

Study Abroad Experience and Attitudes Towards Other Nationalities*

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Abstract

Every year, millions of people relocate to a foreign country for school or work. This paper provides evidence of how international experience shifts preferences and stereotypes related to other nationalities. I use participation in the Erasmus study abroad program to identify the effect of international experience: students who are ready to participate in the Erasmus program are chosen as a control group for students who have returned from studies abroad. Individuals make decisions in a Trust Game and in a Triple Dictator Game. Results show that while students do not differentiate between partners from Northern and Southern Europe in the Trust Game prior to an Erasmus study abroad, students who have returned from Erasmus exhibit less trust towards partners from the South. Behavior towards other nationalities in the Triple Dictator Game is not affected by the Erasmus study experience. Overall, the results suggest that participants learn about cross-country variation in cooperative behavior while abroad and therefore statistical discrimination increases with international experience.

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