

# Comments on “Whose American Dream? Intergenerational Mobility of Immigrants and Natives’ Policy Preferences”

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# This paper

- This paper studies how information about immigrant mobility affects perceptions and policy preferences.
  - Most studies focus on **first-generation** immigrants and their current outcomes.
  - This paper emphasizes intergenerational mobility of **second-generation**.
- It asks how people respond to information about immigrant success over time.

# Key Finding: An important asymmetry

- Mobility information increases support for immigration and immigrant-targeted policies.
- At the same time, it does not change general redistribution preferences.
- This asymmetry is the central result of the paper.

# Redistribution

- The paper finds no effect on overall redistribution, but strong effects on immigration-related policies
- People change who should benefit from redistribution rather than how much redistribution society should provide.

# Interpretation

- The information highlights that immigrants' children succeed economically.
- This makes immigrants appear hardworking and integrated into society.
- As a result, the treatment may change perceptions of deservingness.
- Immigrants are seen as more deserving of support.
- However, this does not translate into broader redistribution support.

# Identification and LATE

- The paper uses an experimental design with imperfect compliance.
- Therefore, the estimates should be interpreted as LATE.
  - The estimates therefore capture the effect among compliers — those who actually process and understand the information.

# External Validity and Bias

- Many individuals may not pay attention to or understand the information.
  - These individuals are not the group for whom the LATE is identified.
- This suggests that the estimated impact may be upward biased.
- It would be useful to consider how large the effects are in real-world settings.

# Broader Implications

- 1. In the US, upward mobility is linked to the American Dream and interpreted positively (meritocracy) .
  - In more homogeneous societies like Japan, the same information may be interpreted less positively due to concerns about competition, social cohesion, or homogeneity.
- 2. **Immigration** is a concrete issue, while **redistribution** is more abstract.
  - People respond to specific groups, but not necessarily to general policies.
- Overall, the paper suggests that information changes perceptions about deservingness, but not necessarily broader redistributive preferences.