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Séminaire recherche

Confucian Literati and Long-run Development in Northern

Vietnam

RÉSUMÉ

Following Max Weber's thesis, studies have suggested that Confucianism could impede economic growth despite its positive effects. In this paper, we revisit the impact of Confucianism on long-run development in a less explored context – northern Vietnam. Using the variation in Confucian literati across 217 historical districts between the Primitive Le and Nguyen dynasties (1426 CE - 1919 CE), we find that districts with greater exposure to Confucianism have experienced better economic outcomes over the past century. The result is robust to controlling for a battery of confounders and using the distance to exogenously located hermit scholars as an instrument. We show that the impact of Confucianism can be attributed to the persistence of a culture of respect for education and norms of collective action, which facilitated human and social capital accumulation, public goods provision, and economic transition.





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