



NEW REPORT

Emigration supports democratization of institutions in the home country

A new report published today on [IZA World of Labor](#) provides evidence that emigration to more democratic countries has positive political effects on the home countries' institutions

The number of immigrants from developing countries living in richer, more developed countries has increased substantially during the last decades. In fact the share of foreign-born individuals in the total population of high-income countries has tripled since 1960 (and doubled since 1985). Up till very recently only a relatively small number of research papers have looked at international migration as an important determinant of the quality of institutions in the home country.

In a new report Elisabetta Lodigiani of the University of Padua, Italy summarizes latest research showing that international migration can improve institutions through several direct and indirect channels: (i) the transfer of political norms; (ii) voting from abroad; (iii) financial remittances; (iv) return migration; and (v) lobbying activities from abroad.

Lodgiani cites a pioneering study with a cross country approach showing how foreign-educated leaders can be extremely important in influencing the reform of a country. Another study, focusing on Mexico, finds evidence that international migration to the US contributes to the democratization process in Mexico. It was shown that a higher proportion of migrant households increased the probability of an opposition party winning the local election for the first time in municipalities governed historically by the PRI.

Of course, the transfer of new political attitudes depends on the political environment in the host country, and whether those countries are more democratic and liberal, and less corrupt. A study in Moldova found that while emigration to Western countries decreased support for the Communist Party in the parliamentary elections an opposite effect (but weaker and less robust) is found for emigration to Russia.

Lodgiani advises policy makers to take into account that migration policies may promote the role of migrants as transnational political agents. She says: "favoring dual citizenship will allow migrants, on the one hand, to integrate and naturalize in their destination country, and on the other hand, to maintain a sense of belonging to their original country."

Finally, the induced democratization process from abroad can only occur if migrants have the possibility of integrating and participating in the social and economic activities in the host country. Therefore Lodgiani suggest: "Integration policies, such as language or employment training in the host country, are crucial in helping the successful integration of migrants."

Media Contact:

Please contact Anna von Hahn for more information or for author interviews:
anna.vonhahn@bloomberg.com or +44 7852 882 770

Notes for editors:

- IZA World of Labor (<http://wol.iza.org>) is a global, freely available online resource that provides policy makers, academics, journalists, and researchers, with clear, concise and evidence-based knowledge on labor economics issues worldwide.
- The site offers relevant and succinct information on topics including diversity, migration, minimum wage, youth unemployment, employment protection, development, education, gender balance, labor mobility and flexibility among others.
- Established in 1998, the Institute of Labor Economics (www.iza.org) is an independent economic research institute focused on the analysis of global labour markets. Based in Bonn, it operates an international network of about 1,300 economists and researchers spanning more than 45 countries.