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Globalization and the environmental impact of sectoral FDI

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Abstract

We analyze the environmental impact of capital inflows and investigate the halo effect (FDI

improves the environment). We control for the type of FDI inflows, the EKC (Environmental Kuznets

Curve) effect and the country income level, and find (i) a differential industry effect: FDI flows into

manufacturing increase pollution (negative halo effect), while those flowing into services support the

halo effect hypothesis; (ii) an income inequality effect: FDI flowing into low- and middle-income

countries degrades the environment, while flows to high-income countries benefit the environment and

support a halo effect; (iii) support for the EKC effect if capital flows into agriculture and services in

poorer countries and into mining and manufacturing in wealthier economies. We show that studies

relying only on firm-level or aggregate data miss the sectoral spillovers, and thus may lead to misleading

conclusions.

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JEL classification: F21, Q5

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