find a 'third way' between Soviet-inspired Marxism and the uncritical adoption of Western *laissez-faire*, both accused of falling into the trap of applying concepts and ideologies that did not fit into Africa's reality. But how to identify the relevant 'significant modifications'? Rather than grounding their support for a different economics in culturally bounded forms of African economic rationality, Green and Seidman, whose understanding of history was closer to the American institutionalists than to orthodox Marxists, seemed to imply that a correct understanding of African economies involved some form of *historical* knowledge against which it was possible, if not to *test* economic theories, at least to establish their relevance for African conditions.

In Seidman's review of Birmingham's *Introduction to Economics* for example, the historical experience of colonialism was enough to reject the relevance (if not the validity) of the Ricardian theory of comparative advantage for Africa. In Green's work on 'Multi-purpose Economic Institutions' the history of the Ghanaian Cocoa Marketing Board 'proved' the limited usefulness of Tinbergen's theory of economic policy for the design of economic institutions in Africa. An historical perspective, combined with first-hand observation, could offer valuable insights for economic theorising in spite of the lack of detailed statistical information.[34] Seidman's description in the back cover of *Unity or Poverty? The Economics of Pan-Africanism* depicts her as someone who 'has travelled by car from Accra and Lagos to Ouagadougou, Niamey, Bamako and Timbuktu to study the problems of African economic development at first hand'. Unfortunately from the evidence available it is impossible to understand if first-hand

[33] Certainly this was not unique to Seidman and Green: in fact this feature, famously defined by Albert Hirschmann (1981, 3) 'the pluri-economics claim' was one of the foundations of development economics in the 1960s and, to some extent, in the 1970s.

[34] In an enthusiastic review of Polly Hill (1963)'s *Migrant Cocoa Farmers of Southern Ghana*, a classic in economic anthropology, Green (1964, 27) found the book 'stimulating in its demonstration of the possibilities for fruitful research in African economic patterns and their continuity and change over time and in showing the possibility of drawing illuminating qualitative conclusions even when materials for a formal quantitative analysis are lacking. The latter point is relevant to a very substantial body of possible areas of economic investigation given the spotty nature of existing statistics'.

observation played any direct role in shaping Seidman's thinking about African economies.[35] In the case of Green instead we have a more concrete example of the use of first-hand observation for economic research: in his 1965 paper on African Unification (discussed in the next section) he claimed to have partly based his observations on the difficulties inherent in fostering economic cooperation in East Africa on 'discussions with officials and civil servants in Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda' (Green 1965b, 13). Perhaps the role of first-hand observation has to be understood in contrast with a strictly quantifiable and apparently a-political notion of economic progress: while maintaining that the approach of growth theorists had 'some educational and analytical value in studying the basic sectoral implications of national economic objectives', and that cognitive instruments like input-output tables could 'be useful at certain stages of plan formulation', Green maintained that these tools ultimately failed to shed light on the 'institutional and political aspects of development' (Green 1963, 164). This misleading way of observing African economies and conceptualising the process of economic development had detrimental consequences on economic policy, narrowing the space for envisaging effective alternatives, and making the preservation of the status quo more likely:

> Economic theories of growth –dealing as they do with models built up from a limited number of highly aggregated variables –assume an institutional matrix rather than providing insight into how such a matrix might be improved (Green 1963, 163-164).

The solution to Africa's problems then required a radically new vision, grounded in history but capable of *imagining* alternatives especially suited to her situation. In order to promote an economic policy of African Unity this did not require anything less than incorporating the methodological programme explained above into an attempt to reconstruct the theory of market integration.

Re-constructing the theory of market integration: the making of the 'economics of African Unity'

The most significant example of 'economics of African Unity' as support for a final policy goal and as a way of looking at African economies found its clearest expression in Green's paper on 'African Economic Unification: Some Perspectives, Paths and Problems' (Green 1965b).[36] In Green's view what made a reconstruction of the theory of market integration particularly urgent was the assumption that in this field the limits of orthodox economic theorising about Africa were both most dangerous and evident. Policy recommendations about African economic integration based on wrong

[35] However, observing African economies at first-hand could be for Western theorists a very unsettling experience, forcing them to question concepts, analytical categories and ways of seeing the economy. See for example Morgan (2011) on Phyllis Deane's fieldwork in Northern Rhodesia.

[36] Green's article was loosely based on a paper titled 'Customs Union Theory, Political Economy and Tiers Monde Reality: A Critique Toward a Revision of Economic Integration Analysis' (referred to as Green 1965a), discussed at the seminar of the Department of Economics the same year. The latter was the second of a series of three papers, but unfortunately the author has not been able during his fieldwork to find the remaining two. In fact, after a four days long exploration of the Library of the Department of Economics at the University of Ghana, the author feels confident enough to state that Green (1965a) is one of the very few surviving unpublished papers discussed in the Department of Economics under Nkrumah's rule.

thinking could have led to disastrous consequences because 'The range and scale of the impact of true economic unification is much wider than that of almost any other policy' and 'Economic integration is *not* easily or costlessly reversible (Green 1965b, 3)'. The only way to provide a correct analysis of African conditions and prove the necessity of political and economic unification relied in the application of the methodological tenets illustrated above, and in the advocacy for a policy of continental political union which 'naturally' followed from them.

The importance attached by Green and Seidman to historical knowledge for correct economic theorising has already been described, but in his 1965 paper Green went one step further and explicitly pointed out the historical nature of economic knowledge, and the political context of its application:

> The theory of economic integration began in the world of Vinerian tariff and neo-pigovian welfare economics. […] This is the world of Marshallian synthesis, of the unalterable division between primary producing and industrial nations, of 'nature does not make haste'. It is a world not simply alien and irrelevant to, but totally rejected by, African political decision makers because it was the economic world order of colonialism (Green 1965b, 4).

According to Green then, consciously or not, the notion of trade on which the classical theory of economic integration was built had acted as an apology for colonial exploitation by ruling out, through the notion of comparative advantage, the *theoretical possibility* that colonies could embark in industrial development. Probably Green's point on the historical nature of economic theories can be read as an extension of his criticism of Bauer and Baran: economic theories tended to bear the mark of their place of inception, and the policy prescriptions associated to the two economists reflected two ideologies (classical liberalism and Marxism) whose origins were too far in time and space to have anything meaningful to teach to the new nations of Africa.

In Green's critique, the theory of economic integration built on Marshall's heritage,[37] 'concerned with alternative equilibrium states, with narrow changes in allocational efficiency, with evaluation of marginal gains and losses for members and non-members states', presented several layers of applicability to different economic areas: for example it was mostly applicable to understand the advantages deriving from integration in the case of the European Economic Community and partly applicable to the case of the socialist Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (Green 1965a, 11). In contrast Africa stood out as a 'nearly pure case of non-applicability' (Green 1965b, 12). The reason for this was that conventional theory of economic integration failed to capture the essence and the timing of Africa's priorities: 'Rapid economic development depends on radical structural (not marginal) change' (Green 1965b, 4). By 'radical structural' Green meant that the economic change sought by African nations went beyond an improvement in static efficiency and mere economic growth: rather it involved a deep change in the structures of production, with a marked shift from dependence on agriculture to industrialisation, and a consequent relocation of underdeveloped countries in the global patterns of specialization.

What Green identified as 'the most effective institutional-policy framework' resembled to a large extent Nkrumah's vision and included:

[37] It is probable that by 'Marshallian economics' Green meant to indicate more broadly the use of marginal analysis which paved the way for neoclassical economics, rather than the specific economics of Alfred Marshall.

1. a continental plan formulation and coordination body
2. a series of major multi-national projects, e.g. in coordinated river basin power-water industrial-industrial development and in the creation of coordinated sub-regional transport systems;
3. a continental central bank […];
4. substantial member state initiative in project proposal, small-scale development project initiation, and major programme implementation (Green 1965b, 9-10).

Unfortunately Green did not make any real progress in defining, taking as a departure point the position expressed by Nkrumah in *Africa Must Unite*, the features of the 'right' continental plan for Africa. Instead he presented a distinctive reading of the relationship between economic reform and political vision. This emerges more clearly by considering the case of another economist discussing this relation with reference to economic integration in a different context. Robert Triffin, in occasion of the 1957 International Economic Association's Conference on the 'Economic Consequences of the Size of Nations', sarcastically remarked:

> Orthodox economic advice is once again being spurned by statesmen. The common market treaty has already been signed, and negotiations on the establishment of a European free trade area are moving rapidly towards a successful conclusion. […] The economists, however, are gentle fellows who take such rebukes in their stride, and are quite willing –even anxious- to try to find belated economic justifications for the decisions of their governments to do the opposite of what they wanted them to do. Keynes did this in the 1930s and I suspect that we may have been assembled at this conference for a similar face-saving operation (Triffin 1960, 247).

Green, on the other hand claimed that 'Economic integration movements –when effective- are usually part, and often a secondary part, of broader socio-political movements' (Green 1965b, 3). He noted that 'the idea of Europe and the E.E.C. are integrally related (if separable)' and, more importantly, that 'the connection between varying expressions of political and economic Pan-Africanism are even closer' (Green 1965b, 3). What were the implications of this subjugation of economic integration to political visions? Probably this statement implied that the problem of African economic integration could be fruitfully addressed only in the terms raised by the Pan-African movement itself, hence rejecting as irrelevant ideologically alien perspectives. Secondly, given that Green had obviously set for himself the task of shaping the economic element of Pan-Africanism, this might be interpreted as an implicit declaration of his support for Nkrumah's vision. This is consistent with the role that Green (1965b, 3) attributed to the political arena as the testing ground of economic thinking: 'Programmes and institutions directed to the solution of challenges in political economy are relevant only if they serve and *are seen to serve* the goals of governments and other groups wielding political power'. Thirdly, although economists could contribute to the Pan-African cause by identifying the best path to be followed and imagine the appropriate institutional set Green, explicitly mentioning Nkrumah, admitted that 'political unity in some form is a pre-condition for economic unity' and for the correct functioning of its most spectacular artefact: the continental plan (Green 1965b, 9).[38] According to Green political union was the device that would have 'set in

[38] The importance of the connection between economic planning and political identity in post-colonial Africa was noted by Green in his comparative study of development plans in Africa, where he went as far as to say

motion' the continental plan and made it work effectively, by deciding the allocation of industries across different countries and by establishing a mechanism of incentives for the fulfilment of the plan objectives (Green 1965b, 9).

Green's vision of economic science as a tool contributing to political and institutional transformation gave to his 1965 paper a dramatic sense of urgency: he worryingly noted that several factors like the 'lack of adequate knowledge' about African economies, the action of 'many foreign economic interests', and the fear of each nation part of a union that gains would be distributed unfairly made successful economic cooperation in Africa difficult to achieve (Green 1965b, 8-9). Although he stated that the ideal framework for continental economic integration could be properly designed within two years, he warned that 'unless substantial break-throughs creating a tangible forward momentum to both political and economic unity are achieved within a decade, Africa will enter a period in which unification will be distinctly unlikely' (Green 1965b, 12). The fall of Nkrumah in 1966, only a few months after Green had published these words, shows that he was being overly optimistic.

From Addis Ababa to Accra: the end of Nkrumah's vision, 1963-1966

How did these ideas shape African affairs? Did the tenets associated to 'the economics of Pan-Africanism' have any political effect? A short answer to these questions comes from Kofi Buenor Adjor (1988, 91) who remarked: 'As long as Nkrumah only talked about Pan-Africanism few objected. Indeed, virtually every African leader paid lip-service to the Pan-Africanist ideal. However, once Nkrumah indicated that he intended to act and not just talk, opposition began to mount'. In 1963 the Emperor of Ethiopia Haile Selassie organised a conference in Addis Ababa to reduce the tension between the Casablanca and the Monrovia Group. Nkrumah saw it as a crucial occasion to convince other African leaders of the necessity to establish a continental union, and sent his ambassadors to different African capitals to distribute copies of his *Africa Must Unite* in order to 'lobby African heads of state and foreign ministers' (Biney 2011, 123). The main outcome of the Conference was the constitution of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), a supra-national institution admitting all African independent states which had among its purposes the promotion of 'the unity and solidarity of the African states' and the eradication of 'all forms of colonialism from Africa' (OAU [1963] 1971, Article II, 3). However the OAU 'largely reflected the demands of the Monrovia group and was thus entirely different from Nkrumah's envisaged framework […] because the guiding principles of sovereignty and non-interference prohibited deeper integration […], therefore fixing the map of Africa' (Welz 2013, 3).[39]

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that a development plan was 'viewed by almost all African states as one of the standard attributes of sovereignty' (Green 1965c, 249).

[39] In occasion of the ratification of the charter, in June 1963, Nkumah declared 'The Charter of African Unity must be regarded as the last but *one step* on the road to Continental Union', but the following events prove that African leaders strongly disagreed' quoted in Nkrumah (1973, 260) Joseph Nye, an acute observer of African political and economic integration in the 1960s, wrote about the OAU that 'While such organisations represent an institutionalization of a weak sense of regional identity, it is clear that their major function is not that of creating high levels of integration among their members. Among the new states of Africa, regional organisation is attractive precisely because it appears to maximize the values of independence, unity and

It was in this context of provisional defeat that the work of Green, Seidman and the other economists of the 'Economics of African Unity' research team received public exposure, and was included in the background material of the second OAU summit, which took place in Cairo in 1964. Seidman actually travelled to Cairo with the Ghanaian delegation as Economic Adviser. During his long and passionate speech in front of the other African leaders Nkrumah once again stressed the need for a common 'Defence, Foreign Policy and Economic Development (including a common currency for Africa)' and claimed that 'The imperialists […] will not respect it [the Charter of Unity] until it assumes the form of a Union Government' (Nkrumah 1973, 281). But Nkrumah's proposals were increasingly greeted by other African heads of state with a range of reactions spanning from plain indifference to open criticism (Rooney 2010, 315).[40]

In 1965, when Ghana hosted the third OAU summit in Accra, Nkrumah published another book, significantly titled, with an obvious reference to Lenin, *Neo-Colonialism: the Last Stage of Imperialism* (Nkrumah [1965] 1970). If *Africa Must Unite* was the articulation, no matter how vague, of a political and economic alternative for the whole continent, *Neo-Colonialism* was a lengthy, vehement and uncompromising critique of neo-colonialism and neo-colonialist agents, by now including former colonial powers, Western multinationals, 'reactionary' African governments, and international organizations. The 'subtle and varied' means through which neo-colonialist agents hindered African union comprised the manipulation of primary product prices in international capital markets, the use of high rates of interest, multilateral aid, and such tools of cultural policy as evangelism and American cinema (Nkrumah [1965] 1970, 239-254). By the time the summit took place Nkrumah was almost completely isolated, increasingly perceived by other African leaders as a lonely Don Quixote fighting against the windmills of real or imaginary neo-colonialist forces, and, what was worse, a direct threat to their recently gained national sovereignty. Indeed shortly before the conference evidence was produced that in Ghana had been established secret military camps where, under the supervision of East German and Chinese instructors, revolutionaries from Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Upper Volta, Niger, Nigeria and other African countries were receiving training in guerrilla techniques, aimed at the overthrown of their respective governments as the first step towards the establishment of a Pan-African government.[41] The 1965 Accra Summit had already been boycotted by a number of French colonies, but the revelation that Nkrumah was offering political asylum and military training to Pan-African revolutionaries threw Ghana into even more discredit. Nkrumah agreed to expel some of the refugees, but it was already too late (Wolfers 1976, 155). Perhaps on the most iconic and long-lasting embodiments of Nkrumah's Pan-African ambition was the majestic building constructed to host the 1965 conference (figure 2).

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development, and to avoid the problems inherent in nationalist isolation and ambitious unification' (Nye 1971, 21-22).

[40] Looking back at the reception of his 'Proposals for a Union Government of Africa' at second OAU summit Nkrumah wrote: 'To my great disappointment, it was clear from the speeches of some of the conference members that there were some who were still not ready for such a radical step to be taken' (Nkrumah 1973, 277).

[41] A recent assessment of the relevance of the Ghanaian camps for Cameroonian revolutionaries is Terretta (2010).

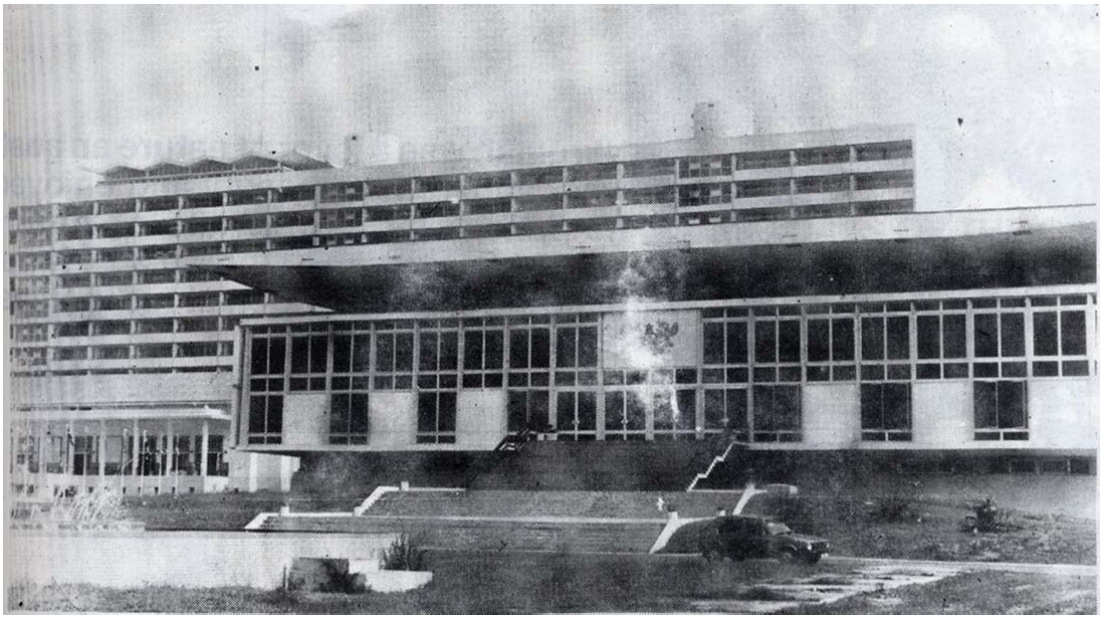

Figure 2: The Kwame Nkrumah Conference Centre, hosting the third meeting of the OAU summit in Accra, 1965. Source: McLean Amissah 1993.

The Kwame Nkrumah Conference Centre (of Job 600, as it came to be called since it was the six hundredth project realized by the Ghana National Construction Corporation) estimated to cost between £ 8,000,000 and £ 10,000,000 (Omari 2000, 127) at a time where foreign exchange reserves were exhausted and shortages of basic goods were plaguing the economy 'became the symbol of all Nkrumah's foolish prestige projects' (Rooney 2010, 316). Amidst this atmosphere of increasing popular discontent at home and isolation from other African leaders, Nkrumah was overthrown in February 1966. Although the reasons behind his overthrown had more to do with the mismanagement of the Ghanaian economy than with the tension pervading the Pan-African scene, the revolutionary dream of a Union Government and a continental plan ended with the fall of Nkrumah, while the crowds in Accra were cheering and smashing statues of the former leader.

Following the fall of Nkrumah, it seemed unlikely that Guinea and Mali, isolated from other French-speaking countries and without the support of Ghana, could push in any significant way the cause of African Unity and continental planning. In 1968 also Modibo Keita was overthrown in a coup d'état, and Mali almost immediately went back to the CFA Franc zone, (Stasavage 2003, 162) *de facto* erasing Keita's dream of socialist emancipation from the metropolis. The only remaining bastion of the movement of African Unity was Sèkou Tourè's Guinea, where Nkrumah found asylum and acted as honorary vice-president in the years between the 1966 coup and his death in 1972.

Requiem for a dream: *Unity or Poverty? The Economics of Pan-Africanism*

In this context of grim disillusionment Green and Seidman in 1968 published *Unity or Poverty? The Economics of Pan-Africanism.* The book, dedicated 'To all those who have striven and strive for the liberation of Africa', was an extended and refined version of Green and Seidman's work with the research team on the 'economics of African Unity'. The authors emphatically asked: 'Can

continental African economic unity be achieved? The answer is not only that it *can* be achieved, but that it *must* be achieved. African economic unity is a revolutionary concept. Its accomplishment requires an economic revolution' (Green and Seidman 1968, 23). As it has been shown, this revolution was twofold, implying not only a re-organisation of the practice of economic cooperation in Africa, but also the rejection of conventional wisdom and the embracement of an alternative set of methodological principles to think about economic integration. To be fair Green and Seidman mentioned Balassa's 1961 *The Theory of Economic Integration* (the book which became the orthodox treatment of economic integration in the 1960s) and admitted that his analysis, while taking place 'primarily in a European context […] in the area of difficulties in market unification is at least substantially relevant to Africa' (Gren and Seidman 1968, 335).[42] However, ultimately the book is permeated by a constant attempt to overcome the generality of 'orthodox' integration theory, which dealt with the Western, industrialised world but was being applied everywhere, and tried to find some specific tenets that could account for the specific historical patterns experienced by African economies and the peculiarities of its economic structure.

Unity or Poverty?, drawing on Seidman's previous work on neo-colonialism, presented once again a description of Africa's potential for industrialisation and of the detrimental economic consequences of balkanisation, but also presented in support of its claims an impressive amount of novel empirical evidence, collected from reports of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, documents of national African planning agencies and other official bodies, bank reports, industrial and trade statistics, and political pronouncements of African leaders. It is crucial to note that, while still maintaining their support for continental planning, in the aftermath of Nkrumah's fall Green and Seidman separated its economic component from the constitution of a unitary African government:

> The need for an all-African political authority […] does not imply that economic unification requires a unitary African government, totally su1bmerging individual states. Neither does the formulation of united African development planning require prior identities of economic ideologies or institutional frameworks (Green and Seidman 1968, 228).

This marked a clear attempt to detach the 'economics of Pan-Africanism' from the political vision in which it originated, and make its analysis and policy prescriptions survive the fall of Nkrumah's regime, and still be relevant for Africa.[43] Furthermore, by stating the assumption that united African development planning did not require 'prior identities of economic ideologies', the book marked also a retreat from the association of socialism and continental planning which was, for example, expressed by Seidman in her 1963 review of Birmingham's *Principles of Economics*. Yet

[42] Interestingly Balassa, like Green, was at Yale in the early 1960s, and therefore it is extremely likely that he must have met and known him. However unfortunately the author does not possess any evidence about the relationship between the two which might have contributed to clarify this aspect of the development of Green's thought.

[43] Seidman had left Ghana in 1966, and in 1968 became Senior Lecturer at the University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania). Green left Ghana in December 1965 and also went to Tanzania, where he became advisor to the Treasury. Although Tanzania under Nyerere was arguably the most socialist of African countries in the 1960s, Nyerere's vision of Pan-Africanism had little to do with Nkrumah's proposals for a continental union. At the Cairo OAU summit Nyerere had been the harshest critic of Nkrumah's proposals for a continental Union. See Nyerere (1964).

the reception of *Unity or Poverty?* indicates that Green and Seidman's work, perhaps partly because of its 'Nkrumaist' imprint, was perceived as hopelessly utopian. The vagueness with which 'an all-African political authority' was defined made it undistinguishable, according to one reviewer, from Nkrumah's dream of 'a Pan-African government' (Ankomah 1969, 159). Although the quality and the amount of empirical evidence collected to show the existence of 'neo-colonialism' in Africa impressed and convinced the reviewers (for example Sutcliffe 1968, 256), the notion that some form of continental planning was the solution to it seemed unfeasible, unpractical and detached from reality. At best Green and Seidman were perceived as progressive dreamers: the most sympathetic reviewer for example defined them

> not 'quiet Americans' but rebels with a cause, recalling Shaw's maxim: 'The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable man persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man (Clairmonte 1969, 493).

Ironically in spite of Green's talks with officials and civil servants in East Africa, and the constant attempt to place economic theory in the political arena by adopting institutions a crucial unit of analysis and policy design, the authors were accused of not understanding the political obstacles to African integration. About the book one reviewer wrote:

> Its main problems are the gap between the ideal and political reality. Although the case for economic integration is well made, it rests entirely on an analysis of economic institutions. The impediments to integration are, however, mainly political (Davies 1968, 812).

What was probably worse from their point of view was that even their systematic attempt to base policy recommendations on 'specific' African conditions failed to be acknowledged. Kofi Ankomah, a Ghanaian lecturer from the Ghana Institute of Public Administration, stated that Green and Seidman's 'models, without doubt, have been the European Economic Community and the Council for Mutual Assistance of the Socialist Nations […]. But the authors fail to note the inapplicability of these institutions to the African problems they have highlighted' (Ankomah 1969, 161). Ankomah's view of the book was overall extremely negative, claiming that much of the case for unity had been argued, well before Green and Seidman, by intellectuals like George Padmore and W.E.B. DuBois (notably he did not mention Nkrumah!), and that the plans presented were 'more idealistic than practical' (Ankomah 1969, 161). Perhaps *Unity or Poverty* appeared as the posthumous manifesto for economic Pan-Africanism, and the requiem for Nkrumah's dream of African unity. The gap that the reviewers of *Unity or Poverty* perceived between African reality and the idealistic plans described by Green and Seidman shares the sense of romantic defeat typically associated to utopian visions.

Conclusion

This paper has provided an historical reconstruction of Green and Seidman's work on the theme of African Unity in the 1960s, placing it in the context of postcolonial tendencies to imagine alternatives to the nation state in Africa, and arguing that in spite of the economists' attempt to build an alternative economic theory of market integration *in* Africa and *for* Africa, the ideas expressed in

their 1960s research failed both at the political level, with the fall of Nkrumah and consequent abandonment of the idea of continental planning and Pan-African government, and in terms of obtaining recognition of the validity of their theorising. Ultimately the reviewers of Green and Seidman's work stressed the wide gap between their idealistic plans and reality, emphasising the 'utopian' nature of their work.

Yet as argued by Karl Mannheim (1966) in his pioneer study of ideology and utopia, it is possible to identify the utopian nature of certain ideas *ex post*.[44] From our privileged standpoint it is easy to see that Nkrumah's vision was unlikely to succeed, and the continental plan imagined by Green and Seidman would have failed to materialise.[45] But Nkrumah thought that the end of colonialism meant the removal of the main constraint on the possibility for Africans to think and act, and the unfolding of previously unseen possibilities in human history. In *Africa Must Unite* Nkrumah wrote:

> I have often being accused of `pursuing a 'policy of the impossible'. But I cannot believe in the impossibility of achieving African union any more than I could have ever thought of the impossibility of attaining African freedom (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 170).

Even without subscribing to the view that 'Human history has no *libretto*' (Berlin 2003, 201), the boundary separating the domain of the possible from that of the utopian at a given time and place is open to re-definition and negotiation. The task that Green and Seidman had set for themselves can be interpreted as an attempt to *stretch the boundaries of the thinkable* in postcolonial Africa, expanding what new states perceived as being their legitimate space for political and economic action and grounding it in some form of scientific analysis. Friedrich Hayek (who certainly would have not approved of Green and Seidman's continental plan!) wrote:

> Utopia, like ideology, is a bad word today; and it is true that most utopias aim at radically redesigning society and suffer from internal contradictions which make their realisation impossible. But an ideal picture of a society which may not be wholly achievable, or a guiding conception of the overall order to be aimed at, is nevertheless not only the indispensable precondition of any rational policy, but also the chief contribution that science can make to the solution of the problems of practical policy (quoted in Hodgson 1999, 6).

[44] However, his argument is placed in the context of a much more complex discussion of the relationship between utopian ideas and philosophy of history (see especially Mannheim 1966, chapter 4).

[45] However already in 1963, when Green and Seidman started working on the theme of African Unity there was plenty of historical evidence to support the idea that African supra-national cooperation had little prospects. French West Africa was divided into different states at independence largely because 'the wealthy colonies, especially the Ivory Coast, did not want to continue subsidising the poorer parts of the Federation'. (Hopkins 1990, 292). The Central African Federation (1943-1953) comprising Rhodesia and Malawi, collapsed at independence for political reasons. The East African Economic Federation survived the achievement of independence of Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda only three years, and eventually crumbled down. As we have seen the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union, possibly the only example of supra-national cooperation directly inspired by Nkrumah's blend of socialism and Pan-Africanism, collapsed in 1963.

In spite of their failure to gain significant political legitimacy and scholarly approval outside the geographical and temporal coordinates of Nkrumah's Ghana,[46] the work of Green and Seidman on the economics of Pan-Africanism perhaps should be read as an invitation to reflect on the role of economics, and social sciences more generally, to shift the boundary between the possible and the utopian at specific times and places. Finally, this analysis on the relationship between Nkrumah's Pan-African vision and the work of Green and Seidman can be seen as a call for a more inclusive way of writing the history of development economics. This stream of historiography is very much in its incipient stage, but already comprises excellent biographies of leading theorists (like Tignor 2006), participant histories,[47] and 'internalist' assessments of the evolution of the discipline.[48] However the micro-history of the economics of African Unity should lead us to think of development economics, rather than as a body of doctrines that was imposed by the West on the Third World, as a mutable set of ideas, tools and methodologies that interacted with, and were in turn shaped by, the political, economic and epistemic conditions of developing countries.

Post scriptum: goodbye to all that… or not?

Following the publication of *Unity or Poverty?* both Green and Seidman seem to have abandoned their focus on Pan-African continental planning. Yet, there are some interesting continuities in the evolution of their lives and careers in the aftermath of Nkrumah's fall. Reginald Green left Ghana at the end of 1965, and after a brief period at Makerere College in Uganda, where he co-organised a conference on African economic integration (Green and Krishna 1967),[49] he became the adviser to the Treasury in what was another major icon of African socialist transformation: Julius Nyerere's Tanzania. Certainly Nyerere's socialism was very different from Nkrumah's: the Tanzanian leader was sceptical of continental union proposals, favouring economic integration on a smaller scale and with exclusive reference to East Africa,[50] and his idea for the development of the national economy

[46] A recent exception is worth noticing: Kofi Kissi Dompere, a professor of economics at Howard University published a few years ago a volume in which he offered an enthusiastic reading of Nkrumah's *Africa Must Unite* as a most valuable blueprint for African economic and political development, and explicitly quoted Green and Seidman's *Unity or Poverty? The Economics of Pan-Africanism* as providing a refinement and an improvement on Nkrumah's economic argument (Dompere 2006, 216). On the other hand it should be pointed out that Howard University for historical reasons preserves a special relationship with Pan-Africanism and black political activism. June Milne, Nkrumah's literary editor, deposited a substantial part of the President's personal papers and correspondence there.

[47] The main example would be the collection of autobiographical essays collected in Meier and Seers (1984).

[48] A concise, yet deep analysis is provided in Ascher (1997).

[49] While this book is extremely useful to understand the different positions shaping the 1960s debates on African economic and political integration, it is impossible to distinguish the parts written by Krishna from those written by Green, and thus is of limited use to reconstruct the latter's thought.

[50] Nyerere's opposition to Nkrumah's proposals for a continental government became particularly evident in occasion of the second OAU meeting in Cairo: 'Ethiopia and Somalia have a dangerous boundary dispute. We must hope that those two sister states will find a solution to this problem. But to some people this is simply propaganda material for a "Union Government". Kenya and Somalia have the same unfortunate problem. What's the answer? Very simple – "Union Government". […] And the most ridiculous and cynical of all: Upper Volta complains that Ghana has swallowed up a bit of her territory; she wants it back. The reply to this? We can guess. "Union Government!" […] We do not believe that there is a choice between achieving African unity step by step and achieving it in one act. The one act choice is not available to us except in some

was more indebted to the experience of Maoist rural cooperatives than to Soviet emphasis on industrial planning. Although an attempt to understand Green's specific role in the making of socialism in Tanzania goes well beyond the scope of this paper, Green's choice to go work for another socialist African government was certainly not a coincidence, and is perhaps indicative of a very specific 'sense of mission'. After all, Green himself noted that 'an economist is unlikely to accept a planning post with a government if he is basically out of sympathy with its aims' (Green 1965c, 260). This confirms the role that he envisaged for himself as a sympathetic economist who could understand the visions of African policy-makers *in their own terms*: for example at the beginning of a study on Tanzania (Green 1977, 7-8) he filled two pages with a series of quotes from the writing and speeches of Nyerere (as well as Mao Tse Tung). Leaving aside the study of Tanzania, some of Green's work in more recent times was devoted to study the conditions and prospects of Namibia, one of the poorest economies in the world and literally the last African country to gain independence (from South Africa rather than a European ruler) in 1990 (Green 1981). Since the 1980s, following the widespread adoption by African countries of 'structural adjustment policies', Green emerged as a vocal and incisive critic of the role played by the Wold Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and of the 'free-market' turn in development policy, (Green 1985, Green 1998). In the 1990s, Nyerere's words still rang true: 'To plan is to choose, choose to go forward' (quoted in Ndegwa and Green 1994, 118).

Between 1966 and 1968 Seidman worked under the supervision of agricultural economist Kenneth H. Parsons on her PhD thesis in Economics (major: development economics, minor: institutional economics) at the University of Wisconsin. The thesis, titled *Ghana's Development Experience 1951-1966*, treated the recent experience of Ghana, consistently with the 'historicist' vision described in previous sections, as an empirical test for development theories, pointed out the limited applicability of Western economic theory (especially the doctrine of comparative advantage) to African conditions, stressed the influence of structural features inherited from colonialism as well as rampaging corruption in determining the dismal performance of the Ghanaian economy in the 1960s, and emphasised that development required 'fundamental restructuring of the existing institutions in which are embedded the market forces shaped by the dead hand of the past' (Seidman 1968, 452). Between 1972 and 1974, like Green, Seidman moved with her husband to Tanzania, where she became a lecturer in Economics at the University of Dar Es Salaam. From the late 1960s, when she first co-taught a course on 'Law and Development' with her husband, the focus of Seidman's work has become the use of democratic legislative tools, rather than planning, as the key to successful economic and political integration for developing countries. However, in spite of this shift in focus, Seidman reiterated the point, already emerged in her work with Green on the economics of Pan-Africanism, that

> development cannot be attained merely by transplanting to Africa the refined planning techniques devised to allocate resources in developed countries such as input-output tables, linear programming, or macro-economic models based on assumed capital-output ratios. [...] the reason for the failure of much of the planning to date lies in the fact that, before it is possible to allocate resources to meet development goals more successfully, it will be necessary to make fundamental

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curious imagination. […] To say that the step by step method was invented by the imperialists is to reach the limits of absurdity. I have heard the imperialists blamed for many things, but not for the limitations of mankind' (Nyerere 1964: 5-6).

> changes in the inherited institutional structure which perpetuates the distorted pattern of development initiated by the colonial era (Seidman 1974, 105).

Following intense decades of academic and advisory work with government and international organisations like the United Nations in South Africa, Zambia (where, at the University of Lusaka, she was head of the Department of Economics in the early 1980s), Zimbabwe, China, Bhutan and Sri Lanka, Seidman is still working with her husband on these issues (email to the author, 12 March 2013). In 2001 Seidman, with her husband and Nalin Abeyesekere (former Director of the Sri Lanka's Government Legislative Drafting Service) published a volume titled *Legislative Drafting for Democratic Social Change: A Manual for Drafters* (Seidman A., R. Seidman and Abeyesekera 2001), which has been translated into ten different languages (email to the author, 12 March 2013). After the publication of the first volume, Ann and Robert Seidman, with the help of other colleagues, established the International Consortium for Law and Development (ICLAD), and have recently completed another volume on legislation and economic change, this time especially devoted to the promotion of industrial integration in East Africa (A. Seidman, R. Seidman and Webster, no date). This is how Ann Seidman describes her current work:

> We retired from BU [Boston University] last spring (Bob is 93, and I am 87), but we are now engaged in working with our ICLAD colleagues to develop a distance learning program to equip country nationals to become teachers of institutional legislative theory and methodology as a guide to drafting national and regional laws to transform inherited dysfunctional institutions to support integrated regional industrial growth (email to the author 12 March 2013).

In conclusion, although over the decades the geographical and conceptual focus of Green and Seidman's work changed, they can still be said to embody a vision of economics as a toolbox to *imagine* and *design* institutions for policy-makers in developing countries, in the constant attempt to overcome the structural weaknesses in which they saw the burdensome inheritance of history.

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