

Webinaire junior sur l'économie des migrations

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Migration and Fertility Change: Evidence from a Resettlement

Program in Indonesia

RÉSUMÉ

Can migrants diffuse fertility norms to other groups? What are the determinants of cultural assimilation and backlash? In this paper, we explore these questions taking advantage of a unique natural experiment that created random exposure to different fertility norms: The Indonesian Transmigration Program. During the 1980s, this national policy reallocated several million people from Java and Bali to the outer islands of the country. Hundreds of new villages were established gathering together local residents (“natives”) and internal migrants (“transmigrants”) from various ethnic groups. Exploiting the heterogeneity in individuals' fertility norms and those to which they were exposed to in their villages, we find that “transmigrants” converged to the norm of “natives” while “natives” backlashed adjusting their fertility decisions in the opposite direction and reinforcing their prior norms. The size of each ethnic group as well as the cultural distance between them are key drivers of the degree of convergence and backlash. Our findings suggest that internal migration can contribute to changes in fertility behavior of both migrants and natives, having thus major implications for developing countries with high fertility and rising internal migration these days.

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