

**Economics 172**  
**Issues in African Economic Development**

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**Issues in African Economic Development**

Lecture 20 – April 5, 2007



**Outline:**

- (1) Historical population density and political power in Africa (Herbst 2000)**

# Population density and politics in Africa

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# Population density and politics in Africa

- The basic idea: historically, land was abundant in Africa and population was low. The scarce resource was labor not land
- Wars in Sub-Saharan Africa traditionally were over control of labor and livestock (the valuable scarce resources) rather than the control of land
- The result is that warfare and politics look very different historically in Africa than in Europe or Asia, with their much higher population densities

## Table 1.1, 1900 population densities

<u>Region</u>	<u>Density in 1900 (people/km<sup>2</sup>)</u>
Japan	118.2
Europe	62.9
China	45.6
South Asia	38.2
Sub-Saharan Africa	4.4
Latin America	3.7

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- Why was population density so low in Africa?
  - (i) Tropical disease;
  - (ii) Low agricultural productivity;
  - (iii) The slave trade

# Population density and politics in Africa

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  - Forced labor / slavery may have been one reaction to this threat by rulers

# Population density and politics in Africa

- This picture begins to change in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, in part due to the importation of millions of guns as part of the Slave Trade
- Larger states emerge during this period – Sokoto Emirate in Nigeria, Zulu Empire in Southern Africa, Buganda in Uganda, Ashanti in Ghana. Other important pre-colonial states include Swahili-Omani Kingdom, Ethiopia, Liberia, ...

# The rise of European colonialism

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- Why did Europeans decide to conquer Africa, after being content with trade for hundreds of years?
  - (1) The use of quinine greatly reduced the threat of malaria for Europeans
  - (2) The invention of the machine gun (the Maxim gun) greatly increased their relative military might
  - (3) Growing imperial rivalries within Europe (Germany versus France versus UK)

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<u>Imperial Power</u>	<u>1935</u>	<u>1963</u>
British colonies	0.02	0.09
French colonies	0.01	0.04
Belgian Congo	0.02	0.07
South Africa	0.11	0.27

# The European colonial legacy

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- Herbst (2000) fundamentally stresses continuities in African political economy – pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial – conditioned by the physical environment
- The European colonial period in most of Sub-Saharan Africa is relatively brief, roughly 1890s-1960s
- Sharp contrast with long-term European colonialism in Asia (e.g., British in India, Dutch in Indonesia) which lasted for centuries and probably left a deeper institutional imprint

Outline:

- (1) Historical population density and political power in Africa (Herbst 2000)
- (2) **Bates (2001) on agricultural marketing policies**

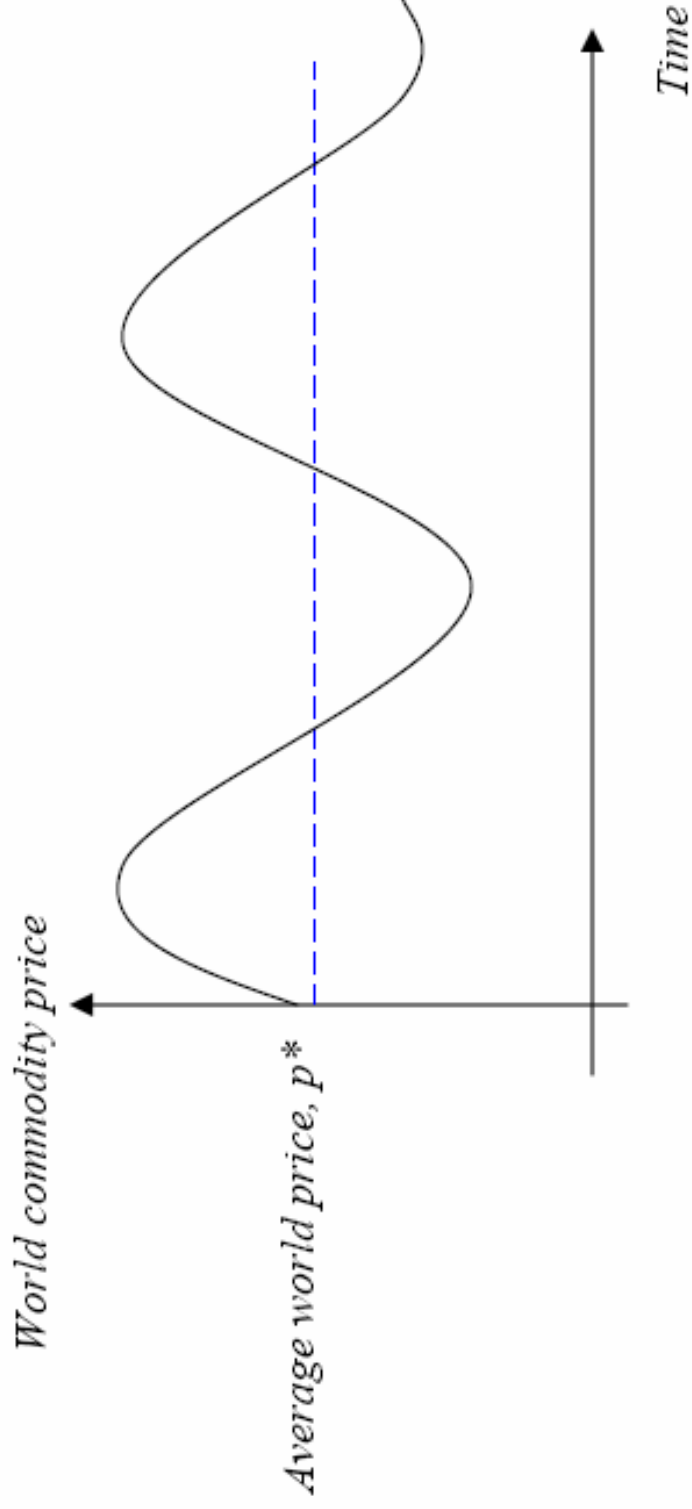
# Agricultural marketing in colonial Africa

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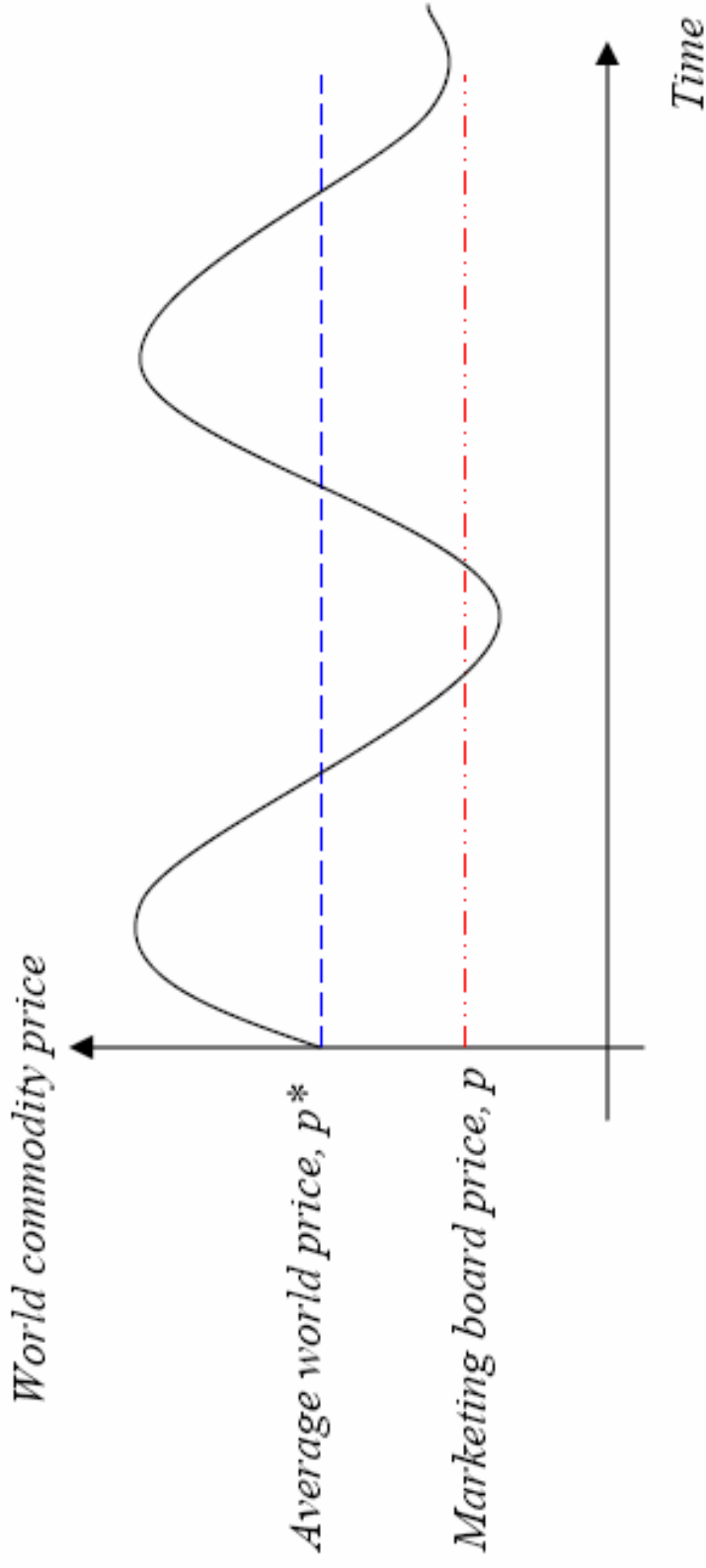


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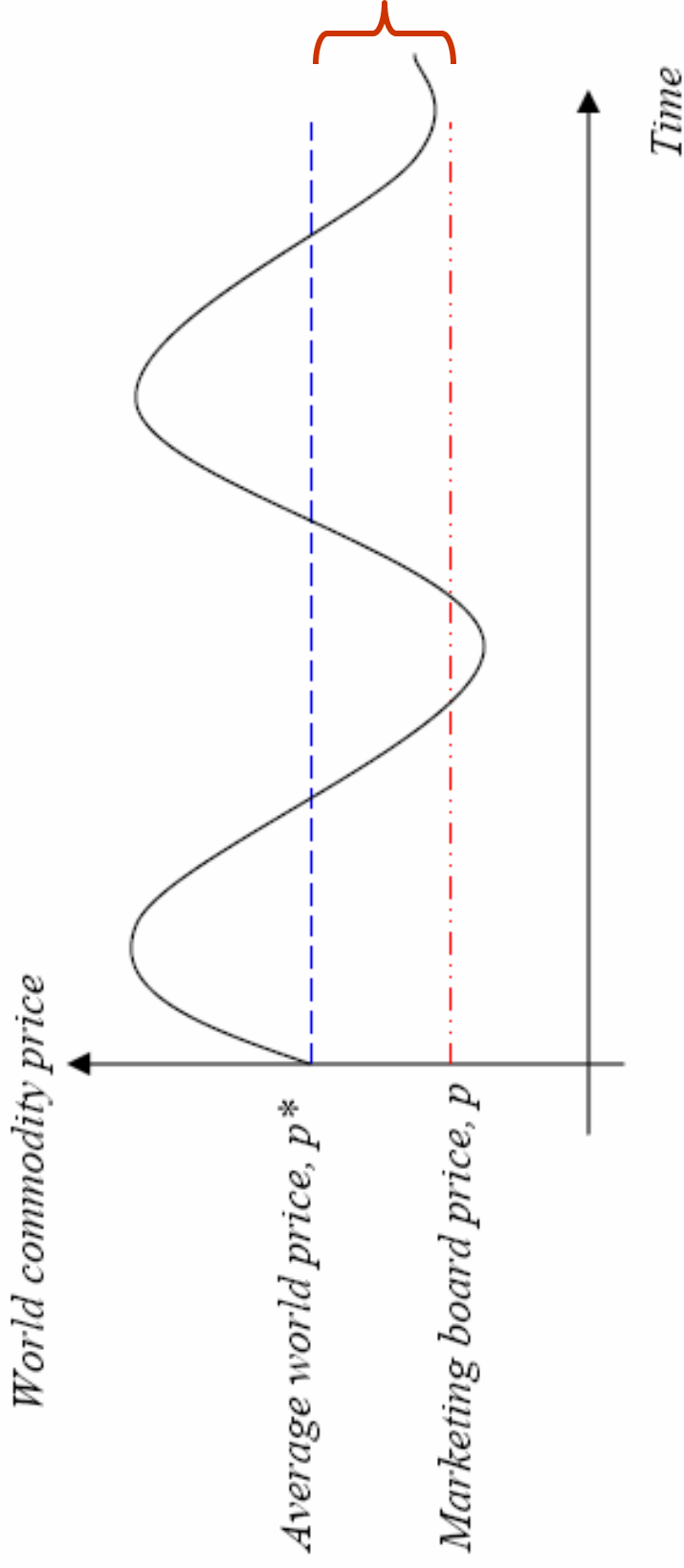
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- For next time: read Bates (1981), weeks 12-13

# Whiteboard #1

# Whiteboard #2

# Whiteboard #3



# Whiteboard #4

# Whiteboard #5

