



Addressing the Legacies of Colonialism in Africa: New Knowledge and Policy Recommendations
Wednesday, April 27
10:00a – 4:00p EDT

<https://harvard.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwuduyurz8uGNVXtTAv9J8LDMBHrpHXw3r4>
<https://africa.harvard.edu/event/addressing-legacies-colonialism-africa-new-knowledge-and-policy>

- 10:00am** **Welcome and Introductions**
[Mr. Alex Taylor](#), Executive Director, Harvard Center for African Studies
- 10:10am** **Unbundling African Colonization**
Keynote by [Professor Elias Papaioannou](#), Professor of Economics at London Business School
Moderated by [Professor Roland Pongou](#), Visiting Scholar at Harvard Center for African Studies and Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Ottawa
- 11:00am** **Panel One**
Moderated by [Professor Dozie Okoye](#), Associate Professor of Economics at Dalhousie University
Panelists:
[Dr. Karen Jennings](#), Postdoctoral Fellow at The Laboratory for the Economics of Africa's Past (LEAP) at University of Stellenbosch
[Professor Naaborko Sackeyfio-Lenoch](#), Associate Professor of History at Dartmouth College
[Ms. Awa Ambra Seck](#), PhD Candidate in Political Economy and Government at Harvard University
- 12:30pm** **Break**
- 12:50pm** **Panel Two**
Moderated by [Professor James Fenske](#), Professor of Economics at University of Warwick
Panelists:
[Professor Sara Lowes](#), Assistant Professor of Economics at the University of California, San Diego
[Dr. Marie Christelle Mabeu](#), Postdoctoral Fellow at King Center on Global Development at Stanford University
[Professor Stelios Michalopoulos](#), Professor of Economics at Brown University
- 2:20p** **Panel Three**
Moderated by [Professor Célestin Monga](#), Visiting Professor of Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School of Government
Panelists:
[Professor Patrick Manning](#), Andrew W. Mellon Professor of World History, Emeritus at University of Pittsburgh
[Professor Marlous van Waijenburg](#), Assistant Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School



[Professor Léonard Wantchekon](#), Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University

[Dr. Albert Zeufack](#), Chief Economist, Africa at The World Bank

3:55p

Closing Remarks

[Professor Roland Pongou](#), Visiting Scholar at Harvard Center for African Studies and Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Ottawa

[Mr. Alex Taylor](#), Executive Director, Harvard Center for African Studies



[Dr. Karen Jennings](#), Postdoctoral Fellow at The Laboratory for the Economics of Africa's Past (LEAP) at University of Stellenbosch

Title: [An Island: the long shadow of colonialism explored through allegory](#)

Abstract: *An Island* (2020) is concerned with understanding the impact of the colonial legacy in Africa at the level of the ordinary individual. It takes broad, complex issues – such as the long shadow of colonialism, the fights for national independence, the failure of democracies, the devastating effects of corruption, the rise of military dictatorships, and the tragedy of xenophobia – and explores them through the lens of one man, Samuel, an elderly lighthouse keeper on a small fictional island off the coast of an unnamed African country. It is when a young refugee washes up on the island that Samuel is confronted with various memories from his past. The novel tries to understand what an individual's experience might be of living through such complicated events, and how that experience might impact his ability to connect with others through a desire to protect (even through violence) that which is viewed as his own.

[Professor Sara Lowes](#), Assistant Professor of Economics at the University of California, San Diego

Title: [Legacy of Colonial Medicine in Central Africa](#)

Abstract: Between 1921 and 1956, French colonial governments organized medical campaigns to treat and prevent sleeping sickness. Villagers were forcibly examined and injected with medications with severe, sometimes fatal, side effects. We digitized 30 years of archival records to document the locations of campaign visits at a granular geographic level for five central African countries. We find that greater campaign exposure reduces vaccination rates and trust in medicine, as measured by willingness to consent to a blood test. We examine relevance for present-day health initiatives; World Bank projects in the health sector are less successful in areas with greater exposure.

[Dr. Marie Christelle Mabeu](#), Postdoctoral Fellow at King Center on Global Development at Stanford University

Title: [Colonial Origins and Fertility: Can the Market Overcome History?](#)

Abstract : Can market incentives overcome the long-term impact of historical institutions? We address this question by focusing on the role of colonial reproductive policies in shaping fertility behavior in Africa. Exploiting the arbitrary division of ancestral ethnic homelands and the resulting discontinuity in institutions across the British-French colonial borders, we find that women in former British areas are more likely to delay sexual debut and marriage and have fewer children. However, these effects disappear in areas with high market access, where the opportunity cost of childbearing appears to be high irrespective of colonizer identity. This heterogeneous impact of colonial origins is robust across different measures of access to international and domestic markets. Examining causal mechanisms, we collect archival data on colonial reproductive laws and policies to conduct an event-study analysis. We find that the effect of colonial origins on fertility is entirely driven by differences in the timing of colonial population policies and their lasting impact on the use of modern methods of birth control. We find little evidence that the fertility effect of British colonization operates through education or income. While British colonization is linked to higher female education, this occurs mainly in areas with higher market access while the fertility effects do not. Again, while income levels differ, the fertility gap between British and French colonies opened prior to 1980, whereas the income gap only opened after 1990. Our analysis highlights the heterogeneous nature of the colonial origins of comparative fertility behavior, and implies that economic incentives may overcome historical determinism.



[Professor Stelios Michalopoulos](#), Associate Professor of Economics at Brown University

Title: [Religion and Educational Mobility in Africa](#)

Abstract: We examine the intergenerational transmission of education across religious lines in Africa, home to some of the world's largest Christian and Muslim communities. Using census data from 20 countries we construct measures of absolute upward and downward religion-specific intergenerational mobility (IM) and document the following. First, Christian boys and girls have much higher upward and lower downward mobility than Animists and Muslims; the latter perform well only in a handful of countries where they are small minorities. Second, we trace the roots of these disparities. Although family structures differ across faiths, this variation explains a small fraction of IM inequities. Inter-religious differences in occupational specialization do not play any role in the Christian-Muslim differences. In contrast, regional features explain nearly half of the imbalances in educational mobility. Third, we isolate the causal impact of regions from spatial sorting exploiting information on children whose households moved when they were at different ages. Regional childhood exposure effects are present for both Muslims and Christians. Fourth, we map and characterize the religious IM gaps across thousands of African regions. Among numerous regional geographic, economic, and historical features, the district's Muslim share is the most important correlate. Children adhering to Islam underperform in predominantly Muslim areas. Our findings call for more research on the origins of religious segregation and the role of religion-specific, institutional, and social conventions on education and opportunity.

[Professor Naaborko Sackeyfio-Lenoch](#), Associate Professor of History at Dartmouth College

Title: Reclaiming the Nation's Art and the Transnational Politics of Asante Regalia in Post-colonial Ghana [Forthcoming book project *Cultural Production, the Arts and Intellectual Life in Postcolonial Ghana, 1960-1992*]

Abstract: This paper examines the diplomatic and transnational efforts/politics of the Asantehene Opoku Ware II and the Kumasi Traditional Council to repatriate Asante Regalia from former British colonial masters in the 1970s. I demonstrate the ways in which the 1974 centenary to mark the Anglo-Ashanti wars of the late nineteenth century opened a complex set of negotiations centered on recovery of particular aspects of the past, and reframing British colonial wars and their effects within a post-independence context by a diverse set of actors in postcolonial Ghana and Britain. Although post-independence Ghana's political and economic circumstances were dire during the 1970s and 1980s, Ghanaians negotiated cultural policies in diverse and impactful ways, as well as the meaning/representation of African cultural artifacts in international spaces through the prism of repatriations efforts. Those efforts offered generative ways for engaging with postcolonial African realities in national and global terms. Policies created by international bodies such as UNESCO in the early 1970s provided new platforms for formerly colonized peoples to negotiate a range of matters in the cultural arena. Chiefly authorities, the British and Ghanaian government and museum officials entered a contested transnational terrain about the significance of African cultural artifacts in the past and present geographic locales. This paper offers new methodological perspectives and alternative sites for capturing Ghana's post-colonial nationhood in its varied forms. It offers a departure from normative understandings of 'failed' postcolonial nationhood and a limited historiography that has not yet fully captured the multiple threads of Ghana's engagement with the legacies of colonial rule.

[Ms. Awa Ambra Seck](#), PhD Candidate in Political Economy and Government at Harvard University

Title: En Route: The Colonial Origins of Francophone Africa Emigration Patterns

Abstract: Did deployment in the colonial army foster emigration at the source of long-run development in the sending communities? We use the arbitrary assignment of troops to different locations to identify the effect of



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foreign location exposure on municipality-level emigration stock and contemporary economic outcomes. To partial out the effect of municipality-level unobservables, we then employ an IV shift-share interacting municipality enlistment with aggregate demand for deployment. In the context of Morocco, we find that municipalities exposed to greater deployment to France exhibit larger stock of permanent emigration to France, larger urbanization rate and more household wealth. We interpret these results as reflecting another source of colonial path-dependency in economic development.

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