Intra-household Selection into Migration: Evidence from a Matched Sample of Migrants and Origin Households in Senegal

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Abstract

Migrant’s selection issues are tackled by a great number of articles since the founder paper by Borjas (1987), which applies to international migration the Roy model of self-selection. However, most migration models usually regard location choices as an individual income-maximizing strategy and do not consider the collective dimension of the decision to migrate. In this paper, we therefore extend the Roy model to account for a household model of migration and derive its implications on migrant’s selection. Since when choosing the one among its members who is to migrate the household maximizes its earnings including further remittances, migrant selection in this case may differ from what is expected from an individual decision model. We de facto specifically tackle the so far under-explored issue of intra-household selection into migration and finally aim at determining which component of the household utility - earnings, remittances or non-monetary factors - mostly drives location choices. We provide empirical evidence from a unique matched sample of 900 Senegalese migrants in three destination countries - France, Italy and Mauritania - and their origin households in Senegal.

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