

His Excellency Dr Arkebe Oqubay
Senior Minister and Special Adviser to the Ethiopian Prime Minister
African Development Economist

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Short bio

Arkebe Oqubay, PhD, is a Senior Minister and Special Adviser to the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, and has been at the centre of policymaking for over twenty-five years. He is Economic Sectors Coordinator at the Prime Minister's Office. His primary focus is on Ethiopia's economic transformation and industrialisation. He has had the unique privilege of working with late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, former Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, and current Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed. Dr Oqubay has played a key role in spearheading Ethiopia's remarkable economic development and structural transformation, with a particular focus on industrialisation, promoting productive investment and pioneering the development of industrial hubs (industrial parks), a model that has been emulated in other African countries.

He also pioneered fundamental reforms while leading the Ministry of Urban Development and Public Works, and the Tigray regional state. He is also the founding Chancellor of the Addis Ababa Science and Technology University, one of the first universities of its kind in Africa. He is also a member of the Ethiopian Investment Board and National Export Coordinating Committee, both chaired by the Prime Minister, as well as of various international advisory boards. He serves as Board Chair and Vice-Chair of many leading public organisations in Ethiopia, including Ethiopian Airlines, Ethiopian Railway Corporation, and the Industrial Parks Development Corporation.

He is the former Mayor of Addis Ababa and winner of the *Best African Mayor of 2006* award presented by ABN and was a finalist *World Mayor Award 2006*, for transforming the city. He currently serves as board chair of several leading public organizations and international advisory boards (such as African Centre for Economic Transformation - ACET), and he is a recipient of the *Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star*, presented by the Emperor of Japan.

Dr Arkebe holds a PhD from SOAS, University of London, and is a Research Associate at the Centre of African Studies in the University of London. He is a development economist, and his recent published works include the path-breaking *Made in Africa* (Oxford University Press, 2015); *The Oxford Handbook of the Ethiopian Economy* (Oxford University Press, 2019); *How Nations Learn: Technological Learning, Industrial Policy, and Catch Up* (Oxford University Press, 2019); *China-Africa and Economic Transformation* (Oxford University Press, 2019); *African Economic Development: Evidence, Theory, and Policy* (Oxford University Press, 2020), *The Oxford Handbook of Industrial Hubs and Economic Development* (Oxford University, 2020), and *The Oxford Handbook of Industrial Policy* (Oxford University Press, 2020).

Dr Arkebe is one of the leading African development economists and thinkers, and was recognized by the *New African* as one of the *100 Most Influential Africans of 2016* and a "leading thinker on Africa's strategic development" for his work on industrialization and industrial policies, both theoretical and practical. His research focus includes structural transformation, economic catch-up, industrial policy, urban transformation, economic governance, leadership, and policymaking with a focus on developing and emerging economies, Africa in particular.

Education

- **PhD** in Development Studies/Development Economics, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, UK

Employment and Public Service

Conference speeches

Dr Oqubay is a frequent keynote speaker in high-level international conferences, in particular on Africa and developing countries, development economics, sustainability and climate change, and global studies such as China-Africa economic ties. He frequently is invited in policy dialogue with ministerial cabinets of various African countries and international consultation.

International Awards, Memberships and Recognition (selected)

Dr Oqubay has keynoted many international and Africa forums, and facilitated workshops and dialogues with African leaders and policymakers. He also serves in international advisory boards such as the African Centre for Economic Transformation (ACET).

- Recipient of the *Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star*, presented by the Emperor of Japan, 2018.
- *100 Most Influential Africans of 2016*, awarded by *New African* magazine for his role as a leading scholar on Africa's strategic development and for his practical and theoretical work on stimulating industrial policies.
- Successfully led many programs and projects that won awards for the government of Ethiopia (such the award given by the World Bank and UNCTAD to the Ethiopian Investment Corporation for best investment performance and promotion of investment and sustainable industrial hubs).
- *The Best African Mayor of 2006*, awarded by the African Broadcast Network.
- Finalist for the *World Mayor Award*, 2006.
- Finalist for the Scroll Award of the UN-Habitat, 2006.
- Member of the United Nations Advisory Committee of Local Authorities (UNACLA), 2005-2009.
- Member of the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (organized in partnership with UN-Habitat), 2006-2010.
- Member of the Governing Council of the Cities Alliance, 2006-2010.
- METROPOLIS - Member of the Board of Directors, Executive Committee, Regional Vice President for Africa Region (Metropolis – Forum of Metropolitan Cities), 2004-2006.

Publications

Books

His most recent books include:

- 1) ***Made in Africa: Industrial Policy of Ethiopia*** (Oxford University Press, 2015). This is a path breaking and widely read sole-authored monograph, focusing on Ethiopia's economic

transformation, industrialisation, industrial policy, and policy learning. The book has been translated into other languages.

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/made-in-africa-9780198739890>

https://www.amazon.com/Made-Africa-Industrial-Policy-Ethiopia/dp/0198767803/ref=sr_1_4?keywords=Oqubay&qid=1562414219&s=gateway&sr=8-4

'Arkebe Oqubay is the ultimate insider, yet he offers an admirably detached and balanced assessment of the ups and downs of Ethiopia's industrial policies. His view of industrial policy is a sophisticated one. Successful intervention requires the right political and institutional framework. It demands a deep understanding of market opportunities, of supply-side problems and linkages across activities, and an appreciation of what government can and cannot do. And it depends, most crucially, on the governments capacity to implement the appropriate measures. This book will be essential reading for all those concerned with the process of industrialisation in developing countries. - **John Sutton, Sir John Hicks Professor of Economics, London School of Economics**

'This book combines sophisticated theories of industrial policy with a deep understanding of the policy process, which comes from the author's long experience in policymaking at the highest levels. This unusual combination has resulted in a framework for empirical analysis that is not only fully appreciative of structural dynamics and intersectoral linkages but also keenly aware of practical challenges of policy implementation in terms of administrative capabilities, interest group politics, and institutional constraints. A unique, pathbreaking book.' -**Ha-Joon Chang, Reader in Economics, University of Cambridge**

- 2) *The Oxford Handbook of the Ethiopian Economy* (Oxford University Press, 2019), with Christopher Cramer and Fantu Cheru (eds.). This is a five-year landmark academic work and the first Oxford economics handbook on a single African country.

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-oxford-handbook-of-the-ethiopian-economy-9780198814986?cc=fi&lang=en>

https://www.amazon.com/Oxford-Handbook-Ethiopian-Economy-Handbooks-ebook/dp/B07MSK2SMF/ref=sr_1_3?keywords=Oqubay&qid=1562414219&s=gateway&sr=8-3

The first Oxford economics handbook on a single African country.

- Examines the economic policies of structural transformation through an extensive review of literature on the Ethiopian economy
- Covers both agricultural and rural transformation and the importance of industrial policy and the role of urbanization in facilitating industrialization
- Considers the social dimensions of structural transformation
- Applies the lessons learned from Ethiopia's unique development model to Africa more broadly

- 3) *China-Africa and an Economic Transformation* (Oxford University Press, 2019), with Justin Yifu Lin (eds.).

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/china-africa-and-an-economic-transformation-9780198830504?q=oqubay&lang=en&cc=fi>

https://www.amazon.com/China-Africa-Economic-Transformation-Arkebe-Oqubay-ebook/dp/B07QMZ3R96/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=Oqubay&qid=1562414166&s=gateway&sr=8-1

Authored by leading scholars on Africa, China, and China–Africa relations, *China-Africa and an Economic Transformation* brings together stimulating and thought-provoking perspectives, and deeper analyses. Focusing on Africa’s economic development, it looks at core areas of structural transformation: productive investment and industrialization, international trade, infrastructure development, and financing. China–Africa relations are considered in the context of the global division of labour and power, and through the history and contexts of both China and Africa. This volume seeks to fill the gap in the existing literature, steer policy and scholarly debate on the progress and trajectory of China–Africa cooperation, and analyse China’s development path as a source of learning for Africa.

‘If you are a public or private entrepreneur, or anyone with a vision to build more prosperous nations and businesses across the African continent in the next 50 years, then this fascinating book is a must-read... The editors and authors do a stellar job of showing how more strategic approaches by African countries, that navigate the dynamic and complex conditions, are urgently required to unlock unprecedented economic value across the continent and ensure mutual economic benefit going forward. Whether in government or the private sector, anyone with a real commitment to the sustainable and prosperous future of both, will be wise to carefully study this volume and glean actionable insights from its historically grounded and intellectually robust analysis.’ **Strive Masiyiwa, Founder Econet**

‘A compelling and cogent work, *China-Africa and an Economic Transformation* offers an opportunity to engage leading policymakers and senior scholars. Cutting against clichéd representations of relations between China and Africa, the contributing authors provide fresh and original ideas about pathways to development. Oqubay and Lin’s volume is timely and challenging. This book is a gem, and that’s an understatement.’ James H. Mittelman, Distinguished Research Professor and University Professor Emeritus, American University

‘African countries are poised to experience sustained growth and development. China is positioned by its own economic development and its external development policies to play a major and expanding role in that process. *China-Africa and an Economic Transformation*, a book edited by Justin Yifu Lin and Arkebe Oqubay, presents a clear and important assessment of the multi-faceted interactions between China and its African trade and investment partners. Among the books many great strengths is its explicit recognition of the dynamic and changing aspects of the relationships, responding to shifts in all of these economies, and in the global context. It will become essential reading for policy makers, businesses and civil society leaders in Africa and China, but also for a global constituency concerned about the SDGs and the inclusiveness of the growth patterns in the global economy.’ Michael Spence, Professor of Economics, Stern School of Business, New York University, Nobel Prize in Economics 2001

4) *How Nations Learn: Technological Learning, Industrial Policy, and Catch-up* (Oxford University Press, 2019), with Kenichi Ohno (eds.).

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/how-nations-learn-9780198841760?q=how%20nations%20learn&lang=en&cc=gb>

https://www.amazon.com/How-Nations-Learn-Technological-Industrial-ebook/dp/B07T1DCRCV/ref=sr_1_2?keywords=Oqubay&qid=1562414219&s=gateway&sr=8-2

What are the prospects for successful learning and catch-up for nations in the twenty-first century? Why have some nations succeeded while others failed? By now middle-income economies are many, but very few among them have risen to attain truly high income and global technological leadership. *How Nations Learn: Technological Learning, Industrial Policy, and Catch-up* examines how nations learn by reviewing key structural and contingent factors that contribute to dynamic learning and catch-up. Rejecting both the ‘one-size-fits-all’

approach and the agnosticism that all nations are unique and different, it uses historical as well as firm-, industry-, and country-level evidence and experiences to identify the sources and drivers of successful learning and catch-up and the lessons for late-latecomer countries.

Authored by eminent scholars, the volume aims to generate interest and debate among policy makers, practitioners, and researchers on the complexity of learning and catch-up. It explores technological learning at the firm level, policy learning by the state, and the cumulative and multifaceted nature of the learning process, which encompasses learning by doing, by experiment, emulation, innovation, and leapfrogging.

'Industrialisation has always been fundamental to sustained economic growth. It separates the world into high and low-income economies. To create inclusive prosperity, we urgently need to understand *how nations learn*. State-supported innovation is not only cardinal for catch-up, but also to abate climate breakdown (through crowding in new businesses, nurturing experimentation, and ensuring public benefits). By studying the economic history of technological advancement in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, this book makes a powerful case for industrial policy.' **Dr Alice Evans, Lecturer in International Development, King's College London.**

'The limited capacity of developing countries to catch up the income level of developed countries has continued to be a major feature of international development over the past decades. Professors Oqubay and Ohno have been able to collect a fantastic set of papers on the crucial question of success and failure in achieving convergence: how technological learning takes place at the firm, sectorial and national level, allowing countries to catch up, but also how failure to do so leads to divergence. It considers both the success stories of Meiji Japan, Taiwan, Korea, Singapore and most recently of China, but also the strong challenges faced in other regions, and notably in Latin America and Africa. A must read for academic and policymakers alike.' **José Antonio Ocampo, Member of the Board of Banco de la República (Colombia), Chair of the United Nations Committee for Development Policy, and Professor, Columbia University.**

'*How Nations Learn* is a book based on big ideas. Why do some nations grow faster than others? How does the process of economic catch-up work? What does the technological learning of firms have in common with the policy lessons of governments? How do the answers to these questions vary across countries and regions of the world? The book provides answers to these queries from a distinguished interdisciplinary and international set of scholars, who draw on an impressive reservoir of both contemporary and historical experiences. *How Nations Learn* is an essential guide to how to navigate the key dilemmas of 21st century development, which should be particularly useful to latecomer countries and those grappling with the pitfalls of uneven development.' **Gary Gereffi, Professor of Sociology and Director of the Global Value Chains Center at Duke University**

5) ***African Economic Development: Evidence, Theory, and Policy*** (Oxford University Press, 2020), with Christopher Cramer and John Sender.

6) ***The Oxford Handbook of Industrial Hubs and Economic Development*** (Oxford University Press, 2020) with Justin Yifu Lin (eds.).

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-oxford-handbook-of-industrial-hubs-and-economic-development-9780198850434?q=Oqubay&lang=en&cc=fi>

https://www.amazon.co.uk/Handbook-Industrial-Economic-Development-Handbooks/dp/0198850433/ref=sr_1_5?keywords=oqubay&qid=1570285837&sr=8-5

Industrialization supported by industrial hubs has been widely associated with structural transformation and catch-up. But while the direct economic benefits of industrial hubs are significant, their value lies first and foremost in their contribution as incubators of industrialization, production and technological capability, and innovation. The Oxford Handbook of Industrial Hubs and Economic Development adopts an interdisciplinary approach to examine the conceptual underpinnings, review empirical evidence of regions and economies, and extract pertinent lessons for policy researchers and practitioners on the key drivers of success and failure for industrial hubs.

This Handbook illustrates the diverse and complex nature of industrial hubs and shows how they promote industrialization, economic structural transformation, and technological catch-up. It explores the implications of emerging issues and trends such as environmental protection and sustainability, technological advancement, shifts in the global economy, and urbanization.

The handbook provides:

- Provides a comprehensive understanding of industrial hubs and economic development
- Uses historical as well as firm-, industry-, and country-level evidence and experiences to identify the sources and drivers of success and failure
- Looks at the longer-term prospects for industrial hubs in the twenty-first century
- Reviews emerging issues and possible responses including gender, climate change, environmental sustainability, emerging shifts in the global economy, and technological advancement

7) ***The Oxford Handbook of Industrial Policy*** (Oxford University Press, 2020) with Ha-Joon Chang, Christopher Cramer, and Richard Kozul-Wright (eds.).

Papers and book chapters

His recent papers and book chapters include:

- 1) 'Ethiopia: Lessons from an experiment'. In *Industrialize Africa: Strategies, Policies, Institutions, and Financing*. 2017. Published by African Development Bank Group.
- 2) 'The Journey of Ethiopian Airlines'. 2018. Published by African Development Bank Group.
- 3) 'Ethiopia: Lessons from an Experiment', in Celestin Monga and Justin Y. Lin (2019) *The Oxford Handbook of Structural Transformation* (Oxford University Press) pp 591-618.
- 4) 'The Journey of Ethiopian Airlines: Technological Learning and Catch-up in Aviation', in Arkebe Oqubay and Kenichi Ohno (2019) (eds.) *How Nations Learn: Technological Learning, Industrial Policy, and Catch-up* (Oxford University Press) pp 235-61.
- 5) 'Industrial Policy and Late Industrialization in Ethiopia', in Christopher Cramer, Fantu Cheru, and Arkebe Oqubay (2019) (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of the Ethiopian Economy* (Oxford University Press) pp 605-629.
- 6) 'The Structure and Performance of the Ethiopian Manufacturing Sector', in Christopher Cramer, Fantu Cheru, and Arkebe Oqubay (2019) (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of the Ethiopian Economy* (Oxford University Press) pp 630-650.
- 7) 'Learning to Catch up in Africa', in Arkebe Oqubay and Kenichi Ohno (2019) (eds.) *How Nations Learn: Technological Learning, Industrial Policy, and Catch-up* (Oxford University Press) pp 285-309.

- 8) 'How Nations Learn: Implications for Latecomers and Pathways to the Future', in Arkebe Oqubay and Kenichi Ohno (2019) (eds.) *How Nations Learn: Technological Learning, Industrial Policy, and Catch-up* (Oxford University Press) pp 310-20.
- 9) 'Catalysing China–Africa Ties for Africa's Structural Transformation: Lessons from Ethiopia', in Arkebe Oqubay and Justin Y. Lin (2019) (eds.) *China-Africa and an Economic Transformation* (Oxford University Press) pp 282-309.
- 10) 'The Future of China–Africa Economic Ties: New Trajectory and Possibilities', in Arkebe Oqubay and Justin Yifu Lin (2019) (eds.) *China-Africa and an Economic Transformation* (Oxford University Press) pp 310-324.
- 11) 'Industrial Hubs and Economic Development: A Literature Review', in Arkebe Oqubay and Justin Y. Lin (2020) *The Oxford Handbook of Industrial Hubs and Economic Development* (Oxford University Press).
- 12) 'Industrial Hubs as development incubators: Asian Pioneers', in Arkebe Oqubay and Justin Y. Lin (2020) *The Oxford Handbook of Industrial Hubs and Economic Development* (Oxford University Press).
- 13) 'Industrial Hubs as development incubators: Asian Pioneers', in Arkebe Oqubay and Justin Y. Lin (2020) *The Oxford Handbook of Industrial Hubs and Economic Development* (Oxford University Press).
- 14) 'A Strategic Approach to Industrial Hubs: Learnings in Ethiopia', in Arkebe Oqubay and Justin Y. Lin (2020) *The Oxford Handbook of Industrial Hubs and Economic Development* (Oxford University Press).
- 15) 'Industrial Hubs and Economic Development: Conclusions and Pathways to the Future', in Arkebe Oqubay and Justin Y. Lin (2020) *The Oxford Handbook of Industrial Hubs and Economic Development* (Oxford University Press).
- 16) 'The Theory and Practice of Industrial Policy', in Arkebe Oqubay, Ha-Joon Chang, Christopher Cramer, and Richard Kozul-Wright (2020) (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Industrial Policy* (Oxford University Press).
- 17) 'Exhibits in the Cabinet of Errors: Learning from Failures in Industrial policy', in Arkebe Oqubay, Ha-Joon Chang, Christopher Cramer, and Richard Kozul-Wright (2020) (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Industrial Policy* (Oxford University Press).
- 18) 'Towards a Research Agenda on the Shifting Terrain of Industrial Policy', in Arkebe Oqubay, Ha-Joon Chang, Christopher Cramer, and Richard Kozul-Wright (2020) (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Industrial Policy* (Oxford University Press).