

Abstract

This paper empirically investigates the determinants of immigration to Israel and compares them to those affecting immigration to Europe and to the U.S. The results support the hypothesis whereby immigration to Israel is unique.

In particular:

- (i) There is a higher number of immigrants to Israel from countries with relatively high GDP per capita, inconsistent with traditional immigration theory, which assumes an increase in earnings as one of the major drivers of immigration.
- (ii) More immigrants come to Israel from countries with a low share of young population, contrary to conventional expectations.
- (iii) In contrast to usual predictions, more immigrants come to Israel from more distant countries; also more trade reduces immigration.

The findings for Europe and for the U.S. are broadly consistent with the conventional theory and with its predictions.