

This paper asks an interesting question: what would be the effects for the United States of adopting a point-based immigration system? By calibration, the paper simulates the immigration policies through the transition for the United States and Mexico. However, the methodology used has potential problems. In addition, there are some typos and many missing references that make it difficult to read and hard to understand. Without justified explanations on parameter calibration, the results of the paper cannot be valid.

1. Is the contribution of the paper potentially significant?

No, please see point 3.

2. Is the analysis correct?

Not really, please see point 3 “Weaknesses”

3. Main strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths: the paper sets up a model economy which has two locations (North and South), technologies and demographic structures. By solving households’ problem (with calibrated parameters), the paper can obtain results on self-selection, GDP, earnings, Mincer returns and inequality after adopting the new immigration system.

Weaknesses:

a. The paper indicates that the main objective of a point-based immigration system is to attract high-skilled immigrations. And the paper uses only “at least completed high school” as the alternative immigration policy based on a point system. But, this does not match the immigration literature in which high-skilled is widely accepted as college degree or above. That explains why the paper has the first result: the point system increases the average years of schooling of immigrants by 3.5 years.

b. The calibrated interest rate is 5% for the United States and 5.014% for Mexico which is not reasonable if the paper uses year 2008, 2010 and 2005 for other calibrated parameters. The author might want to try 1% or 0.5%. Then other parameters may have to change such as discount factor and capital depreciation.

Hence, the results can be very sensitive to a change in the calibration.

A robustness check is necessary to validate the results.

c. The paper assumes migration costs are fixed.

d. Some typos and many missing references. Especially the missing references are very crucial in explaining the parameter calibration. The results cannot be valid and significant without those justified calibration.

(1) In page 3, 300.000 or 300,000 visas? Same as 200.000 or 300,000.

(2) In page 11, there are three missing references (?). In the footnote 12 of same page, a missing reference.

- (3) In page 12, three missing reference (?).
- (4) In page 13, five missing references (?). In the footnote 16, one missing reference.
- (5) In page 14, three missing references (?). In the footnote 17, one missing reference.

Recommendation: Reject.