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MICROECONOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF DETERMINANTS OF RETURN MIGRATION OF NORTH AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS

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OBJECTIVE

The objective of this paper is to provide a better understanding of the mechanisms that affect the return migration of North African citizens. A better comprehension of the motivations of return implies a better targeting of immigration policies of receiving and sending countries.

SCIENTIFIC METHODS

In order to achieve our objective, we analyze information from the MIREM (return migration to the Maghreb) survey. This survey was addressed to immigrants from Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia returning to their origin country. Different statistical and econometric techniques are used in order to identify the main determinants of their decision to return. The obtained results show the need to consider the heterogeneity of the different groups, but also the need to improve statistical knowledge on the phenomena and to carry out external evaluations of policies recently adopted in these countries.

POLICY VALUE-ADDED

The carried out research has permit to identify that he study of return migration suffers from several deficiencies and barriers: First, the absence of reliable statistical databases on return movements both at the international level and the regional level; second, a shortage of theoretical literature about push and pull factors of return movements; and third, the high heterogeneity or return migrants. In fact, the return may be considered as a (partial or full) realization of the objectives fixed at the time of departure. However, these objectives are not fixed in time and their dynamic update can alter the process by delaying (myth of return) or accelerating (failed migration) the return decision.

If public intervention seems to be necessary, its effectiveness largely depends on the conditions of its implementation. In this context, the TOCKTEN experience introduced by Morocco in 1994 and the FINCOM program in 2007 is extremely

instructive in the sense that it gives importance to two major elements, including the provision of statistics and the measures management. Regarding the provision of statistics, the range of issues that could be raised in terms of analyses would significantly be enlarged if countries update their administrative records and undertake partnerships that would enable them to follow up their immersed populations. The measures management is also relevant. The effectiveness of a measure depends on targeting degree. In principle, the more the measure is well-targeted, the larger the effectiveness opportunities become. Indeed, the migrants' category is statistically too heterogeneous so that it will be subject to the same device. The motives that encourage a young post-graduate holder of a degree in the host country largely differ from the objectives of an emigrant who went back to his homeland after retirement. The empirical analysis of the MIREM survey on the North African Returning Migrants reinforces this assumption by highlighting the uniqueness of the North African dynamism (clandestine migration, returning for preference of the host country and its consistency with returning after the end of the working life process). The staying length in the host country is also discriminating. It is higher when referring to returning groups for the purpose of investment (15.7 years) and for those who prefer to settle down in the native country (29 years). It therefore involves the correlation between duration and savings in order to account for consumption or investment in the native country. In contrast, we have found shorter staying duration when referring to those who return after completing studies (7 years), clandestine migration (8 years) and temporary or other migration (10 years). Within the native country, the combination of the staying duration and the respondent's age with regard to those who return after completing studies shows the dominance of the effect of providing professional opportunities on the returning-decision of this profile. Other involved discriminatory varieties include in particular the frequent visits paid to the native country and the change of status in the host country. The targeting measures will not take place unless the measures conception is based on a realistic analysis of profiles, which undermines the implicit assumption that statistical categories used are homogeneous. The work carried out in this context follows this logic in that it seeks to analyze the development of the returning project by highlighting the specificities and sensitivity of each return category.

Moreover, the results from our analysis permit us to conclude that return migration may be a legitimate alternative to the increased mobility of labour across the world. It can have a very important role in the eradication of perverse effects caused by the intensified international mobility of labor especially the most qualified (Brain Drain). It can also play a catalytic role in the transfer of knowledge (physical & human capital) acquired from abroad and lead to a better productivity in the country of birth. Moreover, return migration can also permit that the potential knowledge acquired by migrants is transferred to the country of origin. For example, the transfer of technology between the Silicon Valley and India in the field of software has developed synergies in terms of creation of new sciences parks around the country and generated a new local labour market for engineers, computer scientists and software developers. Nowadays, India occupies an important place in the development and programming software with nearly 500 global companies established there.