



Faculty of History, University of Cambridge

Quantitative History Seminar, Lent Term 2015

Supported by the Centre for History and Economics
and the Trevelyan Fund



Seminars will take place in Room 5, Faculty of History.
Sandwiches and fruit will be available from 12.45 for a 1pm start.
Convenor: Leigh Shaw-Taylor- lmws2@cam.ac.uk

19th January

Professor Carmen Sarasúa, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Women's work and structural change. Manufactures in 18th-century rural Spain

Economic modernization is understood as the process by which societies moved from peasant to urban, and production and employment from agricultural to industrial. The main indicators of this transition are the share of GDP originated by the industrial and service sectors, and the share of population in non-agricultural, i.e., industrial and service, occupations. This paper does two things: first, it calculates women's participation in 18th century inland Spain, thus contributing to knowledge on women's work and on labour market segregation by gender in pre-industrial Europe. Secondly, it shows that taking into account women's paid work transforms our vision of the structure of employment in preindustrial times, and thus the conventional vision of how economic and social modernization occurred.

23rd February

Dr Miguel Morin, Cambridge

The labor market consequences of electricity adoption: concrete evidence from the Great Depression

It remains a puzzle that job creation was so low during the Great Depression despite the quick recovery of productivity. This paper tests whether the adoption of electricity can explain both facts. It uses geography as an instrument for the change in the price of electricity and the concrete industry as a detailed case study. It finds that cheaper electricity caused a decrease in employment and in the labor share of income, as well as an increase in labor quantity productivity and electrical intensity. The findings lend support to the theory of technological unemployment during the Great Depression.