

2024 - Africa Training Workshop in Development Economics (AFTW1-2024)

Title: **African development from the inside**
Date: **October 2-4, 2024**

The [workshop](#), will present new research approaches which try to understand African development on its own terms, rather than what it is not. Typical approaches see Africa as having failed to take advantage of the opportunities created by the modern world and as a failed version of western modernity. It is obvious, however, that African societies were on a different track historically, for example embracing far more decentralized political systems, different and non-expansive models of international relations and a social role for economic institutions and property rights that was completely different from western societies. What types of societies were thus created? What were their successes and failures? How have they survived the experience of colonialism and the post-colonial world? How do they impact modern Africa today and what are their implications? What alternatives and opportunities do they create which are outside the mainstream imaginary? What can Africa learn from getting its past and cultural uniqueness into proper perspective to create its own development path in the way East Asian societies have?

Each of the above topics will be accompanied by a discussion of econometric techniques useful to provide quantitative contents to the questions raised. More specifically, these techniques will cover some aspects of structural estimation methods and causal inference including presenting how to employ strategies for causal inference in the specific context. An emphasis will also be on the relevant literature at the intersection of causal inference, structural models and African development issues.

This is a graduate-level course for PhD students, scholars, and professionals (with at least a master's degree).

Organizers: [Ismael Mourifie](#) (Washington University in St Louis) and [Prosper Dovonon](#) (Concordia University)

Format: **Fully remote**
Registration fees: 120 USD

Instructors:
The course is jointly taught by [Pierre Nquimkeu](#) (Georgia State University) and [James A. Robinson](#) (University of Chicago).

Schedule and Topics:
All times below are in Canada/USA Eastern Time.

	Wednesday October 2	Thursday October 3	Friday October 4
TIME Eastern time (Chicago Time)	8 AM - 11 AM (CDT) 13:00 - 16:00 (GMT)	8 AM - 11 AM (CDT) 13:00 - 16:00 (GMT)	8 AM - 11 AM (CDT) 13:00 - 16:00 (GMT)
Topics	African Development from the Inside out	African Development and Western Expansion	African Development, challenges and futures

More detailed on Topics:

October 2 - Lecture 1: African Development from the Inside out

We begin with a completely different account of African development:

Henn, Soren. J. and James A. Robinson (2024) "Africa as a Success Story," Forthcoming in the *Annual Review of Economics*.

Yes, Africa is poor and suffers from many institutional problems, but this was mostly because Africans were trying to create something very different from Eurasian historically. In many ways this succeeded, but it left Africa very vulnerable to the predatory expansion of European commercialism and colonial rule.

We study the importance of the African past for understanding the present:

Stelios Michalopoulos and Elias Papaioannou (2013) "Pre-Colonial Ethnic Institutions and Contemporary African Development," *Econometrica*, vol. 81, issue 1, 113-152.

Methodological Interlude #1: When is it OK to use OLS regression?

What were African political institutions like? For example, in Cameroon:

Merran McCulloch, Margaret Littlewood, I. Dugast (1954) *Peoples of the Central Cameroons* (Tikar. Bamum and Bamileke. Banen, Bafia and Balom): Western Africa Part IX, Ethnographic Survey of Africa, Oxford University Press.

How might this be relevant for understanding the world today? For example, in Sierra Leone:

Daron Acemoglu, Tristan Reed and James Robinson (2014) "Chiefs: Economic Development and Elite Control of Civil Society in Sierra Leone," *Journal of Political Economy*, 2014, vol. 122, issue 2, 319 – 368.

Some more consequences particularly in Cameroon:

Robinson, James A. (2023) "Tax Aversion and the Social Contract in Africa," *Journal of African Economies*, 32, Issue Supplement_1, i33–i56.

Methodological Interlude #2: Under what conditions do we have identification?

October 3 - Lecture 2: African Development and Western Expansion

The historical organization of African society made it vulnerable to the expansion of European commercialism. The most obvious facet of this was the slave trade:

Nunn, Nathan and Leonard Wantchekon (2011) "The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa," *American Economic Review*, 101 (7): 3221-3252.

Methodological Interlude #3: IV Regression. How do we exploit exogenous variations?

Slavery in Africa and its legacies today in Nigeria

Obinna J. Eze, Nina Kerkebane, Chima J. Korieh, Oluchukwu Nwonovo, James A. Robinson (2024) "The Persistence and Consequences of Slave Identities in Nkanuland, Nigeria: Some Preliminary Evidence."

What was the impact of colonialism on development?

Sara Lowes, Eduardo Montero (2012) "Concessions, Violence, and Indirect Rule: Evidence from the Congo Free State," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Volume 136, Issue 4, Pages 2047–2091.

How exploited was Africa really?

Jean-Francois Bayart (2000) "Africa in the world: a history of extraversion," *African Affairs*, Volume 99, Issue 395, April 2000, Pages 217–267.

Methodological Interlude #4: Regression Discontinuity Design.

October 4 - Lecture 3: African Development, challenges and futures

A statement of the current problem

Ekeh, Peter P. (1975) "Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 17, 1, 91-112.

The consequent equilibrium (for example in Congo ...)

Raúl Sánchez de la Sierra (2021) "On the Origins of the State: Stationary Bandits and Taxation in Eastern Congo," *Journal of Political Economy*, Volume 128, Number 1, 32-74.

Methodological Interlude #5: Differences in Differences Design.

Understanding the legacies of the past, the costs ...

Philippe Alby, Emmanuelle Auriol, Pierre Nguimkeu (2020) "Does Social Pressure Hinder Entrepreneurship in Africa? The Forced Mutual Help Hypothesis," *Economica*, Volume 87, Issue 346, Pages 299-327.

Jakiela, Pamela and Owen Ozler (2016) "Does Africa Need a Rotten Kin Theorem? Experimental Evidence from Village Economies," *Review of Economic Studies*, Vol. 83, No. 1 (294), pp. 231-268.

Nguimkeu, Pierre (2024) "Credit Constraints and Delayed Entrepreneurship » *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, forthcoming.

... and the benefits

Bledsoe, Caroline (1980) *Women and Marriage in Kpelle Society*, Stanford: Stanford University Press. Chapter 3 "Wealth in People."

Methodological Interlude #6: Theory and Structural Estimation.

... and some prospects for the future:

Henn, Soren. J. and James A. Robinson (2023) "Africa's Latent Assets," *Journal of African Economies*, 32, Issue Supplement_1, i9-i32.