

Technical change, competitiveness, and employment

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Societal Relevance

The Southern European economies must contain the rise in global temperatures that threaten the existence of natural and human ecosystems, in a context of stagnant demand, declining productivity and poor international competitiveness. Environmental innovation could contribute to containing climate change while supporting growth and employment in this region. This dissertation represents the first investigation of the direct and indirect effects of environmental product and process innovation on growth and employment in the context of international trade. The result of this investigation can provide fundamental support for the development and implementation of green industrial policies and awareness campaigns on the effects of climate change. Firstly, it can identify the role of consumer preferences and their choice between more and less polluting products, which could influence the final results of these policies. In particular, it can determine the importance of the substitution effects between local environmentally friendly products and highly polluting imported products. Secondly, it can identify the indirect effects of an increase in productivity in the less polluting sectors on prices and demand at the sector and aggregate level. Finally, it can define the types of environmental innovation most suited to the specific regional and sector context. This dissertation reveals the complexity and variety of the effects of environmental innovation, which depend on the specific socio-economic context and the prevailing patterns in each sector. A proper balance of environmental, economic and social policy goals can only be achieved through a better understanding of these effects.