

Africa

Jesús Fernández-Villaverde¹

October 31, 2022

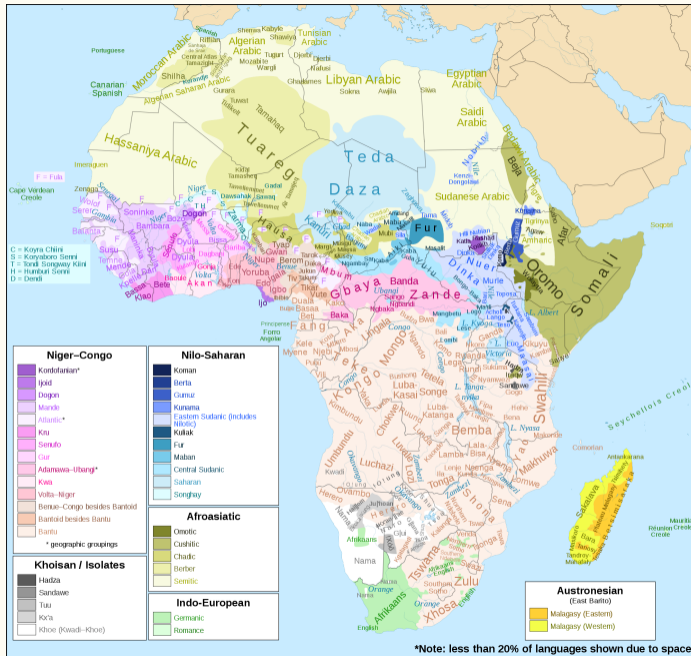
¹University of Pennsylvania

A vast and diverse continent














- Thinking about African economic history since c. 1400 as a whole is a challenging task.
- Vast (30.3 million km²; around three times the size of the U.S.) and enormously rich area.
- Cradle of anatomically modern humans (around 300,000 years ago: oldest remains from Jebel Irhoud in Morocco).
- The ancestors of all of us lived in East Africa around 70,000 years ago and (some) spread out to the rest of the globe around 50,000 years ago (although our understanding of this process becomes more and more complex with each new discovery).
- Genetically, linguistically, and ecologically, Africa is the most diverse continent on the globe.

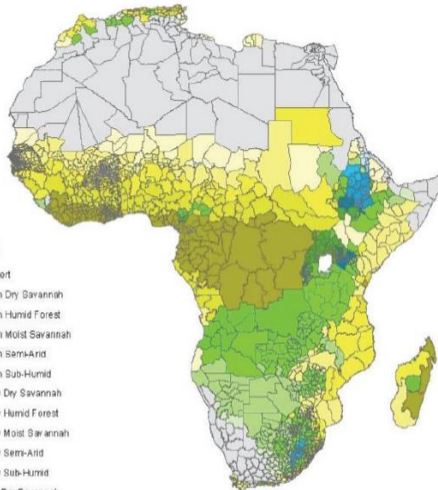






Legend

-  Desert
-  High Dry Savannah
-  High Humid Forest
-  High Moist Savannah
-  High Semi-Arid
-  High Sub-Humid
-  Low Dry Savannah
-  Low Humid Forest
-  Low Moist Savannah
-  Low Semi-Arid
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-  Mid Dry Savannah
-  Mid Humid Forest
-  Mid Moist Savannah
-  Mid Semi-Arid
-  Mid Sub-Humid



0 2.5 5 10 Decimal Degrees

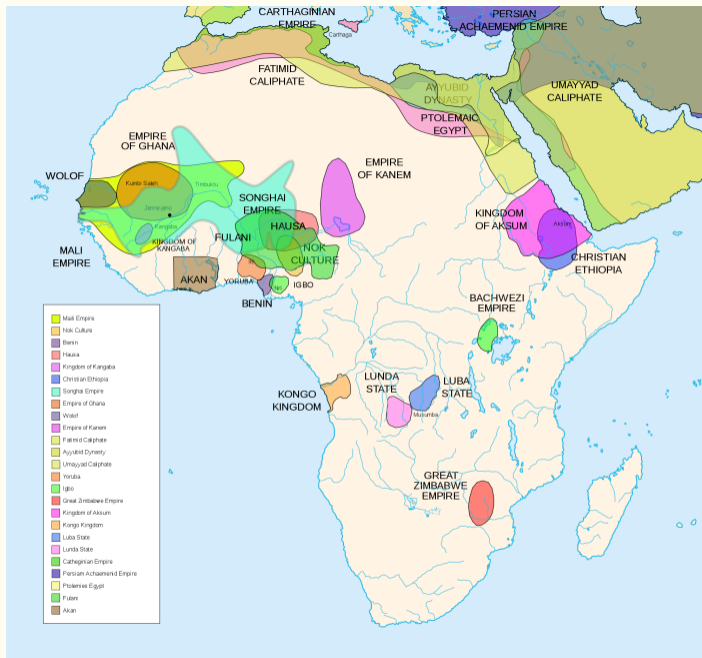



A dynamic continent

- Also, Africa experiences constant change both internally and externally driven during these centuries, with large economic consequences:
 1. Climatic and environmental change.
 2. Bantu expansion and the rise of the Zulu Empire, Oromo migrations.
 3. Expansion of Islam and Christianity.
 4. Slavery, colonialism, and independence.
 5. Arrival of new crops (maize, cassava, coffee, ...).
 6. Integration into world economy.
- You should forget about “ahistorical” concepts of an “eternal Africa” (either as a positive or negative feature) or “one-nation Africa.”

Selection of topics

- Among other aspects, need to integrate in a single narrative:
 1. Egypt → part of the Ottoman empire (1517-1867), later a semi-British colony and a leader of Arab nationalism.
 2. West Africa → slave trade with Europe and the Americas, colonial possession, struggles after independence.
 3. East Africa → slave trade with the Arab world, part of the Indian Ocean network of trade, experiments with socialism in the 1960s-1980s.
 4. South Africa → European settlement in Cape Town, independent Boer republics, Apartheid regime, economic center of Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Out of sheer necessity, we will focus on Sub-Saharan Africa.



A point about evidence

- Documentary record is more limited than for other regions.
- For example, we do not even know where the capital of the Mali Empire (c. 1230-1670) was.
- Reasons:
 1. Environment.
 2. “Records of documentation.” For example, highly acidic nature of tropical soil.
 3. Ideological structures.
 4. Academic framework.
- This does not mean we should not study Africa.
- “The Data Revolution in African Economic History” by Johan Fourie, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 47, no. 2 (2016): 193-212.

Additional readings

- General history:

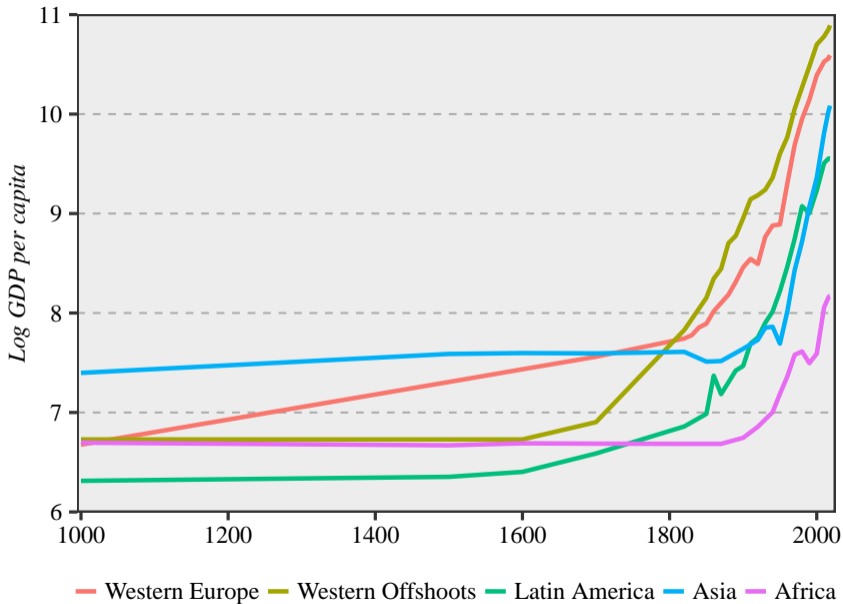
1. *Africans: The History of a Continent* (2nd ed.), by John Iliffe.
2. *The Civilizations of Africa: A History to 1800*, by Christopher Ehret.
3. *The Golden Rhinoceros: Histories of the African Middle Ages*, by François-Xavier Fauvelle.
4. *A History of Modern Africa: 1800 to the Present* (3rd ed.), by Richard J. Reid.

- Economic history:

1. *The History of African Development*, available at <https://www.aehnetwork.org/textbook/>.
2. *Africa's Development in Historical Perspective*, by Emmanuel Akyeampong et al.
3. *Economic History Review: Volume 67, Issue 4, Special Issue: The Renaissance of African Economic History*, available at PennLibrary.
4. *An Economic History of South Africa: Conquest, Discrimination and Development*, by Charles H. Feinstein.

The initial conditions

- Likely, Sub-Saharan Africa is the region with the lowest income per capita c. 1400 and today.
- Notice: this low level of income per capita is before slave trade by Europeans starts, but after slave trade by Arabs have been happening at large scale since at least 9th century.
- Similarly, this low level of income per capita is before any major colonial settlements have started.
- Of course, this does not imply that slave trade and colonialism were not detrimental for Africa's development, just that we are analyzing a complex set of interrelated phenomena.
- In fact, slave trade and colonialism need to be understood within the context of Africa's situation c. 1400.



وَكُنَّا أَحْسِبُ أَنَّهُ سَيَنْظُرُ نَزْرًا لِي وَيُعَلِّي السَّمَةَ عَلَيَّ فَأَحْلَقَ الْحَيْثُ جَلَنَتْ عَلَا عُلْفَتْ
بِقَالَ إِزَّ الْعَبْدَا إِذَا نَزَرَ كُنْهُ وَخَفَتْ مُؤْنَهُ يُبْرَكَ جِمْوَلَاةٌ وَالْقَهْفُ عَلَيْهِ مَوَاةٌ فَأَخِي



لَا وَتَرْجِيْبُ هَذَا الْخَلَامَ النَّبِيَّ بَانَ لَخَفَتْ شَمَهُ عَلَيْكَ فَمِنْ مَا يَنْبَغِي دَهْمُوَانِ شَيْئًا

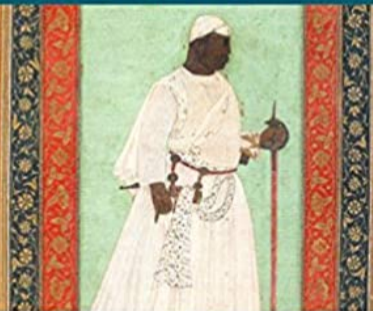




| THE WORLD IN A LIFE |

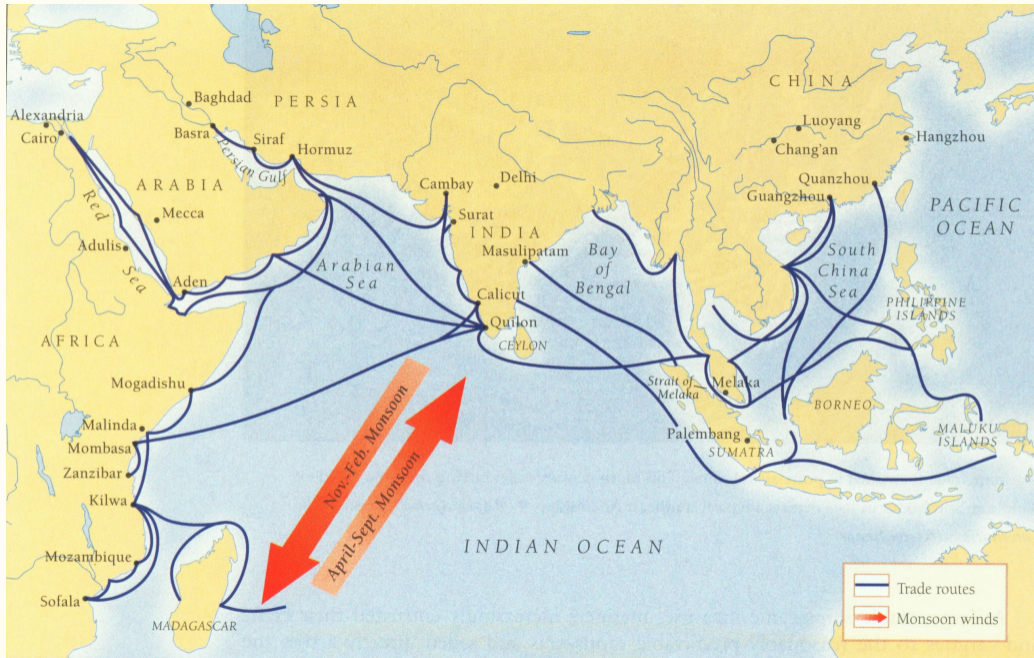
MALIK
AMBAR

POWER AND SLAVERY ACROSS
THE INDIAN OCEAN



OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OMAR H. ALI



No large agrarian states

No large agrarian state

- By 1400, no large, sustained centralized agrarian state has appeared in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Partial exception: Ethiopian plateau. Domesticated teff, finger millet, sesame, mustard, ensete, and coffee and husbandry.
- Large agrarian states are required to generate enough population and surplus to sustain technological growth.
- Of course, this is not to say that Africans were worse off. Jared Diamond and James C. Scott have expressed serious doubts about the advantages of states and “civilization.”
- Instead, more decentralized agricultural systems based on yams, palm oil, toro, beans, bananas, and plantains. Some sorghum and millet around Lake Chad and in the Bantu expansion.
- Decentralized agriculture was base for smaller and more equalitarian polities.



James C. Scott

AUTHOR OF SEEING LIKE A STATE

Against the Grain

A DEEP HISTORY OF THE EARLIEST STATES



Table 5. Yakö income, 1930s

Panel A: Food production and consumption			
The family consists of one man, two women, and 3-4 children (4.75 adult equivalents)			
The family cultivates 1.4 acres of yams intercropped with pumpkins and okra. Palm oil and palm wine are harvested from wild stands.			
food consumption per adult equivalent			
	Kg/year	Kcal/day	grams protein/day
yams	489.2	1582	20.5
cowpeas	12.4	114	8.0
meat	4.4	30	2.4
pumpkins	9.6	7	.2
okra	9.6	8	.5
palm oil	2.1	50	0
palm wine	174.7	150	1.0
total		1941	32.6
Cultivating the yam patch takes 307 days. The palm products require 93 days. The meat is purchased.			
Panel B: Palm products produced for sale			
palm oil	12 tins @ 36 pounds		
palm kernels	747 pounds		
palm wine	93 half-gallon bottles		
Palm products sold require 155 days of work			

Why no large agrarian states?

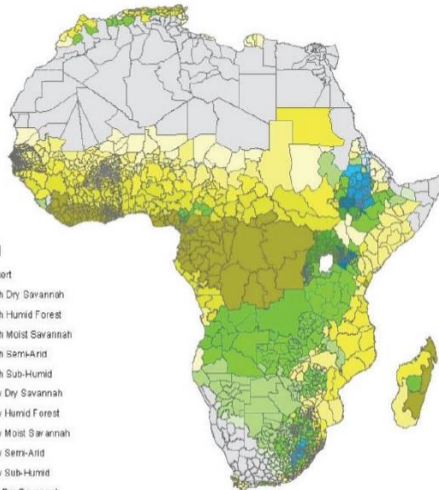
- Traditional explanations based on noncommercial values are hard to defend:
 - Plenty of evidence of markets in Africa well before Europeans arrived.
 - Africans showed considerable ability to adapt to new crops, technologies, and trade when they got in contact with them.
- Two classes of explanations:
 1. Explanations based on endowments.
 2. Explanations based on timing.
- Explanations are not contradictory.
- Both explanations lead to low population density.

Explanations based on endowments

1. Jared Diamond's hypothesis about vertical vs. horizontal axes. Particularly salient after the Sahara dries up about 5,400 years ago. Also, Congo rainforests.
2. **Mayshar, Moav, and Pascali (2022)**: appropriability of crops.
3. Disease environment: horse, cattle, and sheep died of sleeping sickness carry by tsetse fly, malaria, together with a challenging climate.
4. Soil is often low fertility because of old bedrocks and exposed to erosion.
5. Long distances with respect to the sea and few easily navigable rivers: high transportation costs. Iron and cotton production in the Kingdom of Kano (999-1349).

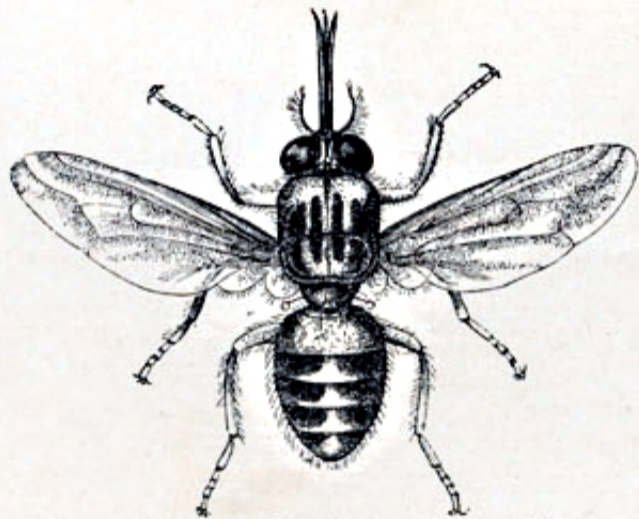
Legend

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- High Dry Savannah
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- Mid Humid Forest
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0 2.5 5 10 Decimal Degrees





Tsetsefliege (*Glossina morsitans*). $\frac{3}{1}$.
(Art. *Tsetsefliege*.)





Explanations based on timing

- Africa just slightly behind in transition toward large agricultural states.
- Similar point in the Americas.
- Early transition to large agricultural states (Mali, Bantu kingdoms,...).

Explanations based on timing, II

- Evidence of iron *forging* already third millennium BCE (Oboui site in the Central African Republic, and Gbatoro, in Cameroon).
- However, these sites seem to be small scale experiments:

Zangato and Holl, On the Iron Front

...scattered LSA foragers 'experimenting' with new technologies and techniques.

- No Bronze age in Sub-Saharan Africa: Large iron and copper *smelting* only grows around the same time (c. 900 BCE).
- Some researchers have argued that bronze leads to centralization, iron does not.

V. G. Childe, What Happened in History?


Cheap iron democratized agriculture and industry and warfare too.

- Luck or endowments? For example, copper is very rare in East Africa and quite rare in West Africa.

SPRINGER BRIEFS IN ARCHAEOLOGY
CONTRIBUTIONS FROM AFRICA

Shadreck Chirikure

**Metals in Past
Societies**
A Global
Perspective on
Indigenous African
Metallurgy

 Springer

Ethiopia

Exception: Ethiopia

- Ethiopia's highlands have a very different environment.
- Kingdoms of D'mt (c. 980-400 BCE) and Aksum (c. 80 BCE-c. 940).
- Later on, the Solomonic dynasty (900-1974).
- Adoption of the plow.
- Trade of agricultural products, ivory, skins, crystal glass, copper, and brass.
- Particularly well regarded coinage: Aksumite currency become standard in the Red Sea area.





Ethiopia's own path

- Much more complex political and cultural structures:
 1. Rock-hewn monolithic churches in Lalibela.
 2. Zera Yacob (1599-1692) and Walda Hewat.
- Much more successful at resisting outside conquest (from the northern muslim lands) and colonization (from Europeans).
- First Italo-Ethiopian War (1895-1896) and Battle of Adwa (1896).
- Foundations of an African Civilisation: Aksum and the northern Horn, 1000 BC-AD 1300 by David W. Phillipson.







Some institutional consequences

- Low population density: abundance of land.
- Land-extensive agricultural methods (e.g., hoe-based ratio in arable lands).
- Hard to tax land (base of Eurasian fiscal systems).
- Hard to compel labor. Resort to slavery raids, but hard to sustain beyond one generation. Nonetheless, slavey within Africa was not “benign.”

African slavery

An economic model of slavery

- **The Causes of Slavery or Serfdom: A Hypothesis** by **Evsey Domar**.
- Domar postulated that, to have a wealthy upper class of aristocrats, warriors, and bureaucrats that rules over a large coerced population, we need three requirements:
 1. Sufficient productivity in the sector where coerced workers are employed to support an upper class with their output. Domar highlighted a low labor/land ratio.
 2. Sufficient differential in military effectiveness to make becoming a lord or an unproductive specialist in coercive violence worth the risk.
 3. An effective “recapture technology” to keep your enslaved persons (serfs/debt peons) from successfully running away. For example, in Russia, the lords used the Cossacks as a mobile police to enforce serfdom. Europeans preferred other systems, such as language competence or skin color.



AFRICAN
STUDIES

TRANSFORMATIONS IN SLAVERY

A History of Slavery in Africa

THIRD EDITION

PAUL E. LOVEJOY



CAMBRIDGE

West Africa

Exception: West Africa

- Trans-Saharan trade becomes feasible around 300, with the adoption of camels by Berber tribes.
- Big impulse after the Arab conquest of North Africa and the expansion of Islam in the Sahel (common language, legal institutions, cultural affinity).
- West African empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai built around the taxation of trans-Saharan trade (a route for the expansion of Islam, which brings its own set of institutional arrangements) and gold production.
- Case of Mansa Musa (1312-1337), ruler of the Mali Empire, and his visit to Cairo in 1324 in route toward his pilgrimage to Mecca.







Trade and cultural exchanges

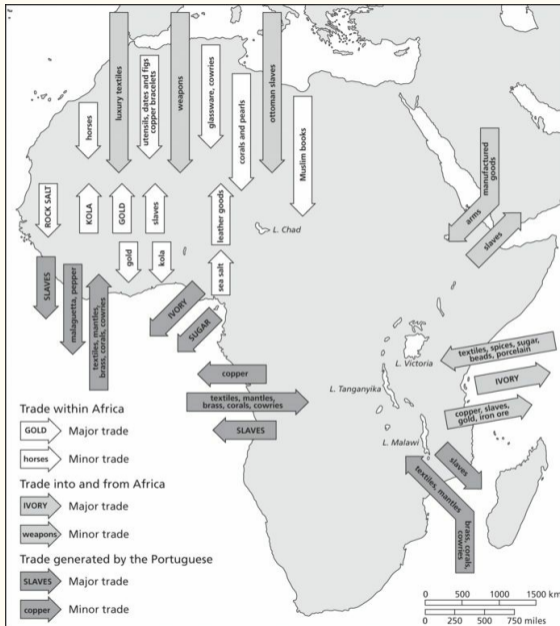
- Economic life,
 1. Exports: ivory, diamonds, animal hides, leatherwork, kola, ostrich feathers, spices, and enslaved persons.
 2. Imports: glass vessels and beads, glazed ceramics, copper, books, foodstuffs, salt.
- Sankore Madrasah in Timbuktu, Mali: manuscripts in Arabic, Songhay, and Tamasheq.
- **Caravans of Gold, Fragments in Time: Art, Culture, and Exchange across Medieval Saharan Africa** by Kathleen Bickford Berzock.



Colonialism

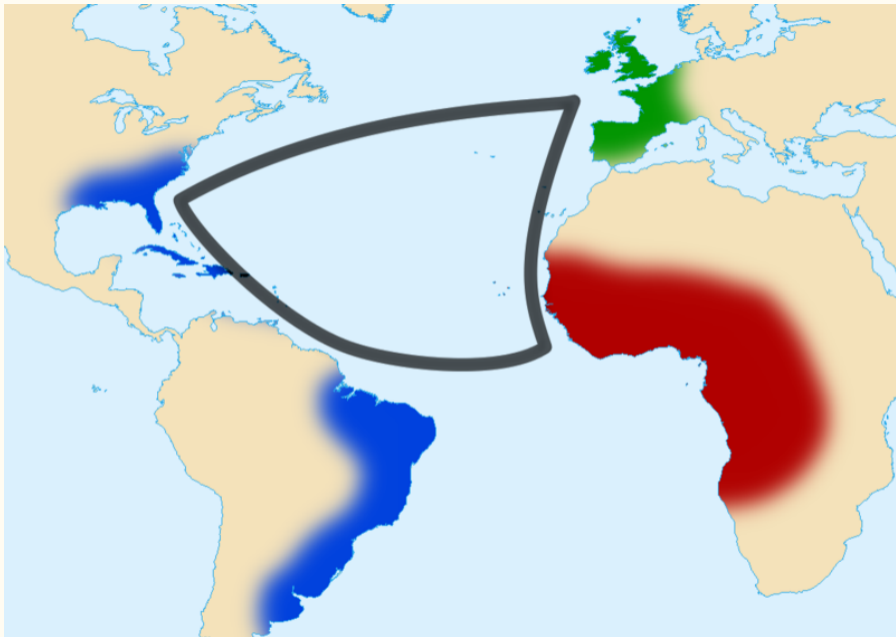
Arrival of the Europeans

- Europeans insert themselves in and transform the pre-existing trade routes in Africa.
- Factories for local exchange and slave trade: Portuguese, Dutch, and English.
- Europeans cannot penetrate in the interior. Partial exception in Cape Colony.
- Kingdoms of Dahomey and the Ashanti specialize in slave raiding in exchange for textiles, alcohol, sugar, firearms, and other manufactures.
- Slave trade largely ends in the three decades after 1807: British Empire abolishes trade and, the next year, sets up the West Africa Squadron. Smuggling lasts until 1870s.
- Long-run consequences.



Map 10.1 Trade of Africa 1450–1600





ALDUS VERTOONT HEM HET CASTEEL DE MÿN AEN DE NOORDT-
 WEST ZÿDE, VÿT DE RIVIER AEN TE STEN. *volgens op de grote kist te Glinne. van...*





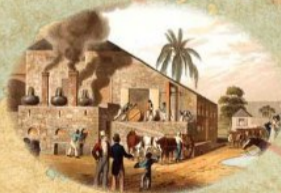


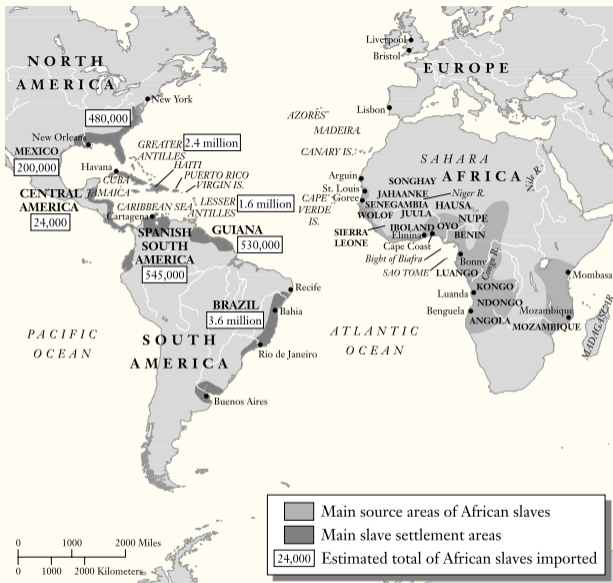


ATLAS OF THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

DAVID ELTIS · DAVID RICHARDSON

Foreword by David Brion Davis · Afterword by David W. Blight





• Check: <http://www.slavevoyages.org/>

**The Indian Ocean
African Slave Trade
1500–1900**

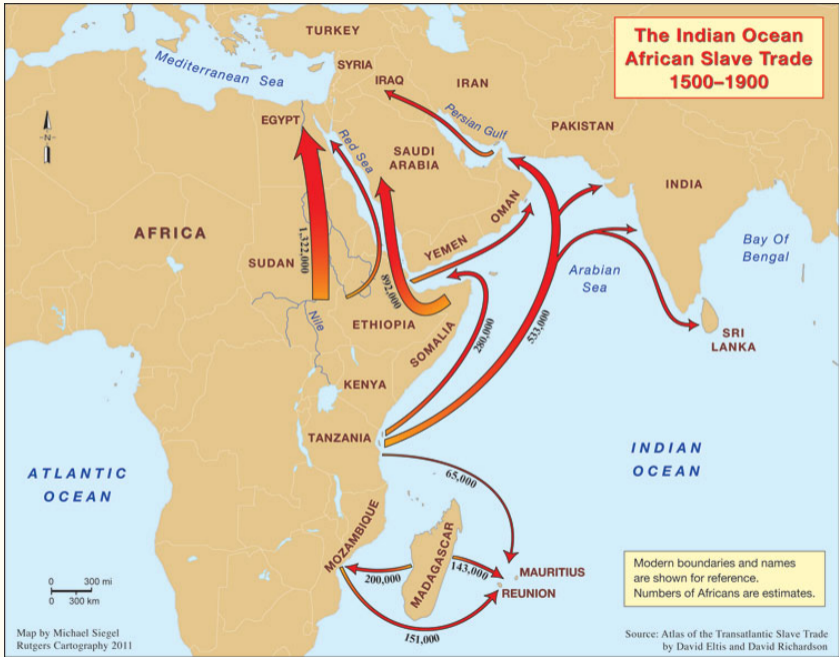


Table 10.1 Estimated slave departures from Sub-Saharan Africa in the different external slave trades, *c.* 1500–*c.* 1900

Trade	1501–1600	1601–1700	1701–1800	1801–1900	Total
Saharan	550,000	700,000	700,000	1,200,000	3,150,000
Red Sea	100,000	100,000	200,000	492,000	892,000
East African	100,000	100,000	400,000	442,000	1,042,000
Atlantic	338,000	1,876,000	6,495,000	4,027,000	12,736,000
Total	1,088,000	2,776,000	7,795,000	6,161,000	17,820,000

THE ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

SECOND EDITION

HERBERT S. KLEIN

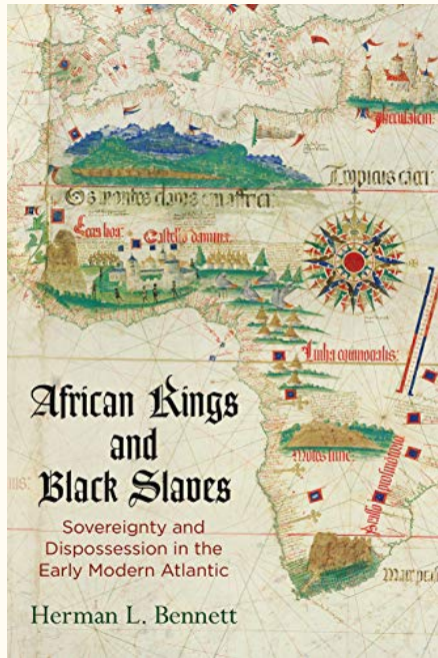


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more information - www.cambridge.org/9780521766302





SLAVES OF ONE MASTER

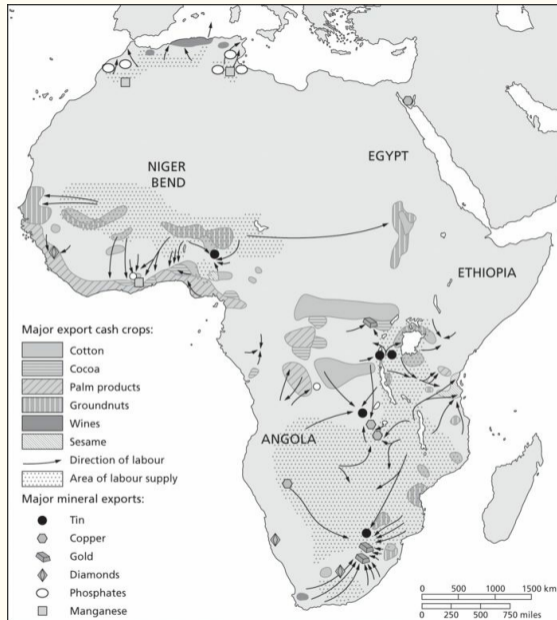
GLOBALIZATION AND SLAVERY IN ARABIA IN THE AGE OF EMPIRE

MATTHEW S. HOPPER

- By the 18th century, African exports diversified.
- Central role of palm oil: lubricant, soap, and candles.
- Also groundnuts, cocoa, coffee, rubber, and minerals.
- How transformative was the transition to the new economy?
 1. Classic view in *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885* by K. O. Dike and *An Economic History of West Africa* by A.G. Hopkins: “vent-for-surplus theory.”
 2. Revisionist view in *From Slave Trade to “Legitimate” Commerce: The Commercial Transition in Nineteenth-Century West Africa* by Robin Law (ed.).







Map 10.2 Export specialization in Africa, c. 1928





A. G. HOPKINS

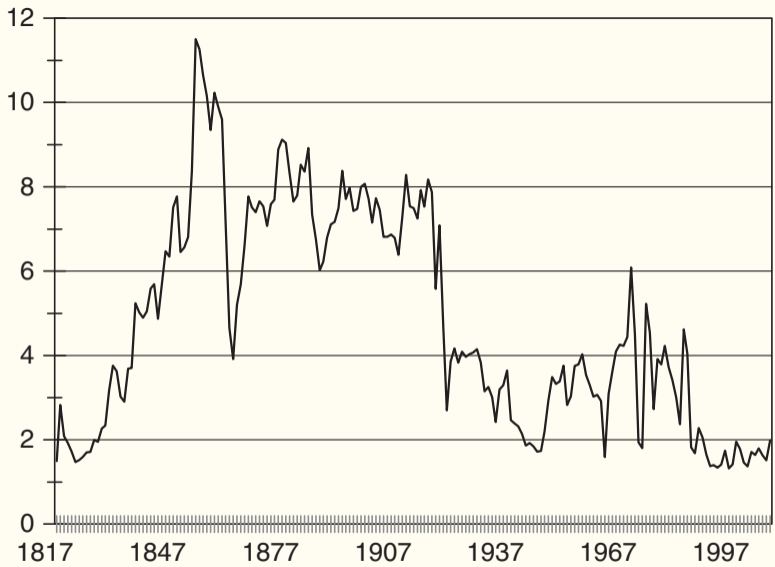
**AN ECONOMIC
HISTORY OF
WEST AFRICA**

Second Edition

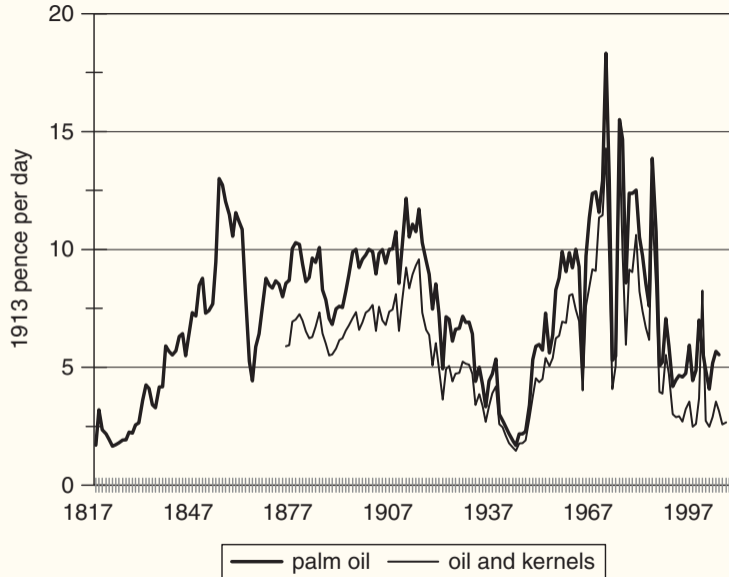


Commodity-exporting economies

- Big feature: commodity-exporting economies are subject to large price (e.g., terms-of-trade) shocks.
- Particularly important when exports are highly concentrated.
- Remediation strategies:
 1. Sovereign funds.
 2. Cartels.
 3. Marketing boards.
- Evidence regarding long-run trends of prices (a popular theory in the 1950s and 1960s) is harder to interpret.

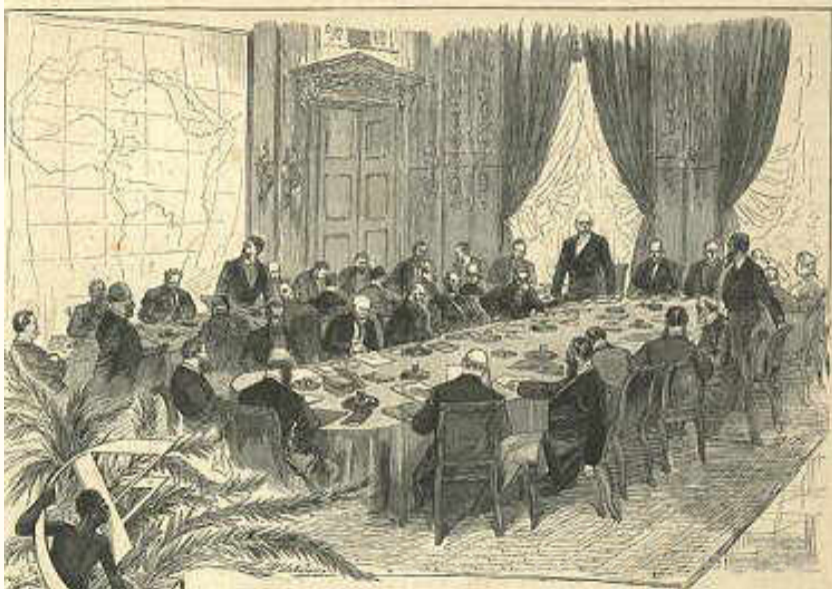


17. Price of palm oil relative to price of cotton cloth



19. Earnings per day from palm oil

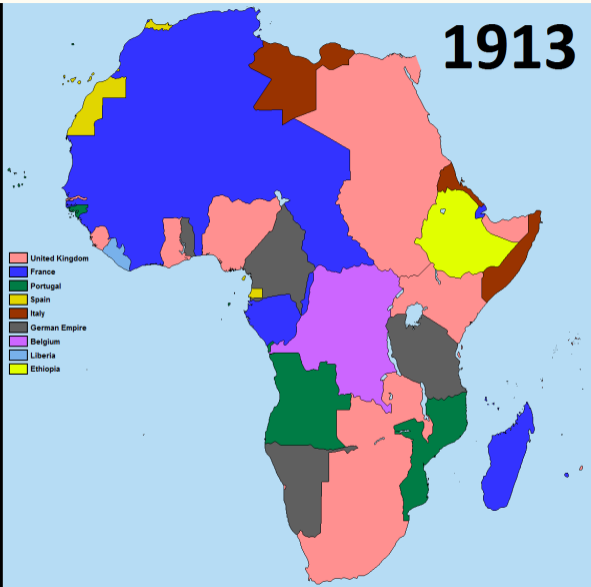
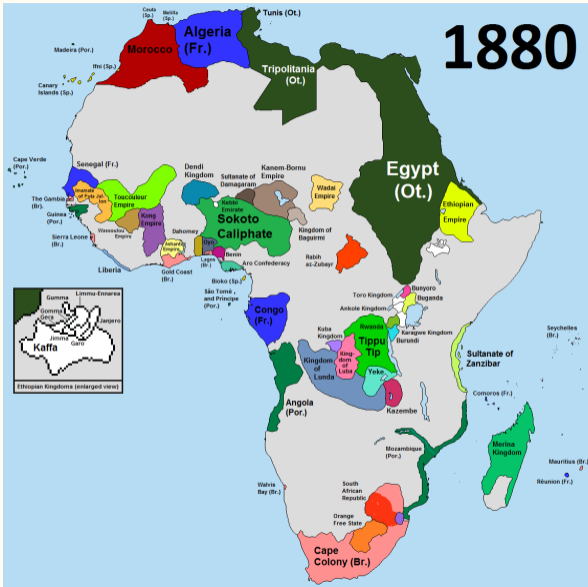
- Most of Africa is conquered by the European powers in the second half of 19th century.
- Mix of different forces:
 1. Technological change.
 2. Strategic considerations.
 3. Internal politics.
- Consolidated in the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885.



Die weltberühmte Konferenz in Berlin. Einmalige Sitzung am 2. März 1878.

Es gab eine Zeit, und Sie sitzen kaum
 im Jahr vorher hier und, in
 der Weltberühmten Konferenz

einer Bedeutung, die nicht allein für Deutschland, sondern für die
 ganze Welt von unerschütterlicher Tragweite ist. Denn die Con-
 ferenz, die hierher, Berlin, versammelt wurde, ist die Weltberühmte



Types of colonies

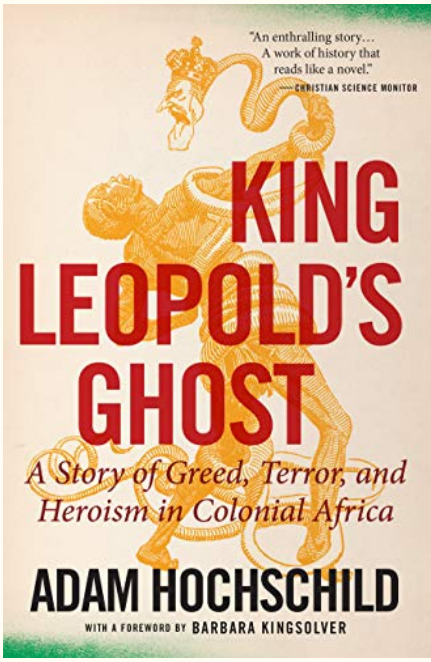
1. Settler colonies: South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia, and Kenya (also Algeria in Northern Africa).
2. Peasant-agricultural colonies: West Africa and Uganda.
3. Concession company colonies: King Leopold II's Congo, Portuguese colonies, other colonies in Central and Equatorial Africa.





"An enthralling story...
A work of history that
reads like a novel."

—CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR



KING LEOPOLD'S GHOST

*A Story of Greed, Terror, and
Heroism in Colonial Africa*

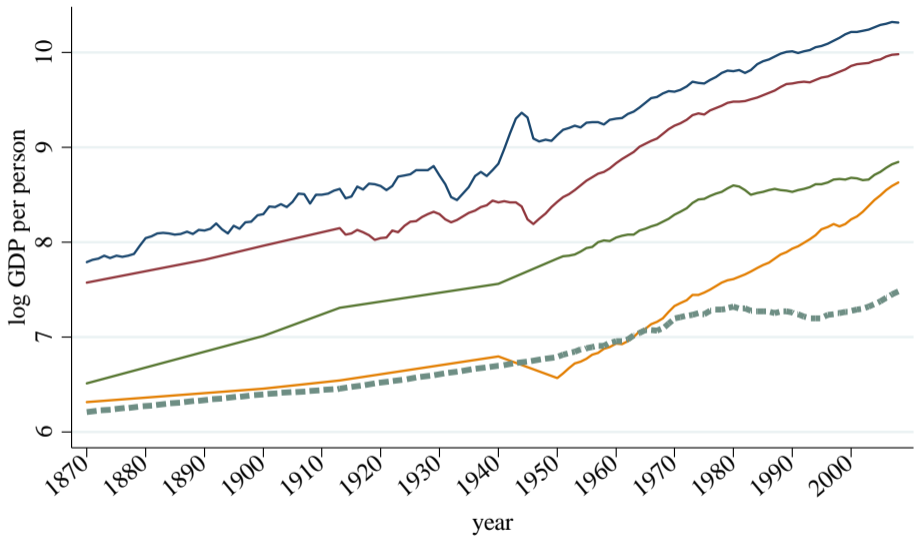
ADAM HOCHSCHILD

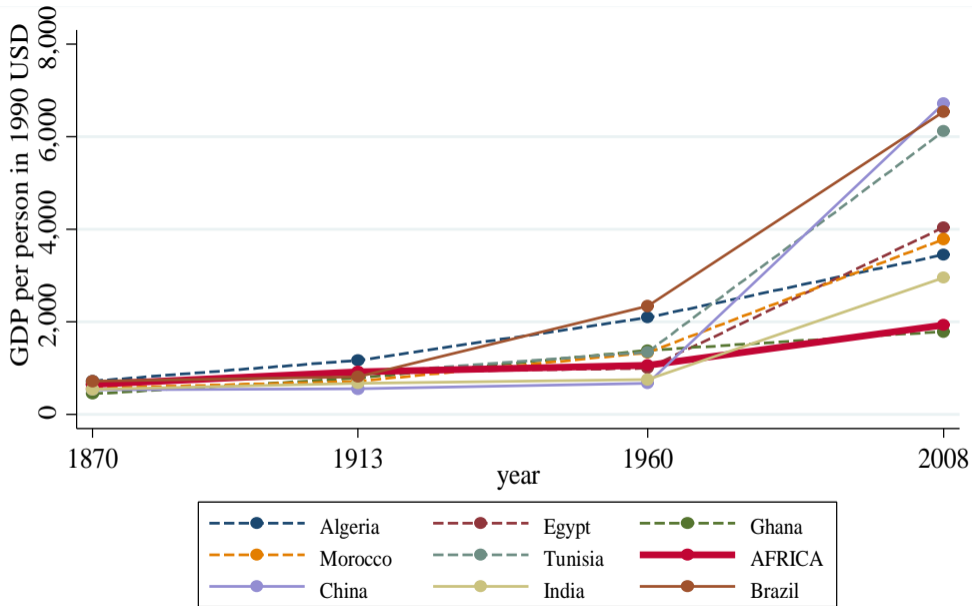
WITH A FOREWORD BY BARBARA KINGSOLVER

The consequences of colonialism

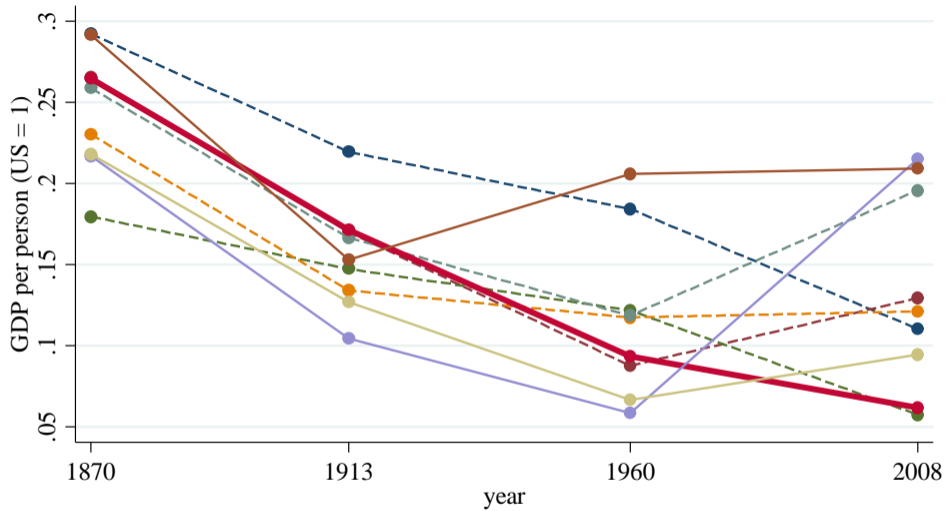
Consequences

- High colonial time was incredibly short (around 70 years: a lifetime).
- However, large consequences.
- Extremely high human cost.
- Tremendous (although often overlooked) impact of World War I on Africa.
- Disappointing economic growth.





Source: Maddison



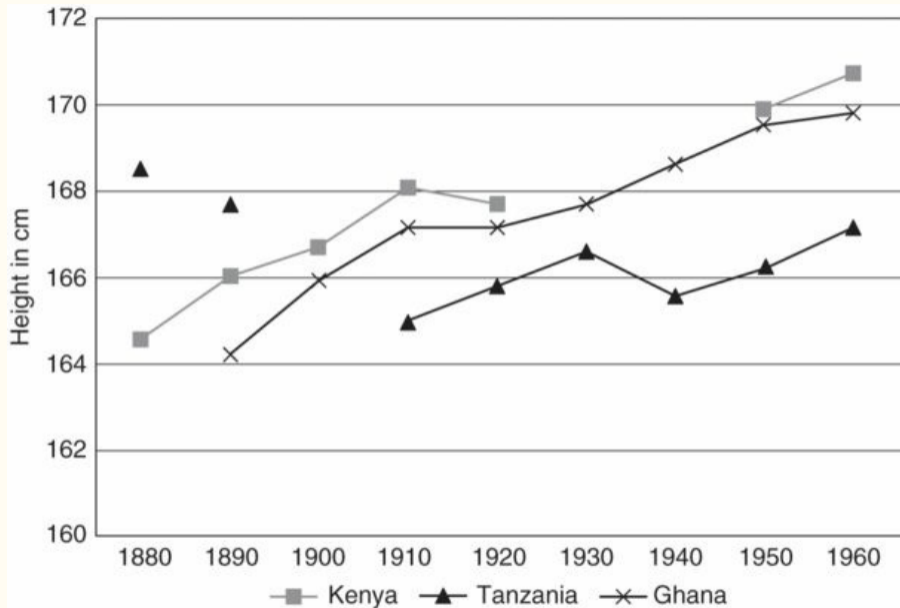


Figure 10.5 Height trends in Ghana, Kenya and Tanzania, 1880–1960s (male)

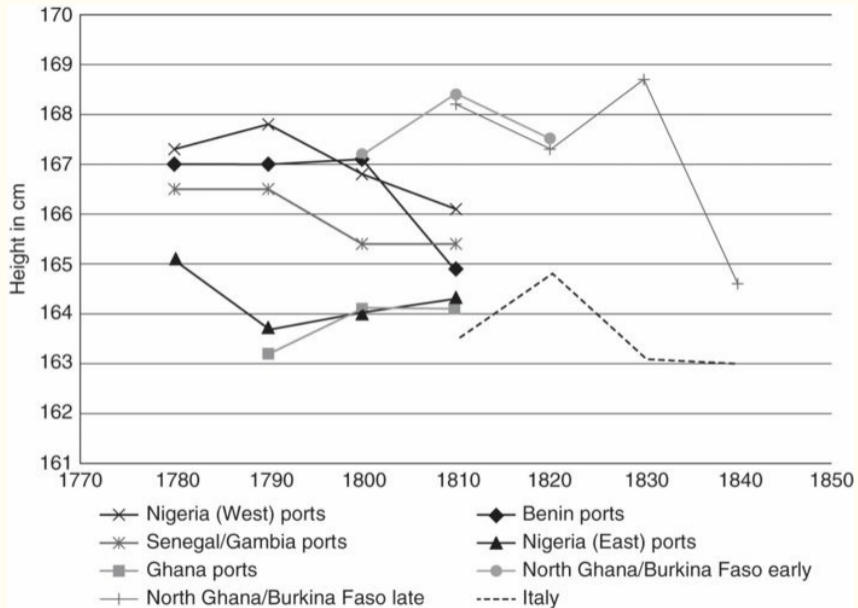
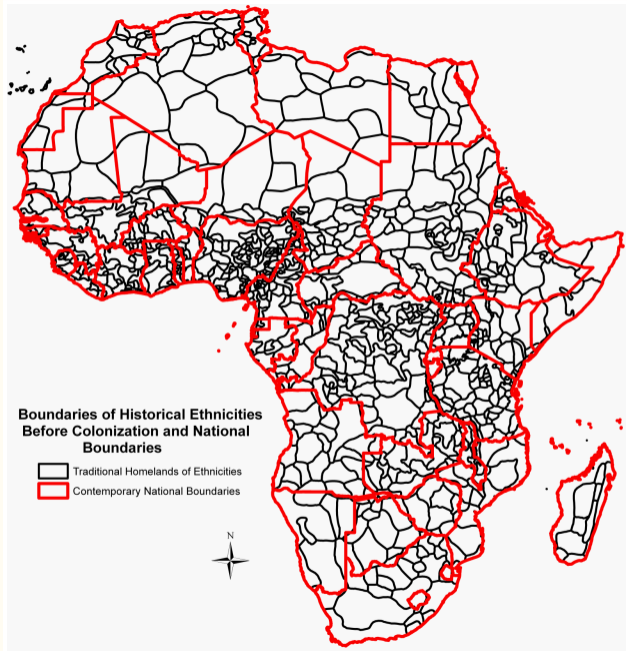
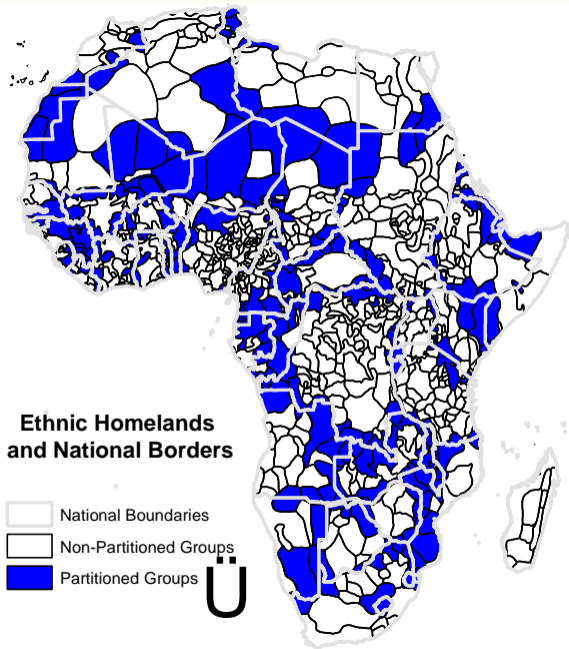
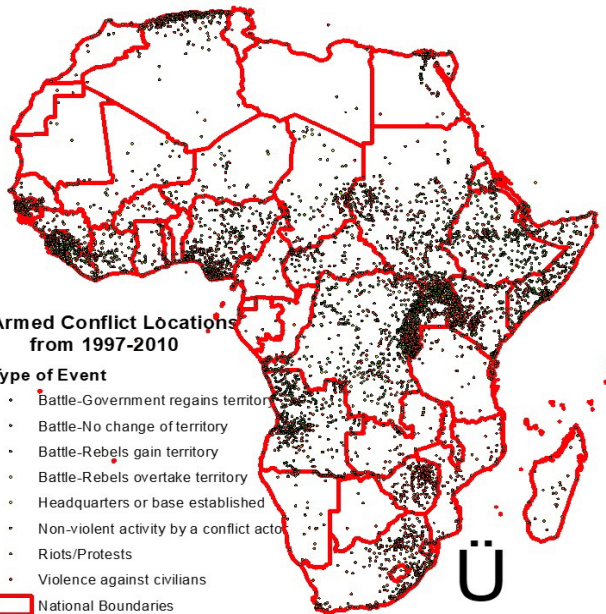


Figure 10.6 Height trends in selected African countries and Italy, 1780–1840s (male)

- Legacy of bad institutions:
 1. Policies of “divide-and-rule” (tribes, religious communities) and creation of “chiefs.”
 2. Extractive institutions.
 3. Artificial frontiers (Stelios Michalopoulos and Elias Papaioannou).






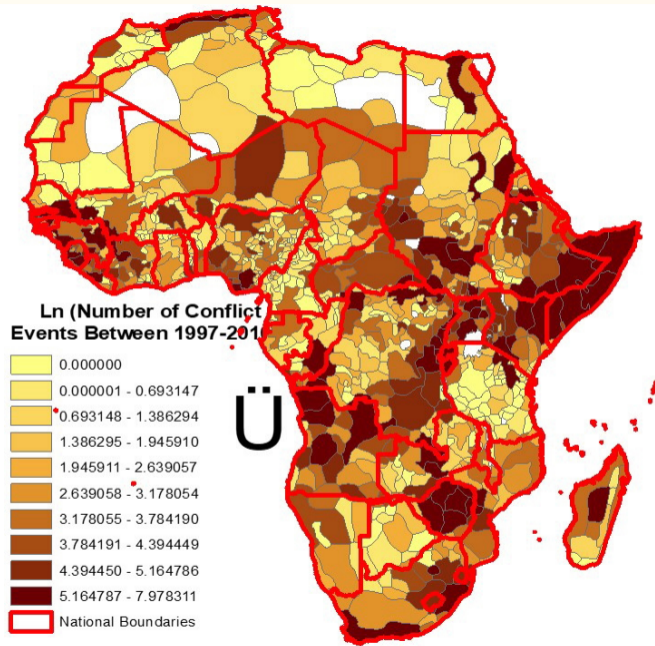


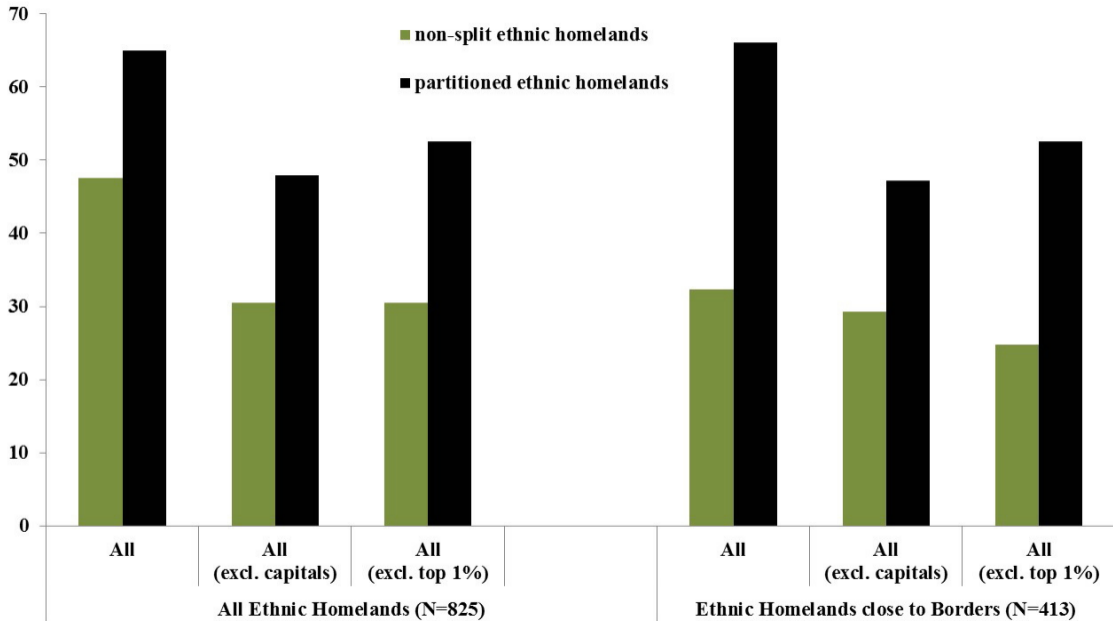
**Armed Conflict Locations
from 1997-2010**

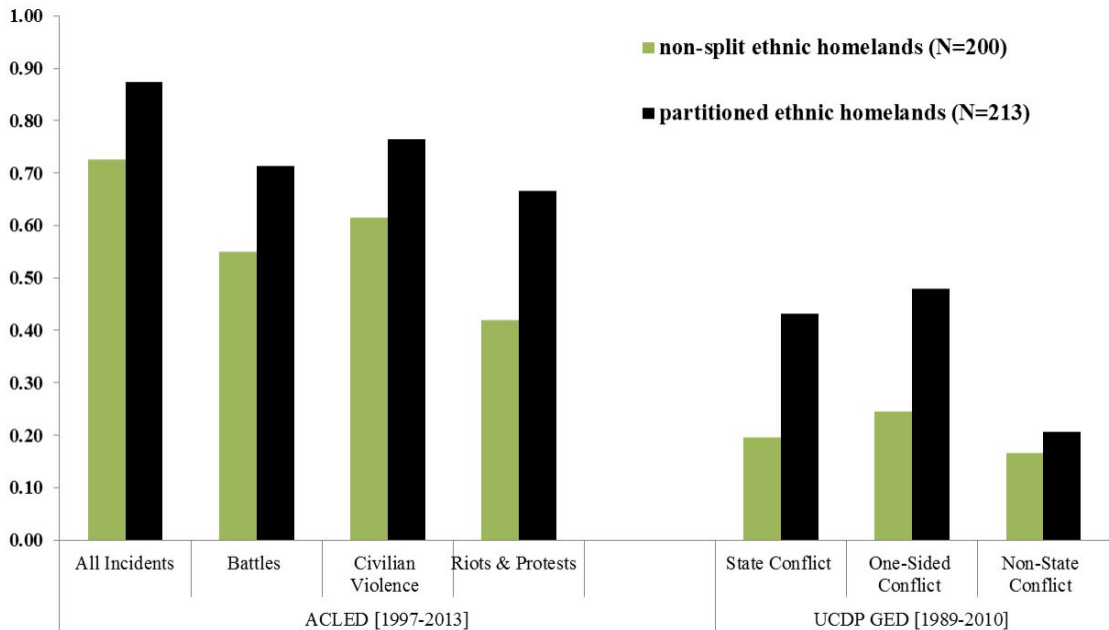
Type of Event

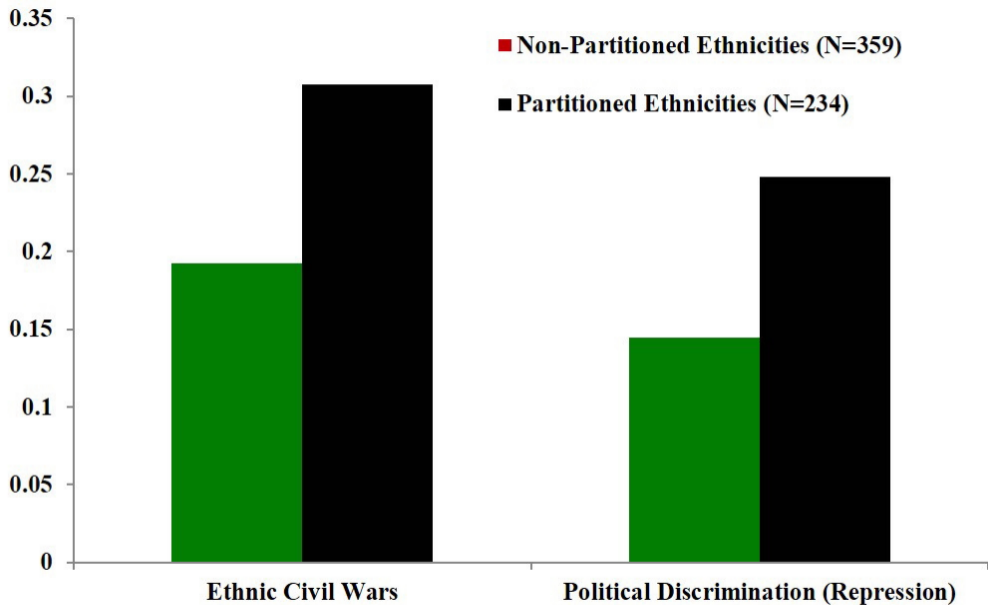
- Battle-Government regains territory
- Battle-No change of territory
- Battle-Rebels gain territory
- Battle-Rebels overtake territory
- Headquarters or base established
- Non-violent activity by a conflict actor
- Riots/Protests
- Violence against civilians

 National Boundaries









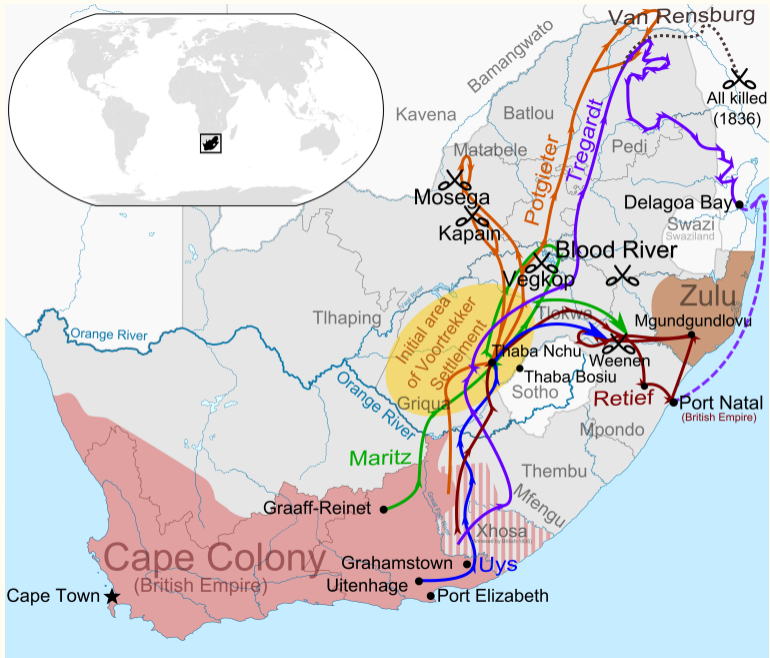
- Next-to-no investment in education.
- Little investment in infrastructures.
- Perverse political-economic incentives.

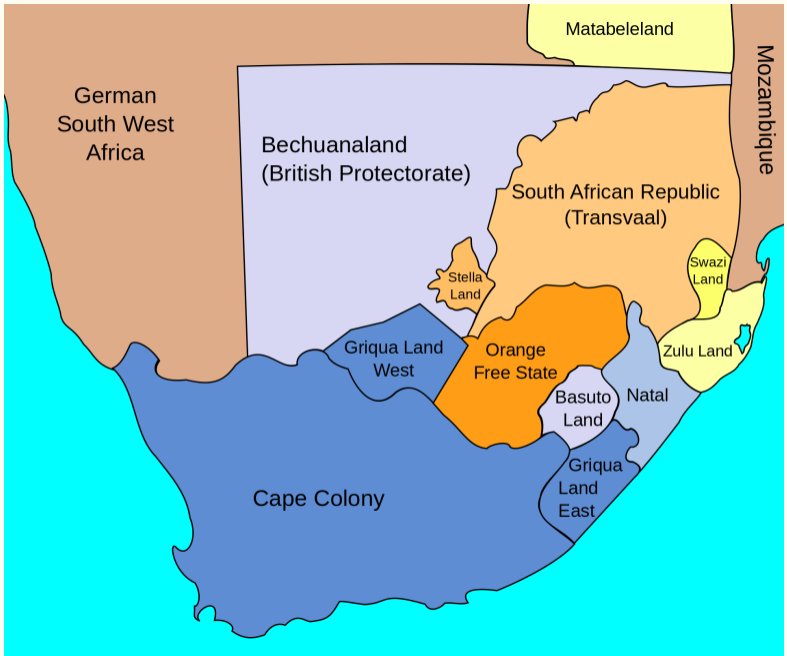
South Africa

The case of South Africa (and Rhodesia), I

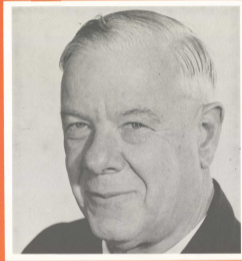
- Cape Colony.
- The Great Trek, the Boers Republics, and the (Second) Boer War 1899-1902.
- Union of South Africa in 1910.
- 1913 Natives' Land Act.
- Victory of National Party in 1948: Apartheid and re-distribution of power within English-speakers and Afrikaners.
- Republic of South Africa in 1960 and unilateral withdrawal from the British Commonwealth.
- Rhodesia: Unilateral Declaration of Independence (1965).







**STEM
NASIONALE
PARTY**



**VIR VOLK EN
VADERLAND**

The case of South Africa (and Rhodesia), II

- Largest economy in Africa.
- High level of income per capita goes back to the times of the Cape Colony: wine, services, trade.
- Mineral revolution:
 1. Diamonds at the town of Kimberley in 1867.
 2. Big gold discoveries: Witwatersrand Gold Rush in 1886 and foundation of Johannesburg.
- First: alliance of “Maize and gold.”
- Later, government-led industrialization in favor of Afrikaners.

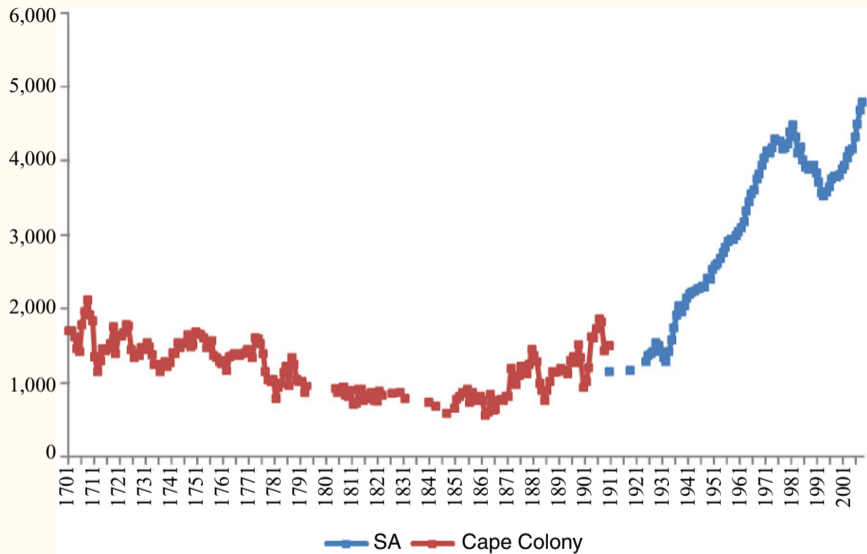


Figure 8. GDP per capita of Cape Colony (1701-1910) and SA (1910-2009), in 1990 dollars

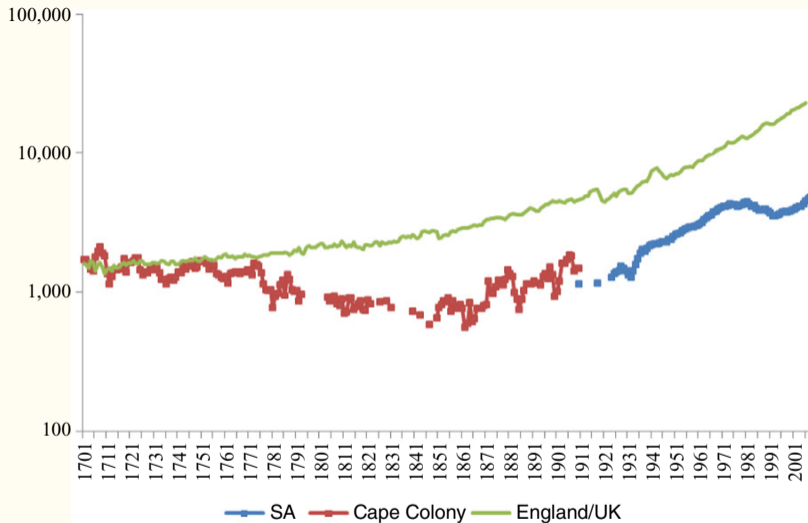


Figure 9. Comparing Cape Colony/South African GDP per capita with that of England/UK
 Sources: This study, and Maddison (2003) and his website at <http://www.ggd.c.net/MADDISON/oriindex.htm>.



1/4 carat (25 points) \$30 to \$200
 1/2 carat (50 points) \$225 to \$475
 3/4 carat (75 points) \$600 to \$1,125
 1 carat (100 points) \$1,200 to \$1,800



In October, 1934, jewelers throughout the country were asked for the price of their top-grade engagement diamonds (unmounted) in the weekly indicator. The result is a range of prices, varying according to the quality offered. Consequently, the diamonds are highly priced. Add a diamond tax. Exact weights shown are 100 percent.



Love's Dream—painted for the De Beers Collection by Pierre Ives of Paris

the mysteries of love Love has a language all its own, sweet and full of secret meanings for each lover's heart. It speaks in the mountains and the sun, in buds, and in the wondrous lights of an engagement diamond. And while its voice may some day fade from the mountains, sun and buds, it lingers clarion clear in the diamond's joyful flames, repeating the dreams of lovers down their married lifetime and beyond.

Your engagement diamond need not be costly or of many carats, but it should be chosen with care. Honesty, care, faith, and charity, as well as carat weight, contribute to its beauty and value. A trusted jeweler is your best adviser. Extended payments can usually be arranged.

De Beers Consolidated Mines, Ltd.

a diamond is forever

Mary Frances Gerety





African Studies Series 34

Dan O'Meara

Volkskapitalisme

Class, capital and ideology
in the development of
Afrikaner nationalism 1934-1948



Africa after independence

Africa after independence, I

- Ghana becomes independent in 1957 under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah. Most nations follow in 1960 (“Year of Africa”).
- Promising start in the 1960s.
- Economic experiments such as Ujamaa in Tanzania (Julius Nyerere):
 1. One-party system: Tanganyika African National Union (today, Chama Cha Mapinduzi).
 2. Creation of a national identity: use of Swahili (note: Tanzania at independence was the most linguistically diverse country in East Africa; only around 10% of population are native speakers of Swahili).
 3. The villagization of production.
 4. Large nationalization of foreign firms. Related: killings of Arabs and Indians in Zanzibar (1964).
- Soon, large conflicts: Biafra (1967-1970).









THERE WAS A COUNTRY

A Memoir

Chinua Achebe

author of *Things Fall Apart*

"A gorgeous, pitiless account of love, violence and betrayal." —*Time*

CHIMAMANDA
NGOZI ADICHIE

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *AMERICANAH*

HALF OF A
YELLOW SUN

A NOVEL

Africa after independence, II

- Big debt problems in the 1970s and 1980s.
- End of minority rule in South Africa (1990-1994) (and, before, Rhodesia, which becomes Zimbabwe).
- Reform and commodity boom (oil and minerals) in the 1990s and 2000s.
- Current role of China.
- Problems with numbers.

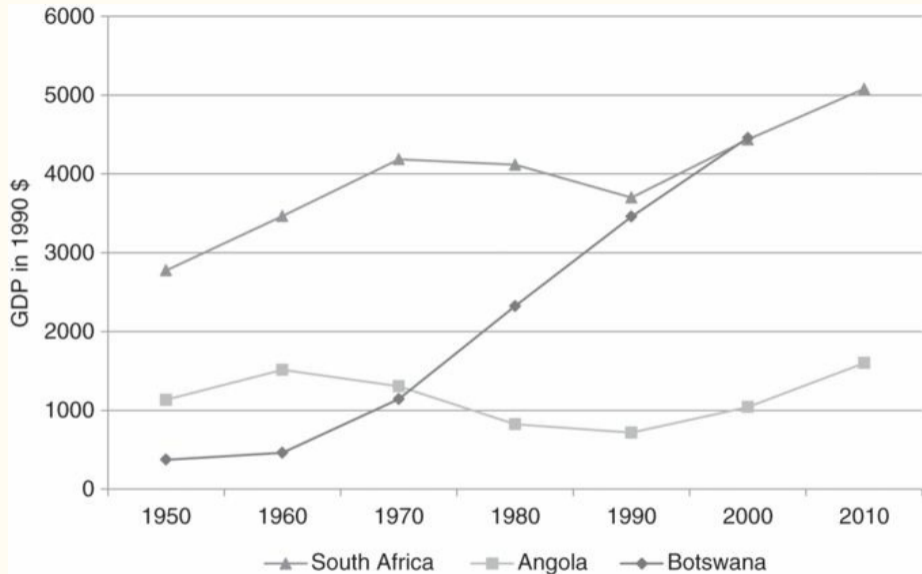


Figure 10.3 GDP per capita in Angola, Botswana and South Africa, 1950–2010s

Notes: Y-Axis in Geary-Khamis dollars (1990). The years refer to the beginning of each decade.

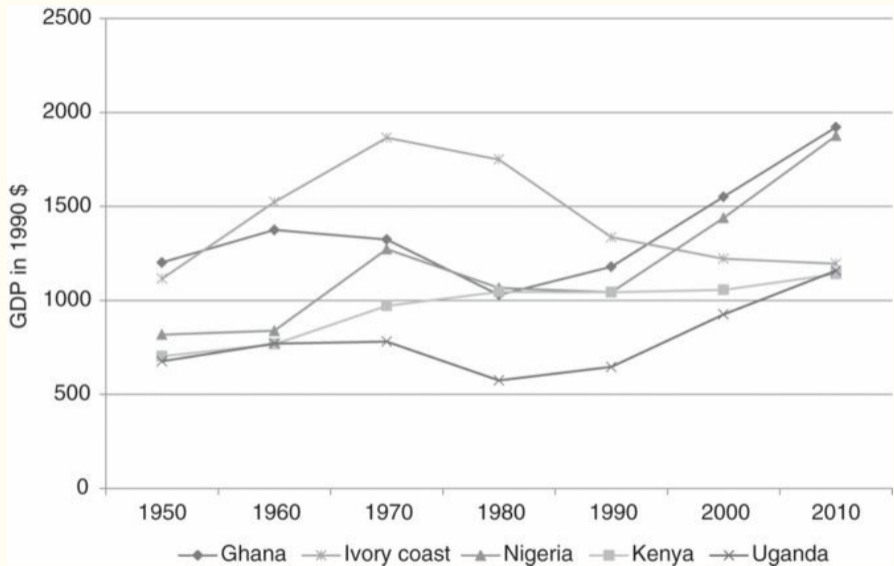


Figure 10.4 GDP per capita in Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda, 1950–2010s

Note: Y-Axis in Geary-Khamis dollars (1990).

MORTEN JERVEN

POOR NUMBERS

HOW WE ARE MISLED BY AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT
STATISTICS AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

