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Exposure to foreign cultural goods and people's attitudes towards migration'

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Abstract

This paper discusses the role of cultural factors in shaping people's attitudes towards immigration. In particular, it introduces the idea that a possible channel through which cultural heterogeneity can emerge in a society is the production and the consumption of cultural goods. It also analyses the impact that pattern of consumption of different cultural goods can have on public opinion over immigration. After presenting a simple static general equilibrium model in which migration and trade in cultural goods are complement, the paper provides some empirical evidence on the possibility that, controlling for potential endogeneity, enhanced exposure to cultural heterogeneity positively affects attitudes towards immigration. In doing so, it joins data on individual attitudes from four rounds of the European Social Survey and data on trade flows from UN-Comtrade database.