



Seminar

**“Nation-Building Through Compulsory Schooling
During the Age of Mass Migration”**

(in English)

Professor Martina Viarengo
Associate Professor
Department of International Economics
The Graduate Institute, Geneva



Date: 11 May 2016 (Wednesday)

Time: 10:30am – 12:00nn

Venue: WYL314, Dorothy Y. L. Wong Building

Biography:

Martina Viarengo is an Associate Professor in the Department of Economics of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies of Geneva (IHEID), a Research Associate at the Centre for Economic Performance at the London School of Economics (LSE) and a Faculty Associate at the Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government (HKS).

Abstract:

By the mid-19th century, America was the best educated nation on Earth: significant financial investments in education were being undertaken and the majority of children voluntarily attended public schools. So why did American states start introducing compulsory schooling laws at this point in time? We provide qualitative and quantitative evidence that states adopted compulsory schooling laws as a nation-building tool to instill civic values to the tens of millions of culturally diverse migrants who arrived during the ‘Age of Mass Migration’ between 1850 and 1914. Using state level data, we show the adoption of compulsory schooling laws occurred significantly earlier in states that hosted a subgroup of European migrants with lower exposure to civic values in their home countries. We present IV estimates based on a Bartik-Card instrument to address concerns over endogenous location choices of migrants. We then use cross-county data to show that the same subgroup of European migrants had significantly lower demand for American common schooling pre-compulsion, and so would have been less exposed to the kinds of civic value instilled by the American education system had compulsory schooling not been passed. We thus provide micro-foundations for schooling laws, highlighting the link between mass migration and the endogenous policy responses of American-born voters in receiving states.