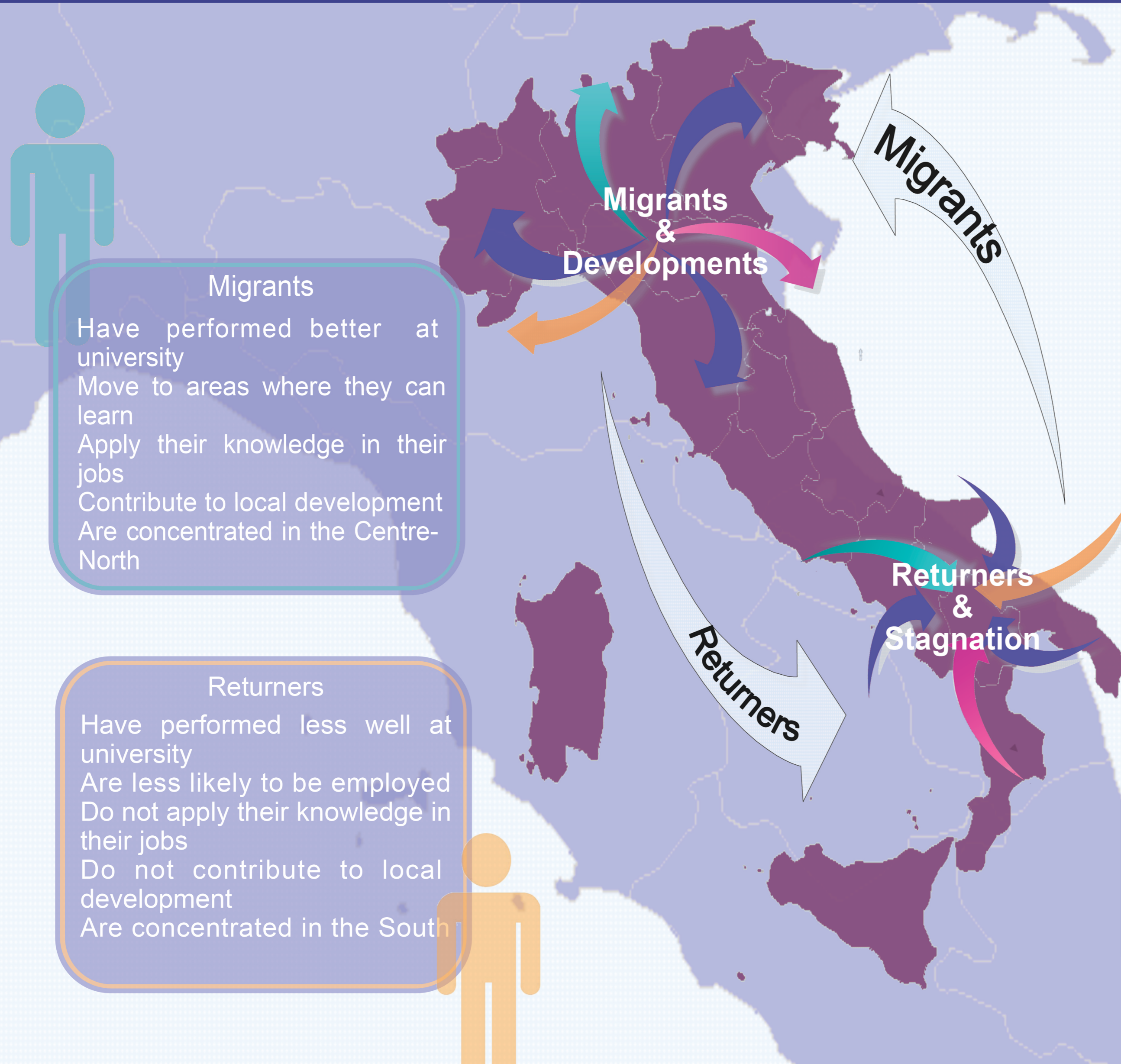


# GRADUATES ON THE MOVE: HOW MIGRANTS & RETURNERS CAN WIDEN THE NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE IN ITALY

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## Migrants

Have performed better at university  
Move to areas where they can learn  
Apply their knowledge in their jobs  
Contribute to local development  
Are concentrated in the Centre-North

## Returners

Have performed less well at university  
Are less likely to be employed  
Do not apply their knowledge in their jobs  
Do not contribute to local development  
Are concentrated in the South

## VIRTUOUS CYCLE IN THE CENTRE NORTH

The most talented graduates migrate to the richer and more innovative regions of Italy, where they can learn and develop whilst applying the knowledge gained at university. These regions, in turn, benefit from migrants' input and this makes them even more attractive to other high-skilled individuals.

## VICIOUS CYCLE IN THE SOUTH

Graduates who move to the South are often *returners*, they go back to their home region after having graduated elsewhere. They have performed less well at university and, if employed, are in jobs for which they are over-educated. *Returners* do not contribute to regional development and this, in turn, makes the area less attractive to other high-skilled individuals.

## GRADUATES' MOBILITY AS FLOWS OF KNOWLEDGE

Graduates are not only *job seekers* but also *carriers of knowledge*

They transfer knowledge across space and across sectors, as they go from university to the labour market. Therefore to understand graduate migration patterns one needs to look at:

- How the specific knowledge embodied by the graduate impacts on the decision to move.
- Whether the opportunity to use such knowledge influences the decision to move and the destination choice.

## MIGRANTS AND RETURNERS

Since the 1990s Italy has experienced an increase in the internal migration of highly-educated individuals. The study of mobility of recent university graduates has to be framed in this context.

An original contribution of the study is the comparison between:

**RETURNERS:** who move from the region of study back to their home region.

**MIGRANTS:** who move from the region of study to another region.

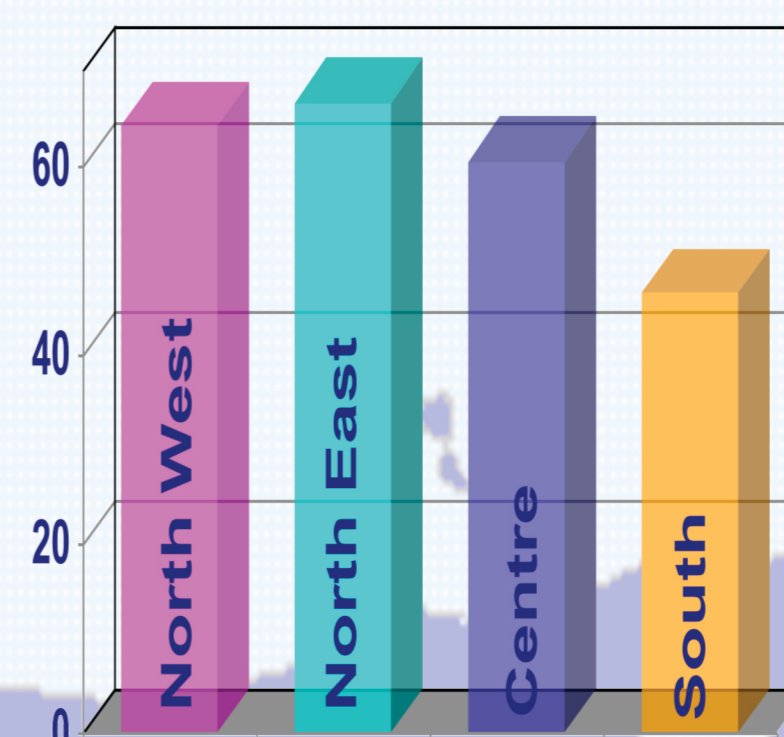
## METHODS

The analysis is based on a survey on graduates' entry in the labour market. It refers to graduates of 2001, interviewed in 2004. Discrete choice models are used to compare *migrants* and *returners* to *stayers* (those graduates who do not leave the region of study). Simultaneous equation models are used to evaluate the regional impact of graduate mobility.

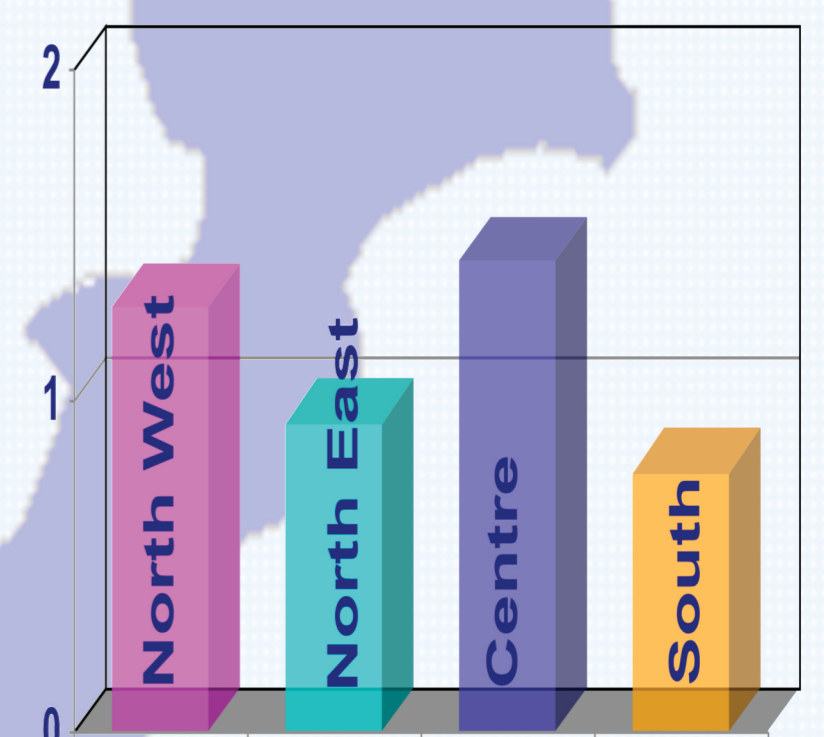
## THE ITALIAN NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE

The South is historically the least developed part of the country. It underperforms the other areas on all the indicators of socio-economic and innovative activity.

Employment Rate 2003



R&D Expenditures on GDP 2003



## IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

Higher education in the South needs to be integrated strategically with regional industrial and innovation policy, generating the skills that can enhance the process of structural change. Unless this is done, the risk for the South is not to benefit from the social returns to education and to drain graduates to more developed regions of the country.