



AFES Speakers' Bios



Prof. Daron Acemoglu

Daron Acemoglu is an Institute Professor of Economics in the Department of Economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and also affiliated with the National Bureau Economic Research, and the Center for Economic Policy Research. He is an elected fellow of the National Academy of Sciences, the British Academy, the American Philosophical Society, the Turkish Academy of Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Econometric Society, the European Economic Association, and the Society of Labor Economists.

Daron Acemoglu has received a BA in economics at the University of York, 1989, M.Sc. in mathematical economics and econometrics at the London School of Economics, 1990, and Ph.D. in economics at the London School of Economics in 1992. Since 1993, he has held the academic positions of Lecturer at the London School of Economics, and Assistant Professor, Pentti Kouri Associate Professor and Professor of Economics at MIT.

He is the author of five books, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (with James A. Robinson), *Introduction to Modern Economic Growth*, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* (with James A. Robinson), *Principles of Economics* (with David Laibson and John List), and *Balance of Power: States, Societies, and the Narrow Corridor to Liberty* (with James A. Robinson), forthcoming September 2019.

His academic work has been published in leading scholarly journals, including the *American Economic Review*, *Econometrica*, *Journal of Political Economy*, *Quarterly Journal Economics* and *Review of Economic Studies*. His research covers a wide range of areas within economics, including political economy, economic development and growth, human capital theory, growth theory, innovation, search theory, network economics and learning.

Daron Acemoglu has received numerous awards and fellowships, including the inaugural T. W. Shultz Prize from the University of Chicago in 2004, and the inaugural Sherwin Rosen Award for outstanding contribution to labor economics in 2004, Distinguished Science Award from the Turkish Sciences Association in 2006, the John von Neumann Award, Rajk College, Budapest in 2007, the Carnegie Fellowship in 2017, the Jean-Jacques Laffont prize in 2018, the Global Economy Prize in 2019, and the CME Mathematical and Statistical Research Institute prize in 2021.

He was awarded the John Bates Clark Medal in 2005, given every two years to the best economist in the United States under the age of 40 by the American Economic Association, the Erwin Plein Nemmers prize awarded every two years for work of lasting significance in economics in 2013, and the 2016 BBVA Frontiers of Knowledge award in economics.

He holds Honorary Doctorates from the University of Utrecht, the Bosphorus University, University of Athens, Bilkent University, the University of Bath, the Ecole Normale Supérieure, Saclay Paris, and the London Business School.

His book (joint with James A. Robinson) *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* received the Association of American Publishers Award for Excellence in Professional, and the William Riker Prize for Best Book Published in Political Economy, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation Award for Best Book Published on Government, Politics, or International Affairs. *Why Nations Fail* also received several prizes and awards and was a New York Times bestseller in 2012. His new book, *Power, and Progress: Our Thousand-Year Struggle Over Technology and Prosperity* (joint with Simon Johnson), will be published May 2023.



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Prof. Ernest Aryeetey

Prof. Ernest Aryeetey is the chairman of the Board of Directors of the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC). Prof. Aryeetey is currently the Secretary-General of the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) and a former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana. One of his strategic priorities as Vice Chancellor was to develop the university into a research-intensive institution that supports structural transformation in Ghana and Africa.

Prior to his appointment as Vice-Chancellor, he was a Senior Fellow and Director of the Africa Growth Initiative at the Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C. He was also Director of the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) of the University of Ghana, Legon for the period February 2003 – January 2010.

Prof. Aryeetey has been associated with the AERC since its inception in 1988, and has served in various capacities: as a Resource Person, member of the AERC Programme Committee (2005-2009), thought leader, presenter, and discussant of policy papers at AERC flagship events, and recently as a "Director at Large" on the AERC Board. Prof. Aryeetey, jointly with Prof. Frances Stewart, carried out the evaluation of the AERC Strategic Plan 2015-2020, whose recommendations informed the strategic directions for the AERC over the period 2020-2025.

Ernest was the Chairman of the Board of the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER), Helsinki (2009-2015). In April 2016, he was appointed by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Director-General Irina Bokova of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to the governing council of the United Nations University. In addition, he served as a Member of the Board of the Global Development Network (GDN) (2004-2009) and remains a member of the Governing Board of the Centre for Development Research (ZEF) at the University of Bonn, Germany. Until April 2019, he was the Board Chair of Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) in Nairobi, Kenya.

Ernest's research work focuses on the economics of development with interest in institutions and their role in development, regional integration, economic reforms, financial systems in support of development and small enterprise development. He is well known for his work on informal finance and microfinance in Africa and has consulted for various international agencies on several development and political economy subjects.

Professor Aryeetey studied Economics at University of Ghana and then undertook graduate studies at the Universitaet Dortmund, Germany completing his PhD in 1985. In July 2017, he was awarded an honorary degree by the University of Sussex, UK for his contribution to the study of African economies and higher education transformation in Africa and in December 2022 he was awarded another honorary doctorate from Stellenbosch University in South Africa.



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Prof. Théophile Azomahou

Prof. Théophile Azomahou is the Executive Director of the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC). He joined the AERC Secretariat in January 2021 as Director of Training, overseeing the three Collaborative Training programmes that support Economics and Agricultural Economics students at the Master's and Doctoral levels.

Prior to joining AERC in January 2021, Théophile was an Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Strasbourg (2001-2008), a holder of the Chair of Econometrics at the Ecole des Ponts ParisTech (2005-2007), Senior Research Fellow at the United Nations University, UNU (2008-2018) in which capacity he led the UNU research group on 'Economic Development, Innovation, Governance and Institutions', Professor of Development Economics at the Maastricht University School of Business and Economics (2010-2020), Professor of Economics at the University of Lorraine-Nancy (2012-2015), Professor of Economics at the University Clermont Auvergne, CERDI (2015-2021), Professor of Research at the National Centre for Scientific Research, CNRS (2018-2020) among other positions.

Prof Théophile is a Professor of Economics. His research resonates around development economics at the frontier of evidence-based policy, quantitative empirics, and economic theory. He has a proven track record of publications in peer-reviewed journals and is a guest editor for several academic journals. His expertise includes sustainable human development, environmental and natural resource economics, health economics, intergenerational mobility in Africa, impact evaluation, applied econometrics, economic theory. Besides, he has acquired first-hand operation experience of conducting effective policy dialogues and negotiations with multiple development actors.

He holds a PhD and a master's degree in economics, both from the University of Strasbourg, France. He also received an executive education on 'A Cutting Edge of Development Thinking' from Harvard Kennedy School, USA. He is a Senior Fellow of the Pan-African Scientific Research Council and has been serving as AERC resource person since 2019.



Prof. Esther Duflo

Esther Duflo is the Abdul Latif Jameel Professor of Poverty Alleviation and Development Economics in the Department of Economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a co-founder and co-director of the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL). In her research, she seeks to understand the economic lives of the poor, with the aim to help design and evaluate social policies. She has worked on health, education, financial inclusion, environment, and governance.

Professor Esther Duflo's first degrees were in history and economics from Ecole Normale Supérieure, Paris. She subsequently received a Ph.D. in Economics from MIT in 1999.

Duflo has received numerous academic honors and prizes including 2019 Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel (with co-Laureates Abhijit Banerjee and Michael Kremer), the Princess of Asturias Award for Social Sciences (2015), the A.SK Social Science Award (2015), Infosys Prize (2014), the David N. Kershaw Award (2011), a John Bates Clark Medal (2010), and a MacArthur "Genius Grant" Fellowship (2009).

With Abhijit Banerjee, she wrote *Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty*, which won the Financial Times and Goldman Sachs Business Book of the Year Award in 2011 and has been translated into more than 17 languages, and *Good Economics for Hard Times*.

Duflo is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy.



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Prof. Rosa Liliana Matzkin

Rosa Liliana Matzkin is the Charles E. Davidson Distinguished Professor of Economics. Her research has been aimed at creating a tight connection between econometrics and economic theory, avoiding specifications and transformations not implied by economic models. She has developed

- (i) methods to test the consistency of data with economic models,
- (ii) methods to identify and estimate nonparametric functions using shape restrictions implied by economic theory,
- (iii) nonparametric methods that allow unobservable variables to enter in non-additive ways within models, and
- (iv) methods to identify and estimate nonparametric and non-separable systems of equations. She has worked on models of consumer demand, discrete choice, and equilibrium, among others.

Professor Matzkin is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. She is also a Fellow of the Econometric Society, the International Association of Applied Econometrics, the Journal of Econometrics, and the Society of Economic Measurement.

She is currently President of the Econometric Society. She served as First and Second Vice-President of the Econometric Society and as a member of the Executive Committees of the Econometric Society and of the American Economic Association.

Professor Matzkin is co-editing the Handbooks in Economics series (Elsevier) and Vol. 7 of Handbook of Econometrics (Elsevier). She previously served as the chief Editor of Quantitative Economics, as Co-editor of the Research Monograph Series of the Econometric Society, as member of the Editorial Committee of Annual Review of Economics, and as Associate Editor of Econometrica and of Journal of Econometrics.

Before joining UCLA, Professor Matzkin held faculty positions at Yale University and Northwestern University and visiting positions at the University of Chicago, MIT, Caltech, and Universidad de San Andres (Argentina).



Prof. Njuguna Ndung'u

Prof. Njuguna Ndung'u is the Cabinet Secretary, National Treasury & Economic Planning. Prior to this appointment, he served as the Executive Director of the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), a Pan African premier capacity building network of researchers, trainers, students, universities, policy makers and international resource persons. He is an associate professor of economics at the University of Nairobi, Kenya and the immediate former Governor, Central Bank of Kenya.

Prof. Ndung'u has been a member of the Global Advisory Council of the World Economic Forum, Visiting Fellow of Practice at Blavatnik School of Government, Oxford University, Director of Training at AERC, Program specialist at IDRC and Team Leader in Macro-modelling at the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis.

He holds a PhD in economics from University of Gothenburg, Sweden. He is a Member of Brookings Africa Growth Initiative, Member of the Advisory Committee of the Alliance for Financial Inclusion, that coordinates financial inclusion policies in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and Senior Advisor for the UNCDF-based Better Than Cash Alliance.



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Prof. Nathan Nunn

Nathan Nunn is a Professor at the Vancouver School of Economics. Professor Nunn's primary research interests are in political economy, economic history, economic development, and cultural economics. He is a Fellow of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research (CIFAR) in the Boundaries, Membership & Belonging program, an NBER Faculty Research Fellow, and a Research Fellow at BREAD. He is currently an editor at the Quarterly Journal of Economics.

Professor Nunn's research focuses on the historical and dynamic process of economic development. He has studied the factors that shape differences in the evolution of institutions and cultures across societies. He has published research that studies the historical process of a wide range of factors that are crucial for economic development, including distrust, gender norms, religiosity, norms of rule-following, conflict, immigration, state formation, and support for democracy.

His research also examines economic development in contemporary contexts. He has studied the effects of Fair-Trade certification, CIA interventions during the Cold War, foreign aid, school construction, climate shocks, and trade policies. He is particularly interested in the importance of the local context (e.g., social structures, traditions, and cultures) for the effectiveness of development policy and in understanding how policy can be optimally designed given the local environment. He has studied the relationship between marriage customs and female education, generalized trust and political turnover, the organization of the extended family (lineage) and conflict, and traditional local political systems and support for democracy. His most recent research tries to better understand the importance of local culture and context for economic policies in both developing and developed countries.



Prof. James Robinson

James Robinson is an economist and political scientist; Robinson has conducted influential research in the field of political and economic development and the relationships between political power and institutions and prosperity. His work explores the underlying causes of economic and political divergence both historically and today and uses both the mathematical and quantitative methods of economics along with the case study, qualitative and fieldwork methodologies used in other social sciences.

Robinson has a particular interest in Latin America, where he has taught every summer for over 25 years at the University of the Andes in Bogotá, Colombia, and in sub-Saharan Africa. He has conducted fieldwork and collected data in Bolivia, Colombia, Haiti, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone.

He has published three books co-authored with Daron Acemoglu, an Institute Professor of Economics at MIT. The first, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, proposed a theory of the emergence of and stability of democracy and dictatorship. Their second book *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* (translated into 41 languages since its publication in 2012), pulled together much of their joint research on comparative development and proposed a theory of why some countries have flourished economically while others have fallen into poverty. Their most recent book, *The Narrow Corridor: States, Society, and the Fate of Liberty*, examines the incessant and inevitable struggle between states and society, and gives an account of the deep historical processes that have shaped the modern world.



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Dr. Anthony Simpasa

Dr Anthony Simpasa is Division Manager, Macroeconomic Policy, Debt Sustainability and Forecasting Division in the Macroeconomic Policy, Forecasting and Research Department of the African Development Bank. His role as Division Manager involves leading cross-functional and multicultural team in executing cutting edge policy research and production and dissemination of flagship reports such as the Bank's new Africa's Macroeconomic Performance and Outlook (MEO), the famed African Economic Outlook (AEO) as well as analytical work in the Bank's High 5 priority areas and other emerging development issues. Anthony has held several other positions within the Bank, including until recently, as Lead Economist for Nigeria. Prior to joining the African Development Bank, Anthony was Manager-Market Studies in Financial Markets Department at the Bank of Zambia. He has also twice been a Visiting Scholar at the International Monetary Fund.

Anthony holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Cape Town, South Africa, a Master of Arts degree in Economics from the University of Botswana and a Bachelor of Arts degree (Economics) from the University of Zambia. His research interests span areas of banking and finance, financial markets and investment, fiscal and monetary policy interactions, growth empirics and management of natural resource revenues in developing countries. He has published widely in leading peer reviewed journals such as Journal of African Development, International Economics, Managerial Finance, Journal of Economic Studies, Africa Development Review, among others.

Anthony is an alumni of the AERCs' Collaborative's Masters and Doctoral Programmes in Economics and is a Guest Resource Person of the Finance and Resource Mobilisation Thematic Research Group of the African Economic Research Consortium. He is also a Research Fellow, Southern Africa Institute for Policy and Research., its Thematic Research Programme. He is also a member of the Global Development Network and Research Fellow, Southern Africa Institute for Policy and Research.



Prof. Leonard Wantchekon

Leonard Wantchekon is the James Madison Professor of Political Economy, Professor of Politics, and International Affairs at Princeton University. He is the Founder and President of the African School of Economics and the Pan African Scientific Research Council.

His research centers on political economy, development economics and economic history with regional focus on Africa and on substantive topics such as democracy and development, institutional experimentation, education and social mobility, and the long-term social impact of slavery and colonial rule.

Finally, Wantchekon is the winner of the 2023 Global Economy Prize in the Science category. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Econometric Society, the Bureau for Research and Economic Analysis of Development (BREAD) and Research Affiliate at the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER). He served as Vice President of the American Political Science Association and on the Executive Committee of the International Economic Association.