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Published on April 20, 2021 – Updated on April 29, 2021

Date

Le 28 April 2021 De 17:30 à 18:30

Informations complémentaires :5.30 pm CET

Webinar: The Economics of Migration

The Seeds of Ideology: Historical Immigration and Political Preferences in the United States

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ABSTRACT

We study the long run effects of immigration on US political ideology. We establish a new result: historical European immigration is associated with stronger preferences for redistribution and a more liberal ideology among Americans today. We hypothesize that European immigrants moving to the US in the early twentieth century brought with them their preferences for redistribution, with long-lasting effects on political attitudes of US-born individuals. After documenting that immigrants' economic characteristics and other standard economic forces cannot, alone, explain our results, we provide evidence that our findings are driven by immigrants with a longer exposure to social-welfare reforms in their countries of origin. Consistent with a process of horizontal transmission from immigrants to natives, results are stronger where historical inter-group contact was more frequent, and are not due to transmission within ancestry groups. Immigration left its footprint on American political ideology starting with the New Deal, and persisted since then.

Read the paper (NBER WP 27238)(https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w27238/w27238.pdf)

Register(https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_OlZzqtY1ScOv4vyb7VLD8w)



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