

**This list presents some topic ideas that might be useful for your paper. You can pick one of the topics mentioned below, or you can modify the research question or pick an entirely new topic. All topics must be approved by your writing assistant.**

**The readings are just prompts to help you get started, they do not constitute a sufficient literature review.**

## **Material well-being**

### **1. The relationship between poverty reduction and economic growth across countries.**

Readings:

- Ravallion, M. (1995). Growth and poverty: Evidence for developing countries in the 1980s. *Economics letters*, 48(3-4), 411-417.

### **2. How does urbanization affect economic growth?**

Readings:

- Henderson, J. Vernon. "Urbanization and growth." *Handbook of Economic Growth*. Vol. 1. Elsevier, 2005. 1543-1591.
- Glaeser, Edward L., et al. "Growth in cities." *Journal of Political Economy* 100.6 (1992): 1126-1152.
- Fuller, Brandon, and Paul Romer. Urbanization as opportunity. The World Bank, 2014.
- Gollin, Douglas, Remi Jedwab, and Dietrich Vollrath. "Urbanization with and without Industrialization." *Journal of Economic Growth* 21.1 (2016): 35-70.
- Jedwab, Remi, and Dietrich Vollrath. "Urbanization without growth in historical perspective." *Explorations in Economic History* 58 (2015): 1-21.

### **3. Difference between urban and rural consumption in poor countries.**

Readings:

- Sahn, D. E., & Stifel, D. C. (2003). Urban–rural inequality in living standards in Africa. *Journal of African Economies*, 12(4), 564-597.
- Deaton, A. (1997). *The analysis of household surveys: a microeconomic approach to development policy*. The World Bank (Sections on LSMS)

**4. What is the relationship between consumption shares on food and total consumption levels, on micro and macro level?**

Readings:

- Houthakker, H. S. (1957). An international comparison of household expenditure patterns, commemorating the centenary of Engel's law. *Econometrica, Journal of the Econometric Society*, 532-551

**5. What is the relationship between inequality and GDP growth?**

Readings:

- Persson, T., & Tabellini, G. (1994). Is inequality harmful for growth?. *The American economic review*, 600-621.
- Barro, R. J. (2000). Inequality and Growth in a Panel of Countries. *Journal of economic growth*, 5(1), 5-32.

## Health

**6. Relationship between mother's schooling and child health.**

Readings:

- Cutler, D. M., & Lleras-Muney, A. (2006). *Education and health: evaluating theories and evidence* (No. w12352). National bureau of economic research

**7. What's the relationship between health expenditure and GDP growth?**

Readings:

- Weil, David N. "Health and economic growth." *Handbook of Economic Growth*. Vol. 2. Elsevier, 2014. 623-682.
- Szirmai, Adam. *Socio-economic development*. Cambridge University Press, 2015. Chapter 7
- Bloom, David E., and David Canning. "The health and wealth of nations." *Science* 287.5456 (2000): 1207-1209.

**8. Evaluating the Positive Effect of Improved Sanitation on Health**

Readings:

- Szirmai, Adam. *Socio-economic development*. Cambridge University Press, 2015. Chapter 7
- Cain, Louis, and Elyce Rotella. "Death and spending: urban mortality and municipal expenditure on sanitation." *Annales de démographie historique*. No. 1. Belin, 2001.

# Schooling

## **9. The effects of test scores vs education on subsequent growth.**

Readings:

- Hanushek, E. A., & Woessmann, L. (2008). The role of cognitive skills in economic development. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 46(3), 607-68.

## **10. What are the reading skills of people in different educational groups after years of schooling?**

Readings:

- Kaffenberger, M., & Pritchett, L. (2017). More School or More Learning? Evidence from Learning Profiles from the Financial Inclusion Insights Data. World Development Report Background Paper. Washington, DC: World Bank

## **11. What are the returns to schooling in terms of income in a rich and a poor country?**

Readings:

- Psacharopoulos, G., & Patrinos\*, H. A. (2004). Returns to investment in education: a further update. *Education economics*, 12(2), 111-134

## **12. What is the relationship between schooling and pro-democratic values?**

Readings:

- Ariely, G., & Davidov, E. (2011). Can we rate public support for democracy in a comparable way? Cross-national equivalence of democratic attitudes in the World Value Survey. *Social Indicators Research*, 104(2), 271-286.
- McFaul, M. (2004). Democracy promotion as a world value. *The Washington Quarterly*, 28(1), 147-163.

## **13. Relationship between country income levels, education, and attitudes towards gender equality**

Readings:

- Inglehart, R., Norris, P., & Ronald, I. (2003). Rising tide: Gender equality and cultural change around the world. Cambridge University Press.

#### **14. What is the relationship between higher education and GDP Growth?**

Readings:

- Vandenbussche, J., Aghion, P., & Meghir, C. (2006). Growth, distance to frontier and composition of human capital. *Journal of economic growth*, 11(2), 97-127

#### **15. What is the relationship between education and subsequent democratization?**

Readings:

- Acemoglu, D., Johnson, S., Robinson, J. A., & Yared, P. (2005). From education to democracy?. *American Economic Review*, 95(2), 44-49.
- Lutz, W., Cuaresma, J. C., & Abbasi-Shavazi, M. J. (2010). Demography, education, and democracy: Global trends and the case of Iran. *Population and Development Review*, 36(2), 253-281
- Inglehart, R., & Welzel, C. (2009). How development leads to democracy: What we know about modernization. *Foreign Affairs*, 33-48

#### **16. Compare & contrast returns to education between racial groups in a racially diverse country.** (Note: Pick a racially diverse developing country, such as Brazil or South Africa)

Readings:

- Lam, D., & Schoeni, R. F. (1993). Effects of family background on earnings and returns to schooling: evidence from Brazil. *Journal of political economy*, 101(4), 710-740.

## **Demographics**

#### **17. What is the relationship between education levels and fertility? What are the moderators?**

Readings:

- Cochrane, S. H. (1979). Fertility and education: What do we really know?.
- Diamond, I., Newby, M., & Varle, S. (1999). Female education and fertility: examining the links.
- Jejeebhoy, S. J. (1995). Women's education, autonomy, and reproductive behaviour: Experience from developing countries. OUP Catalogue
- Szirmai, Adam. *Socio-economic development*. Cambridge University Press, 2015. Chapter 6

**18. What is the relationship between income and fertility over time? What theories of demographic transition does this support?**

Readings:

- de Silva, Tiloka, and Silvana Tenreyro. "Population control policies and fertility convergence." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 31.4 (2017): 205-28.
- Szirmai, Adam. *Socio-economic development*. Cambridge University Press, 2015. Chapter on population control
- Lee, Ronald, and Andrew Mason. "Fertility, human capital, and economic growth over the demographic transition." *European Journal of Population/Revue européenne de Démographie* 26.2 (2010): 159-182.

**19. What is the relationship between urbanization and fertility?**

Readings:

- Cochrane, Susan Hill. "Effects of education and urbanization on fertility." (1983): 587-626.
- Sato, Y., & Yamamoto, K. (2005). Population concentration, urbanization, and demographic transition. *Journal of Urban Economics*, 58(1), 45-61

**20. The relationship between female education and fertility rates**

Readings:

- Vogl, Tom S. "Differential fertility, human capital, and development." *The Review of Economic Studies* 83.1 (2015): 365-401.

**21. What is the relationship between education and living in a city?**

Readings:

- Zhang, Y. (2006). Urban-rural literacy gaps in Sub-Saharan Africa: The roles of socioeconomic status and school quality. *Comparative Education Review*, 50(4)

**22. What is the impact of population ageing on economic growth?**

Readings:

- Bloom, David E., David Canning, and Günther Fink. "Implications of population ageing for economic growth." *Oxford review of economic policy* 26.4 (2010): 583-612.
- Lindh, Thomas, and Bo Malmberg. "Age structure effects and growth in the OECD, 1950–1990." *Journal of population Economics* 12.3 (1999): 431-449.

**Miscellaneous regional regressions**

**23. Relationship between 1900 education in the US on state level and current GDP levels?**

Readings:

- Benhabib, Jess, and Mark M. Spiegel. "The role of human capital in economic development evidence from aggregate cross-country data." *Journal of Monetary Economics* 34.2 (1994): 143-173.

**24. Does GDP converge within European countries since 1991? Before? What determines convergence rate?**

Readings:

- Barro, R. J., & Sala-i-Martin, X. (1992). Convergence. *Journal of Political Economy*, 100(2), 223-251
- Barro, R. J., Sala-i-Martin, X., Blanchard, O. J., & Hall, R. E. (1991). Convergence across states and regions. *Brookings papers on economic activity*, 107-182

**25. What is the effect of natural resource prices on GDP growth of resource rich countries? (Note: Pick a resource, such as oil, coffee, etc)**

Readings:

- Van Der Ploeg, F., & Poelhekke, S. (2017). The impact of natural resources: Survey of recent quantitative evidence. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 53(2), 205-216.
- Venables, A. J. (2016). Using natural resources for development: why has it proven so difficult?. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 30(1), 161-84.
- Harding, T., & Venables, A. J. (2016). The implications of natural resource exports for nonresource trade. *IMF Economic Review*, 64(2), 268-302.

**26. Compare & contrast relationship between number of children and women's labor supply for two different developing countries.**

Readings:

- Bloom, D. E., Canning, D., Fink, G., & Finlay, J. E. (2009). Fertility, female labor force participation, and the demographic dividend. *Journal of Economic growth*, 14(2), 79-101.
- Agüero, J. M., & Marks, M. S. (2011). Motherhood and female labor supply in the developing world evidence from infertility shocks. *Journal of Human Resources*, 46(4), 800-826.

## Trade

### **27. What's the impact of international trade on GDP growth?**

Readings:

- Frankel, Jeffrey A., and David H. Romer. "Does trade cause growth?." *American Economic Review* 89.3 (1999): 379-399.

### **28. What is the relationship between a country's possession of natural resources and GDP.**

Readings:

- Frankel, J. A. (2010). The natural resource curse: a survey (No. w15836). National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Sachs, J. D., & Warner, A. M. (2001). The curse of natural resources. *European economic review*, 45(4-6), 827-838.

## Government & Government Policy

### **29. What is the relationship between a country's corporate tax rate and economic growth?**

Readings:

- Lee, Y., & Gordon, R. H. (2005). Tax structure and economic growth. *Journal of public economics*, 89(5-6), 1027-1043.
- Arnold, J. (2008). Do Tax Structures Affect Aggregate Economic Growth?

### **30. What is the relationship between foreign aid and economic growth?**

Readings:

- Deaton, A. (2013). *The Great Escape, Health, Wealth and the Origins of Inequality*, Princeton University Press. Chapter 7
- Easterly, William. "Can foreign aid buy growth?." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17.3 (2003): 23-48.
- Dalgaard, Carl-Johan, Henrik Hansen, and Finn Tarp. "On the empirics of foreign aid and growth." *The Economic Journal* 114.496 (2004): F191-F216.

### **31. What is the relationship between foreign direct investment and economic growth?**

Readings:

- Borensztein, E., De Gregorio, J., & Lee, J. W. (1998). How does foreign direct investment affect economic growth? 1. *Journal of International Economics*, 45(1), 115-135.
- Chowdhury, A., & Mavrotas, G. (2006). FDI and growth: What causes what?. *World economy*, 29(1), 9-19.

## Labor and agriculture

### **32. The evolution of yields of staple crops in Asia vs Africa since 1960**

Readings:

- Evenson, R. E., & Gollin, D. (2003). Assessing the impact of the Green Revolution, 1960 to 2000. *science*, 300 (5620), 758-762
- Paarlberg, R. (2009). *Starved for science: How biotechnology is being kept out of Africa*. Harvard University Press

### **33. What's the relationship between female labor force participation rate and GDP per capita?**

Readings:

- Goldin, C. (2006). The quiet revolution that transformed women's employment, education, and family. *American economic review*, 96(2), 1-21.
- Goldin, C. (1994). The U-shaped female labor force function in economic development and economic history (No. w4707). National Bureau of Economic Research

## Technology

### **34. What's the relationship between cellular subscription rates and economic growth?**

Readings:

- Cellphones are used as a proxy to measure technology in models like the Solow model <https://www.gsma.com/publicpolicy/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/gsma-deloitte-impact-mobile-telephony-economic-growth.pdf>
- [https://digitalcommons.bucknell.edu/cqi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=honors\\_theses](https://digitalcommons.bucknell.edu/cqi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=honors_theses)



# Immigration

## **35. Compare & analyze the difference in returns to education between immigrants and non-immigrants.**

Readings:

- Schoellman, T. (2011). Education quality and development accounting. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 79(1), 388-417
- Lagakos, D., Moll, B., Porzio, T., Qian, N., & Schoellman, T. (2018). Life-cycle human capital accumulation across countries: lessons from US Immigrants. *Journal of Human Capital*, 12(2), 305-342.

# The Role of Institutions

## **36. What is the relationship between legal institutions and GDP?**

Readings:

- La Porta, R., Lopez-de-Silanes, F., & Shleifer, A. (2008). The economic consequences of legal origins. *Journal of economic literature*, 46(2), 285-332.

## **37. What is the relationship between slavery (historical) and GDP growth?**

Readings:

- Nunn, N. (2008). The long-term effects of Africa's slave trades. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 123(1), 139-176.
- Nunn, N. (2008). Slavery, inequality, and economic development in the americas. *Institutions and economic performance*, 15, 148-180.
- Dell, M. (2010). The persistent effects of Peru's mining mita. *Econometrica*, 78(6), 1863-1903.

## **38. What is the relationship between the identity of a colonizer (e.g. British vs. French rule) and economic development?**

Readings:

- La Porta, R., Lopez-de-Silanes, F., & Shleifer, A. (2008). The economic consequences of legal origins. *Journal of economic literature*, 46(2), 285-332.
- Acemoglu, D., Johnson, S., & Robinson, J. A. (2001). The colonial origins of comparative development: An empirical investigation. *American economic review*, 91(5), 1369-1401.

## Miscellaneous

### **39. Compare & contrast gender earnings gap between three developing countries.**

Readings:

- Goldin, C. (1994). The U-shaped female labor force function in economic development and economic history (No. w4707). National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Jayachandran, S. (2015). The Roots of Gender Inequality in Developing Countries. Annual Review of Economics, 7(1), 63-88.