Research frontiers in Economic Sociology and Labour Studies (ResFron ESLS)

Seminar

Matching demand and supply in the labour market

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5 July 2018
Seminar Room (via Conservatorio side), h. 11.30-13.30
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via Conservatorio 7 - Milan

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The seminar focuses on the ways in which selectors make decisions during the selection process of young new graduate entering the Italian labour market.

According to multilevel model of selection decision making, we assume that the interaction between three levels can shape selectors' decision process. The three levels are composed by affective and cognitive factors, organizational context where selector works, and wider environment (e.g. environmental insecurity, local labour market, employment legislation).

The research we present in this seminar aims to understand how selectors filter young people engaged in transition from university to work. In many countries, this transition has become more complex due to difficulties of young people to well integrate in the work force. Many studies tried to detect this issue considering young graduates occupational positioning, without observing the companies point of view. We think the selectors decisional patterns are a relevant issue to better understand transition to work. Thus, we analyse the decisional pattern (judgmental heuristics, values, assumptions) used to integrate the different data and sources of information and pressures about applicants used in this kind of decision process. In order to do this, the research uses an experiment of selection process simulation derived by the *conjoint analysis* statistical approach. Following previous studies (De Wolf & Van der Velden, 2001; Colombo, 2006), we adopted a two-step selection design. In our empirical analysis, we selected three types of jobs at the clerical/technical level, since this is where young people with medium-high levels of education usually find their first job. The three types of job are junior human resources employee, junior accountant employee and junior computer system administrator. In addition, these three types of job were chosen because of their different content and then to observe differences in selection criteria depending on the type of vacancy.

Fifty selectors working in Lombardy private employment agencies - as it is the region with most concentration of this kind of work agencies (Corno, 2005) - were interviewed using cards of hypothetical applicants (1,000 each three professional figures we considered). During all of these steps, we asked selectors to comment their choices. This in order to collect some qualitative in-depth examination of the selection process. Quantitative data analysis has been based on logistic regression models (binomial and rank ordered ones).

The first relevant result is that we can draw different decisional patterns according to different patterns of job ('technical' and more 'general' jobs). The second important result is that we can observe not only differences related to the type of job, but also standard criteria (both related to ascribed and acquired characteristics) as indicators of individual propensities and strong filters of selection.