

Timo Särkkä, PhD, Docent in Global Economic History, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Paper and the British Empire: The Quest for Imperial Raw Materials, 1861 to 1960

Abstract

In the field of the paper industry, the speed and intensity of the industrialisation process around the globe have been shaped by a wide variety of variables, including the surrounding institutional framework, entrepreneurial and organisational strategies, the cost and accessibility of transportation, the availability of capital, knowledge, energy resources and technology, and, in particular, the constant supply of papermaking raw materials, which has historically been the most important determinant for geographical location and dominance. By taking a longitudinal perspective on these dynamics, *Paper and the British Empire* examines the evolution of the paper industry within British organisational frameworks, and highlights the role of the Empire as a market and business-making area in a world of shrinking commerce and rising trade barriers.

The research focuses on the roles played by the availability of technology, knowledge and capital on the one hand, and demand characteristics on the other, and, in particular, considers developments connected to a quest for Empire-grown raw materials to tackle the problems of the lack of indigenous raw materials and the resulting dependence on Scandinavian wood pulp imports from the establishment of a free trade system based on the gold standard in 1861 to the British entry into the Common Market in the form of the European Free Trade Association in 1960.