



You are cordially invited to

UCLouvain Economics Seminar

On **Thursday February 14, 2019**, from **12:45 to 14:00**
Doyen 22, Place des Doyens, 1

Matteo Cervellati
(Università di Bologna)

Will give a presentation on

Sovereign Polities and Pre-Industrial Development: Theory and Evidence for Europe 1000-1850

Abstract: This paper offers a first attempt of systematic investigation of the drivers of the evolution of sovereign polities in pre-industrial Europe and their role in shaping economic development in the locations under their territorial control. We build a simple theoretical framework that allows to characterise the endogenous change in the sovereign polities, in terms of rule of law and state capacity, and the their equilibrium number and territorial size. The framework tracks, in particular, the (timing and location of) emergence and disappearance of city states and the evolution of medieval domain reigns into modern territorial states. The theory also deliver insights on the role of different polities for changing patterns of political geography including the role of distance to capitals and borders, change of rulers and the emergence of national markets. The predictions are investigated assembling a novel geo-referenced database tracking the emergence, territorial evolution and disappearance of all sovereign polities ruling in Europe over the period 1000-1850. By exploiting, within location and within polities, overtime variation in urban population growth, we finally explore the validity of existing arguments and the novel predictions on the role of polities and local political geography. The main patterns are robust to a large set of sensitivity checks.

(joint with Sara Lazzaroni, Giovanni Prarolo e Paolo Vanin).

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