

En Route: The Colonial Origins of Francophone Africa's Emigration Patterns

Ariane Salem and Awa Ambra Seck

Abstract :

Did deployment in the colonial army foster emigration and specific patterns of long-run development in the sending communities? We use the arbitrary assignment of troops to different locations as a natural experiment to identify the effect of foreign location exposure on municipality-level emigration stock and contemporary economic outcomes. To partial out the effect of municipality-level unobservables, we then employ an IV shift-share interacting municipality enlistment with aggregate demand for deployment. In the context of Morocco, we find that municipalities exposed to greater deployment to France exhibit larger stock of permanent emigration to France, larger urbanization rate and more household wealth. We interpret these results as reflecting another source of colonial path-dependency in economic development.