

# ILAN STRAUSS

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Research economist at UCL's *Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose* where I help lead empirical work and research design on the market power of 'big tech'. I have expertise in Bayesian panel econometrics and firm-level data analysis, international investment flows, and macroeconomic surveillance. Experience managing flagship publications and research teams for the *African Development Bank* (AfDB), UNCTAD's *World Investment Report*, and the *International Labour Organization* (ILO). I taught macroeconomics at the *Jones Graduate School of Business* (Rice University) and *New York University*. In 2020/21 I led the writing of several United Nations assessments on the impact of COVID-19 on the macroeconomy.

## EDUCATION

**Ph.D.** Economics, *The New School for Social Research*, New York 2014 - 2020 (awarded May)

- Columbia University Coursework: Bayesian Statistics, Macroeconomics, Dynamical Systems

My Ph.D applied Bayesian panel econometrics to large publicly listed firm-level data, exploring trends in fixed capital investment rates among advanced and developing economy firms. Published with Oxford University's *Institute for New Economic Thinking* (INET), *Oxford Martin School*, the *International Review of Financial Analysis*, and under review with *Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis*.

**MSc**, International Development Economics (First Class), *SOAS, University of London* 2010 - 2011

**BSc (with Honours)**, Economics and History, *University of Cape Town* 2005 - 2007

## WORK EXPERIENCE

Currently a Senior Research Associate, **Office of the SARCHI Chair in Industrial Development**, University of Johannesburg, South Africa, where I supervise masters students and engage in research collaboration.

- **Researcher**, 04/2021. UCL - Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose (IIPP), (London).

Part of a research team investigating the market power of 'big tech'. I help lead the work on enhanced disclosure requirements; firm-level empirical work; and big data research design.

- **Economics Consultant**, 01/2015 - 2021.

Macroeconomist on COVID-19 (02/2021 - 06/2021). Airfinity (London).

Link cross-country (panel) COVID-19 data to macroeconomic outcomes; explaining differences between (and within) countries, regions, and continents. Panel predictive modelling (Bayesian hierarchical models, machine learning, GLMs). Data visualization in ggplot. Index construction. Manage researchers. Bi-weekly presentation to *IMF* leadership (including chief economist Gita Gopinath). Macroeconomic and COVID-19 surveillance.

COVID-19 Impact Country Expert (10/2020 - 06/2021). African Development Bank (AfDB).

Project 1: COVID-19 impact assessment on The Gambia, including debt sustainability analysis (DSA) using IMF-World Bank DSA model, custom built VAR model, and Bayesian time-series forecasting techniques.

Project 2: South African country expert to assess impact of COVID-19 on manufacturing sector for joint AFDB-UNIDO study. Implement and analyze survey results. Provide policy recommendations on the basis of impact assessment.

Project and Technical Lead (05/2020 - 2021). International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Head of modelling, macroeconomic surveillance, project write-up and researchers' management to produce estimates of the impact of COVID-19 on employment for 2020.

Paper 1: For South Africa (SA) using a simple input-output model augmented with household survey data;

Paper 2: For Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries using a Bayesian multilevel econometric panel model. Use of high-frequency Google Mobility, financial data, commodity price data, and annual macroeconomic surveillance data to provide qualitative employment risk assessment by SADC country.

Paper 3: Assessment of Eswatini's labour market, leading a team of local researchers and engaging with Eswatini statistical authority, as background paper to establishing an unemployment benefit fund (UBF).

Chief Macroeconomic Consultant (08/2019 - 04/2020). [African Union Commission and ILO](#).

Lead author and research manager for a 120 page macroeconomic policy guide for Africa's finance ministers to advance employment and structural transformation within the balance of payments constraint (Mundell-Fleming).

National Minimum Wage Steering Committee (05/2015 - 2016). [University of the Witwatersrand](#).

Macroeconomic modeller and advisor, research published with ILO [here](#). Passing of the first ever national minimum wage for South Africa (01 January 2019).

Lead Author (06/2016 - 10/2016). [Johns Hopkins University and Emerge85](#).

Produce a 100 page history of global economic development: 'The Rise of 'the Rest'? Global Development in the Past, Present, and Future', [Final report here](#).

Expert Consultant (06/2015 - 09/2015). [ILO, Multinational Enterprises Unit](#).

Write background paper on FDI and MNEs in Africa, for ILO conference on the Tripartite Declaration in Addis Ababa, 30 November-3 December 2015, [Final report here](#).

Consultant (01/2013 - 06/2013). [United Nations Economic Commission for Africa \(UNECA\)](#).

Produce benchmark definitions on creative sectors for UN and analyse their ability to generate employment in South Africa. Presented findings to expert committee in Addis Abba in 2014.

- **Expert Consultant, UNCTAD (Investment Division), World Investment Report** 12/2013 - 08/2018

*Lead author of Africa trends section of the World Investment Report. Contributions to the quarterly Global Investment Monitor. Monitor and analyse various types of FDI data from official and unofficial sources and use it to provide a narrative on developments in Africa's inward and outward FDI, including forecasts, by country, region, and continent. Currently serve as an advisor and external reviewer on an ad hoc basis.*

- **Lecturer in Macroeconomics**, 01/2016 - 06/2020.

- [Course lead](#) (1/2019 - 06/2020), *Jones Graduate School of Business, Rice University* (Houston, Texas), @MBA program. Manage and help design syllabus, assignments, live lectures, and other teachers. Stopped due to time zone differences.

- [Adjunct Lecturer](#) (06/2015 - 12/2019), *New York University* (New York), Division of Applied Undergraduate Studies (DAUC).

- **Research Economist, African Development Bank (AfDB)** (Tunisia) 06/2013 - 06/2014

*Help lead and direct internal and external teams which wrote the 200 page African Development Report: a flagship publication of the AfDB involving 11 months of expert meetings, research, editing, & macroeconomic analysis and forecasting. Lead author of key chapters on trade, FDI, value chains, regional integration, and policy recommendations.*

- **Faculty Member, University of the Witwatersrand** (South Africa) 01/2012 - 12/2012

*Lecture econometrics to honours student in development economics. Write policy inputs for government and for European Union funded project on the financial sector called FESSUD. Manage researchers.*

## PERSONAL INTERESTS

I love to cook, write letters to the Financial Times (which are rarely accepted), and enjoy the outdoors. I have travelled to over 45 countries and lived on several continents.

## JOURNAL ARTICLES

with Jangho Yang, ‘Corporate Secular Stagnation: Empirical Evidence on the Advanced Economy Investment Slowdown’, Rejected by peer reviewers at *Review of Financial Studies*. Sending to *Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis*.

with Jangho Yang, ‘Slowing Investment Rates in Developing Economies: Evidence from a Bayesian hierarchical model’, *International Review of Financial Analysis*, Volume 77, October 2021.

with Gilad Isaacs and Josh Rosenberg, ‘The Effect of Shocks to GDP on Employment in SADC Member States during the COVID-19 Pandemic using a Bayesian Hierarchical Model’, *African Development Review*, 05 May 2021.

with Josh Rosenberg and Gilad Isaacs, ‘How has Covid-19 Impacted Labour Markets in SADC Member States? Evidence from combining novel high-frequency data and other sources’, *African Development Review*, 05 May 2021.

Strauss, I. ‘Understanding South Africa’s Current Account Deficit: The role of foreign direct investment income’, *Transnational Corporations* (UNCTAD), Volume 23, Number 2, 2017.

Strauss, Ilan and Charaf-Eddine, Naym. ‘Ten Commandments of Applied Regional Integration Analysis: The African Case’, *African Development Review*, Special Edition, Volume 26, Issue S1, pages 7–20, November 2014.

Strauss, I. ‘Manufacturing and the National Development Plan: Which way forward?’, *Social Dynamics: A Journal of African studies*, 2013, 39:1, 119–129.

## BOOK CHAPTERS

Strauss, I., Mueller, B., and Isaacs, G. ‘A Transformative Macroeconomic Policy Framework for Employment Generation in Africa’, in ILO. *Global Employment Policy Review*. October 2022 forthcoming. International Labour Office.

Strauss, I. ‘2019 Trends in FDI Flows and Policy’, in Lisa Sachs and Lise Johnson (eds). *Yearbook on International Investment Law and Policy 2019*. Oxford University Press. March 2021.

Strauss, I. ‘Explaining Global Trends in FDI in 2015 and Beyond’, in Lisa Sachs and Lise Johnson (eds). *Yearbook on International Investment Law and Policy 2015-2016*. Oxford University Press. November 2017.

Strauss, I. ‘Teacher Absentee Rates: Setting the Record Straight’, in Joshua Maserow(ed). *Taking Equal Education into the Classroom*. Equal Education. 2016.

## PEER-REVIEWED WORKING PAPERS AND POLICY BRIEFS

Strauss, I., et al. ‘Towards A Transformative Macroeconomic Policy Framework for Employment Generation in Africa: Background Paper’, *ILO and African Union Commission Background Paper*, October 2021. International Labour Office and AUC.

Strauss, I., et al. ‘The impacts from a COVID-19 shock to South Africa’s economy and labour market’, *ILO Rapid Country Assessment: South Africa*, August 2020. International Labour Office.

‘Corporate Secular Stagnation: Empirical Evidence on the Advanced Economy Investment Slowdown’, with Jangho Yang, *INET Oxford Working Paper No. 2019-16*, 22 July 2020.

Strauss, I., Isaacs, G., and Capaldo, J. ‘The Impact of Minimum Wage Increases on the South African Economy in the Global Policy Model’, *ILO Research Paper No. 20*, October 2017. International Labour Office.

Strauss, I. and Mavroedi, V. ‘How India can Benefit from FDI: lessons from China’, *Columbia FDI Perspectives*, No. 194 February 27, 2017. Columbia University.

Strauss, I. ‘Understanding South Africa’s Current Account Deficit: the role of FDI income’, *Africa Economic Brief*, Volume 6, Issue 4, 2015, African Development Bank.

Krüger, R., and Strauss, I. ‘Africa Rising Out of Itself: the growth of intra-African FDI’, *Columbia FDI Perspectives*, N.139, January 19 2015, Columbia University.

## BUSINESS PAPER OP-EDS

Strauss, I. ‘An expat’s guide to Williamsburg, Brooklyn’. *Financial Times, Property Listings*. 10 May 2020.

Strauss, I. ‘Current accounts: it’s not as simple as “wine for cloth” anymore’. *Financial Times, Letter to the Editor*. August 27 2018.

Strauss, I. ‘How a minimum wage can help South Africa’. *Fin 24*. 02 August 2016.

Strauss, I. ‘Subsidies won’t make a dent’. *Mail & Guardian Business Section*. 07 June 2013.

Strauss, I. ‘ “Beggar-my-neighbour” wage policies a race to the bottom’. *Business Day*. 12 February 2013.

Strauss, I. ‘ “Cheap labour” fiction will hobble plan’s effectiveness’. *Business Day*. 23 January 2013

## CONFERENCE PAPERS

Strauss, I., Johnson, L., Toledano, P., James, S. ‘Background Paper on Investment Incentives: The good, the bad and the ugly: Assessing the costs, benefits and options for policy reform’. *Draft Conference Paper*. Columbia University and the IFC. 2014

Molinari, A., Strauss, I., and J. De Angelis. ‘South-South cooperation between Latin America and Africa Analysis with trade and FDI indicators’. *Flacso-ISA Joint International Conference*, July 23rd-25th 2014, Buenos Aires.

Strauss, I and Charaf-Eddine, N. ‘The 10 Rules of Regional Integration’, *African Economic Conference* hosted by the AfDB, UNDP, and UNECA. October 28-30 2013, Johannesburg.

Last updated: October 6, 2021