

EDUARD VAN DER MERWE

PHD CANDIDATE IN ECONOMICS

Development Economics
Economics of Poverty
Economics of Culture and Religion

Rice University, Houston, Texas, USA

✉ e.vdmerwe@rice.edu
🌐 <https://eduardvdm.github.io>
🌐 LinkedIn: eduard-vdm

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Economics

Rice University | Houston, Texas, USA

Expected: May 2026

- Relevant coursework: Development Economics, Empirical Microeconomics, Matching & Market Design, Computational Economics, Human Rights and Human Security in MENA, Econometrics I & II, Empirical Industrial Organization, Financial Economics, Real Analysis, Macroeconomics, Microeconomics.

Master of Commerce (MCom) in Econometrics

University of Pretoria | Pretoria, South Africa

Graduated: Jul 2021

- Graduated Cum Laude.
- Relevant coursework: Quantitative Econometrics, Computable General Equilibrium Modeling, Microeconometrics, Macroeconomics, Panel-Data Econometrics, Microeconomics.

Bachelor of Commerce Honors (BComHons) in Econometrics

University of Pretoria | Pretoria, South Africa

Graduated: Dec 2019

- Graduated Cum Laude.
- Relevant coursework: Microeconomics I & II, Macroeconomics I & II, Cross-Section Econometrics, Time-Series Econometrics.

Advanced Certificate in Emerging Markets and Country Risk Analysis

Fordham University | New York, New York, USA

Graduated: Sep 2019

- Relevant coursework: Political Risk Analysis, Emerging Markets, Strategic Financial Management.

Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) in Econometrics

University of Pretoria | Pretoria, South Africa

Graduated: Dec 2018

- Graduated Cum Laude.
- Top-performing undergraduate student in the faculty of Economic and Management Sciences.
- Relevant coursework: Economic Growth and Development, Mathematical Statistics, Calculus, Linear Algebra, Multivariate Analysis, Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Stochastic Processes, International Trade, Public Economics, Accounting.

EXPERIENCE

Graduate Scholar

Boniuk Institute, Rice University | Houston, Texas, USA

Aug 2023 - Present

- Cultivated expertise in qualitative data collection and analysis, including data privacy through anonymization techniques.
- Enhanced quantitative research by standardizing reports and visual representations of statistical data.
- Engaged with faith and community leaders, as well as leading religious scholars, to discuss current issues, collaborate on research, and exchange resources.

Teaching Assistant

Rice University | Houston, Texas, USA

Aug 2021 - Present

- ECON 433/633: Dynamic Models for Computational Economics (undergraduate/graduate).
- ECON 479: Math for Computational Economics (undergraduate).
- ECON 203: Macroeconomics (undergraduate).

GIS Student Assistant

GIS/Data Center (GDC), Fondren Library | Houston, Texas, USA

May 2023 - Aug 2024

- Supplied technical support to faculty and students in the GIS computer lab.
- Supported multiple research projects and authored two reports, advancing both academic and applied GIS knowledge.
- Taught four different professional development courses in GIS methodologies and software, expanding the data literacy of the campus community.

Research Assistant

Apr 2019 - Jul 2021

Dr. Matthew Clance, University of Pretoria | Pretoria, South Africa

- Managed, cleaned, and optimized multiple datasets using Stata, R, and QGIS for elevated data integrity and usability.
- Contributed to multiple development economics projects, co-authoring one published research paper and one working paper.
- Composed a series of educational "Introduction to R" videos to facilitate learning for new users.

Teaching Assistant

Feb 2019 - Jul 2021

University of Pretoria | Pretoria, South Africa

- Successfully completed certified tutor training in 2019, 2020, and 2021, enhancing teaching methodologies annually.
- Provided tutoring for students in second and third-year economics courses, as well as for an advanced honors-level econometrics course.

RESEARCH AND PROJECTS

Publications

- Van der Merwe, E., Clance, M., & Yitbarek, E. (2022). Climate Change and Child Malnutrition: A Nigerian Perspective. *Food Policy*, 113, 102281. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2022.102281>
- Van der Merwe, E., & Schneider, R. C. (2024). Book Review: Mark Juergensmeyer, When God Stops Fighting. *Review of Religious Research*, 67(1), 158-159. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0034673X241286536>

Working Papers

- Van der Merwe, E., Chisadza, C., Clance, M. (2021). Government Religious Preference and Intrastate Conflict. *Economic Research Southern Africa Working Paper Series*, 867
- Van der Merwe, E. (2025). Heritage of Hunger: Ethnicity, Intrahousehold Resource Allocation and Child Poverty

Selected Work in Progress

- Preaching Against the Choir: Faith, Stigma, and Family Planning in Kenya
- Unequal Prosperity: The Changing Landscape of Global Individual Poverty (with Rossella Calvi, Tanmay Devi, and Yunjie Xie)
- Understanding Poverty in Ethiopian Refugee Communities (with Rossella Calvi, Theresa Beltramo, Ibrahima Sarr, and Giacomo De Giorgi)
- Religion, Poverty and Conflict: How beneficial is it to adhere to the state's religion? (with Matthew Clance)

SEMINARS AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- *How best could we predict climate-driven disease outbreaks to better respond in WaSH?* Oxfam, MSF, UoN, ThinkPlace, Centre for Humanitarian Change (Webinar, April 2021).

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- **Languages:** Stata, R, Python, Julia, ArcGIS, LaTeX
- **Familiarity:** QGIS, SAS, EViews, MATLAB, GEMPACK Software Platform

FELLOWSHIPS, NOMINATIONS AND ACCOLADES

- Boniuk Institute Graduate Student Scholar Awardee (2023/2024).
- Anton and Huberte Rupert Bursary (2020).
- Nominated for the ESSA Founders' Medal for Best Honors Research Paper (2020).
- National Research Foundation's (NRF) Postgraduate Scholarship (2019).
- Vice-Chancellor and Principal's Award (2019).
- Dean's List in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences (2019).
- Bain & Company Merit Award for Outstanding Performance in the Economics Department (2018).
- Genesis Analytics Award as Top Performing third-year student in the Department of Economics (2018).
- Genesis Analytics Award as Top Performing second-year student in the Department of Economics (2017).
- Bain & Company Merit Award as Top Performing Econometrics second-year student (2017).
- ERSa award for the best first-year student in Economics (2016).