

THE FUTURE WE WANT

Nobel Prize Dialogue India 2025

James Robinson

James Robinson was awarded the 2024 prize in economic sciences “for studies of how institutions are formed and affect prosperity.”

James Robinson was educated at the London School of Economics, the University of Warwick and Yale University where he was awarded his PhD in 1993. He has since held faculty positions at the University of Melbourne, the University of Southern California, the University of California at Berkeley, and Harvard University. He is currently one of ten University professors at the University of Chicago where he holds positions in the Harris School of Public Policy and the Department of Political Science.



Robinson was a recipient of the 2024 Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel. His work explores the underlying causes of economic and political divergence both historically and today and uses both the mathematical and quantitative methods of economics along with the case study, qualitative and fieldwork methodologies used in other social sciences. Robinson has a particular interest in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and is a Fellow at the Institute of African Studies at the University of Nigeria at Nsukka. He has conducted fieldwork and collected data in Bolivia, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Haiti, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

He has published three books co-authored with Daron Acemoglu. The first, ‘Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy’, proposed a theory of the emergence of and stability of democracy and dictatorship. Their second book ‘Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty’, pulled together much of their joint research on comparative development and proposed a theory of why some countries have flourished economically while others have fallen into poverty. Their most recent book, ‘The Narrow Corridor: States, Society and the Fate of Liberty’, examines the incessant and inevitable struggle between states and society, and gives an account of the deep historical processes that have shaped the modern world. More information:

<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/economic-sciences/2024/robinson/facts/>