

**Early-Life Circumstance and Adult Locus of Control:  
Evidence from 46 Developing Countries\***

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Abstract

Early-life circumstance determines adult outcomes such as health, education, wealth, and happiness. Using exogenous variation in weather conditions across 46 developing countries over time, this study examines the impact of experiencing weather shocks in childhood on adult non-cognitive skills, namely, locus of control. The result shows that those who experienced rainfall shortage before age five are more likely to believe that they cannot control their life outcomes. The impact is larger for females from agricultural countries. However, in line with the theoretical prediction, the impact fades away with age. This study also demonstrates negative impact on voting behavior. Finally, underlying mechanisms for this relationship are explored.

Keywords: locus of control; non-cognitive skills; early life circumstance

JEL classifications:

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