

PH.D. THESIS

ECONOMIC HISTORY SERIES NO. 22

A Black Utopia?

**SOCIAL STRATIFICATION IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY
COLONIAL SIERRA LEONE**

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**DEPARTMENT OF
ECONOMY AND SOCIETY**



**UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG
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Social stratification in Nineteenth-century Colonial
Sierra Leone

Stefania Galli

GOTHENBURG STUDIES IN ECONOMIC HISTORY replaces the former series under the title
Meddelanden från Ekonomisk-historiska institutionen, Handelshögskolan vid Göteborgs universitet.

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Graphic production: BrandFactory AB

ISBN 978-91-86217-22-8

<http://hdl.handle.net/2077/58172>

Published by the Unit for Economic History, Department of Economy and Society,
School of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg

Printed by BrandFactory AB, Kålleröd 2019

Cover Artwork Credit line:

Title: A View of the New Settlement in the River at Sierra Leone, c.1790

Artist: Cornelis Apostool. Date: c.1790

Public domain, British Library, London

Distribution: Unit for Economic History, Department of Economy and Society,
School of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg

P.O. Box 625, SE 405 30 Gothenburg, Sweden

www.econhist.gu.se

*The imperative to discover order may stem
from man's instinct to survive:
to know is to have power,
to have power enhances chances of surviving.*

Ronald J. Horvat

ABSTRACT

Stefania Galli, 2019. *A Black Utopia? Social stratification in Nineteenth-century Colonial Sierra Leone.*

Gothenburg Studies in Economic History 22, Department of Economy and Society, University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg. ISBN 978-91-86217-22-8

In the present dissertation, social stratification in colonial Sierra Leone is discussed, with the aim of providing novel evidence on the association between ideals, institutions and inequality. The case study of Sierra Leone is valuable for it allows examining social stratification in an alleged egalitarian context.

The dissertation consists of an introductory chapter and four research essays. The essays examine four aspects that contribute to social stratification. The former two essays delve into the social aspects of social stratification, namely socio-economic status and marriage patterns, whereas the latter two examine social stratification from an economic perspective. The intention is to employ the case study of Sierra Leone to portray a picture of European colonialism in Africa that differs from that often portrayed in the literature.

The first essay studies the association between ethnic belonging and socio-economic status in early days colonial Sierra Leone. The findings suggest that, in spite of the egalitarian ideals on which it had been allegedly founded, a certain degree of ethnic discrimination characterized the socio-economic structure of the colony. Ethnic discrimination did not, however, translate into a strict occupational segregation for individuals from most ethnic groups could be found across the whole socio-economic spectrum.

The second essay delves into the association between ethnic belonging and marriage patterns. The study shows that, irrespective of egalitarian ideals and ethnic heterogeneity, endogamy was the most prevalent marriage arrangement in colonial Sierra Leone. This finding implies the existence of an association between ethnic belonging and marriage patterns, while providing circumstantial evidence on the presence of an ethnic social divide in the colony. Furthermore, the essay shows that exogamy occurred within ethnic groups' clusters, a finding that corroborates the hypothesis of the existence of a vertical ethnic hierarchy in colonial Sierra Leone.

The third essay examines quantitatively the claim that egalitarian ideals impacted on inequality levels by studying wealth inequality in rural colonial Sierra Leone. The results show that between households' distribution of resources was fairly egalitarian in global comparison. Wealth inequality estimates for Sierra Leone are on par with those estimated for other rural settler colonies in North America in their early days of existence. The results provide supportive evidence to the hypothesis that ideals can impact on the institutions driving inequality, by shaping the rules of allocation of resources towards egalitarianism.

The fourth essay examines the evolution of land distribution in colonial Sierra Leone over the course of the first forty years of the colony's existence. The results show that although egalitarian principles regulated land distribution, land inequality increased over the period studied. The essay argues that the shift in the type of egalitarianism underlying land distribution was the major responsible for increasing inequality as recorded for colonial Sierra Leone.

Overall, the results of this dissertation suggest that Sierra Leone was a fairly equal colony under most perspectives, and that institutions were influenced by egalitarian ideals, although not all to the same extent. The present dissertation ultimately provides evidence supporting the existence of an association between ideals, institutions and social stratification in a colonial context.

Keywords: Social stratification, institutions, colonialism, Africa, inequality, marriage, wealth, settler colony, slave trade, egalitarianism

Acknowledgements

Although academia is often said to be a lonely place, this dissertation would not have been carried out hadn't it been for the support, friendship, and help of a number of great people. First of all, I wish to thank my supervisors, Klas Rönnbäck and Stefan Öberg, for their invaluable help and support. Thank you Klas for your critical eye, quiet but supportive presence, constant availability, and continuous trust in my abilities. Thank you for having seen something in me that I had not seen myself, I would not be where I am without you. Thank you, Stefan, for your systematic and thorough approach to research, for your help with the most annoying methodological issues, and for convincing me that in research less is definitely more. Although the path may not have been smooth at times, I am thankful I had the chance to work alongside you.

A great thank you to all the colleagues at the unit in Gothenburg for making it a stimulating working place. Special thanks go to my teaching comrades, and especially to Per, who provided me with the best guidance in the difficult task of teaching when I, all of a sudden, found myself on the other side of the barricade. Thank you for trusting me with ever-increasing responsibilities and for listening patiently to my suggestions.

A further immense thank you goes to my fellow PhD students at the unit, past and present. You all contributed to make the process far more pleasant. Thank you to Knut Ola and Dimitris, with whom I shared the largest part of this journey. For all the dinners, beer tastings, gifts of delicacies from every part of the world, deep and small talks, thank you. To Debora Pricila, my academic partner in crime, thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything you have done for me. Thank for being the best office mate and the friend I could ever have asked for. Thank you for being my trustworthy confidant in the darkest days, thank you for feeding me empanadas, thank you for helping me out with all the coding issues I have had through the years, thank you for the never-ending debate over the primacy of societal pressure on individual choices (I still haven't bought your point, btw).

Thank you to Erik Green, who acted as a commentator to a previous draft of this dissertation during my final seminar and who provided some *eureka*-comments that have improved the quality of this work dramatically. Thank you also to Christer Lundh, Staffan Graner, Oskar Broberg, and Svante Prado who provided me with comments on that same draft or earlier ones. Thank you to Martin Shanahan for the suggestions on how to include the theory of ideas into my framework. Thank you to the Johan Fourie and the whole LEAP team at the Faculty of Economics, Stellenbosch University, who welcomed me to South Africa. The time I spent in Stellenbosch have opened my eyes academically, personally, and culturally. Thank you for an enriching life experience. A thank you is in order also to all those who have commented on drafts of this dissertations at various conferences and workshops. A non-exhaustive list includes the African Economic History Network meetings, the European Economic History Society conference, the African Studies Association of the UK conference. Mixing with the scholarly crowd at these events have felt like dreams come true. Thank you to all those who allowed me to travel with generous funding contributions, being that to collect data or to participate to conference: the Knut and Alice Walleberg Foundation,

the Helge Axelsson Johnson Foundation, the Jan Wallanders and Tom Hedelius Foundation, the Adlerbertska Stipendiestiftelsen.

Family and friends have never ceased being an invaluable source of support and comfort throughout this process. Thank you to Sebastian, who always readily agreed to discuss the most boring econometric issues and to share a great number of sour beers with me. Thank you to Lisa, Yvonne, Mihail, and many more, who have brightened my days in Gothenburg since I decided to call this city home. Thank you to Tanja, since the days in Australia. Thank you to my Italian squad, who never stopped being there for me regardless of distance. I am indebted to Federica, Valentina, Jlenia, Arianna, Alessandra for their constant friendship, for sharing travel experiences, memes, reunions, gourmet dinners and much more with me. A special thank you to Michela, who has been there since day one, and who knows me in ways that I cannot describe, I owe you a lot of my mental sanity. Thank you to my whole family that never stopped supporting me even when no one really knew what I was up to. Thank you Rossella, Andrea, Filippo, Aurelio, Bruna, Luisa (and Tonino), for being the family I was gifted with. Although I know you may not always agreed with my choices, I appreciate the freedom you gave me to achieve what I really wanted for myself.

Finally, to Andreas, who is the most wonderful companion with whom to face the challenges that life brings about: You are my rock in the middle of a storm. Thank you for all you have done for me, for listening to me mumbling about things you had no clue about without complaining, for cooking for me when I arrived home way too late from work, for sharing with me the outlook on life, for having gifted me of a sense of constant happiness and satisfaction that I never thought would be available to a nomadic soul like mine. Last but not list, thank you to Frasse, who brought me back to reality every single day by reminding me that what matters most in life is food, cuddles and sleep, after all.

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Introduction

Social stratification has occupied social scientists from multiple disciplines for over a century. Sociologists, economists, anthropologists and historians have all attempted to understand the nature and underlying determinants of inequality (Grusky 1994; Osberg 2001). Inequality, economic as well as social, has vast implications at all levels, from individual to global ones. Numerous authors have discussed the far-reaching effects of inequality, said to negatively affect growth and development, generate political stability and undermine social cohesion (Deiningner and Squire 1998; Easterly 2007; Deiningner and Olinto 1999; Thorbecke and Charumilind 2002). It is, thus, not surprising that the discussion on inequality has grown into much more than a marginal scholarly debate, attracting the interests of politicians and common people alike fuelled by a new wave of widely cited studies as Thomas Piketty's *Capital* (2014) and Branko Milanovic's *Global Inequality* (2016), to name only a few.

Rising concerns over the effects of inequality and its motives have led to a broadening of the scope of the debate in multiple directions: thematically (from income, to resources distribution, to social rights and education), temporally and geographically. An unprecedented number of studies have been concerned with the past of vast areas of the world, including places previously neglected, driven by the belief that history can provide valuable insights for the understanding of the present (Milanovic, Lindert, and Williamson 2011; van Zanden et al. 2014; Alfani 2015; Frankema 2009; Berrocal, Sanjuán, and Gilman 2013). Thanks to this literature, it is becoming increasingly clear that today's phenomena are rooted in long-term processes that cannot be understood without the aid of history (Prados de la Escosura 2007; Lindert and Williamson 1995; Nunn 2009).

The resurgence of historical studies of social stratification has had the effect of bringing into the spotlight phenomena that have undoubtedly had a long-term impact on the world as we know it; among them are colonialism and the slave trade. Both phenomena, not unfrequently discussed in combination, have had the effect of reshaping the societies they came in contact with from a wide-array of perspectives: political, demographic, economic, social and cultural. The drastic nature of the changes and their depth has fascinated many, becoming a lively area of debate (Heldring and Robinson 2012a; Williamson 2010; Seed 1982; Tjarks 1978).

However, colonialism has varied in its characteristics across space and time (Veracini 2014; Denoon 1979). Although differences may have involved multiple aspects, among which include settlement patterns, economic systems, and institutions, it is the latter aspect that has attracted the most scholarly attention (Lloyd, Metzger, and Sutch 2013, Introduction).

Numerous theories have been formulated to explain the development of institutions. Some scholars have argued that the type of institution is determined by the specific factor endowment of a place at the time of colonization (Sokoloff and Engerman 2000; Engerman and Sokoloff 1997; Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson 2001a, 2002). Others have argued that institutions are the result of a particular process, that of frontier expansion (Turner 1920; Ford 1993), or that it is ideas that have driven and shaped institutions throughout history (McCloskey 2015; Mokyr 2012; Atack and Bateman 1981; Wright 1970). Because institutions are responsible for inequality by setting the rules of allocations that regulate resource

distribution, it is important to understand what factors may determine institutional set up and, ultimately, inequality.

Aims and research questions

The focus in the present dissertation is on providing new evidence on social stratification, ideals and institutions. The intention is to portray, through the examination of social stratification, a picture of colonialism in Africa that differs from that often discussed in the literature. In this dissertation, I examine the claim that ideals are important in shaping institutions and ultimately for social stratification, by studying the case of early nineteenth century colonial Sierra Leone

The colony makes for a critical case for the test of social stratification theories thanks to a combination of idealistic, institutional, demographic and economic aspects into one single case (Yin 2013, 51–52). The country had allegedly been founded on egalitarian ideals and settled by former slaves from the whole of Africa, the United States and Jamaica. Heterogeneity of ethnicities, cultures, languages and customs came to characterize the colony, along with a focus on free-labour agricultural production. In light of these characteristics, previous literature has argued that the colony had more in common with white settler colonies than other African societies, although this hypothesis has never been empirically tested.

On the one hand, this dissertation intends to contribute to the debate on social stratification, by providing evidence from a geographical area often neglected due to data limitations and political marginality. On the other hand, the aim is also to discuss the association between colonial institutions and inequality, by adding the allegedly egalitarian experience of Sierra Leone to the picture. Ultimately, this dissertation intends to modestly contribute to the ‘renaissance of African economic history’ (Austin and Broadberry 2014) by examining an area that has received only limited empirical attention.

The overarching research question for the present dissertation is the following: *What does Sierra Leone tell us about the association between ideals, institutions and colonialism?* This main research question builds on four separate essays. The essays study a broad range of indicators of social stratification in order to understand the socio-economic dynamics underlying the colony’s social order. The aspects that are discussed are socio-economic status, marriage patterns, and inequality. Each essay in this dissertation examines a particular aspect of social stratification, discussed below, and can be read as a small step forward in our understanding of social stratification and colonialism.

(1) *Did ethnic belonging affect socio-economic status in the early colonial context of Sierra Leone?*

Colonial societies have been found to be often discriminatory and segregated in terms of opportunities for socio-economic advancements for the ethnic groups at the bottom of the social hierarchy. The first essay examines whether an association between ethnicity and socio-economic status can be identified in the allegedly egalitarian colony of Sierra Leone.

(2) *Did ethnic belonging impact on marriage patterns in colonial Sierra Leone?*

Marriage choices can create social barriers that influence resource distribution and inequality. Scholars have argued that marriage choices stem from a combination of opportunity and preference, although in rigidly stratified societies intermarriage has been considered with

scepticism due to concerns of subverting social order. This essay examines marital choices in the allegedly egalitarian context of Sierra Leone, with the aim of studying the association between ethnic belonging and marriage patterns in this ‘demographic experiment’.

(3) *How unequal was the early nineteenth century colony of Sierra Leone in a comparative perspective? Did ideals affect inequality levels?*

Settler colonies have often been portrayed as being characterized by a more egalitarian distribution of resources than extractive colonies. The unique case of a black settler colony in Africa provides a critical case for testing this hypothesis. The essay will examine whether the levels of inequality were on par with those found in other settler societies (e.g. in North America), or if they were comparable with those found in tropical extractive colonies.

(4) *Did land inequality change over time in the colony of Sierra Leone? If so, what was the driver of change?*

Land distribution has been found to be a major factor contributing to inequality in pre-industrial rural societies. Land distribution in Sierra Leone followed the principle of egalitarianism, although the meaning of egalitarianism shifted over time. This essay quantifies and examines land inequality over time, in an attempt to understand how egalitarian ideals impacted on land inequality.

Theoretical framework

Social stratification

Social stratification is a broad concept. In the homonym book, David Grusky defines it as the ‘complex of social institutions that generates inequality’ (Grusky 1994, 3), thereby affirming that social stratification is the process of distributing people into a rank, thus the association with inequality. This definition does also provide that inequality is an outcome of social institutions. Taking a somewhat different approach, Gerhard Lenski, in his *Power and Privilege*, argued that social stratification is ‘the study of the distributive process’, stressing the importance of understanding the process, as well as the outcomes (Lenski 2013, chap. 1).

The aim of social stratification theories is to identify, describe and explain inequality from a broad range of perspectives (Grusky 1994, 3). It is generally well known that inequality can assume different forms, such as economic and social ones. Thus, inequality is expected to have a wide array of effects that involve every aspect of life (Antonelli and Rehbein 2017; Osberg 2001, 7372–73). At the micro level, inequality is associated with occupational opportunities and social mobility, residential and marital choices, while at the macro level, inequality affects growth and development, political stability and social cohesion (Haller 1981; Rytina et al. 1988; Kreckel 1980; Massey and Denton 1988; Deininger and Squire 1998; Easterly 2007; Deininger and Olinto 1999; Thorbecke and Charumilind 2002). Hence, it is no surprise that inequality is highly debated within a multitude of disciplines, from political science to economics, to sociology and beyond.

By default, every society is to some extent unequal because the distribution of any kind of resource follows rules of allocation that give rise to intrinsically unequal outcomes (Grusky 1994, 3). Rules of allocation do not appear in a vacuum but are determined by the institutions put in place in a society. Institutions are the ultimate determinants of inequality

because they regulate the access to resources and to reward systems, making social systems more or less unequal not solely in terms of outcomes but, more importantly, in opportunity terms (Albiston 2009; Osberg 2001). Noteworthy, institutions are also a result of social stratification themselves, thus providing a high level of endogeneity (Krechel 1976, 355). Nevertheless, institutions are also affected by ideology and ideals. Ideals have the ability to bring about changes in institutions, as well as to modify the reward system (McCloskey 2015, 58–65).

Social stratification involves numerous dimensions because individuals are by definition multidimensional (Grusky 1994, 21). Thus, the dimensions of inequality are found to relate to gender, migration, ethnicity, caste, race, geography, education, profession and other aspects all at the same time (Antonelli and Rehbein 2017). As a complex multidimensional phenomenon, social stratification requires different parameters to be examined. The analysis of inequality involving different resources, the examination of social and group relations, the estimation of the degree of rigidity of social structures, all these elements contribute to shape social structures. Due to its inherent multidimensionality, research has often been concerned with only a few, or even just one, of these dimensions (Krechel 1976). Nevertheless, a number of authors have called for a more comprehensive and organic approach towards social stratification (for instance see Grusky 1994, 3); such an approach is attempted in this study.

Colonialism and Inequality

Beside the magnitude and the dimensions of inequality, another vital element in the analysis of social stratification is its level of rigidity. Rigidity determines the ability of a system to replicate a social structure over time (Grusky 1994, 6). Caste societies as well as racial colonial societies are examples of highly rigid systems (Davis 1941; Lachance 1994; Schwartz 1995).

Colonialism, particularly in its more extractive form, had its theoretical underpinning in a rigid and discriminatory organization of the society: colonized versus colonizers. Discrimination was as much economic as social, involving all aspects of society. The resuscitation of the roman motto of *divide et impera* in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries devised the division and segregation of groups as a way to facilitate ruling the colonies and increase the returns to the empire (Ekeh 1975). This dynamic often modified social group dynamics and identities in the long term, even after independence. Individuals and groups would be hierarchically distributed on the basis of ascriptive elements, such as ethnicity or race, more often assumed rather than actual, which in turn would determine one's place in society by affecting individual opportunity more than human capital or achievements (Njoh 2008; Grusky 2001).

This strand of literature emerged in Central America, where colonialism had been associated with unequal opportunities for a much longer period than elsewhere. There, race and ethnicity were rigidly associated with class¹ (Schwartz 1995; Seed 1982; Layne 1979). The

¹ The definition of the concept of 'class' has been heavily debated in the literature. In the present dissertation, the definition of the term 'class' follows in the footsteps of Anderson (1988, p.210), who intended the term as 'an analytical category with which the social structure is defined' based on socio-economic status. The term is, thus, defined by its practical use rather than in theoretical form.

rigidity of the system had its roots in the limited possibilities for human capital development for the groups at the lower end of the hierarchy, but also and more importantly in an institutionalized occupational segregation (Chance and Taylor 1977; Kinsbruner 1990).

Despite the existence of a few studies on Africa, most of them have been focused on the twentieth century. Although European colonialism may not have been so deterministically discriminatory in Africa as Spanish colonialism had been in Central America because the colonial administration relied more on the indigenous population in Africa than in Central America, the lack of evidence impairs the debate. The present dissertation attempts to contribute to the study on the association (or lack of it) between ethnicity and socio-economic status in nineteenth century Africa to provide evidence regarding a period and an area often overlooked.

Within the broad context of social stratification, colonial societies are expected to register higher levels of inequality than non-colonized societies, due to their intrinsically discriminatory set-ups (Angeles 2007). Some authors have argued that the sources of inequality can be found in the rewards system devised by a society (Davis and Moore 1945), while others argue that the source of stratification is power and power distribution (Wrong 1959; Shimeles and Nabassaga 2018; Adamopoulos 2008).

Scholars have defined different types of colonialism highly dependent upon the case studies and the aspects they examined. Within this context, settler colonialism and extractive colonialism have emerged as the two most encompassing models of colonialism (Veracini 2013). The elements that differentiated the former from the latter are numerous, and had to do with the scale of the settler population in relation to that of the indigenous population, the characteristics of the climate and of the soil, and the importation of slaves, among others (Lloyd, Metzger, and Sutch 2013, Introduction). Settler colonization developed in those colonies that were more favourable to a large re-settlement of European immigrants, due to a combination of climate, land abundance and limited indigenous population. Conversely, extractive colonialism emerged in areas where European settlement was hindered by an adverse climate and disease environment and by the presence of a large indigenous population in relation to the settlers. Interestingly, it is only in recent years that these two concepts have been employed as opposite ends of a range of possibilities. Until very recently, settler colonialism was considered to be a different phenomenon than colonialism altogether (Veracini 2013). Thus, this dissertation intends to contribute to the historiography of colonialism by assuming a comprehensive approach towards colonial experiences.

The implications of different types of colonialism have been vast. An increasing number of scholars have argued that colonialism have had long-term effects, ultimately leading to different patterns of development and inequality levels across the world (Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson 2002; Lange, Mahoney, and vom Hau 2006; Heldring and Robinson 2012b; Dobado González and García Montero 2010; Shimeles and Nabassaga 2018; Michalopoulos and Papaioannou 2011; Huillery 2009).

Long-term effects of colonialism are considered to be the outcome of institutional set-ups (Lloyd, Metzger, and Sutch 2013). Some scholarship argues that it was factor endowments at the time of colonization that determined the type of colonization that emerged, thus assuming a largely deterministic view over institutions and the effects of

colonialism, in terms of inequality and development (Engerman and Sokoloff 1997; Sokoloff and Engerman 2000; Easterly and Levine 2003; Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson 2001, 2002; Acemoglu and Robinson 2012). Although this view has not been void of scepticism, with some scholars arguing the overemphasizing of the colonial experience at the expense of pre- and post-colonial events (Fenske 2013; Abad 2013; Gennaioli and Rainer 2007), and others talking about a ‘compression of history’ (Austin 2008), its relevance for the debate cannot be fully dismissed.

Another strand of literature argues that the development of institutions is the result of a process, thus adding a time component otherwise missing from the debate. This literature, originating with the work of Frederick J. Turner on the American frontier, incorporates the long-lasting process of frontier expansion in the picture of inequality, arguing that the process itself led to the emergence of ideals that gave rise to benevolent institutions (1920, 266). Various authors have found the latter element of the model to fall short on reality, in North as well as South America (Ford 1993; Hennessy 1978). Frontier expansion did not always result in the rise of benevolent institutions or in low inequality levels. Lacy K. Ford shows that in North America, wealth distribution was highly unequal even along the frontier (1993), similar to what Alistair Hennessy demonstrates for the case of Argentina (1978).

Another area of scholarship has examined ideas and ideals, in order to explain the development of institutions. This strand of literature argues that institutions and ideas are intertwined, and that ideas have the power to shape institutions (McCloskey 2015; Mokyr 2012). Ideas have been employed in the area of colonialism to reconcile the process of frontier expansion with the development of extractive institutions. According to this literature, the outcomes of the frontier expansion depend upon the ideals and institutions that are in existence at the time of the expansion which shape resource allocation and ultimately influence inequality levels (García-Jimeno and Robinson 2011, see also Atack and Bateman 1981).

The distinction between benevolent and non-benevolent institutions has interested a number of scholars because it consents to discuss the outlook of institutions towards resource distribution (Deininger and Olinto 1999; Bigsten 2018). Within the debate on resource distribution, land has been discussed in a historical perspective because it generated rents and channelled most capital investments in pre-industrial societies (Guillemin 1981, pt. VII; Berry 2002). The existing scholarship has argued that land has followed, more or less consciously, unequal policies of redistribution in tropical extractive colonies, while not so in settler colonies² (Lloyd, Metzger, and Sutch 2013; Mayer 1964; Frankema 2005). This strand of literature has, nevertheless, focused most heavily on Latin America, whereas the African continent has been examined only seldomly. Thus, this thesis intends to expand this strand of literature by examining how land redistribution looked in a colony allegedly regulated by egalitarian ideals, as well as studying how ideals reflected on wealth inequality levels in a comparative perspective.

² It is worth noting, however, that native populations were often stripped of their land also in settler colonies. Yet, because of their limited numbers, this practice has left less of a mark in historiography.

Context

The history of West Africa is very much a global history. Understanding past and current dynamics of this area in isolation from the rest of the world is meaningless, if not harmful. Thus, this section intends to place the discussion on Sierra Leone and West African within a broader context, that of the Atlantic world.

Commerce and the Slave Trade

Despite often having been pictured as being isolated, West Africa has been very much in contact with the rest of the world through trade since the first millennia BC. Trade relations intensified after the Arab expansion into North Africa and the Middle East in the seventh century, when gold and slave were exported in exchange for weapons and luxury goods through the Trans-Saharan trade route. This route, often considered erroneously as an alternative to the Atlantic trade route, continuously connected West Africa with North Africa until well into the nineteenth century, albeit diminished in importance (Hopkins 1973, chap. 3). It will occur that the slave trade was not, thus, a by-product of European economic interests but existed long before these interests emerged and along a variety of routes, including the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean route centred in Zanzibar (Bates 2014). In his *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*, John Thornton has argued that domestic slavery, and thus the slave trade, was very much an institution endogenous to Africa (1998, chap. 3). Wealth in people, rather than wealth in the form of land and other resources, constituted the basis for the West African indigenous economic system. The control of labour, rather than that of land, was the main determinant of wealth, thus the greater the number of members of a group, free and not free alike, the greater the wealth of the kin (Nyerges 1992). Land, on the contrary, could not be owned and alienated perpetually as in Europe, but rather was regulated according to relations of landlord-stranger. The kin who first settled in an area had the right to distribute land to non-kin members, the strangers, for a period of time after which land returned to the kin, in a continuous circle (Dorjahn and Fyfe 1962).

The interaction between Europe and West Africa did not begin until the early fifteenth century, when European traders started venturing South in search of gold, spices and ivory timber. European penetration into West Africa would be limited to coastal entrepôts due to a combination of limited resources and scarce adaptation to the local climate. At this stage, Europeans would maintain a landlord-stranger relation with local chiefs, requiring approval for operating and setting up forts (Dorjahn and Fyfe 1962). These locations were heavily prized due to their vicinity with local trade centres, thus very often multiple European powers through their chartered companies, would establish forts several kilometres away from each other, fuelling competition (Thornton 1998, chap. 2; Feinberg 1989, chap. 2).

The first contact between Europe and Africa had been founded on commodities rather than trade in slaves. Nevertheless, Europeans, mostly Portuguese, began purchasing African slaves soon after having established commercial relations in West Africa, and by the late eighteenth century the slave trade had overtaken in importance the trade in commodities (Hopkins 1973, chap. 3). With the establishment of sugar plantation agriculture in the West

Indies, labour force came to be in high demand, partly due to decimation of the indigenous population and partly due to the high rate of survival of West Africans compared to white indentured labour (Pons 2012, 96). Furthermore, the high demand for slaves in Brazil and North America contributed to the global demand to a significant extent, while requiring slave traders to continuously find new supply. It is, thus, not surprising that the area of embarkation shifted over time. Over two centuries, the area of embarkation moved eastward from the Senegambia to West Central Africa (Congo and Angola), with the greatest number of slaves in absolute terms being shipped from the Bight of Benin and the Bight of Biafra (Curtin and Vansina 1964). Various elements can account for this geographical shift, from warfare, of which slaves were often a by-product, to the patrolling action of the English Navy in the aftermath of the approval of the slave trade bill in 1807 (Hopkins 1973, chap. 3).

Abolitionism and the legitimate trade

In spite of England's important contribution to the slave trade, estimated as two-thirds of the slaves traded alone, the country became a major player in the match of abolition.

Between the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, an abolitionist movement emerged in London, extending gradually to the whole of England, an offspring of a more widespread benevolent attitude, the humanitarian movement (Austen and Smith 1969). The movement started out as a small circle of high profile citizens aggregated around civic and humanitarian values, among which included slave abolition (Asiegbu 1969 Preface). The group, known as the Clapham sect from the neighbourhood where the meetings usually took place, was formed by members of parliament, lawyers and bankers, among whom could be found William Wilberforce, Zachary Macaulay, Granville Sharp and Henry Thornton (Fyfe 1962). After many years of heated debates between the abolitionists and the supporters of the slave trade, a varied combination of West Indian planters and slave trade merchants, in 1807 the slave trade abolition bill was finally approved (Austen and Smith 1969). Although the abolitionists had an important role in the bill's approval, other factors did contribute to abolition. Among them, the rise of industrial capitalist interests, which led to a clash that saw the industrial interests prevail over the slave productive system (Hopkins 1973, chap. 3; Asiegbu 1969 Preface).

A direct consequence of the abolition of the slave trade was the emergence of the so-called legitimate commerce's argument, a type of trade allegedly able to supplant the slave trade and prevent economic losses for the English economic system as a whole. Legitimate commerce was to foster the production of cash and food crops by means of free labour in Africa and in the West Indies because free labour was thought to be more productive than slave labour and, thus, economically more reasonable (Austen and Smith 1969). Additionally, the legitimate commerce would make use of households as labour units, without the requirement for large amounts of capital and labour to be employed (Hopkins 1973, chap. 4). The emergence of this new productive system led to numerous changes in the labour patterns in West Africa, including a greater involvement of men in agriculture and the rise of a new small class of intermediaries (Law 2002; Austin 2005). Not everyone did, however, benefit from the shift and not infrequently, important suppliers of slaves became marginal actors in the renewed economic context of West Africa (Law 2002, 6). Thus, despite a rapidly

growing demand for tropical raw materials produced by free labour, in the form of oils and various types of nuts, legitimate commerce took much longer than hoped to replace slave trade produce. The two productive systems appear to have survived alongside for the most part of the nineteenth century, partly due to the inefficiencies of the trade commerce which made the use of slaves in the 'legitimate' production more profitable than selling them (Law 2002, 6–10; Hopkins 1973, chap. 4).

Colonialism

The emergence of the legitimate commerce is argued to have brought about a major change in the attitude that European powers had towards West Africa, and possibly Africa at large. The conditions for tropical producers, measured in terms of trade, improved significantly in the nineteenth century, thanks to a rise in export prices and a decline in import prices as a result of industrial production. Recent estimates suggest that this upwards trend continued until the 1880s, rather than terminating in the 1860s as previous scholars argued (Frankema, Williamson, and Woltjer 2018; Hopkins 1973; Eltis and Jennings 1988). Large profits could be made, yet power imbalances favoured African agents at the expense of European merchants. European merchants, thus, began demanding a greater degree of governmental support and intervention, in an attempt to extract as much profit from the legitimate trade as possible (Hopkins 1973, chap. 4). Unsurprisingly, Africa had become economically interesting to Europe in a way that it had not been before.

The combination of newly emerging economic interests, nationalistic rivalries, power struggles and communication and transportation revolutions, all led to the scramble for West Africa in the late nineteenth century. The partitioning of West Africa among European powers which later would expand to the rest of the continent, is often considered to be the starting point for European colonialism in Africa (Frankema, Williamson, and Woltjer 2018; Hopkins 1973, chap. 4; Eltis and Jennings 1988). The colonization of Africa, despite occurring later in history than elsewhere, was a very rapid and encompassing phenomenon. At the beginning of WWI, most of Africa was a European dominion, whether British, French, Portuguese, German, Belgian or Italian. A process that had taken centuries in the Americas and Asia was completed with extraordinary rapidity in Africa.

European colonialism is a concept most often associated with the European expansions across the world that occurred between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. Following the circumnavigation of Africa and the discovery of the Americas, Portugal and Spain began appropriating new territories, chiefly in Latin America and Asia attracted by their wealth. A century later, France, the Netherlands and Britain all followed by founding colonies in North America and, to a lesser extent, in Asia. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw a further expansion into areas yet untapped, among which included Oceania and South Asia, while the nineteenth century registered the occupation of Africa (Findlay and O'Rourke 2009).

To a geographic heterogeneity corresponded a heterogeneous set of colonial experiences, which differed in terms of institutions, settlement patterns and both economic and legislative systems. Despite this heterogeneity, some scholars have argued that all colonies could be distributed across an ideal line connecting settler colonies on one side and

tropical extractive colonies on the opposite, arguing for the primacy of the type of colonial institutions over other factors of differentiation (Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson 2001b, 2002).

Settler colonies emerged in North America, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina and Uruguay. All these areas registered a large number of European settlers, many escaping from poverty and famine in Europe. The settlers most often replicated European institutions, including social and property rights, along with preserving the cultures and customs of their homeland (Mayer 1964). Elsewhere, another type of colonialism emerged, characterized by a clear hierarchical distinction among ethnic groups and the aim of extracting as much resources and profits to benefit the motherland, through a plantation or extraction economy (Lloyd, Metzger, and Sutch 2013, 1–11). Notably, settler colonies are a very different type of colonization than African settler colonies (also known as settler-elite colonies), where the latter belongs among the broader group of tropical colonies. Settler-elite colonies were characterized by a redistribution of land favourable to the European minority, able to appropriate the vast majority of the fertile land available and to extract labour from the indigenous population (Austin 2015, 525).

Sierra Leone

In the context of European colonialism, Sierra Leone is of particular interest. The colony of Sierra Leone constituted one of the first colonial ventures on the African continent: from its foundation pre-dating the scramble for Africa of a century, to the motives leading to its founding, to the settlers that came to inhabit it, to the institutions that were set up, all makes this example a valuable case study.

In the aftermath of the American Revolutionary War and the Somerset ruling of 1772, freedom had been granted to a number of slaves both in the old and the new world. Despite their newly granted freedom, most of them ended up at the margins of society, often jobless and undesired. Large strata of the society regarded them with fear, and so did the government, concerned that their marginality may spark social struggles (Asiegbu 1969, 2). A group of abolitionists, part of the Clapham sect, founded the Black Poor Committee with the aim of solving the 'black poor issue'. The committee included abolitionists of the calibre of William Wilberforce, Zachary Macaulay, Granville Sharp and Henry Thornton (Fyfe 1962, 13–14). The committee was presented with a scheme of colonization of Sierra Leone designed by Henry Smeathman, a botanist who had spent some time along the coast of Sierra Leone several years prior. Although Smeathman intended to benefit economically from the venture, the committee decided to present his scheme to the government, which met the plan with favour (Cox-George 1961, 13). Those who were willing to move to Sierra Leone would have seen their passage paid by the government, if approving of the conditions that the committee had drawn for the settlement (Asiegbu 1969, 5).

Despite being largely unknown to the general public, Sierra Leone had been known to the British government for years, at least since it had been contemplated as a settlement for convicts before deciding to send them to Australia instead. Sierra Leone had been in contact with Europeans since the sixteenth century, when Portuguese traders had established commercial relations with the indigenous population and had founded a trade outpost in the

Sierra Leone river (Fyfe 1962, 4–8). Later, British traders also came to trade in the area, which by the mid-seventeenth century had become an important commodity and slave trade centre. Thus, the area where the first settlers landed in 1787 was not unused to European contacts (Hair 1998; Northrup 2006).

The land where the first nucleon of the colony later emerged was purchased for the equivalent of £59 from a local king. Although Smeathman had depicted the area as being highly fertile, the reality was much less ideal. Soil infertility and conflicts with the indigenous population related to the character of the land granting, a mere lease for the indigenous kings but a proper acquisition of land rights for the Europeans, characterized the first few years of the settlement (Curtin 1961; Asiegbu 1969, 6–7; Fyfe 1962, 25). Unsurprisingly, most of the first settlers did not survive the first years in the colony due to a combination of high mortality and the lack of opportunities. Despite this early failure, Sierra Leone's utopia survived, thanks to the foundation of the Sierra Leone Company aimed at developing trade with the colony, but mostly owing to the unexpected arrival of other settler groups (Land and Schocket 2008).

Just as the colony seemed on the verge of collapse, the arrival of a group of former slaves from Nova Scotia brought new life to the settlement. The so-called Nova Scotians were former slaves from the American plantations who had been granted freedom for having fought on the British side in the American revolutionary war. Some of them had been born slaves in the United States; some others had been born in Africa and later sold to American plantation owners (Colonial Office 1791). At the end of the war, they had been re-settled in Nova Scotia, Canada, where they were promised land and freedom. Instead, land granting never occurred and their freedom was continuously at stake (Walker 1976). The group decided to petition the British Government to be removed to a more suitable location. When hearing of the colony of Sierra Leone, the groups decided to embark, hoping to find their long-sought 'province of freedom'. They landed in the colony in the spring of 1792, and soon started to re-build and clear the area for a settlement (Peterson 1969). Several years after the Nova Scotians, other groups of black settlers landed at Freetown. The Maroons had also been removed to Nova Scotia, and similarly to the Nova Scotians, they found it inhospitable and unsafe. The Maroons were part of a community of runaway slaves particularly unpopular among Jamaica's government officials and planters alike. Thus, they had been removed from the country and sent to Nova Scotia, from where they had finally embarked to Sierra Leone in 1801 (Lockett 1999). Along with the Nova Scotians, the Maroons formed the 'original settlers' of Sierra Leone (Abasiattai 1992).

Not only was the colony itself a result of abolitionism, but Sierra Leone came also to be central in the period that followed the approval of the slave trade bill in 1807. The combination of a safe harbour and a sparsely populated area elected Sierra Leone as the port of disembarkation for all the slaves that were rescued from the slave ships captured by the Royal Navy along the West African coast (Kuczynski 1948, chap. 2). Deemed initially negligible, the inflow of liberated slaves proved massive, with the number of 'recaptives' landed at Freetown estimated at 99,000 by 1863, of which roughly 50,000 had been landed already by 1831 (R. Anderson 2013). The origin of these liberated slaves was diverse, extending from modern-days Angola to Senegal, and their ethnic and cultural heritage was

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even more heterogeneous (Fyfe 1987; Northrup 2006). To accommodate their settlement, new villages were founded throughout the Freetown peninsula (Scanlan 2016). A number of them, those considered the most capable, were listed for military service upon arrival, a phenomenon that some have considered to resemble that of forced labour (Anderson 2013). After their discharge, they would return to Sierra Leone and settle down. Other young recaptives would be apprenticed to settler families, in a form that resembled that of indentured labour, and not infrequently slavery (Schwarz 2012).

Prior to the colony's founding, the peninsula of Sierra Leone had no large and strong kingdoms but was inhabited by indigenous groups related through landlord-stranger relations. The limited amount of indigenous inhabitants was possibly the result of the scarce fertility of the soil and the involvement of these groups with trade, both in commodities and slaves (Fyfe 1962, 10). After the colony's founding, indigenous groups were still recorded living in the area of Freetown, although accounting for only a minor share of the colony's population. These groups, who originated from various parts of West Africa, occupied themselves with trade or lived by selling labour for wages (Ibid, 101). Other indigenous groups, chiefly Kru from Liberia, were present in the colony even if only temporarily, during which time they also worked for wages (Frost 1999).

Granville Sharp, the abolitionist who drew the first constitution of the colony and had supported its financial needs in its early days, had envisaged the 'province of freedom' as a self-governed utopia where legislative and justice responsibilities lied in the hands of the settlers. Its black settlers were, thus, both colonized and colonizers (Land and Schocket 2008). The self-government experiment did not last long because in 1791, the government had been taken over by the newly founded Sierra Leone Company. When the Company ceased operations in 1807, the colony was transferred to the British Crown, and thus governors and officials were now appointed in London, much to the disappointment of the settlers (Everill 2017). Despite such shifts of responsibilities, the colony remained allegedly true to its ideals of non-discrimination and egalitarianism upon which it had been founded. Resource distribution has been argued to have followed logics of equality, although the meaning of equality shifted through the years. Equality was particularly important in terms of land distribution, with the aim of creating a class of landowners. A major reason of conflict elsewhere, land in Sierra Leone was said to be freely appropriable by all settlers, with the sole condition of clearance and cultivation of the plot (Everill 2013).

Abolitionism has been argued to be intrinsic to Sierra Leone's economic system. Agricultural production for the legitimate commerce was to be the economic model allowing the colony to thrive. Ideally, the colony was to become the champion of legitimate commerce, its success representing the economic superiority of free labour against slave labour (Olabimtam 2013; O'Kane and Menard 2015). In the idealistic mind of the founding fathers of the colony sitting in London, an egalitarian distribution of land would have fostered the development of a class of small-holders able to produce for the subsistence of the colony but also, and more importantly, for export (Herrmann 2014). Yet, it would appear as if the colony did not manage to be food self-sufficient until well into the nineteenth century, following the appropriation of the hinterland in the form of the protectorate, and

continuing to require the importation of the majority of its food necessities from far and close regions of West Africa (McGowan 1990).

Overall, Sierra Leone was not a result of imperialistic interests of Britain but was rather an outcome of the abolitionist movement. Previous scholarship has argued, although providing little empirical evidence, that Sierra Leone's immigrant society had little in common with its indigenous neighbours, but rather resembled the white settler colonies of North America and Oceania. The egalitarian ideal upon which it had been allegedly founded would further mark the distance between the later wave of colonialism, or imperialism, and the colony.

Research design

Social stratification constitutes the research problem that the present dissertation aims to study. The concept of social stratification is extremely broad, which can be both a benefit and a curse. Special care had to be devoted to properly substantiate the overall study amid the risk of becoming either too shallow or too narrow in its focus. To be able to effectively examine the research problem, I chose to perform a case study. Case studies, by delimiting the scope of a study to only one case, render the examination of broad research problems more feasible compared to other research designs, such as cross-country comparisons. By focusing on one single case, case studies consent to examine multiple aspects of one research problem. The issue of social stratification involves multiple interrelated aspects, which contribute to make the research problem more complex. A case study is deemed to be the most appropriate research design to tackle high degrees of complexity while able to deliver an in-depth examination of the numerous elements contributing to social stratification and of their inter-connections. The aspects of social stratification that are discussed in the present dissertation are socio-economic status, marriage patterns, and inequality.

The case study examined in the present dissertation is that of the colony of Sierra Leone in the early nineteenth century. It is argued that early-days Sierra Leone makes for a critical case study of social stratification because it provides a critical test for theories of social stratification (for a definition of critical case studies see Yin 2013, 51–52). Multiple motives make the colony interesting from a social stratification perspective: the colony had been founded on ideals of egalitarianism and humanitarianism; its heterogeneous population resembled the results of a demographic experiment; its foundation occurred at a very early stage of African colonialism, decades before the scramble for Africa. Previous scholarship has discussed these elements extensively. Nevertheless, no empirical evidence has yet been put forward to justify many of the claims this scholarship has made about Sierra Leone, from the actual impact of ideals on institutions, to the degree of integration between ethnic groups, and so forth.

It is with the aim to investigate a rare and valuable case for social stratification, while empirically testing previous claims and theories regarding the same case study that I decided to design my dissertation as a quantitative rather than qualitative study. While, on the one hand, qualitative studies on Sierra Leone abound, quantitative evidence is still lacking. For the purpose of the research aim, I thus have chosen to employ quantitative sources, in the form of census data, rather than qualitative sources. The data I have employed throughout the

present dissertation are census data for a single cross-section extracted from an original primary source, with the exception of essay n.4 where data for three separate cross-sections are employed. The data refer to the entire population, which consent to study empirically not only a sample but the population in its entirety. In the specific case of Sierra Leone, however, census data differed between urban and rural areas. The differences in the information contained required adjusting each study to the investigation of one of the two populations, urban or rural.

Limitations

Limitations are an intrinsic part of any research, and the present dissertation is in no way an exception. The specific limitations of the research design employed are discussed below.

Case studies allow for an in-depth analysis of complex phenomena, yet they are not void of issues. The generalizability of case studies has often been deemed to be problematic, although it is the generalizability of case studies' findings *per se* that has been mostly discussed. Robert K. Yin argued that 'case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical proposition', a type of generalization called 'analytical generalization' distinct from the more common 'statistical generalization' (Yin 2013, 21). With such distinction in mind, the aim of this dissertation is to present elements often overlooked when discussing phenomena such as social stratification and colonialism, eventually calling for a nuanced picture of historical phenomena and their drivers.

Besides the general concerns typical of case studies, the case study of Sierra Leone may not be best understood if read with a Sub-Saharan perspective in mind. Although the colony belonged to the Sub-Saharan subcontinent, it is here hypothesized that in many ways it resembled white settler societies founded at the same time from Canada all the way to Australia, rather than its immediate African neighbours. However, differences between Sierra Leone and white settler societies are also apparent. These specificities make the case study of Sierra Leone valuable, but also require caution when performing comparisons.

Caution is also necessary when employing historical quantitative data. The data only consent to observe what the colonial officials chose to report, rather than how reality may have really looked like. For robustness, much contextual information was gathered from other sources, and a few usable variables were also extracted from these additional sources.

Data in the form of a cross-section carry some limitations because they are but snapshots of a reality that is mobile and ever changing. For this reason, this dissertation is mostly involved with the observation of the outcomes of a process, rather than with the process itself. Undoubtedly, the observation of outcomes does not allow drawing causal inference from the study, limiting the contribution to the study of associations. Nevertheless, research design is about finding a balance between what can be done and what would be ideal. In the present dissertation, I believe that so much was there to uncover and examine, that an expansion of its scope would have likely rendered the analysis not more meaningful but rather less incisive.

Methods

The variety of research problems examined in the present dissertation has required the use of multiple methodological approaches, often arrived at through a choice between alternative methods. Although necessary, choosing between methods has not always been easy. Overall, I have opted for the methods that convey my research in the most accessible manner.

The first essay in the present dissertation examines the association between ethnic belonging and socio-economic status. For the purpose of this study, I employed mostly descriptive statistics, with the aim of describing and interpreting the data. Contingency tables and histograms have been used to summarize the association between the variables under examination, ethnicity and socio-economic status. The former is a type of table that is used to summarize the association between two variables, one in rows and one in columns. The latter is a graphical representation of the frequency distribution of a variable, which informs on the shape of the data. To examine the strength of the association between the two variables, I tested the hypothesis of independence between the two variables by running a Chi-squared test. Chi-squared tests compare observed frequencies to expected frequencies in order to determine whether there is a statically significant association between the two variables.

In essay number 2, I employed both descriptive and inferential statistical methods to study the association between ethnic belonging and marriage patterns. Descriptive analysis, in the form of contingency tables, scatterplots and histograms are employed to study the association between the variables of interest. T-test statistics are used to examine whether socio-economic status may have impacted on marriage choices for exogamic couples compared to endogamic couples. T-tests are often used to study the hypothesis of a statically significant difference between the means of two groups.

Essays 3 and 4 share the methodological approach, centred on the estimation of Lorenz curves and Gini coefficients. In both essays, descriptive statistics are widely used, however the core of the analysis relies on the two measures mentioned above. The Lorenz curve graphically represents the distribution of resources in a population in comparison with an ideal equal distribution, thus explaining why the curve is often used to measure various types of social inequality. The curve is accompanied by a 45° angle line that represents equal resource distribution. The farther away from the 45° angle line the Lorenz curve is, the more unequal the distribution is. The Gini coefficient is a measure of dispersion and, thus, it is very often used to measure inequality. It is calculated as the ratio between the area comprised between the Lorenz curve and the equality line, and area beneath the equality line. Its values span from a minimum of 0, signalling equality, to a maximum of 1 (or 100), meaning that only one individual in the population owns all the available resources. Its widespread use and relatively straightforwardness have made the Gini coefficient the index of inequality most used in comparative perspectives. Despite its advantages, the Gini coefficient has some limitations. Among them, the most debated is that it is a relative measure, where the same results can emerge from very different distributions. For the purpose of the studies in this dissertation, however, Gini coefficients were preferred over other measures of inequality for their comparability.

Sources and source criticism

The data employed in this dissertation were collected from a vast range of primary and secondary sources alike. Although some sources were more important than others in the economy of this dissertation, all have contributed with valuable information to the four essays comprised in this volume.

Primary sources

1831 Census of the population of the Colony of Sierra Leone

The backbone of this dissertation, and somewhat the point of departure for the entire project, has been the *1831 Census of the Population of the Colony of Sierra Leone*. The census, archived at the British National Archives in London, contains an exceptionally large amount of information that had not been consistently employed until now.

The census is of particular value because it is a very early example of a demographic survey in Sub-Saharan Africa, often deemed to be imprecise well into the twentieth century. Although Sierra Leone had a long tradition of demographic survey, with the first census taken already in 1802 and later enumeration of the population carried out every five to ten years, it was only in 1831 that an organized and vast effort was carried out to survey the entire population residing in the colony in 1831 (Kuczynski 1948, 19–20; Colonial Office 1831, fols. 3–4 Findlay to Colonial Office). Importantly, the census did not rely on simple estimations of the population, commonly employed by colonial administrators in Africa, but rather they represent possibly the first example of door-to-door enumeration carried out on a large scale in the continent (Kuczynski 1948, 24; for an account of the challenges posed by African census data see Fetter 1987). The process of census taking lasted from July to November 1831, during which time the census takers carried out a door-to-door enumeration of the portion of territory they had been appointed to survey (Colonial Office 1831, fol. 69 Harding to Findlay). The census takers relied on standardized forms to fill in their journey through the areas they oversaw, the aim being to reduce the degree of inconsistencies in the information reported (Kuczynski 1948, 23). Eventually, the census comprised information on 28,975 individuals across over 9,000 households, although some over- and under-counting may have occurred if people moved during the lengthy process of enumeration.

Although part of one single effort, the census was effectively composed of two separate parts: one urban and one rural (Table 1). Not only were the two parts separately undertaken, but they also differed in regard to who the census takers were and what information they comprised. The census of the population of Freetown, the only urban area of the colony at the time, was carried out by specially appointed census takers, selected among the administrative clerks employed by the colonial administration (Colonial Office 1831, fol. 251 and 390). Data were recorded at the individual level for the entire urban population. The information was recorded by street, starting from the eastern and ending on the western side of the city. The data collected included street name and house number, along with full name of each individual, gender, ethnic group, age group (either child or adult) and occupational title. In some cases, the latter piece of information was replaced by the relation

of the individual to the household head (daughter/child/nephew and so forth). The urban data included observations for 8,453 individuals distributed across 1,989 households.

Table 1. Census characteristics, by geographical area.

	<i>Urban sample</i>	<i>Rural sample</i>
Sample size	1,989 households 8,453 individuals	7,169 households 20,522 individuals
Census-takers	Specifically assigned census-takers	Town managers
Level of information	Individuals	Households
Geographical location	Street name and number	Village
<i>Information reported</i>		
Name	All*	Heads of household
Occupational title	All*	Heads of household + Apprentices
Ethnicity	All*	All*
Assets of wealth	No	Type of housing Livestock Acreage

* See essays for sample size.

In the rural areas of the peninsula, local government administrators known as town managers had been entrusted with the task of carrying out the census (Colonial Office 1831; Kuczynski 1948, 25). Despite a common role within the colonial administration, town managers were a highly diverse group, including European missionaries along with recaptives who had advanced in society. Differently than in the urban part of the census, information in the countryside was recorded at the household level. Data were recorded geographically by district, and further by settlement. Within each settlement, detailed information on name, ethnic group and occupational titles was available for the households' heads. For the rest of the members in the household, only limited information was recorded, which included a column for wife, one reporting the number of children, one other column reporting the number of apprentices by gender hosted in the household and one column accounting for natives working for the household. Interestingly, however, the rural census reported additional valuable data on assets owned by the households. The assets reported are housing, livestock and land. Type of housing (wattle-and-daub, wood, stone) and number and type of livestock (horse, cattle, pig, poultry, goat, sheep) owned were widely reported and surveyed by the town managers themselves. For an estimation of each landholding, instead, the census takers relied on the settler themselves (Colonial Office 1831, fol. 69 Harding to Findlay). In this latter case, three town managers declared the inability to ascertain the size of the plots owned by each settler, providing only a tentative average (Colonial Office 1831, fol. 86 Jones to Findlay, fol. 228 Pratt to Findlay, fol. 237 Porter to Findlay)-

René Kuczynski, the authority in the British colonial demographic survey, considered the census to be quite accurate (1948, 20–21). However, the reliability of the source does not mean the absence of issues and limitations. By construction, some data are available only for

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a portion of the colony, or are surveyed unequally across regions. Clearly, differences of this sort make generalizations difficult. Furthermore, although the census had no taxation purposes (Kuczynski 1948, 21–23), some may have been careful reporting their assets, fearing they could be later required to pay. Of all assets, the recording of apprentices may have been the most problematic. The system of apprenticeship, originally designed to ease the settlement of unaccompanied liberated slaves under aged, had gradually turned into a form of temporary enslavement (Colonial Office 1842, 12; 94–95). Even worse, kidnapped children were sold to households that were not entitled to host an apprentice through the legal channels, leaving these children at the mercy of their hosts (Schwarz 2012; Colonial Office 1842). It is, thus, not unlikely that hosts would have under-reported the number of apprentices they hosted to the authorities, fearing to be reproached for the conditions in which they kept these children or to lose the apprentices they had purchased on the black market.

Indigenous individuals, or ‘natives’ in colonial jargon, were not colonial citizens or British subjects until the late nineteenth century (Kandeh 1992). By 1831, the term had come to refer to a large number of ethnic groups: Temne, Mende, Susu, Mandiska, Fula, Yoruba, just to name a few (Fyfe 1962, 149; Frost 1999, 26–32). Despite not being colonial subjects, ‘natives’ were recorded in the colony. The census recorded a number of ‘native’ households in Freetown, whereas only individuals living in settlers’ households were reported in the countryside. It is not at all unlikely that a few ‘natives’ went unrecorded in the countryside because some areas of the peninsula had not yet been fully occupied in 1831. Nevertheless, in light of the scarce fertility of the soil and the ban on the slave trade (an activity in which indigenous were active), the interest of indigenous groups in the peninsula would have been quite limited, lending support to the reliability of the census overall.

The handwritten source was personally photographed and digitized. The process of digitization, although painstakingly long, has served the purpose of making me better understand the material, with its potential and drawbacks. After digitization, the data were organized into a dataset. To avoid inconsistency between the original source and the dataset, no type of standardization was initially carried out. The form and order in which the information was reported in the source was kept intact. The resulting dataset was only converted for statistical use at a later stage, when a minor round of standardization was implemented. Each paper discusses the process of standardization of the data relevant for that particular paper separately (see below). The two-step process ensured that the data extracted from the primary source would never be irreparably compromised, with the idea to render the dataset available at a later stage. Although standardization remained limited, a number of choices had to be made regarding how to report or interpret precise pieces of information. Had it not been for the time spent understanding data specificities, these decisions may have been much more difficult.

Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry: 1827 and 1842.

The Reports, the first dated 1827 and the second 1842, are recurrent sources throughout the entire dissertation. Both reports were commissioned by the House of Commons to the Colonial Office, in an attempt to better understand the remote colony of Sierra Leone from

where frequent financial pleas were received. The reports were later deposited at the British National Archives, where they have become part of a small Sierra Leone collection.

The first report, dated 1827, provides valuable information regarding a number of subjects: from the colony's geographical characteristics, to population, to religion, agriculture and trade, to public finance and legal systems. The Commissioners, escorted by various government officials, travelled extensively through the country, and their observations were noted down in the report. The broad spectrum of subjects comprised in the report was the result of the need to bring back to England as much information as possible on a colony that was obscure to most.

The data extracted from the report concerns objective characteristics, such as the age and characteristics of the settlements in the countryside (including communications and distance between the villages in the countryside and Freetown), as well as soil quality and valuable information on the state of agriculture in the colony just before the census was taken. The data on soil quality were assessed against another source, a report on soil characteristics for modern-day Sierra Leone prepared by the FAO, and found to be reliable (Birchall, Bleeker, and Cusani Visconti 1980). Information on the age and characteristics of the settlements were compared with contemporary accounts and with secondary sources and also found to be reliable (among which: Macaulay 1826; R. Clarke 1863; Fyfe 1962). The second report, dated 1842, was carried out with a much more specific aim in mind compared to the first one. After numerous claims of kidnappings of liberated slaves by slave traffickers with the alleged collaboration of settlers, an inquiry into the state of the colony was initiated. The commissioner, R. R. Madden, a long-term abolitionist, was sent to the colony to investigate the claims and monitor its advancements (Saunders 1984, chap. 1). His report is particularly enlightening in its passages on re-enslavement and on the system of apprenticeship, far too little discussed in most sources, for which he reported the transcripts of the interviews with a plethora of interlocutors (clergymen, officials, schoolmasters) in full in the appendix. Data regarding the fees to pay to acquire an apprentice, the legislation and the terms of employment were extracted from this source, along with more general data on export and agricultural production. Despite the absence of other sources to employ for cross-checks, the presence of the original transcripts can be considered to be a sufficient guarantee that Madden did not report information on his own accord, but actually referred what his interlocutors had told him, increasing the reliability of the report and the validity of its conclusion, thus rendering it a vital source in the study of nineteenth century Sierra Leone.

An additional source that was used is a map of the colony of Sierra Leone depicting the borders of the peninsula, the settlements and the roads connecting them produced in 1827. The map, located with other miscellaneous documentation in a folder called 'correspondence', would appear to have been produced for or by the Commissioners of Inquiry sent to the colony in 1826, likely to attest the state of the settlements and of the communications, qualitative evidence of which can be found in the Report itself. The absence of the author to this map is unfortunate; however, it does not undermine its value. In fact, when cross-referenced against maps found in a later source (Montagu 1857), the details of the map appear to be highly reliable.

A BLACK UTOPIA?

List of those blacks in Birchtown who gave their names for Sierra Leone in November 1791 and List of Maroons as returned by their Superintendent

These primary sources, archived again at the British National Archives, were employed to extend the temporal scope of this dissertation, or at least of parts of it, as far back to the foundation of the colony as possible. Unfortunately, early data for Sierra Leone have been mainly preserved in the form of reports or summaries, in which aggregate data is difficult to use and trust, while the original sources appear to have been lost.

The oldest primary source, the *List of those blacks in Birchtown who gave their names for Sierra Leone in November 1791*, provides information on a sample of Nova Scotian households just before they embarked for Sierra Leone. The list is the only existing source giving an account of the Nova Scotians that left for Sierra Leone in a non-aggregated, but rather detailed, form. The list, organized at the household level, provides information on the name, age, place of origin and occupational title of the household heads just before embarking to Sierra Leone, along with the assets the household owned in Canada (land, livestock, housing) and, more importantly, with the composition of the household (wife and children, by gender). The absence of a census of the Nova Scotian settlers available for the period after their landing in the colony increases the value of the 1791 list significantly, making it the only source of disaggregated household data so far uncovered for the early period of the colony.

The list is not void of limitations, however. First of all, it must be noted that the households appearing in the list were not all those who left for Sierra Leone, but rather only those that resided in Birchtown, the largest Nova Scotian enclave, roughly a fifth of the total (Byrd 2001, 296). It could be argued that they may constitute a biased sample of the Nova Scotians who left to Sierra Leone. Even though this is theoretically possible, no clear pattern among these households could be found, suggesting that these households were not dissimilar from the rest. The individuals in the list had only the place of residence in common, whereas they differed in place of origin, age, assets owned and household composition, thus not making any bias apparent. Yet, it is unclear why the other lists for other places did not survive. It is not at all unlikely that the Canadian authorities had little interest in investing resources to survey settlers they had no interest in on behalf of the Sierra Leone Company. It is, though, also possible that other lists became lost and only the one for Birchtown had survived. Unfortunately, the major limitation of the source is that it surveys the settlers who intended to embark for Sierra Leone, but not those who did actually land across the Atlantic, thus leaving a certain degree of uncertainty regarding how many changes may have occurred during those months between the departure and arrival.

The second list, the *List of Maroons as returned by their Superintendent in April 1802*, was part of the first ever census commissioned to be taken in the colony (Kuczynski 1948, pp. 20–21). The list is, to my knowledge and research, the only detailed part surviving of that census. As anticipated, the list covers only a sample of the population residing in the colony in 1801, the newly arrived Maroons, along with a few notes on the pre-existing population of the colony, mostly in summary form. Although the list cannot be used to shed light on the rest of the population of the colony, the source remains valuable because it contains household level data for the newly arrived Maroons, yet not as detailed as in the case of the

Nova Scotian list. In the list of Maroons, only the name of the household head is available, along with a summary of the remaining household members, by gender and age group.

Blue books for Sierra Leone (1836–1838)

The colonial Blue Books have, in recent times, increasingly become a favourite source for economists, historians and other scholars alike. The variety of the data comprised and the annual publication make these books a valuable source. Typically, a series of Blue Books was published for each colonial state and would record taxes and duties levied in the territory, revenues and expenditure of the colonial government, data on population, education, trade, agriculture and wages, among others. The aim of such a type of source was to keep the Colonial Office in England updated on the colonies, in a more or less standardized form.

The Blue Book series for Sierra Leone began already in 1819, a decade after the colony had become a Crown colony (Colonial Office CO 272/1). However, in the first few years, the books carried only scant information, a likely signal of the (in)capacity of the colonial government (Colonial Office CO 272/1–12). Only in 1836, the books started carrying more and more valuable information, including average retail prices for various types of produce and merchandise and daily wages for different kinds of labourers, information which I extracted for the years 1836–1838. Despite the official nature of the source, the Blue Books I employed did not mention how, when and why the data had been originally collected, which may be seen as a limitation of the source. For this reason, it is not unlikely that the source may be affected by imprecision, and that the data are only estimates or actual data collected systematically. It is also not possible to rule out the chance that the colonial government may have actively manipulated the data for financial or other purposes, although this issue seems to be a minor one.

Algernon Montagu (1857) Ordinances of the Settlement of Sierra Leone

The *Ordinances of the Settlement of Sierra Leone* are an official primary source compiled by Algernon Montagu in 1857 on behalf of the Governor of the colony of Sierra Leone. The five volumes contain an immense amount of legislation, treaties and other information covering a period spanning from 1792 to 1857. The author had worked in Sierra Leone in various administrative positions, as master of the Court of Records, as clerk of the Crown and as chief justice between the 1850s and 1860s, and during that time had collected and organized documentation regarding the colony in volumes, later published in London (Howell 1967). Despite a certain amount of success at the time, one of the few copies left of the Ordinances is stored at the British Library, where copies were taken to be personally digitized.

The numerous volumes of the ordinances have been an important source throughout this dissertation. The data extracted from the volumes had mostly to do with two areas: landholding distribution and geography. Landholding distributions referring to the Nova Scotians and to the Maroons had been transcribed from the original documents and inserted in the appendix to the third volume of the Ordinances. Although the original sources have become lost, a comparison with a copy taken from the same source and archived at the Sierra Leone National Archive shows that the two copies are identical (with kind permission of

Prof. Suzanne Schwarz). The loss of the primary source has made the transcription by Montagu invaluable, by allowing to reconstruct inequality in the early stages of the colony. Additionally, the scarcity of valid geographical data for the early days of Sierra Leone made the maps included in the fifth volume an important aid for the spatial reconstructions that are carried out in the dissertation, in combination with the above-mentioned map.

Additional sources

Although vital, primary sources alone could not have made this dissertation possible. A wealth of contemporary accounts, modern-day reports and secondary sources were also employed for a variety of needs, including robustness checks and gathering of historical information.

Contemporary accounts included the pamphlet *The Colony of Sierra Leone Vindicated from the Misrepresentations of Mr. Macqueen of Glasgow* (Macaulay 1826), the accounts *Sierra Leone: A Description of the Manners and Customs of the Liberated Africans; with Observations Upon the Natural History of the Colony, and a Notice of the Native Tribes and Sketches of the Colony of Sierra Leone and Its Inhabitants* (R. Clarke 1843, 1863), the collection of correspondence between colonial chief of Justice Robert Thorpe and Vice-President of the African Institutions William Wilberforce *A Letter to William Wilberforce* (Thorpe and Wilberforce 1815) and the epistolary travel account *Narrative of Two Voyages to the River Sierra Leone during the Years 1791–1792–1793* by Anna Maria Falconbridge (Falconbridge 1794). These sources were used to gather first-hand information regarding how the colony appeared to contemporary observers. Information from these sources spanned from prices of poultry to population heterogeneity, to death rates, to the state of the relations with local kingdoms, used as corroborating evidence for primary and secondary sources.

Furthermore, the modern FAO report *Land in Sierra Leone: A Reconnaissance Survey and Evaluation for Agriculture* provided vital soil quality data to be employed for assessing the reliability of similar data found in the Reports discussed above (Birchall, Bleeker, and Cusani Visconti 1980).

This dissertation counted also on a number of secondary sources. Articles from academic journals across various subjects, from economic history to sociology, from economics to history, and to ecology were used to address a number of questions and to create a context for the variety of subjects touched upon in this dissertation. Books and edited volumes were also often employed, of which I list here only the most important: Cristopher Fyfe (1962) *A History of Sierra Leone*, possibly the most exhaustive historical account of Sierra Leone ever published; Robert Kuczynski (1948) *Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire*, the basic text for anyone dealing with colonial sources and demography in Africa; Robin Law, Silke Strickrodt and Suzanne Schwarz (2013) *Commercial agriculture, the slave trade and slavery in Atlantic Africa*; Paul Lovejoy and Suzanne Schwarz (2015) *Slavery, Abolition and the Transition to Colonisation in Sierra Leone*. Secondary sources were gathered by using specialized web engines, such as Google Scholar, or by the old-fashioned but highly rewarding system of scrolling through the reference list of other academic papers to find well-hidden gems.

Results and contributions

This section briefly presents the main findings of the dissertation, by essay. The aim is to create a restricted space where the most important results of this dissertation are presented. The four essays examine four different aspects of social stratification: the former two delve into the social

aspects of social stratification, whereas the latter two examine social stratification from an economic perspective.

Essay 1. Socio-economic status and group belonging: a non-discriminatory experiment from nineteenth century West Africa

The first study of the thesis examines the colony of Sierra Leone and its population from a socio-economic perspective. The aim of the paper is to assess whether ethnic belonging did ultimately determine individuals' socio-economic positioning in the early colonial society of Sierra Leone.

Colonial societies have been argued to be often discriminatory, both economically and socially. One such type of discrimination involved the impact on ethnic belonging on socio-economic status. In rigid hierarchical colonial societies, the ethnic groups at the bottom of the hierarchy had only limited opportunities for socio-economic advancements. The scholarship on the relationship between ethno-racial belonging and socio-economic status has focused particularly on heavily stratified societies in the Americas (Chance and Taylor 1977; Seed 1982; Tjarks 1978; McCaa 1984; Lachance 1994; Keesing 1969; Njoh 2003). There, one individual place in society could be *a priori* determined by its ethnicity belonging, elevating barriers to entry to a number of occupations and to education for those at the lower end of the hierarchy (Anderson 1988; McCaa 1984).

For its characteristics and ideals of egalitarianism, the colony of Sierra Leone can be considered to be a critical case for the study of socio-economic discrimination. Hence, this study intends to examine whether an association between ethnicity and socio-economic status could be identified in the colony, by employing census data for the entire colony of Sierra Leone for 1831. The results show that an association between ethnicity and socio-economic status could be found in the colony, suggesting the presence of a certain degree of ethnic discrimination despite alleged ideals of egalitarianism. Nevertheless, discrimination did not imply a strict occupational segregation. The results rather suggest that capable and educated individuals from each ethnic group could access most occupations without much restriction.

Essay 2. Marriage patterns in an alleged egalitarian society: Evidence from early nineteenth-century Sierra Leone

In the second study, the focus shifts from socio-economic status to ethnicity and marriage patterns. The aim of the paper is to examine whether ethnic belonging affected marriage patterns in early days Sierra Leone. Marriage choices are said to have long-term impacts on society and on social-stratification, by creating social barriers that may influence resource distribution and inequality.

Many authors have argued that marriage choices stem from a combination of opportunity and preference, where opportunity represents the chances of encountering a suitable partner in what has been termed the 'marriage market' (Becker 1973, 813–15), while preferences are intended as an individual's preferences³ for a certain partner's characteristics (Kalmijn 1998, 3997). Individuals show preferences for similarity, however similarity in

³ It is often argued that preferences are not strictly individual but can be influenced by family, community, etc. In this study, however, I treat preferences as merely individual.

stratified societies has operated most often along ethnic lines, due to strong social divide between ethnic groups (Kalmijn 1994; McCaa and Schwartz 1983). It is thus argued that the degree of exogamy, or intermarriage, could be considered as a proxy for the strength of social divide.

Sierra Leone is a particularly interesting case study for historical marriage dynamic due to its recent foundation, an unusually heterogeneous population made up mostly of former slaves, and an alleged focus on institutional egalitarianism. This study investigates the impact of ethnic belonging on marital choices in this historical ‘demographic laboratory’ by relying on previously unemployed census data for urban Sierra Leone in 1831. The results demonstrate that different ethnic groups exhibited different marriage rates, likely to be associated with gender imbalances. I find that the greater the gender imbalance, the lower the share of married individuals compared to singles. Furthermore, I find that ethnic homogamy was the prevalent marriage arrangement, in spite of the colony’s multicultural context, and that exogamy was likely driven by the absence of suitable partners from the same ethnic group. These results suggest that even in Sierra Leone, an association between marriage patterns and socio-ethnic belonging could be identified. The findings suggest that a certain social divide was already in place by 1831, lending support to the hypothesis that a social hierarchy had already emerged in the colony.

Essay 3. Colonialism and Rural Inequality in Sierra Leone: An Egalitarian Experiment

Co-authored with Klas Rönnbäck⁴

This study examines the impact of ideals of egalitarianism on institutions and, in turn, on inequality in rural Sierra Leone. It is often argued that inequality is influenced, if not determined, by institutional arrangements because these arrangements are responsible for establishing the rules of allocation of valuable resources. However, institutional arrangements do not appear in a vacuum, but may be driven by ideals and beliefs. Thus, Sierra Leone is a valuable case study due to the egalitarian ideals upon which it had been founded.

To examine whether these ideals really impacted on inequality in rural Sierra Leone, we first study resource distribution. We estimate between-household wealth inequality based on asset distribution extracted from census data for the year 1831. Secondly, we examine our newly calculated estimates of wealth inequality in global comparison.

Our results show that some assets, namely land and housing, were more equally distributed than others (livestock and apprentices). However, overall the distribution of resources in Sierra Leone was comparatively egalitarian, among the most equal so far estimated for pre-industrial societies, on similar levels as early rural settler colonies in the modern-day United States. We argue that inequality levels were influenced by the colony’s ideals of egalitarianism. Thus, our study provides supportive evidence to the hypothesis that

⁴ Prof. Rönnbäck provided the original idea and design for the essay, later developed in collaboration. I have been responsible for the assembling of all the data and for the quantitative analysis of said data. The writing of the first draft version of the essay was performed by Prof. Rönnbäck, which later has been substantially revised by both authors.

ideals can impact on the institutions driving inequality, by shaping the rules of allocation of resources in an egalitarian manner.

Essay 4. Institutions, Land redistribution and Inequality: the case of Sierra Leone, 1792-1831

Co-authored with Klas Rönnbäck⁵

Land distribution has been deemed to be an important driver of inequality in pre-industrial societies, said to have long-term implications for development (Clarke 1975; Deininger and Feder 2001, among others). Although often unequally distributed, the study of land inequality and its determinants has only received limited attention. This essay aims at contributing to the scholarship on land inequality by studying the development of land inequality in the colony of Sierra Leone over time.

Sierra Leone was founded on principles not dissimilar from those of most British settler colonies of the time: egalitarianism and agricultural labour as a means of civilization. However, in the mind of its abolitionist founders, these factors assumed greater relevance in West Africa than elsewhere. An egalitarian distribution of land was intended to foster the rise of a class of small black landowners able to produce agricultural produce more efficiently than enslaved labour, thus proving the inefficacy of enslavement and ultimately of the slave trade. The case of Sierra Leone is, once again, valuable for the examination of the impact of ideals on inequality levels and resource distribution.

Our results demonstrate that inequality increased over time in the colony, although in its early days the colony displayed a remarkably egalitarian distribution of land among settlers. We argue that institutional policy did impact on inequality levels. Initially, redistributive policy allowed each individual to receive a set amount of land equal to that of other settlers, by category (adult men, adult women, and children). Later on, partly as a result of an unexpectedly large inflow of new settlers, redistributive policy was modified. Settlers could still freely access land, however no upper or lower limit was set, and settlers could clear how much land they deemed necessary. The results suggest that the redistributive shift allowed some settlers to appropriate larger plots, while others were left landless. Overall, our study argues that egalitarian ideals played an important role in shaping institutions, although not all types of egalitarianism have the same effect on inequality levels.

Concluding discussion

The present dissertation has aimed at examining social stratification so as to shed new light on the association between ideals, institutions and colonialism, asking: *What does Sierra Leone tell us about the association between ideals, institutions and colonialism?*

⁵ The idea for the essay occurred to me while working on essay 3, when I felt that land would have required a deeper examination. The research design of this paper was then developed by both authors. The process of data collection and analysis was my responsibility. The writing of the final paper has been a collaborative effort: I drafted a first version of the essay, later revised substantially by my co-author. Numerous rounds of revisions were carried out by both authors to reach the form the reader currently sees.

By studying different aspects of social stratification in early nineteenth century colonial Sierra Leone, this dissertation has intended to provide new evidence to the debate on colonialism, ultimately suggesting the need for a more nuanced approach towards European colonialism in Africa specifically, and colonialism in general. The essays in this dissertation suggest that social stratification and colonial institutions are far from being the result solely, or largely, of factor endowments, as numerous authors have suggested in recent times, neither have they emerged because of the process of settlement in and by itself. Rather, this study shows that institutions can very well be influenced, if not determined, by ideals and values to an extent that so far has been neglected in studies of colonialism. Thus, it would seem as if benevolent institutions could appear elsewhere than white settler colonies in spite of climate and epidemiology, even in an African context inhabited by black settlers such as that of Sierra Leone, the 'White Man's grave' *par excellence*

The first essay examined the association between ethnicity and socio-economic status by studying the following research question: (1) *Did ethnic belonging affect socio-economic status in the early colonial context of Sierra Leone?* Colonies have been found to be often discriminatory and segregated under economic and social perspectives. Ethnicity is one discriminatory element that affected individuals' socio-economic status. I have examined whether an association between ethnicity and socio-economic status could be identified for Sierra Leone, where ideals of egalitarianism and non-discrimination were allegedly at play. I find that in Sierra Leone such logic applied, although did not transform discrimination into occupational segregation. Surely, certain groups were overly represented in high socio-economic status occupations, nevertheless I find individuals from all ethnic groups represented in high-status positions. I thus conclude that Sierra Leone was not a rigid society in terms of socio-economic status, an outcome likely to be imputable to a recent foundation, and the egalitarian and non-discriminatory ideals upon which the colony had been founded.

The second essay examined the social structure of the colony from the perspective of marriage patterns, attempting to answer to the research question: (2) *Did ethnic belonging impact on marriage patterns in colonial Sierra Leone?* The essay examines whether and how ethnic belonging affected marriage patterns and partner choice in a colony characterized by a high degree of ethnic heterogeneity. Marriage theory has argued that individuals tend to choose homogamy, even more so in rigid societies where social divide between groups is strong. The evidence from Sierra Leone confirms that individuals showed a preference for ethnic homogamy. However, if suitable partners were not available because of unbalanced sex-ratios, I find that individuals were more likely not to marry or to choose partners from other ethnic groups. Despite egalitarian ideals affecting occupational choices, here I find that patterns of partner choice seem to reflect the existence of a vertical hierarchy among ethnic groups in the colony already by 1831, thus suggesting that ideals of egalitarianism had less relevance in the intimate context of marital relations.

The third and fourth essay have been concerned with another aspect of social stratification, that of economic inequality. To what extent the colony had been able to achieve its aim of creating an equal society in economic terms was examined in the last two essays. The third essay was concerned with the question: (3) *How unequal was the early nineteenth century colony of Sierra Leone in a comparative perspective? Did ideals affect inequality levels?* The newly

estimated inequality levels for Sierra Leone suggest that the colony did actually record low levels of wealth inequality in a global perspective, much lower than most other colonies for which this type of inequality had been estimated. Furthermore, Sierra Leone's inequality estimates are in line with those arrived at for white settler colonies in North America at a similar stage of development. This finding confirms the hypothesis that Sierra Leone had more in common with white settler colonies than with other tropical colonies of the time.

The fourth essay examined the following question: (4) *Did land inequality change over time in the colony of Sierra Leone? If so, what was the driver of change?* The essay extended the examination of inequality by including land distribution, considered to be an important element contributing to inequality in pre-industrial societies. The evidence presented in the essay demonstrates that land inequality was initially very low, but it increased substantially over time. The result corroborates the theory that ideals of equality affected resource distribution in the colony of Sierra Leone through the channel of institutional policy. Furthermore, the essay suggests that most of the increase in inequality could be imputed to shifts in redistributive policy determined by the re-definition of egalitarianism, following the incapacity of the state to provide for a rapidly growing population. The move from equality of outcome to equality of opportunity reshaped the rules of allocation of land so to allow for a much larger variation in the size of land that the settlers owned. Thus, ideals underlying institutions determined the level of inequality and the ability of the colony to achieve and maintain its goal of equality among settlers over time.

This dissertation finds that, overall, Sierra Leone was a remarkable example of an egalitarian colony under most perspectives, an example that European colonialism in Africa could differ from the picture that most studies portray. The ideals upon which the colony had been allegedly founded appear to have acted upon in practice, with the exception of marriage choices, which affect a very intimate sphere of each person's life. Hence, this dissertation argues that the experience of the colony of Sierra Leone in its early stages confirms the hypothesis that the colony had more in common with white settler colonies across the globe, in terms of ideas and outcomes, than with other African societies or tropical colonies of the time.

With the caution that generalization from a case study may require, the present dissertation suggests that the contribution of ideas to the development of institutions and their ultimate impact on social stratification should be more emphasized, at the expense of some a-historical and deterministic mechanisms that have characterized a certain scholarship of colonialism. Eventually, the case study of Sierra Leone may be considered to be a call for the development of an analytical approach able to capture the variety of aspects that characterize the development of institutions, and of colonial institutions in particular.

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Svensk Sammanfattning

Denna avhandling diskuterar social stratifiering i det koloniala Sierra Leone, med syftet att ge nya bevis på kopplingen mellan värderingar, institutioner och ojämlikhet. Sierra Leone är en användbar fallstudie på detta område, eftersom den låter oss studera social stratifiering i ett påstått jämlikt sammanhang.

Avhandlingen består av ett inledande kapitel och fyra forskningsartiklar. Artiklarna granskar fyra aspekter som bidrar till social stratifiering. De första två artiklarna fokuserar på de sociala aspekterna av social stratifiering, nämligen socioekonomisk status och äktenskapsmönster. Den tredje och fjärde undersöker social stratifiering och ojämlikhet ur ett ekonomiskt perspektiv. Målet är att använda Sierra Leone som fallstudie för att skildra en bild av europeisk kolonialism i Afrika som skiljer sig från det som ofta beskrivs i litteraturen.

Den första artikeln studerar sambandet mellan etnisk tillhörighet och socioekonomisk status i det koloniala Sierra Leones begynnelse. Resultaten tyder på att en viss grad av etnisk diskriminering präglade koloniens socioekonomiska struktur, trots de egalitära värderingar som den påstås ha grundats på. Etnisk diskriminering ledde emellertid inte till en sträng yrkesuppdelning, då individer från de flesta etniska grupper kunde hittas över hela det socioekonomiska spektrumet.

Den andra artikeln lägger fokus på kopplingen mellan etnisk tillhörighet och äktenskapsmönster. Studien visar att endogami var den vanligaste formen av äktenskap i det koloniala Sierra Leone, trots egalitära ideal och etnisk heterogenitet. Detta visar på en koppling mellan etnisk tillhörighet och äktenskapsmönster, samt antyder att det förekom en etnisk social indelning i kolonin. Vidare visar uppsatsen att exogami uppstod i kluster inom etniska grupper, ett konstaterande som stöder hypotesen om förekomsten av en vertikal etnisk hierarki i det koloniala Sierra Leone.

Den tredje artikeln studerar påståendet att jämlikhetsideal påverkar ojämlikhetsnivåerna, genom att studera ojämlikhet i lantliga områden i det koloniala Sierra Leone. Resultaten visar att fördelningen av resurser mellan hushållen var ganska jämlik jämfört med världen i övrigt. Ojämlikheten i rikedom för det koloniala Sierra Leone ligger i dess begynnelse i nivå med vad som beräknats för andra lantliga bosättarkolonier i Nordamerika. Resultaten stödjer hypotesen om att ideal kan påverka institutionerna som driver ojämlikhet, så att de utformar mer egalitära regler för fördelning av resurser.

Den fjärde artikeln studerar utvecklingen av markfördelning i det koloniala Sierra Leone under de första fyrtio åren av koloniens existens. Resultaten visar att även om egalitära principer reglerade markfördelningen så ökade ojämlikheten i landet under perioden. I artikeln hävdas att skiftet i den typ av egalitarism som låg bakom laddistributionen var den största bidragande faktorn till den ökade ojämlikheten.

Resultaten i denna avhandling tyder på att Sierra Leone var en ganska jämlik koloni ur de flesta perspektiv, och att institutionerna påverkades av egalitära ideal, dock inte alla i samma utsträckning. Föreliggande avhandling ger slutligen bevis som stöder existensen av en koppling mellan ideal, institutioner och social stratifiering i ett kolonialt sammanhang.

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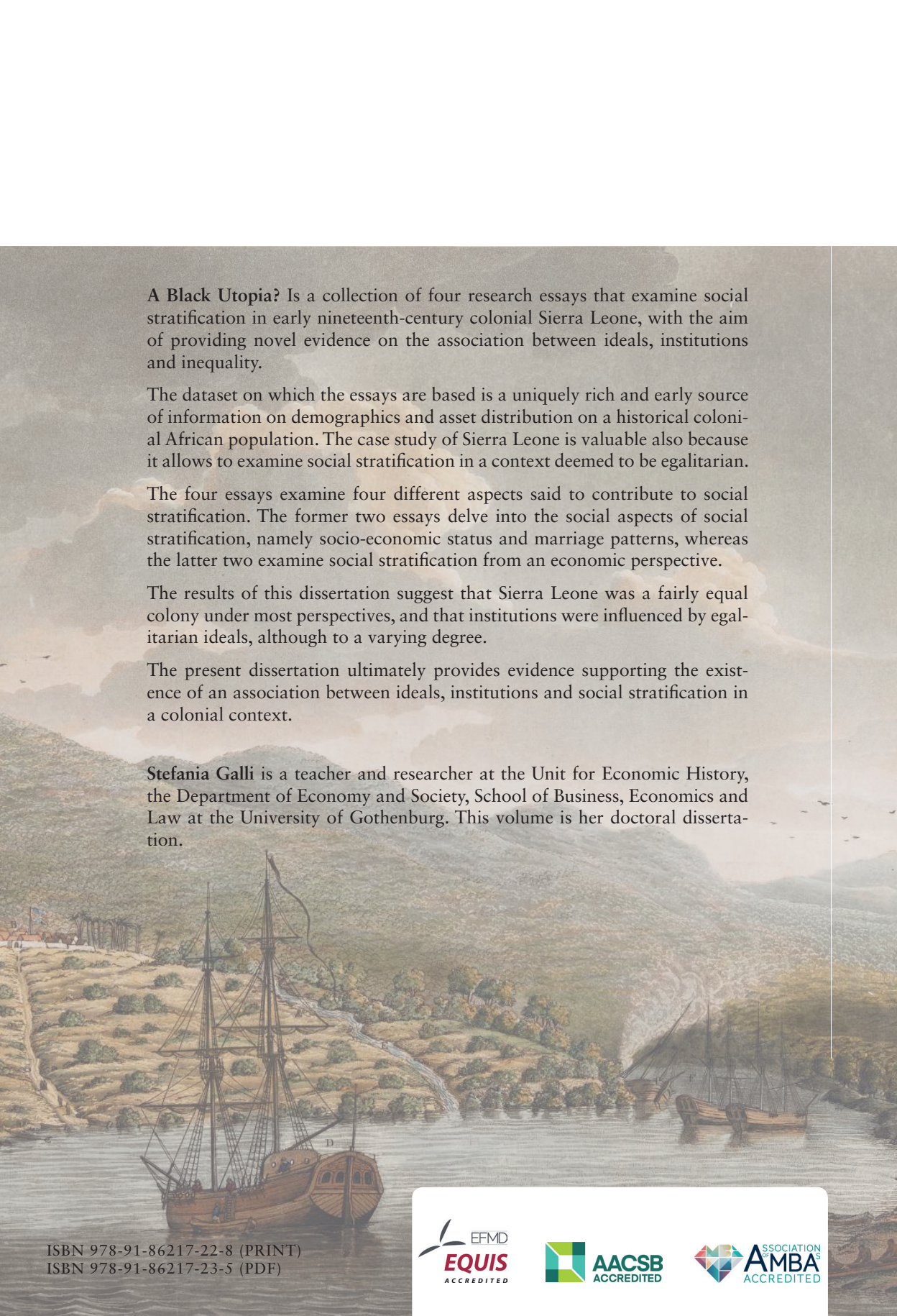
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A Black Utopia? Is a collection of four research essays that examine social stratification in early nineteenth-century colonial Sierra Leone, with the aim of providing novel evidence on the association between ideals, institutions and inequality.

The dataset on which the essays are based is a uniquely rich and early source of information on demographics and asset distribution on a historical colonial African population. The case study of Sierra Leone is valuable also because it allows to examine social stratification in a context deemed to be egalitarian.

The four essays examine four different aspects said to contribute to social stratification. The former two essays delve into the social aspects of social stratification, namely socio-economic status and marriage patterns, whereas the latter two examine social stratification from an economic perspective.

The results of this dissertation suggest that Sierra Leone was a fairly equal colony under most perspectives, and that institutions were influenced by egalitarian ideals, although to a varying degree.

The present dissertation ultimately provides evidence supporting the existence of an association between ideals, institutions and social stratification in a colonial context.

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