AFRICAN ECONOMIC HISTORY NEWSLETTER
ISSUE #28 NOVEMBER, 2016

Your bi-monthly update from the African Economic History Network

The AEHN 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:

1. Network News and Announcements
2. New Abstracts in African Economic History
   - 8 New Journal Articles
   - 4 New Working Papers
3. Upcoming Events in African Economic History
   - 4 Upcoming conferences
4. Opportunities in African Economic History
   - 3 Vacancies

Do you want to become a member of the network and receive this monthly email? Send a message to the African Economic History Network at aehnetwork@gmail.com with ‘member’ in the subject line.

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

Best regards,
The African Economic History Network
News and Announcements

We just had a very successful and enjoyable annual meeting in Sussex. Thanks to the local organizers Alexander Moradi, Felix Meier zu Selhausen and Gerardo Serra. You can browse the program here: http://www.sussex.ac.uk/economics/newsandevents/events/aehn2016

Next years meeting will take place in Stellenbosch, South Africa and dates and call for papers will be circulated in due time.

Working Papers Series

If you have a paper you would like to submit for our consideration please send us an email. For questions regarding the WPS please contact Erik Green at Erik.Green@ekh.lu.se.

The latest working papers include:


NEW ABSTRACTS IN AFRICAN ECONOMIC HISTORY

Articles

Stephen Broadberry and Leigh Gardner. Economic Development in Africa and Europe: Reciprocal Comparisons

Recent advances in historical national accounting have allowed for global comparisons of GDP per capita across space and time. Critics have argued that GDP per capita fails to capture adequately the multi-dimensional nature of welfare, and have developed alternative measures such as the human development index. Whilst recognising that these wider indicators provide an appropriate way of assessing levels of welfare, we argue that GDP per capita remains a more appropriate measure for assessing development potential, focussing on production possibilities and the sustainability of consumption. Twentieth-century Africa and pre-industrial Europe are used to show how such data can guide reciprocal comparisons to provide insights into the process of development on both continents.


Denis Cogneau. History, Data and Economics for Africa: Can We Get Them Less Wrong?: Reply to Morten Jerven’s ‘Trapped between tragedies and miracles: Misunderstanding African economic growth’

Many of the criticisms directed by Morten Jerven at mainstream economic analyses of Africa's development are well made, and it seems they indeed apply to a number of works. As Jerven reminds in a word of caution, not all economists working on Africa are implicated. One could even add that when looking at individual economists, some works are relevant while others are not. Perhaps a short bibliometric meta-analysis would have helped here. Anyway, let's circumscribe again what is at stake: the claim to identify an African exceptionalism in terms of capacity for development, and explain it by a few ‘fundamentals' located in the more or less distant past, while invoking some path dependence that remains largely unexplored, while also too quickly assuming that one can infer where history is going from the present state of the world, as when China was said to be doomed to underdevelopment by Confucianism. Jerven's critique aims at ways of doing economic history of development without doing history at all.


Bruce Gilley. Chinua Achebe on the positive legacies of colonialism

The late Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe was a key figure in the rise and persistence of anti-colonial ideology in Africa. Yet in his final work, Achebe made a clear statement about the positive legacies of
colonialism, praising the British project of state formation and nation building in the lower Niger basin. A careful study of his writings and comments from 1958 until his death in 2013 shows that Achebe was never the simple anti-colonial figure that most assumed, and that his seeming reversal could be read as the culmination of a lifetime’s meditation on African history and politics. Achebe's final views have significant paradigmatic implications for the knowledge relevant to national identity formation and state building in Africa today.


**Morten Jerven. The Failure of Economists to Explain Growth in African Economies**

In *Africa: Why Economists Get it Wrong* I am not saying that all economists get it wrong all the time. Rather I am saying that most economists have been getting it wrong most of the time. It has thus been reassuring to read the responses to my book by the eminent economists Denis Cogneau, Jonathan Temple and Dietrich Vollrath. They certainly provide some encouraging evidence indicating that there are indeed quite a few economists who share my view and concerns, at least sometimes. All three seem to be in broad agreement that a decade or two of research has relied too much on misleading numbers and missing data. Moreover, it is broadly agreed that too much weight has been given to cross-country regressions, and that in general the mainstream literature has focused on explaining average general failure, and that therefore episodes of growth are under-researched. Finally, there is general support for the notion that the average results of the ‘history matters’ literature is not taking us far enough to be genuinely informative (and there is even partial agreement that we risk ending up with a literature that is saying ‘why aren't they more like us’).


**Morten Jerven. Trapped between tragedies and miracles: Misunderstanding African economic growth**

How could economists miss decades of growth? When I was an undergraduate, I was genuinely puzzled to read a summary of the growth literature on Africa and find that its main purpose was to explain ‘chronic failure of growth in Africa’. I wrote my master’s thesis on the relevance of that question in 2004. During my PhD I was further surprised to see that the Bottom Billion maintained this stylised fact of chronic growth failure in 2007. In the late 2000s, the peak output in the very specific cross-sectional literature that looked for correlates of slow average growth in Africa was reached. The literature gradually moved on to explaining large gaps in per capita income between poor and rich countries. Maintaining the stylised fact of African chronic growth failure was essential in providing the springboard for this literature. I refer to this as the first and second generation in the cross-sectional literature on income and growth. I do not argue that all the economists got it wrong all the time, but I do argue that the literature, in both generations, got the emphasis wrong.

Jonathan Temple. Morten Jerven, and What Economists Do and Don't Get Wrong

In a short space of time, Morten Jerven’s work has influenced debates about economic growth and the nature of the underlying data, especially in the case of sub-Saharan Africa. Jerven (2013) is essential reading for anyone working in this area. His new book is also lively, readable and thought-provoking. He argues that economists studying growth have misrepresented the African experience as one of long-run economic failure. In commenting on his summary of the arguments, I will also respond to the more detailed discussion and analyses in Jerven (2015). There is a lot to be said for many of the overarching points he makes, including the need for more attention to measurement; the importance of detailed country studies that complement theoretical models and statistical methods; and the value of seeing development as a process unfolding within particular contexts, which should not be analysed just by taking models off the shelf.


Gary B. Magee, Lorraine Greyling and Grietjie Verhoef. South Africa in the Australian mirror: per capita real GDP in the Cape Colony, Natal, Victoria, and New South Wales, 1861-1909

This article compares the real GDP per capita of the Cape Colony and Natal between 1861 and 1909 with that of Australia's two most developed colonies, Victoria and New South Wales. Estimates of European and non-European GDP per capita for both South African colonies are also provided. Together, this information allows for the first time an evaluation of the growth performance of these important parts of the South African economy in the colonial era. The article concludes that South African performance in this period was stronger than often assumed and that by the beginning of the twentieth century European South Africans, now more fully integrated into a British World economy, operated at a level of GDP per capita that matched and in some places may have exceeded that of Australians. Non-European South Africans, however, did not share in these same advances.


Dietrich Vollrath. Evolving Research on Growth and Development

I often suggest to my graduate students that they’ll learn more about a subject by reading the appendices to a paper rather than the paper itself. Morten Jerven’s body of work, of which Africa: How Economists Get It Wrong is a prime example, shows the value of this kind of often thankless digging. Staring at the muck he uncovered, Jerven has identified several ways in which the empirical growth literature has failed, and makes recommendatio ns for improvements.

Working Papers

Gareth Austin, Ewout Frankema and Morten Jerven. Patterns of Manufacturing Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa: From Colonization to the Present

This paper reviews the 'long twentieth-century' development of 'modern' manufacturing in Sub-Saharan Africa from colonization to the present. We argue that classifying Africa generically as a 'late industrializer' is inaccurate. To understand the distinctively African pattern of manufacturing growth, we focus our discussion on the dynamic interplay between the region's specific endowment structures, global economic relationships and government policies. We conclude that the case of Sub-Saharan Africa is best characterized as interrupted industrial growth instead of sustained convergence on world industrial leaders. This is partly because, until very recently, the factor endowments made it very costly for states to pursue industrialization; and partly because successive rulers, colonial and post-colonial, have rarely had both the capacity to adopt and the dedication to sustain policies that modified the region's existing comparative advantage in primary production, by using their fiscal and regulatory powers effectively to promote industrialization.


Angus Dalrymple-Smith and Pieter Woltjer. Commodities, Prices and Risk the Changing Market for Non-Slave Products in Pre-Abolition in West Africa

Using a newly constructed dataset on the quantities and prices of African commodities over the long 18th century this paper provides new insights into the changing nature of the non-slave trade with West Africa in the era before the abolition of the British transatlantic slave trade. We find that previous estimates of both the volume and value of the commodity trade have been underestimates and fail to account for regional variations in output. Our data shows that from the 1770s there was a significant expansion in what would later be called 'legitimate commerce'. This growth was centred around the Bight of Biafra and that the vast majority of these goods were purchased by slave ships, not the specialist bi-lateral traders who had dominated the trade earlier in the century. We argue that slave merchants were motivated by both rising prices in European markets and by the relative stability of prices on the African coast. Furthermore, we suggest that both European and African merchants faced increasing levels of risk in the latter decades of the 18th century. This may have prompted some of the them to diversify their portfolios of goods through investment in the commodities trade to better manage these risks.


Erik Green. The Development of Settler Agriculture in British Africa Revisited: Estimating the Role of Tenant Labour in Southern Rhodesia, c. 1920-1960

In this paper I use primary and secondary sources to quantify the role of tenant labour on settler farms in colonial Africa, using Southern Rhodesia as a case in point. My findings show that the rise of wage labour did not mark the end of labour tenancy, as has been assumed in previous literature. On the contrary, the two forms of labour co-existed. The results find support in the theoretical literature
on agrarian labour contracts as well as from studies on farm labour on large farms in pre-industrial Europe and America. This literature has been surprisingly neglected in studies of rural labour relations in colonial Africa. Based on my estimates I revise the fundamental question of the role of access to and control of indigenous labour in the growth of European settler agriculture in Africa. In contrast to previous research, I argue that the rise of wage labour was a response to settler farmers’ limited capacity to control tenant labour rather than a sign of the superiority of agrarian capitalist relations of production.


Alfonso Herranz-Loncán and Johan Fourie. “For the Public Benefit” Railways in the British Cape Colony

Built mostly to support the early mining industry, the Cape Colony’s railways reduced the cost of transport to the interior and increased labor productivity in the Colony from 1859 to 1905 by, we calculate, 30 percent. Little of the gains went to the state-owned company: the Cape parliament seems always to have seen the railways as a means to development. But the politically overrepresented western parts of the Colony gained much more than underrepresented areas like Basutoland or the Transkei. While boosting the economy, the railways also had distributional effects, with consequences for racial segregation in twentieth-century South Africa.


UPCOMING EVENTS IN AFRICAN ECONOMIC HISTORY

The Road to Global Inequality, 1945-Present day: New Historical Perspectives Conference
Aarhus University, Denmark
30 November, 2016

Keynote speakers (confirmed)
• Göran Therborn (Cambridge, UK), author of The Killing Fields of Inequality
• Michael J. Thompson (William Paterson University, USA), author of The Politics of Inequality: A Political History of the Idea of Economic Inequality in America
• Ravinder Kaur (University of Copenhagen), author of Since 1947: Partition Narratives among Punjabi Migrants of Delhi
• Morten Jerven (Norwegian University of Life Sciences), author of Africa: Why Economists Get it Wrong

Special invited participants (confirmed)
• Pedro Ramos-Pinto (Cambridge, UK), head of the Inequality and History Network, Centre for History and Economics, Cambridge
About the conference
The present is characterized by a globalized economy, global inequality and poverty, and by very uneven protection of social and economic human rights. Immense human suffering and inequality of life conditions thus stand side by side with historically unprecedented wealth, technology, and productive capacities. This is a paradox that is well known. It continues, however, to define our contemporary world. The two-day conference 'The Road to Global Inequality, 1945-Present Day' will examine the post-second world war historical trajectories of this present. The aim of the conference is to explore and combine new or less developed historical themes and explanations of our current situation.

The conference will focus on the following six themes and their relation to inequality:
1. Decolonization and development: How have processes of decolonization influenced inequality? What roles have development, development thinking and development aid played?
2. Social and economic rights: Why have socioeconomic rights shown so little efficiency in relation to poverty and inequality reduction? What does the history of particular economic and social rights look like, and how might these histories help shed light on the history of global inequality? And, more broadly, how can legal histories shed new light on the history of global inequality?
3. International organizations: How have particular international organizations taken up the challenge of global inequality? What have they done which have hindered or promoted it?
4. Business, markets and states: How can we map the historical trajectories of business, markets and state-based approaches to poverty and inequality reduction? What does the history of particular economic and social rights look like, and how might these histories help shed light on the history of global inequality? And, more broadly, how can legal histories shed new light on the history of global inequality?
5. Intellectual histories of inequality: How have various actors conceptualized, legitimized or criticized international inequality, for example by arguing that inequality is inevitable, necessary, or even desirable?
6. Political and intellectual histories of debt, tax, and trade: How have debt, tax and trade been debated and conceptualized in international debates as determining features of the growth in inequality? What alternative approaches to handling these three areas featured in the global domain?

While the main focus on the conference will be on the time after 1945, we welcome paper proposals that move into the pre-1945 era as well.

Organization
The conference is organized by Christian Olaf Christiansen, Associate Professor at the School of Culture and Society, Aarhus University (author of Progressive Business: An Intellectual History of the Role of Business in American Society) and Steven L. B. Jensen, Post.Doc. at the Danish Institute for Human Rights, Copenhagen (author of The Making of International Human Rights: The 1960s, Decolonization and the Reconstruction of Global Values). The conference is funded by the Danish Council for Independent Research and its Sapere Aude program.

Practical information
For more information about payment, accommodation and other practical information, please see our conference website: http://conferences.au.dk/globalinequality2016/. Social media: keep an eye out for #globalinequality16 on twitter. We look forward to seeing you in Aarhus in November 2016!

Symposium
Global Histories of Taxation and State Finances Since the Late 19th Century Basel
December 1-3, 2016

Organization: Vanessa Ogle (University of Pennsylvania), in cooperation with the Institute for European Global Studies at the University of Basel, funded by the universities of Basel, Heidelberg, and Sydney
Taxation has wide-ranging implications for global as well as domestic orders, ranging from budgets and public finances to inequality, the social fabric of societies, and worldwide competition for corporate profits. Since the global financial crisis of 2008 in particular, taxation and the reform of tax systems have become talking points in many parts of the North Atlantic world. Tax reform is often said to be required for fostering a more attractive business climate through reducing the tax burden and thus increasing tax competitiveness. Other voices focus on government revenues in times of empty coffers and instead call for higher tax rates especially for top earners. Thomas Piketty and his Capital in the Twenty-First Century as well as the Occupy movement in the United States have galvanized attention on the connections between taxes and inequality. Outrage at the rise of the “One Percent” is accompanied by calls for shutting down tax havens available mostly to the super-rich. Whether in the United States or Britain, however, multinationals such as Google and Apple successfully play the inversion game by splitting up into multiple units and reincorporating in lower-tax countries for the purpose of obtaining better tax conditions.

The current interest in taxation is welcome, but many of the issues raised more recently have long histories that deserve to be studied in their own right. This international symposium calls on historians and historically-minded sociologists, legal scholars, and political scientists with different geographical specializations to engage with the topic of taxation from a wide variety of angles. Contributions on histories of taxes and state finances beyond Europe and North America are explicitly encouraged. Commentators and session chairs will be drawn from the universities of Basel, Heidelberg, and Sydney as well as from the United States, Britain, and Switzerland. Currently, Patricia Clavin (Oxford University), Marc Flandreau (Graduate Institute Geneva/University of Pennsylvania), Madeleine Herren-Oesch (University of Basel), Monica Prasad (Northwestern University), Glenda Sluga (University of Sydney), Jacob Soll (University of Southern California), and Roland Wenzlhuemer (University of Heidelberg), have agreed to serve as chairs and commenters. While limited travel and accommodation support is available, interested presenters are encouraged to explore their own funding opportunities.

Possible contributions may address but are not limited to the following topics and questions:
- Acceptance of and support for high taxation levels throughout the 20th century
- Anti- or low-tax movements
- Taxation and inequality
- Transitions from colonial to post-colonial tax and revenue systems, from tariffs to income and other taxes
- Tax evasion, tax avoidance, tax havens
- “Tax density” and difficulties of collecting revenue and enforcing taxation
- Taxes and “social contracts” in authoritarian and dictatorial regimes
- Multilateral, bilateral, and other efforts to combat tax avoidance
- Accounting standards and corporate/multinational tax avoidance
- “Race to the bottom” dynamics of global competition for corporate tax profits
- Historically different concepts for allocating business profits among tax jurisdictions: country-by-country reporting of taxes, worldwide income, etc.
- “Tax missions” to the non-Western world as part of dollar diplomacy and financial missions
- Restructuring fiscal systems in the third world as part of development and/or austerity politics, before and after the ‘Washington Consensus’
- Taxes vs. austerity
- Historically shifting attitudes towards deficits, taxation, and austerity: what are acceptable deficit levels, and how are deficits to be reduced?
- Alternative sources of state finances: government loans and bond issues

Workshop: The Laboratory of the Economics of Africa’s Past
Stellenbosch, South Africa
December 5-6, 2016

The Laboratory for the Economics of Africa’s Past (LEAP) hosts its first LEAP workshop from 5-6 December in Stellenbosch, South Africa. The workshop will offer scholars working on quantitative African economic history the opportunity to present their research to an audience of international scholars. Papers in early stages of development and by young scholars are especially welcomed. To apply, please send an abstract of no more than 500 words to leap@sun.ac.za before 4 November.

LEAP will offer a small number of grants for visiting students to cover domestic travel and accommodation. Please indicate the need for such support in your application. Organising committee: Johan Fourie (Stellenbosch), Leigh Gardner (LSE), Erik Green (Lund) and Dieter von Fintel (Stellenbosch). Keynote: Marianne Wanamaker (Tennessee).

Call for Papers: DIAL Conference on Development Economics
Paris, France
June 29-30, 2017
Deadline: January 31, 2017

The Université Paris-Dauphine (UPD) and the French Institute of Research for Development (IRD) are organizing their fourth joint international conference on international and development economics. The conference will be held in Paris, and will provide a forum to discuss innovative theoretical and empirical research in international and development economics. Interested researchers are invited to send a paper dealing with these topics.

Keynote speakers:
Guillaume Daudin, Université Paris-Dauphine
Eliana La Ferrana, Bocconi University
Rohini Somanathan, Delhi School of Economics

Preliminary versions of papers can be submitted, but abstracts alone will not be accepted. Please submit your proposals including keywords and a 150 word abstract in PDF form by January 31st 2017 via the conference web site.

The results of the selection process will be announced by April 2nd, 2017.

For more information please see http://colloque-dial.dauphine.fr/en.html

OPPORTUNITIES IN AFRICAN ECONOMIC HISTORY

University of Pennsylvania, Africana Studies
Tenured Associate Professor, Pre-colonial African History

The Department of Africana Studies at the University of Pennsylvania seeks a historian of pre-colonial West Africa at the rank of tenured associate professor with a preference for applicants whose work has a comparative perspective and/or engages with transregional or global scholarship.
The successful candidate will be selected on the basis of superb scholarly production, evidence of outstanding teaching and mentoring, and a proven ability to contribute to a vibrant, collaborative, and interdisciplinary global black studies graduate and undergraduate program.

Candidates should apply online at http://facultysearches.provost.upenn.edu/postings/1007. Please attach a letter of application, CV, and research statement. Review of applications will begin on October 28, 2016 and continue until the position is filled.

The Department of Africana Studies is strongly committed to Penn’s Action Plan for Faculty Diversity and Excellence and to creating a more diverse faculty (for more information see: http://www.upenn.edu/almanac/volumes/v58/n02/diversityplan.html).

The University of Pennsylvania is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Minorities/Women/Individuals with disabilities/Protected Veterans are encouraged to apply.

**Deadline to apply:** 6 November 2016
**Additional information:** please visit [https://africana.sas.upenn.edu/department](https://africana.sas.upenn.edu/department)

---

**University of California – San Diego, School of Global Policy and Strategy**

**Associate Professor, International Political Economy**

The School of Global Policy and Strategy at UC San Diego [http://gps.ucsd.edu](http://gps.ucsd.edu) invites applications for an advanced tenure-track Associate Professor position in the area of international political economy to begin July 1, 2017.

Applicants should be PhD graduates in economics or political science with an established record of scholarly productivity. The successful candidate will have a background in the field of political economy with a focus on international issues and mastery of theoretical methods and modelling. GPS has a special interest in candidates whose range of teaching is relevant for professional master’s students in public policy and international affairs. Applicants must have already completed a PhD.

The School of Global Policy and Strategy at UC San Diego is committed to academic excellence and diversity within the faculty, staff and student body. Preferred candidates should demonstrate the highest standards of professional research, teaching, and service and contribute to our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in higher education.

Salary is commensurate with qualifications and based on University of California pay scales.

Review of applications will begin November 20, 2016 and continue until the position is filled.

**To Apply:**

Candidates for the Associate Professor position should submit: a curriculum vitae; three writing samples; a personal statement that includes a description of research, training, and teaching; and a summary of past or potential contributions to diversity (see [http://facultyequity.ucsd.edu/Faculty-Applicant-C2D-Info.asp](http://facultyequity.ucsd.edu/Faculty-Applicant-C2D-Info.asp)); and three (3) letters of reference.

All applicant materials including reference information should be submitted via UCSD Academic Personnel On-Line:

[https://apol-recruit.ucsd.edu/apply/JPF01263](https://apol-recruit.ucsd.edu/apply/JPF01263)
University of Tennessee - Knoxville, History
Assistant Professor in the History of Africa

The History Department at the University of Tennessee invites applications for a tenure track assistant professorship in the History of Africa. Research specialties in any topic will be considered. The appointment will begin fall semester 2017. Ph.D. is required at the time of appointment. Teaching duties include a survey in World History, undergraduate upper division courses in early and modern African History, and graduate courses in the candidate’s area of specialty. The Knoxville campus of the University of Tennessee is seeking candidates who have the ability to contribute in meaningful ways to the diversity and intercultural goals of the University. Applications should include a cover letter addressing research and teaching interests and experience, curriculum vitae, three letters of recommendation, and an article length writing sample. Materials should be emailed to http://apply.interfolio.com/36972. Review of applications will begin October 31, 2016 and continue until an appointment is made.

Deadline to apply: 23 November 2016
Additional Information: please visit http://history.utk.edu