

MATTHEW EDWARD COLLIN

Citizenship: American, British

Education:

2008-2013 DPhil (PhD) in Economics, University of Oxford, UK
Thesis title: *Essays in development economics: land rights, ethnicity and birth order*
Supervisor: Professor Stefan Dercon

2005-2006 MSc in Economics for Development (Distinction), University of Oxford, UK

2001-2005 BA in Mathematical Sciences and Economics, (*summa cum laude*)
Clemson University, Clemson, SC, USA

Employment:

2019 – Economist, Domestic Resource Mobilization Team, World Bank, Washington D.C.

2017 – 2018 Young Professional, Office of the Chief Economist for Human Development, World Bank, Washington D.C.

2016 – 2017 Young Professional, Global Tax Team, World Bank, Washington D.C.

2015 – 2016 Research Fellow, Center for Global Development Europe, London, UK

2014 Post-Doctoral Fellow, Center for Global Development Europe, London, UK

2013-2014 Research officer, Centre for the Study of African Economies (managing iiG-funded research project on impact of land tenure regularisation), Oxford, UK

2006-2008 Economist/budget officer, Ministry of Finance, Lilongwe, Malawi (ODI Fellowship Scheme)

Research experience and other employment:

2011-2013 Editor, Centre for the Study of African Economies (CSAE) Blog

2011-2012 Researcher, IGC Land Rights project and iiG project on land titling

2009-2010 Research assistant, International Growth Centre Land Rights Project (questionnaire design, piloting, baseline survey manager), Tanzania

2009 Development Initiatives, Bristol: consultancy work on cost-benefit analysis of International Aid Transparency Initiative

2008 Young Lives Programme, Oxford: research assistance on risk-attitudes

Research Fields:

Primary fields: Development economics, applied microeconomics
Secondary fields: Land tenure, tax and illicit financial flows, AML/CFT, remittances, urban economics, ethnicity, peer effects human capital, child development, impact evaluation

Honours, Scholarships, and Fellowships:

2008-2011 Recipient of ESRC +3 Studentship, Full stipend for doctoral work

2006 George Webb Medley Prize for Best Overall Performance (MSc), *proxime accessit*

Professional activities:

Referee for *Journal of African Economics, Economics and Human Biology, Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics, Agricultural Economics, Journal of Comparative Politics, Journal of Human Resources, Land Use Policy, World Bank Economic Review, World Development*

Seminar and Conference presentations:

2018 9th Bolivian Conference in Development Economics, Santa Cruz
IFPRI Brown Bag Seminar, Washington D.C.

2017 2nd Zurich Conference on Public Finance in Developing Countries, Zurich

2016 NOVAFRICA annual conference, Lisbon
Centre for the Study of African Economies annual conference, University of Oxford

2015 NEUDC, Brown University
Economics seminar, Clemson University
iiG Conference, University of Oxford

2014 NEUDC, Boston.
LSE SERC Seminar, London
GREThA Economic Development Conference, Bordeaux
IGC Urbanisation workshop - Dar es Salaam

2013 DIAL Development Conference, University of Paris-Dauphine, Paris
Results UK National conference - What should replace the MDGs (panel speaker)
Centre for the Study of African Economies annual conference, University of Oxford

2012 Centre for the Study of African Economies annual conference, University of Oxford

2011 Rockwool Lunchtime Seminar, Rockwool Foundation, Copenhagen
Centre for the Study of African Economies annual conference, University of Oxford

Publications:

[Tribe or title? Ethnic enclaves and the demand for formal land tenure in a Tanzanian slum](#) (Forthcoming, Economic Development and Cultural Change, 2020)

This paper examines the relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and the demand for formal land tenure in urban Tanzania. Using a unique census of two highly fractionalized unplanned settlements in Dar es Salaam, I show that households located near coethnics are significantly less likely to purchase a limited form of land tenure recently offered by the government. I attempt to address one of the chief concerns – endogenous sorting of households – by conditioning on a household’s choice of coethnics neighbors upon arrival in the neighborhood. I also find that coethnic residence predicts lower levels of perceived expropriation risk, but not perceived access to credit nor contribution to local public goods. These results suggest that close-knit ethnic groups may be less likely to accept state-provided goods due to their ability to generate reasonable substitutes, in this case protection from expropriation. The results are robust to different definitions of coethnicity and spatial cut-offs, controls for family ties and religious similarity as well as spatial fixed effects. Finally, the main result is confirmed using a large-scale administrative dataset covering over 20,000 land parcels in the city, exploiting ethnically-unique last names to predict tribal affiliation.

[Small price incentives increase women’s access to land titles in Tanzania](#) (Journal of Development Economics, 2016) *with Daniel Ayalew Ali, Klaus Deininger, Stefan Dercon, Justin Sandefur and Andrew Zeitlin.*

We present results from a field experiment using price incentives to address two obstacles to women’s access to formal land ownership. First, the price of formal land titles is often prohibitive, restricting access for both men and women. Second, when formal titles are issued, men are recorded as the sole owners of household land in the vast majority of cases. In theory, these problems may be in tension: requirements to grant women equal ownership may reduce the overall household demand for titling. In practice, we find no such trade-off: when residents of low-income, unplanned settlements in Dar es Salaam were offered price discounts for formal land titles, demand rose significantly. Price elasticity of demand was unchanged when price discounts were conditional on registering a woman as (co-)owner of household land. Furthermore, conditional price discounts achieved near gender parity in land ownership.

Working Papers:

[The effect of increasing human capital investment on economic growth and poverty: a simulation exercise](#) (World Bank Policy Research Working Paper, 2018) *with David Weil*

We examine the dynamic responses of income and poverty to increased investment in the human capital of new cohorts of workers, using a quantitative macroeconomic model with realistic demography. Compared to a baseline in which the rate of human capital investment currently observed in every country remains constant we examine two alternative scenarios: one in which each country experiences a rate of growth of human capital investment that is typical of what was observed in the decade ending in 2015, and one in which each country raises human capital investment at a rate corresponding to the 75th percentile of what was observed in the data. In the former, world GDP per capita is 5% higher than baseline in the year 2050, while the global rate of \$1.90 poverty is 0.7 percentage points lower in that year. In the latter, world GDP per capita is 12% higher than baseline in 2050, while the rate of \$1.90 poverty drops by 1.4 percentage points. These gains are concentrated in poor countries. We argue in the context of our model that investing in people is more cost effective than investing in physical capital as a means to achieve specified income or poverty goals.

Illicit Financial Flows: Concepts, Measurement and Evidence (2018) [Resubmit and Accept, World Bank Research Observer]

There is a growing consensus that illegal and harmful cross-border flows are one of the factors impeding economic and human development. In recent years, a new conceptual framework for describing these 'illicit' financial flows (IFFs) has emerged, combining issues ranging from cross-border money laundering to tax evasion. The aim of this paper is to summarize and clarify recent empirical work in this area. Three types of studies considered and critiqued: (i) methods of measuring IFFs, (ii) constructed risk indicators, and (iii) forensic studies aimed at uncovering instances where illicit flows have occurred. Given the limitation of all three approaches, the paper discusses areas where the research agenda on IFFs could be reasonably advanced, given the hidden nature of the subject.

Does anyone pay attention to age-of-marriage laws? Discontinuity evidence from 73 developing countries (Center for Global Development Working Paper, 2017) *with Theo Talbot* [Submitted]

Child marriage has long been associated with negative developmental outcomes for women and girls. In this paper, we use every available round of the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) to examine whether observed behavior suggests that existing legislation is effective at inducing individuals to postpone marriage. We first develop a simple model of marriage behavior, then use a method for testing for distributional discontinuities based on the popular McCrary (2008) test to examine whether women are more likely to be married at the legal age in their country than just before. We find that very few countries appear to be enforcing existing laws on the books. We then show how this novel measure of state effectiveness covaries with a variety of country characteristics and existing rule-of-law measures. We argue that legislative means of enforcing adult marriage may be limited in many settings and that monitoring legal efficacy using observational data provides a useful supplement to our understanding of how differences in legislation actually affect outcomes of interest.

Peer Effects in the Demand for Property Rights: Experimental Evidence from Urban Tanzania (World Bank Policy Research Working Paper, 2017)

This paper investigates the presence of endogenous peer effects in the adoption of formal property rights. Using data from a unique land titling experiment held in an unplanned settlement in Dar es Salaam, the analysis finds a strong, positive impact of neighbor adoption on the household's choice to purchase a land title. The paper also shows that this relationship holds in a separate, identical experiment held a year later in a nearby community, as well as in administrative data for more than 160,000 land parcels in the same city. Although the exact channel is undetermined, the evidence points toward complementarities in the reduction in expropriation risk, as peer effects are strongest between households living close to each other and there is some evidence that peer effects are strongest for households most concerned with expropriation. The results show that, within the Tanzanian context, households will reinforce each other's decisions to enter formal tenure systems.

[The Impact of Anti-Money Laundering Regulation on Payment Flows: Evidence from SWIFT Data](#)

(Center for Global Development Working Paper, 2016) *with Samantha Cook and Kimmo Soramäki*

Regulatory pressure on international banks to fight money laundering (ML) and terrorist financing (TF) increased substantially in the past decade. At the same time there has been a rise in the number of complaints of banks denying transactions or closing the accounts of customers either based in high risk countries or attempting to send money there, a process known as de-risking. In this paper, we investigate the impact of an increase in regulatory risk, driven by the inclusion of countries on an internationally-recognized list of high risk jurisdictions, on subsequent cross-border payments. We find countries that have been added to a high risk greylist face up to a 10 percent decline in the number of cross border payments received from other jurisdictions, but no change in the number sent. We also find that a greylisted country is more likely to see a decline in payments from other countries with weak AML/CFT institutions. We find limited evidence that these effects manifest in cross border trade or other flows. Given that countries that are placed on these lists tend to be poorer on average, these impacts are likely to be more strongly felt in developing countries.

[Falling Off the Map: The Impact of Formalizing \(Some\) Informal Settlements in Tanzania](#) (Centre for the Study of African Economies Working Paper, 2015) *with Justin Sandefur and Andrew Zeitlin*

When the Tanzanian government formalized over 200,000 informal land claims by granting leasehold titles to residents of unplanned settlements in Dar es Salaam in 2004, a few neighborhoods in the initial plan were excluded due to missing satellite photos. We examine the impact of this low-cost, large-scale titling intervention a decade later in a regression discontinuity design using new survey data collected on either side of the arbitrary boundary created by the missing photos. We find significant, positive effects on housing investment, and indicative but not statistically robust increases in tenure security and reductions in land sales. There is no evidence that titles improved access to credit markets.

[Persistence in the effect of birth order on child development: evidence from the Philippines](#) (2014)

(Revise and resubmit)

This paper investigates birth order effects on both anthropometric and education outcomes in a longitudinal survey of children from the Philippines, the Cebu Longitudinal Health and Nutrition Survey (CLHNS). Birth order effects are present early in life for both anthropometric and educational outcomes, but attenuate as children approach adulthood. There is also evidence for nonlinear birth order effects, with both first-born and last-born children holding an advantage over middle-born children. These results are at odds with prevalent theories of birth order, which predict lasting and monotonic differences in outcomes across children of different birth order.

Ongoing research:

Using reminders and nudges to increase property tax compliance in Dar es Salaam

with Vincenzo Di Maro, David Evans, and Fredrick Manang

Following a decade of centralization, decentralization and re-centralization of the responsibility to collect property tax revenue, the Tanzania Revenue Authority has struggled with high levels of non-compliance. In this paper, we experiment with a text-message campaign aimed at promoting compliance amongst a group of landowners in Dar es Salaam who had not paid any property tax two months prior to the annual deadline. We randomly treat taxpayers with one of three treatments: a text message reminding them to pay their tax, a message strengthening the connection between taxes and public services, and a social pressure message. Initial results indicate that the messages has a small, but significant impact on compliance: recipients of any message were one percentage point more likely to pay any property tax by the end of the study period. Recipients of the social pressure message were significantly less likely to make a payment, relative to that of a simple-reminder. Despite this compliance effect, overall levels of revenue sent in were similar across treatment arms, with the exception of the reciprocity treatment. While taxpayers in this treatment were just as likely to make a payment, they ultimately made larger payments to the TRA.

Does democracy turn a leader's frown upside down? Evidence from state portraits

This paper tests an assertion once made by Paul Collier: whether national leaders in democratic countries are more likely to smile in their state photograph than their autocratic counterparts. Using a complete cross section of state portraits for 2004, I construct several measures of the intensity of a national leader's smile using web surveys, Mechanical Turk responses and an emotion detection algorithm. I find that a one standard deviation increase in polity is associated with approximately a 0.25-0.3 standard deviation increase in measures of smiling or observed happiness. To investigate whether this might be driven by electoral competition specifically, I use data from US Senate and Gubernatorial elections to show that candidates (both winners and losers) in close elections have a greater propensity to smile during closer elections. I then discuss implications and future research.

Other publications/writing:

"The Unintended Consequences of Anti-Money Laundering Policies for Poor Countries

<http://www.cgdev.org/publication/unintended-consequences-anti-money-laundering-policies-poor-countries>

Blogger, Aid Thoughts (<http://aidthoughts.org>)

"How not to help Haiti" *Foreign Policy*

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/02/19/how_not_to_help_haiti?page=full

"Should RCTs be blind? Not so fast" CGD Blog post.

<http://www.cgdev.org/blog/should-development-rcts-be-blind-not-so-fast>

"Million dollar question: does Fairtrade work?"

<http://www.cgdev.org/blog/million-dollar-question-does-fairtrade-work>

"And Then There Were None? Banks Are De-Banking on a Grand Scale"

<http://www.cgdev.org/blog/and-then-there-were-none-banks-are-de-banking-grand-scale>

"Why Arbitrary Measures of Money-Laundering Risk Are Nonsensical and Unfair"

<http://www.cgdev.org/blog/why-arbitrary-measures-money-laundering-risk-are-nonsensical-and-unfair>

If the Cost of Sending Remittances Goes Up and No One Is Around to Measure It, Did It Really Happen?

<http://www.cgdev.org/blog/if-cost-sending-remittances-goes-and-no-one-around-measure-it-did-it-really-happen>

New Study of Somali Remittance Flows Does Not Actually Tell Us Much about Somali Remittance Flows

<http://www.cgdev.org/blog/new-study-somali-remittance-flows-does-not-actually-tell-us-much-about-somali-remittance-flows>

The Panama Papers and the Correlates of Hidden Activity

<http://www.cgdev.org/blog/panama-papers-and-correlates-hidden-activity>

Short Films:

[First Impressions](#) (2012)

[Dovetail](#) (2011)

[Bad Copy](#) (2010)

Winner of the Oxford University Film Foundation (OUFF) Best Film Award. "...a glorious romp, tapping into all office-dwellers' ambivalent and stormy relationship with technology." Jen Pawsey, Daily Info.

[Out, Out](#) (2008)