



**An ERSA Research Workshop
16 – 18 November 2009
Mont Fleur, Stellenbosch**

**Slavery and Economic History research in South
Africa**



In association with the Economic History Society of Southern Africa

Introduction

The fourth ERSA Economic History Workshop in November will focus on African colonial history with an emphasis on the issue of African slavery. It will also provide us with an opportunity to finalize details about papers for a possible publication on the incorporation of 'new economic history' and its techniques and questions to the Southern African debates.

Our keynote speaker will be Prof Nathan Nunn from Harvard University who has agreed to present three papers over the course of the workshop. Day 1 will start with a presentation by Nathan Nunn on Economic History and its contribution to development. The rest of the day will focus on short presentations for the publication on the new economic history of Southern Africa.

The aim of the publication is to begin using South African (or Southern African) economic history to understand both the evolution of South African institutions and to use South Africa as a unique case study toward understanding the evolution of economies in general. Specifically, it is expected to contribute to international debates current in economic history (but obviously not all of them). South Africa's unique background provides an almost natural experiment for testing numerous economic theories on the evolution of economies.

Participants will be expected to present short 10 minute presentations on the work they would like to undertake for this publication. The idea is to stimulate discussion and provide support for the research through collaboration in these forums. It is not necessary to have formalised the research structure of the papers but rather to present ideas and research questioned together with proposed methods. This will allow for a fruitful debate and discussion. We would then expect these papers to be completed by the end of the following year – roughly November 2010 for a future workshop.

We are in discussions with leading journals and publishers about possibly publishing a special edition dedicated to the *New Economic History of Southern Africa*. We would hope to publish these in 2011 prior to (or to be launched at) the World Economic History Congress in Stellenbosch in 2012.

Examples of topics and questions (not limited to these)

Volume 1: Before Union in 1910

- Issues pertaining to growth and inequality in the early Cape Colony; reasons for growth; demand from ships
- Issues around slavery and indentured labour; specifically with reference to Fogel and Sokoloff
- Issues around the Dutch East India Company as government; mercantilism
- The development of political institutions
- Development of financial markets in the Cape
- Early business cycles
- Possible economic explanations for the Great Trek
- The economic impact of the Anglo-Boer War

Volume 2: The post Union modernization of the South African Economy 1910-2010

- Structural Changes in the South African Economy
- Institutions and Growth: integrating New Institutional Economics and New Growth theory into the SA debate
- Labour markets (how and why have they evolved; test discrimination theories)
- Poverty and inequality (who was poor, trends, policies to eradicate poverty (poor white problem as case study?))
- Human capital (how and why has it evolved, issues around education provision, incentives for selecting into education etc) (inventors and invention, particularly coping with economic isolation and invention)
- Social capital
- SA in the global economy, etc.

Day 2 – will focus on slavery in Africa. Apart from Nathan, four guest speakers have been invited to present their most recent research work. These include prominent scholars in the field of African slavery, including Gwyn Campbell, Paul Lovejoy, Kerry Ward and Robert Shell. They will pay particular attention to what economists can add to the field.

Day 3 – will concentrate on African colonial history and we invite submissions of completed papers to be presented.

The proposed programme is as follows:

Sunday -15 November 2009

Later afternoon: Arrival of participants

Monday – Publications

08:30 Registration and welcoming

09:00 Nathan Nunn – The Importance of History for Economic Development

10:30 Tea

11:00 John Luiz – Publication details followed by short presentations from all delegates on proposed research questions

11:30 Presentations (10 minutes each)

12:30 Lunch

14:00 Presentations (10 minutes each)

15:30 Tea

16:00 Presentations (10 minutes each)

Tuesday - Slavery

08:00 Nathan Nunn – The Long Term Effects of Africa's Slave Trades

09:30 Gwyn Campbell – Indian Ocean slavery

11:00 Tea

11:30 Paul Lovejoy – West African slavery

13:00 Lunch

14:00 Kerry Ward – Slavery and economic history

15:00 Tea

15:30 Robert Shell – Data and slavery

Wednesday – African colonial economic history (completed papers to be presented today)

08:00 Nathan Nunn – Ruggedness: The Blessing of Bad Geography in Africa

09:30 Three presentations

11:00 Tea

11:30 Two presentations

12:30 Concluding remarks

13:00 Lunch

We therefore invite applications to be submitted for this workshop. ERSA will only cover the costs of flights and accommodation of those delegates presenting a paper (including the presentations of proposed contributions towards the *New Economic History of Southern African* on Day 1). We would therefore encourage you to present your ideas for future research on Day 1.

Closing date for applications is 14 September 2009. Applications should be submitted to Sophia du Plessis – sophia@sun.ac.za, and should consist of a one paragraph summary of your presentation.