

SOEREN J. HENN

Department of Political Science
University of Wisconsin–Madison
214 North Hall, 1050 Bascom Mall
Madison, WI 53706

+1 857-218-0826
sjhenn@wisc.edu
soerenhenn.com

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Political Economy, Comparative Politics, Development Economics, Economic History.

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

University of Wisconsin–Madison, 2024–
Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science
Courtesy Affiliate, Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, 2026–
Faculty Affiliate, African Studies Program

Newcastle University, Business School, Lecturer in Economics (equivalent to Assistant Professor), 2022–2024

University of Chicago, Pearson Institute, Postdoctoral Fellow, 2021–2022

Innovations for Poverty Action, Peace & Recovery, Postdoctoral Fellow, 2019–2021

EDUCATION

PhD, Political Economy & Government, Harvard University, 2013–2019.
Committee: Torben Iversen, Horacio Larreguy, Nathan Nunn, and Pia Raffler.

BA, Politics, University of Essex, 2010–2013. *With Distinction*.

PUBLICATIONS

- [1] Soeren J. Henn, Laura Paler, Wilson Prichard, Cyrus Samii, and Raúl Sánchez de la Sierra. “Seeing like a Citizen: Experimental Evidence on How Empowerment Affects Engagement with the State.” *American Journal of Political Science*, forthcoming. [PDF](#).
- [2] Soeren J. Henn and James A. Robinson. 2026. “African Success Stories.” *Annual Review of Economics*, 18:447–471. [Open Access PDF](#). Coverage: [The Economist](#), [Marginal Revolution](#), [This Week in Africa](#), and [VoxDev](#).
- [3] Soeren J. Henn, Horacio Larreguy, and Carlos Schmidt-Padilla. 2026. “Missionary Competition, Education, and Long-run Political Development: Evidence from Africa.” *Comparative Political Studies*, 59(9):1896–1931. [PDF](#).
- [4] Aimable Amani Lameke, Soeren J. Henn, Christian Mastaki Mugaruka, and Vincent Tanutama. 2026. “Urbanization and State-Society Relations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Examining Political Change in Emerging Urban Agglomerations.” *World Development*, 199:107219. [Published Version](#).
- [5] Soeren J. Henn, Christian Mastaki Mugaruka, Miguel Ortiz, Raúl Sánchez de la Sierra, and David Qihang Wu. 2025. “Monopoly of Taxation Without a Monopoly of Violence: The Weak State’s Trade-Offs From Taxation.” *Review of Economic Studies*, 92(2):1126–1156. [Accepted Version](#).
- [6] Soeren J. Henn and Connor Huff. 2024. “The Local Memory of Repression and Who Fights.” *World Politics*, 76(2):219–258. [Accepted Version](#).

- [7] Soeren J. Henn. 2023. “Complements or Substitutes? How Institutional Arrangements Bind Traditional Authorities and the State in Africa.” *American Political Science Review*, 117(3):871–890. [Open Access PDF](#). Honorable Mention for APCG Best Article Award 2023. Coverage: [Development Impact](#) and [This Week in Africa](#).
- [8] Soeren J. Henn and James A. Robinson. 2023. “Africa’s Latent Assets.” *Journal of African Economies*, 32:i9–i32. [Open Access PDF](#). Coverage: [Brookings](#), [LSE Business Review](#), [Marginal Revolution](#), [This Week in Africa](#), and [VoxEU](#).

WORKING PAPERS

- Soeren J. Henn, Gauthier Marchais, and Raúl Sánchez de la Sierra. “Direct or Indirect Rule? Armed Groups and Customary Chiefs in Eastern Congo.” *Revise & Resubmit*, *Journal of Political Economy*. [PDF](#).
- Soeren J. Henn and Vincent Tanutama. “State Expansion and Social Responses in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.” [PDF](#).
- Soeren J. Henn, Horacio Larreguy, and John Marshall. “How Unobserved Investments Inhibit Public Service Delivery Improvement in Corrupt Environments.” [PDF](#).
- Soeren J. Henn and Harry Pickard. “Institutional Origins and the Balance of Power: Long-run Effects of the Danelaw Boundary on English State Formation.” *Draft available*.
- Oeindrila Dube, Soeren J. Henn, and James A. Robinson. “Farmer–Herder Violence in Nigeria.” *Draft available*.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

- Soeren J. Henn, Horacio Larreguy, and John Marshall. “The Effect of Drug-related Violence on Local State Capacity.”
- Gildfred Asiamah, Soeren J. Henn, and Vincent Tanutama. “The Electoral Consequences of Decentralization Reform in the DRC.”
- Soeren J. Henn, Connor Huff, Conner Joyce, Emily Myers, and Kaitlyn Robinson. “Wartime Violence and Political Participation: Evidence from Reconstruction.”
- Soeren J. Henn, Nuno Palma, and James A. Robinson. “Negotiating Power: Local Agency and European Strategy in Precolonial Africa.”
- Brice Beicon Denakpo, Marine Gassier, Soeren J. Henn, and Connor Huff. “Perspective-Sharing, Mediation, and Resources: Testing Strategies to Repair Farmer–Herder Relations in Northern Benin.”

POLICY WRITING & CONSULTING

- Soeren J. Henn. 2021. “Political Economy Analysis of Decentralization and the Imihigo Process in Rwanda: A Review of the Literature.” *USAID DRG Learning, Evaluation, and Research Activity*. Prepared as consultant for NORC & USAID.
- Alexandre Arrobbio, Soeren J. Henn, Pascal Jaupart, and Michel Maellberg. 2021. “Deployment of Public Resources, Service Delivery, and Stability: Evidence from Niger.” *World Bank Group Policy Report and Working Paper*. Prepared as consultant for the World Bank Governance Unit.
- Consulting*: World Bank Governance Unit, Policy Note on State Deployment in the Sahel Region, 2019.

GRANTS

- 2026 Innovations for Poverty Action Peace & Recovery Initiative Grant, over \$100,000 (with Brice Beicon Denakpo, Marine Gassier, and Connor Huff) Reducing Conflict and Improving Performance in the Economy (ReCIPE) Big Research Grants, £79,040

- 2023 Pearson Institute Research and Innovation Fund, over \$20,000 (with Raúl Sánchez de la Sierra)
- 2022 UNU-WIDER grant, over €10,000 (with Gauthier Marchais and Raúl Sánchez de la Sierra)
- 2021 Fonds d'Innovation pour le Développement grant, €286,037 (with Oeindrila Dube and James A. Robinson)
- 2020 International Growth Centre grant, £107,606
USAID Development Innovation Ventures (DIV) grant, \$1,056,540 (with Oeindrila Dube and James A. Robinson)
Pearson Institute Research and Innovation Fund, \$12,793
- 2019 J-PAL Crime and Violence Initiative (CVI) grant, \$471,664 (with Oeindrila Dube and James A. Robinson)
- 2018 CAF Latin American Development Bank research grant, over \$10,000 (with Horacio Larreguy and John Marshall)
- 2017 Harvard IQSS graduate research grant, \$2,300
- 2016 Harvard IQSS graduate research grant, \$2,200
- 2015 Harvard IQSS graduate research grant, \$2,389

HONORS & AWARDS

- 2024 Honorable Mention, 2023 African Politics Conference Group Best Article Award
- 2023 Outstanding Early Career Researcher of the Year, Economics, Newcastle University Business School
- 2019 Harvard Certificate of Distinction in Teaching
- 2018 Harvard Certificate of Distinction in Teaching
- 2013 Oscar Arias Prize in Politics (best thesis in politics), University of Essex
Athlete Scholar Award, University of Essex

TEACHING

Primary instructor unless noted otherwise.

University of Wisconsin–Madison

Introduction to State Building (undergraduate): Fall 2025 & Fall 2026.

Honors Seminar in State Building (undergraduate): Fall 2025.

Political Data Science (undergraduate): Fall 2024 & Spring 2026.

Political Economy of Development (PhD): Spring 2025.

Newcastle University

Topics in Microeconomics (master's): Spring 2024.

Research Methods in Economics and Finance (master's): Fall 2023.

Development Economics (undergraduate): Fall 2022 & Fall 2023.

Microeconomic Analysis (undergraduate): Fall 2022 & Fall 2023 (seminar instructor).

Harvard University

Senior Thesis Research Seminar in Political Economy, Development, and Econometrics (undergraduate): Fall 2018 & Spring 2019.

Analyzing Politics (undergraduate): Spring 2016 & Spring 2017 (teaching assistant for Kenneth Shepsle).

The Future of Globalization: Issues, Actors, and Decisions (undergraduate): Fall 2016 (teaching assistant for Robert Lawrence and Larry Summers).

Rethinking Financial Inclusion: Smart Design for Policy and Practice (executive education): April 2016 (teaching assistant for Asim Khwaja).

Other

Approaches to Research on African Development (PhD): Summer 2024
(co-instructor with Sara Lowes, Nathan Nunn, and James A. Robinson).

TALKS & CONFERENCES

Invited Talks

- 2026 University of California, Los Angeles
- 2025 Washington University in St. Louis
- 2023 Arthur Lewis Lab, University of Manchester
University of Bristol
- 2021 Kiel Institute for the World Economy
Princeton University
- 2019 World Bank, Governance Unit
- 2016 German Development Institute (DIE)

Conferences

- 2026 American Economic Association; American Political Science Association;
Midwest International Economic Development Conference (MWIEDC);
New Perspectives on the Political Economy of Development Conference;
Royal Economic Society; Third Annual Historical Political Economy
Conference
- 2025 CGM Workshop on the Future of Development, University of Pittsburgh
- 2024 NBER Summer Institute Development Workshop; NOVAFRICA
Conference on Economic Development; BSE Summer Forum Political
Economy Workshop; BSE Summer Forum Public Economics Workshop;
European Political Science Association; LSE Workshop on Institutions and
Political Economy in Historical Perspective; CSAE Conference: Economic
Development in Africa
- 2023 European Workshop in Empirical Political Science; Governance and Local
Development Institute Annual Conference; European Economic
Association; Royal Economic Society; TwoSaNe
- 2022 NBER Political Economy Meeting (Discussant); Africa Meeting of the
Econometric Society; Midwest Political Science Association
- 2021 Development Day, Notre Dame
- 2020 American Political Science Association
- 2019 American Political Science Association; BREAD Conference on
Development Economics; Midwest Political Science Association; Northeast
Universities Development Consortium (NEUDC)
- 2018 American Political Science Association; Northeast Workshop in Empirical
Political Science
- 2017 Midwest Political Science Association; American Political Science
Association; African Studies Association
- 2016 Midwest Political Science Association; Formal Theory and Comparative
Politics Conference; Boston Working Group on African Political Economy
Workshop
- 2014 European Political Science Association; African Studies Association

Policy Talks

- 2026 Agence Française de Développement
- 2025 Agence Française de Développement
Search for Common Ground
USAID
World Bank Group

Community Talks

2026 UW–Green Bay Great Decisions Lecture Series
CIRA—Anti-Colonial Dreams, Authoritarian Realities Event
African Studies Program Writing Group Symposium
2025 Participatory Learning and Teaching Organization (PLATO)

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Editorial Board: University of Wisconsin Press, 2025–

Reviewer: American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, American Journal of Political Science, American Political Science Review, Asian Development Perspectives, Asia-Pacific Economic History Review, British Journal of Political Science, Cogent Arts & Humanities, Comparative Political Studies, Comparative Politics, Economic History of Developing Regions, Economic Journal, European Review of Agricultural Economics, GeoJournal, International Economic Review, Journal of Development Economics, Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization, Journal of the European Economic Association, Journal of Institutional Economics, Journal of Political Economy, Journal of Rural and Community Development, Perspectives on Politics, Political Analysis, Political Behavior, Political Science Research and Methods, Political Studies, Quarterly Journal of Economics, Science, South African Journal of Economics, Studies in Comparative International Development, World Development.

Member: American Economic Association, American Political Science Association, European Economic Association, Midwest Political Science Association, Royal Economic Society.

Academic Advisor: [Marakuja Kivu Research](#), Goma, DRC, 2018–

V-Dem Country Expert: Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, 2021–2022

Department Service: Faculty organizer, Comparative Politics Colloquium, 2025–2026

COMPUTING SKILLS

Agentic Coding, GIS, GitHub, L^AT_EX, MATLAB, Python, R, Stata.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

German (native), English (fluent), French (fluent), Spanish (intermediate), Swahili (intermediate).

Last updated: October 26, 2026.