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What Drives Deforestation and What Stops It? A Meta-Analysis of Spatially Explicit Econometric Studies

Resource
April 2014

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Summary

This paper presents a meta-analysis of what drives deforestation and what stops it. The researchers find that forests are more likely to be cleared where economic returns to agriculture and pasture are higher, either due to more favorable climatological and topographic conditions, or due to lower costs of clearing forest and transporting products to market. It is argued that timber activity, land tenure security, and community demographics do not show a consistent association with either higher or lower deforestation. Population is consistently associated with greater deforestation, and poverty is consistently associated with lower deforestation, but in both cases endogeneity makes a causal link difficult to infer. Promising approaches for stopping deforestation include reducing the intrusion of road networks into remote forested areas; targeting protected areas to regions where forests face higher threat and tying rural income support to the maintenance of forest resources through payments for ecosystem services.

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