

Max Winkler

PhD Candidate in Economics, University of Zurich
Schönberggasse 1 · Zurich · CH-8001 · Switzerland

✉ max.winkler@econ.uzh.ch ☎ +44-7726-156859 / +41-79-7090647 🌐 [mxwinkler.github.io](https://github.com/mxwinkler)

UNIVERSITY OF ZURICH

Placement Director: Joachim Voth Phone: +41-44-634-5547 Email: voth@econ.uzh.ch

EDUCATION

University of Zurich, Ph.D. Candidate in Economics. 2014 to present
Thesis Title: Essays in Cultural Economics
Expected completion date: May 2020
Harvard University, Visiting Student. 2018-2019
Barcelona Graduate School of Economics, M.Sc in Economics. 2013
University of St. Gallen, Bachelor's Degree in International Affairs. 2012
University of St. Gallen, Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration. 2012

REFERENCES

Professor Alberto Alesina (Harvard University)
Phone: +1-617-495-7730, Email: aalesina@harvard.edu
Professor Nathan Nunn (Harvard University)
Phone: +1-617-496-5079, Email: nunn@fas.harvard.edu
Professor Joachim Voth (University of Zurich)
Phone: +41-44-634-5547, Email: voth@econ.uzh.ch
Professor David Yanagizawa-Drott (University of Zurich)
Phone: +41-44-634-6131, Email: david.yanagizawa-drott@econ.uzh.ch

TEACHING AND RESEARCH FIELDS

Primary Fields: Development Economics, Political Economy
Secondary Fields: Economic History, Cultural Economics

TEACHING

Instructor, University of Zurich 2016-2017
Programming Practices for Research in Economics (3 week intensive courses).
Teaching Assistant, University of Zurich 2015-2017
Program Evaluation, Graduate (x2). Instructor: Pietro Biroli.
Development Economics, Undergraduate. Instructor: Joachim Voth.

OTHER EMPLOYMENT

McKinsey & Co, Zurich, Switzerland. Management Consulting Internship.	2014
Verium AG, Zurich, Switzerland. Private Equity Internship.	2013
Vadian Bank AG, St. Gallen, Switzerland. Private Banking.	2008-2010
Glas Centrum Winkler, Rottweil, Germany. Management Family Business.	2004-2008

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Refereeing

Economic Journal. Journal of Development Economics.

Invited Presentations

Brown, ETH Zurich (both 2019).

Workshops and Working Groups Organized

Zurich Workshop in Political Economy and Development (2017, 2019, co-organized), PhD Breakfast (2017, co-organized), Reading Group in Cultural Economics (2016, 2017, co-organized). Zurich Workshop in Economics (2016, co-organized).

HONORS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

Dissertation Fellowship, University of Zurich.	2019-2020
SNF Doc.Mobility Grant (Host Institution - Harvard University).	2018-2019
Swiss Study Foundation Scholarship.	2014-2019

RESEARCH PAPERS

Shocks, Norms, and Cooperation (Job Market Paper)

Social norms shape economic decisions in many situations. Growing evidence suggests vast heterogeneity in how strong norms are, irrespective of their specific contents. This paper examines a determinant of norm strength that has emerged from evolutionary theories as important: negative shocks. According to these theories, evolutionary selection favors psychological traits that imply stronger adherence to local norms and a greater willingness to punish norm violators in response to shocks. Based on several tests, each using different samples and empirical strategies, the paper shows that negative shocks result in stronger norms. Moreover, negative shocks promote cooperative behavior, particularly towards members of the same social group, and norm strength mediates some of the effect. The mechanism has implications for our understanding of right-wing populism. Individuals who experienced more negative shocks tend to think that the most important responsibility of government is to maintain order in society, and regional heterogeneity in the strength of norms in the United States is highly predictive of voting behavior in the 2016 presidential election.

Insecurity, Rituals, and Economic Behavior: Evidence from Beer Retailers in the Eastern DRC

(with Nathan Nunn and Raul Sanchez de la Sierra)

This study examines the economic effects of “anti-theft” protection spells on the economic decisions of beer retailers in the eastern DRC – where such beliefs are widespread, and expectations of theft lead retailers to lose business due to anxiety and frequent stock-outs. We extend access to retailers to undergo the rituals of three regional reputed witch doctors and randomize the timing of the rituals. For retailers who reported to believe in the spell, taking part in the spell reduced reported stress and perceived risk of theft on their business. Furthermore, as a result of the ritual, they purchased

larger numbers of beers, resulting in higher inventories and fewer stock-outs for weeks after the treatment. This, in turn, increased retailer sales and profits. These findings suggest that the beliefs in the existence of supernatural protection are significant enough to affect psychological well-being, economic decisions and business growth.

Political Competition and Racial Hate: Evidence from the U.S.

(with Sebastian Ottinger)

Does political competition incentivize the use of hate-creating stories in the media? Can such stories, even if short-lived, have long-lasting effects on attitudes? To answer these questions, we first create a new granular and time-varying measure of anti-Black hate stories by applying text analysis tools to a text corpus of local newspapers. Our dataset spans over a century and covers hundreds of counties. To validate the text-based measure, we show that it is highly predictive of conventional local proxy-indicators of anti-Black attitudes. We then exploit the electoral success of the redistributionist Populist Party in the late 19th century. In a difference-in-differences setting, we show that local newspapers, which mostly sided with the incumbent Southern Democratic party, were more likely to spread anti-Black hate stories in counties where the emerging Populist party won more votes in elections. Instrumenting the distribution of Populist support with four different predictors corroborates the finding. We also establish that the spread of hate had long-lasting effects: counties where political competition fostered anti-Black hate stories in the 1890s experienced more lynchings of African Americans in the 20th century.

RESEARCH PAPERS IN PROGRESS

Network Intensiveness and Innovation

(with Jonathan Schulz and Joseph Henrich)

Do social networks play a role in innovation and in the flow of information? Drawing on a rich literature in population genetics, we compute a panel of local-level summary statistics of network intensiveness using full-count US census data from 1900 to 1940. We show that historical network intensiveness is highly correlated with modern-day data of social connectedness. We find that counties with more intensive networks registered fewer patents and received fewer citations between 1900 and 1960. The finding is robust to a broad set of control variables that are important for innovation. Second, we find that innovation diffused more quickly between counties that had closer social ties, even when controlling for geographic proximity and transportation cost between counties. We interpret this as large-scale empirical evidence for the importance of social networks in innovation and the flow of information.

Network Intensiveness and Populism

(with Jonathan Schulz and Joseph Henrich)

Recent research suggests an important cleavage between places where most individuals hold open relative to closed attitudes, and that this cleavage plays a crucial role in the recent rise of populist parties. However, we know little about why closed attitudes are more prevalent in some places but not in others. In this paper, we argue that network intensiveness is a critical determinant of closed attitudes. We compute local-level measures of network intensiveness using full-count U.S. census data in 1940. We show that these measures are highly predictive of today's social connections. We find that network intensiveness correlates with the Republican vote share in recent U.S. presidential elections, impersonal and institutional trust, racial attitudes, and moral universalism.

Can War Participation Promote Parochial Prosocial Behavior?

(with Brian Wheaton)

In this paper, we provide causal evidence that serving in war increases prosocial behavior, even many years after the service ended. Using large-scale, representative surveys that record veteran status and employing an instrumental variable strategy that isolates an exogenous component in individual war participation, we find that veterans are more prosocial toward their neighbors and fellow nationals but not toward foreigners. Moreover, we find that veterans are more likely to participate in social associations and to turn out in presidential elections, two common proxies of social capital. These findings lend empirical support to the notion that warfare can promote social cohesion.