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## Abstract

This essay offers a critique of the controversial proposal that peculiarities in African thought concerning time have a negative impact upon African economic development. The proposal under scrutiny takes the form of two corollaries whose notoriety dates back to John S. Mbiti's (1969) infamous claim that African cultures lack an indigenous concept of the distant future. It is shown that these joint hypotheses appear to be either self-refuting or false. In consequence, the proposal that a cross-cultural scrutiny of time will reveal defective concepts is reconsidered. It is proposed that deficiencies in the perception of time that bear a negative impact upon African economics are instead the cache of foreign experts who fail to appreciate conventional uses of time in Africa as rational strategies for risk avoidance, damage control, for resisting hegemonic authority, quelling foreign expropriation of African resources, and for maximizing efficiency given scarce capital and inadequate infrastructure. What begins as a deflationary dismissal of a long-standing debate over African indigenous thoughts about time concludes with a promising speculation about African idiosyncratic practices of time-management that are instrumental in negotiating the vicissitudes of spiralling underdevelopment.