



AFRICAN ECONOMIC HISTORY NEWSLETTER

- Your monthly update from the African Economic History Network

The AEH newsletter brings you up to date with current and forthcoming events in African Economic History. It gives you a chance to publicise your new research and opportunities to the right audience.

In this issue:

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Anything we missed? Want to publicise your own research, events or organizing a panel for an upcoming conference? Send a message to aehtnetwork@gmail.com and we will include you in our monthly round up.

Best regards,

The African Economic History Network

NEW ABSTRACTS IN AFRICAN ECONOMIC HISTORY

Articles

Austin, G., Baten, J., & van Leeuwen, B. The Biological Standard of Living in Early Nineteenth-Century West Africa: New Anthropometric Evidence for Northern Ghana and Burkina Faso

West Africans are on average shorter than Europeans today. Whether this was already the case at the end of the Atlantic slave trade is an important question for the history of nutrition and physical welfare. We present the first study of changing heights for people born mostly in what are now northern Ghana and Burkina Faso during the early nineteenth century. The dataset, not used before for anthropometry, documents men born between 1800 and 1849. Mostly purchased from slave owners, they were recruited into the Dutch army to serve in the Dutch East Indies. We find that height development was stagnant between 1800 and 1830 and deteriorated strongly during the 1840s. In international comparison and after taking selectivity issues into account, these Ghanaian and Burkinabe recruits were notably shorter than northwestern Europeans but not shorter than southern Europeans during this period.

Austin, G., Baten, J., & van Leeuwen, B. (2011). [*The Biological Standard of Living in Early Nineteenth-Century West Africa: New Anthropometric Evidence for Northern Ghana and Burkina Faso*](#), *Economic History Review*, 1-23

Pim de Zwart: South African Living Standards in Global Perspective, 1835-1910

Differentiating between various types of colonies in order to explain their divergent paths of economic development is commonplace among economists and economic historians. Recently, specialists of African economic history have drawn attention to the more adverse economic effects of colonial rule in the so-called settler societies. These colonies were not only characterized by a more persistent form of inequality, but also by comparatively low and stagnant living standards for the native population. Employing data from the British colonial statistics, wage and price levels were established and used to compute real wages in South Africa between 1835 and 1910. These show a rising real wage trend for most Europeans in South Africa, while the material wellbeing of the 'coloured' workers did not improve; racial inequality thus increased during the 19th century. In addition, wage differentials between skilled

and unskilled laborers reveal a high and rising skill premium, indicating a shortage of human capital. Global comparisons demonstrate that South Africa real wages were on par with Europe and higher than in Asia. Finally, it is shown that Africans were not necessarily better off in non-settles societies.

Pim de Zwart (2011): [South African Living Standards in Global Perspective, 1835–1910](#), Economic History of Developing Regions, 26:1, 49-74

James Fenske: The Causal History of Africa: A Response to Hopkins

In a recent paper for the Journal of African History, A.G. Hopkins writes that economists have spent the last decade writing a “new” economic history of Africa that has escaped the notice of historians. He labels the “ethnolinguistic fractionalization” and “reversal of fortune” theses as this literature’s key insights. In this paper, I shall argue that the most valuable contributions to the new economic history of Africa are not distinguished by their broad theories, but by their careful focus on casual inference. I shall survey recent contributions to this literature, compare them with “old” economic history of Africa, and revise Hopkins’s advice to historians accordingly.

James Fenske (2010): [The Causal History of Africa: A Response To Hopkins](#), Economic History of Developing Regions, 25:2, 177-212

James Fenske: The Causal History of Africa: Replies to Jerven and Hopkins

In this article I reply to critiques by Jerven and Hopkins of my review “The causal history of Africa: response to Hopkins” (2010). I agree, with caveats, that non-economic approaches are valuable, that data quality matters, and that the compression of history can be a bad thing. Historians should not dismiss technique for being technique, should not discard imperfect data, and should be careful making inferences from small samples. The strategies of econometric identification should guide non-quantitative work.

James Fenske (2011): [The Causal History of Africa: Replies to Jerven and Hopkins](#), Economic History of Developing Regions, 26:2, 125-131

Ewout Frankema: Colonial taxation and government spending in British Africa, 1880–1940: Maximizing revenue or minimizing effort?

Colonial state institutions are widely cited as a root cause of sub-Saharan African underdevelopment, but the opinions differ on the channels of causation. Were African colonial states ruled by near absolutist governments who strived to maximize revenue extraction in order to strengthen their grip on native African societies? Or did European powers build ‘states without substance’, governed with minimal resources and effort, failing to invest in basic public goods? This paper develops an analytical framework for comparing colonial tax and spending patterns and applies it to eight British African colonies (1880–1940). We show that colonial fiscal systems did not adhere to a uniform logic, that minimalism prevailed in West Africa, extractive features were more pronounced in East Africa, and that Mauritius revealed characteristics of a developmental state already before 1940.

Ewout Frankema (2011): [*Colonial taxation and government spending in British Africa, 1880–1940: Maximizing revenue or minimizing effort?*](#), *Explorations in Economic History*, 48:1, 136–149

Leigh Gardner: Decentralization and Corruption In Historical Perspective: Evidence from Tax Collection in British Colonial Africa

Fiscal decentralization has been a major theme in development policy in Sub-Saharan Africa since the 1980s. However, the hopes that decentralization will lead to greater accountability have often been disappointed. This paper uses evidence on the devolution of tax collection in British colonial Africa to argue that corruption in local governance in Africa has a long history. The devolution of authority over tax assessments to district officers and their delegates in the early colonial period resulted in widespread corruption. These problems were exacerbated when authority was devolved further to the local level in the 1940s, a pivotal decade in the development of the local authorities inherited by post-independence governments. This evidence indicates that the tendency for decentralization to lead to corruption at the local level is not limited to recent moves toward decentralization.

Leigh Gardner (2010): [*Decentralization and Corruption In Historical Perspective: Evidence from Tax Collection in British Colonial Africa*](#), *Economic History of Developing Regions*, 25:2, 213–236

Erik Green: Indirect Rule and Colonial Intervention: Chiefs and Agrarian Change in Nyasaland, ca. 1933 to the Early 1950s

The article discusses the role of indirect rule in British colonial intervention in rural Nyasaland, or modern Malawi, focusing on the period of about 1933 to the early 1950s. It comments on the colonial government's interactions with chiefs and Native Authorities (NA) in implementing agrarian change, examining the dissemination of information and the imposition of regulations. The author particularly reflects on the district of Thyolo, focusing on the NA Nsabwe and Ntondeza, and the district of Mzimba, focusing on the NA M'mbelwa. Peoples considered include the Yao, Ngoni, and Lomwe.

Erik Green (2011): [*Indirect Rule and Colonial Intervention: Chiefs and Agrarian Change in Nyasaland, ca. 1933 to the Early 1950s*](#), International Journal of African Historical Studies, 44:2, 249-274

Ellen Hillbom: Agricultural development and the distribution of water resources in Kgatleng District, Botswana

During Botswana's four decades of high levels of growth the agricultural sector has lagged behind, with smallholder productivity being especially poor. This paper applies an equity perspective: its main claim is that one important explanation for the current lack of agricultural development is the unequal distribution of agricultural resources. It takes into account both the national institutional structure, which promotes widespread inequality, and the distribution of boreholes and water resources on the communal grazing range in Kgatleng District. It argues that ever since the first administrative effort to develop water resources in the 1920s the country's official policy and legislation has directly or indirectly favoured the large-scale farmers over the smallholders and, further, that customary property rights principles have supported the process that has led to today's institutional inequality.

Ellen Hillbom (2010): [*Agricultural development and the distribution of water resources in Kgatleng District, Botswana*](#), Development Southern Africa, 27:3, 413-427

A.G. Hopkins: Causes and Confusions in African History

What follows is a short notes on James Fenske's article, The Causal History of Africa: A Response to Hopkins (Economic History of Developing Regions, Vol. 25, No. 2, 2010). The intention is to prevent what I regard as a wholly unnecessary bifurcation of effort in a field that, more than many others, needs its few practitioners at least to agree on the broad framework within which disagreement can then take place.

A.G. Hopkins (2011): [*Causes and Confusions in African History*](#), Economic History of Developing Regions, 26:2, 107-110

Morten Jerven: A Clash of Disciplines? Economists and Historians Approaching the African Past

This review article examines the differences in the approaches take by economists and historians when interpreting social and economic change in the African past. It is argued that it is a mistake to assume that one discipline has supremacy over the other, let alone monopoly, when it comes to evaluating historical causes of African poverty. One of the shortcomings of the 'New African Economic History' is that it has largely sidestepped the issue of data quality. In cross-disciplinary work it is generally advised that data points and observations should roughly cohere with the state of knowledge in the other disciplines. Economists do themselves a disservice if the only criteria they consider for 'robustness' of historical argument are those pertaining to econometric methods.

Morten Jerven (2011): [*A Clash of Disciplines? Economists and Historians Approaching the African Past*](#), Economic History of Developing Regions, 26:2, 111-124

Morten Jerven: An unlevel playing field: national income estimates and reciprocal comparison in global economic history

If we take recent income per capita estimates at face value, they imply that the average medieval European was at least five times 'better off' than the average Congolese today. This raises important questions regarding the meaning and applicability of national income estimates throughout time and space, and their use in the analysis of global economic history over the long term. This article asks whether national income estimates have a historical and geographical

specificity that renders the 'data' increasingly unsuitable and misleading when assessed outside a specific time and place. Taking the concept of 'reciprocal comparison' as a starting point, it further questions whether national income estimates make sense in pre-and post-industrial societies, in decentralized societies, and in polities outside the temperate zone. One of the major challenges in global history is Eurocentrism. Resisting the temptation to compare the world according to the most conventional development measure might be a recommended step in overcoming this bias.

Morten Jerven (2012): [*An unlevel playing field: national income estimates and reciprocal comparison in global economic history*](#), Journal of Global History, 7:1, 107-128

Nathan Nunn and Leonard Wantchekon: The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa

We show that current differences in trust levels within Africa can be traced back to the transatlantic and Indian Ocean slave trades. Combining contemporary individual-level survey data with historical data on slave shipments by ethnic group, we find that individuals whose ancestors were heavily raided during the slave trade are less trusting today. Evidence from a variety of identification strategies suggests that the relationship is causal. Examining causal mechanisms, we show that most of the impact of the slave trade is through factors that are internal to the individual, such as cultural norms, beliefs, and values.

Nathan Nunn and Leonard Wantchekon (2011): [*The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa*](#), American Economic Review, 101:7, 3221-3252

Maren Radenya and Erwin Bulte: Determinants of Rural Income: The Role of Geography and Institutions in Kenya

We revisit the debate about the root causes of income divergence, and ask whether geographical variables or institutions are the main determinants of income. Complementing earlier cross-country work, we focus on the local level and seek to explain within-country income differences. Analysing Kenyan household data, we find that certain geographical variables appear to be more important drivers of per capita income levels than local institutions. Once we control for

geography, our measures of community-level institutions do not seem to explain within-Kenya differences in income.

Maren Radenya and Erwin Bulte (2012): [*Determinants of Rural Income: The Role of Geography and Institutions in Kenya*](#), Journal of African Economics, 21:2, 307-341

Francis Wilson: Historical Roots of Inequality In South Africa

Fundamental rethinking is required to tackle the durability of the legacies of poverty and inequality inherited by the democratic government of South Africa. Such rethinking has to start with an understanding of the long historical processes that brought us to where we are. This paper traces the ways in which first land and water, then minerals, capital for investment and finally human capital were accumulated over several centuries primarily into white hands. The net result of this long process is to bequeath to the country today not only widespread poverty but one of the deepest levels of inequality in the world. Of the many problems facing the South African economy, the four most intractable relate to poverty, unemployment, inequality and environmental sustainability. They are all, of course, interrelated but in this special issue we focus particularly on the inequality whose roots go down in to the history of the country.

Francis Wilson (2011): [*Historical Roots of Inequality in South Africa*](#), Economic History of Developing Regions, 26:1, 1-15

Working Papers

Sambit Bhattacharyya and Paul Collier: Public Capital in Resource Rich Economies: Is there a Curse?

As poor countries deplete their natural resources, for increased consumption to be sustainable some of the revenues should be invested in other public assets. Further, since such countries typically have acute shortages of public capital, the finance from resource depletion is an opportunity for needed public investment. Using a new global panel dataset on public capital and resource rents covering the period 1970 to 2005 we find that, contrary to these expectations, resource rents significantly and substantially *reduce* the public capital stock. This is more direct evidence for a policy-based 'resource curse' than the conventional, indirect evidence from the relationships between resource endowments, growth and income. The adverse effect on public capital is mitigated by good economic and political institutions and worsened by GDP volatility and ethnic fractionalization. Rents from depleting resources have more adverse effects than those that are sustainable. Our main results are robust to a variety of controls, and to instrumental variable estimation using commodity price and rainfall as instruments, Arellano-Bond GMM estimation, as well as across different samples and data frequencies.

Sambit Bhattacharyya and Paul Collier (2011): [*Public Capital in Resource Rich Economies: Is there a Curse?*](#), CSAE Working Paper WPS/2011-14, 1-36

Denis Cogneau and Alexander Moradi: Borders that Divide: Education and Religion in Ghana and Togo since Colonial Times

When European powers partitioned Africa, individuals of otherwise homogeneous communities were divided and found themselves randomly assigned to one coloniser. This provides for a natural experiment: applying a border discontinuity analysis to Ghana and Togo, we test what impact coloniser's policies really made. Using a new data set of men recruited to the Ghana colonial army 1908-1955, we find literacy and religious beliefs to diverge between British and French mandated part of Togoland as early as in the 1920s. We attribute this to the different

policies towards missionary schools. The British administration pursued a "grant-in-aid" policy of missionary schools, whereas the French restricted missionary activities. The divergence is only visible in the Southern part. In the North, as well as at the border between Ghana and Burkina Faso (former French Upper Volta), educational and evangelization efforts were weak on both sides and hence, did not produce any marked differences. Using contemporary survey data we find that border effects originated at colonial times still persist today.

Denis Cogneau and Alexander Moradi (2011): [*Borders that Divide: Education and Religion in Ghana and Togo since Colonial Times*](#), University of Sussex Working Paper Series, 1-53

Sophia du Plessis and Stan du Plessis: Happy in the service of the Company: the purchasing power of VOC salaries at the Cape in the 18th century

This paper contributes to the debate on the level and trajectory of welfare at the Cape of Good Hope during the 18th century. Recent scholarship (for example, Allen 2005) has calculated and compared the levels and evolution of real wages in various European and Asian economies since the early modern period. To this literature we add evidence for unskilled and skilled workers of the Dutch East India Company at the Cape of Good Hope during the 18th century, following De Zwart (2009; 2011), who recently presented evidence for unskilled workers in the Cape for the latter half of the 17th century and the 18th century. We calculate job-specific real wages in a three-step argument; from the narrowest international comparison of wage rates in terms of silver content to one based on a basket of widely consumed goods. The paper's contributions lie in the breadth of the comparisons, the inclusion of skilled workers in the comparison and the adaptation of the consumption basket to local conditions and relative prices at the Cape. The results support the hypothesis that at the start of the 18th century, the Cape Colony was relatively poor on an international comparison, but as the century unfolded, gained considerably on even the richest contemporary societies.

Sophia du Plessis and Stan du Plessis (2012): [*Happy in the service of the Company: the purchasing power of VOC salaries at the Cape in the 18th century*](#), Stellenbosch Economic Working Papers, 1-24

James Fenske: Does land abundance explain African institutions?

I show that abundant land and scarce labor shaped African institutions before colonial rule. I test a model in which exogenous land quality and endogenous population determine the existence of land rights and slavery. I use cross-sectional data on a global sample of societies to demonstrate that, as in the model, land rights occurred where land quality was high and where population density was greatest. Slavery existed where land was good and population density was intermediate. The model can explain institutional differences across regions, but not within regions. I present suggestive evidence that this is due to institutional spillovers.

James Fenske (2012): [Does land abundance explain African institutions?](#), Munich Personal RePEc Archive, 1-39

James Fenske: Imachi Nkwu: Trade and Commons

The conventional view is that an increase in the value of a natural resource will lead private property to emerge. Many Igbo groups in Nigeria, however, curtailed private rights over palm trees in response to the palm produce trade of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I present a simple game between a property owner and a potential thief in which an increase in the price of a natural resource makes it possible to introduce regulated communal tenure. This makes the property owner better off, leaving the thief as well off as under private property. I use this model along with colonial court records to explain the political economy of property disputes in interwar Igboland.

James Fenske (2012): [Imachi Nkwu: Trade and Commons](#), Munich Personal RePEc Archive, 1-31

James Fenske: Ecology, trade and states in pre-colonial Africa

State capacity matters for economic growth. I test Bates' explanation of states in pre-colonial Africa. He argues that trade across ecological boundaries promoted states. I find that African societies in ecologically diverse environments had more centralized pre-colonial states. This result is robust to reverse causation, omitted heterogeneity, and alternative interpretations of the link between diversity and states. I test mechanisms by which trade promoted states, and find that trade supported class stratification between rulers and ruled. My results underscore

the importance of ethnic institutions and inform our knowledge of the effects of geography and trade on institutions.

James Fenske (2012): [Ecology, trade and states in pre-colonial Africa](#), Munich Personal RePEc Archive, 1-31

Augustin Kwasi Fosu: Terms of Trade and Growth of Resource Economies: A Tale of Two Countries

The current paper demonstrates a dichotomy of the growth response to changes in the barter terms of trade (TOT), employing as case studies the following two African countries: Botswana and Nigeria. Using distributed-lag analysis, the paper finds that the effect of TOT on output is positive and negative for the two countries, respectively. I interpret these results as supportive of the 'resource curse' hypothesis for Nigeria but not for Botswana. I further argue that the superior institutional quality (IQ) in Botswana, relative to Nigeria, is likely responsible for the contrasting results. However, Nigeria appears to be making progress on IQ, especially in the last decade. Continuing such progress would be necessary if the country was to reverse course.

Augustin Kwasi FOSU (2011): [Terms of Trade and Growth of Resource Economies: A Tale of Two Countries](#), Centre For the Study of African Economies, 1-26

Johan Fourie and Dieter von Fintel: Settler Skills and Colonial Development

The emphasis on location-specific factors, such as climate or disease environment, in the explanation of development outcomes in colonial societies implicitly assumes that settler groups were homogenous. Using tax records, this paper shows that the French Huguenots who immigrated to Dutch South Africa at the end of the 17th century were more productive wine-makers than the already-established non-French farmers. Standard factors of production usually associated with faster growth do not explain the differences between the two groups. We posit that the skills of the Huguenots-the ability to make quality wines-provided a sustainable competitive advantage that not only explains initial but persistent productivity differences. We test this hypothesis by dividing the French settlers into two groups-those originating from wine regions, and those from wheat regions-and comparing them with other settler groups. Potential differences between the French (overall) and the Dutch may be

attributable to institutional and cultural differences, while variations within the French group are more likely to be skill-related. This intuitive but important insight-that home-country production determines settler-society productivity, even in later generations-sheds new light on our understanding of how newly settled colonial societies develop, and of the importance of knowledge and skills in economic growth.

Johan Fourie and Dieter von Fintel (2011): [Settler Skills and Colonial Development](#), Stellenbosch Economic Working Papers, 1-30

Johan Fourie: Slaves as capital investment in the Dutch Cape Colony, 1652-1795

The Cape Colony of the eighteenth century was one of the most prosperous regions in the world. This paper shows that Cape farmers prospered, on average, because of the economies of scale and scope achieved through slavery. Slaves allowed farmers to specialize in agricultural products that were in high demand from the passing ships – notably, wheat, wine and meat – and the by-products from these products, such as tallow, skins, soap and candles. In exchange, farmers could import cheap manufactured products from Europe and the East. Secondly, the paper investigates why the relative affluence of the early settlers did not evolve into a high growth trajectory. The use of slaves as a substitute for wage labour or other capital investments allowed farmers to prosper, but it also resulted in severe inequality. It was this high inequality that drove the growth debilitating institutions posited by Engerman and Sokoloff (2000). The immigration of Europeans was discouraged after 1717, and again during the middle of the century, while education was limited to the wealthy. Factor endowments interacted with institutions to create a highly unequal early South African society, with long-term development consequences.

Johan Fourie (2011): [Slaves as capital investment in the Dutch Cape Colony](#), 1652-1795, Stellenbosch Economic Working Papers, 1-19

Ewout Frankema and Marlous van Waienburg: African Real Wages in Asian Perspective, 1880-1940

This paper offers time-series of urban unskilled labor wages and commodity prices in eight British African colonies (1880-1940) and shows that real wages were above subsistence level

and rising, especially during the interwar years. Real wages in West Africa and Mauritius were even considerably higher than in some major Asian cities. Our results cast doubt on studies emphasizing the existence of 'structural impediments' to African economic growth. We also document an East-West divergence *within* Africa and argue this was caused by variations in colonial land and labor market institutions, challenging the view that African colonial institutions were exclusively extractive.

Ewout Frankema and Marlous van Waienburg (2011): [*African Real Wages in Asian Perspective, 1880-1940*](#), Center for Global Economic History, 1-29

Ewout Frankema and Marlous van Waienburg: Structural Impediments to African Growth? New Evidence from Real Wages in British Africa, 1880-1965

Recent studies on African economic history have emphasized the *structural impediments* to African growth, such as adverse geographical conditions and extractive colonial institutions. The evidence is mainly drawn from cross-country regressions on late 20th century income levels, assuming persistent effects of historical causes over time. But to which extent has African poverty been a persistent phenomenon? Our study sheds light on this question by providing new evidence on long-term African growth-trajectories. We show that slave trade regressions are not robust for pre-1970s GDP per capita levels, or for pre-1973 and post-1995 growth rates. We calculate urban unskilled real wages of African workers in nine British African countries 1880-1965, adopting Allen's (2009) subsistence basket methodology. We find that real wages were above subsistence level, rose significantly over time and were, in major parts of British Africa, considerably higher than real wages in Asian cities up to, at least the 1930s. We explain the intra-African variation in real wage levels by varying colonial institutions concerning land alienation, taxation and immigration.

Ewout Frankema and Marlous van Waienburg (2011): [*Structural Impediments to African Growth? New Evidence from Real Wages in British Africa, 1880-1965*](#), Center for Global Economic History, 1-53

Ewout Frankema: The Origins of Formal Education in sub-Saharan Africa: Was British Rule More Benign?

British colonial rule has often been praised for its comparatively benign features, such as its support for local educational development. This paper studies the origins of formal education in sub-Saharan Africa arguing that the beneficial effects of British educational policy should not be overstated. British African colonies showed significantly higher school enrolment rates in the late colonial era, but these were not the result of impressive investment efforts. Missionary schools provided the bulk of education to native Africans at extremely low costs. We show that local African conditions affecting the African reception of missionary education explain much more of the variation in colonial educational outcomes than metropolitan identity.

Ewout Frankema (2011): [The Origins of Formal Education in sub-Saharan Africa: Was British Rule More Benign?](#), CGEH Working Paper Series, 1-40

Remi Jedwab and Alexander Moradi: Revolutionizing transport: modern infrastructure, agriculture and development in Ghana

We study the impact of colonial investments in modern transportation infrastructure on agriculture and development in Ghana. Two railway lines were built between 1901 and 1923 to connect the coast to mining areas and the large hinterland city of Kumasi. This unintendedly opened vast expanses of tropical forest to cocoa cultivation, allowing Ghana to become the world's largest producer. Using data at a very fine spatial level, we find a strong effect of railroad connectivity on cocoa production in 1927, generating rents in the order of 4.5% of GDP. We show that the economic boom in cocoa-producing areas was associated with demographic growth and urbanization. We find no effect for lines that were not built yet, and lines that were planned but never built. Lastly, railway construction had a persistent impact: railway districts are more developed today despite a complete displacement of rail by other means of transport.

Jedwab, Remi and Moradi, Alexander (2012) [Revolutionizing transport: modern infrastructure, agriculture and development in Ghana](#), Modern and Comparative seminar, London School of Economics and Political Science.

Morten Jerven: Comparing colonial and post-colonial output: Challenges in estimating African economic change in the long run

Until recently, most economists' work on Africa has taken 1960 as the starting point because data on national income and similar derivatives are only available back to this point. To date, the quantitative literature on Africa has made heroic leaps of faith, asserting causal relationships across time periods, without being able to account for different trajectories of economic development. This paper suggests some ways in which historical national accounts for African economies can be created and discusses whether such estimates will add to our stock of knowledge regarding African economic change, or whether they are likely to mislead. A new data-series approximating growth in Ghana from 1892-1954 is presented.

Morten Jerven (2011): [*Comparing colonial and post-colonial output: Challenges in estimating African economic change in the long run*](#), CGEH Working Paper Series, 1-17

Morten Jerven: Controversy, Facts and Assumptions: Lessons from Estimating Long Term Growth in Nigeria, 1900–2007

This article contributes to the debates surrounding 'New African Economic History' by exploring the feasibility of constructing a time series of economic growth in Nigeria spanning the 20th century. Currently most datasets for African economies only go back to 1960. The sources for their creation exist, but these valuable colonial data remain underutilized. This is a first exploratory paper in a project aiming to create measures of economic growth through the 20th century for a sample of African economies. The paper offers a systematic discussion of the different available datasets on population, agricultural production and income for the country. It finds that the existing data, often presented as facts, are more accurately described as projections based on assumptions. If these assumptions are already made in the production of the data, this precludes empirical testing of important questions. The main lesson is that any African economic history investigation must both begin and end with a critical analysis of the quantitative data, and must further be supported by careful qualitative evaluation.

Morten Jerven (2011): [*Controversy, Facts and Assumptions: Lessons from Estimating Long Term Growth in Nigeria, 1900-2007*](#), Simons Working Papers

UPCOMING EVENTS IN AFRICAN ECONOMIC HISTORY

The XVI World Economic History Congress

The Economic History Society of South Africa and the Department of Economics, Stellenbosch University invites you to be part of the XVI World Economic History Congress from July 9th to 13th 2012 in South Africa.

The theme for the XVI World Economic History Congress is “The Roots of Development”. The IEHA welcomes sessions on all topics in economic history, the history of economics, demographic history, social history, urban history, cultural history, gender studies, methodological aspects of historical research, and related fields.

Selected Sessions

Monday, July 9th

Session: Quantifying long-term growth (13h30-17h00)

The Maddison project, an international collaboratory to continue the work of Angus Maddison on measuring economic performance across time and space.

Session: Globalization (13h30-17h00)

Pre-colonial sub-Saharan Africa: interactions between internal and external sources of change, 1450-1890

Tuesday, July 10th

Session: Quantifying long-term growth (08h30-10h00)

New African economic history: approaches to long-term African economic development

Session: Colonization (08h30-10h00)

Land, wealth and the empire: individuals, institutions and policy

Session: Colonization (13h00-16h30)

Colonial causes of development and underdevelopment

Wednesday, July 11th

Session: Work, labour and living standards (08h30-10h00)

Labour, wages and living standards in colonial Africa

Session: Innovation and Technology (08h30-10h00)

Does the history of entrepreneurship in Africa matter?

Session: Trade (13h00-16h30)

Trade and growth in the periphery the dependency theory revisited

Thursday, July 12th

Session: Fiscal History (08h30-10h00)

Colonial fiscal policies in global perspective

Session: Inequality (13h00-16h30)

Modern economic history of South Africa from the perspective of comparison and connectedness: Land, labour and business

Friday, July 13th

Session: Methods in economic history (13h00-16h30)

The new institutional economics and causation in history

Additional Information

For more information please visit the website <http://www.wehc2012.org/> and to view a complete schedule of the Preliminary Programme click [here](#)

55th Annual Meeting

Research Frontiers In The Study Of Africa

November 29th to December 1st, 2012

Program Overview

The ASA Annual Meeting is the largest gathering of Africanist scholars in the world. With an attendance of almost 2,000 scholars and professionals, the conference offers more than 200 panels and roundtables, scholarly and professional plenary and institutional events, awards and prizes, as well as discussion groups, an international exhibit hall, and an on-demand film to appreciate the teaching, research, and professional results of Africanist scholars and that of their colleagues. The Annual Meeting is held in cooperation with major colleges, universities and museums in different regions of North America and attracts participants from North and South America, Africa, Asia and Europe

Additional Information

For more information please visit the website at <http://africanstudies.org/> and if you have any question you can address them to asameeting2012@gmail.com

ASAUK Biennial Conference 2012

Program Overview

The African Studies Association UK is calling for papers for the 2012 ASAUK biennial conference. The conference will be held in Leeds in 2012 and will run from September 6th to the 8th.

Call for Papers: A call for papers is currently open and the deadline for paper submissions is the 27th of April 2012.

Selected Streams

Deborah Johnston (SOAS) and Morten Jerven (Simon Fraser University) on the database for African economic development.

Reassessing African macro-welfare statistics: national income estimates and beyond

Convenor: Morten Jerven, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada

Monitoring Human Capital Development in Africa: Population, Education, Health and Nutrition

Convenor: Morten Jerven, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada

Measuring Poverty in Africa: Improving poverty statistics and developing alternative methods

Convenor: Deborah Johnston, SOAS, London, UK

Labour market assessment in Africa - Better surveys and better questions

Convenor: Deborah Johnston, SOAS, London, UK

Additional Information

For additional information please visit the website at

<http://www.asauk.net/conferences/asauk12.shtml>

CAS@50: Cutting Edges and Retrospectives

6th June – 8th June 2012, University of Edinburgh

Program Overview

Over 2012, the Centre of African Studies (CAS) in Edinburgh will celebrate its 50th anniversary. The focal point for the year long celebrations will be an international conference from 6-8 June on the theme of CAS@50: Cutting Edges and Retrospectives. One of the main issues the

conference will tackle is the contention that interdisciplinary has been as much a problem for African Studies as its underlying source of strength.

Draft Programme (Selected)

Planning and Measurement in African Development (I-4, II-4)

Chairs: Morten Jerven and Gerardo Serra

Session 1:

Morten Jerven: Perils, Pitfalls and Potential of National Income Accounting: African experience over the 20th century

Gerardo Serra: The Political Economy of Planning and Statistics in Nkrumah's Ghana

Alden Young: Designing New Economies: Economic planning and the construction of the Sudanese State, 1945-1967

Vincent Bonnacase: Measuring Living Conditions in Late Colonial French Africa. Which figures and what for?

Session 2:

Daniel Speich Chassé: Counting the African Other: The epistemic shift from anthropology to economics in scholarly representations of Africa

Boris Samuel: Macroeconomic Calculation as Technologies of Government

Felicitas Becker: Development as Political Theatre in Post-Colonial Tanzania

Additional Information

For more information please visit the website at

http://www.cas.ed.ac.uk/events/annual_conference/2012/cas@50_cutting_edges_and_retrospectives Please note that the conference registration deadline is

Friday, March 25th

"Frontiers of AEH" Workshop

September 11th-September 12th, Geneva

Program Overview

In 2012 the annual **African Economic History Workshop** will be hosted by the International History Department of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, with this years theme being "New Frontiers in African Economic History". The organizer, Gareth Austin, hopes to be able to announce more details in May, via the AEHN Newsletter and his department's website.

Additional Information

Website: <http://graduateinstitute.ch/international-history/home/conferences.html>

Email: gareth.austin@graduateinstitute.ch

NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND FUNDING

The economic history department at Lund University is looking for PhD candidates to work on inequality in colonial Africa

The Department of Economic History at Lund University announces vacancies to the doctoral program for the fall term of 2012. The deadline for applications is set for 16 April, 2012. We especially welcome students who have an interest in Africa, Asia and/or Latin American economic history and who would like to work with the project; *Tracing the Institutional Roots of Economic Development – The Impact of Colonial Extraction*. There are currently four seniors working on the project at the department and one or two post-docs and a visiting fellow will also be involved in the future work.

For further information about the application, please visit:

http://www.ekh.lu.se/education/edu_phd.asp

If you want to know more about the project, email: Erik.Green@ekh.lu.se

Global Postdoctoral Teaching Fellows

Social Sciences: NYU Abu Dhabi

New York University Abu Dhabi's Society of Fellows invites applications and nomination for Global Postdoctoral Teaching Fellows in Social Sciences. NYUAD Society of Fellows calls for young scholars who filed their Ph.D. in 2008 or later. Especially encouraged are those who received their degree in economics and political science and who have excellent quantitative skills.

The application review process opened on January 20th, 2012 and will continue until April 5th, 2012. Please consult <http://nyuad.nyu.edu/human.resources/open.positions.html> for more information and if you have any further questions they can be addressed to nyuad.socialscience@nyu.edu

The economics department at NYU Abu Dhabi is currently inviting applications for faculty positions at any level in all fields of economics.

Entering its second year, NYU Abu Dhabi is looking for assistant, associate, or full professor in its economics department. The terms of employment are competitive and include housing and educational subsidies for children. Faculty may also spend time at NYU New York and other sites of the global network, engaging in both research and teaching opportunities. The appointment might begin as soon as September 1, 2012, or could be delayed until September 1, 2013.

Applications will be accepted starting January 15, 2012. Applicants need to submit a curriculum vitae, statement of research and teaching interests, representative publications and three letters of reference in PDF format to be considered.

Please visit the website at <http://nyuad.nyu.edu/human.resources/open.positions.html> for instructions and other information on how to apply. If you have any questions, please e-mail nyuad.socialscience@nyu.edu.

The University of London's Centre for Oriental and African Studies is seeking a Lecturer / Senior Lecturer in Research Methods in Development Economics.

The Department of Economics invites applications for a 0.5 FTE Lecturer/Senior Lecturer starting from 1 September 2012. The successful candidate should have a strong publications and teaching record in economics, with particular expertise in applied (and varied) research methods.

The successful candidate will contribute to post-graduate and undergraduate teaching in the department and will make a particular contribution to the new MSc Research for International Development, co-taught by the Economics and Development Studies Departments.

For additional information please visit the website at:

http://jobs.soas.ac.uk/fe/tpl_soasnet01.asp Prospective candidates seeking further information may contact the Head of the Department of Economics, Professor Jan Toporowski at jt29soas.ac.uk

The University of London's Centre for Oriental and African Studies is seeking a Lecturer / Senior Lecturer in Research Methods in Development Research Methods.

The Department of Development Studies invites applications for a 0.5 FTE Lecturer/Senior Lecturer starting from 1 September 2012. The successful candidate should have a strong publications and teaching record in development studies, with particular expertise in applied (and varied) research methods.

The successful candidate will contribute to post-graduate and undergraduate teaching in the department and will make a particular contribution to the new MSc Research for International Development, co-taught by the Economics and Development Studies Departments.

For additional information please visit the website at:

http://jobs.soas.ac.uk/fe/tpl_soasnet01.asp Prospective candidates seeking further information may contact the Head of the Department of Development Studies, Professor Christopher Cramer at cc10@soas.ac.uk

The Centre of African Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London) is offering two PhD scholarships to African residents.

In order to apply for the PhD programme and the scholarship please [download the SOAS PhD application form](#). Please state on the form that you wish to be considered for one of these scholarships and that admission tutors are kindly asked to liaise with the Centre of African Studies on this.

The deadline to apply is April 30th, 2012. Please visit the website at <http://www.soas.ac.uk/gdai/gdai-phd-scholarships.html> for further information. If you have any questions, please email Angelica Baschiera at ab17@soas.ac.uk

The LCIRAH Project Studentship at the School for Oriental and African Studies (University of London) is looking for PhD students interested in investigating farm household income and wider interactions in Sub Saharan Africa.

The Leverhulme Centre for Integrative Research on Agriculture and Health (LCIRAH) has been established under a generous grant from the Leverhulme Trust. Applications are invited for a LCIRAH doctoral studentship tenable at SOAS for 3 years starting on 1 October 2012.

For more information please visit the website at <http://www.soas.ac.uk/registry/scholarships/lcirah-project-studentship.html> For any additional questions please email scholarships@soas.ac.uk

**Leventis Fellowship
Centre of African Studies**

The Centre of African Studies of the University of London invited applications from Nigerian academics to take part in a scheme of collaborative research funded by the Leventis Foundation. Applicants are invited to apply to spend three months as visitors of the Centre of African Studies in order to pursue their research in libraries and archives and to participate in the intellectual life of the Centre. The Leventis Research CO-operation Programme is devised to assist young scholars develop their research interests in collaboration with their counterparts in London.

Please note that the deadline for applications is May 31st, 2012. Additional information can be found at <http://www.soas.ac.uk/cas/sponsorship/leventis/>

