

Great Expectations: The Persistent Effect of Origin Institutions on Immigrants' Political Trust

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This research explores the forces behind the formation and the transmission of immigrants' political trust and highlights the differences with respect to interpersonal trust. First, it theoretically and empirically establishes that immigrants coming from corrupt countries, tend to overtrust the institutions at the host country. This inflated trust of immigrants is documented as the Great Expectations effect. Second, the analysis explores whether political trust is shaped primarily by mean attitudes and/or by average institutional quality (both at the origin country). Interestingly, the findings establish that institutions have a stronger effect on shaping immigrants' political trust than mean attitudes of their compatriots. Third, the implications of the Great Expectations effect are explored. The inflated trust of immigrants towards host institutions results in lower levels of political participation.