

Prison Labor: The Price of Prisons and the Lasting Effects of Incarceration

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Negative. Colonial imprisonment correlates with lower trust in police and courts, but not lower interpersonal trust.

Contribution

- ▶ First quantitative exploration of the role of the colonial prison system and its long-run legacies.
 - ▶ New data and estimates of the value of convict labor to British colonial Nigeria
 - ▶ Examines both drivers and effects of prison labor

Three sets of comments

1. Estimating the value of prison labor
2. Evidence on incentives for incarceration
3. Long-term effects

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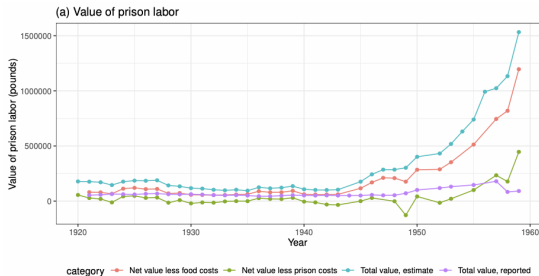
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 - ▶ Not all convicts employable
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- ▶ Any way to quantify (even for a subset of years) what convicts produced?

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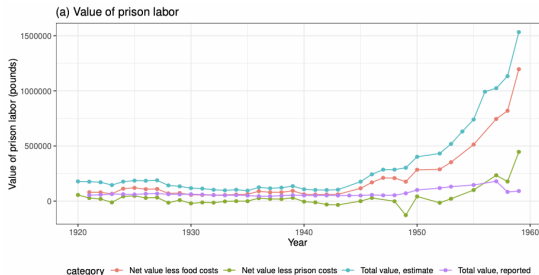
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- What happens after 1945? This period also seems to drive the correlation between daily average number in prison and wages.

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 - ▶ Substitution with Native prisons?
 - ▶ More coercion as a way to exert more direct control on profitable sector?

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- ▶ What is the connection between prison labor and other forms of forced labor or surplus extraction?

Incentives for incarceration

Table A4: Rainfall shocks and crop yields, 1992-1995

Outcome:	Yield per area				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Rainfall Dev	-0.114 (4.254) [0.985]				
Rainfall Dev Sq	-17.309*** (4.479) [0.000]				
Positive rainfall shock (M)		-2.433 (1.984) [0.287]	-0.952 (0.985) [0.353]		
Negative rainfall shock (E)		-3.195* (1.718) [0.109]		-3.523** (1.679) [0.078]	
Positive rainfall shock (E)		-17.081*** (2.275) [0.000]			-14.587*** (0.723) [0.000]
Mean of outcome	2.827	2.827	2.827	2.827	2.827
<i>Observations</i>	122	122	122	122	122
<i>Clusters</i>	31	31	31	31	31
District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Incentives for incarceration

- ▶ Relationship between rainfall and productivity improperly specified?
- ▶ Non-parametric estimations to figure out how rainfall relates to yields?

Long-term effects

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 - ▶ Compare imprisonment at times of peak estimated extraction vs other times?
- ▶ How much of the correlation between colonial imprisonment and contemporary trust is driven by persistence of extractive motives vs 'memory' of past treatment?
 - ▶ Compare imprisonment in location vs imprisonment in ethnic groups' origin (Nunn & Wantchekon, 2011)

Conclusion

- ▶ New and detailed documentation of colonial prison system, its function and its effects
- ▶ New knowledge and new questions:
 - ▶ How does prison labor fit in the menu of extractive and state-building strategies of colonial states (van Waijenburg, 2018)?
 - ▶ Is prison labor as an extractive system abandoned after independence? What is its legacy for postcolonial regimes?