Anatole Cheysson (European University Institute)

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Webinaire Junior sur l'économie des migrations. The Effect of Foreign Media on International Migration: the Case of Italian TV in Albania

The Effect of Foreign Media on International Migration: the Case of Italian TV in Albania

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RÉSUMÉ

We rely on a unique natural experiment to study the effects of foreign media exposure on international migration flows. Under the authoritarian rule of Enver Hoxha, Albania was an insulated country with no access to the world beyond its borders. Yet, around 10% of its urban territory received the television signal of a neighboring antenna located in Italy. We show that this access to Italian TV contributed to the unprecedented emigration flows of the 90s. Municipalities exposed to the signal presented higher international emigration rates than their counterparts. Furthermore, migrants from exposed municipalities had a higher probability to choose Italy as a destination. Using satellite data, we study the impact of this emigration on city area growth. We estimate a considerable effect of Italian TV signal: exposed city grew on average one third less per year than their counterparts on the 1986-2002 period. Additionally, we show that exposure to the signal increased Italian language proficiency, revealing a mechanism through which Italian television affected emigration.

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