

Dept of Social Science – Job Talk

International Development Studies (IDS)

Nathanael Ojong

Date:
Wednesday,
May 01

Times:
Research
10:00 am
– 11:30 am

Teaching
2:00 pm
– 3:30 pm

Location:
822 Ross
South

All sessions will be
open to faculty &
students.

Light refreshments
will be provided.

Contesting the Bottom-of-the-Pyramid Finance in Cameroon



Photo Credit: N. Ojong

Research Presentation Abstract: We are experiencing a scramble to identify and profit from ‘new markets’ at the base of the pyramid. This task has been made easier for financial capitalists as a result of the mobilizing narrative which frames the problem of the poor as that of finance. Gaining access to new markets is often challenging due to different social contexts. I focus on the articulation of financial capitalism with traditional institutions, with the goal of gaining access to new markets at the bottom of the pyramid. I develop a critical understanding of the bottom of the pyramid finance in Cameroon with recourse to a relational comparison of the ‘conventional’ and ‘traditional’ modes of securing neoliberalized credit. A relational comparison points to the features that both modes have in common and brings into particular focus the expansive power of financial capitalism. Using critical theory, I aim to generate a more nuanced understanding of financial capitalism by emphasizing (a) the exercise of dispossession through the mediation of traditional institutions, (b) the formation of financial subjects, and (c) the processes through which inequality is reproduced and normalized.

Dr. Ojong has been investigating how social and cultural factors influence formal and informal financial practices in the Global South. He has examined issues related to microfinance and informal finance. Dr. Ojong's current research examines the political economy of green grabbing (in sub-Saharan Africa) in the context of neoliberal capitalism. Specifically, Dr. Ojong is investigating the local livelihood outcomes that arise on the basis of green grabbing, including how this appropriation of land and resources for environmental ends (re)produces inequality. Dr. Ojong's work has appeared in journals such as Third World Quarterly, Journal of Economic Issues and Review of Social Economy.