

# JUSTE DJABAKOU

Economics Job Market Candidate

## Office Contact Information

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## EDUCATION

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- 2019 - Ph.D. Candidate, Economics, University of Montreal, Canada
  - 2016 Diplôme d'Ingénieur Statisticien Economiste, ENSAE, Dakar, Senegal
  - 2014 Diplôme d'Ingénieur des Travaux Statistiques, ENSEA, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

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Macroeconomics, Financial Economics, Corporate Finance, Firm Dynamics

## RESEARCH PAPERS

### [JOB MARKET PAPER]

Debt Callability and Firm Dynamics [[PDF](#)]

## WORK IN PROGRESS

1. Seniority Structure in Macroeconomics, with A. EKPONON and H. SOMÉ
2. Financial Frictions, Intangible Capital, and the Business Cycle
3. Monetary Policy Narratives and House Price Expectations, with F. AYIVOJI
4. Business Cycles, Competition, and Stock Returns, with A. EKPONON and H. SOMÉ
5. Inside the Non-Compete Agreements Damages in the U.S., with F. AYIVOJI and F. GOUDOU

## PUBLICATIONS (PRE-PHD)

1. Twin deficit: Evidence from Togo, *61st World Statistics Congress Proceedings*, 2017 [[PDF](#)]

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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- July 2025 - **Research Assistant** for Prof. ADELPHE EKPONON, University of Ottawa
  - 2023 **Ph.D. Dissertation Fellow**, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, Research Division
  - 2023 **Research Fellow**, Observatoire de la Francophonie Economique - OFE, Montreal
  - 2023 **Research Assistant** for Prof. MARLENE KOFFI, University of Toronto
  - 2017 - 2018 **Research Assistant** for Prof. ABOU KANE, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar, Senegal
  - 2017 - 2018 **Research Assistant** for Prof. THIERNO THIOUNE, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar, Senegal.

## CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS [\* SCHEDULED; † BY COAUTHOR]

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- 2025 Bank of Canada Graduate Student Paper Award Workshop, Computing in Economics and Finance (Santiago), SCSE Annual Meeting†, IFC (The World Bank), Wilfrid Laurier University, IMF
  - 2024 CEA Annual Meeting (Toronto)
  - 2023 Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, CEA Annual Meeting (Winnipeg)
  - 2022 SCSE Annual Meeting (Montreal), CIREQ Ph.D. Conference (Montreal), University of Montreal
  - 2017 World Statistics Congress (Marrakesh)

## FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS, AND HONORS

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2025	Finalist for Bank of Canada Graduate Student Paper Award
2024 - 2026	J.W. McConnell Foundation Chair Scholarship in American Studies, UdeM
2023	Dissertation Fellowship, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis
2023	CEA Annual Meeting Travel Grant   Graduate Poster Finalist, CEA
2022 - 2024	PhD Fellowship, Fonds de Recherche du Quebec - Société et Culture (FRQSC)
2019 - 2023	PhD Fellowship, CIREQ & Department of Economics, University of Montreal
2014 - 2016	Excellence Fellowship, ENSAE, Dakar
2014	2nd Prize, Application development competition, ENSEA, Abidjan
2012 - 2014	Quiz Championships (French & English)   Scholarship, ENSEA, Abidjan
2010 - 2012	2nd Place, Quiz Championship   Undergraduate Excellence Fellowship, University of Lome, Togo

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE [\* IS UNDERGRADUATE, UNLESS SPECIFIED]

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2021, 2024, 2025	<b>Lecturer</b> , U. of Montreal: Introduction to Macroeconomics*
2019 -	<b>Teaching Assistant</b> , U. of Montreal: <i>Macroeconomics B - PhD</i> <i>Numerical Analysis in Economics</i> <i>Financial Economics* / Macro Theory I/II*</i> <i>Initiation to Economics* / Data Analysis for Economist*</i>
2018 - 2019	<b>Teaching Assistant</b> , ESG UQAM: <i>Microeconomics Analysis / Macroeconomics Analysis*</i>
2017 - 2018	<b>Lecturer</b> , UCAD, Senegal: <i>Survey's and Statistic's Softwares (STATA, R, SPSS, ODK, CsPro)</i>
2014 - 2015	<b>Lecturer</b> , ENSAE, Dakar, Senegal: <i>Excel-VBA / Mathematics for Graduate Entrance Exams in Statistics and Economics*</i>

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

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2023, 2025	University of Montreal Economics Conference   1st CIREQ Conference on Big Data and AI
2022 - 2023	Reviewer - La Clinique des bourses, University of Montréal
2021 - 2022	Online Seminar Assistant, CIREQ, Montreal.

## SKILLS

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Languages:	English (Fluent), French (Native), Ewe (Native), Wolof (Basics)
Programming:	MATLAB, Python, R, STATA, Dynare, Fortran, Julia, C++, Eviews
Other Tools:	LaTeX, GitHub, Ms Office, Excel-VBA, Markdown, Quantum Computing (basics)
Technical:	Data Analysis, Machine Learning (LLM, sentiment analysis)

## PROFESSIONAL AND POLICY RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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2016 - 2018	<b>Senior Economist and Deputy Head</b> , French Embassy in Senegal, Econ Department, Dakar, Senegal
2017 - 2018	<b>Consultant in Statistics and Econometrics</b> , Cheikh Anta Diop University (UCAD), Dakar, Senegal
2015	<b>Statistician Economist Intern, Bureau de la Comptabilite Nationale</b> , ANSD, Dakar Senegal
2015 - 2016	<b>Research Assistant</b> , ENSAE - Dakar, Senegal
2014 - 2015	<b>Survey Design</b> (funded by Luxembourg and United Nations [UNIDO]), ENSAE, Senegal
2014	<b>Health Data Analyst Intern</b> , ACONDA VS (NGO against HIV), Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

## LEADERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIPS

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- CEA, AEA, AFA, EEA, SCSE, ISI (Statistics)
- Mouvement Provincial Genies en Herbe / Pantologie (MPGHP) | Think Tank – L'Afrique Des Idees
- Chair of Economic Debates | President of Togolese Students | Head of Marketing, Junior Enterprise, ENSAE - Dakar [2014 - 2017]
- Head of Finance of Students Association, ENSEA d'Abidjan, ITS Family [2013 - 2014]
- General Secretary of Togolese Students, ENSEA d'Abidjan [2013 - 2014]
- Team of Sciences Captain, Quiz Competition, University of Lome [2010 - 2012]

## POLICY PAPERS (IN FRENCH)

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Reformer l'Enseignement Technique et la Formation Professionnelle pour l'Employabilite en Afrique, 2018 [PDF]

## TRAINING

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BREAD-IGC Virtual PhD Course on Firms and Development, [Link](#), Online

## PERSONAL

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1. Citizenship: Togolese; Canadian Permanent Resident.
2. Quiz Competitions (Génie en herbe, Advanced level); Scrabble; Chess; Sports (table tennis, soccer, volleyball, skiing)

## REFERENCES

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**IMMO SCHOTT****Principal Economist**

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Federal Reserve Board  
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## ABSTRACTS

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### **Debt Callability and Firm Dynamics**

Callable debt - a bond allowing issuers to redeem outstanding principal before maturity - has become dominant in U.S. corporate bond markets since the Global Financial Crisis. This paper examines the relationship between callability and firm investment, as well as its macroeconomic implications. Using an issuer–bond panel, I document a gap between contract design and effective eligibility: while 59% of outstanding debt is contractually callable, only about 1.7% is callable at the beginning of a typical quarter due to lock-out provisions; conditional on eligibility, firms call about 3.5% of eligible debt per quarter. Firms with weaker credit quality tend to rely more on callable issuance but exercise the calls less frequently. Exploiting high-frequency monetary policy surprises in a local-projection framework, I find that callable debts amplify investment responses only when firms actually call, with the strongest effects for firms holding larger eligible callable shares. To interpret these facts, I develop a heterogeneous-firm model with long-term non-callable and callable debts, endogenous default and call decisions, and investment. The model quantitatively replicates the cross-sectional incidence of contractual versus effective callability, the conditional call hazard, and the investment behavior. Callability increases the rate sensitivity of investment by about 21% relative to a baseline without callable debt, highlighting how debt callability in firms' financing structures influences aggregate investment dynamics.

### **Seniority Structure in Macroeconomics**, with A. EKPONON (UOttawa) and H. SOMÉ (USherbrooke)

Seniority in debt contracts refers to the order of repayment in the event of a firm's default, where senior debt holders are paid before junior creditors. The seniority hierarchy in debt contracts is increasingly relevant in firm financing, yet its aggregate effects are largely understudied. This paper investigates the macroeconomic implications of introducing a seniority structure in firm debt within a dynamic business cycle model with defaultable long-term debt. We show that a seniority structure is crucial in mitigating the debt dilution problem, which arises when firms issue new debt that reduces the value of existing claims, particularly in long-term debt markets. By prioritizing senior claims in the event of default, firms can protect senior debt holders from dilution, resulting in more efficient credit allocation. Our model demonstrates that seniority structure reduces risk premia on senior bonds, lowers firm leverage, and induces more stable investment patterns. Additionally, we provide empirical evidence using firm-level data that seniority structure is associated with lower default rates and reduced financial fragility, particularly during economic downturns. On the aggregate level, introducing seniority structure in firm debt smooths business cycle fluctuations, reduces macroeconomic volatility, and enhances financial stability.

### **Financial Frictions, Intangible Capital, and the Business Cycle**

This paper studies how the rise of intangible capital reshapes firm financing and business cycle dynamics. Using firm-level data, I document three stylized facts. First, intangible-intensive firms rely disproportionately on equity financing and face persistently higher credit spreads relative to tangible-intensive firms. Second, their investment is more sensitive to aggregate downturns, with sharper contractions during financial crises and slower recoveries thereafter. Third, the cyclicity of financing costs is amplified for intangible-heavy firms, suggesting that limited collateralizability exacerbates procyclical financing frictions. To interpret these patterns, I develop a heterogeneous-firm equilibrium model with two types of capital—tangible and intangible—that differ in pledgability. Firms choose their financing mix subject to collateral constraints, and aggregate shocks propagate through the interaction of financing frictions and capital composition. The model reproduces the empirical facts and delivers a key insight: the growing share of intangibles amplifies aggregate fluctuations by tightening financing constraints in downturns.

### **Monetary Policy Narratives and House Price Expectations**, with F. AYIVODJI (IMF)

This paper examines the impact of central bank narratives on house price expectations using a unique dataset of approximately 5 million sentences from three textual sources: direct central bank communication (including monetary policy reports and speeches), newspaper articles, and X (Twitter) posts. Leveraging advanced computational linguistics and large language models (LLMs), we analyze the narrative tone in these sources related to the Bank of Canada's monetary policy decisions. Our findings reveal that narrative sentiment significantly shapes expectations for future house prices, with sentiment related to credit, financial conditions, and housing narratives holding considerable predictive power. Using LLMs, we extract both backward-looking and forward-looking aspects of sentiment in monetary policy narratives, highlighting the pronounced impact of forward-looking sentiment on house price expectations. Additionally, we find that media coverage plays a crucial role in channeling central bank communication to the public, with variations in the effectiveness of this transmission over time. This underscores the media's influence in shaping economic expectations, particularly during periods of heightened uncertainty. The study suggests that social and news media can serve as valuable tools for central banks in managing economic expectations, with significant implications for the housing market.

### **Inside the Non-Compete Agreements Damages in the U.S.**, with F. AYIVODJI (IMF) and F. GOUDOU (Wayne State)

This paper examines the consequences of Non-Compete Agreements (NCAs) in the United States. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) announced in January 2023 a project to ban NCAs. Using recent advanced artificial intelligence methods, we built unique data from online comments on this ban. We combined it with X posts (tweets) to highlight the damaging effects of NCAs on individuals and the economy.