

Workshop on Restrictions to Immigration

AGENDA **Friday 4 February**

- 18:00 – 19:15** **Panel I: Economic and cultural drivers of restrictions and their impact**
Chair:
Loukas Tsoukalis, President, ELIAMEP; Professor, Sciences Po, Paris
- Speakers:**
Do immigration restrictions benefit natives?
Ran Abramitzky, Professor of Economics, Stanford University
- The causes of US immigration restrictions in the 1920s*
Marco Tabellini, Assistant Professor of Business Administration, Harvard Business School
- Assimilability and cultural backlash against immigrants*
Vicky Fouka, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Stanford University
- Discussion*
- 19:15 – 19:25** *Break*
- 19:25 – 20:35** **Panel II: The political mechanisms of immigration restrictions**
Chair:
Spyros Blavoukos, Senior Research Fellow, Head, Ariane Condellis Programme, ELIAMEP; Associate Professor, Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB)
- Speakers:**
Do shared norms and ideas reduce native bias against immigrants?
Danny Choi, Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Pittsburgh
- The electoral basis of immigrants' exclusion*
Nikhar Gaikwad, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Columbia University
- The policy cycles of immigration restrictions*
Emmanuel Comte, Senior Research Fellow, ELIAMEP
- Discussion*
- 20:35 – 20:40** **Closing remarks**

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Description of the presentations

References:

1. Abramitzky, Ran, Philipp Ager, Leah Boustan, Elicor Cohen, and Casper Worm Hansen. 2022. "[The Effect of Immigration Restrictions on Local Labor Markets: Lessons from the 1920s Border Closure.](#)" *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*. Forthcoming.
2. Choi, Donghyun Danny, Mathias Poertner, and Nicholas Sambanis. 2019. "[Parochialism, social norms, and discrimination against immigrants.](#)" *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 116 (33): 16274–16279. doi: 10.1073/pnas.1820146116.
3. Comte, Emmanuel. 2018. "[Xénophobie en mer: Marins français contre étrangers dans la Communauté européenne, 1971-1975.](#)" *Le Mouvement social* 264(3) (July–September): 41–59. doi: 10.3917/lms.264.0041.
4. Comte, Emmanuel. 2019. "[Promising More to Give Less: International Disputes between Core and Periphery around European Posted Labor, 1955–2018.](#)" *Labor History* 60(6): 749–764. doi: 10.1080/0023656X.2019.1642465.
5. Fouka, Vasiliki, Soumyajit Mazumder, and Marco Tabellini. 2021. "[From Immigrants to Americans: Race and Assimilation during the Great Migration.](#)" *The Review of Economic Studies*. doi: 10.1093/restud/rdab038.
6. Gaikwad, Nikhar, and Gareth Nellis. 2021. "[Overcoming the Political Exclusion of Migrants: Theory and Experimental Evidence from India.](#)" *American Political Science Review* 115(4): 1129–1146. doi: 10.1017/S0003055421000435.
7. Tabellini, Marco. 2019. "[Gifts of the Immigrants, Woes of the Natives: Lessons from the Age of Mass Migration.](#)" *The Review of Economic Studies* 87(1): 454–486. doi: 10.1093/restud/rdz027.

Prof. Ran Abramitzky, Stanford University, Do immigration restrictions benefit natives?

This presentation will discuss from a historical perspective whether immigration restrictions benefited US natives. It will review the results from the latest research on major historical episodes of immigration restrictions, including the border closure of the 1920s, the repatriation of Mexican immigrants in the 1930s, and the exclusion of Bracero workers in the 1960s. Abramitzky will make the point that using immigration restrictions to raise the earnings of native workers broadly is unlikely to be effective given the adaptability of local labour markets in substituting away from immigrant workers. Sources of substitutability today may come from automation or offshoring. The presentation will rely on his article in the *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* (2022).

Dr Marco Tabellini, Harvard Business School, The causes of US immigration restrictions in the 1920s

The presentation will discuss the factors that led to the introduction of the country-specific immigration quotas in the US during the 1920s. Tabellini will present results from his work, published in *The Review of Economic Studies* (2019), where he studies the impact of European immigration on natives' support for immigration restrictions (and political backlash more broadly) across US cities between 1910 and 1930. Tabellini will document that, despite the economic benefits brought about by immigration, immigrants triggered natives' backlash. Exploiting differences in the cultural distance between immigrants and natives, Tabellini will show that, in the 1920s US, support for immigration restrictions was more influenced by cultural rather than by economic forces.

Dr Vicky Fouka, Stanford University, Assimilability and cultural backlash against immigrants

The presentation will discuss one of the drivers of cultural backlash against immigrants, namely the fear of lack of assimilation. Fouka will provide context on the drivers of cultural backlash and specifically concerns about assimilability. She will argue that assimilation is a two-sided process that depends as much on immigrants' efforts to integrate as it does on the host society's acceptance. She will present evidence on immigrants' assimilation efforts in history and the extent to which lack of assimilation may have been not only the cause of nativism, but also its outcome. Some of the evidence presented draws from her article in *The Review of Economic Studies* (2021).

Dr Danny Choi, University of Pittsburgh, Do shared norms and ideas reduce native bias against immigrants?

Public support for restrictive immigration policies is often driven by perceptions that immigrants are "different" from natives in important ways that threaten core values and norms of native society. Such perceptions motivate natives to support low immigration quotas and coercive assimilation policies. What if immigrants demonstrate that they share natives' norms and ideas regarding appropriate civic behaviour? Would that be enough to make natives feel less threatened and would it make them think of immigrants as fellow citizens rather than as a hostile outgroup? Does native bias decline when immigrants demonstrate respect for the native society's civic norms and behave in ways that a "good citizen" is expected to behave? Sambanis will draw on field experiments and surveys in Germany that address these questions with reference to Germans' attitudes toward Muslim immigrants and will draw lessons from those studies that could be applied to the case of Greece. The presentation is based on his article in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* (2019), as well as other articles and material for a forthcoming book, [Native Bias: Overcoming Discrimination Toward Immigrants](#).

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Description of the presentations

Dr Nikhar Gaiwad, Columbia University, The electoral basis of immigrants' exclusion

The presentation will shed light on a new explanation for why the interests of immigrant communities routinely get suppressed in electoral democracies, as well as suggest a policy tool that governmental and non-governmental organizations can adopt to advance immigrant interests and reduce immigration restrictions. It will focus on the role of systematic bureaucratic barriers that naturalized immigrants and migrants in general face when attempting to vote in electoral democracies. Naturalized immigrants vote at far lower rates than native-born citizens in countries around the world, in part because immigrants face significant hurdles in exercising their franchise. Gaiwad will make the case that voter registration drives among immigrant communities can overcome these barriers. The evidence presented will rely on the results from a large-scale field experiment he recently published in the *American Political Science Review* (2021).

Dr Emmanuel Comte, ELIAMEP, The policy cycles of immigration restrictions

This presentation will aim to combine the results from other presentations, while suggesting what a qualitative study can add to quantitative approaches for our understanding of twentieth- and twenty-first-century large-scale state systems of immigration restrictions. The *fear* of adverse economic effects on precise segments of the national workforce has interacted, Comte will argue, with a *structure* of state power – including relevant instruments of claim-representation, income-redistribution, and migration-control – and the *agency* of union leaders and policymakers, initiating a series of migration-related policy cycles. The resulting sequential movement of marginalisation has ultimately led to magnifying the cultural and normative otherness of selected immigrants when the series of policy cycles neared the point of complete rejection. This reflection will cite Comte's articles in *Le Mouvement social* (2018) and *Labor History* (2019), while opening up on new research plans.