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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. With this aim, we analyse 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. Statistical and econometric techniques are used in order to identify the main determinants of their decision to return.

MAIN RESULTS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The obtained results revealed a very heterogeneous profile according to the different aspirations and reasons of immigrants to come back (in some cases, even forced and/or imposed). Indeed, correspondence analysis revealed a differentiation of profiles related to demographic and socioeconomic characteristics during pre, intra and post migration experiences. The results from a multinomial model also showed that the length of stay, age at departure, repeated migration, among others are relevant in order to predict the success or failure in the destination country.

One of the main reasons to come back seems to be related to the immigrant sentiment that they are perceived as a potential threat to European democracies by a fraction of politicians, particularly in France and the Netherlands. This climate of rejection of immigration may emerge as the cornerstone of a thorny undertaking choice: to stay in the host country and bear the consequences of political, social and media stigmatization increasingly hostile to immigration, or to return as a healthy and dignified way. Indeed, the migrant is constantly faced with a stark choice between rationality and affection. The first involves a dimension that extends not only to immigrants but also his offspring. Descendants of immigrants may suffer the

consequences of a choice without taking part, the risk of being assimilated to xenophobic discourse, calls for politicians inviting them to integrate more even though they have been lulled from birth to democratic principles as well as their native counterparts. These examples are a perfect mix of social exclusion and an irreversible uprooting, both in the country of birth and country of origin of the parents. Besides the suburbs located in Western Europe are the most obvious example of the problems related to immigration.