

Weekend links: Žižek on Greece, Worm Wars, an empiricist strikes back, and more...

by Camilla Burkot and Terence Wood

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In this weekend's edition of the links, we start with a [long read](#) from philosopher Slavoj Žižek. In his typically expansive style, Žižek paints a rather bleak picture of the reality now facing Greece after arriving at a bailout agreement with the EU: 'Greeks are now asked to pay a high price, but not for a realistic perspective of growth'.

Rapid developments in the 'Worm Wars' have preoccupied much of the development blogosphere this week. On BuzzFeed, Ben Goldacre [discusses](#) issues with the replication of the highly influential [Miguel and Kremer deworming trial](#), which concluded more than ten years ago that deworming improves health, school performance, and school attendance. The [replication](#) [pdf] identified a number of discrepancies from the original study, ranging from minor rounding errors to more significant coding mistakes — some of which the original authors [dispute](#). As the debate escalated, Chris Blattman stepped in with [a summary](#) (and, later, some [lessons learned](#)). And at the end of the day, GiveWell [concluded](#) that a strong case remains for supporting deworming. The Worm Wars are dead; long live the Worm Wars.

And if you need a sequel — call it An Empiricist Strikes Back — this old (2003), classic paper by David Laitin [makes the case](#) [pdf] for combining methodological approaches. All very relevant to development research.

A new [IRIN/HPG Crisis Brief](#) examines the unlikely local response to humanitarian aid needs in the Eastern Ukraine — comprised of local NGOs, Russia, and Ukraine's richest man, Rinat Akhmetov — and the extent to which that aid may actually be contributing to the conflict.

Ricardo Hausmann [argues](#) that fighting corruption, while laudable, won't necessarily lead to greater prosperity. When it comes to corruption, 'attacking the bad is very different from creating the good'. Education, on the other hand, is essential to economic growth, [writes](#) Kevin Watkins (who also uses the opportunity to take Hausmann to task for his views on ['the education myth'](#)).

In *Development Policy Review*, Monica Beuran and colleagues [interrogate](#) myths around the development impact of investments in road infrastructure in sub-Saharan

Africa. In practice, it appears that the political-economy factors and misperceptions tend to maintain the status quo and lead to investments that are less effective than they could be.

Last but not least, *The Guardian* presents the **unexpected story** of last December's attempt by the self-styled Gambia Freedom League — composed of a group of middle-aged American immigrants — to overthrow Yahya Jammeh, The Gambia's longstanding autocratic ruler, and their subsequent prosecution in the US under the Neutrality Act, a law dating to 1794 that criminalises military action by individuals against any foreign state with which the US is at peace.

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Link:

<https://devpolicy.org/weekend-links-zizek-on-greece-worm-wars-an-empiricist-strikes-back-and-more-20150731/>