



AFRICA IN MOVIMENTO / AFRICA ON THE MOVE

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TITLE: Labour Dynamics in Africa: Past and Present

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ABSTRACT: In the light of Africa's booming economies, it has become increasingly urgent to consider such growth from a labour perspective. Although the Decent Work agenda is gaining importance, questions about the extent to which labour can benefit from the current economic boom in Africa remain largely unanswered. This panel aims at attracting research papers on the African labour research agenda, and more specifically on the following issues:

- The remarkable continuity in many African labour markets (large informal sector, dependency on primary resources, the precarity of workers as well as the limited engagement of governments) despite the current economic growth;
- The struggles (and in some cases reluctance) of trade unions in organizing precarious and informal workers, especially the self-employed;
- The questionable relevance of the Decent Work Agenda for Africa: a good objective but not that effective as a means?
- The impact of new global powers, such as China and India, on African labour markets and labour conditions;
- The changing roles of trade unions on the continent and the challenges they face 'post structural adjustment' of finding a well-defined ideology and identity;
- The articulation of social dialogue and collective bargaining processes in Africa and the influence of (colonial) history on these processes;
- The dynamics in international solidarity mechanisms, and the nature of the relationship between trade unions and civil society organisations that may strongly differ across countries.

The panel organizers aim at attracting students on subjects that are part of their research collaborative projects: the 'Labour Issues and Trade Unions in Africa Today' at the African Studies Centre of Leiden and the 'Global Labour History' project at the International Institute of Social History of Amsterdam.

CONVENOR'S ACADEMIC PROFILE:

Stefano Bellucci is Senior Researcher and the Head of the Africa Desk at the International Institute of Social History of Amsterdam. He also teaches African Labour History at the University of Leiden in the Faculty of Humanities. His current research includes the history of labour and capitalism in Africa and in particular the analysis of the impact of Italian colonialism in Africa. He's also the coordinator of the programme for the creation of an historical repository of strikes and social unrests in Africa.

Zjos Vlamincx holds a master's degree in Political Science from the University of Ghent, Belgium and Stellenbosch University in South Africa, with a major in African Studies. She obtained a second master in Development Evaluation and Management from the Institute for Development Policy and Management in Antwerp, where she narrowed her focus on Western Africa through her fieldwork and research in Ghana. After graduating she worked as a junior researcher at the Institute for Work and Society (HIVA), KU Leuven, Belgium and as a project manager, research assistant and junior researcher at the African Studies Centre in Leiden. The common thread throughout her research has been unequal power relations and how local agents deal with adverse incorporation. More recently she has worked around these issues in relation to labour- and workers' organisations- dynamics in West Africa.