

Ada Gonzalez-Torres

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PhD Candidate, Department of Economics

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Placement Director (EUI):

Prof. David K. Levine

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Visiting Research Scholar, CEGA

UC Berkeley, 207 Giannini Hall, Berkeley, CA 94720

Research Fields

Development economics, Political economy (primary); Applied Microeconomics

Education

2013 - 2018	Ph.D. Candidate, Economics	European University Institute, Florence
1/2016 - 6/2018	Visiting Research Scholar	University of California, Berkeley
		Thesis: <i>"Essays in Development Economics"</i>
		Supervisors: Jérôme Adda, Edward A. Miguel, Michèle Belot
2012	M.Sc., Economics	Toulouse School of Economics
2010	B.A., Economics	Universidad Carlos III Madrid
2007/08		Université Panthéon-Sorbonne, Paris I (exchange student)
2010	L.L.B., Law	Universidad Carlos III Madrid

Research Awards and Honors

Berkeley Initiative for Transparency in the Social Sciences (BITSS) Catalyst Grant, 2018.

Royal Netherlands Embassy in Ghana funding for research in Guinea & Sierra Leone, 2016.

Visiting Research Scholar at UC Berkeley grant, European University Institute, 2016.

PhD scholarship, "Salvador de Madariaga" (Spanish Ministry of Education), 2013-2017.

MSc scholarship, Obra Social 'La Caixa' and the French Government, 2010-2012.

International Cooperation Department, Universidad Carlos III Madrid, travel grant, 2009.

Erasmus and Comunidad de Madrid scholarship, 2007/08.

Research papers

"Epidemics and Conflict: Evidence from the Ebola outbreak in Western Africa", Job Market Paper (with Elena Esposito)

"Propaganda and Cultural Change: Local Radios and the Spread of Ebola in Guinea"

"Non-linear pricing of regulated utilities to address the tradeoff between a universal service and an environmental externality"

Research experience and fieldwork

- 2016 Independent fieldwork (with grant), Guinea - Data collection for dissertation
 2012 Ministry of Environment (Dept. Economic Instruments), Paris, France - Research Intern
 2009 Magdala Foundation for Development Tanzania (Microfinance) - Volunteer (with grant)

Other Employment

- 2013 Deloitte Group (BIOIS), Paris, France - Junior Consultant, EU projects
 2012/13 European Commission (DG Climate), Brussels, Belgium - Bluebook Trainee, EU policy
 2010 Ministry of the Presidency, Madrid, Spain - Legal practice (towards Law degree)

Teaching

"PhD Toolkit on Transparent, Open, and Reproducible Research" (June 2018)
 to PhD students in Economics & Political Science at the European University Institute, funded by the Berkeley Initiative for Transparency in the Social Sciences (BITSS) Catalyst Program (competitive grant)

Seminar and Conference Presentations

"Epidemics and Conflict: Evidence from the Ebola outbreak in Western Africa"

Working Group in African Political Economy (UBC Vancouver, 2017), Development Lunch (UC Berkeley, 2016, Spring, Fall 2017), Political Economy Research Lunch (UC Berkeley, 2017), Pacific Development Conference, PacDev (UC Riverside, 2017), ERE Seminar (UC Berkeley, 2016), Interdisciplinary PhD Workshop in Sustainable Development, IPWSD (Columbia Univ., 2016).

"Propaganda and Cultural Change: Local Radios and the Spread of Ebola in Guinea"

Microeconometrics Working Group (EUI, 2015, 2017), Summer Research Lunch (UC Berkeley, 2017).

"Non-linear pricing of regulated utilities to address the tradeoff between a universal service and an environmental externality"

Environmental Regulation Summer School (EAERE, FEEM, VIU, 2015), Microeconometrics Working Group (EUI, 2015).

Programs

R, STATA, ArcGIS, Matlab, Python

Languages

Fluent: **English, French, German** (Abitur), **Spanish** (native)
 Proficient: **Italian** Conversational: **Serbo-Croatian**

References

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Job Market Paper

Epidemics and Conflict : Evidence from the Ebola outbreak in Western Africa (with Elena Esposito)

This paper investigates the impact of a rapidly spreading epidemic on civil violence in the context of the largest Ebola outbreak in history, in Western Africa. The identification strategy relies on the epidemiological features of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD). We exploit the dynamics of the disease and weekly frequency data at the local level to analyze the effect of new infections on riots, protests and violence against institutional authorities. The impacts are large, localized and tied to containment efforts. The results suggest that state coercion and demand for public goods are mechanisms fueling conflict. The epidemic requires a cultural change which leads to social unrest, especially for groups facing higher costs of cultural adaptation, low trust in institutional authorities and depending on the response of the state. This further deepens mistrust in institutions after the epidemic, especially among these communities. The paper contributes to a growing literature on conflict by providing light into mechanisms triggering civil violence in weak institutional settings.

Working Papers

Propaganda and Cultural change : Local Radios and the Spread of Ebola in Guinea

I study the role of broadcast information on cultural and technological adaptation to a major aggregate shock. Using original data from Guinea and an experimental design based on exogenous variation in radio signal reception by distinct media outlets, combined with the precise timing of distinct information campaigns during the Ebola outbreak in Guinea, I estimate the impact of broadcast information on the evolution of social unrest, changes in burial practices, treatment uptake and ultimately the spread of the disease. The results show that sustained access to a local radio program informing about protective measures, encouraging treatment and addressing Ebola rumours lowered social unrest and led to a drop in infected cases seven months after the start of the campaign, compared to having access to other campaigns or the same campaign from other radios. Access to local radios affected cultural norms, such as burial practices, and facilitated technological adoption, but there is no evidence of impacts on private actions, such as chlorine use. The findings suggest a role for local radios as means of persuasion, rather than a pure information effect, and as a coordination device to change cultural norms and adopt a new technology.

Nonlinear pricing of regulated utilities to address the tradeoff between a universal service and an environmental externality

This paper analyses the role of nonlinear pricing in guaranteeing access to a universal service, such as electricity, and in incorporating the environmental externality caused by its consumption. In a general equilibrium framework, I show that third degree price discrimination can achieve both goals. I then study the impact of a reduction in the electricity tariff for poor households in the Spanish residential electricity market. The difference in tariffs introduced in 2010 and applied to households depending on the age of the third child is exploited in a Difference-in-Discontinuities Design to test the effect of price discrimination on consumption and long-term outcomes. I find positive long-term impacts on the health of the elderly benefiting from the reduced price.