

# CHINEMELU OKAFOR

---

Harvard University Government Department  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

Email: [cokafor@g.harvard.edu](mailto:cokafor@g.harvard.edu)  
Website: [www.chinemeluokafor.com](http://www.chinemeluokafor.com)

<b>Research Interests</b>	Comparative politics; political economy; public policy; economic development; economic history; Narrative economics; MSME development in emerging markets; international economics and trade	
<b>Education</b>	<b>Harvard University</b>	Cambridge, MA
	Ph.D. Government	2028 ( <i>expected</i> )
	<i>Committee:</i> Melani Cammett (chair), Nathan Nunn, Mashail Malik, Pia Raffler, Awa Ambra Seck	
	<b>Princeton University</b>	Princeton, NJ
	Emerging Scholars in Political Science Program	August 2021
<b>Research Experience</b>	<b>The George Washington University</b>	Washington, DC
	M.A. Applied Economics	May 2018
	<b>The University of Michigan</b>	Ann Arbor, MI
	B.A. Economics, B.A. International Studies	May 2015
	<b>White House Council of Economic Advisers</b> ( <i>took leave from PhD</i> )	Washington, DC
<b>Research Experience</b>	Staff Economist	August 2023 - August 2024
	<b>Advisors:</b> Dr. Sandile Hlatshwayo	
	<b>Areas of focus:</b> International Economics and Trade; Section 201 & 301 Tariffs	
	<b>Selected Projects:</b> Economic Report of the President, <i>Council of Economic Advisers</i> 2024	
	<b>Emerging Scholars in Political Science Program</b>	Princeton, NJ
<b>Research Experience</b>	Predocutorial Research Specialist	August 2019 - August 2021
	<b>Advisors:</b> Prof. Leonard Wantchekon	
	<b>Area of focus:</b> Historical applied microeconomics;	
	Digitized historical maps of Nigeria in QGIS to support ongoing research on the long-run effects of colonial missionary education on present-day living standards, occupation, and political participation	
	<b>Empirical Studies of Conflict Project</b>	Princeton, NJ
<b>Research Experience</b>	Research Specialist II	September 2018 - August 2019
	<b>Advisors:</b> Prof. Tarek Ghani and Prof. Jake Shapiro	
	<b>Areas of focus:</b> Natural resource extraction and conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa;	
	Preprocessed spatial data and created interactive map of Africa by merging firm-level ownership identifiers of extractive sites in oil, gas, and mining, to instances of violent conflict	
	<b>Selected Projects:</b> “Firm Heterogeneity in Natural Resource Extraction” Tarek Ghani et al.	
<b>Research Experience</b>	<b>The International Finance Corporation (IFC)</b>	Washington, DC
	Research Assistant	February - October 2018
	<b>Advisors:</b> Dr. Tristan Reed and Dr. Alexandros Ragoussis	
	<b>Areas of focus:</b> Private sector firm development in Sub-Saharan Africa;	
	Created indicators of infrastructure access and ran synthetic panel fixed effects regressions to measure inclusiveness and equality of markets to electric power and water for households	
<b>Research Experience</b>	<b>Selected Projects:</b> Making It Big : Why Developing Countries Need More Large Firms, <i>IFC</i> 2020;	
	Creating Impact: The Promise of Impact Investing, <i>IFC</i> 2019;	
	Beyond Capital: Monitoring Development Outcomes of Multinational Enterprises, <i>World Bank</i> 2018	

	<b>The World Bank</b> Consultant <b>Advisors:</b> Kinley Salmon and Nabila Assaf <b>Areas of focus:</b> Major challenges to firm operations in post-conflict settings; Conducted statistical hypothesis testing to investigate challenges to Syrian firms including access to economic infrastructure, supply disruptions, and loss of skilled workers <b>Selected Projects:</b> Surviving Firms of the Syrian Arab Republic, <i>World Bank</i> 2018	Washington, DC June - August 2017
<b>Works in Progress</b>	Protest Matters: The Effects of Protests on Economic Redistribution, <i>with Belinda Archibong, Evans Osabuohien and Tom Moerenhout (Revise &amp; Resubmit at the Review of Economics and Statistics)</i>	
<b>Teaching Fellow</b>	Harvard: Spring ‘25 - Evaluating the Impact of Public Policies (GOV 1737), for Prof. Michael Hiscox Harvard: Spring ‘25 - Business & Entrepreneurship in Africa (HBSMBA 1555), for Hakeem Belo-Osagie Harvard: Fall ‘24 ‘25 - Public Economics (ECON 1410), for Stan Veuger	
<b>Academic Affiliations</b>	Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Graduate Student Associate, <i>renewed</i> Harvard Center for International Development, PhD Affiliate London Business School’s Wheeler Institute – African Research Councillors Programme Collaborator w/ Prof. Nathan Nunn, Prof. Elias Papaioannou, and Prof. Stelios Michalopoulos	August 2025 January 2025 May 2022
<b>Selected and Invited Talks</b>	Harvard Center for African Studies Contested Realities Workshop ( <i>2025</i> ) African History Through the Lens of Economics, Wheeler Institute - London Business School ( <i>2022</i> ) J-PAL Research Staff Training, Massachusetts Institute of Technology ( <i>2020, 2022</i> )	
<b>Professional Distinctions</b>	Association for Comparative Economic Studies (ACES) Summer School American Political Science Association Member Spotlight Harvard Department of Government Karl Deutsch Fellowship Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Graduate Prize Fellowship American Political Science Association Diversity Fellowship (\$2500)	July 2025 July 2025 August 2021 August 2021 December 2020
<b>Selected Awards</b>	Harvard Center for African Studies, Travel Grant (\$1500) Harvard Government Department, Women and Politics Research Grant (\$2000) Harvard Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Pre-dissertation Grant (\$4000) Harvard Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, GSA Grant (\$2905) Harvard Jens Aubrey Westengard Scholarship (\$1250) Forbes 30 Under 30: Education - Founder, the Research in Color Foundation Harvard Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Pre-dissertation Grant (\$3500) Harvard Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Summer Language Grant (\$6000) Best Overall Performance in the Applied Economics Master’s Program, <i>Dean’s Award</i>	May 2025 April 2025 April 2025 November 2024 May 2024 November 2022 April 2022 April 2022 May 2018
<b>Professional Service</b>	Reviewer for <i>The Annual Review of Economics</i> Economics & Government Concentration Advisor and Non-Resident Tutor Harvard Resident Tutor Specialities: French Language, Race Relations, Public Service, and First-gen Low-income Tutor	August 2024 - Present August 2021 - August 2023
	The Research In Color Foundation <u>Founder and President</u> Founded and lead <u>Research In Color</u> a 501c(3) non-profit which seeks to increase the number and improve retention of historically excluded scholars in economics and economics-adjacent disciplines.	May 2019 - Present
<b>Technical Skills</b>	RStudio, R Shiny, STATA, L <sup>A</sup> T <sub>E</sub> X, QGIS, SPSS, Tableau, Thomson Reuters Datastream, Thomson Reuters Eikon, Excel, PowerPoint, Word, Overleaf, GitHub, Qualtrics, JavaScript	
<b>Languages Citizenship</b>	English (Native proficiency), French (Upper-intermediate proficiency), Igbo (Passive proficiency) United States; Nigeria	