

## **NATIVES' HOSTILITY TO IMMIGRANTS REDUCES IMMIGRATION**

Natives' hostility to immigrants reduces immigration to a country, according to research by **Cédric Gorinas** and **Mariola Pytliková**, to be presented to the NORFACE migration conference at University College London this weekend.

Over the past three decades, fears about immigrants and their impact on the host society have developed among native populations in several OECD countries. Indeed, about half of the population of the EU today think that their government should place stricter limits on the number of immigrants or prohibit new immigrants to come.

But over the same period, OECD countries have experienced overall expanding rates of immigration. The researchers investigate empirically whether natives' negative attitudes towards immigrants in OECD countries have affected the location decision of immigrants.

Their findings show that natives' hostility – measured by natives' readiness to discriminate against immigrants in the labour market when jobs are scarce – reduces immigration. The effect of natives' attitudes persists even after taking account of the fact that politicians may restrict immigration policies following public hostility to immigration.

Examining possible mechanisms behind the findings, the authors show that knowledge of the destination country's language and larger ethnic networks in the destination reinforce the effect. Hence, immigrants are likely to learn about natives' opinions before they migrate.

In addition, the authors demonstrate that labour-driven migrants are much more sensitive to natives' hostility than asylum-seekers or migrants driven by family reunion.

The research is based on a combination of a comprehensive longitudinal dataset on bilateral immigration flows and foreign population stocks in OECD countries collected by one of the authors, Mariola Pytliková, with data on natives' attitudes from several waves of the International Values Survey.

Dr Mariola Pytliková says:

'We argue that natives' attitudes send signals to immigrants about integration possibilities in the destination, such as the ease of finding employment or building a social network.

'For that reason, countries with more positive attitudes will receive larger migrant inflows.

'One way to understand our results is that natives' hostility to immigrants constitutes a major integration barrier and therefore will affect foreign workers' choice of location.'

Cédric Gorinas, co-author of the study, says:

'Our findings raise the policy issue that manoeuvring immigration policies may not suffice for influencing the size of migrant inflows.

'When both the structural demand for foreign workers and natives' opposition to immigrants are high, how to dampen natives' hostility towards immigrants constitutes a great challenge for policy-makers in OECD countries.'

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Cédric Gorinas, Aarhus University and the Danish National Centre for Social Research (SFI)

Mariola Pytliková, the Danish Institute for Governmental Research (KORA) & affiliated to the UCL Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration (CReAM)

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Contact:

Cédric Gorinas on (+45) 3348 0903; cgorinas@asb.dk

Mariola Pytliková on (+420) 739 211 312; marp@asb.dk