



Economics Seminars

Friday 4 April 2025 at 12:00

Aula Magna Baffi

Facoltà di Scienze Economiche Giuridiche e Politiche - Viale Sant'Ignazio 74

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Fields and foreign lands: Pre-industrial climate risk and international migration (with A. Newnham and E. Nikolova)

Abstract. We study how pre-industrial climate risk during 1500-1800 influenced historical bilateral inward migration and present-day international migration stocks in Europe. Using high resolution data, we find that one standard deviation increase in historical precipitation decreases the share of today's migrants in a given location by 0.48 percentage points and also negatively influences historical migration flows. The results only hold in historically rural locations and are driven by climate variability during growing season, suggesting that climate risk affected migration through agriculture. Our findings suggest that the persistent effect of historical climate risk on current migration patterns is through differences in historical prosperity.