



African Economic History Newsletter

Issue #63, August 2024

The AEHN newsletter brings you up to date with current and forthcoming events in African Economic History. It gives you a chance to publicise your new research and opportunities to the right audience.

In this issue:

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If you want to publicise your own research, events, seminars or organise a panel for an upcoming conference, please send a message to leone.walters@uct.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

AEHN WORKING PAPER SERIES

Early-Modern Globalization and the Extent of Indigenous Agency: Trade, Commodities, and Ecology

Ann M. Carlos, Erik Green, Calumet Links and Angela Redish

This paper examines the responses of Indigenous nations and European companies to new trading opportunities: Cree nations and the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), and Khoe nations and the Dutch East India Company (VOC). This case study is important because of the disparate outcomes: within a few decades the Cree standard of living had increased, and Khoe had lost land and cattle. Standard histories begin with the establishment of trading posts but this elides the decades of prior intermittent contact which played an important role in the disparate outcomes in the two regions. The paper emphasizes the significance of Indigenous agency in trade.

Colonialism on the Cheap: The French Empire 1830-1962

Denis Cogneau, Yannick Dupraz, Elise Huillery and Sandrine Mesplé-Somps

How much did France pay for its colonial empire? Did colonies benefit from large transfers from French taxpayers and private investors, or were they on the contrary drained of their capital? So far, Jacques Marseille (1984) was the only attempt to investigate these questions, by deducting from the structural trade deficit of the French colonies that they were a heavy financial burden for France. We collect novel budgetary and loan data from archives and compute public monetary flows between France and the colonies between 1833 and 1962. We also provide figures of colonial private investment through the Paris Stock Exchange. Public expenditure spent by France on the empire only represented 1.3% of its GDP, of which four fifths were in the military. The persistent trade balance deficits of French colonies did not correspond to large public or private capital transfers, as they were in fact counterbalanced by military expenditure from the Metropole. Once accounting for this, the colonial drain of the French empire is comparable to British India.

FRONTIERS IN AFRICAN ECONOMIC HISTORY BLOG

Income inequality and export-oriented commercialization in colonial Africa: Evidence from six countries

Ellen Hillbom, Jutta Bolt, Michiel de Haas and Federico Tadei

Using evidence from 33 social tables, we investigate the relationship between export-oriented commercialization and income inequality in six predominately agricultural African colonial economies between the 1910s and 1960s. We find that, overall, inequality rose over time, and differences between colonies were linked to the presence of non-Africans and the capital intensity of different export commodities.

The Manufacturing Industry in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890-1979

Victor Gwande

How did Zimbabwe become the second-most industrialized country in sub-Saharan Africa by 1980? A new book sets out to answer this question, tracing colonial Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector, focusing on business interest groups and Southern Rhodesia's autonomy in driving industrialization, challenging traditional narratives centered on external factors. Despite initial neglect, manufacturing grew through organized lobbying and internal pressures. Shifts in policy, especially during Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) and subsequent sanctions, spurred domestic industrial expansion. By 1979, manufacturing had become a significant contributor to Zimbabwe's economy, showcasing resilience and adaptability.

The Development of Colonial Health Care Provision in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, 1900-1955

Arlinde Vrooman

How did colonial health care provision develop over time, and what similarities and differences can be observed between different colonizers? Using a newly constructed dataset on colonial health care expenditure, facilities, medical staff and patients in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, a new paper shows how two similar countries (apart from their colonizer) can have different colonial health care trajectories.

News and announcements

CALL FOR PAPERS

Cultural evolution and economic policy

17 – 18 October 2024



LEAP

Laboratory for the
Economics of Africa's Past
Chair in Economics, History and Policy



Call for papers: Cultural evolution and economic policy

WORKSHOP | STELLENBOSCH | 17-18 OCTOBER 2024

We invite submissions for a workshop on how cultural evolution can inform better economic policies. This workshop seeks to explore the evolutionary underpinnings of human behaviour, beliefs, and institutions, and their implications for policymaking. We welcome papers that examine how cultural transmission and social learning can guide the development of policies to enhance economic outcomes and governance. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to, the application of cultural evolution theories to address contemporary economic challenges, promote innovation, and improve societal well-being. Through this workshop, we aim to foster discussions and share insights that bridge the gap between cultural evolution and economic policy.

Keynote: Michael Muthukrishna is Associate Professor of Economic Psychology at the London School of Economics and author of 'A Theory of Everyone'. His research explores what makes humans unique, focusing on the psychological and evolutionary basis of culture and social change. He combines mathematical models, experiments, and data science to develop a theory of human behaviour that addresses innovation, corruption, cooperation, and the integration of artificial intelligence. His work also examines how cultural evolution informs public policy, aiming to improve governance. Key topics include social learning biases, cross-cultural differences, and mechanisms of cultural transmission, with the goal of tackling global challenges and enhancing societal leadership.

Logistics:

- Please submit a paper abstract of not more than 500 words to leap@sun.ac.za
- Submission deadline: 6 September
- All papers are expected to be presented in person, and accommodation will be covered for all accepted speakers.
- The workshop will be held at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study (STIAS), Stellenbosch, South Africa.



Governing the Global Economy in the Long Twentieth Century

7-8 April 2025

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Since the financial crisis of 2007/08, international rivalries, nationalist movements, a global pandemic, and the existential threat of climate change have destabilised the global economic order. From an historical perspective, such strains have many precedents in the tumultuous twentieth century. We seek to bring together scholars for a two-day conference at the University of Oxford to explore the history of global economic governance. We are particularly keen to discuss how national governments, international organisations, businesses, financial institutions and workers all responded to shocks and instability, and how these responses shaped the global economic order.

Many recent historical works have explored the history of political economy, capitalism and global governance from multiple perspectives. There has been important historical research into the effects of wars and conflicts on the global economic order; the birth of global economic development initiatives; the ideological foundations of neoliberalism; and the hegemony of economic growth. Together, these works raise an array of important questions: What economic, political and social factors underpinned the evolution of national and global economic governance in the twentieth century? How have conflicts and crises generated competing ideas and agendas for governing the global economy? And to what extent can these works inform our perspective on present-day challenges of climate change, global poverty, public health, deindustrialization and global economic stability?

The focus of this conference will be on examining the ways in which the world economy has been contested, debated, governed and restructured during moments of crisis and change, as well as how challenging conditions determined relations between states, businesses, individuals and civil society. Our conference will aim to bridge past and present by offering fresh insights into the forces that have shaped our current global economy, and by considering possible future trajectories of the international economy.

Our conference welcomes a broad range of topics that are historical in perspective, including but not limited to those concerned with: global trade and monetary order; the economics of empire and decolonisation; international economic organisations and international economic relations; the governing of global food and commodities; global labour practices and markets; global banking and finance; multinational business enterprises; and international tax and regulation. Following the conference, we may solicit articles for the publication of a special issue.

Proposals should include a brief biographical note, presentation title and an abstract of no more than 300 words emailed to both Aled Davies (aled.davies@history.ox.ac.uk) and Robert Yee (robert.yee@history.ox.ac.uk) prior to the deadline listed below. If accepted, each presenter will be expected to share a pre-circulated memorandum of 2,000 to 3,000 words.

Important Dates

Abstract Submission Deadline: 1 November 2024

Notification by: 30 November 2024

Memorandum Submission Deadline: 1 March 2025

Conference: 7 and 8 April 2025

Conference Organisers: Prof Patricia Clavin, Dr Aled Davies and Dr Robert Yee

This conference is supported by the History & Political Economy Project, the Economic History Society, the Conference for European Studies at Columbia University, the Rothermere American Institute, the Oxford Martin School 'Changing Global Orders' project, St. John's College and Wadham College.

Graduate student workshop Economic Development and Structural Change: A Conference in Honour of W. Arthur Lewis

13 November 2024

UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER



Call for applications: Lewis Lab Graduate Student Workshop November 13, 2024, at the University of Manchester

Summary The workshop will bring together a group of advanced PhD students and scholars working in economic history, (macro or comparative) development, political economy, and related fields. Faculty participants will provide constructive feedback and discussions on student presentations, in a welcoming and inclusive environment. It will be immediately followed by a conference on "Economic Development and Structural Change: A Conference in Honour of W. Arthur Lewis" (November 14-15).

Funding Students will be fully funded (travel and accommodation for 4 nights) by the Arthur Lewis Lab to attend both events, with generous support from the Hallsworth Conference Fund.

To apply, send your CV and abstract to <https://forms.gle/ke8aJbanBtHQrdk57>

Application deadline: September 17, 2024, at 5PM GMT

Faculty discussants Guillaume Blanc, Nuno Palma, Ákos Valentinyi, and others

The link to apply is [here](#).

Deadline for submission: September 17, 2024, at 5pm GMT

Graduate Economic History Seminars 2024/25

Autumn Term

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC HISTORY
LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

The Department of Economic History at the London School of Economics and Political Science is now inviting applications for the Graduate Economic History Seminar series for the academic year 2024. The series runs weekly during term time on Wednesdays, from 1 to 2pm. Seminars are regularly attended by faculty members and research students. The format is a 30-minute presentation followed by 30 minutes for questions and discussion. The seminar is ideal for PhD students at an advanced stage of research. It provides an opportunity to present a paper or a chapter, receive feedback, and test ideas and methodologies. We welcome qualitative and quantitative work

alike on any topic of economic history, and we seek a diverse coverage of areas and time periods. We encourage students from all disciplines related to economic history to apply.

We invite speakers to attend the seminar in person as a general rule. **The deadline to apply for presenting in the Autumn term is 1 September 2024.** To apply, please submit an abstract of your paper or chapter (approx. 500 words) and a short CV to all workshop conveners Ziyue Shen and Marco Cokic (z.shen19@lse.ac.uk ; m.cokic@lse.ac.uk)

Please indicate preferred dates you would be available to present, institutional affiliation and an expected submission date of your PhD. Successful applicants will hear back from us shortly after the deadline. To stay updated with the seminar program, follow us on Twitter @LSEEcHist or check the departmental website. We are looking forward to receiving your applications.

Autumn Term Dates for the Seminar series: Monday 30 September – Friday 13 December 2024 (excepting 5 November)

SPECIAL ISSUE CALL FOR PAPERS

Transport and history: pushing the frontiers of data, measurement, and outcomes

Guest Editors: Dan Bogart and Carlo Ciccarelli
DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: 1 NOVEMBER 2024

The European Review of Economic History is pleased to announce a special issue on Transport and history: pushing the frontiers of data, measurement, and outcomes. The special issue aims at exploring recent trends in the quantity analysis of transport and history. It seeks to assemble papers in the field of economic history but it is open to scholars from other related fields. Dan Bogart and Carlo Ciccarelli are editors of the special issue.

New data sources are being used in the study of transport history. Historians are now digitizing maps, registers of shipwrecks, and railway time-tables among others. These new sources create opportunities, but also challenges. There are potential misinterpretations of new sources, which can be identified through careful use and comparative research. Recent research also gives emphasis to better measurement of transport costs and the attributes of transport services. For example, it is now standard to simulate transport costs between locations using GIS data and tools. But how accurate are these approaches? Can they be improved? Transport innovations are also being linked to outcomes other than trade, like fertility, culture, and social protests. Does it make sense to believe that transport could shape a wider range of outcomes? The answers are not clear. We propose a special issue which brings together papers that address the frontiers of data, measurement, and new outcomes linked to transport history.

Selected papers will be presented in a meeting on the same topic to be held at the University of Rome Tor Vergata, 19-20 December 2024. The papers will then follow the regular refereeing process of the journal.

The editors invite papers to be submitted by 1 November 2024 via the journal's submission portal: <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ereh>. Please do not hesitate to contact the special issue editors at dbogart@uci.edu and carlo.cicarelli@uniroma2.it should you have any questions.

More details and information are in the [call for papers](#)

Post-doctoral fellowship LEAP, Stellenbosch University



Stellenbosch
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LEAP

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Chair in Economics, History and Policy

JOIN LEAP

Two postdoctoral fellowships at LEAP, Stellenbosch University:

The Chair in Economics, History and Policy is recruiting two postdoctoral fellows in the Department of Economics at Stellenbosch University.

Requirements:

Completed PhD in Economics, History or related discipline.
Evidence of submitted or published academic articles.

Additional advantages:

Interest in text analysis, machine learning or related techniques.
Interest in public policymaking or public communication.
Appointments for 15 months: October 2024 to December 2025.

Please apply before 1 September at leap@sun.ac.za. Please attach PhD manuscript, CV and letter.



Post-doctoral scholarship: social and/or economic history of Africa

University of Antwerp

The [University of Antwerp](#) is a dynamic, forward-thinking, European university. We offer an innovative academic education to more than 20000 students, conduct pioneering scientific research and play an important service-providing role in society. We are one of the largest, most international and most innovative employers in the region. With more than 6000 employees from 100 different countries, we are helping to build tomorrow's world every day. Through top scientific research, we push back boundaries and set a course for the future – a future that you can help to shape.

The University of Antwerp (Belgium) is hiring a post-doctoral research fellow in the field of social and/or economic history of Africa:

Post-doctoral Scholarship (1-year – 100%): Social and/or Economic History of Africa.

Over the past fifteen years social and economic history research on Africa has evolved from a field dominated by debates on the (adverse) impact of colonialism to a much broader exploration of themes related to economic and urban development, material wellbeing or social inequalities. At the University of Antwerp, the existing collaboration between the Centre for Urban History and the Institute for Development Policy, joint together in the Antwerp Interdisciplinary Platform for Research into Inequality (AIPRIL), resulted in a structural initiative to strengthen research on the Social and Economic History of (Central) Africa. Together with the appointment of a new tenure-track research professor in this field, we are now looking for a post-doctoral researcher aiming to develop innovative research on the social and/or economic history of (Central) Africa. Potential topics include (but are not limited to) the history of urbanisation, (enslaved) labour, migration, wellbeing, inequality, political participation, health, demography, financial inclusion, etc.

Position

- You develop innovative research in the field of Social and/or Economic History of Africa and communicate the results of this research via national and international scientific publications, presentations at conferences, and/or other publication outlets.
- You prepare an application for follow-up funding (notably Marie Curie IF Fellowship and/or FWO Postdoctoral Fellowship).
- You are embedded in the [Centre for Urban History](#) of the University of Antwerp and participate actively in the research activities of this centre, the [Great Lakes of Africa Centre](#) and [AIPRIL](#) - Antwerp Interdisciplinary Platform for Research into Inequality.

Profile

- You hold a PhD in history, development policy or a related field, with a clear historical perspective.
- You are an excellent researcher, with an international track record and experience in research fields relevant to the objectives of the project.
- You are entitled to benefit from a postdoctoral scholarship at UAntwerpen, i.e. you spent at least 12 months of the three years prior to the start date of the status as a postdoctoral scholarship holder outside Belgium and did not work or study in Belgium during these 12 months. Short-term stays (e.g. holidays, participation in conferences, preparation for this stay as a postdoctoral scholarship holder) will not be taken into account.
- The postdoctoral scholarship is intended to support research mobility to Belgium. By the time the scholarship period starts, the postdoctoral scholarship holder must have moved to Belgium. Exceptions to this provision may be made only in exceptional cases upon reasoned request and with the approval of the supervisor and the Human Resources Department.
- During the appointment as a postdoctoral scholarship holder at the University of Antwerp, combinations with other scholarships, remuneration or professional activities in either employment or independent status will not be allowed, with the exception of a possible mobility allowance or family allowance provided for in the regulations of a public funding body.

- You are fluent in academic English.
- Your academic qualities comply with the requirements stipulated in the [university's policy](#)
- You are quality-oriented, conscientious, creative and cooperative
- You have strong communication skills.

What we offer

- We offer a 1-year full-time (100%) postdoctoral scholarship.
- Your monthly scholarship amount is calculated according to the [scholarship amounts](#) for postdoctoral scholarship holders on the pay scales for Contract Research Staff (Dutch: *Bijzonder Academisch Personeel*, BAP).
- You will do most of your work at the UAntwerpen City Campus, a dynamic and stimulating working environment. Working from home will be possible to a certain extent.
- The planned start date is between 1 October 2024 and 31 January 2025.

Want to apply?

- You can apply for this vacancy through the University of Antwerp's online job application platform until **29/08/2024**. Click on the '[Apply](#)' button, complete the online application form and be sure to include the following attachments: (1) a motivation letter, (2) your academic CV, (3) any additional information you deem relevant for the selection.
- The selection committee will review all of the applications as soon as possible after the application deadline. As soon as a decision has been made, we will inform you about the next steps in the selection procedure.
- If you have any questions about the online application form, please check the [frequently asked questions](#) or send an email to jobs@uantwerpen.be. If you have any questions about the job itself, please contact one of the supervisors: prof. dr. Margot Luyckfasseel (margot.luyckfasseel@uantwerpen.be), prof. dr. Tim Soens, Centre for Urban History (tim.soens@uantwerpen.be), or prof. dr. Tom De Herdt, Institute for Development Policy (tom.deherdt@uantwerpen.be)

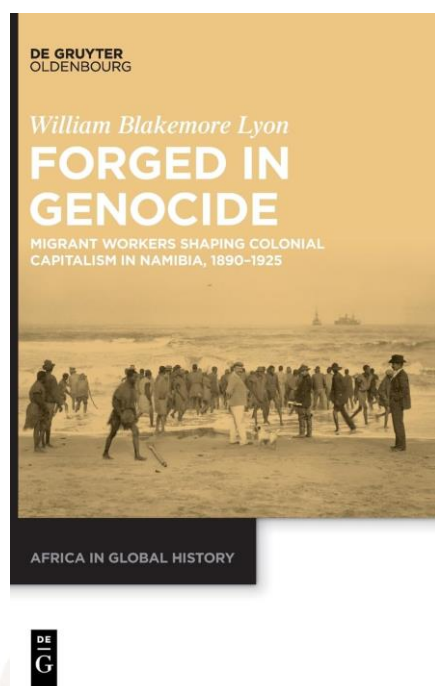
The University of Antwerp received the European Commission's [HR Excellence in Research Award](#) for its HR policy. We are a sustainable, family-friendly organisation which invests in its employees' growth. We encourage [diversity](#) and attach great importance to an inclusive working environment and equal opportunities, regardless of gender identity, disability, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation or age. We encourage people from diverse backgrounds and with diverse characteristics to apply.

New research in African economic history

FOR YOUR BOOKSHELF

Forged in Genocide: Migrant Workers Shaping Colonial Capitalism in Namibia, 1890–1925

William Blakemore Lyon

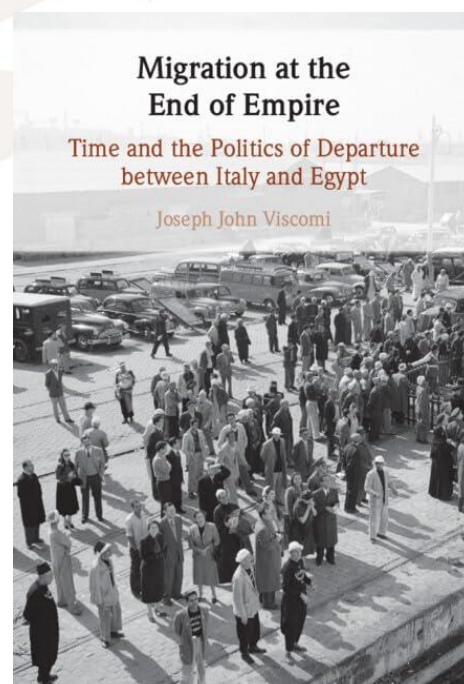


Forged in Genocide traces the early history of colonial capitalism in Namibia with a central focus on migrants who came to be key to the economy during and as a result of the German genocide of the Herero and Nama (1904-1908). It posits that Namibia, far from being a colonial backwater of the early 20th century, became highly integrated into the labor flows and economies of West and Southern Africa, and even for a time was one of the most sought-after regions for African migrants because of relatively high wages and numerous opportunities resulting from the war's demographic devastation paired with an economic frenzy following the discovery of diamonds. In highlighting the life stories of migrants in Namibia from regions as diverse as the Kru coast of Liberia, the Eastern Cape of South Africa, and the Ovambo polities of Northern Namibia, this work integrates micro-history into larger African continental trends. Building off of written sources from migrants themselves and utilising the *Namibian Worker Database* constructed for this project, this book explores the lives of workers in early colonial Namibia in a way that has hereto not been attempted.

Migration at the End of Empire: Time and the Politics of Departure Between Italy and Egypt

Joseph John Viscomi

How has migration shaped Mediterranean history? And what role did conflicting temporalities and the politics of departure play in the age of decolonisation? Using a microhistorical approach, *Migration at the End of Empire* explores the experiences of over 55,000 Italian subjects in Egypt during the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Before 1937, Ottoman-era legal regimes fostered the coupling of nationalism and imperialism among Italians in Egypt, particularly as the fascist government sought to revive the myth of *Mare Nostrum*. With decolonisation, however, Italians began abandoning Egypt en masse. By 1960, over 40,000 had deserted Egypt; some as 'emigrants,' others as 'repatriates,' and still others as 'national refugees.' The departed community became an emblem around which political actors in post-colonial Italy and Egypt forged new ties. Anticipated, actual, and remembered departures of Italians from Egypt are at the heart of this book's ambition to rethink European and Mediterranean periodisation.

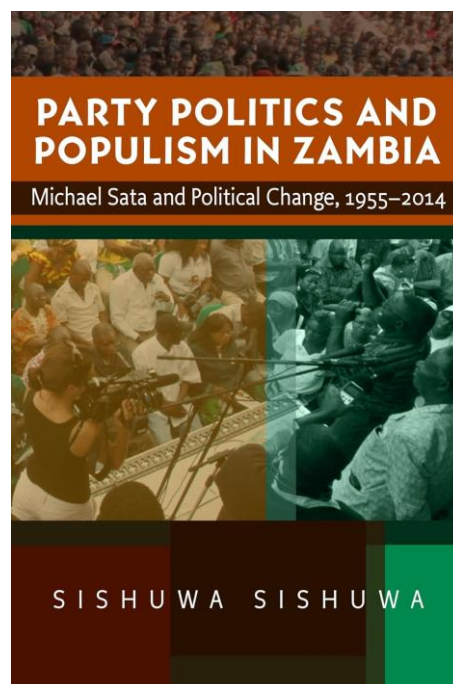


Party Politics and Populism in Zambia: Michael Sata and Political Change, 1955–2014

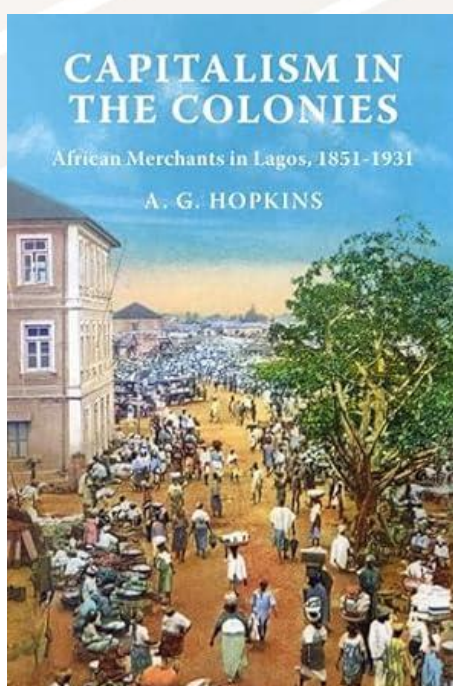
Sishuwa Sishuwa

Analysis of the political history of Zambia through a study of Michael Sata. It shows the interaction between party politics and populism since the 1950s, the nature and competitiveness of electoral politics in single or dominant party regimes, and the importance of individual political leadership to the success of opposition parties in Africa.

Javier Milei in Argentina, Donald Trump in the United States, Giorgia Meloni in Italy, Narendra Modi in India, Julius Malema in South Africa - populist leaders are thriving in party politics across the world. Structural changes like the globalisation of the economy, rising inequality, and increased voter detachment from traditional parties have given rise to distinct social grievances on which the populist leader feeds. But how does such a leader emerge? This book uses the study of Michael Sata, former president of Zambia and one of the most intriguing political figures of modern African history, to provide insight into the origins and personality of the populist. It argues that three factors - the structural, the economic and, importantly, the personal - are needed to understand when and how populism develops.



Based on exclusive interviews with Sata, as well as with his friends, allies, opponents, and journalists, and on newspapers, archives, personal correspondence, and participant observation, Sata's election to the Zambian presidency in 2011 is explained as the culmination of a political journey spanning the late colonial period (1953-1964), the years of one-party rule (1973-1991), and the era of multiparty democracy (since 1991). The book explores the nature and style of his political strategy, the grievances that he articulated and played on, the constituencies he targeted and mobilised, the policy appeals around which he rallied support, and the language with which he expressed those appeals. At the same time, it uses the prism of Sata's political life to examine the growth of populism in Zambia and its practice in party politics since the 1950s. As well as providing new insights into the long shadow of late colonialism on the country's contemporary politics, this book illustrates the evolution of political ideas and populist strategies.



Capitalism in the Colonies: African Merchants in Lagos, 1851–1931

A. G. Hopkins

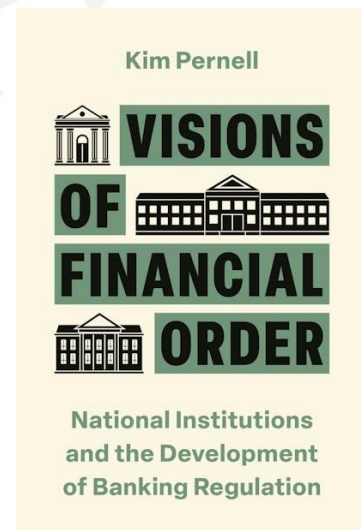
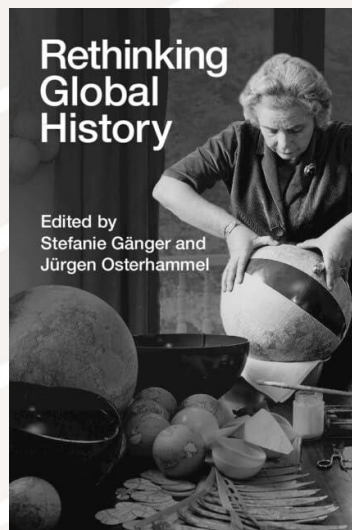
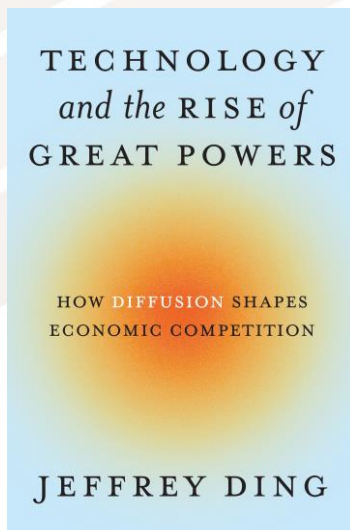
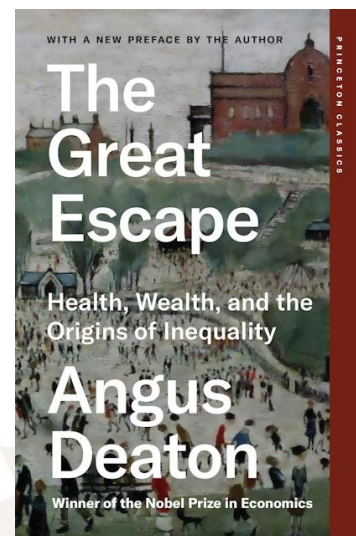
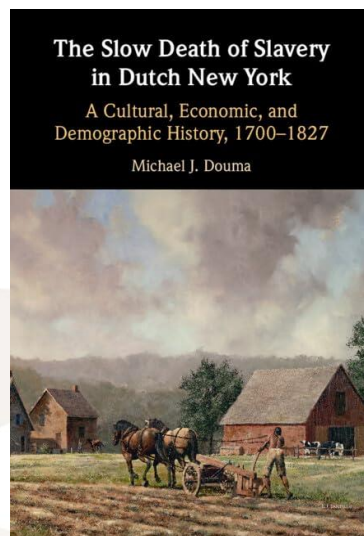
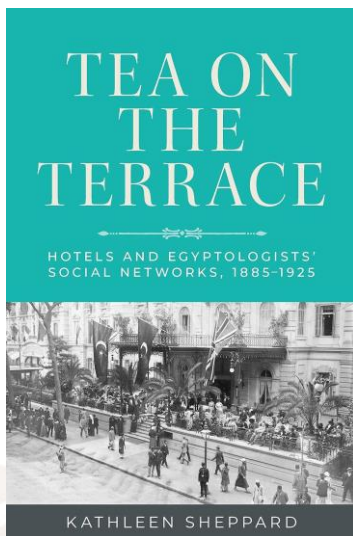
In *Capitalism in the Colonies*, A. G. Hopkins provides the first substantial assessment of the fortunes of African entrepreneurs under colonial rule. Examining the lives and careers of 100 merchants in Lagos, Nigeria, between 1850 and 1931, Hopkins challenges conventional views of the contribution made by indigenous entrepreneurs to the long-run economic development of Nigeria. He argues that African merchants in Lagos not only survived, but were also responsible for key innovations in trade, construction, farming, and finance that are essential for understanding the development of Nigeria's economy.

The book is based on a large, representative sample and covers a time span that traces mercantile fortunes over two and three

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generations. Drawing on a wide range of sources, Hopkins shows that indigenous entrepreneurs were far more adventurous than expatriate firms. African merchants in Lagos pioneered motor vehicles, sewing machines, publishing, tanneries, and new types of internal trade. They founded the construction industry that built Lagos into a major port city, moved inland to start the cocoa-farming industry, and developed the finance sector that is still vital to Nigeria's economy. They also took the lead in changing single-owned businesses into limited liability companies, creating freehold property rights and promoting wage labour. In short, Hopkins argues, they were the capitalists who introduced the institutions of capitalism into Nigeria. The story of African merchants in Nigeria reminds us, he writes, that economic structures have no life of their own until they are animated by the actions of creative individuals.

Other new books in economic history



ARTICLES

Property Rights and Labour Relations: Explaining the Relative Success of Native Purchase Area Farmers in Southern Rhodesia, 1930–1965

Journal of Southern African Studies

Erik Green and Mark Nyandoro

In the 1930s the colonial authorities in Zimbabwe set aside geographical areas where Africans were allowed to purchase land. Despite having private property rights to land, a rare occurrence among Africans in colonial times, the performance of this group of farmers has rarely been investigated. In this article, we show that the average group of 'native purchase' farming households performed far better than the average African farmer in the native reserves. We do more, by offering one of the first explanations behind the 'success' of this group of farmers. We argue that the explanation for this is not that private property rights were more secure than other forms of land rights as argued in mainstream economics. The farmers who owned land performed better than those who did not because private property rights changed social relations in a wider sense of the term. Private property rights enabled the emergence of various forms of non-family labour relations including sharecropping and wage labour that the landowner could exploit to increase production.

Slave trades, kinship structures and women's political participation in Africa

Kyklos

Leoné Walters, Carolyn Chisadza and Matthew Clance

We study whether present-day women's political participation in sub-Saharan Africa is associated to the temporary gender ratio imbalances caused by the transatlantic and Indian Ocean slave trades, taking into account pre-existing gender norms influenced by kinship structures. To study the interrelatedness between historical exposure to the slave trades, patrilineality and their association to contemporary women's political participation, we use individual-level data for 35,595 women from 28 sub-Saharan African countries from three rounds of Afrobarometer surveys, georeferenced to historical ethnic region kinship and slave trade data. Our findings suggest that a woman's ethnic region historical exposure to the transatlantic slave trade is associated with an increase in her likelihood to vote today, however, only in non-patrilineal ethnic regions. This effect is mitigated in patrilineal ethnic regions, where women have less decision-making power. This paper contributes to the literature on the contemporary sub-national effects of the slave trades and the historical causes of gender gaps in political participation.

Trade costs and the integration of British West Africa in the global economy, c. 1840–1940

The Economic History Review

Federico Tadei, Nektarios Aslanidis and Oscar Martinez

Despite the essential role of trade for African economies, in the extensive literature on the historical evolution of international trade costs, Africa is still missing. In this article, we contribute to filling this gap by (1) providing the first estimates of British West Africa's trade costs with Britain c. 1840–1940 by computing relative price gaps in a representative sample of African export and European import prices, and (2) analysing the main determinants of trade costs trends, by regressing price gaps on measures of transport costs, market efficiency, and trade barriers. The results uncover a diverging pattern in African and global trade costs trends, which was not noticed in the previous literature. British West Africa experienced a reduction in its trade costs with Britain c. 1840–70, similar to the one we observe in other world areas, thanks to improvements in shipping technology and market efficiency. From the late 1870s, however, as colonial monopsonistic trading companies consolidated their control of African export markets, trade costs continued to decline in the rest of the world, but not in British West Africa. Consequently, from the late nineteenth century, trade for West Africa became relatively more expensive than for other world regions.

A Fractured State: Local Powers and Mining Politics in Rural North-Western Zambia

Journal of Southern African Studies

Robby Kapesa

This study employs an explorative case study methodology, which utilises interviews, historical analysis and observations to identify and analyse the local powers and politics that influence large-scale mining development in developing societies. It uses the Trident Mine Project in Kalumbila in rural North-Western Zambia as a case study. The Trident Project comprises an existing copper mining/processing operation at Sentinel Mine and a nickel mining development project at Enterprise Mine. It is owned by Kalumbila Minerals Ltd, a subsidiary of the Canadian-listed metal and mining company First Quantum Minerals Ltd. Situated on land previously managed under customary tenure, the Trident Project presents a useful case study to explore the tensions and contradictions that arose in this large-scale mining development. The findings reveal how several local actors influence large-scale mining and the nature and direction of the mining-induced socio-economic benefits. This implies that the state is not limited to a duality (civil and customary powers) of the type identified by Mahmood Mamdani. Instead, the paper explores several public and 'private' power poles that often function as a fractured state.

African time travellers: What can we learn from 500 years of written accounts?

The Economic History Review

Edward Kerby, Alexander Moradi and Hanjo Odendaal

In this paper we study 500 years of African economic history using traveller accounts. We systematically collected 2464 unique documents, of which 855 pass language and rigorous data quality requirements. Our final corpus of texts contains more than 230 000 pages. Analysing such a corpus is an insurmountable task for traditional historians and would probably take a lifetime's work. Applying modern day computational linguistic techniques such as a structural topic model approach (STM) in combination with domain knowledge of African economic history, we analyse how first-hand accounts (topics) evolve across space and time. Apart from obvious accounts of climate, geography, and zoology, we find topics around imperialism, diplomacy, conflict, trade/commerce, health/medicine, evangelization, and many more topics of interest to scholarship. We illustrate how this novel database and text analysis can be employed in three applications (1) What views are introduced by travellers as a result of their occupational background? (2) Did the adoption of quinine as treatment and prophylaxis against malaria facilitate European expansion into Africa? (3) When and how did the diffusion of New World crops alter the African economic landscape?

Bound to be Free? Manumission in Cape Town, 1825–34

Slavery & Abolition

Kate Ekama

As in other slave societies, manumission existed in the Cape Colony from the introduction of slavery by the Dutch East India Company in the 1650s until British abolition in the 1830s. This article focuses on manumissions in Cape Town between 1825 and *de jure* Emancipation in 1834, during which time changing manumission regulations loosened slaveowners' grip over the process. One thousand two hundred and sixty-six enslaved people were manumitted in Cape Town and recorded in the 'Return of Manumissions'. Among them were more enslaved women and girls than men and boys, a pattern consistent with earlier periods at the Cape and other slave societies. The most common reason for manumission was purchase constituting 38% of the manumissions. This shifts the focus away from slaveowners granting manumission towards enslaved people achieving it. Using specific cases, this article explores wages, inheritance and loans as possible means of acquiring funds to purchase manumission, and suggests that conditions attached to manumission, while uncommon, were sometimes repayment arrangements. In this analysis, the importance of work both in slavery and life after slavery comes to the fore, and it opens questions about the financial lives of the enslaved for future research.

Social interactions and contract enforcement in the postcolonial Arab world. Evidence from the industrial elite of Morocco, 1956–1982

Economic History of Developing Regions
Romain Ferrali and Javier Mejia

This paper examines the role of social interactions in contract enforcement within the postcolonial Arab world, with a specific focus on Morocco. Through extensive interviews with members of the industrial elite during the import-substituting industrialization (ISI) period, we uncover a significant risk of contractual breaches. Despite this risk, there was a reluctance to use social connections to penalize those who breached contracts. Legal recourse was also rarely pursued. Instead, business leaders leaned on their social networks to assess potential partners and resolve disputes through bilateral channels. This reliance on social ties was facilitated by the close-knit and compact nature of the business community. In the post-ISI era, characterized by a larger and more diverse industrial elite, there was a noticeable increase in contractual disputes, accompanied by a shift towards more aggressive resolution methods. We present a theoretical model that elucidates how these dynamics naturally emerge from an environment where economic and social interactions are intertwined.

Amity, Commerce, and Compromise: Americans, Indians, and the Evolution of Trade on Zanzibar and across the Western Indian Ocean, 1825–1861

Journal of World History
Joshua S. C. Morrison

During the early nineteenth century, the Omani outpost of Zanzibar emerged as a leading marketplace in the Western Indian Ocean. The island's economic expansion depended heavily on a community of well-connected Indian merchants. The port's rising fortunes also attracted traders from farther afield. By 1826, American merchants had reached the island. Although Americans had decades of experience in the region, they struggled to turn a profit on Zanzibar. Over time, American traders realized that commercial success depended on a strong relationship with the island's Indian community. By the 1840s, the American consul, Richard Waters, and Zanzibar's custom master, Jairam Shivji, had formed a lucrative arrangement exchanging commodities. Waters, Shivji, and their peers developed a commercial framework that melded key precepts of Indian Ocean trade with their Atlantic equivalents. Aided by bilingual commodity contracts, trade between the United States and Zanzibar flourished. In time, the island served as a crucial springboard for American ventures to India. With the help of Parsi firms, Waters and his successors incorporated Bombay into their trade routes. In turn, the city's economic expansion reshaped trade in East Africa. By the American Civil War, commercial intelligence and British credit from Bombay contributed to Americans' success on Zanzibar.

Between Land Reform and Postcolonial Frustration: Understanding the Social Roots of Local Opposition to the PAIGC/PAICV in Santo Antão, Cabo Verde, 1975–91

The Journal of African History
Alexander Keese

This study discusses the processes of increasing social malaise and an “oppositional mood” in the Cape Verdean island of Santo Antão, where growing frustration between 1975 and 1990 led to the building of massive political opposition against the single-party regime in the archipelago. Early scrutiny of the shortcomings of independent administration, anger about the installation of a new police force, resettlement schemes, a failed agrarian reform, regime violence to achieve that reform, and a generalised mood of decline in the second half of the 1980s, constitute different elements explaining the unrest in that island. Based on newly available, local archives as an innovative source, the interpretation of a remote Cape Verdean opposition island also addresses the potential of studying opposition against “winning parties” and regimes after independence in wider regional frameworks, referring to discontent and “oppositional mood” elsewhere in postcolonial (Lusophone) Africa.

Beyond colonial politics of identity: being and becoming female youth in colonial Kenya

Genealogy

Elizabeth Ngutuku and Auma Okwany

This paper draws on biographical research among the Akamba and the Luo communities in Eastern and Western Kenya, respectively. Our research explored how practices of adolescence as a process, an institution, and a performance of identity interact with colonial modernities and imaginaries in complex ways. The biographical research was carried out predominantly with women born in the late colonial period in Kenya. We provide critical reflections on the process and affordances of our embodied storytelling approach, which we position as an Africanist methodology and a decolonial research practice. This research and approach provided women with a space to narrate and perform their lived experience, potentially disrupting epistemic inequities that are embedded in the way research on growing up in the past is carried out. The discussions show how colonialism interacted with other factors, including gender and generational power, tradition, girls' agency, and other life characteristics like poverty and family situation, in order to influence the lived experiences of women. Going beyond the narratives of victimhood that characterise coming of age in similar spaces, we present women's emergent, incomplete, and incongruent agency. We position this agency as the diverse ways in which people come to terms with their difficult contexts. The discussion also points to the need for unsettling the settled thinking about girlhood and coming of age in specific historical spaces in the global South.

Elite persistence in Sierra Leone: What can names tell us?

Journal of Development Economics

Yannick Dupraz and Rebecca Simson

Is elite persistence weaker in Africa than in other parts of the world, given historical barriers to intergenerational inheritance of status, such as limited private property rights and frequent economic and political crises? In the absence of linked intergenerational data, we use name analysis to address this question. Using surnames associated with two Sierra Leonean elites, Krio descendants of settlers and members of chiefly lineages, we measure elite persistence in politics, education and business since 1960. Both groups were highly overrepresented in elite positions at independence, and remain overrepresented today. Benchmarking our results against other countries shows that Sierra Leone's educational elites are as persistent as elsewhere, but elite persistence in the political sphere is lower than in the United Kingdom, our main comparator. We also show marked path dependence: chiefly descendants remain more overrepresented in politics and mining, while the Krio are highly over-represented in education and the professions.

Household Change and Related Demographic and Social Indicators in Botswana During 1971–2011

Journal of Family History

Oleosi Ntshebe

This article examines household change and related demographic and social factors in Botswana during the last 40 years (1971–2011). The analysis uses data from five Botswana censuses and three nationally representative surveys: the 1988 Botswana Standard Demographic Health Survey (BSDHS), the 2000 Multiple Indicator Survey (MICS) and the 2007 Botswana Family Health Surveys (BFHS). Overall, the analysis affords a demographic and socio-economic perspective on the change in Tswana households, which is not generally available in census reports and other population survey analyses but is crucial to family and household policy.

WORKING PAPERS

Gender Inequality and the Colonial Economy: Evidence from Anglican Marriage Registers in Urban British Africa

Felix Meier zu Selhausen and Jacob Weisdorf

We use Anglican marriage registers from six major cities in British Africa to examine how colonial educational and occupational opportunities affected gender inequality among the sampled couples in terms of access to schooling and the formal economy. The marriage registers concern more than 30,000 Anglican converts making up a comparatively advantaged group of urban Africans aspiring to advance their economic and social status during British colonial rule through conversion to Christianity. We use the couple's signature literacy and occupational descriptors to argue that mission schools and the colonial economy opened up a gender gap in access to formal employment during the early colonial period that declined again after the 1940s through the Africanization and feminization of the civil service. We discern that the gender gap among the sampled couples closed earlier and faster in our West African cities where women's tradition of financial independence contested Christian missionary ideals of female domesticity more prevalent in our East African locations. Comparison with census data indicates that our sampled couples were forerunners for the educational and occupational developments of the average African in the sampled cities.

A Political Economy Analysis of Changes and Continuities in Iran-Africa Trade Relations: A Case of South-South Dependency?

Eric Lob and Hakan Yilmazkuday

This paper provides a political economy analysis of the bilateral trade relations and patterns of exchange that existed between Iran and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) from 1962 to 2021. The paper contributes to the growing literature on Iran-Africa relations by empirically delineating not just the changes, but also the continuities between Iran and its African trading partners before and after the Iranian Revolution. It also adds nuance to the broader scholarship on South-South cooperation by showing the disparity between the rhetoric of South-South solidarity and reciprocity between Iran and SSA, on one side, and their low and fluctuating trade volumes, on the other. These volumes resulted from historical inertia or path dependency and structural factors, including trade complementarities and geopolitical conditions, more than demographic, cultural or religious realities. They were also shaped by the agency and decision-making of Iranian and African leaders and officials regarding the extent to which they economically engaged with each other.

Institutional change and persistence: What does the long-run evidence tell us?

Antonio Savoia, Kunal Sen and Abrams Tagem

There is a broad agreement that political and economic institutions matter for long-term development. Yet relatively little is known as to how to adopt good quality institutions and reform weak or poor institutions, for which one needs to know how institutions change. This paper provides a systematic econometric investigation of long-run patterns of institutional change, offering panel time series evidence that allows for different forms of country-specific heterogeneity and cross-section dependence. We use variables that capture the quality of four key political and economic institutions over 200 years for a sample of 161 countries from the V-Dem database: electoral democracy and executive constraints, for political institutions; and the rule of law and property rights, for economic institutions. We focus on two core hypotheses: (i) institutions display inertia, hence measures are stationary and, if a shock occurs, it is reabsorbed after a while; (ii) political and economic institutions tend to co-evolve. We find that political and economic institutions are non-stationary, suggesting that institutional change is more the norm than the exception. We also find that the long-run dynamic relationship between economic and political institutions may be different for different institutions and in different contexts, because their interplay may depend on country-specific factors.

Corruption and leadership in Africa: Evidence from Burkina Faso

Harouna Sedgo

This study assesses the role of a leader in anti-corruption fighting in Africa. It focuses on the rule of Thomas Sankara, one of the legendary figures of contemporary Africa. Using the synthetic control approach, we design a counterfactual for the actual Burkina Faso called synthetic Burkina Faso based on corruption before Sankara's tenure. The difference between Burkina Faso and Synthetic Burkina Faso highlights that the leadership of Thomas Sankara had a substantial effect in reducing corruption in Burkina Faso, during his tenure, over the period 1983-1987. This reduction effect in 1987 was as much as 70 percent of the 1982 level of corruption in the country. This result is robust to placebo tests. This finding highlights the leader's importance in shaping African countries' institutional trajectory. To fight corruption, having an exemplary leader is a cure.

External debt and capital flight in sub-Saharan Africa: The role of institutions

Jean Claude Kouakou Brou and Mamadou Thiam

This paper aims to study the impact of external debt on capital flight conditional on the institutional quality of host countries. Three major contributions emerge. First, the role of external debt in capital flight is clarified. Econometric results based on 26 sub-Saharan African countries over the period 1970-2015 show a positive relationship between external debt and capital flight. Second, high quality institutions weaken the link between debt and capital flight somewhat, although they do not eliminate it completely. The results suggest that improving the quality of institutions in sub-Saharan African countries could help minimise the contribution of external debt to capital flight. Third, the analysis takes into account panel data, the persistence of capital flight and the potential endogeneity of the regressors.