

Webinaire junior sur l'économie des migrations

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Can immigration affect neighborhood effects?

Accounting for the indirect effects of immigrants on native test scores

RÉSUMÉ

Migratory waves can affect native students through immigrant peer effects. But immigration and native response can also change neighborhoods. In this paper, I compare two different methods to analyze the impact of immigration on children test scores and show that broader changes in the neighborhood can indeed be important. I study this question by focusing on 4th-grade test scores in the context of the recent migratory phenomenon in Chile, where, from 2012 to 2019, the immigrant population increased from nearly 1% to 8%. Following Chetty and Hendren's (2018a, 2018b) methodology, I estimate the effect of each municipality on test scores using a fixed effect regression model identified by students who move across municipalities at different ages. Then, I construct a shift-share instrument by taking shares from the 2002 census and estimate the impact of immigrant arrivals on the municipality effects. On average, I find a negative impact of foreign students on the municipality effects. My estimation suggests that a 1 standard deviation increase in the proportion of immigrant students in a municipality causes 1 percentile decrease in student test scores per year spent. Then, I estimate immigrant peer effect (Hoxby, 2000). I find a precise null effect using comparison across school cohorts and classes. These results suggest that migration may affect natives through indirect effects. In fact, the presence of native flights and an increase in socioeconomic segregation across schools fuel the indirect effect hypothesis.

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