The Geography of Social Change

Date: Thursday, 21 December 2017 – 2 pm

Venue: Seminar Room, Department of Economics and Management

Speaker: Stefania Marcassa – Université de Cergy-Pontoise

Abstract

The early decline in American fertility is a puzzle in terms of both magnitude and timing. We show that fertility was lower in counties characterized by higher outward migration, especially migration towards the western frontier. Our theory is based on the diffusion of new family values governing intergenerational responsibilities and behavior with respect to saving and fertility. Increased economic opportunities in the West, as higher wages and land availability, provided incentives to migrate. This phenomenon lowered expected transfers from children, and incentivized precautionary savings of parents.

The paper is co-authored with Alessandra Fogli (Minneapolis FED)