

Titolo: *Stayers vs movers: university students' migration and socio-economic gaps in Italy*

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Abstract: Student enrollment to first level of University has decreased significantly, especially after the economic crisis of 2008. While there has been a slight increase in the last few years all over Italy, the students' mobility from the South to the central and northern regions of the country has increased steadily. This mobility may occur essentially at two main points in time: the enrollment at the first (undergraduate or bachelor) level and, the second (graduate or master) level. In this paper we analyze this type of mobility using Italian students cohort data, which are national level longitudinal micro-data on the educational careers of freshmen enrolled at the first level of an Italian university degree course. Several cohorts are analyzed and compared longitudinally starting from the 2008/09 year which may be regarded as the beginning year of the crisis as well as the first one for which data are available after the modifications introduced in Italy by the Decree Law 270 of 2005. Data were provided by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research. The study deals with enrollment and degree rates, highlighting macro-regional difference with respect to some individual characteristics. A special focus is on the relationship between regional attractiveness (in terms of students' inward flows) and regional economic performance. In particular, the hypothesis under testing concerns the possibility that southern students move towards Universities located in growing or resilient areas instead of enrolling in Universities with the best academic ranking.