



## **African Economic History Newsletter**

### **Issue #49, February 2021**

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
  - a. Now in print
  - b. Working papers
  - c. The next generation
3. Upcoming Events in African Economic History
  - a. Conferences and workshops
  - b. Seminars and talks
  - c. Courses in African economic history
  - d. Opportunities in African economic history

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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:frontiers.aehn@gmail.com).

**Abel Gwaindepi, Krige Siebrits and Johan Fourie.** [Mineral Beneficence in Developing Regions: Insights from the Cape's Public Finance Policies, 1820-1910.](#) (21 December 2021.)

What do states do when they hit a jackpot of mineral discovery? This piece summarizes recent research on the Cape Colony, showing that leveraging mineral discoveries for inclusive development may become impossible when the extractive sector is insulated from state policies.

**Elias Papaioannou and Stelios Michalopoulos.** [Historical Legacies and African Development.](#) (15 November 2020.)

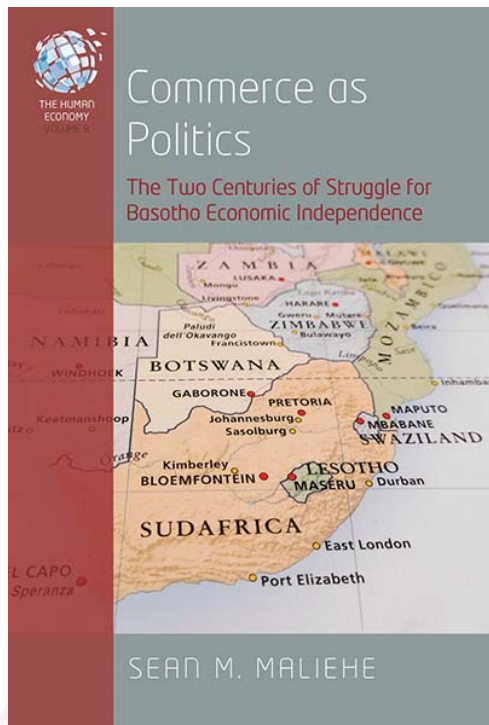
As Africa's role on the global stage is rising, so does the need to understand the shadow of history on the continent's economy and polity. They discuss recent works that shed light on Africa's colonial and precolonial legacies.

## 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](mailto:aehtnetwork@gmail.com) and I will include your news in our quarterly round up. The next issue will appear in early May 2021.

# NEW RESEARCH IN AFRICAN ECONOMIC HISTORY

## Now in print



**Sean M. Maliehe. Commerce as Politics: The Two Centuries of Struggle for Basotho Economic Independence. Berghahn Books.**

This is the first comprehensive economic history of the Basotho people of Southern Africa (in colonial Basutoland, then Lesotho) and spans from the 1820s to the present day. The book documents what the Basotho have done on their own account, focusing on their systematic exclusion from trade and their political efforts to insert themselves into their country's commerce. Although the colonial and post-colonial periods were unfavourable to the Basotho, they have, before and after colonial rule, launched impressive commercial initiatives of their own, which bring hope for greater development and freedom in their struggle for economic independence.

"I think very highly of this book ... I think it will be highly cited and important, partly because there has been so little economic history of Lesotho but also because of the quality of the scholarship." • Colin Hoag, Smith College

**Jutta Bolt and Leigh Gardner. How Africans Shaped British Colonial Institutions: Evidence from Local Taxation. Journal of Economic History.**

The institutions that governed most of the rural population in British colonial Africa have been neglected in the literature on colonialism. We use new data on local governments, or "Native Authorities," to present the first quantitative comparison of African institutions under indirect rule in four colonies in 1948: Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Nyasaland, and Kenya. Tax data show that Native Authorities' capacity varied within and between colonies, due to both underlying economic inequalities and African elites' relations with the colonial government. Our findings suggest that Africans had a bigger hand in shaping British colonial institutions than often acknowledged.

The Journal of Economic History, Volume 80, Issue 4, December 2020, pp. 1189-1223

**Laura Panza and Ulaş Karakoç. Overcoming the Egyptian cotton crisis in the interwar period: the role of irrigation, drainage, new seeds, and access to credit. Economic History Review.**

After experiencing a period of spectacular growth during the late nineteenth century, the Egyptian cotton sector underwent a phase of stagnation, which was followed by a gradual and steady increase in output during the interwar period. Drawing on a new panel dataset at the province-year level, this article explores the determinants of the upturn in cotton output, running a horserace between credit, seed technology, and infrastructure. In order to address endogeneity concerns, an instrumental variable approach is adopted, using a modified version of Bartik's shift-share instrumental variable. Our results provide supporting evidence that peasants switched to a lower-yielding cotton variety as

a response to changes in relative price. Moreover, our production function estimates show that two key factors had a positive impact on output growth: credit availability and the adoption of new cotton varieties.

The Economic History Review, Volume 74, Issue 1, February 2021, pp. 60-86.

**Stefania Galli and Klas Rönnbäck. Land distribution and inequality in a black settler colony: the case of Sierra Leone, 1792–1831. [Economic History Review](#).**

Land distribution is considered to be one of the main contributors to inequality in pre-industrial societies. This article contributes to the debate on the origins of economic inequality in pre-industrial African societies by studying land inequality at a particularly early stage of African economic history. The research examines land distribution and inequality in land ownership among settlers in the Colony of Sierra Leone for three benchmark years over the first 40 years of its existence. The findings show that land inequality was low at the founding of the Colony but increased substantially over time. We suggest that this increase was enabled by a shift in the type of egalitarianism pursued by the colonial authorities, which was reflected in a change in the redistributive policy applied, which allowed later settlers to appropriate land more freely than had been previously possible.

The Economic History Review, Volume 74, Issue 1, February 2021, pp. 115-137.

## Stop the presses!

**Sédi-Anne Boukaka, Giulia Mancini and Giovanni Vecchi. [Poverty and inequality in Francophone Africa, 1960s–2010s](#). [Economic History of Developing Regions](#).**

The paper provides first generation estimates of poverty and inequality rates for three countries in Francophone Africa – Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, and Gabon – in the aftermath of independence. Sources – a large collection of historical household budgets – are new, as is the method that allows to connect historical sources to modern household budget surveys, and to deliver nationally representative estimates. The second part of the paper identifies the trend of poverty and inequality in Côte d'Ivoire for the years 1965 to 2015: mean income growth failed to reduce poverty during the 15 years of economic boom post-independence (1965–1979) because of increasing inequality. Conversely, in the following period (1979–2015) poverty changes are mostly guided by the evolution of growth.

**Vladimir Chlouba and Jianzi He. [Colonial legacy, private property, and rural development: Evidence from Namibian countryside](#). [Economic History of Developing Regions](#).**

Does the legacy of direct colonial rule, through its impact on property rights security, affect rural development in Africa? Although mainstream economic theory links secure property rights to development, extant micro-level evidence from the continent remains mixed. We take advantage of a natural experiment in Namibia, exploiting as-if random application of direct colonial rule that later affected property rights security. Using detailed census data and matching on underlying climatic conditions, we find evidence of more commercialized agricultural cultivation in directly ruled areas. We relate this finding to differing tenure regimes. In formerly indirectly ruled areas where land is still allocated by traditional elites, own-account agricultural activity for the market and living standards lag behind formerly directly ruled regions. Our work has direct implications for students of colonial legacies and land tenure regimes.

**Joseph Keneck Massil and Sophie Harnay. [Parliamentary experience and contemporary democracy in Africa: A Northian view](#). *Economic History of Developing Regions*.**

In a series of pioneering works, Douglass North argues that the institutional innovations taking place in seventeenth-century England as a consequence of a modification of the balance of power between the Parliament and the Crown provided the conditions not only for economic growth, but also for the development of democratic institutions later on. Our article extends his analysis to the study of parliaments in African countries before and after independence. We find that countries in which parliaments were established prior to independence are more likely to have efficient democratic institutions today. We define a variable of interest, 'parliamentary experience at independence', and estimate its effect on a democracy index. Several sensitivity and robustness tests confirm our results that parliamentary experience at the time of independence is a determinant of democracy in African countries today. This corroborates North's idea that history and institutions do matter.

**Joerg Baten and Laura Maravall. [The influence of colonialism on Africa's Welfare: An anthropometric study](#). *Journal of Comparative Economics*.**

This study presents new evidence on the anthropometric development of 47 countries. Did colonialism have an influence on the biological standard of living of Africans? We find that Africans lost stature upon colonization, even after controlling for a number of different variables and potential sample selectivity bias issues. We analyse various types of colonialism and find that both settler colonies and other colonies had an adverse effect on native African heights during the colonialization period.

**Gabriele Cappelli and Joerg Baten. [Numeracy development in Africa: New evidence from a long-term perspective \(1730–1970\)](#). *Journal of Development Economics*.**

Historical evidence of numeracy on the African continent since the 18th century is presented for the first time based on a panel dataset of 43 African countries covering the periods before, during and after colonialism (1730–1970). Estimates of numeracy draw on the age-heaping methodology: we carefully discuss the potential biases and sources of measurement error concerning the use of this index for long-term analyses. These new estimates enable us to gain a better understanding of long-term African development. We find that the evolution of numeracy over time correlates with differences in colonial education systems, even when controlling for other variables.

**Kate Ekama, Johan Fourie, Hans Heese and Lisa-Cheree Martin. [When Cape slavery ended: Introducing a new slave emancipation dataset](#). *Explorations in Economic History*.**

When the enslaved were emancipated across the British Empire in 1834, slave-owners received cash compensation, and four years of unpaid labour as the former slaves became apprentices. In the Cape Colony, appraisers assigned a value to the former slaves. To investigate this, we transcribed 37,411 valuation records to compile a novel emancipation dataset. This gives us a new picture of the enslaved population in the Cape at the time of the emancipation. Some of our findings, for example that slaves from south-east Asia were assigned lower valuations than Cape-born slaves, are in contrast to those of an earlier literature. To distinguish between what the former slave-owners should have received and what they actually received, we matched the valuation records to the compensation claims. We argue that the uneven allocation of compensation had important implications for the distribution of capital after emancipation.



# Working Papers

**Michiel de Haas.** [The failure of cotton imperialism in Africa: Did agricultural seasonality undermine colonial exports?](#) **African Economic History Network Working Paper No. 59.**

European colonizers sought to extract cotton from sub-Saharan Africa. However, while some African farmers generated substantial cotton output, most others did not. I revisit a thesis proposed by John Tosh (1980), to argue that patterns of agricultural seasonality played a crucial role in these heterogeneous outcomes. A comparison of widespread cotton adoption in British Uganda and persistent cotton failure in the French West African interior highlights the impact of rainfall seasonality on farmers' production possibilities and subsistence risks. Ugandan output was enabled by long rainy seasons, smoothing labor requirements and allowing farmers to assess the food harvest before committing to cotton planting. These combined effects resulted in an estimated 4 to 5 times larger capacity to grow cotton alongside food crops. A belated take-off in post-colonial Francophone West Africa illustrates how the observed historical seasonality constraint was contingent on technological stagnation and thin food markets, which characterized most parts of colonial Africa.

**Laura Channing and Bronwen Everill.** [On the Freetown Waterfront: Household Income and Informal Wage Labour in a Nineteenth Century Port City.](#) **African Economic History Network Working Paper No. 58.**

In this article, we use the 1831 Freetown Census alongside a variety of business and colonial papers to argue for the importance of informal, seasonal, flexible labor conducted at the household level – rather than individual breadwinner – in understanding how the economy in urban port cities in Africa and elsewhere in the Atlantic World operated in the nineteenth century. We construct a welfare ratio of different wage categories over the nineteenth century, as well as presenting sample household welfare ratios using real households from the Census. We argue that the flexibility, 'entrepreneurship', and precarity of the informal port city economy of the nineteenth century is relevant for understanding the nature of the modern gig economy and the predominance of 'underemployment' and informal employment in African urban areas. An archivally-based long view of how households strategized about their welfare can help to undo some of the 'compression of history' prevalent in the literature, and can offer contextualization to recent comparative real wage series.

**Igor Martins.** [Raising Capital to Raise Crops: Slave Emancipation and Agricultural Output in the Cape Colony.](#) **African Economic History Network Working Paper No. 57.**

Agricultural output fluctuated worldwide after the emancipation of slaves. The usual explanation is that former slaveholders now lacked labor. This is not the full story: slaves were not just laborers but capital investments to support production. Using databases covering more than 40 years from Stellenbosch in the British Cape Colony, this study measures changes in output before and after emancipation to determine the role of slaves as factors of production. Large shortfalls in compensation paid to slaveholders after the 1833 Abolition Act reveal that slaves were a source of capital that strongly influenced production levels, an important reason for the output variation.

**Ellen Feingold, Johan Fourie and Leigh Gardner.** [A Tale of Paper and Gold: The Material History Money in South Africa.](#) **LSE Economic History Working Papers N. 323.**

This paper uses the South African objects in the National Numismatic Collection of the Smithsonian to tell a new material history of money in South Africa. In other parts of the continent, research about the currencies in use and how these changed over time have offered a new perspective on the

impact of colonialism, commercialisation, and the rise of state capacity. South Africa, and southern Africa more generally, has remained on the periphery of these debates. This paper begins to fill this gap. It shows that even in Africa's most financially developed region, the process of establishing a stable national currency was long and halting, reflecting struggles over South Africa's relationship with the global economy and the rise and fall of apartheid.

**Raouf Boucekkine, M Laksaci and M. Touati-Tliba.** [Long-run stability of money demand and monetary policy: the case of Algeria.](#) **LIDAM discussion paper: IRES/2021/01.**

We estimate the demand for money for monetary aggregates M1 and M2, and cash in Algeria over the period 1979-2019, and study its long-run stability. We show that the transaction motive is significant for all three aggregates, especially for the demand for cash, reflecting the weight of informal economy "practices". The elasticity of the scale variable is very close to unity for M2 and M1, and even equal to unity for cash demand (1.006). The elasticity of inflation is also significant for all three aggregates, although its level is higher in the case of cash demand (-6.474). Despite the persistence of certain financial repression mechanisms, interest rate elasticity is significant for all three aggregates, but higher for M1 and cash. The same observation is made for elasticity of the exchange rate, reflecting the effect of monetary substitution, especially for M1 and cash. Finally, our study concludes that the demand for money in terms of M1 remains stable, the same observation being confirmed for the M2 aggregate. However, the demand for fiat currency proves not to be stable. The consequences for the optimal design of monetary policy in Algeria are clearly stated.

**Facundo Alvaredo, Denis Cogneau, Thomas Piketty.** [Income Inequality under Colonial Rule: Evidence from French Algeria, Cameroon, Tunisia, and Vietnam and comparisons with British colonies 1920-1960.](#) **WID.world Working Paper N° 2020/14.**

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.

**Yajna Govind.** [Post-colonial Trends of Income Inequality: Evidence from the Overseas Departments of France.](#) **WID.world Working Paper N° 2020/14.**

Most ex-colonies have gained their independence during the decolonization wave in the last century. Recent research on the colonial legacy in terms of inequality has thus mostly focused on these independent states, overlooking the territories which have been assimilated by their ex-colonizers. This paper analyzes the post-colonial inequality in four such territories- La Réunion, Guadeloupe, Martinique and Guyane. Drawing on a new income tax dataset put together in this paper, I study the evolution of income inequality in the four oldest French colonies, now overseas departments of France, since their decolonization in 1946 until recent years. The results of the top 1% income shares reveal a rapid decline of inequality since decolonization and stabilisation in the recent decade. Despite the general catch-up of the overseas departments, the top 10% income share remained consistently higher than in the metropolis. Going further, I investigate the underlying cleavage: the

metropolitan-native divide. Matching recent fiscal data to the corresponding population census, I show that public-sector employment and metropolitans are over-represented at the top of the distribution and that there exist a “metropolitan income premium” in the overseas departments, even after controlling for observable characteristics.

**Kristof Titeca.** [The Lord’s Resistance Army \(LRA\) in the DRC.](#) Working paper 2020.07.

While much has been written about the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), hardly any analyses focus on the rebel group’s activities in (northeastern) Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) – although the rebel group conducted some of the biggest massacres in its history in the country, and continues to be active there. This analysis focusses on a consistent claim which is made among many actors in the DRC: that the LRA was invited, and supported, by the Congolese authorities. This analysis reviews this claim, by zooming in on the available evidence, such as the circumstances in which the rebel group arrived in the country. It concludes that, while freelancing individuals indeed might have brokered such an agreement, institutional Congolese government support to the LRA was (most probably) not the case. Yet, it shows the murky circumstances which allowed such claims to emerge, involving war entrepreneurs, freelancing government officials, ineffective protection, and a government more interested in state security rather than human security.

**Maxim Ananyev and Michael Poyker.** [Christian missions and anti-gay attitudes in Africa.](#) NICEP Working Paper: 2020-04.

We argue that colonial Christian missions had a long-term impact on anti-gay attitudes in Africa. We use a geo-coded representative survey of African countries and the location of historical Christian missions to estimate a significant and economically meaningful association between proximity to historical missions and anti-gay sentiments today. Using anthropological data on pre-colonial acceptance of homosexual practices among indigenous groups, we show that the establishment of missions, while nonrandom, was exogenous to pre-existing same-sex patterns among indigenous population. The estimated effect is driven by persons of Christian faith and statistically indistinguishable from zero on samples of Muslims, nonbelievers, and followers of traditional indigenous religions. Thus, we argue that our results are indicative of a causal effect of missionary religious conversion to Christianity

**Leoné Walters, Carolyn Chisadza and Matthew W. Clance.** [The Effect of Colonial and Pre-Colonial Institutions on Contemporary Education in Africa.](#) UP Department of Economics Working Paper Series.

This paper argues that contrary to previous findings, present-day education outcomes in Africa cannot be independently attributed to colonial or pre-colonial ethnic institutions. We propose that it is instead the complementarity or contention between colonial and precolonial institutions that result in education outcomes we observe today. Using geolocated DHS literacy outcomes for Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria, our findings suggest that the positive effect of British rule on contemporary literacy is diminished in centralised ethnic regions. This paper contributes to debates on colonial and pre-colonial ethnic influences on African development, moving beyond country-level analysis.

**Guido Alfani and Federico Tadei.** [Income Inequality in French West Africa: Building Social Tables for Pre-Independence Senegal and Ivory Coast.](#) WP E-Eco19/396.

Sub-Saharan Africa is home today to some of the most unequal countries in the world, in Southern and Central Africa, as well as others that are close to the world average, in Western Africa. Yet, there is no consensus regarding the historical factors that led to such a situation. Given limited data on income distribution during colonial times, we do not know whether present-day inequality patterns can be traced back to the colonial period and which role was played by colonial institutions. Most of our knowledge comes from information on British colonies, while territories subjected to other colonial



powers are much less well known. To address this gap, we analyze trends in income inequality for colonies in French West Africa, building social tables for Senegal and Ivory Coast during the last decades of colonial rule. We find that income inequality was high during the colonial period, because of the huge income differential between Africans and European settlers (especially in Senegal) and of high inequality within the African population (especially in the Ivory Coast). Nevertheless, it tended to reduce during colonial rule – but the trend inverted after independence. Our findings cast in a new light the connection between colonialism, extractive institutions, high inequality and inequality extraction ratios.

**Federico Tadei.** [Colonizer Identity and Trade in Africa: Were the British More Favourable to Free Trade?](#) **UB Economics – Working Papers, 2020, E20/399.**

It has often been claimed that the structure of export trade between Africa and Europe during the colonial period depended on the colonizer identity, with the British relying on free trade and the French employing instead monopsonistic policies. Yet, due to the lack of systematic data on colonial trade, this claim has so far remained untested. In this paper, I use recently available data on export prices from African colonies to estimate monopsonistic profit margins for British and French trading companies. The results challenge the view of the British colonizers as champions of free trade. The level of profit margins was determined much more by the local conditions in Africa than by the identity of the colonial power. The British did not necessarily rely on free trade more than the French and did so only when a stronger control of trade was not a viable option.

**Johan Fourie and Jonathan Jayes.** [Health inequality and the 1918 influenza in South Africa.](#) **CAGE working paper no. 532.**

The 1918 influenza – the Spanish flu – killed an estimated 6% of South Africans. Not all were equally affected. Mortality rates were particularly high in districts with a large share of black and coloured residents. To investigate why this happened, we transcribed 39,482 death certificates from the Cape Province. Using a novel indicator – whether a doctor's name appears on the death certificate – we argue that the unequal health outcomes were a consequence of unequal access to healthcare. Our results show that the racial inequalities in health outcomes that existed before October 1918 were exacerbated during the pandemic. Access to healthcare, as we expected, worsened for black and coloured residents of the Cape Province. Unexpectedly, however, we found that other inequalities were unchanged, or even reversed, notably age, occupation and location. Living in the city, for instance, became a health hazard rather than a benefit during the pandemic. These surprising results contradict the general assumption that all forms of inequality are exacerbated during a crisis. Our analyses suggest explanations for the widening racial gap in healthcare access during the 1918 pandemic, from both the demand and the supply side. We could find, however, no evidence of racial prejudice. Our findings confirm the importance of taking race into account in studying the effects of the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic or other world crises.

**Philip Roessler, Yannick Pengl, Robert Marty, Kyle Sorlie Titlow and Nicolas van de Walle.** [The Cash Crop Revolution, Colonialism and Legacies of Spatial Inequality: Evidence from Africa.](#) **CSAE Working Paper WPS/2020-12.**

We analyze the long-term effects of colonial cash crop extraction in Africa. Our conceptual framework focuses on the dynamic, interactive effects of geography, trade and colonialism in the context of Africa's structural change from the slave trades to export agriculture. The adoption of cash crops shifted the loci of economic production to smallholder farmers in areas suitable for cultivation. Concurrently, the cash crop revolution—tied to European industrialization—led to the diffusion of economic imperialism beyond coastal Africa. Imperial extractive economies fueled infrastructural development in highly-suitable zones but dislocated production linkages to Europe and stymied the economic differentiation that otherwise might have occurred. The result was economic agglomeration at the site of production but with limited spillovers to nearby areas. Using agro-climatic suitability

scores and historical data on the source location of more than 95 percent of all exports across 38 African states, we find that colonial cash crop production exhibited a large and positive long-run effect on local development in terms of urbanization, road infrastructure, nighttime luminosity and household wealth. These effects rival or surpass other geographic and historical forces frequently linked to subnational development in Africa. Exploring causal mechanisms, we show that path dependence due to colonial infrastructure investments is the more important channel than continued advantages in agricultural productivity. We also find that the positive local effects of colonial cash crop extraction came at the expense of surrounding areas and thereby entrenched deep spatial inequalities.

## The next generation

### **Maria Fibaek.**

Maria Fibaek successfully defended his PhD in Economic History, titled: Rural income diversification, employment and differentiation in Kenya and implications for rural change, at the Department of Economic History, Lund University, on 4 December 2020.

### **Lloyd Melusi Maphosa.**

Lloyd Maphosa successfully defended his PhD in History, titled: A historical analysis of joint stock companies in the Cape Colony between 1892 and 1902, at the Department of History, Stellenbosch University, on 11 December 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

#### **Summer School on Research methods in African Economic History: Quantitative techniques**

The study of Africa's economic past has in recent years received considerable scholarly attention, leading prominent scholars like Prof. Gareth Austin to talk about a renaissance for the study of African economic history (2014). After being increasingly marginalized in the 1980s and 1990s as part of the rise of neo-liberalism and the cultural turn in history the study of Africa's economic history it is now considered as fundamental for our understanding of Africa's development challenges and how to address them. Much of the recent research has been conducted by western scholars based at western universities, while scholars from African universities are, to a very limited extent, part of this renaissance (Fourie 2019). This is not to suggest that no economic history research have been taking place. Indeed, as Erik Green and Pius Nyambara (2015) have demonstrated, there is a lot of Economic History research and teaching taking place in Africa. The economic history research is, however, not finding its way into mainstream economic history journals, with the consequence that the research conducted at African universities are not receiving the recognition it deserves. Part of the reason for such has to do with differences in methodological approaches. Economic history

research in Africa tend to be largely qualitative and single case study oriented while the mainstream economic history journals have a bias towards quantitative and comparative research.

From our preliminary investigations, researchers on African Economic history at African universities have limited capacity where quantitative research methodologies are concerned. It is within this context that a capacity building summer school will be held at the University of Zimbabwe from 21 June to 3 July 2021 in partnership with the Young Scholars Initiative, the Economic History Department at Lund University and the African Economic History Network.

It is envisaged that 15 participants from different parts of Southern Africa, constituting of largely early career PhD holders and post-graduate students will be engaged for 10 days under the tutelage of senior scholars. The participants should be already in a University system and to qualify should submit your CV and a statement of purpose demonstrating how they seek to deploy quantitative methodologies in their ongoing research. Submissions should be made to [ushehwedu@gmail.com](mailto:ushehwedu@gmail.com) and [erik.green@ekh.lu.se](mailto:erik.green@ekh.lu.se). Due date for application is 28 February 2021.

**Partners:** YSI Africa, African Economic History Network (AEHN), University of Zimbabwe and Lund University (Economic History Departments)

**Organisers:** Ushehwedu Kufakurinani and Erik Green

\*\*\*

### 18th Century Africa Virtual Workshop Cambridge University

What did the eighteenth century look like, smell like, sound like? And how different would those answers have been for different parts of the world? Historians and theorists of globalization have both identified a convergence of social, cultural, and political forms in the modern period. But how different would people have really found each other in the eighteenth century?

Historians have often struggled with the legacies of the nineteenth century in shaping the views of earlier African pasts. Travel writing, ethnographies, abolitionist literature, and colonial archives were as interested in painting a picture of modernity in Europe as they were in telling their readers something about Africa. As new historical research questions arising from Atlantic, economic, and global historical approaches have revived broader interest in pre-colonial African histories, the nineteenth century continues to cast a long shadow on how pre-colonial Africa is understood. The “compression of history” problem has been identified in African economic history, but it also shapes how the imagination of an African past infuses writing about the African diaspora and slavery in the Atlantic World, or the dynamics of historical change as a development towards colonial history.

How can forms of cultural history and interdisciplinary methodologies help us to access an eighteenth century African experience? How can a grounding in a particular century change the shape of our narratives of change over time? Does a fuller picture of life emerge through a different kind of story telling? This virtual workshop series seeks to bring together scholars and students working in a wide variety of fields and geographies ranging from music history, the history of art and architecture, fashion, literature and performance, food, material culture, religion, landscape archaeology, economic and business history, historical anthropology, gender, intellectual history, and political thought working on any part of the eighteenth century African continent. Most broadly, the workshop series will ask us to think about time, narrative, and chronology as they shape how African historical change is discussed in relation to global histories.

300 word abstract and 1 page CV to [18thcenturyafrica@gmail.com](mailto:18thcenturyafrica@gmail.com)  
by February 8, 2021

Questions to [bee21@cam.ac.uk](mailto:bee21@cam.ac.uk)

Virtual Workshops: June 2021

Sponsored by CRASSH Cambridge; Centre for African Studies, Cambridge; Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge

<https://18thcenturyafrica.wordpress.com/>

## Seminars and talks

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

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 26 January  | Gareth Austin (King's, Cambridge)<br>'The political economy of growth in beverage-crop economies in 1970s Africa: Ghana and Kenya compared'   |
| 2 February  | Klas Rönnbäck (Gothenburg)<br>'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)<br>'A history of rubber production in Africa'   |
| 16 March    | Moses Ochonu (Vanderbilt University, Nashville)<br>'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.

### **Economic History of Developing Regions Virtual Seminar Series**

Wednesday, February 10, 2021 (3PM UK Time):

Speaker: **Belinda Archibong (Barnard College)**, Organizer: James Fenske

Wednesday, February 24, 2021 (3PM UK Time):

Speaker: **Mustafa Erdem Kabadayi (Koç University)**, Organizer: Mohamed Saleh

Wednesday, March 10, 2021 (3PM UK Time):

Speaker: **Abhiroop Mukhopadhyay (Indian Statistical Institute (Delhi))**, Organizer: James Fenske

Wednesday, March 24, 2021 (3PM UK Time):

Speaker: **Xavier Durán (Universidad de los Andes)**, Organizer: Manuel Llorca Jana

Wednesday, April 7, 2021 (3PM UK Time):

Speaker: **Ulas Karakoc (Kadir Has University)**, Organizer: Coskun Tuncer

Wednesday, April 21, 2021 (3PM UK Time):

Speaker: **Pei Gao (Yale-NUS College)**, Organizer: James Fenske



Wednesday, May 5, 2021 (3PM UK Time):

Speaker: **Felipe González (PUC-Chile)**, Organizer: Manuel Llorca Jana

Wednesday, May 19, 2021 (3PM UK Time):

Speaker: **Omar Cheta (Bard College)**, Organizer: Mohamed Saleh

Wednesday, June 2, 2021 (3PM UK Time):

Speaker: **Pim de Zwart (Wageningen University)**, Organizer: Jessica Vechbanyongratana

Wednesday, June 16, 2021 (3PM UK Time):

Speaker: **Yasin Arslantas (Anadolu University)**, Organizer: Coskun Tuncer

Wednesday, June 30, 2021 (3PM UK Time):

Speaker: **Thanyaporn Chankrajang (Chulalongkorn University)**, Organizer: Jessica Vechbanyongratana

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

### LEAP Economic History Seminar Series: Stellenbosch University

A series on 'Global economic history beyond Africa'



**LEAP**  
LABORATORY FOR  
THE ECONOMICS  
OF AFRICA'S PAST

**ECONOMIC HISTORY WEBINAR SERIES**  
February to June 2021

Every Wednesday, 13h00 or 16h00 (GMT + 2) depending on speaker's timezone.  
Send e-mail to Karl Bergemann ([kjbergemann@gmail.com](mailto:kjbergemann@gmail.com)) to join.

# Courses in African economic history

## African development – from the past to the present (Ellen Hillbom)



African development – from the past to the present -- offers a unique economic history perspective on Africa's development. Over a period of five weeks, the course covers a logical account of historical events and decisions that have shaped the current political-economical landscape of Sub-Saharan Africa - from the pre-colonial and the colonial era, to the era of liberalisation, modern day Africa and the future prospects of the continent.

One does not need to have a dedicated historical interest to benefit from the course. The course targets a broad range of professional groups, actors, organisations and curious individuals - all sharing a common interest in improving their understanding of the limitations and opportunities inherent in the Sub-Saharan African continent.

**Starts 3 February 2021!**

<https://www.coursera.org/learn/african-development--from-the-past-to-the-present>



# OPPORTUNITIES IN AFRICAN ECONOMIC HISTORY

## PhD position: Wageningen University

### Rural and Environmental History Group

A PhD candidate in the field of history or economic history to study the causes and health outcomes of drought-induced famines in Latin America and/or Africa at the turn of the 20th century.

Droughts have been intrinsically related to famine throughout history, resulting in harvest failure, public health crises and conflict over resources. Contrary to other world regions such as Europe and Asia, very little is known about such crises in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, where drought contributed to major famines in Brazil (1876-9, 1896-1900), Sudan (1888-92), Ethiopia (1888-92), and elsewhere. This project focuses on the late 19th-early 20th century, a period characterized by major technological transitions influencing the production and transport of food crops as well as the treatment and prevention of disease. These developments radically altered the economic and health conditions during famines as compared with previous historical periods, and are therefore crucial for understanding responses to and the impact of later 20th-century food crises.

This vacancy will be listed up to and including the 15th of March, 2021. We will schedule the first job interviews soon after closing date. For more information: <https://www.wur.nl/en/vacancy/PhD-project-Famines-and-Health-Outcomes-in-Latin-America-and-Africa-at-the-Turn-of-the-20th-Century.htm>

## Postdoctoral fellowship: Stellenbosch University

### LEAP, Department of History (Biography of an Uncharted People)

A postdoctoral candidate in the field of history or economic history to study African political economy in the nineteenth century.

The liberal franchise in the Cape Colony at the end of the nineteenth century is an understudied area of South African democracy. The candidate would be expected to use techniques such as GIS, textual and network analysis with newly transcribed source material to document the rise and fall of an African electorate.

The vacancy will be listed up to and including 5 March 2021. A CV, letter of motivation and two reference letters should be sent to [leap@sun.ac.za](mailto:leap@sun.ac.za) before this date.

The preferred candidate will have a PhD in history, economics, political science, sociology or related fields and would have experience with South African archival sources. The ability to read isiXhosa is a strong preference. The candidate is expected to reside in Stellenbosch, South Africa for the duration of the fellowship. The position is available for a period of eighteen months (starting in July 2021).