

READ ALL ABOUT IT!

Research unit launches newsletter

When the *Laboratory for the Economics of Africa's Past* was founded in May 2015, we could not have imagined that the scale and scope of research in social and economic history would expand this quickly. Three years later, LEAP has already produced three PhD students, hosted numerous visitors and has successfully applied for local and international research funds.

This newsletter, which we hope to be the first of many, will report back on our research and its impact, and the

achievements of our students, faculty and research partners.



2017 was an important year for LEAP as Stellenbosch hosted to the 7th African Economic History Network meeting in October. Read more about those successes below.

We also report on a new research project – the *Biography of an Uncharted People* – funded by the Mellon Foundation, that is pushing the research boundaries in social, demographic and economic history in South Africa.

As an inter-disciplinary research unit, LEAP depends mostly on external research funding. We thank everyone who supports our teaching and research, notably the Department of Economics which also provides administrative support.



At work: Visitors Michiel de Haas and David Bijsterbosch in the LEAP lab

LEAP gets a lab

In September 2017, LEAP got a lab. As Prof. Servaas van der Berg moved into a new office on the sixth floor of the Schumann building, his vacant fifth-floor office was transformed into a new home for LEAP visitors and postdocs.

Six workstations have been set up, and the LEAP lab has already received several short-term visitors, particu-

larly during the 2017 AEHN meetings. In April 2018, a data repository was installed, allowing students access to the entire catalogue of datasets produced by our researchers. The space will also provide access to software packages like Stata and ArcGIS.

LEAP welcomes visitors to our new lab. Send an email to leap@sun.ac.za for more information.

Fourie voted EHSSA president

At the Annual General Meeting of 2017, Johan Fourie was elected president of the Economic History Society of Southern Africa. Johan was the previous vice-president.

LEAP is well-represented on the board. Anton Ehlers, chair of the History Department and a LEAP member, is the new vice-president, LEAP PhD student Calumet Links is the new secretary, and Bokang Mpetla serves on the committee, together with LEAP alumni Jeanne Cilliers and Christie Swanepoel.

The chief purpose of EHSSA is to promote economic history research at universities in Southern Africa. It publishes the *Economic History of Developing Regions*, edited by Leigh Gardner (LSE) and Alfonso Heranz-Loncan (Barcelona).

The Society also hopes to attract more international members. More information about the society is available on the website: www.ehssa.org.za



Ramela and Fourie in Cambridge

Paper on occupational structure presented in UK

Omphile Ramela and Johan Fourie presented their paper – *A blessing and a curse: Occupational structure and South Africa's mineral revolution* – at the AFCHOS Conference at Cambridge in the UK during April. The paper is part of Omphile's Master's dissertation, which he successfully completed in March 2018.



Presenting: Igor Martins in Belfast

Lund PhD visits Stellenbosch

Igor Martins, a PhD student in Economic History at Lund University in Sweden, is a visiting student at LEAP from September 2017 to June 2018. Igor works on the Cape of Good Hope Panel project (capepanel.org) with his Stellenbosch supervisor, Johan Fourie.

Their research – *Expropriation with Compensation: The 1834 slave emancipation and intergenerational outcomes* – considers the consequences of the slave reparations paid to slave-owners in the aftermath of the emancipation.

Igor has presented a first draft of this research at the LEAP and ReSEP seminars at Stellenbosch. He also presented at the European Social Science History Conference in Belfast during early April.



A generation of legends: A younger Sampie Terreblanche, with students Reinhold Joubert, Philip Mohr and Estian Calitz

A giant falls

Legendary professor Sampie Terreblanche dies at 84

Stellenbosch Emeritus Professor Johannes "Sampie" Terreblanche, 84, passed away on Saturday, 17 February, following a brief battle with brain cancer.

To describe Sampie Terreblanche simply as a 'maverick' intellectual would perhaps be unfair. His progression from an Afrikaner nationalist to an advocate of its demise, and then an ANC supporter who later became a fierce critic of the ruling party was certainly spectacular and often dramatic. But each step in his fifty years as public intellectual and political economist was preceded by perceptive contemplation and intense discussions with his close friends and family about how to best serve the common good.

Like all his professorial predecessors

in Economics at Stellenbosch, Prof. Terreblanche also got involved with processes of policy formulation. Between 1973 and 1976 he was a member of the Erika Theron Commission that investigated issues related to the coloured population of South Africa. From 1979 until 1985 he was a member of the Prime Minister's Council for Economic Advice. Terreblanche's involvement in the Theron Commission triggered his interest in the nature and causes of poverty.

The collection of books that Prof Terreblanche published includes mainly textbooks for the History of Economics and History of Economic Thought. His productivity is also evident in his publication of about twenty articles in academic journals and several chap-

ters in books and his involvement in party politics is reflected in the hundreds of articles that he wrote for local and foreign newspapers on political and economic issues in South Africa. For such extensive political involvement he received a great deal of criticism.

After retiring at the end of 1995, he concentrated on studying the political and economic history of South Africa while still working as a part-time lecturer in the Department until 2011. He received honorary doctorates from the Universities of Free State, Pretoria and Stellenbosch.

A website has been created to preserve Prof. Terreblanche's legacy. Please visit www.ekon.sun.ac.za/sampieterreblanche.

AEHN meetings huge success

The 7th Annual African Economic History Network meeting was held from 25 to 27 October at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study (STIAS).

The proceedings started with the second annual LEAP Lecture, delivered by Prof. Emmanuel Akyeampong of Harvard University. He provided an overview of the ideologies adopted by the first African independence leaders, noting the boldness of their visions for the continent despite the limited success of their programmes. The Lecture was attended by more than 80 guests, and is available for free on the LEAP website.

Thursday and Friday were filled with parallel sessions, with 55 papers, three keynote speakers, and one discussion panel. It was one of the largest and most successful AEHN meetings yet. Participants noted, in particular, the high quality of the presentations, the diversity of themes and contributors, and the excellent keynote addresses.

A particular satisfying feature of the conference was the large number of South African students present. The hope is that the conference will inspire more South African students to engage with African economic history. The fact that 40% of all attendees were graduate students, and a further 19% were postdocs, shows that there is much interest amongst the next generation of scholars in African economic history.

One of the key reasons for hosting the conference on the African continent was to attract more African participants. For the first time, more than half of all attendees were based in Africa. This excludes the several African PhD students and postdocs that are currently based in Europe or the US. One concern, though, is the expensive nature of intra-African travel. As one participant remarked, it is cheaper (and easier) for him to fly to Europe (where the previous conferences were held), than to fly to South Africa.

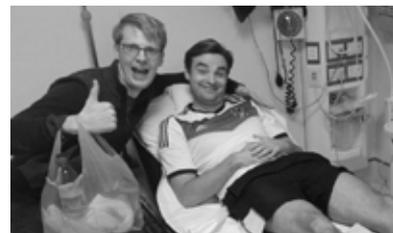
Lisa Cook (Michigan State University) and Trudi Makhaya (consultant) were the keynote speakers on the Thursday and Friday. Lisa presented her research on innovation in Africa – the theme of the conference – and Trudi concluded the event by asking whether South Africa is doomed to re-



Keynotes: Emmanuel Akyeampong and Trudi Makhaya

peat the mistakes of the past. On Friday morning, a panel of four – Leigh Gardner (LSE), Jutta Bolt (Lund), Belinda Archibong (Barnard College) and Ushehweu Kufakurinani (University of Zimbabwe) – discussed the different methodologies employed by African economic historians.

The contribution of several institutions made the event possible. Economic Research Southern Africa was the lead sponsor. The Hutchinson Center together with the Centre for African Studies of Harvard University co-sponsored the venue fee, and also sponsored five US academics to travel to South Africa to participate in the



The annual Jay-Jay Okocha Trophy match at the AEHN meetings ended in calamity as the captain of the visiting team, Felix Meier zu Selhausen, had to be taken to hospital with fractured ankle ligaments. It was a sad way to end the highly-anticipated match, one characterised by brutal rugby tackles and biased refereeing. Michiel de Haas scored the winning goal while Felix was carried off the field.

event. The presence of these academics certainly lifted the overall quality of the discussions. The Economic History Society of Southern Africa sponsored a very successful graduate dinner at Middelvlei farm. The Department of Economics and the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences all contributed funds too.

The quality of papers presented at the meeting will allow a special issue of the journal *Economic History of Developing Regions* dedicated to African economic history. The next African Economic History Network meeting will be held in Bologna, Italy from 13-14 October 2018.



Abel Gwaindepi graduates

Abel Gwaindepi is the third LEAP student to graduate with a PhD in Economics from Stellenbosch.

Abel's dissertation, supervised by Krige Siebrits and co-supervised by Johan Fourie and Leigh Gardner (LSE), investigated the public finances of the British Cape Colony between 1837 and 1910. Abel shows the immense impact the discovery of diamonds and the consequent construction of railways had on the Cape's public finances, and then argues that the interactions between political and

business networks were central to explain the revenue and expenditure patterns observed in the Colony.

Abel grew up in Zimbabwe, where his father worked in the sugarcane plantations of Anglo-American. Abel has 16 siblings, many of whom he had to support while completing an undergraduate degree at Fort Hare, a post-graduate degree at Rhodes and, ultimately, a PhD at Stellenbosch. LEAP is proud of Abel's achievements, and wish him well on the next chapter of his academic journey.

Mellon-funded project kicks off

In September 2017, the trustees of the Andrew W Mellon Foundation approved a grant of \$860 000 to Stellenbosch University for the Biography of an Uncharted People project, a five-year project that will construct large datasets and digital technologies for historical research. Johan Fourie will lead the project, and it will be hosted in the Department of History.

As black South Africans in particular were often excluded from qualitative archival sources in the past, we have a current lack of historical information concerning their lives. Now, individual-level records along with the methods of the 'digital humanities' offer an opportunity to reveal the untold histories of South Africans. The Biography of an Uncharted People project is a first attempt to bring to light histories of families that were overlooked in the past. This will be achieved by transcribing large sets of historical micro-data, and equipping students in

the humanities with the tools to analyse it. One postdoc, one PhD student, two Masters students, three Honours students and four research assistants are currently working on the project.

This initiative clearly addresses Stellenbosch University's institutional strategy with regard to interdisciplinary research in the social sciences and humanities, as well as the crucial element of capacity development among young researchers, including those from designated groups. The project will also support and contribute significantly to the establishment and development of the digital humanities, initiating and anchoring a new methodology in the Department of History. It will have an impact on teaching, learning and research, and open up opportunities for the motivation of future academic appointments in this field. Interested readers can visit www.unchartedpeople.org to follow the project's progress.

Tim off to Warwick

Tim Ngalande, one of LEAP's Masters students, was recently awarded a full PhD scholarship at Warwick University in the UK. We asked him to share his Stellenbosch story.

I came to Stellenbosch in 2015 with little knowledge of LEAP or Economic History. I knew, however, what I wanted to achieve with my time as a postgraduate student in Economics at Stellenbosch: I wanted to become a well-rounded economist. This involved entrenching myself deep in research methodology and acquainting myself with theory and literature and the contexts in which they have developed. So I knew I would need to take a course in Economic History. You can imagine that when Prof Fourie made an announcement about some funding available for students interested in an Economic History topic for research, the cards fell right in front of me. And so was how my journey with LEAP started.

I worked with Prof Fourie in my honours year on "The Great Depression in Africa". It was a road less travelled by researchers and that made it interesting and challenging. The long hours of digitising more than half a century old data paid its dividends though. It firstly helped me graduate cum laude for my honours and then earned me a spot to present at the African Economic History Network conference in September 2018 and a few weeks later at Utrecht University in the Netherlands.

Currently I am working on completing my Master's thesis with Dr Dieter von Fintel and an exchange programme at the University of Zurich. My next step is to do a PhD and I am fortunate to have been offered a scholarship for the MRes/PhD programme at Warwick University in the UK. I want to thank Prof Fourie, Dr Von Fintel and the rest of the Economics department for supporting me on my academic journey.

We are always in search of financial support for our students and research projects. If you want to contribute, please contact us: leap@sun.ac.za