

Economie del colonialismo: transizioni, conflitti, modernità / *Colonial economies: Transitions, conflicts, modernity*

Sabato 24 settembre / Saturday 24 September 09.15-11.00

PROPONENTI: Gian Luca PODESTÀ (Università di Parma-Università Bocconi, Milano); Karin PALLAVER (Università di Bologna)

DISCUSSANT: Stefano BELLUCCI (IISH + University of Leiden)

ABSTRACT: This panel explores the development of colonial economies in different historical periods and geographical areas. The focus is on the transitions determined both by the creation of new institutions and by the implementation of new economic or fiscal policies. For the colonial state, these changes were aimed at the modernization of African economies, but for local societies these were exogenous factors that were opposed or incorporated into existing economic practices and systems. The main themes of the panel are: the transition from chartered companies to the formal colonial states; the transformation of colonial cities in relation to economic policies; labour in the colonial context; currency and fiscal policies of the colonial state; new economic institutions.

PAPERS:

Marisa CANDOTTI, *Institutional innovation and conflicts between merchant parties and colonial government in the British Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, 1903-14*

ABSTRACT:

In 1903 Sir Frederick Lugard unified the territories of Borno and the Sokoto Caliphate in the British Protectorate of Northern Nigeria (1903-14), and his government took the form of the well-known 'indirect rule'. The period of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria was one of transition, during which the institutional basis of effective British rule was forged. The imposition of colonial over-rule was characterized by major shifts in the institutional settings of the Caliphate; the fundamental innovations were the gradual end of slavery and the introduction of 'modern' monies. The major problem for the local economy was that institutional innovation was not induced by changes in relative factor prices within the economy, but was imposed by British colonization. The main reason of this imposition was that export subsidies for agricultural commodities were already a feature of the Protectorate. Today government involvement in agriculture is taken for granted but, at the turn of the twentieth century, such intervention was much rarer. However, this paper argues that such intervention were done not only because were British economic practices different from the local ones, but also because colonial administration and private commercial interests had divergent commercial goals. Contrary to what has commonly been argued, archival evidences prove that the colonial government and interested merchant parties such as the BCGA and the Niger Company were not always collaborating with each other, and they had conflicting interests in cotton growing in Northern Nigeria. In short, this paper argues that during the period 1902-1914, there were more complicated and pluralistic patterns of official and expatriate business interests in cotton development than what is currently believed.

PROPOSER'S ACADEMIC PROFILE:

Marisa Candotti obtained her PhD in African History at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. She is currently conducting research at SOAS as Research Associate of the

Department of History. Her main research interests concern the colonial and pre-colonial West African economic history in a global perspective.

Karin PALLAVER, *The Circulation of Money and the East African Rupee Crises in Kenya and Uganda (1912-1923)*

ABSTRACT:

From 1919 to 1923, Kenya and Uganda witnessed three different currency changes: from the Indian Rupee to the East African Rupee, to the East African Florin and, finally, to the East African Shilling. The starting point for these rapid currency changes was the so-called East African Rupee crisis. The analysis of the events connected to the rupee crisis provides a unique insight into the connections between the various components of the colonial society and different forms of currency. The paper explores the circulation and use of different currencies as a way to analyse the development of the colonial economy and the expansion of waged labour in the early colonial period.

PROPOSER'S ACADEMIC PROFILE:

Karin Pallaver is Associate Professor of African History at the Department of History and Cultures, University of Bologna.

Gian Luca PODESTÀ, *Economic change and urbanization in Libya*

ABSTRACT:

In 1936 the proclamation of the Italian Empire set in motion a radical transformation of economic structures in Libya. The most remarkable innovations were a huge increase in public expenditure, destined to build the towns and all the infrastructures necessary to promote economic development, and the start of regular immigration from Italy. Both factors contributed to widen the scope of capitalist economy, whilst involving tens of thousands of African natives too.

The natives often abandoned their subsistence agriculture to enroll in the armed forces, while a considerable mass of people found employment in Italian enterprises. This caused their salaries to increment the monetary economy and also stimulated the diversification of consumption in a European sense. The Arab population resident in the towns had also increased notably. This started the multiplication of small commercial and craft enterprises looking to satisfy the demand for consumer goods. This research also presents some estimates of the income distribution for the different ethnic groups making up the population of Tripoli. The data attest the formation of a new Arab urban middle class.

PROPOSER'S ACADEMIC PROFILE:

Gian Luca Podestà is Professor of Economic History at the University of Parma and at Bocconi University.

Donatella STRANGIO, *The Somali and Eritrean economy between the '40s and '70s of the '900*

ABSTRACT:

Aim of the work are the institutional changes (defined as rules of the game, according to the definition of Douglass North) Somali economy and the Eritrean between the 40s and the 70s of the '900. Will address

the ideological nature of the Somali ethnic nationalism; it was the binding force of the Somali clans and its impact on the construction of a unitary state. Second, addressing the role of the British colonial policies and the role of the administration in the Italian subsidiary decolonization will face the failure to achieve a pan-Somali nation-state and as a result, the failure of the state in the Republic of Somalia. It will seek to highlight the differences with the case of Eritrea in search of sovereignty and independence.

PROPOSER'S ACADEMIC PROFILE:

Donatella Strangio is an associate professor of Economic History at the Department of Method and Models of the Territory Economics and Finance (Memotef) Sapienza-University of Rome. Her research interests, among others, relate to the Italian colonization and the relation between decolonization and economic development.