Some Experiences with ILO Discrimination Testing

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Successive steps

• Step 1: Voice inquiry – the testers call to inquire about the availability of the position
• Step 2: Written application – the testers submit formal applications for the job
• Step 3: Job interview – face to face interaction with the prospective employer

At each point preference of the one over the other could occur.
Countries studied

- So far the full three-step procedure employing ILO methodology was carried out in the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Denmark, Italy, France, and Sweden
- Denmark without ILO involvement
- Only the first two steps in Germany
- Only the written applications (step 2) in Switzerland (correspondence testing, no ILO involvement)
Minority groups studied

• Usually men in their early twenties, first generation born in the country, citizens (not in Italy for reasons of plausibility)

• Usually of North African descent, in Denmark Turkish and Pakistani, in Germany Turkish

• In some cases extra research into women, and into other descent groups
Jobs studied

• Semi-skilled jobs, operatives
  Diploma requirements cannot be fulfilled
• Recently services only, i.e. restaurants, retailing, delivery, previously also manufacturing, construction, crafts
• Advertised positions, usually in newspapers
• No jobs agencies
Does this ‘represent’ the labour market?

• Not an attempt to represent the entire labour market
• Unskilled and semi-skilled jobs
• Young labour market entrants
• Quota sampling
Challenges

• Overall: Sticking to the prescribed method
• Thus assuring comparability
• Selection, training, monitoring of testers
• Application requirements: German vs. Danish approach, ILO approach
• Plausibility of legal status? Citizenship not plausible in Italy, nor in-country birth
Achilles heel?

• Precise matching of the pairs of testers
  – Not only at selection time but along the learning curve: takes keen monitoring!

• Do we know which characteristics employers perceive to be productivity enhancing?

• What are employers really looking for in the labour market?
Intercountry comparability

- Quota sampling enhances comparability: comparing like with like
- German results not comparable because of liberties with the method
- Larger differences between cities than between countries
Comparability over time

- OECD labour markets have moved on since the early 1990s
- Less skilled jobs now highly concentrated in services
- Next they might move into households
- We had to change the sampling quotas
How do we present results?

• Net discrimination rate (percentage points difference)
  – No. of cases with preference for majority minus no. of cases with preference for minority divided by no. of cases
  – In the published results aborted cases were included in the denominator

• Share of cases with preference (percent)

• Job applications per case of being given preference
Results

- The numbers reported below may be slightly higher than in the published reports because there is always a small percentage of cases that has to be abandoned along the way.
- These are here excluded from the case total while in the published reports they were included.
Net discrimination rate

![Bar chart showing net discrimination rate for different countries. The y-axis represents percentage points, and the x-axis represents countries: BE, DK, IT, NL, ES, and All. The chart shows varying levels of net discrimination rate across these countries.](chart_image)
Net discrimination rate by step

Percentage points

BE  DK  IT  NL  ES

Third  Second  First
Share of cases with preference

BE
DK
IT
NL
ES

%
Share of cases with preference

Favouring minority tester

Favouring majority tester
Applications per preference

![Graph showing applications per preference with minority tester on the x-axis and majority tester on the y-axis. The graph contains several data points, with some values close to 1 on the y-axis and varying values on the x-axis.]
City results, males, applications per preference

![Graph showing applications per preference for city results, males, with data points for Belgium, Spain, and Italy, and a dashed line indicating equality.](image-url)
Preferences per 100 applications
Although we do not propose to explain discrimination ...

- Attention to deskilling in the hiring process
- Prejudice against city quarters
- Monitoring of media activity just before and during testing
- Does local inequality influence outcomes?
- Do seasonal and business cycles matter?
- Does the formality of skill acquisition?
Suggested reading

P. A. Riach & J. Rich
Field Experiments of Discrimination in the Labour Market
November 2002