

Social capital and the internal mobility of graduates: A gravity model at Italian provincial level

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A growing literature strand focusing the attention on the elements able to attract and retain high-skilled people has increasingly been aware about the role played by non-pecuniary factors, in addition to economic incentives, in affecting the migration decisions. More recently, the set of non-pecuniary factors has been expanded to include social capital, but the attention has almost exclusively been paid on a narrowly dimension given by the ties with relatives, friends, and neighbors. For this reason, we aim at contributing to enrich this literature strand by analysing the effect associated with two additional forms of SC, namely, community involvement and political engagement, on the migration flows of graduates among Italian provinces for the year 2012. By relying on a gravity model approach, our paper provides empirical evidence that lower high-skilled emigrations are the result of a higher SC base in the origin provinces, while the graduates' decision to move might occur in presence of significant SC differences between origin and destination (higher in the latter). The results also reveal that several variables pertaining to the agglomeration economies - in particular the innovative capacity, the human capital, and the population density - are key drivers of internal migration flows in Italy.