

## Institutional Quality & Ph.D. holders' migration

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### Extended Abstract

High-skilled migration has always attracted the attention of scholars, particularly due to the recognized relevance of human capital for socio-economic growth in the knowledge society (Basile et al., 2019; Faggian et al., 2019; 2014). Thus, migration of high-skilled individuals had been studied from a variety of perspectives, e.g. the determinants of migration (see, for example, Mara and Landesmann, 2023; Galos, 2022; Impicciatore and Tosi, 2019; Caragliu et al., 2013; Faggian et al., 2007), the effect of migrants in the destination places, at the regional or country level (e.g. Bratti and Conti, 2018; Faggian et al., 2017; Faggian and McCann, 2009) and the pull factors of destinations (Galos, 2022; Columbu et al., 2021; Ermini et al., 2019; Di Cintio and Grassi, 2017).

In this extensive literature, two gaps emerge.

First, when studying the attractiveness of destinations, extant studies mainly focus on economic and labour market factors (e.g. economic structure, income and future earnings, employment rate, costs of living), while other social and cultural aspects have been scantily addressed, even though the role played by amenities and by a favourable socio-cultural environment is important, particularly when selective migration is concerned (Nifo and Vecchione, 2014).

Second, much has been said about graduates, while little attention has been paid to PhD holders. This, we claim, is a relevant gap. Having held the highest level of education, PhD holders potentially represent a powerful source of knowledge and innovation for the places where they decide to live. Analysing their migration behaviour is, in fact, fundamental to understand the knowledge flow which potentially affect the future socio-economic development of the destination places (Di Cintio and Grassi, 2017; Ermini et al., 2017; Fratesi and Percoco, 2014; Marinelli, 2013).

Starting from these premises, this research investigates the relationship between PhD holders' internal migration in Italy and Institutional Quality (IQ), whose role is fundamental to ensure quality of services and effective governance. Specifically, two research questions are addressed: i) *does IQ represent a pull factor for PhD holders' mobility?* ii) *which specific IQ factors affect their migration behaviour<sup>1</sup>?*

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<sup>1</sup> Following Kaufmann et al. (2010) and Nifo and Vecchione (2014), IQ is articulated in: "voice and accountability", "Political stability and absence of violence and terrorism", "government effectiveness", "regulatory quality", "rule of law" and "corruption".

The research setting is Italy, which is an interesting case for migration studies given the historical divide between the North and the South (Biagi et al., 2023; Bratti and Conti, 2018; Iammarino and Marinelli, 2015; Fratesi and Percoco, 2014;), increased by the (selective) migration of human capital (Parenti et al., 2022; Basile et al., 2019; Di Berardino et al., 2019).

Our investigation is based on two data sources: the most recent available survey on the employability of PhD holders carried out by ISTAT in 2018 and referring to PhD who hold degree in 2012 and 2014 and the Italian IQ index at the provincial level. Concerning the econometric strategy, we follow Nifo and Vecchione (2014) and we perform a probit Model to overcome possible self-selection problems. We control for individual characteristics (gender, age, faculty, degree grade, family income, parents' education), and for macroeconomic variables both in origin and destination provinces. Results will contribute to the literature on high-skilled migration and its determinants, taking an emerging perspective, that of PhD holders' mobility and IQ, which potentially lead to relevant policy implications. Second, understanding the spatial distribution of PhD holders gives relevant insight on the future economic development, given the role knowledge now lays for the development of regions and territories. Third, understanding the role of IQ as potential pull factor favoring high-skilled migration provide important implications for regional, provincial and local policy makers which, in turn, could become a policy tool too reduce the traditional and historical North-South divide.

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