Return Migration and Illegal Immigration Control

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Abstract

This paper investigates the effectiveness of immigration control policies when the duration of stay of illegal immigrants is endogenous because they may return home voluntarily. In this case, policies can affect aggregate illegal immigration not only via the number of immigrants, but also via their duration of stay. We show that, as a result, popular policies against illegal immigration such as border enforcement, employer inspections, and amnesties can potentially increase the total amount of illegal immigration in the destination country.