

DAVIDE CANTONI

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HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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Personal Information: Date of birth: August 29, 1981. Citizenships: Italy, Germany.

Undergraduate Studies:

Diplom, Economics, University of Mannheim (with distinction), 2005

Graduate Studies:

University of California, Berkeley, visiting student, 2003-2004

Harvard University, 2005 to present

Preliminary Thesis Title: "Essays on Natural Experiments in Economic History"

Expected Completion Date: June 2010

References:

Professor James A. Robinson
Department of Government, Harvard University
617-496-2839
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Professor Elhanan Helpman
Department of Economics, Harvard University
617-495-4690
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Professor Robert Barro
Department of Economics, Harvard University
617-495-3203
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Professor Claudia Goldin
Department of Economics, Harvard University
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Teaching and Research Fields:

Primary fields: Economic History, Macroeconomics

Secondary (teaching) fields: Applied Econometrics, International Trade, Political Economics

Teaching Experience:

Spring, 2009	<i>Macroeconomic Theory (graduate)</i> , Harvard University, teaching fellow for Professor Robert Barro
Fall, 2008	<i>Econometrics (undergraduate)</i> , Harvard College, teaching fellow for Professor Raffaella Giacomini
Fall, 2007	<i>Macroeconomic Theory (graduate)</i> , Harvard University, teaching fellow for Professors David Laibson and Robert Barro
Fall, 2006	<i>Macroeconomic Theory (graduate)</i> , Harvard University, teaching fellow for Professor Robert Barro

- Spring, 2006 *Macroeconomics III (advanced undergraduate)*, University of Mannheim, teaching assistant for Professor Antonio Ciccone
- Spring, 2005 *Macroeconomics III (advanced undergraduate)*, University of Mannheim, teaching assistant for Professor Frank Heinemann

Research Experience:

- 2006-2007 Research assistant for Professor James A. Robinson
- 2006 Research assistant for Professors Alberto Alesina and Nicola Fuchs-Schündeln

Professional Activities:

Seminar presentations: Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, Colgate-Hamilton, EEA annual meeting (Barcelona), EHA annual meeting (New Haven), Heidelberg, HU Berlin, LMU Munich, MPI Bonn, NBER Summer Institute, Yale

Refereeing: *Economics of Transition*, *Explorations in Economic History*, *Journal of the European Economic Association*, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *Princeton University Press*

Honors, Scholarships, and Fellowships:

- 2009-2010 Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, Dissertation Completion Fellowship
- 2009 Certificate of Distinction in Teaching, Harvard University
- 2007-2009 Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes, Dissertation Fellowship
- 2007-2009 Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, Graduate Student Affiliate
- 2007 Economic History Association, Exploratory Data and Travel Award
- 2005-2007 Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes, ERP Grant
- 2005-2007 Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Fellowship
- 2000-2005 Fellow, Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes (German Merit Foundation)

Job Market Paper:

“The Economic Effects of the Protestant Reformation: Testing the Weber Hypothesis in the German Lands”

(November 2009)

Abstract: Many theories, most famously Max Weber’s essay on the ‘Protestant ethic,’ have hypothesized that Protestantism should have favored economic development. With their considerable religious heterogeneity and stability of denominational affiliations until the 19th century, the German Lands of the Holy Roman Empire present an ideal testing ground for this hypothesis. Using population figures in a dataset comprising 272 cities in the years 1300-1900, I find no effects of Protestantism on economic growth. The finding is robust to the inclusion of a variety of controls, and does not appear to depend on data selection or small sample size. In addition, Protestantism has no effect when interacted with other likely determinants of economic development. I also analyze the endogeneity of religious choice: instrumental variables estimates of the effects of Protestantism are similar to the OLS results.

Research Papers:

“The Consequences of Radical Reform: The French Revolution” (with Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson)

(NBER Working Paper 14831, February 2009)

Abstract: The French Revolution of 1789 had a momentous impact on neighboring countries. The French Revolutionary armies during the 1790s and later under Napoleon invaded and controlled large parts of Europe. Together with invasion came various radical institutional changes. French invasion removed the legal and economic barriers that had protected the nobility, clergy, guilds, and urban oligarchies and established the principle of equality before the law. The evidence suggests that areas

that were occupied by the French and that underwent radical institutional reform experienced more rapid urbanization and economic growth, especially after 1850. There is no evidence of a negative effect of French invasion. Our interpretation is that the Revolution destroyed (the institutional underpinnings of) the power of oligarchies and elites opposed to economic change; combined with the arrival of new economic and industrial opportunities in the second half of the 19th century, this helped pave the way for future economic growth. The evidence does not provide any support for several other views, most notably, that evolved institutions are inherently superior to those ‘designed;’ that institutions must be ‘appropriate’ and cannot be ‘transplanted;’ and that the civil code and other French institutions have adverse economic effects.

“Clueless? The Impact of Television on Consumption Behavior” (with Leonardo Bursztyn)
(December 2009)

Abstract: This paper examines the impact of television on consumption behavior. We focus on a ‘natural experiment,’ in which differential access to Western television in former East Germany was determined by geographic features. Based on surveys from the early 1990s, we find that individuals less exposed to Western TV reported significantly lower importance to consumerist values. Using data from the German income and expenditure survey (EVS), we observe that soon after 1990 those individuals in East Germany that previously lacked access to Western television consumed significantly less goods with high intensity of advertisement.

“Medieval Universities, Legal Institutions, and the Commercial Revolution” (with Noam Yuchtman)
(November 2009)

Abstract: Europe experienced a ‘commercial revolution’ in the late Middle Ages, with urbanization and trade expanding, first in Northern Italy, then across Europe. We argue that the establishment of universities in Europe, which developed the continent’s legal systems and trained the individuals who served in them, was a fundamental institutional development that supported economic activity. We provide historical evidence that university establishment and the training of individuals in the law were associated with the commercial revolution. To identify a causal relationship, we construct a dataset of market establishment dates across Germany and exploit the arguably exogenous creation of universities in Germany following the Papal Schism. Our findings suggest that university establishment and legal development significantly increased economic activity.

Papers in progress:

“Television and Happiness: Evidence from a Natural Experiment” (with Leonardo Bursztyn)

“Urbanization in Europe: Regional Variations, 1700-1900”

“Labor Market Rigidities, Skills Acquisition, and Trade Patterns”

Published Papers:

“From Ancien Régime to Capitalism: The Spread of the French Revolution as a Natural Experiment” (joint with Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson). Forthcoming in: Jared Diamond and James A. Robinson (eds.), *Natural Experiments of History*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Language Skills: Italian, German (native), English (fluent), French (intermediate), Spanish, Dutch (reading knowledge), Latin.