

Andrew C. Dickens

CONTACT INFORMATION

York University
Department of Economics
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CITIZENSHIP

Canadian

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Development Economics, Political Economy, Applied Microeconomics, Economic History

TEACHING INTERESTS

Development Economics, Political Economy, Applied Microeconomics

EDUCATION

PhD, Economics, York University, Expected 2017

Dissertation: Essays on Language and Development

Supervisor: Nils-Petter Lagerlöf

Committee: Tasso Adamopoulos, Ben Sand, Berta Esteve-Volart

Visiting Research Fellow, Economics, Brown University, 2015

MA (Doctoral Stream), Economics, University of Toronto, 2011

BA (First Class Honours), Economics, University of Manitoba, 2010

RESEARCH PAPERS

Ethnolinguistic Favoritism in African Politics (*Job Market Paper*)

Revision requested at the **American Economic Journal: Applied Economics**

Population Relatedness and Cross-Country Idea Flows: Evidence from Book Translations

Revision requested at the **Journal of Economic Growth**

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Ecology, Trade and the Geographic Origins of Cultural Differences

Freedom on the Move: The 1850 Fugitive Slave Act and the Search for Escaped Slaves
with Daniel Goetz (Princeton)

AWARDS AND EXTERNAL FUNDING

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Doctoral Fellowship, 2014-2016
York University Graduate Fellowship, 2011-2016
Ontario Graduate Scholarship, 2011-2012, 2013-2014, 2014-2015 (Declined)
York University Chris Sloan Prize, 2014
York University Provost Entrance Scholarship, 2011
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Graduate Scholarship, 2010-2011
University of Toronto Graduate Fellowship, 2010-2011
University of Manitoba Students Union Scholarship, 2009-2010
University of Manitoba Rubin Simkin Memorial Prize in Economics, 2009-2010
(For the best essay in Economic Growth and the Quality of Life)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Course Instructor, York University, 2012-2014
Principles of Microeconomics, Department of Economics, York University
Principles of Economics, YUBridge Supplementary Lectures for ESL Students, York University
Teaching Assistant, York University, 2011-2016
Graduate: Macroeconomic Theory
Undergraduate: Econometrics, Statistics for Economists, Advanced Macroeconomic Theory,
Topics in International Trade, Principles of Economics
Teaching Assistant, University of Toronto, 2010-2011
Undergraduate: Health Economics
Teaching Assistant, University of Manitoba 2009-2010
Undergraduate: Principles of Economics
Research Assistant, York University 2012-2016
Nils-Petter Lagerlöf: Data preparation and analysis
Tasso Adamopoulos: Data preparation and analysis
Avi Cohen: Data preparation for Principles of Economics textbook
Research Assistant, University of Manitoba 2009-2010
John Serieux: Data preparation and analysis
Household Surveyor, Honduras, 2009
Undergraduate thesis summer field research

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

2016: NEUDC (MIT Sloan), Economic History Association Annual Meeting (Boulder), Royal Economic Society Symposium for Junior Researchers (Sussex), PODER Summer School on New Data in Development Economics (Namur), Canadian Economics Association Annual Meeting (Ottawa)
2015: Brown University Macro Lunch, Canadian Economics Association Annual Meeting (Ryerson)
2014: Capri Summer School in Economic Growth
2012: Duke University Summer Institute on the Emergence of Modern Economics

SERVICE

2016: Graduate student representative for the Tenure and Promotion Committee

COMPUTER SKILLS

Stata, ArcGIS, Python, L^AT_EX

MEMBERSHIP

American Economic Association, Canadian Economics Association, Economic History Association, Royal Economic Society

REFERENCES

Professor Nils-Petter Lagerlöf
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TEACHING REFERENCE

Professor Avi Cohen
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Dissertation Abstract

Ethnolinguistic Favoritism in African Politics (Job Market Paper)

I document evidence of ethnic favoritism in a panel of 163 ethnolinguistic groups partitioned across 35 African countries. In contrast to previous studies, I construct a computerized lexicostatistical measure of linguistic similarity between each ethnic group and the national leader as a novel measure of ethnic proximity. I exploit the arbitrary placement of African political borders as a source of exogenous within-group variation, where the similarity of the same partitioned group varies over time according to the ethnolinguistic identity of the national leader on each side of the border. To quantify patronage at the group level, I isolate time variation in night light luminosity resulting from changes in the ethnolinguistic identity of a leader. Using a triple-difference estimator I find that a one standard deviation increase in linguistic similarity yields a 7.0 percent increase in luminosity, which corresponds to a 2.1 percent increase in group-level GDP per capita. I then use the continuity of linguistic similarity to show that favoritism exists among groups that are not coethnic to the leader, where the mean effect of non-coethnic similarity is one quarter the size of the coethnic effect. I corroborate this evidence using individual-level data and establish that it's where an individual lives and the attached ethnolinguistic identity that predicts favoritism, not the identity of the individual respondent. I relate these results to the literature on coalition building, and provide evidence that ethnicity is one of the guiding principles behind high-level government appointments.

Population Relatedness and Cross-Country Idea Flows: Evidence from Book Translations

This paper uses book translation data as a measure of idea flows to document a robust empirical relationship between these data and two measures of population relatedness: linguistic and genetic distance. I find a significant negative relationship between linguistic distance and book translations that is robust to a variety of controls, fixed effects specifications and sample restrictions. Genetic distance similarly exhibits negative correlation with book translations, but after conditioning on linguistic and geographic distance the sign is reversed. This conditional positive relationship between genetic distance and book translations is statistically significant and robust to numerous robustness checks. The benchmark estimate indicates that a one standard deviation increase in linguistic distance reduces book translations by 12 percent, while a one standard deviation increase in genetic distance increases book translations by 10 percent. I argue linguistic distance reflects a cost on idea flows via the translatability of a language pair, whereas genetic distance captures a concomitant incentive to communicate when dissimilar countries have more to learn from each other.

Ecology, Trade and the Geographic Origins of Cultural Differences

Ethnic divisions affect development. I study the geographic origins of these divisions to better understand the variation in ethnolinguistic distance between ancestrally related groups. In particular I focus on agricultural diversity and the role it plays in mitigating the extent of cultural drift between groups. I use a novel georeferenced dataset to explore the border regions of neighbouring language groups and exploit exogenous variation in the set of potentially cultivatable crops at the onset of the Columbian Exchange. I measure ethnic distance with a computerized estimate of lexicostatistical distance and find that neighbouring groups delineated across agriculturally diverse regions are ethnically similar. Throughout history, specialization in crop production was prevalent in agriculturally diverse regions, with inter-group trade resulting as an outcome of specialization. I propose that agricultural diversity has an indirect effect on cultural drift through inter-group encounters resulting from trade.