

# Call For Papers: Special Session on African Entrepreneurship at World Economic History Conference, Stellenbosch, South Africa 9 – 13 July 2012



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## **Does the History of Entrepreneurship in Africa Matter? Call for Papers for a Special Session of the XVIth World Economic History Congress**

Despite a long and rich history of entrepreneurial activity on the African continent – a history that has significantly shaped developed patterns in the rest of the world – the history of entrepreneurship on the continent is still very much neglected. For instance, the recent path-breaking ‘The Invention of Enterprise’ by David Landes, Joel Mokyr and William Baumol covers in 18th chapters the historical richness of human entrepreneurial activity, from the Roman Empire, ancient Babylon to the early emergence of entrepreneurship in India and China. But not a single chapter is devoted to Africa. And with the continued marginalization of Africa in the world economy, its struggle to industrialize, and the growing Diaspora of its best and brightest, the current analytical debate is often devoid of consideration of how entrepreneurship, both foreign and indigenous, has played in role in creating or mitigating, the conditions for Africa’s current challenges.

Connections between foreign and indigenous entrepreneurs had developed since the fifteenth century and by the nineteenth century had facilitated the formation of lucrative and growing markets of exchange for imports and exports. These markets were developed by large state-led entities, small entrepreneurs, family businesses and foreign companies, both large and small. A dynamic relationship emerged in markets where domination was determined by access to resources, power and internal and external links – with important implications for understanding the business environment in modern Africa.

Hence it is our contention in proposing this session, that the history of entrepreneurship in Africa remains highly relevant to economists, policy makers and academics. In this light, this session is proposed to put the importance of the history of entrepreneurship in Africa firmly on

the agenda. As such the session aims to explore the rich development of entrepreneurship, markets and business activity in and with Africa - particular since the nineteenth century.

Papers dealing with the relationships between indigenous and foreign entrepreneurs, between states, elites and entrepreneurs, with the relationship between historic patterns of entrepreneurship and modern day development outcomes, and with the patterns of migration and sector specialization in Africa, are particularly welcome. The session promoters will endeavor to find a special outlet, such as a special journal issue or book, for the publication of the papers selected for this session.

The session organizers welcome paper proposals for participation in this panel and these should be sent to Suzanne McCoskey, in either .doc or .pdf format to the e-mail address: [skmccoskey@frostburg.edu](mailto:skmccoskey@frostburg.edu).

All proposals should include a title, abstract of approximately 500 words and contact information for the author(s). Paper proposals should be received by January 30, 2012.

#### **Session Organizers:**

**Suzanne McCoskey**, *Assistant Professor Department of Economics, Frostburg State University, USA*

**Wim Naudé**, *Professorial Fellow, MGSOG and UNU-MERIT, University of Maastricht, The Netherlands and Maastricht School of Management and*

**Grietjie Verhoef**, *Professor, Departement Rekeningkunde, University of Johannesburg, South Africa*



Event location:

Stellenbosch, South Africa 9 -13 July 2012

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