



African Economic History Newsletter **Issue #48, November 2020**

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:

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If you want to publicize your own research, events or organize a panel for an upcoming conference, please send a message to aehtnetwork@gmail.com and I will include your news in our quarterly round up.

Best regards,

Johan Fourie
on behalf of 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.

Frontiers in Economic History Blog

Frontiers in African Economic History – AEHN’s blog – diffuses research-based content and promotes discussion concerning the study of long-term African development. The blog provides authors a platform to disseminate easily accessible summaries (700 words) of their recently published research (articles, book chapters, book reviews, theses), publishes interviews with key scholars in the field, and discusses relevant developments. We welcome blog contributions and suggestions. Please contact the editors ([Felix Meier zu Selhausen](#), [Michiel de Haas](#) and [Kate Frederick](#)) to discuss possible posts at: frontiers.aehn@gmail.com.

Prince Young Aboagye and Ellen Hillbom. [Tax Bargaining, Fiscal Contracts, and Fiscal Capacity in Ghana: A Long-Term Perspective](#). (21 October 2020).

Why do many Sub-Sahara African (SSA) governments fail to raise adequate tax revenues for public investments? We analyse four major tax reforms in Ghana from the 1850s to the late 1990s to show that successful taxation depends on governments’ ability to provide public goods in return for the payment of taxes.

Maria Fibaek and Ellen Hillbom. [African Long-term Inequality Trends – AFLIT](#). (11 August 2020).

African Long-term Inequality Trends, AFLIT, is a research network dedicated to the advancement in constructing and analysing historical inequality trends in sub-Saharan Africa using the social tables approach. Currently, we lack both the empirical and theoretical understanding to explain the historical underpinnings of the development in inequality. The researchers in AFLIT are committed to filling this gap.

Postponed:
Due to covid-19, the 15th Annual Meeting of the African Economic History Network has been postponed to 2021!

15th Annual Meeting of the African Economic History Network

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Victor Gwande (University of the Free State)
 Nicola Ginsburgh (University of the Free State)
 Duncan Money (Leiden University)
 Hyden Munene (University of the Free State)

Ushewedu Kufakurinani (University of Zimbabwe)
 Tinashe Nyamunda (North West University)
 Ian Phimister (University of the Free State)



African Economic Dynamics: Local, Regional, and International Connections

CALL FOR PAPERS

Often missing from accounts of African economic history is the interplay between local, regional and international dynamics. While this conference aims particularly to address this issue, it welcomes abstracts and papers on any aspect of African economic history. Abstracts may be organised by sector, theme, by period, or all three. Obvious sectors would cover variously mining, agriculture, services, including finance, and secondary industry. Possible themes include capital, trade, long distance commodity chains, biography, ideology, historiography and methodology. Taking due account of wider patterns of globalisation and fragmentation, the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial eras vary by place and time.

KEYNOTE ADDRESSES (to be confirmed)

- MAMOOD MAMDANI** (Makerere University and Columbia University)
- ALOIS MLAMBO** (University of Pretoria)
- TONY HOPKINS** (University of Cambridge)
- TINASHE NYAMUNDA** (North West University)

The first day will be dedicated to presentations by PhD students, and will include skills training sessions. A limited number of travel and accommodation bursaries will be available. Applicants should indicate their interest when submitting their paper abstracts.

Optional activities will include visits to the Big Hole at Kimberley, as well as historical tours of Bloemfontein, which is the birthplace of both the ANC and the National Party, and its museums.

PROPOSALS

Please send paper abstracts and panel or session proposals (250-300 words), and a short biography (150 words), to Ms Tari Gwena <tgwena@ufo.ac.za> by 30 March 2020. Successful participants will be notified by 15 April 2020.

Date and location

21-23 September 2020
 Bloemfontein, South Africa

Hosted by

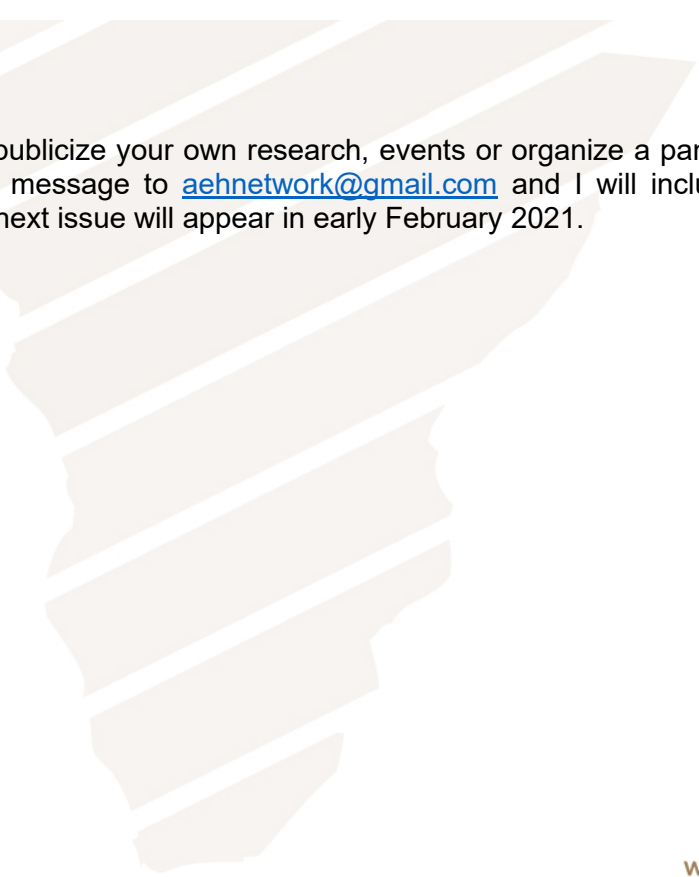
International Studies Group
 University of the Free State

Together with

University of Botswana
 North West University
 Chancellor College, University of Malawi
 University of Zambia
 University of Zimbabwe

Get in touch!

If you want to publicize your own research, events or organize a panel for an upcoming conference, please send a message to aehtnetwork@gmail.com and I will include your news in our quarterly round up. The next issue will appear in early February 2021.



NEW RESEARCH IN AFRICAN ECONOMIC HISTORY

Now in print

Abel Gwaindepi and Krige Siebrits. 'Hit your man where you can': Taxation strategies in the face of resistance at the British Cape Colony, c.1820 to 1910

The topic of this article is the development of the tax system of the Cape Colony from 1820 to 1910. This period was crucial for the introduction and diffusion of modern taxes, and the Cape constitutes an important case as the prime settler-colony in Africa. The article uses a new tax dataset and evidence from official documents to trace and explain the Colony's growing revenue problems during this period. It shows that few changes were made to the tax system from the annexation of diamond fields in 1877 until the end of the South African War in 1902 and that the public coffers mainly benefitted indirectly from the Colony's increased prosperity via railway earnings. This, it is argued, largely reflected the success of efforts by the mining industry to block the introduction of new taxes. The article emphasizes the unusual form of this resistance: instead of undertaking conventional lobbying activities, industry representatives obtained positions of policymaking authority in the Cape Colony's then still immature system of democratic institutions. Hence, it draws on the experience of the Cape to show that immature democratic institutions can hamper fiscal capacity-building.

Gwaindepi, A. and Siebrits, K. 2020. 'Hit your man where you can': Taxation strategies in the face of resistance at the British Cape Colony, c.1820 to 1910. *Economic History of Developing Regions* 35, 3, 171-194.

Ebes Esho and Grietjie Verhoef. Beyond national markets: The case of emerging African multinationals.

Findings from research on emerging market multinationals (EMNEs) have posed some intriguing questions to scholars. While some of the questions are easy to explain through the lens of extant theories, others are more complex. Research on African multinationals is limited and being only a recent phenomenon, historical accounts of their internationalization is scarce. Early findings suggest that African firms exhibit distinct internationalization behaviour from other EMNEs. However, are EMNEs from Africa and their internationalization behaviour unique? This paper expounds the internationalization of three nascent African multinationals through the lens of extant theories and finds that multiple theories converge to explain their internationalization. Their distinct paths to internationalization come from their independent efforts in navigating Africa's diverse, and sometimes extreme, contextual challenges and opportunities. Alongside the global orientation of founders that originates from their education and experience, relationships from founders' networks also play a dominant role in the internationalization process of African EMNEs. The conditions for business, especially for internationalization, in Africa are unique, and sometimes extreme. Institutional voids and informal markets, for example, are pervasive and huge. However, the African context enables a nuanced understanding of extant theories and the linkages between theories in explaining internationalization of EMNEs.

Esho, E. and Verhoef, G. 2020. Beyond national markets: The case of emerging African multinationals. *Economic History of Developing Regions*, 35, 2, 71-97.

Calumet Links, Johan Fourie and Erik Green. The substitutability of slaves: Evidence from the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony.

The substitutability of the economic institution of slave labour has often been assumed as a given. Apart from some capital investment to retrain slaves for a different task, essentially their labour could be substituted for any other form of labour. This paper questions that assumption by using a longitudinal study of the Graaff-Reinet district on the eastern frontier of South Africa's Cape Colony. We calculate the Hicksian elasticity of complementarity coefficients for each year of a 22-year combination of cross-sectional tax datasets (1805–1828) to test whether slave labour was substitutable for other forms of labour. We find that slave labour, indigenous labour and settler family labour were not substitutable over the period of the study. This lends credence to the finding that slave and family labour were two different inputs in agricultural production. Indigenous khoe labour and slave labour remain complements throughout the period of the study even when khoe labour becomes scarce after the frontier conflicts. We argue that the non-substitutability of slave labour was due to the settlers' need to acquire labourers with location-specific skills such as the indigenous khoe, and that slaves may have served a purpose other than as a source of unskilled labour, such as for artisan skills or for collateral.

Links, C., Fourie, J. and Green, E. 2020. The substitutability of slaves: Evidence from the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony. *Economic History of Developing Regions*, 35, 2, 98-122.

Klas Rönnbäck. The business of barter on the pre-colonial Gold Coast.

Trade on the Gold Coast in the eighteenth century was dominated by non-monetized barter trade. In this paper, a large dataset of barter transactions are used to study the social embeddedness of the trade. The data shows that prestige goods such as alcohol to a disproportionate degree were exchanged for other prestige goods such as gold. Guns – but also cheaper types of textiles – were to a disproportionate degree exchanged for slaves in particular. The evidence thus helps to shed light on the social valuation of various imported commodities on the Gold Coast at this time.

Rönnbäck, K. 2020. The business of barter on the pre-colonial Gold Coast. *Economic History of Developing Regions*, 35, 2, 123-142.

Rebecca Simson. Statistical sources and African post-colonial economic history: Notes from the (digital) archives.

While interest in African economic history has grown rapidly in recent years, the continent's post-colonial past remains understudied. This is at least in part because of the decline and fragmentation in the publication of economic statistics after decolonization, which has limited the type and breadth of quantitative analysis that can be undertaken. Nonetheless, this note argues that there are comparatively untapped post-colonial data sources that could enrich the study of the continent's economic history. The note surveys some of these sources and data repositories and provides advice, based on the author's own experiences, on how to utilize them.

Simson, R. 2020. Statistical sources and African post-colonial economic history: Notes from the (digital) archives. *Economic History of Developing Regions*, 35, 2, 143-154.

Nicholas Tunanukye. Migrancy and the Birth of Nativism, Uganda 1920s-1960s.

Uganda has experienced explosive inter-ethnic conflicts and yet internal migration has persisted, and intermingling of different ethnicities has led to a complex relationship among them. This article bases on the oral history and life histories of the former Banyankole migrant laborers and their former

Baganda employers, to discuss the incentives that propelled migration of people and what impact it had on the relationship among them. The article argues that the Banyanyankole migrant labor experience informed their socio-economic and political behavior back home, influenced the penetration of capital in southwestern Uganda, informed the Banyankole perception of the Baganda, and subsequent relations that defined their interactions, which ignited flames of nativism. It is pitched in the historical theories of Ravenstein and Lee. The findings show that the labor migration in Uganda was in response to the colonial economic policies, which aimed at developing the colonial overlord. The factors that propelled migration included the need to pay taxes, mobilizing resources for marriage, access to manufactured goods, and cash nexus. Migrancy had an impact on both the sending and host communities in defining their identities in relation to cash crop growing and expansion in Ankole, change in the labor dynamics, monetarization and commoditization of the economy in Ankole, change in gender roles, Baganda versus Banyankole perception, and modern life in Ankole.

Tunanukye, N. 2020. Migrancy and the Birth of Nativism, Uganda 1920s-1960s. RAIS Conference Proceedings, March 30-31.

Radoli Lydia Ouma. “Healing Rwanda’s Genocide Trauma”. A Re-construction of Painful Oral Historical Narratives.

April to June every year, Rwandans commemorate the 1994 genocide. Extensive oral historical narratives are brought to life. Under the Aegis Trust for the prevention of genocide and crimes against humanity, stories are re-enacted and shared. Narratives of memories are seen as instruments to heal historical trauma. Rwanda has since moved from ravages of the genocide to political and economic stability. Although, Rwanda records a history of ethnic killings and near genocide from 1950s, it is the 1994 genocide that rocked its fabric of peace. Des Forges (2007) argues the genocide was not an outburst of uncontrolled rage of ethnic hatred, but a discontent to historical grievances and widening economic disparities between the Hutu elites and Rwandan poor. To suppress dissent, state and militia extremists planned and orchestrated the genocide. After the genocide, an International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was set up to try suspects. It was supplemented with Gacaca courts - a modified traditional conflict resolution system. In this paper, I aim to analyse oral history as a qualitative methodology. The narratives archived on video recount how Rwandans heal the genocide trauma through remembering. According to Moyer (1993) oral history involves a systematic gathering of testimonies of people who have experienced a significant event. It is not based on non-factual information, rather on verifiable facts that can be analyzed and placed in accurate historical contexts. This paper will adapt an oral historical narrative analysis of video testimonies from the Aegis Trust.

Ouma, R. 2020. “Healing Rwanda’s Genocide Trauma”. A Re-construction of Painful Oral Historical Narratives. RAIS Conference Proceedings, March 30-31.

Working Papers

Facundo Alvaredo, Denis Cogneau and Thomas Piketty. [Income inequality under colonial rule: Evidence from French Algeria, Cameroon, Tunisia, and Vietnam and comparisons with British colonies 1920-1960.](#)

In this article we assess income inequality across French and British colonial empires between 1920 and 1960. For the first time, income tax tabulations are exploited to assess the case studies of French Algeria, Tunisia, Cameroon, and Vietnam, which we compare to British colonies and dominions. As measured by top income shares, inequality was high in colonies. It fell after WWII, but stabilized at much higher levels than in mainland France or the United Kingdom in the 1950s. European settlers or expatriates comprised the bulk of top income earners, and only a minority of autochthons could compete in terms of income, particularly in Africa. Top income shares were no higher in settlement colonies, not only because those territories were wealthier but also because the average European settler was less rich than the average European expatriate. Inequality between Europeans in colonies was similar to (or even below) that of the metropolises. In settlement colonies, the post-WWII fall in income inequality can be explained by a fall in inequality between Europeans, mirroring that of the metropolises, and does not imply that the European/autochthon income gap was reduced.

Jörg Baten, Michiel de Haas, Elisabeth Kempter and Felix Meier zu Selhausen. [Educational Gender Inequality in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Long-term Perspective.](#)

To what extent was the 20th century schooling revolution in sub-Saharan Africa shared equally between men and women? We examine trajectories of educational gender inequality over the 20th century, using census data from 21 African countries and applying a birth-cohort approach. We present three sets of findings. First, compared to other developing regions with similar histories of colonial rule and educational expansion, sub-Saharan Africa performed comparatively poorly in closing educational gender gaps (M-F) and gender ratios (M/F) over the 20th century. Second, in most African countries, the educational gender gap rose during the colonial era, peaked mid-century, and declined, albeit at very different rates, after independence. Southern African countries were remarkably gender equal, both in terms of gaps and ratios. French (former) colonies had smaller gaps but higher ratios than British (former) colonies, which we attribute to slower expansion of male education in the former. Both on the world-region and country-level, the expansion of male education is associated initially with a growing gender gap, and subsequently a decline. We refer to this pattern as the “educational gender Kuznets curve”. Third, using data from 6 decadal cohorts across 1,177 African regions, we explore sub-national correlates of educational gender equity. Better connected and urban regions witnessed lower educational gender inequality. In regions with large Christian mission stations in the early 20th century access to education was also less gender unequal, an effect that persisted into the post-colonial period. We also find that during the colonial era, cash crop cultivation was not consistently associated with larger gender gaps, while female farming systems were associated with smaller gaps. The sub-national cross-sectional results confirm the existence of an educational gender Kuznets curve.

Ewout Frankema and Marlous van Waijenburg. [The Great Convergence. Skill Accumulation and Mass Education in Africa and Asia, 1870-2010.](#)

While human capital has gained prominence in new vintages of growth theory, economists have struggled to find the positive externalities of mass education in developing economies. We shed new light on the economic significance of the global 'schooling revolution' by looking at a different indicator of human capital accumulation - the relative price of skilled labor -, and placing it in a long-

term global perspective. Based on a new wage dataset we constructed for various blue- and white-collar occupations in 50 African and Asian countries between 1870-2010, we reveal that skill-premiums have fallen dramatically everywhere in the course of the 20th century, and that they have now converged with levels that dominated in the West already for centuries. While such a 'great convergence' in skill-premiums is not a sufficient condition for Schumpeterian growth by itself, the growing availability of affordable skills is a necessary condition. Our findings, therefore, shed a more optimistic light on the long-term economic gains of mass education in the global South than standard growth regressions have hitherto done.

Lucas Chancel, Denis Cogneau, Amory Gethin and Alix Myczkowski. [How large are African inequalities? Towards Distributional National Accounts in Africa, 1990-2017.](#)

This paper makes a first attempt to estimate the evolution of income inequality in Africa from 1990 to 2017 by combining surveys, tax data and national accounts in a systematic manner. The low quality of the raw data calls for a lot of caution. Results suggest that income inequality in Africa is very high, and stands at par with Latin America or India in that respect. Southern and Central Africa are particularly unequal. The bulk of continent-wide income inequality comes from the within country component, and the between country component was even slightly reduced in the two last decades, due to higher growth in poorer countries. Inequality was rather stable over the period, with the exception of Southern Africa. Dualism between agriculture and other sectors and mining rents seem to be important determinants of inequality.

Sara Lowes and Eduardo Montero. [Concessions, violence, and indirect rule: Evidence from the Congo Free State.](#)

All colonial powers granted concessions to private companies to extract natural resources during the colonial era. Within Africa, these concessions were characterized by indirect rule and violence. We use the arbitrarily defined borders of rubber concessions granted in the north of the Congo Free State to examine the causal effects of this form of economic organization on development. We find that historical exposure to the concessions causes significantly worse education, wealth, and health outcomes. To examine mechanisms, we collect survey and experimental data from individuals near a former concession boundary. We find that village chiefs inside the former concessions provide fewer public goods, are less likely to be elected, and are more likely to be hereditary. However, individuals within the concessions are more trusting, more cohesive, and more supportive of sharing income. The results are relevant for the many places that were designated as concessions to private companies during the colonial era.

Cormac Ó Gráda. [On Plague and Ebola in a Time of COVID-19.](#)

The global COVID-19 pandemic recalls the Ebola epidemic of 2014-15 and earlier much more lethal plague epidemics. All share several characteristics, even though the second and third plague epidemics dwarfed the both the 2014-15 Ebola outbreak and COVID-19 in terms of mortality. This essay reviews the mortality due to Ebola and plague and their lethality; the spatial and socioeconomic dimensions of plague mortality; the role of public action in containing the two diseases; and their economic impact.

Remi Jedwab and Adam Storeygard. [The average and heterogeneous effects of transportation investments: Evidence from sub-Saharan Africa, 1960-2010.](#)

Previous work on transportation investments has focused on average impacts in high- and middle income countries. We estimate average and heterogeneous effects in a poor continent, Africa, using

roads and cities data spanning 50 years in 39 countries. Using changes in market access due to distant road construction as a source of exogenous variation, we estimate a 30-year elasticity of city population with respect to market access of about 0.08-0.13. Our results suggest that this elasticity is stronger for small and remote cities, and weaker in politically favored and agriculturally suitable areas. Access to foreign cities besides international ports matters little. Additional evidence points suggestively to rural-urban migration as the primary source of this population increase, though we cannot fully rule out natural increase or reallocation across cities.

Marcel Fafchamps and Forhad Shilpi. [The Evolution of Built-up Areas in Ghana since 1975.](#)

This paper uses high-resolution satellite data on the proportion of buildings in a 250x250 meter cell to study the evolution of human settlement in Ghana over a 40-year period. The analysis finds a strong increase in built-up area over time, mostly concentrated in the vicinity of roads, and also directly on the coast. There is strong evidence of agglomeration effects in the static sense—buildup in one cell predicts buildup in a nearby cell—and in a dynamic sense—buildup in a cell predicts buildup in that cell later on, and an increase in buildup in nearby cells. These effects are strongest over a radius of 3 to 15 kilometers. No evidence is found that human settlements are spaced more or less equally over the landscape or along roads. By fitting a transition matrix to the data, this paper predicts a sharp increase in the proportion of the country that is densely built-up by the middle and end of the century, but there is no increase in the proportion of partially built-up locations.

Youssef El Jai. [Monetary Integration in West Africa: History, Theory, Policy.](#)

Prior to the colonial era, money issuance in West Africa depended on slave trade. With the advent of the colonial rule, silver coins were imported then progressively imposed as a tool of coercion. The post-colonial trajectory was different for former British and French colonies. While the former regained their monetary sovereignty, the latter continued under a monetary union under the auspices of France. The proposal of the Eco as a single currency for ECOWAS is therefore a whole new step for some countries and a simple exercise of adaptation for others. Hence, a bold policy agenda is needed if the currency union is to be a success.

Johan Fourie. [The settlers of South Africa and the expanding frontier.](#)

The arrival of European settlers in the mid-seventeenth century at the southern tip of Africa profoundly affected the region's development. They quickly displaced the local Khoesan and began a process of colonisation that would, some might argue, continue until 1994 with the first democratic elections, 342 years after their arrival. This is the story of their migration into the southern African interior. Combining a rich historiography with new quantitative source material – and the story of one family – I show that, despite the political, cultural and religious rhetoric that inspired their migrations, their reason for trekking was at heart economic. Their story is closely tied to the fortunes of those around them: their actions were often both a response to and a cause of events beyond their borders, a dynamic process that continues today.

Nathan Nunn. [History as Evolution.](#)

In this chapter, I consider the benefits of viewing history through an evolutionary lens. In recent decades, a field of research has emerged, which builds on foundations from biological evolution to study culture within an evolutionary framework. I begin the chapter by discussing the theory behind cultural evolution and the empirical evidence supporting its ability to explain the history of human societies. I then turn to a discussion of how an evolutionary perspective provides important insights

into a range of phenomena within economics, including a deeper understanding of human capital, innovation, gender roles, the consequences of warfare, the effects of market competition, why we observe historical persistence and path dependence, and, most importantly, why sustained economic growth is often so elusive. I end by turning to a summary of a growing body of research within economics that has made progress in improving our understanding of cultural evolution and, thus, contributing to evolutionary disciplines outside of economics.

Laure Athias and Moudo Macina. [The Legacy of the Slave Trade: Towards Identifying the Causal Impact of Mistrust in Medicine on Demand for Vaccination in Sub-Saharan Africa.](#)

There is a large body of anecdotal evidence from sub-Saharan Africa of widespread medical distrust leading to health program failures. In this paper, to isolate an exogenous variation in trust in medicine to explain contemporary health demand in sub-Saharan Africa, we rely on a widespread historical shock: the slave trade. We combine Nunn & Wantchekon's (2011) historical data on the slave trade by ethnic group with individual-level data, geolocated at the district level, from the 2010-2014 Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) to examine the reduced-form relationship between ancestors' exposure to the slave trade and children vaccination status against measles. Exploiting variations both within countries and districts, we find that children from mothers whose ancestors were exposed to the slave trade are less likely to be vaccinated. The size of the effect offsets or even dominates the ones obtained for standard determinants of health demand, such as education or revenue. Evidence from a variety of identification strategies shows that the slave trade affects demand for vaccination only through trust in medicine. We then provide explanations for the persistent effect of the slave trade. Consistent with the economic approach, we identify religious affiliations and matrilineal lineage systems as important cultural transmission mechanisms. Consistent with the evolutionary anthropology approach, we point to the similarity of the environment across generations due to colonial and contemporaneous abusive medical treatments to explain persistence of optimal mistrusting behavior.

Special section on historical data

Paola Giuliano and Andrea Matranga. [Historical Data: Where to Find Them, How to Use Them.](#)

The use of historical data has become a standard tool in economics, serving three main purposes: to examine the influence of the past on current economic outcomes; to use unique natural experiments to test modern economic theories; and to use modern economic theories to refine our understanding of important historical events. In this chapter, we provide a comprehensive analysis of the types of historical data most commonly used in economic research and discuss a variety of issues that they raise, such as the constant change in national and administrative borders; the reshuffling of ethnic groups due to migration, colonialism, natural disasters, and many other forces. We also point out which methodological advances allow economists to overcome or minimize these problems.

Sara Lowes. [Ethnographic and field data in historical economics.](#)

This chapter will cover recent research in historical economics that uses ethnographic data and data from surveys and lab experiments. The study of historical economics, particularly outside of non-Western countries, has been constrained by availability of historical data. However, recent work incorporates data and tools from other fields and sub-fields to fill this gap. For example, economists are increasingly taking advantage of ethnographic data sets compiled by anthropologists. There is also growing interest in the use of original survey data collection both within and across countries and lab-in-the-field experiments to answer questions on culture and institutions. Often, these tools are

used together to provide complementary evidence on the question of interest. These sources of data have been particularly important for research on areas where there is limited historical data, and they have increased the scope of questions that can be examined. This chapter will overview these recent developments and highlight the benefits of these diverse methodologies and data sources.

David Jacks, Kevin O'Rourke and Alan Taylor. [The Gravitational Constant?](#)

We introduce a new dataset on British exports at the bilateral, commodity-level from 1700 to 1899. We then pit two primary determinants of bilateral trade against one another: the trade-diminishing effects of distance versus the trade-enhancing effects of the British Empire. We find that gravity exerted its pull as early as 1700, but the distance effect then attenuated and had almost vanished by 1800. Meanwhile the empire effect peaked sometime in the late 18th century before significantly declining in value. It was only after 1950 that distance would once again exert the same influence that it has today.

Martina Cioni, Giovanni Federico and Michelangelo Vasta. [The two Revolutions in Economic History.](#)

This paper compares the Cliometric Revolution, which transformed economic history in the 1960s, with the current developments in the field with a quantitative analysis based on two databases, totalling more than 3,500 articles. We show that the share of Cliometric articles in the top three economic history journals increased from 1958 to 2000 more slowly than some ex-post narratives lead to believe. We outline the developments from 2001 to 2019 by looking at economic history articles published in the top five field economic history journals and in thirteen prominent economics journals. Most articles in these latter deal with economics of the past ('traditional cliometric'), but quite a few put forward a revolutionary change in the research questions. The 'persistence studies' (PS) look for the historical origins of current outcomes, the 'non-economic outcomes studies' (NEOS) extend the issues well beyond the traditional boundaries of economics, towards sociology, anthropology and above all political science. This Second Revolution was started by young economists who published in some of the top economics journals following the seminal article by Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson (2001). We show that some PS have had on average a huge impact in terms of citations and that they have been more successful than the NEOS. We conclude with some musings about the future of economic history. There might be a new synthesis, with scholars integrating a wider range of research questions, 'traditional cliometric', PS and NEOS. Or perhaps the field will splinter in three independent research streams.

The next generation

Igor Martins.

Igor Martins successfully defended his PhD in Economic History, titled: Collateral Effect: Slavery and Wealth in the Cape Colony (295 p), at the Department of Economic History, Lund University, on 14 October 2020.

'The next generation' is a new section in the Newsletter. Please send us details of your successfully defended PhD related to the field of African economic history.

UPCOMING EVENTS IN AFRICAN ECONOMIC HISTORY

Workshops and conferences

The 15th Annual Meeting of the African Economic History Network has been postponed to 2021.

XIX World Economic History Congress Paris, July 25-29, 2022.

Due to the many difficulties raised by the coronavirus pandemic, the Paris WEHC is postponed to 2022. It will take place on July 25-29, 2022.

In addition, the deadline of the 2nd call for sessions initially planned for June 30, 2020 is postponed to September 15, 2020. For more information visit: <http://www.wehc2021.org/>.

Seminars and talks

Economic History of Developing Regions Virtual Seminar

After a very successful virtual economic history seminar series focused on scholars from developing countries, a second seminar series is planned to start in February. If you want to contribute, please email [James Fenske](mailto:James.Fenske@ehssa.org). The schedule, including speakers, titles, times, and Zoom links, will be announced here:

<http://www.ehssa.org.za/index.php/workshops-and-conferences/>

African Economic History Seminar (Lent term, 2021): University of Cambridge

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 26 January | Gareth Austin (King's, Cambridge)
'The political economy of growth in beverage-crop economies in 1970s Africa: Ghana and Kenya compared' |
| 2 February | Klas Rönnbäck (Gothenburg)
'Capital and colonialism: The return on British investments in Africa 1869-1969' |
| 16 February | Ellen Hillbom (Lund) and Jutta Bolt (Lund), Michiel de Haas (Wageningen) and Frederico Tadei (Barcelona), 'Measuring historical income inequality in Africa: What can we learn from social tables?' |
| 2 March | Reuben Loffman (Queen Mary, University of London)
'A history of rubber production in Africa' |
| 16 March | Moses Ochonu (Vanderbilt University, Nashville)
'African entrepreneurship: the fetish of personal responsibility' |

To subscribe, wherever you are in the world, please visit <https://www.hist.cam.ac.uk/event-series/african-economic-history>. Where possible, the speaker provides a paper in advance, which will be sent to those committing themselves to attending.