

# MICHELE SOLLAI

## AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Global history of development
- Environmental history
- History of science & technology
- African history & European colonialism
- Transnational history of fascism(s)
- International Organizations & labour history

## ACADEMIC POSITIONS

- 05/2022-05/2024 Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) Postdoc.Mobility Fellow & Visiting Scholar at the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, Munich.
- 09/2021-05/2022 Project Assistant: Antoine Acker (PI), "AnthropoSouth: Latin American Oil-Based Futures in the Development Century. (1920-1975)". Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) Eccellenza Research Project.
- 09/2021-12/2021 Research Assistant: Corinna Unger, Amalia Ribì Forclaz (PIs), "Pesticides: Toward an International History". Collaborative Research Project European University Institute – Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies.
- 09/2018-06/2021 Teaching Assistant, International History Department, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, IHEID.

## EDUCATION

- 09/2016-10/2021 Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID), PhD in International History and Politics, defended on 8/10/2021, *summa cum laude avec félicitations du jury*.  
Thesis title: *The Thin Green Line. Farmers, Experts, and the Practice of Agrarian Development in Ethiopia (1930s-1950s)*.  
Supervisor: Amalia Ribì Forclaz. Internal Reader: Davide Rodogno. External Reader: Corinna Unger.
- 09/2014-06/2016 Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa. Faculty of Arts, History Department, Allievo del corso ordinario.
- 09/2014-06/2016 University of Pisa, M.A. in History, defended on 4/07/2016, 110/110 *cum laude*.

Thesis title: *Alle origini del Native Labour Code. L'International Labour Organization e il problema del 'native labour' (1919-1930)* [The Origins of the Native Labour Code. The International Labour Organization and the 'native labour' problem (1919-1930)]

09/2011-07/2014 University of Pisa, B.A. in History, discussed on 10/6/2014, 110/110 *cum laude*.

## PUBLICATIONS

### *Peer-reviewed Journal Articles*

- [Forthcoming] "How to Feed an Empire? Agrarian Science, Indigenous Farming, and Wheat Autarky in Italian-occupied Ethiopia (1937-1941)", *Agricultural History*, v. 96, no. 3 (2022).
- "Microcosms of Colonial Development: Italian and Ethiopian Farmers at the Crossroads of Fascist Empire Building (1937-1941)", *Contemporanea*, v. 24, no. 1 (2021): 79-101. DOI: 10.1409/100257

### *Book Reviews*

- [Forthcoming], Michele Sollai, Book Review of Diana Garvin, *Feeding Fascism: The Politics of Women's Food Work* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2022). George L. Mosse Program in History Blog, University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- Michele Sollai, Book Review of Felicitas Becker, *The Politics of Poverty: Policy-Making and Development in Rural Tanzania*, (Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019). *Connections. A Journal for Historians and Area Specialists*, 20/10/2020. URL: [www.connections.clio-online.net/publicationreview/id/reb-29564](http://www.connections.clio-online.net/publicationreview/id/reb-29564).

## PRIZES, AWARDS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

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| 06/2022           | Gilbert C. Fite Dissertation Award for the best PhD Dissertation on Agricultural History, awarded by the Agricultural History Society.   |
| 05/2022 – 05/2024 | SNSF Postdoc.Mobility Fellowship. Grant: 111,900 CHF.  |
| 09/2021 – 12/2021 | Collaborative Research Project European University Institute (EUI) – Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID): Roberta Biasillo, Michele Sollai, <i>Grounding Multilateralism in Colonial Environments: the 1939 Congress of Tripoli</i> . Grant: 6000 EUR. |

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2020-2021 Teaching Assistant, International History Department, IHEID.  
Course list:
- *Histories Beyond Nation*, by Gopalan Balachandran
  - *History and Development*, by Amalia Ribí Forclaz
  - *Doctoral Seminar II*, by Nicole Bourbonnais and Cyrus Schayegh
  - *Histories of Truth, Facts and Uncertainty*, by Aidan Russell
  - *Evolution of the International System*, by Gopalan Balachandran
- 2019-2020 Teaching Assistant, International History Department, IHEID.  
Course list:
- *Humanitarians and Human Trafficking. The Global History of Slavery and Abolition, 1800-present*, by Amalia Ribí Forclaz
  - *Approaches to Global History*, by Michael Goebel
  - *International Organisations and Global Narratives*, by Annabelle Littoz-Monnet and Amalia Ribí Forclaz
  - *Doctoral Seminar II*, by Jussi Hanhimäki and Amalia Ribí Forclaz
  - *Nationalism. A Global Career*, by Michel Goebel
- 2018-2019 Teaching Assistant, International History Department, IHEID.  
Course list:
- *Global Cities in History*, by Michael Goebel
  - *Doctoral Seminar I*, by Jussi Hanhimäki and Amalia Ribí Forclaz
  - *Decolonization: A History*, by Cyrus Schayegh
  - *Evolution of the International System*, by Gopalan Balachandran
  - *History and Development*, by Amalia Ribí Forclaz

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2019 ILO External Collaborator – Preparation of the background paper for the ILO Conference “World Employment Programme: Past, Present and Future”. Referent: Gerry Rodgers (gerry.rodgers@bluewin.ch)
- 2017 ILO External Collaborator – Consultancy for the ILO Century Project (writing of a research paper on the World Employment Programme, 1969-1976 for Daniel Maul’s book *The International Labour Organization. 100 Years of Global Social Policy*). Referent: Dorothea Hoehtker ([hoehtker@ilo.org](mailto:hoehtker@ilo.org))

## LANGUAGES

- Italian (native)
- English, French (fluent)
- Spanish, Portuguese (intermediate)

## CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS, AND PRESENTATIONS

- European Rural History Organization, 5th biennial Conference, Uppsala, 20-23 June 2022. Paper: *UNRRA, FAO, and US Point Four Rural Development in Early Post-War Ethiopia: Plans, Practices, and Colonial Legacies*.
- University of Pavia, 16-17 December 2021, "Global LabourScapes: Labour in Africa: Historical and Social Dynamics". Invited speaker: *The Anti-Plantation: The 'Cotton Districts' Development Model in Italian-occupied Ethiopia and Beyond (1937-1957)*.
- Co-organizer: Pierre du Bois Doctoral Workshop : "Modernizing Landscapes: New Histories of Development and the Environment between Europe and the World", 22 October 2021. Paper presented: *The Scientific Conquest of the Empire: Agrarian Experts and the Discovery of the 'Local' in Italian-occupied Ethiopia*.
- Agricultural History Society Annual Meeting, "Challenging Crops and Climates" 1-5 June 2021, Online Conference. Panel organized: "Agrarian Development From Planning to Practice. Paper presented: *How to Feed an Empire? Agrarian Science, Indigenous Farming, and Wheat Autarky in Italian-occupied Ethiopia (1937-1941)*.
- Oxford Transnational and Global History Seminar, 2 March 2021, Online Seminar. Paper presented: *Microcosms of colonial development Italian and Ethiopian farmers at the crossroads of fascist empire building (1937-1941)*.
- Queen's University at Kingston, Ontario, Canada, 5-6 November 2020, Virtual Workshop: "Global Histories of Colonialism". Paper presented: *From an Imperial to a Transnational Seed Network: The Quest for Wheat Autarky in Ethiopia from the Italian Occupation to Post-War International Development (1930s-1950s)*.
- University of Bern, 27-28 February 2020, Workshop: "Imaginaries of Development in the Highlands: The constitution of mountain areas as spaces for international development since 1945". Invited speaker: *Connected Histories of Agrarian Development and Rural Reconstruction in the Ethiopian Highlands (1930-1950s)*.
- Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa, 24-25 February 2020, "Dal Governo del Lavoro al Governo della Società: Cent'anni di Organizzazione Internazionale del Lavoro". Invited speaker: *Uno 'sviluppo dal volto umano'. L'Organizzazione Internazionale del Lavoro e la creazione del Programma Mondiale per l'Impiego (1969-1976)*.
- African Studies Association (ASA) Annual Meeting, Boston, 21-23 November 2019. Paper presented: *Microcosms of colonial development. Italian and Ethiopian farmers at the crossroads of fascist empire building (1937-1941)*.

- Society for the History of Technology, Annual Meeting, Museo della Scienza, Milan, 24-27 October 2019. Paper presented: *How to Feed an Empire? Agrarian Science, Indigenous Farming and the Development of Wheat Technology in Italian-occupied Ethiopia (1938-1941)*.
- Pierre du Bois Annual Conference, IHEID, Geneva, 3-4 October 2019. Invited speaker, paper presented: *Modernization Adjusted. Italian Agrarian Expertise and Ethiopian Farmers at the Crossroads of Empire Building (1937-1944)*.
- European Rural History Organization, 4th biennial Conference, Paris, 10-13 September 2019. Paper Presented: *Lessons from the Imperial Highlands. Italian Agrarian Expertise and the 'Battles for Grain' in Ethiopia (1938-1941)*.
- Justice Sociale et Travail Décent : 100 Ans d'Action de l'OIT', Ministère des Solidarités et de la Santé, Paris, 26-28 June 2019. Paper Presented: *Humanizing Development. The ILO and the Making of the World Employment Programme (1969-1976)*.
- 'Citizens and Subjects in the Italian Colonies: Legal Constructions and Social Practices (1882-1943)', Università di Napoli Federico II; Università degli studi di Milano; PRIN 2015: War and Citizenship; Sissco. Naples, 20-21 June 2019. Paper presented: *Colonial Encounters in the Countryside. Italian and Ethiopian Farmers at the Crossroads of Empire Building (1937-1944)*
- Swiss Congress of Historical Sciences, Zurich University, 5-7 June 2019. Paper Presented: *Tractors, Hybrid Seeds and Loaded Guns: Agrarian Transformation and 'Entrenched Development' in Fascist-occupied Ethiopia (1938-1941)*.
- 'Africa and World War II', Queen Mary University of London, School of History, 18 January 2019. Paper presented: *Colonial Planning, War Economy and Post-war Reconstruction in Rural Ethiopia (1936-1947)*.
- African Economic History Network Conference, 12-13 October 2018, Bologna. Paper presented: *The Thin Green Line. Colonial Planning, War Economy and the Origins of Rural Development in Ethiopia (1938-1946)*.