

## Labor, Coercion, and Rights in Africa and the Indian Ocean World in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries

A Series of Workshops Sponsored by the France-Stanford Center, EHESS, Stanford Global Studies, and History Department, Stanford University

Labor coercion was a central feature of social and economic life in Africa and the IOW in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It persists to this day. Such coercion took many forms in different parts of these regions and changed over time. The core question we want to address in these workshops is why did people in so many different economic, political, social, and cultural settings turn to coercion to organize labor? Why did coercion persist so long in so many different contexts? How has coercion changed over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries?

An even more complex story emerges when we consider that this same period also witnessed unprecedented changes in rights –the abolition of slavery, workers’ rights, human rights, children’s rights etc. We are particularly interested in examining the intersection of the growing international regimes of rights with articulations of various “civilizing missions” as justifications for colonialism and increased efforts at social engineering together with the persistence if not growth in coerced labor. How did these patterns overlap? What roles did market forces and humanitarian ideas play in these various intersections? How did they influence each other? What were the limits on the growing regimes of workers’ rights to effect changes on local contexts? Can we identify a periodicity to the relationships between regimes of workers’ rights and regimes of coerced labor? How can historical perspectives on these problems inform current debates about coerced labor, trafficking, and human rights?

To begin the process of engaging with these issues, we will hold a preliminary workshop in Paris, EHESS, 12-13 October 2015. Participants will pre-circulate drafts of their projects/papers. We expect that these papers will be 10-15 pages and that we will circulate them by 5 October to all workshop members.

Based on the discussions and feedback, we will hold a somewhat larger workshop at Stanford, during the second half of April, 2016. We expect to have revised papers to pre-circulate and we expect to involve a larger number of faculty and students in this next phase of discussions on these topics.

If you have any questions, please contact Alessandro Stanziani ([alessandro.stanziani@ehess.fr](mailto:alessandro.stanziani@ehess.fr)) or Richard Roberts ([rroberts@stanford.edu](mailto:rroberts@stanford.edu))