



## African Economic History Newsletter

### Issue #58, May 2023

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.

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If you want to publicise your own research, events, seminars or organise a panel for an upcoming conference, please send a message to [lwalters@sun.ac.za](mailto:lwalters@sun.ac.za) and I will include your news in our quarterly round up.

**Leoné Walters**  
on behalf of the African Economic History Network

# Network updates

## 2023 AEHN MEETING NEWS

### 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the African Economic History Network

*Agency in African Economic History: Networks, capital and African development*

**Where:** Future Africa, University of Pretoria, South Africa  
**When:** 5 - 6 October 2023  
**Keynote speakers:** Prof Alois Mlambo (University of Pretoria) and Prof John Turner (Queen's University Belfast)  
**To register:** <https://forms.gle/FzzCV4GE2bPEw3BC8>  
**Or email:** [aehn2023@gmail.com](mailto:aehn2023@gmail.com)

The abstracts submitted for this year's meeting have been accepted. **If you wish to attend (without submitting a paper), please register by completing the form before 22 September 2023.** Please indicate whether you would be willing to chair a session.

Organising Committee:

Dr Carolyn Chisadza, Department of Economics, University of Pretoria  
Prof Tinashe Nyamunda, Historical and Heritage Studies, University of Pretoria  
Dr Christie Swanepoel, Department of Economics, University of the Western Cape



**Faculty of Humanities**  
Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe  
Lefapha la Bomotheo



**Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences**  
Fakulteit Ekonomiese en Bestuurswetenskappe  
Lefapha la Disaense tša Ekonomi le Taolo



**ECONOMIC HISTORY SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA**

**Young Scholars Initiative**

**FUTURE AFRICA**  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

## AEHN WORKING PAPER SERIES

If you have an African economic history paper that you would like to submit to [AEHN Working Papers](#) for consideration, please contact the editors Leigh Gardner ([l.a.gardner@lse.ac.uk](mailto:l.a.gardner@lse.ac.uk)) and Felix Meier zu Selhausen ([f.p.meierzuselhausen@uu.nl](mailto:f.p.meierzuselhausen@uu.nl)). This working paper series is intended to disseminate research results to other scholars in order to encourage discussion and suggestions before journal publication.

### Tubers and its Role in Historic Political Fragmentation in Africa

Nonso Obikili

This paper examines the link between historical political fragmentation and surplus agricultural production, and the impact of natural endowments with regards to crop suitability. I show that in sub-Saharan Africa, groups that cultivated tubers, specifically yams, were more likely to have higher levels of local political fragmentation. I show that both tubers and most cereals were positively correlated with historic population density and that there was no historic discrimination in the capacity of crops to produce surpluses and support large populations. I however show that unlike cereal cultivators who were more likely to be centralized, tuber cultivators were likely to have more local political fragmentation. I use crop suitability and the proximity to the area of the domestication of yams to show that cultivating yams did lead to more local political fragmentation. I argue that this is likely due to the biological properties of yams which make them more difficult to expropriate and implies that surpluses stay local. I argue that the experience of keeping surpluses local is associated with contemporary social norms that are against autocracy and unitary accumulation of power. These social norms are an example of the mechanism through which these historical institutional structures transmit to contemporary times.

### Elite Persistence in Sierra Leone: What can names tell us?

Yannick Dupraz and Rebecca Simson

Can name analysis be used to study elite persistence in African contexts? Taking Sierra Leone as a case study, we use surnames to measure how two historical elites (descendants of settlers that comprise Sierra Leone's Krio community and members of Chiefly Ruling Houses) have fared over the postcolonial period. We find strong and persistent overrepresentation of these groups across a range of postcolonial elites, although decolonisation is associated with a marked decline in political elite persistence. The results also show strong elite compartmentalisation: Chiefly name-holders are more overrepresented in politics and mining, and their overrepresentation falls the more educationally-selective the profession. The Krio, conversely, are increasingly overrepresented the more educationally-selective the sector, and their role in politics diminished rapidly after independence. This speaks to the enduring legacy of the colony-protectorate divide in Sierra Leone, and to different strategies of elite perpetuation, whether through educational investments or political capital. It demonstrates that name-based methods can bring new perspectives to African elite studies.

### Women on a Mission: Protestant Legacies of Gender Equality in Africa?

Bastian Becker and Felix Meier zu Selhausen

Christian missions, especially Protestants missions, have been shown to advance long-run education outcomes and gender equality in Africa. However, the mechanisms behind this benign legacy and the contribution of missionary women, who constituted more than half of all Western mission staff, are not well-understood. We compile a new extensive data set on the locations of missions in colonial Africa, including the gender composition of their staff. In combination with contemporary survey data on one million respondents in 29 African countries, we provide evidence of missions' equalizing effects with regards to education and a wide range of female agency outcomes. We document that Protestant missions left no more benign legacy than Catholics, questioning the Protestant exceptionalism highlighted by prior studies. We also document a strong association between missionary women and girls' school enrollment in colonial times but find no evidence of any lasting gendered effects. Post-independence expansion of public education and the secularization of school curricula may have offset persistence of Africa's earliest centers of female education.

## FRONTIERS IN AFRICAN ECONOMIC HISTORY BLOG

### The Economics of Missionary Expansion

Rémi Jedwab, Felix Meier zu Selhausen and Alexander Moradi

How did Christianity expand in sub-Saharan Africa to become the region's dominant religion? Christian missions in the 19th and early 20th centuries were established in healthier, more accessible, and richer places before expanding to economically less developed areas. Christianization did not leave any benign legacy on macro-economic development during colonial or contemporary times but continues to affect human capital formation.

### Legacies of loss: The health outcomes of slaveholder compensation in the British Cape Colony

Igor Martins, Jeanne Cilliers and Johan Fourie

Can wealth shocks have intergenerational health consequences? This paper explores the wealth-health gradient among Cape Colony slaveholders using a shortfall produced by the compensation scheme following the emancipation of slaves in the British Empire in 1834. We find that wealth losses have a small but statistically significant effect on later-life outcomes and that intergenerational transmission is unlikely to play an important role in this relationship.

### What about the Race between Education and Technology in the Global South?

Ewout Frankema and Marlous van Waijenburg

Historical research on the race between education and technology has focused on the West but barely touched upon 'the rest'. We created a new occupational wage database for 50 African and Asian economies which allows us to compare long-run patterns in skill premiums across the colonial and post-colonial eras (c. 1870–2010). Our paper takes a first step to explain the origins of the Africa–Asia gap and the drivers of global skill premium convergence, paying special attention to the colonial context that shaped demand, supply, and labour market institutions.

## AEHN TEXTBOOK

The AEHN Textbook eBook is now out with 17 wonderful chapters to teach open-access.

### The History of African Development

Edited by Ewout Frankema, Ellen Hillbom, Ushehweu Kufakurinani and Felix Meier zu Selhausen

This book aims to draw experts in the field of African History, Economics and African Development Studies together around an open access textbook. The book is intended for teachers and undergraduate students at African universities, but also for an interested public audience. The chapters describe and explain various aspects of historical African development trajectories in plain English language. All chapters include a list of suggested readings, data sources and study questions to test student's comprehension. By offering this book in an open-source (CC BY) environment, the AEHN seeks to facilitate a wider diffusion of the knowledge that is generated within its academic network and to support capacity building among a new generation of African historians and development practitioners.

### The History of African Development

*An Online Textbook for a New Generation of African Students and Teachers*

Edited by

Ewout Frankema, Ellen Hillbom, Ushehweu Kufakurinani  
and Felix Meier zu Selhausen



# News and announcements

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### Special Issue: The business from within Africa. Zeitschrift für Unternehmensgeschichte/Journal of Business History

#### *African agency in business through history*

The business of entrepreneurial agency in Africa brings together a tapestry of activity, networking and economic mobility over several centuries. Historians are exploring this complex integrated web of economic activity relying on multiple disciplinary perspectives. Business people assumed agency in developing extensive exchange networks moving natural resources, agricultural products and locally manufactured goods beyond the borders of local markets. In these entrepreneurial activities women and men collaborated towards social sustainability, but also personal advancement. As the legacy of planning gradually allowed individual and collective agency in business (Natkhov & Pyle, 2022), this is the history of Africa's entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial families, entrepreneurial corporations and business networks business historians stand to deliver.

The agency of people in enterprise all over Africa has not received systematic attention in Business History. The entrepreneurial role of all the peoples of Africa in different business structures, organisational form and even informal groups, displayed a growing engagement with international business. The collection on business in Africa edited by Falola and Jalloh (Falola T and Jalloh A, 2002) surveyed the landscape of African and African-American business, but now the innovative entrepreneurial businesses amongst all Africa's peoples justifies a new history. The new lens is the narrative of the long duree of business agency in Africa. Business men and women built on the deep-rooted legacy of entrepreneurial agency in developing market operations through enterprises of varying size and structure to negotiate the opportunities of Africa in the world. As state intervention in markets slowly contracts, dynamic and innovative business entered both African and global markets. This development motivated the ZUG to dedicate a Special Issue to the history of business in Africa. This call for contributions seeks to solicit submissions exploring the history of business people and business enterprise in Africa, from earliest times through the discontinuities and complexities of the last half of the twentieth century, to global engagements in recent times. The following questions are driving the enthusiasm for this volume:

- Who were the business leaders of the past and how did they infuse business capacity into the next generation of business leaders in different African contexts?
- Who were the business leaders – men and women?
- How have entrepreneurs adjusted to dynamically changing market trends?
- How have markets in Africa interacted internally and externally with global markets?
- How has the organisation of business changed in different contexts in Africa?
- How have business organisations fostered/undermined business development?
- Has business in Africa benefitted from privatisation?
- How has state regulation impacted business development in Africa?
- How does business in the MENA region align with business in SSA?

**Submissions of draft manuscript outline (1000 words) with discussion of methodology and Preliminary findings 30 June 2023.** The Editors of the ZUG will communicate acceptance of manuscript submissions by 15 July 2023. Final manuscripts for publication are due by 30 November 2023. <sup>1</sup> Guest editors: Prof Grietjie Verhoef, University of Johannesburg, South Africa, [gverhoef@uj.ac.za](mailto:gverhoef@uj.ac.za); Prof Ayodeji Olukoju, University of Lagos, Nigeria, [aolukoju2002@yahoo.com](mailto:aolukoju2002@yahoo.com)

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<sup>1</sup> References:


Akinyoade, A., Dietz T., and Uche, C. (2017). *Entrepreneurship in Africa*. Brill Publishers.  
Falola, T. and Jalloh A. (2002). *Black Business and Economic Power*. Rochester University Press.  
Natkhov, T., & Pyle, W. (2022). *Revealed in Transition: The Political Effect of Planning's Legacy*.  
Ochonu, M. (2018). *Entrepreneurship in Africa: A Historical Approach*. Indiana University Press.

## SEMINAR SERIES

Please remember to send updates of seminar series in African economic history to Leoné Walters ([lwalters@sun.ac.za](mailto:lwalters@sun.ac.za)).

## BECOME A MEMBER

[Economic History Society of Southern Africa](#) membership news:



Promoting the study of and interest in economic and social history of southern Africa

### Join the Society!

Membership benefits include -

- Joining network of young and established scholars in the field
- Receive copies\* of the society's journal *The Economic History of Developing Regions* and special issues
- Stay up to date with conferences and events

\* Published by Taylor & Francis, 3 issues per calendar year

Sign up is simple. Fill in the [membership application form](#) and send it with POP to EHSSA secretary Kate Ekama ([kateekama@sun.ac.za](mailto:kateekama@sun.ac.za)).

## IN MEMORIAM

### Aaron Graham (1984 - 2023)

It is with deep sadness that we announce the loss of our colleague, Aaron Graham. Aaron passed away after a short and sudden illness on 27 April 2023. A full announcement and obituary from UCL can be found at: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/history/news/2023/may/dr-aaron-graham-1984-2023>

In his research, he focused on the British Empire and how finance, politics, corruption, and slavery were linked throughout history. For this work, he received numerous awards and grants. He was the author of two books, *Corruption, party and government in Britain, 1702-13* and *Bills of Union: money, empire and ambitions in the mid-eighteenth century British Atlantic*. His research on British Empire reached Africa as well. On Africa, he compared the experiences of compensation after the emancipation of slavery in Mauritius, South Africa, and the Caribbean. He further investigated the role of this compensation in the establishment of banks in the Cape Colony, and how family networks were key in this process.

At the time of his passing, he was working on two books that will be completed by colleagues. He planned to continue his work on the Cape Colony's early banks and their role in the lives of formerly enslaved people.

He was a kind and generous researcher who provided support to young scholars and created networks where none existed. He will be missed. Messages of tribute for Aaron can be left at: <https://padlet.com/eleanorrobson/in-memory-of-dr-aaron-graham-k9vaw0ktzkfzz98c>

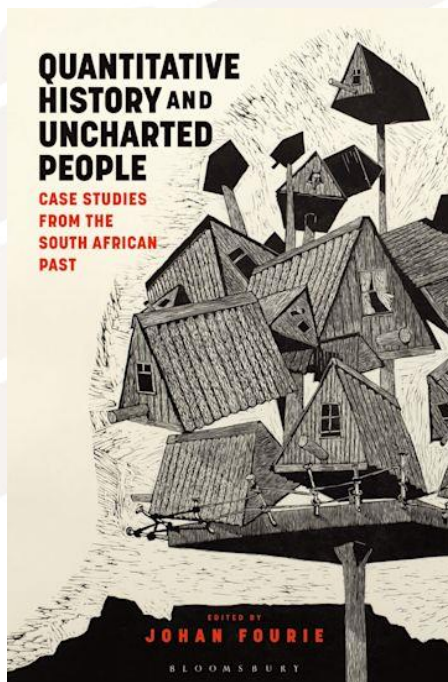
# New research in African economic history

## FOR YOUR BOOKSHELF

### Things Change - Black Material Culture and the Development of a Consumer Society in South Africa, 1800-2020

Robert Ross

Since the early nineteenth century, the things which Black South Africans have had in their homes have changed completely. They have adopted things like tables, chairs, knives, forks, spoons, plates, cups and saucers, iron pots, beds, blankets, European clothing, and later electronic apparatus. Thus they claimed modernity, respectability and political inclusion. This book is the first systematic analysis of this development. It argues that the desire to possess such goods formed a major part of the drive behind the anti-apartheid struggle, and that the demand to consume has significantly influenced both the economy and the politics of the country.



### Quantitative History and Uncharted People: Case Studies from the South African Past

Edited by Johan Fourie

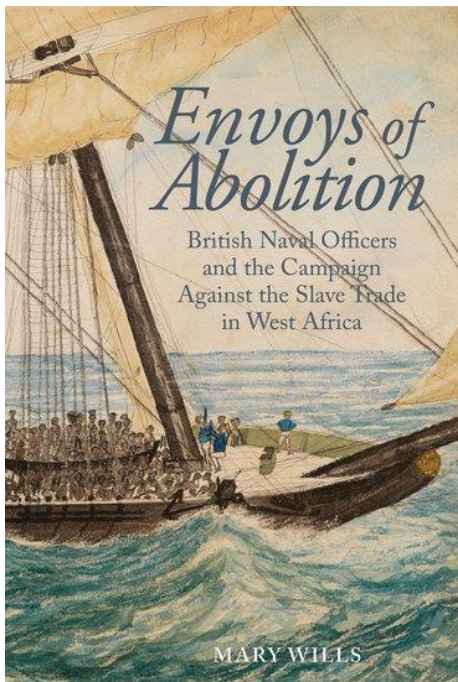
One of the biggest challenges in the study of history is the unreliable nature of traditional archival sources which omit histories of marginalised groups. This book makes the case that quantitative history offers a way to fill these gaps in the archive.

Showcasing 13 case studies from the South African past, it applies quantitative sources, tools and methods to social histories from below to uncover the experiences of uncharted peoples. Examining the occupations of slaves, victims of the Spanish flu, health of schoolchildren and more, it shows how quantitative tools can be particularly powerful in regions where historical records are preserved, but questions of bias and prejudice pervade. Applying methods such as GIS mapping, network analysis and algorithmic matching techniques it explores histories of indigenous peoples, women, enslaved peoples and other groups marginalised in South African history.

Connecting quantitative sources and new forms of data interpretation with a narrative social history, this book offers a fresh approach to quantitative methods and shows how they can be used to achieve a more complete picture of the past.

## Envoys of Abolition: British Naval Officers and the Campaign Against the Slave Trade in West Africa

Mary Wills



After Britain's Abolition of the Slave Trade Act of 1807, a squadron of Royal Navy vessels was sent to the West Coast of Africa tasked with suppressing the thriving transatlantic slave trade. Drawing on previously unpublished papers found in private collections and various archives in the UK and abroad, this book examines the personal and cultural experiences of the naval officers at the frontline of Britain's anti-slavery campaign in West Africa. It explores their unique roles in this 60-year operation: at sea, boarding slave ships bound for the Americas and liberating captive Africans; on shore, as Britain resolved to improve West African societies; and in the metropolitan debates around slavery and abolitionism in Britain. Their personal narratives are revealing of everyday concerns of health, rewards and strategy, to more profound questions of national honour, cultural encounters, responsibility for the lives of others in the most distressing of circumstances, and the true meaning of freedom for formerly enslaved African peoples. British anti-slavery efforts and imperial agendas were tightly bound in the nineteenth century, inseparable from ideas of national identity. This is a book about individuals tasked with extraordinary service, military men who also worked as guardians, negotiators, and envoys of abolition.

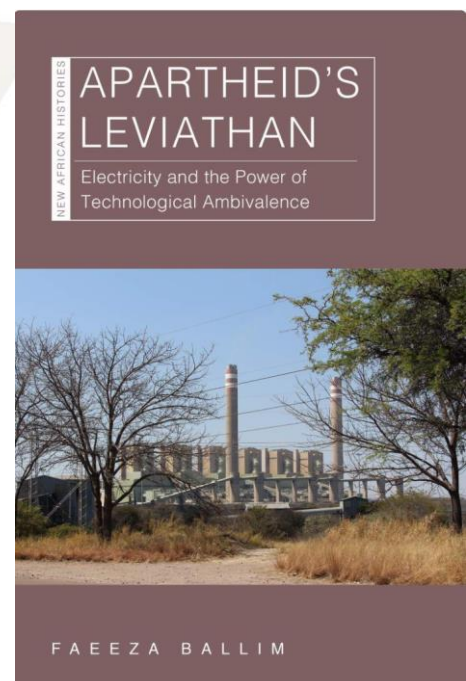
## Apartheid's Leviathan: Electricity and the Power of Technological Ambivalence

Faeza Ballim

This book details the development of an interconnected technological system of a coal mine and of the Matimba and Medupi power stations in the Waterberg, a rural region of South Africa near the country's border with Botswana. South Africa's state steel manufacturing corporation, Iscor, which has since been privatized, developed a coal mine in the region in the 1970s. This set the stage for the national electricity provider, Eskom, to build coal-fueled power stations in the Waterberg.

Faeza Ballim follows the development of these technological systems from the late 1960s, a period of heightened repression as the apartheid government attempted to realize its vision of racial segregation, to the deeply fraught construction of the Medupi power station in postapartheid South Africa. The Medupi power station was planned toward the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century as a measure to alleviate the country's electricity shortage, but the continued delay of its completion and the escalation of its costs meant that it failed to realize those ambitions while public frustration and electricity outages grew.

By tracing this story, this book highlights the importance of technology to our understanding of South African history. This characterization challenges the idea that the technological state corporations were proxies for the apartheid government and highlights that their activities in the Waterberg did not necessarily accord with the government's strategic purposes.

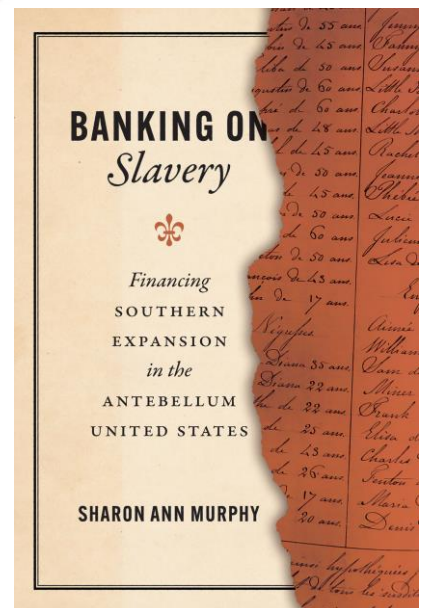
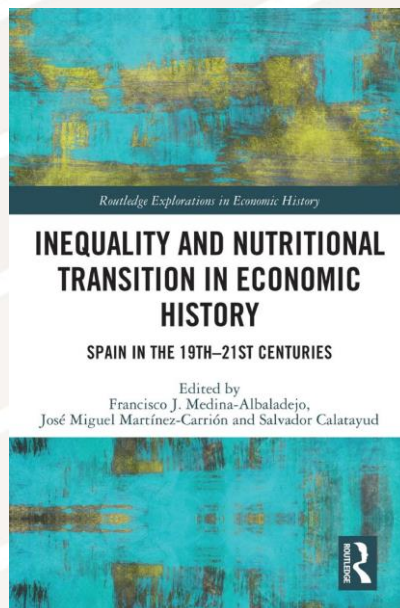
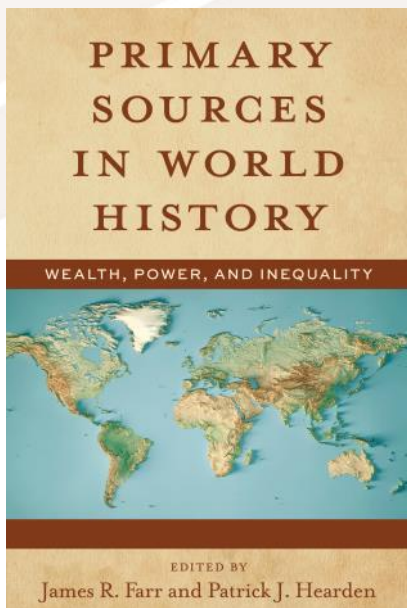
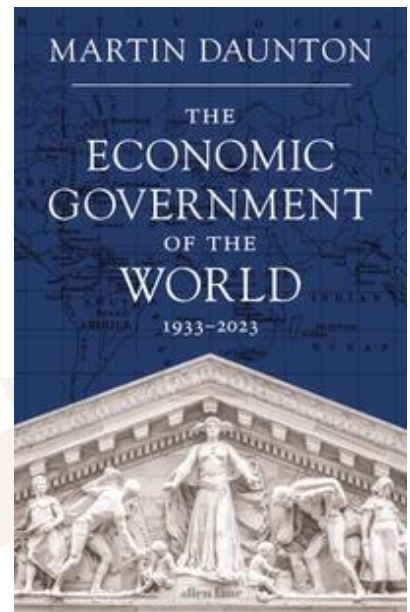
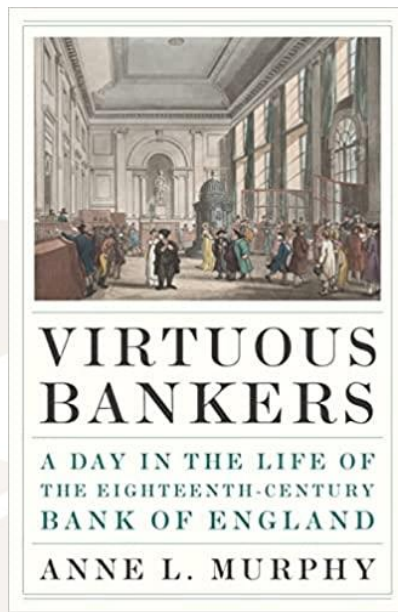
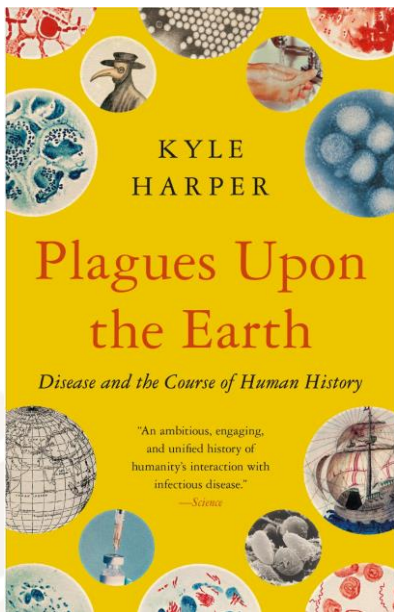




While a part of the broader national modernization project under apartheid, they also set the stage for worker solidarity and trade union organization in the Waterberg and elsewhere in the country. This book also argues that the state corporations, their technology, and their engineers enjoyed ambivalent relationships with the governments of their time, relationships that can be characterized as both autonomous and immersive. In the era of democracy, while Eskom has been caught up in government corruption—a major scourge to the fortunes of South Africa—it has also retained a degree of organizational autonomy and offered a degree of resistance to those who sought to further corruption.

The examination of the workings of these technological systems, and the state corporations responsible for them, complicates conventional understandings of the transition from the authoritarian rule of apartheid to democratic South Africa, which coincided with the transition from state-led development to neoliberalism. This book is an indispensable case study on the workings of industrial and political power in Africa and beyond.

**Other new books in economic history**



## NOW IN PRINT

### What about the race between education and technology in the Global South? Comparing skill premiums in colonial Africa and Asia

*The Economic History Review*

**Ewout Frankema and Marlous van Waijenburg**

Historical research on the race between education and technology has focused on the West but barely touched upon ‘the rest’. A new occupational wage database for 50 African and Asian economies allows us to compare long-run patterns in skill premiums across the colonial and post-colonial eras (c. 1870–2010). Our data reveal three major patterns. First, skilled labour was considerably more expensive in colonial Africa and Asia than in pre-industrial Europe. Second, skill premiums were distinctly higher in Africa than in Asia. Third, in both regions, skill premiums fell dramatically over the course of the twentieth century, ultimately converging to levels long observed in the West. Our paper takes a first step to explain both the origins of the Africa–Asia gap and the drivers of global skill premium convergence, paying special attention to the colonial context that shaped demand, supply, and labour market institutions.

### The settlers’ fortunes: Comparing tax censuses in the Cape Colony and early American republic

*The Economic History Review*

**Johan Fourie and Frank Garmon Jr**

Europeans at the end of the eighteenth century had settled across the globe, from North and South America to Australia to the southern tip of Africa. While theories of institutional persistence explain the ‘reversal of fortunes’ between settled and unsettled regions, few studies consider the large differences in early living standards between settler societies. This paper uses newly transcribed household-level tax censuses from the Dutch and British Cape Colony and the United States shortly after independence to show comparative levels of income and wealth over four decades both between the two regions and within them. Cape farmers were, on average, more affluent than their American counterparts. While crop output and livestock were more unequally distributed at the Cape, ownership of enslaved people in America was more unequal. There was little indication of an imminent reversal of fortunes.

### Electricity, Agency and Class in Lagos Colony, C.1860s–1914

*Past & Present*

**Adewumi Damilola Adebayo**

European states gradually established colonial rule in Africa between the mid nineteenth century and the beginning of the First World War. Historians have assessed the infrastructure introduced during this period through the lens of colonial state-building and resource extraction. This article offers another perspective by reconstructing the early history of electrification in Lagos Colony, one of the first British colonies in West Africa, within the contexts of African agency (that is, knowledge and socio-political influence) and class. It argues that electricity was not a novelty to Africans when the government opened the first power station in 1898. The principles of electricity were already being taught in the classroom and through public lectures in the 1860s, and temporary exhibitions of electric light had been a feature of Lagos society since the 1880s. Furthermore, because of some demographic advantages, the Africans of nineteenth-century Lagos were able to shape colonial policies, including on financing electricity. Lastly, contrary to colonial African case studies in which scholars have argued that racial politics affected access to electricity, extensive primary sources affirm that a rising number of Africans in Lagos enjoyed electric lighting on the streets, at religious centres and at home from 1898.

## The Labor Productivity Differential between the West Indies and West Africa: 1680-1830

*Annals of the Fondazione Luigi Einaudi*  
**Wasiq N. Khan**

This paper is an empirical test of Stefano Fenoaltea's (1999) hypothesis that the labor productivity differential between the Americas and West Africa was insufficient to cover the high mortality and transport costs of the forced transatlantic migration of slave labor. Using data on slave hire rates and slave subsistence costs in the West Indies from the mid-17th to the early 19th century, we measure surplus-to-subsistence ratios in the Americas and compare those measures to estimates of the surplus-to-subsistence ratios in Africa. Since there is almost no data on labor productivity in precolonial Africa, we impute surplus-to-subsistence ratios for Africa using estimates of fertility derived from the consensus view that the annual population growth in West Africa prior to the mid-19th century was 0.2% to 0.3%. We estimate the surplus-to-subsistence ratio required to maintain this population growth rate. By comparing an upper-bound estimate of the surplus-to-subsistence ratios of slave laborers in the West Indies to a lower-bound estimate for subsistence farmers in West Africa, we conclude that the labor productivity differential between West Africa and the West Indies was insufficient to cover the transport and mortality costs of the slave trade.

## The Middle-Eastern marriage pattern? Malthusian dynamics in nineteenth-century Egypt

*The Economic History Review*  
**Yuzuru Kumon, Mohamed Saleh**

Malthus predicted that fertility rises with income and that people regulate fertility via regulating marriage. However, evidence on the Malthusian equilibrium has been mostly confined to Europe and East Asia. We employ Egypt's population censuses of 1848 and 1868 to provide the first evidence on the preindustrial Malthusian dynamics in the Middle East and North Africa. At the aggregate level, we document rural Egyptian women having a high fertility rate that is close to the Western European level, combined with low age at marriage and low celibacy rate, that are closer to the East Asian levels. This resulted in a uniquely high fertility regime that was probably offset by the high child mortality. Next, we provide individual-level evidence on the positive correlation between fertility and income (occupation). We find that the higher fertility of rural white-collar men is attributed to their marriage behaviour, and not to marital fertility. Specifically, white-collar men's higher polygyny explains 45 per cent of their fertility advantage, whereas their higher marriage rate and lower wife's age at marriage explains 55 per cent. Therefore, polygyny was an additional factor that led to a steeper income–fertility curve than in Western Europe by enabling the rural middle class to out-breed the poor.

## Inequality regimes in Africa from pre-colonial times to the present

*African Affairs*  
**Ewout Frankema, Michiel de Haas and Marlous van Waijenburg**

While current levels of economic inequality in Africa receive ample attention from academics and policymakers, we know little about the long-run evolution of inequality in the region. Even the new and influential 'global inequality literature' that is associated with scholars like Thomas Piketty, Branko Milanovic, and Walter Scheidel has had little to say about Africa so far. This paper is a first effort to fill that void. Building on recent research in African economic history and utilizing the new theoretical frameworks of the global inequality literature, we chart the long-run patterns and drivers of inequality in Africa from the slave trades to the present. Our analysis dismantles mainstream narratives about the colonial roots of persistent high inequality in post-colonial Africa and shows that existing inequality concepts and theories need further calibration to account, among others, for the role of African slavery in the long-run emergence and vanishing of inequality regimes.

## Political Identity as Temporal Collapse: Ethiopian Federalism and Contested Ogaden Histories

*African Affairs*

**Daniel K Thompson and Namhla Thando Matshanda**

Since the 1980s, analyses of African political identities have emphasized identity manipulation as a governance tool. In the Somali Horn of Africa, however, politicians' efforts to reinvent identities confront rigid understandings of genealogical clanship as a key component of identity and political mobilization. This article explores how government efforts to construct a new 'Ethiopian–Somali' identity within Ethiopia's ethnic-federal system are entangled with attempts to reinterpret clan genealogies and histories. We focus on efforts to revise the history of clans within the broader Ogaden Somali clan group and trace the possibilities and limits of these revisions in relation to legacies of colonialism as well as popular understandings of Ogaden identity. Drawing on fieldwork and archival research, we show that political struggles over Somalis' integration with Ethiopia orient around Somali clanship, but that clanship is not a mechanical tool of mobilization, as it is often portrayed. We suggest that genealogical relatedness does not equate to political loyalty, but genealogical discourse provides a framework by which various actors reinterpret contemporary events by collapsing history into the present to imbue clan, ethnic, and national identities with political significance.

## Living standards of copper mine labour in Chile and the Central African Copperbelt compared, 1920s to 1960s

*Economic History of Developing Regions*

**Dácil Juif and Sergio Garrido**

Large-scale copper mining has been the main industry in Chile and the countries conforming the Central African Copperbelt for about one century. While a relatively extensive social science literature exists on the mostly adverse macroeconomic and institutional effects of a high reliance on mineral exports and revenues, we address the effects on the labour force employed by this industry. We perform a novel inter-continental – as well as dynamic-historical – comparative assessment of the living standards of the domestic copper mineworkers in the three countries from ca1920 to ca1960. There are important similarities and disparities in levels and trends of real wages and other welfare provisions. In explaining the gap across continents, we discuss labour shortage and labour provision, productivity, and mobilization. We also highlight the underlying role of colonialism in determining the inter-continental differences. Copper miners are further found to have been better paid than other workers in all three countries.

## Legal origins of corporate governance: Choice of law in Egypt, 1887–1914

*The Economic History Review*

**Cihan Artunç**

This paper revisits the classic question of legal origins: whether laws originating from common or civil law traditions are more effective in promoting governance rules with stronger shareholder and investor protection. But corporate governance cannot be easily disentangled from other sources that can influence firm outcomes. This paper disentangles these effects by assembling a new dataset of corporations in Egypt between 1887 and 1914. Egypt had an unusual system of incorporation. The main legal system was a close French transplant but entrepreneurs – Europeans and Egyptians alike – had the option of incorporating under any European law. This practice allowed extraordinary legal flexibility in choice of law, governance provisions, and board composition. The new findings show that companies incorporated under British law provided weaker shareholder protection than companies incorporated under French laws, especially in giving weaker voting rights to minority shareholders, preventing oversight over directors' borrowing powers, and limiting director rotation. These rules mattered for firm performance. Corporations with weaker investor protection had higher failure risk, were less profitable, and had lower firm value.

## Money and the Regularisation of African Soldiers in the Early Phase of Italian Colonialism in Eritrea

*War & Society*  
**Alessandro De Cola**

The article focusses on transformations in the military labour regimes brought about by the recruitment of African soldiers during the early years of the Italian colony of Eritrea, by analysing colonial reports, correspondence and official regulations. On the one hand, it demonstrates that the lack of complete political control forced the Italians to adapt to the local multiple currency system for the building and maintenance of the indigenous corps. On the other hand, it shows that money was employed in colonial discourse and practice as a tool to facilitate the regularisation of indigenous soldiers.

## Africa's Latent Assets

*Journal of African Economies*  
**Soeren J Henn and James A Robinson**

Despite the past centuries' economic setbacks and challenges, are there reasons for optimism about Africa's economic prospects? We provide a conceptual framework and empirical evidence that show how the nature of African society has led to three sets of unrecognised 'latent assets.' First, success in African society is talent driven and Africa has experienced high levels of perceived and actual social mobility. A society where talented individuals rise to the top and optimism prevails is an excellent basis for entrepreneurship and innovation. Second, Africans, like westerners who built the world's most successful effective states, are highly sceptical of authority and attuned to the abuse of power. We argue that these attitudes can be a critical basis for building better institutions. Third, Africa is 'cosmopolitan.' Africans are the most multilingual people in the world, have high levels of religious tolerance and are welcoming to strangers. The experience of navigating cultural and linguistic diversity sets Africans up for success in a globalised world.

## Education and polygamy: Evidence from Cameroon

*Journal of Development Economics*  
**Pierre André and Yannick Dupraz**

Has secular education contributed to the decline of polygamy in Africa? To answer this question, we study a wave of public school construction in late-colonial Cameroon. Our difference-in-differences and event-study specifications show that school openings have simultaneously increased education and the chances to be in a polygamous union for men and, more surprisingly, for women. We estimate a structural model of marriage to explain why education made women more likely to be in a polygamous union. The main estimated channel is marriage to educated men who are more often polygamists than uneducated men, not direct preferences for polygamy.

## License to educate: The role of national networks in colonial empires

*World Development*  
**Bastian Becker and Carina Schmitt**

Colonial Africa was shaped by a variety of European actors. Of foremost importance in the educational sector were both colonial governments and Christian mission societies. While their activities and long-term implications are often analyzed in isolation, few systematic studies investigate relationships between them. However, it is well-known that underfunded colonial governments supported mission societies, who used schools to attract new converts, as low-cost educational providers. In this paper, we argue that mission societies that shared national ties with colonial governments benefitted from increased support and engaged in more extensive educational activities. Using new historical data on Protestant mission societies from the interwar period in Africa, we demonstrate that national alignment between mission societies and colonizer's identity in British Africa was associated with more primary schools and higher enrolment. We discuss and explore potential channels underlying this dynamic, including financial support for missionary activities as well

as the granting of access to more favourable locations. Our findings show that national networks are an important but understudied aspect of colonial empires. Furthermore, analyzing the early expansion of education inform studies focusing on long-term effects assume.

## **WORKING PAPERS**

### **Changing local customs: Long-run impacts of the earliest campaigns against female genital cutting**

**Heather Congdon Fors, Ann-Sofie Isaksson and Lindskog Annika**

This paper investigates the long-run impacts of Christian missionary expansion on the practice of female genital cutting (FGC) in sub-Saharan Africa. The empirical analysis draws on historical data on the locations of early European missions geographically matched with Demographic and Health Survey data on FGC practices of around 410,000 respondents from 42 surveys performed over a 30-year period (1990-2020) in 14 African countries. The results suggest that historical Christian missions have impacted FGC practices today. The benchmark estimates imply that a person living 10 km from a historical mission is 4-6 percentage points less likely to have undergone FGC than someone living 100 km from a mission site. Similarly, having one more mission per 1000 km<sup>2</sup> in one's ancestral ethnic homeland decreases the probability of having undergone FGC by around 8 percentage points. The effect is robust across a large number of specifications and control variables, both modern and historic. We use ethnographic data on pre-colonial FGC to show that the location of missions was not correlated with the practice of FGC in the local population.

### **The Fertility Transition in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Role of Structural Change**

**Nicolas Büttner, Michael Grimm, Isabel Günther, Kenneth Harttgen and Stephan Klasen**

Despite the recent economic growth in many countries on the African continent, the region has seen a slow fertility transition. In this study, we explore whether the lack of structural economic change can explain this slow fertility transition. We create a unique panel data set combining Demographic and Health Surveys, Household Income Surveys, and nighttime light intensity data, as an indicator for industrialization, from 57 countries at the sub-national regional level over three decades to analyze the driving forces of fertility transitions across low- and middle-income countries. Our results confirm that household wealth, reduced child mortality, and female basic education are crucial for fertility reductions. Yet, our analysis also highlights the important role of increased female labor force participation in the formal sector, industrialization, increased female secondary education, and the expansion of health insurance coverage. Urbanization appears to have a limited, if any, effect. Our simulations indicate that if high-fertility countries in sub-Saharan Africa had experienced similar structural economic change as low- and middle-income countries with low fertility, their fertility levels could be up to 50% lower.

### **'It's our turn (not) to learn': the pitfalls of education reform during post-war institutional transformation**

**Emily Dunlop, Yasmine Bekkouche, and Philip Verwimp**

In this study, we investigate the relationship between education reform, institutional legacies of inequality, and changing political institutions in a poor, conflict-affected country. Burundi experienced a dramatic change in ethnic power relations after the 1993–2005 civil war. The post-war government prioritized education to previously marginalized regions and ethnic groups, both in access and in attainment. We leverage test score data from four nationwide exams in primary and secondary education from 2006 to 2018. Our difference-in-differences analysis shows a dramatic shift in test scores, with the schools in the north of the country, deprived before the civil war, outperforming schools in the south. Results are robust across datasets. We derive policy implications for understanding how post-conflict governments can build inclusive institutions through education after conflict, and how governments can overcome institutional legacies of educational inequality.

## **The Symmetric and Asymmetric Effect of Remittances on Financial Development: Evidence from South Africa**

**Mduduzi Biyase and Yourishaa Naidoo**

Investigating the remittance-financial development relationship is an ongoing endeavor among economists and policy makers. Building and improving on the existing work, this study considers the possibility that the relation between remittances and financial development is potentially asymmetric. This study applies the linear ARDL and captures the possibility of an asymmetrical relationship by applying the non-linear Autoregressive Model (NARDL). Using NARDL, an attempt is made to estimate the short-run and long-run asymmetric responses of financial development through positive and negative partial sum decompositions of changes in remittances. To assess the robustness of the ARDL and NARDL estimates, a battery of long-run robustness tests were employed, including the linear and nonlinear versions of the fully modified ordinary least squares (FMOLS). Annual data series from 1980 to 2017, derived from the World Development Indicators, Fred Economic data and Penn World Tables were used for this study. The ARDL results reveal a positive and significant impact of remittances on financial development, whereas NARDL estimations suggest a both positive and negative shock of remittances on financial development in the long run: a percentage (%) increase in the remittances brings about 0.121568 percent increase in financial development, whereas a one-percent decrease in remittances produces a 0.33363 percent decrease in financial development.

## **(De facto) Historical Ethnic Borders and Contemporary Conflict in Africa**

**Emilio Depetris-Chauvin and Ömer Özak**

We explore the effect of historical ethnic borders on contemporary conflict in Africa. We document that both the intensive and extensive margins of contemporary conflict are higher close to historical ethnic borders. Exploiting variations across artificial regions within an ethnicity's historical homeland and a theory-based instrumental variable approach, we find that regions crossed by historical ethnic borders have 27 percentage points higher probability of conflict and 7.9 percentage points higher probability of being the initial location of a conflict. We uncover several key underlying mechanisms: competition for agricultural land, population pressure, cultural similarity, and weak property rights.

## **Power, institutions, and state-building after war: A controlled comparison of Rwanda and Burundi**

**Omar Shahabudin McDoom**

I examine whether and how the means through which a civil war ends affects the success of a country's state-building strategy after conflict. I show that two distinct modes of conflict termination—military victories and negotiated settlements—lead to differential long-run state building outcomes and offer an explanation of the mechanism behind the divergence. In a military victory, the coercive balance-of-power at the end of war favourable to the victor enables it to dictate the post-conflict institutional design and skew power formally in its favour. In a negotiated settlement, formal power is distributed by design among multiple parties to avoid the dominance of any single actor. These differences in turn have implications for the distribution of informal power in the post-war context whose influence is exercised through private networks of party members and loyalists. Informal power becomes concentrated in the victorious party because its opponent is typically excluded from the post-conflict political process and expelled from the territory. In contrast, in negotiated settlements informal power is commonly diffuse because the inclusion of erstwhile military rivals in the political process enables the operation of multiple informal networks that then compete for influence. I suggest that when both formal and informal power become concentrated in a single actor—a militarily victorious party—power may even become hegemonic. The dominance of the victorious party is assured because the basis of its rule becomes both coercion and consent. This mutes resistance to its post-conflict agenda and, consequently, strengthens its capacity to implement its state-building strategy. I trace this causal process over a period of two decades through a controlled comparison of Rwanda and Burundi whose civil wars terminated through military victory

and negotiated settlement, respectively. The findings have implications for theories of liberal peacebuilding, institutional independence, and the distribution of power in post-conflict contexts.

### **Distortionary Agricultural Policies: Their Productivity, Location and Climate Variability Implications for South Africa During the 20th Century**

**Jan Greyling, Philip G. Pardey and Senait Senay**

During the first half of the 20th century, the policy stance towards South African agriculture swung from suppression to support. More recently, the agricultural support policies were eliminated. Using newly constructed, long-run (1918-2015) data concerning maize production, yield and average price, we show these switching agricultural policy regimes had significant production, productivity, and climate risk implications for the maize sector. At its peak, this policy-induced movement reduced maize productivity by between 7.9 and 15.3 percent. The removal of the distortions coincided with a contraction in the total area planted to maize, but some spatial productivity perturbations still persist.

### **The Long-Run Effects of South Africa's Forced Resettlements on Employment Outcomes**

**Alexia Lochmann, Nidhi Rao and Martín A. Rossi**

Can South Africa's segregation policies explain, at least partially, its current poor employment outcomes? To explore this question, we study the long-term impact of the forced resettlement of around 3.5 million black South Africans from their communities to the so-called "homelands" or "Bantustans", between 1960 and 1991. Our empirical strategy exploits the variability in the magnitude of resettlements between communities. Two main findings. First, the magnitude of outgoing internal migrations was largest for districts close to former homelands. Second, districts close to former homelands have higher rates of non-employed population in 2011. Together the evidence suggests that districts that experienced racial segregation policies most intensely, as measured by outgoing forced resettlements, have worse current employment outcomes.