

Laurence Radford

December 24th, 2020

2020 highlights from Africa at LSE

0 comments | 2 shares

Estimated reading time: 2 minutes



Browse a selection of our top posts from 2020, covering the latest research and critical commentaries from and about the African continent.

As the world adapted to a new normal in 2020, Africa at LSE changed how we engage our authors and their work. Our **new research networks**, reporting on the pandemic from across the continent, combined on-the-ground reportage with **rapid surveys** to chart political responses, impacts on people's livelihoods, and micro to macro transformations. At the same time, we continued to highlight the year's most innovative, in-depth social science research. Reflecting on wider trends, especially where these met the year's unprecedented ruptures, we have sought to situate **breaking stories** within the many upheavals, and evolutions, across African society.

In case you missed anything, we've selected widely read posts from 2020 for you below, which raise issues as relevant today as when they were published. Thank you for your support, and all the best for the year ahead.

In peace.



Military confrontation in Ethiopia, Trump and the geopolitics of dams

Ethiopia's internal conflicts have escalated at a time it needs unity for its tense relations with Egypt and Sudan resulting from the GERD infrastructure project. Outgoing Donald Trump's interjection into the controversy has only exacerbated the issue, with little regard for complexity in the region.

[Read the blog post here.](#)



Did British colonial rule in Africa foster a legacy of corruption among local elites?

Corruption is considered one of the main contributors to Africa's development challenges, but less is known about the determinants of corruption and why the levels of corruption vary between countries. A new study finds that the legacy of colonial rule and its influence on local elites (chiefs) may be part of the explanation.

[Read the blog post here.](#)



Afro-Asian comrades and the buttressing of political order

Afro-Asian relations have made a spectacular comeback in recent decades, but a focus on commercial ties overlooks the crucial endurance of policy emulation, deep partnerships between political parties and ideological influencing.

[Read the blog post here.](#)



Contemporary research must stop relying on racial inequalities

With international collaboration common to international research, race frequently structures the professional hierarchies of projects. But are there problems with researchers believing they are 'doing things differently'?

[Read the blog post here.](#)



Why trade matters for African development

Trade can be a driver of growth, sustainable development and poverty reduction. But rather than automatic, the process requires trade policies that are dynamic, inclusive and responsive to constantly changing national, regional and global contexts.

[Read the blog post here.](#)



Do COVID-19 conspiracy theories challenge public health delivery?

The Ugandan government's severe response to COVID-19 has encouraged endless debate over the virus' origins, in the face of unclear global explanations. Conspiracy theories and rumours proliferate, especially in regions with no recorded infections.

[Read the blog post here.](#)



An experiment on foreign aid and public spending changed our thinking on aid effectiveness

Foreign aid is often accused of promoting corruption and hurting development by encouraging recipient governments to reallocate budgets away from needed areas. A recent experiment in Malawi to test whether aid crowds out public spending found each project crowds out about 22%.

[Read the blog post here.](#)



Life in Kampala under lockdown: in photos

Uganda is under lockdown with a curfew and extensive restrictions on movement to contain the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. Photographer, painter, poet and social activist De Lovie captures the market vendors following the government's sleep-where-you-work order to prevent the virus' transmission.

[Read the blog post here.](#)



Why publishing in Kiswahili can transform knowledge production on eastern Africa

Africa's contribution to knowledge production on its own region has long been suppressed by the infrastructures of international publishing. By publishing in both English and Kiswahili, a new journal focused on eastern Africa aims to foster dialogue between previously siloed schools of thought.

[Read the blog post here.](#)



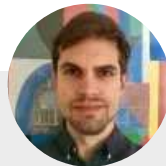
The politics of food relief in Uganda's COVID-19 era

As government responses to COVID-19 ban citizens from distributing food, questions in Uganda about who supplies food relief has caused political tensions. An emerging consensus considers food distribution to be instrumentalised ahead of upcoming elections.

[Read the blog post here.](#)

Photo: President Cyril Ramaphosa receives PPEs from Naspers, 30 April 2020. Credit: GCIS (CC BY-ND 2.0).

About the author



Laurence Radford

Laurence is the Communications Manager for the Firoz Lalji Centre for Africa and Editor of Africa at LSE. Laurence is the former Communications Director of Zed Books and Managing Editor at the University of Manchester, where he was a