

## Nature view

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## Family Trees by Blood or Tongue?

Whether the genetic relationships between African populations are better predicted by geographical or linguistic distances has not been clarified by research so far. A new study in the current issue of *European Journal of Human Genetics*, however, throws light on the historic patterns to the genetic make-up of Africa. E.T. Wood and colleagues tested 40 populations across the continent for associations between genetic, linguistic and geographical distances. Examining Y chromosomes and mtDNA revealed that gene flow patterns have been different for men and women historically: language appears to be passed from father to child, and women may have mixed between populations more than men. Linguistically, the Bantu-speaking farmers have made a stronger genetic contribution across the continent than any other language group.

article

### **Contrasting patterns of Y chromosome and mtDNA variation in Africa: evidence for sex-biased demographic processes**

E. T. WOOD *et al.*

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