

# AFRICAN ECONOMIC HISTORY NEWSLETTER

## ISSUE #41 MARCH, 2019

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
  - 2 Upcoming conference
4. Opportunities in African Economic History
  - 2 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 [aehtnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:aehtnetwork@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 [aehtnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:aehtnetwork@gmail.com) and we will include your news in our bi-monthly round up.

Best regards,  
The African Economic History Network

# News and Announcements

## 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](mailto:Erik.Green@ekh.lu.se).

The latest working papers include:

Calmut Links, Johan Fourie and Erik Green, 2018. "[Was Slavery a Flexible Form of Labour?: Division of Labour and Location Specific Skills on the Eastern Cape Frontier](#)", AEHN Working Paper No. 42.

Jens Andersson, 2018. "[Tax Stabilisation, Trade and Political Transitions in Francophone West Africa over 120 years](#)", AEHN Working Paper No. 41.

Jutta Bolt and Leigh Gardner. "[Tax Compliance under Indirect Rule in British Africa](#)", AEHN Working Paper No.40.

Sumner La Croix, 2018. "[The KhoKhoi Population: A Review of Evidence and Two New Estimates](#)", AEHN Working Paper No. 39.

Prince Young Aboagye and Jutta Bolt, 2018. "[Economic Inequality in Ghana, 1891-1960](#)", AEHN Working Paper No. 38.

## Frontiers in Economic History Blog

Federico Tadei, 2019. "[The Long-Term Effects of Extractive Institutions: Evidence from Trade Policies in Colonial French Africa](#)" AEHN Blog Article Summary (January 2019).

Rebecca Simson, 2019. "[Africa's Clientelist Budget Policies Revisited: Public Expenditure and Employment in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, 1960–2010.](#)" AEHN Blog Article Summary (March 2019).

# NEW ABSTRACTS IN AFRICAN ECONOMIC HISTORY

## Articles

### **Morton Jerven. *The History of African Poverty by Numbers: Evidence and Vantage Points*.**

Poverty has a long history in Africa. Yet, the most conventional and influential history of African poverty is a very short one. As told by the World Bank, the history of poverty starts in the 1980s with the first Living Standard Measurement Study. This history of poverty by numbers is also a very narrow one. There is a disconnect between the theoretical and historical underpinnings of how academics understand and define poverty in Africa, and how it has been quantified in practice. While it is generally agreed that poverty is multidimensional and has certain time- and location-specific aspects, the shorthand definition for poverty is the dollar-per-day metric. This article reveals how particular types of knowledge about poverty have gained prominence and thus shaped the dominant interpretation of poverty in Africa. It argues that, based on other numerical evidence, the history of poverty in Africa could be radically different from the dominant interpretation today.

Morton Jerven, 2019. "[The History of African Poverty by Numbers: Evidence and Vantage Points](#)", *The Journal of African History*, 59(3): 449-461.

### **Rhiannon Stephens. *Poverty's Pasts: A Case for Longue Durée Studies*.**

This article examines how historians have approached the history of poverty in Africa before European colonisation. From an earlier focus on the emergence of class difference to more recent studies on the emergence of poverty, scholars have demonstrated the longevity of economic inequality in Africa. This historiography counters a linear view of the growth of economic inequality and the idea that poverty is a necessary corollary of wealth. The article then considers how historians have studied the meanings of poverty within particular societies to the nineteenth century allowing us to move beyond the inadequacy of quantitative data. It ends by arguing for more *longue durée* studies of poverty in Africa with a focus on the qualitative and on the internal dynamics of particular societies. This will improve our knowledge about how colonial rule changed the experience and reality of poverty for people across the continent and form a basis for comparative studies.

Rhiannon Stephens, 2019. "[Poverty's Pasts: A Case for Longue Durée Studies](#)", *The Journal of African History*, 59(3):399-409.

### **Wyane Dooling. *Poverty and Respectability in Early Twentieth Century Cape Town*.**

Cape Town's black population of the early twentieth century actively pursued lifestyles that might be described as respectable. But respectability was expensive, and poverty — characterised by poor housing, ill health and shortened lifespans — stood in the way of some of its most essential elements: cleanliness, sexual restraint, sobriety, and the creation of nuclear and gendered households. Black respectability, therefore, could not simply replicate that of the dominant white bourgeoisie. Most challenging was the development of rampant black criminality, often seen by contemporary observers as the result of the failure of black women to realise respectable households. Even attempts on the part of the state to create respectable citizenries floundered, partly because these initiatives were incompatible with the policies of racial segregation. The state and the dominant bourgeoisie put their faith in the black elite as the standard-bearers of respectability, but the reality was that the respectability of the 'superior' class was frequently indistinguishable from those below, a consequence of the fact that the boundary between these classes was highly porous.

Wyane Dooling, 2019. "[Poverty and Respectability in Early Twentieth Century Cape Town](#)", *The Journal of African History*, 59(3):411- 435.

### **Jane I. Guyer. Pauper, Percentile, Precarity: Analytics for Poverty Studies in Africa.**

The paper reviews the history of the concepts used to depict poverty in Africa. “Pauperism” is a legal concept, deriving from early modern law in Britain, which frames individual situations, places the paupers under specific rights and duties, and was applied in early colonial situations. Percentile is a economic-demographic concept, implying class difference, indexed to measurable or imputed monetary income, which became an instrument of government in the colonial world mainly after 1945, moving into the international comparative world after the era of independence. In the neoliberal era after 1989, the concept of precarity, and a focus on realizable assets rather than income, has taken higher profile than an emergent replacement for the comparative-percentile approach, sometimes now depicted as “living on \$2 a day”. The paper indicates the conceptual and political implications and challenges of each of these depictions.

Jane I. Guyer, 2019. [“Pauper, Percentile, Precarity: Analytics for Poverty Studies in Africa”](#), *The Journal of African History*, 59(3):437- 448.

### **Vincent Bonnacase. When Numbers Represented Poverty: The Changing Meaning of the Food Ration In French Colonial Africa.**

This article examines the evolution of dietary knowledge about French colonial Africa, from the 1920s to the early 1950s. More specifically, it focuses on efforts to quantify daily food intake by tracing the different meanings assigned to nutrition over time. While such statistics were used as early as the 1920s to evaluate the food consumption of populations most useful to the imperial economy, it was only after the Second World War that they became a means of measuring living standards according to universal metrics. This history invites us to reflect on how poverty in Africa came to be recognized as a problem, by showing that such a process has neither been based entirely on social reality nor on the knowledge produced to delineate privation. Rather it also emerged from the changing set of meanings associated with this knowledge.

Vincent Bonnacase, 2019. [“When Numbers Represented Poverty: The Changing Meaning of the Food Ration In French Colonial Africa”](#), *The Journal of African History*, 59(3):463-481.

### **Klas Rönnbäck and Dimitrios Theodoridis. African agricultural productivity and the transatlantic slave trade: evidence from Senegambia in the nineteenth century.**

Agriculture has played a central role in Africa's long-term economic development. Previous research has argued that the low productivity of African economies has posed significant challenges to African efforts to produce an agricultural surplus or to develop commercial agriculture. Low agricultural productivity has also served as a key explanation for the transatlantic slave trade, on the basis that it was more profitable to export humans overseas than to grow and export produce. However, the field has suffered from a lack of comparable empirical evidence. This article contributes to this field by presenting quantitative data on historical land and labour productivity in Africa, from a case study of the agricultural productivity of Senegambia in the early nineteenth century. Focusing on five key crops, our results suggest that both land and labour productivity was lower in Senegambia than it was in all other parts of the world for which we have found comparable data. This article thus lends support to claims that stress ecological factors as one of the main determinants of Africa's historical development.

Klas Rönnbäck and Dimitrios Theodoridis, 2019. [“African agricultural productivity and the transatlantic slave trade: evidence from Senegambia in the nineteenth century”](#), *The Economic History Review*, 71(1):209-232.

[Article Summary](#) on AEHN's Blog Frontiers in African Economic History.

## **Marijke Du Toit. Mothers' Pensions and the 'Civilised' Black Poor: The Racialised Provision of Child Maintenance Grants in South Africa, 1921–1940.**

This article discusses the origins and early 20th-century administration of child maintenance grants, first introduced in South Africa in 1921 as an amendment to the Children's Protection Act of 1913 and popularly known as 'mothers' pensions'. The grants were patently racialised: in the 1920s, government officials administered the grants so as to exclude people categorised as 'native' and as 'Asian'. This article traces how, from the late 1920s, liberal members of the self-styled 'Child Welfare Movement' (which had established a country-wide network of local branches after the First World War) began advocating the extension of maintenance grants to African communities. During this period, mission-educated African women were also becoming increasingly involved in questions of social welfare. From the mid-1930s, growing numbers of Child Welfare Societies, along with some sympathetic magistrates, were advocating the extension of mothers' pensions to indigent African mothers and children. In this context, senior bureaucrats in the national departments of Native Affairs and Social Welfare sought to clarify the social responsibilities of the state towards its impoverished 'native' subjects. The article considers the collaboration and the escalating contestation between organisations active in child welfare, civil servants and ministers of state. The qualified extension of maintenance grants resulted in a policy of limited social assistance to impoverished African families living in towns and cities throughout South Africa. The child welfare movement and its allies were partly successful in their attempts to limit racialised application of the Children's Protection Act from the 1940s until the late 1950s. The powerful officials in the national departments of Native Affairs and Social Welfare were fully convinced that the demands of segregation must determine how the state should intervene in questions of state social assistance and parental responsibility. In principle, they had little or no sympathy with representations that the state should provide social assistance to impoverished African mothers and African children in need of care. In 1940 – in response to pressures from the child welfare coalition – they reluctantly included the urban-based African poor as recipients of child maintenance grants. This marginal assistance took place within a social welfare system designed to protect 'civilised' (defined as 'European') labour and to complement policies of segregation. In fact, the policy revision involved continued official commitment to the gendered geography of racial segregation and delimitation of civic access to state resources that placed 'native' families in the reserves and on white-owned farms beyond governmental regimes of child welfare.

Marijke Du Toit, 2019. ["Mothers' Pensions and the 'Civilised' Black Poor: The Racialised Provision of Child Maintenance Grants in South Africa, 1921–1940"](#), *The Journal of Southern African Studies*, 44(6): 973-989.

## **Johan Fourie and Erik Green. Building the Cape of Good Hope Panel.**

To study the intergenerational dynamics of productivity, social mobility and demographic change of any contemporary society is a challenge. To do this for a pre-industrial society at the southern tip of Africa seems almost impossible. Yet this is the purpose of the Cape of Good Hope Panel, an annual panel data set – still under construction – of Cape Colony settler tax records over almost two centuries. The transcription of this ambitious project is now in its fourth year. Here we describe the history of the project, the transcription process, and present some preliminary results.

Johan Fourie and Erik Green, 2018. ["Building the Cape of Good Hope Panel"](#), *The History of the Family*, 23(3):493-502.

## Working Papers

### **Denis Cogneau, Yannick Dupraz and Sandrine Mesplé-Somps. African states and development in historical perspective: Colonial public finances in British and French West Africa.**

Why does it seem so difficult to build a sizeable developmental state in Africa? A growing literature looks at the colonial roots of differences in economic development, often using the French/British difference as a source of variation to identify which features of the colonial past mattered. We use historical archives to build a new dataset of public finances in 9 French and 4 British colonies of West Africa from 1900 to independence. Though we find some significant differences between French and British colonies, we conclude that over all patterns of public finances were similar in both empires. The most striking fact is the great increase in expenditure per capita in the last decades of colonization: it quadrupled between the end of World War II and independence. This increase in expenditure was made possible partly by an increase in customs revenue due to rising trade flows, but mostly by policy changes: net subsidies from colonizers to their colonies became positive, while, within the colonies, direct and indirect taxation rates increased. We conclude that the last fifteen years of colonization area key period to understand colonial legacies.

Denis Cogneau, Yannick Dupraz and Sandrine Mesplé-Somps, 2018. [“African states and development in historical perspective: Colonial public finances in British and French West Africa”](#), PSE working paper No. 29.

### **João Amador and António R. dos Santos. Thirty years of Economic Growth in Africa.**

This paper examines the contribution of employment, capital accumulation and total factor productivity (TFP) to economic growth in African countries over the period 1986-2014. The methodology consists in the estimation of a translog dynamic stochastic production frontier for a set of 49 African economies, thus allowing for the breakdown of TFP along efficiency developments and technological progress. Although the heterogeneity amongst African countries poses a challenge to the estimation of a common production frontier, this is the best approach to perform cross-country comparisons. The results of our growth accounting exercise are more accurate for the contribution of input accumulation and TFP to GDP growth than for the separation between contributions of technological progress and efficiency. We conclude that economic growth patterns differ across African countries but they have been almost totally associated to input accumulation, notably in what concerns capital. The experience of Egypt, Nigeria and South Africa - the three largest African economies - confirms this pattern.

João Amador and António R. dos Santos, 2018. [“Thirty years of Economic Growth in Africa”](#), NovaAfrica Working Paper No. 1802.

## **Simplice Asongu and Oasis Kodila-Tedika. Intelligence and Slave Exports from Africa.**

This article examines the role of cognitive ability or intelligence on slave exports from Africa. We test a hypothesis that countries which were endowed with higher levels of cognitive ability were more likely to experience lower levels of slave exports from Africa probably due to comparatively better capacities to organise, corporate, oversee and confront slave traders. The investigated hypothesis is valid from alternative specifications involving varying conditioning information sets. The findings are also robust to the control of outliers.

Simplice Asongu and Oasis Kodila-Tedika, 2019. "[Intelligence and Slave Exports from Africa](#)", African Governance and Development Institute Working Paper No. 19/005.



# UPCOMING EVENTS IN AFRICAN ECONOMIC HISTORY

## WINIR Conference Lund, 19-22 September

The conference will open on the afternoon of Thursday 19 September 2019 and end with a dinner on Saturday 21 September. Delegates may stay for a guided tour on Sunday 22 September. Thursday sessions will be held in the historic city centre and the following two days will be held in the Ideon Science Park.

We have now closed the **four-paper session proposals** and invite **individual abstracts submissions**. Submissions related to the conference theme that encompass global and/or comparative perspectives are particularly welcome. We also invite proposals on any other aspects of institutional research, with a strong preference for those relating to WINIR's aims and research priorities



### CALL FOR PAPERS

The rise of new growth poles and the emergence of new global institutional dynamics are challenging the old divide between the developed and developing world. Although the majority of the world population has experienced improved living standards, there seems to be rising popular discontent with globalization as economic inequalities between and within nations are rising across the world.

As many now question whether globalization is compatible with inclusive societies, we must ask what lessons may be drawn from previous waves of globalization. What can be learned from the institutional changes

and the distribution of the effects of globalization on the standards of living and capabilities of people? We must also ask if inclusive institutional strategies such as a renewed role of the welfare state can play an active role in contemporary societies.

Organised in collaboration with the Department of Economic History at Lund University, Sweden, the Sixth WINIR Conference will explore these and other related issues.

The World Interdisciplinary Network for Institutional Research brings together scholars from across the social sciences and the humanities to promote the study of institutions and institutional thought around the world.

Visit [www.winir.org](http://www.winir.org) | Follow [@winir2013](https://twitter.com/winir2013)  
Join the [INTERDISCIPLINARY-INSTITUTIONS](mailto:INTERDISCIPLINARY-INSTITUTIONS) mailing list

Keynotes lectures will be given by:

**Deepa Narayan** (independent)  
**Sheilagh Ogilvie** (Cambridge)  
**Bo Rothstein** (Gothenburg)

The conference will open on the afternoon of Thursday 19 September 2019 and end with a dinner on Saturday 21 September. There will be an optional guided tour on Sunday 22 September.

Submissions related to the conference theme that encompass global and/or comparative perspectives are particularly welcome, but submissions can be on any aspect of institutional research, with a strong preference proposals that relate to [WINIR's aims and research priorities](#). Submissions (300 words max.) must be made online at [www.winir.org](http://www.winir.org).

All submissions are evaluated by the WINIR Scientific Quality Committee: Bas Van Bavel (Utrecht, history), Geoff Hodgson (Loughborough, economics), Uskali Mäki (Helsinki, philosophy),

Katharina Pistor (Columbia, law), Sven Steinmo (EUI, Politics) Wolfgang Streeck (MPIfG, sociology), Linda Weiss (Sydney, politics).

Please note the following key dates:

**22 February 2019**  
Abstract submission deadline

**8 March 2019**  
Notification of acceptance

**9 March 2019**  
Registration opens

**31 May 2019**  
Early registration deadline

**31 July 2019**  
Registration deadline for accepted authors

**1 August 2019**  
Non-registered authors removed from programme

**15 August 2019**  
Registration deadline for non-presenters

**15 August 2019**  
Late surcharge applies

**1 September 2019**  
Full paper submission deadline



**14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the African Economy History Network  
Barcelona, 18-19 October**

The African Economic History Network (AEHN), in association with the Economic History Department at the University of Barcelona, announces a Call for Papers for the [14th Annual Meeting of the African Economic History Network](#). The conference theme is 'Global Dimensions of African Economic History'. The conference will be held 18-19 October 2019 in Barcelona, Spain. Papers on all aspects of African economic history are welcome, but preference will be given to those that pertain to the conference theme. Abstracts of 500 words should be submitted to [aehn2019@ub.edu](mailto:aehn2019@ub.edu) no later than 15 May 2019. Some bursaries are available for graduate students and faculty from Africa. If applicable, please indicate this need in your submission.

UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA

Centre d'Estudis Antoni de Capmany

AEHN

CASA AFRICA

Young Scholars Initiative

ECONOMIC HISTORY SOCIETY

# 14th Annual Meeting of the African Economic History Network

18-19 OCTOBER 2019  
*University of Barcelona*

GLOBAL DIMENSIONS  
OF AFRICAN  
ECONOMIC HISTORY

*Papers on all aspects of African economic history are welcome, but preference will be given to those that pertain to the conference theme.*

*Abstracts of 500 words should be submitted to [aehn2019@ub.edu](mailto:aehn2019@ub.edu) no later than 15 May 2019.*

*Some bursaries will be available for graduate students and faculty from Africa. If applicable, please indicate this need in your submission.*

# OPPORTUNITIES IN AFRICAN ECONOMIC HISTORY

## Norges Biovitenskapelige Universitet

### Senior Lecturer in International Environment and Development Studies

The Faculty of Landscape and Society, The Department of International Environment and Development Studies (Noragric), has a vacant permanent position for a Senior Lecturer in International Environment and Development Studies.

The post comprises teaching, research and administration in the fields of International Environment and Development Studies and specialization in teaching applied quantitative methods for interdisciplinary research and work.

In addition to conducting high-quality teaching in International Environment and Development Studies, the successful candidate is expected to be able to take responsibility for the development and administration of study programmes and courses, and especially be able to work across the natural and social sciences. Teaching may include tasks/courses in quantitative methods.

#### Requirements:

- Documented extensive research and development work which, in terms of quality and scope, corresponds to the work volume and level of a doctoral thesis in International Environment and Development Studies or a similar field. Candidates with a PhD within the relevant field are preferred.
- An interdisciplinary background, including a solid background in the natural sciences and demonstrated experience in working across the natural and social sciences
- Documented background in teaching research methods, particularly quantitative methods for applied interdisciplinary work.
- Ability to communicate and write in English and Norwegian
- Ability to teach in English

#### The applicant should:

- have extensive experience in teaching Bachelor and Master level students
- be able to teach natural science courses with a focus on environmental science, sustainability science, ecology, climate change and linkage to social contexts
- have international experience in teaching, and documented practice in organizing courses and collaboration projects. Experience from the 'global south' is an advantage.
- have connections to professional networks nationally and internationally in the subject of environment and development studies
- be familiar with the Norwegian university sector and the Norwegian academic environment.

To qualify for the position, the department is seeking a person with educational and administrative skills, documented teaching competence, with knowledge of interdisciplinary work, good cooperation skills, the ability to work, coordinate and lead teams, participate in public debates, and be able to inspire colleagues and students.

Documented interdisciplinary experience in research, education and work in the 'global south' is an advantage.

For further information contact [shai.divon@nmbu.no](mailto:shai.divon@nmbu.no) or visit <https://www.jobbnorge.no/en/available-jobs/job/164969/senior-lecturer-in-international-environment-and-development-studies>.

## **Norges Biovitenskapelige Universitet**

### **PHD Fellowship in International Environment and Development Studies**

The Department of International Environment and Development Studies (Noragric) at the Faculty of Landscape and Society at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) has a vacant 3-year PhD position related to Extractive resource processes.

Exploitation of exhaustible resources such as oil, gas, and minerals is often contentious, in part because of the manner in which extraction pitches powerful corporate interests against those of local communities, and the tangible traces that extraction tends to leave on both natural and social environments.

Despite efforts to improve corporate practices and safeguard local interests, such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, challenges remain in a number of dimensions. These include a lack of transparency, corrupt practices, continuing neglect of social responsibility, the local social, political and economic consequences, and a failure to adequately protect sensitive natural environments.

Extractive industries, straddling the range of intra-state governmental, economic, and environmental levels, present us with a number of issues at the macro, middle, and micro scales, such as resource governance, foreign direct investment, economic dependence, resource conflicts, the 'resource curse', human and/or indigenous rights, institutional innovation and collaboration, local participation and organization, poverty, inequality, and resistance.

The successful applicant will engage empirically with one or more specific cases of extraction and their local effects, but also indicate how cases connect to broader social and economic issues (cf. issues mentioned above). Relevant academic fields include – but are not limited to – political ecology, anthropology of development, science and technology studies, environmental & social justice, and environmental history.

The Department invites applicants to submit project proposals for critically investigating extractive resource processes.

#### **Required academic qualifications**

- The applicant must have an academically relevant education corresponding to a five-year Norwegian degree programme, where 120 credits are at master's degree level. The applicant must have a documented strong academic background from previous studies, and be able to document proficiency in both written and oral English.
- The successful applicant must meet the conditions defined for admission to a PhD programme at NMBU and Noragric.

#### **Additional required academic qualifications**

- research-based master's degree with a GPA of B or above in a relevant field
- Unless the applicant's mother tongue is English, documentation of English proficiency: IETLS score > 7.0, TOEFL > 92

For more information visit:

<https://www.jobbnorge.no/en/available-jobs/job/164996/phd-fellowship-within-international-environment-and-development-studies>.