

Department SEMINARS



DEM DIPARTIMENTO DI
ECONOMIA E
MANAGEMENT

Stigma and Attitudes Toward Immigrants

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2:00 PM

Room Bruguier Pacini, DEM
Online via Teams

A B S T R A C T

We study whether and how internalized stigma shapes natives' attitudes toward immigrants. Drawing on research showing that individuals with higher body mass often face moralized stigma and discrimination, we use body weight as a proxy for belonging to a stereotyped group. Using European Social Survey data, we document that higher body mass is strongly associated with more negative attitudes toward immigrants. Exploiting the public stigmatization of Belgium's newly appointed Health Minister in 2014, we provide causal evidence that stigmatization episodes trigger more negative views, especially toward culturally distant immigrant groups. A survey experiment embedded in the ESS further shows that individuals with higher body mass prioritize cultural factors over economic ones when evaluating immigrants. Our results highlight the importance of stigma internalization in shaping attitudes toward immigrants, suggesting that identity-based mechanisms play a central role in economic and political preferences.

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