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Busetta, Giovanni and Fiorillo, Fabio and Visalli, Emanuela

University of Messina, University Politecnica delle Marche

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Searching for a job is a beauty contest

*Giovanni Busetta**, *Fabio Fiorillo*** and *Emanuela Visalli^{***}*

ABSTRACT

The paper deals with the impact of beauty on employability of people, stressing the first stage of the hiring process. In particular, we studied if there exists a preference for attractive candidates and if it does whether it depends on sex, physical features and racial characteristics.

We monitored all relevant agencies offering jobs in Italy from August 2011 to September 2012 sending 11008 CVs to 1542 advertised job openings. To do so, we construct fake CVs and we sent the same CV 8 times, changing only name and surname, address, and the photo included. In particular, we sent 4 CVs with photo of an attractive and unattractive man and women, and 4 CVs without photo of an Italian and a foreign men and women to each job opening.

Callbacks rates are statistically significant higher for attractive women and men than unattractive ones. Racial discrimination appears to be statistically relevant, but less than discrimination based on the physical features, especially for women.

Keywords: beauty premium, racial discrimination, experimental economics.

JEL classification nos.: C93, J71, J78.

Corresponding Author:

Giovanni Busetta
gbusetta@unime.it

1. Introduction

Aristotele said: “Personal beauty is a greater recommendation than any letter of reference” After thousands of years this concept continues to hold.

In nowadays’ society people are often discriminated for their physical attractiveness. Discrimination based on the various components of physical appearance results in “premia” for those individuals characterized by certain attributes, and in penalties for persons failing to match the given standard.

* Department of Economics, Business, Environmental Sciences and Quantitative Methods, Università degli Studi di Messina, Via T. Cannizzaro 278, 98122 Messina, Italy

** Department of Economics, Università Politecnica delle Marche, Piazzale Martelli 8, 60121 Ancona, Italy

*** Università degli Studi di Messina, Italy.

In France, the country of the Enlightenment and human rights, people refer to the aesthetic discrimination in terms of “beautism”. This kind of discrimination is so widespread that several candidates to work positions use to include into their CVs, not only their skills and titles (such as education, languages spoken, experiences, etc), but also a “video resume” in which they present and enhances themselves.

“Pole D’Eploi” is a French firm at which it is possible to attend a course called “action looking” to learn tricks and how to dress-up in order to encourage recruitment in job interviews. In this way, the selection of candidates for a job becomes similar to a casting.

In Italy this kind of discrimination appears to be particularly relevant. In “casting’s society”, an article published in 2011 on “la Repubblica”, one of the main Italian newspapers, Anais Ginori describes a survey published by Sofres Institute. The results of the survey show that clothing and manner of presentation improve the probability of being employed by 82% for candidates with same degree and experience. The economic crisis has made recruitment techniques even more ruthless. First impressions are crucial and, as the author wrote in the same article, this rule also applies to the work of back office.

Is such discrimination a novelty in Italian labor market? Actually, Italy is a dualistic country. Dualism is a common issue in Italy and it is based on several explanations¹. It is the result of past determinants: sociological (differences in social capital, Putnam 1993), economical (differences in workforce coming out from agriculture, Bagnasco 1977) and institutional (formal norms vs informal rules, Tabellini 2008). Because of dualism, also the access to the job differs regarding regions: job opportunities, which reflect firms’ labor demand, were concentrated in the North and the Center of the Country and they are definitely much more for man than women (Table 1).

Table 1 – Italian employment and unemployment rate by macro areas and gender

Employment rate	NOR D	CENTE R	SOUTH	ITALY
Male	73,00 %	69,80%	56,20%	66,50%
Female	57,00 %	52,30%	31,60%	47,10%
Total	65,30 %	61,00%	43,80%	56,80%
Unemployment rate	NOR D	CENTE R	SOUTH	ITALY
Male	6,60%	8,40%	15,90%	9,90%
Female	8,60%	11,00%	19,30%	11,90%
Total	7,40%	9,50%	17,20%	10,70%

Source: Istat

Therefore, data reported in Table 1 depend on the number of firms and the industrial structure of the area which behaved differently in different regions. Different firms behaviors not necessarily persist in the present as it was in the past. In particular, we wonder if, also in Italy, the considerations underlined by the theory of beautism on the relevance of attractiveness premia in the hiring process could be more important than explanation based on dualism in influencing the probability of receiving a job offer.

Furthermore, Italy is a growing immigration country. For this reason it is relevant to investigate whether Italian labor market is affected by racial discrimination. As showed, among others, by a

1 Fratianni (2012).
2

recent analysis performed by Italy's National Office against Racial Discrimination (UNAR), an institution which collaborate with United Nations, discrimination based on race has increased by 61% between 2011 and 2012.

The main objective of this paper is to investigate whether the dualisms, traditionally characterizing Italian labor market (e.g. discriminations based on region), are still the ones mainly influencing firms hiring decisions or whether, instead, there are new determinants to investigate on. If this is the case, what is, among education, nationality, job characteristics, gender and attractiveness, the most relevant variable affecting candidates' probability to get a job?

Since we want to analyse the influence of race and attractiveness in the hiring process, we have to face two problems common in literature. Firstly, authors (Biddle and Hamermesh 1998, Mobius and Rosenblat 2006, Parrett 2007, Eckel and Ragan 2011, Etcoff, Stock, Haley, Vickery and House 2011) commonly consider small samples of students answering hypothetical questions on hiring decisions, and, secondly, it is often impossible for researchers to control for employees' qualifications and abilities.

On the contrary, in the analysis that we are going to present, we used an empirical strategy that, to our knowledge, has never been applied to Italian labor market. This methodology consists in building up an *ad hoc* created database sending fake CVs to real job openings solving, in this way, both the two problems previously mentioned. Indeed, we analyzed a huge sample based on 11008 CVs sent to real job offers posted by actual employers, obtaining 3278 callbacks (approximately 30% of the CVs sent).

Moreover, the design of our experiment (as already done for Argentina by Bóo, Rossi, and Urzua 2013) gives us the complete control and observability over candidates' backgrounds, solving in this way the second problem previously mentioned. In effect, our applicants are identical in every respect (including their education, work experience, language and computer skills) for each kind of job offer: name, nationality, sex, race and pictures (or lack thereof) are the only informations which change in between different CVs sent to the same job offer. Moreover, the applications completely fulfill employer requirements regarding education, experience and so on.

This methodology is similar to the one applied by Ruffle and Sthudiner (2010) to explore the effect of attractiveness (or lack thereof) on the likelihood of being invited for a job interview in Israel. We added a racial component, as in Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004), to explore also the impact of racial discrimination. To control either for racial discrimination and for discrimination based on beauty, we sent 8 identical resumes to firms, 4 resumes with photo of attractive and unattractive men and women, and 4 resumes without photo (two CVs for Italian people, a woman and a man, and two for foreigners, a woman and a man). In this last case, African name and nationality are indicated in order to control for racial discrimination.

Our design strategy allows us to examine whether there exists a preference for attractive candidates, and whether this preference interacts with the applicant's sex and nationality. In our knowledge it is the first paper exploring simultaneously beauty, gender and racial discrimination in the hiring process in Italy.

Main results obtained by this paper show that attractive women and men get much more callbacks (54% for attractive woman and 47% for attractive man) than unattractive ones, and that unattractive women get less callbacks than unattractive men (7% for woman and 26% for man). Moreover, foreign women get less callbacks than the average callback rate, but much more than unattractive women (12% for foreign woman and 13% for foreign man). These results continue to hold even considering jobs not involving any face-to-face contact and/or highly qualified jobs.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, we present the main literature on the topic. The experimental design is described in Section 3. In Section 4 we present the main empirical results. Section 5 provides the conclusions to the paper.

2. Related literature

Several jobs analyzed correlation between beauty and labor market, focalizing, in particular, on the relation between beauty and wages.

Feingold (1992) analyzes the association between physical beauty, personality features, health, cleverness and mental skills. In this respect, Harper (2000) finds that the penalty for being unattractive is about 15% for men and 11% for women, because beauty is considered to be linked with social skills, health and intelligence.

Etcoff, Haley, Vickery and House (2011) included *make-up* as an additional element influencing common perception of individual's features. In particular, they described the relationship between beauty, make-up and perceived reliability. A jury had to assign a score from 1 to 7 to the same face, before and after having changed make-up style from natural to professional, to glamorous. Jury assigns a score for beauty, competence, pleasantness and reliability, assessing that make-up produces a significant effect in terms of the level of competence perceived.

Mobius and Rosenblat (2006) provided evidence that the most beautiful workers are considered to be more confident, and their self-confidence determine a pay rise.

Biddle and Hamermesh (1994) reached the similar conclusions studying data from the US and Canada. Their main findings were as follows: attractiveness plays an important role in deciding employees' earnings; the penalty for not being attractive is greater for women than men, and it is robust across occupations.

In a different study on graduates from a prestigious law school (Biddle and Hamermesh, 1998), the same authors found that a weakly positive and insignificant relationship between attractiveness and earnings for lawyers becomes higher and significant as working years accrue.

More recently Boo *et al.* (2012) studied, the impact of beauty premium in the labor market sending resumes to real job openings in Buenos Aires. In particular, they sent 6 resumes to each firm: 2 resumes with photos of attractive men or women, 2 with photos of unattractive men or women and 2 resumes without photo. They manipulated electronically real photos and made them unattractive using Photoshop. While resumes containing photos manipulated in order to appear as unattractive received 5% of callbacks, attractive photos received a callback rate of 36%.

The two papers most similar to ours in methodology are Ruffle and Sthudiner (2010) and Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004). Both the papers studied real job opening posted by actual employers in order to evaluate various kind of discriminations during the hiring process. While Ruffle and Sthudiner (2010) studied discrimination based on beauty, Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004) studied racial discrimination.

Ruffle and Sthudiner sent 5312 resumes answering to 2656 job postings in Israel. They sent to each offer 6 different resumes, identical in every respect but the photo. They sent CVs including pictures of attractive men, women, unattractive men and women and with no photo included. They could study the photo effect because in Israel is not that common to include photos into resumes. Attractive men got relevant higher callback rates than men resumes with no photo and double than unattractive ones. On the contrary, for Israeli women the two authors found relevant evidence of discrimination against attractiveness. Thus, beautiful women including a photo on their resumes appear to be punished for their attractiveness and, consequently, to be more often discard by recruiters.

Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004) sent 2435 fictitious resumes in the area of Boston and Chicago, considering all the job offers in the Boston Globe and Chicago Tribune Sunday edition during the period between July 2001 and May 2002 in order to study the impact of racial discrimination. They sent 2 low profile CVs with African American names and White names and 2 high profile CVs with

African American names and White names. Using this method, the two authors found large racial differences in callback rates. Applicants with White names needed to send about 10 CVs to get one callback, whereas those with African American names had to send around 15 resumes to get one callback. This 50 percent gap in callback rates is statistically significant. Based on their estimates, a White name yields as many more callbacks as an additional eight years of experience and, since applicants' names are randomly assigned, this gap can only be attributed to name manipulation.

As in the papers previously mentioned, our study is based on real job opening posted by actual employers. Moreover, it includes both the aspects considered by Ruffle and Shtudiner (2010) and Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004), integrating the discrimination connected to attractiveness with the one connected to racial discrimination.

In this respect, our research complements these studies. In effect, they found results on singular reasons underlying discrimination occurring at the earliest stages of the hiring process. On the contrary, we produced combined results in order to compare beauty, gender and nationality. .

3. Experimental design and procedures

Our empirical experiment focuses on the impact of attractiveness in the hiring process. Our study analyzed all job postings displayed in the period between august 2011 and September 2012. In particular, we submitted 11008 resumes in response to 1542 employments ads published in the most important Italian job search website, that does not require registration (e.g. laboratorio.it, Lavoro&Stage, Miojob, Lavorare.net, Page Personnel, Trovalavoro, Kijiji, Inique Agenzia, Archimede agenzia per il lavoro, Manpower divisione Horeca, Combinazioni s.r.l, Quanta agenzia per il lavoro, Humangest, Alma, Orienta agenzia per il lavoro, Varese centro per l'impiego, Adecco, Obiettivo lavoro, Temporary agenzia per il lavoro, Free work, Maw, Euro Interim, Mr Communication, Open Job).

We produced resumes based on the European format and structure and we use fictitious names and addresses. To avoid matching problems, we modified them in order to fulfill the skills required by the firms offering jobs. We sent same resumes with same skills several times to all the companies, changing the photo attached or including no photo.

For choosing the pictures to be included in the resumes, we selected photographs from Internet and we modified them in order to make them unrecognizable. We then asked 100 students at the University of Messina to choose which of the people in the photos they considered to be attractive, and unattractive. As almost all of them (92%) agreed on the classification, we are confident that subjectivity can be excluded from the choice. We created a Gmail account for each of the candidate categories, including this email address on the CV as contact information.

The same² resume has been sent to firms 8 times: four resumes with different photos of applicants and 4 without photos. In particular, a resume with photo have been sent including each time the photo of attractive and unattractive Italian women, and attractive and unattractive Italian man. A resume containing no photo of Italian and of African (African origin can be inferred by name and nationality) person has been sent to each firm for both gender. In all, 9680 resumes for both male and female vacancies were sent to 1210 firms. Applications from female (male) workers only were invited by 127 (205) firms, and 508 (820) resumes were sent to them, in this last case each firm received only four resumes per vacancy.

2 Actually, following the same procedure adopted by Ruffle and Shtudiner (2010), in order not to let employers realize that they were receiving identical resumes with different photos and names, we staggered over a few days the dispatch of the CVs to the same firms. For the same reason, we used different names and addresses. Finally, all the residential addresses belong to the city of Rome in order not to make the scrutinizers perceive differences in the candidates for residential reasons.

In terms of distribution by genders, we sent more resumes of men (almost 51%) than women (almost 49%), because we got more job offers requesting exclusively men than exclusively women. Moreover, we classified the CVs sent in terms of level of education required by the firm. According to it, our dataset is composed by 25% of jobs requiring university degree, 43% requiring high school diploma, and 32% of jobs not requiring any qualification.

An other distinction in our dataset is between *functions offered* in job postings. In this respect, according to ISCO (International Standard Classification of Occupation) definition, executive posts accounted for 4.94% of job offers, specialized posts for 8.07%, technical jobs 37.39%, office jobs 13.59%, commercial posts 20.53%, artisans 7.99%, drivers 1.31% and unskilled work 6.18%.

Dividing work categories into jobs involving and not involving face-to-face contact and implying and not implying physical strength we classified the CVs sent into front and back office, hard and *soft* work jobs. We defined front office and hard work either labors for which firms explicitly ask for, or the ones for which by no doubt it can be derived from ISCO classification. Approximately 59% are back office and 41% are front-office jobs, 16% are hard work jobs and 84% are the ones which do not imply physical labor (soft work).

Table 2 summarizes the characteristics of job openings in our dataset.

We also considered regional distribution of job offers (see Table 2). As it might be reasonably expected Lombardy (16.86%), Veneto (9.92%), Tuscany (9.52%) and Lazio (18.02%) are the regions with most of the job offers, while the other regions are characterized by far fewer vacancies.

4. Results

Table 2 and 3, already mentioned in Section 3, present also the results of the call back rates classified according to our database. Analyzing callback rates in respect to attractiveness, we can show that attractive Italian people have much higher call back rates (50%) than unattractive ones (17%) and than Italians with no photo (39%). Also racial discrimination appears to be relevant. Table 1 shows widely lower callback rates for foreigners candidates (13%). According to gender classification, men get 32% of callbacks, while women get 28%.

Considering together beauty, nationality and gender, we obtained an interesting result in terms of differences in callback rates.

Graf.1 – Distribution of callback rates by attractiveness and gender

IAW= Italian Attractive Woman, NPIW= Italian Woman (No Photo), IUW= Italian Unattractive Woman, NPFW= Foreign Woman (No Photo), IAM= Italian Attractive Man, NPIM= Italian Man (No Photo), IUM= Italian Unattractive Man, NPFM= Foreign Man (No Photo)

Italian attractive women (from now on IAW) and Italian attractive man (from now on IAM) are called back on average respectively 54% and 47% of the times. Gender is quite relevant for unattractive candidates, indeed Italian unattractive men (from now on IUM) obtain 26% of callbacks, while Italian unattractive women (IUW) obtain a widely lower callback rate (7%). Attractiveness appears to be then widely relevant in the hiring process especially for women and, in particular, for unattractive ones (Graf. 1).

In respect to racial discrimination, foreign people are relevantly lower called back than Italian candidates, without relevant discrimination based on gender. Foreign women and men (from now on NPFW and NPFM) are actually called back with almost the same percentage. (12% for NPFW,

and 13% for NPFM), but widely lower than the callback rate obtained by the correspondent Italian resumes with no photo (37% for women and 41% for men).

According to the qualification required, we obtained the highest callback rates for jobs which do not require any qualification (38%), while jobs for graduate candidates obtain 28% and jobs for which it is required high school diplomas obtain 23% (Table 1).

In terms of ISCO classification of jobs, we have 43% for unskilled occupations, 41% for service workers, 35% for workmen artisan and drivers, and 32% for executives and for clerical jobs. Definitely lower callback rates characterize technical (27%) and specialized job (26%), and sales workers (16%).

Regarding the categories hard and “soft” works and front and back office, we obtained 42% of callback rates for jobs implying hard work, 27% for the ones not implying hard works, 31% for the ones implying back office work and 28% for the ones implying front office works.

Table 2 – Summary Statistics

			CVs sent	Call back rate
Candidate characteristics	Picture	Attractive Italian	25%	50%
		Italian with no photo	25%	39%
		Unattractive Italian	25%	17%
		Foreigner with no photo	25%	13%
	Gender	Men	51%	32%
		Women	49%	28%
Job characteristics	Public / Office	Front office	41%	28%
		Back office	59%	31%
	Strength	Hard work	16%	42%
		Soft work	84%	27%
	Qualification required	No qualification	32%	38%
		High school	43%	28%
		Graduated	25%	23%
	Function offered	Executives	5%	32%
		Specialized labor	8%	26%
		Technical jobs	37%	27%
		Clerical jobs	14%	32%
		Sales workers	15%	16%
		Service workers	5%	41%
Workmen, artisans and drivers		9%	35%	
Unskilled workers	6%	43%		

As displayed in Table 3, the jobs offered (i.e. the number of CVs sent to each region) differ among regions according to the performance of the labor market in the area (as showed in Table 1). We also expect some differences in call back rate, since in the South vacancies are fewer than in the Center and in the North. For this reason, competition among applicants should be higher and thus

we may expect lower callback rate. On the contrary, differences in call back rates exist, but companies placed in Umbria, Abruzzo, Trentino Alto Adige, Sicily, Campania and Calabria are characterized by higher callback rates (respectively 39%, 36%, 35%, 34%, and 34%). Definitely lower call back rates characterize, instead, regions like Molise, Valle D'Aosta, Lombardy, Marche, Piedmont, and Tuscany (respectively 23% the first one, 25% the second and the third, 27% the forth, the sixth and the seventh).

Table 3 – Distribution of CVs sent and callback rates by regions of the offering firm

Regions	CVs sent	Call back rate
Piedmont	7%	27%
Valle D'Aosta	2%	25%
Lombardy	17%	25%
Trentino Alto Adige	3%	35%
Veneto	10%	31%
Friuli Venezia Giulia	2%	30%
Liguria	2%	32%
Emilia Romagna	4%	33%
Tuscany	10%	27%
Umbria	2%	2%
Marche	2%	27%
Lazio	18%	30%
Abruzzo	1%	36%
Molise	1%	23%
Campania	4%	34%
Puglia	3%	30%
Basilicata	1%	31%
Calabria	6%	34%
Sicily	5%	35%
Sardinia	1%	28%
Total	100%	30%

Our objective is to investigate whether regional differences, traditionally characterizing Italian labor market are still the ones mainly influencing hiring decisions, or whether, instead, there are new determinants to investigate and, if this is the case, which are the most relevant. In order to investigate this issue, we performed an analysis of the variance classifying possible reasons of discriminations into the ones associated to Gender, Nationality, Attractiveness, Jobs Classification and/or Characteristics, Regions.

These variables, from Table 2 and 3, seems to determine differences in terms of job offers rates and of call back rates. Secondly, we test some classification created by the “interaction” among these single variables. The intuition is that the best classification to be chosen is the one which display the highest variance between groups and the lowest within them.

Table 4 shows the results of the total variance analysis referred to the 11008 CVs sent and its decomposition into particular subsamples. Analyzing all the single categories results on variance decomposition, we note that the variance between groups is very low for regional (1% of total variability) and ISCO job classification (1%). Also education (variance between amount to 2%) and ISCO classification of jobs does not appear to be a good classifier. Good classifications can be obtained only if we consider attractiveness and its interactions with gender and nationality.

Table 4 - Variance Analysis

Categories	Between	Total	Percentage	F	Significance
Attractiveness only for Italian	159,97	1890,74	8%	381,4	0
Attractiv. only for Ital. men	33,05	1000,58	3%	72,46	0
Attractiv. only for Ital. women	150,41	884,57	17%	410,58	0
Attractiveness and Nationality	268,59	2301,87	6%	484,55	0
Gender	4,29	2301,87	0%	20,53	0
Gender only for Italian	5,60	1890,74	0%	24,511	0
Gender only for foreigner	0,02	302,5	0%	0,016	0,9
Gender only for attractive Italian	3,88	687,96	1%	15,6	0
Gender only for unattractive Italian	23,8	386,43	6%	180,49	0
Nationality	108,63	2301,87	5%	545,1	0
Attractiveness, gender and nationality	297,69	2301,87	13%	233,41	0
Attractiveness and gender only for Italians	189,06	1890,74	10%	183,32	0
ISCO classification of jobs	33,94	2301,87	1%	23,51	0
Education	38,33	2301,87	2%	93,18	0
Region of the firm	13,37	2301,87	1%	3,38	0
Jobs implying face to face contact	3,2	2301,87	0%	15,31	0
Hard work jobs	32,32	2301,87	1%	156,74	0

Gender seems to be a bad classificatory variable (between variance amount to 0%). Only for unattractive people this classification seem to work (between variance 17%). Attractiveness appears to be relevant by itself (between 8%), even if it does not increase its relevance when considering its interaction with gender. Even nationality appears to be relevant considered by itself (between variance 5%), while its interaction with gender doesn't seem to have any effect. We obtain the best classification when we interact³ gender, nationality and attractiveness (variance between 13%).

³ Interaction with gender, attractiveness and nationality with other variables do not have significant results.

Furthermore, other interesting results come out when we apply ANOVA on subsamples. In particular, the impact of attractiveness seems to be gender bias, while no gender bias emerges for foreign people. In any case, the results coming out from the analysis show new tendencies in hiring process discrimination, which take into account determinants connected more to attractiveness than any other kind of difference between candidates.

More information can be extracted if we apply the most relevant classification defined by ANOVA on the distribution of the CVs receiving respectively positive and no answers. When we compare the conditioned distributions with the theoretical one coming out from our experimental design, we immediately see that this distribution is not independent from call back rates distribution. We test null hypothesis of independence between classification and call backs in Table 5 and, rejecting the null, we have an additional check to confirm the result of ANOVA.

Table 5 – Test of independence

H0 = independence (marginal means = conditioned mean)
H1 = dependence (marginal mean \neq conditioned mean)
X^2 di Pearson = 1432,62; Df = 7; P-value = 0
The discrepancies are significant; H0 = refuses

As shown in Table 6 conditioned distributions are different from marginal one, except for unattractive men. Moreover, it is interesting to note that attractiveness appears to be much more polarized for women than for men and that, in particular, the beauty penalization for unattractive women is higher than the beauty premium for attractive ones.

Table 6 - Discrimination tests

Categories	marginal distrib.	Frequencies for positive answers (N=3278)	Frequencies for no answers (N=7730)				
		Freq.	Stand. dev.	Z values for pos. answers	Freq.	Stand. dev.	Z values for no answers
Italian attractive women	0,12	0,22	0,4151	13,9544	0,08	0,2700	-13,2936
Italian women (No photo)	0,12	0,15	0,3578	4,9126	0,11	0,3117	-3,0868
Italian unattractive women	0,12	0,03	0,1703	-30,2875	0,16	0,3669	9,6536
Foreign women (No photo)	0,12	0,05	0,2199	-17,9775	0,15	0,3584	7,6922
Italian attractive	0,13	0,20	0,4013	10,2222	0,10	0,2967	-9,6177

men								
Italian men (no photo)	0,13	0,18	0,3835	7,3267	0,11	0,3093	-6,5056	
Italian unattractive men	0,13	0,11	0,3154	-3,2754	0,14	0,3424	1,4319	
Foreign men (no photo)	0,13	0,05	0,2272	-18,9952	0,16	0,3665	7,1713	

5. Conclusion

From the performed analysis we observed the existence of a significant social problem of discrimination in hiring process in Italy. Unlike what one could expect, discrimination in callback rates is neither based on regional differences, nor on lower employability of women, but on other aspects. In other word, the dualism in the labor market seems not to affect an applicant's probability to receive a positive callback from a firm⁴. The new tendencies of employability are based on attractiveness much more than traditional regional differences, or the ones based on education and job characteristics. Moreover, in Italy we measured a relevant discrimination based on Nationality.

Gender's impact on discrimination become trickier than the one which traditionally concerned Italian labor market. In effect, gender seems to have little discriminatory effect considered by itself, but it takes relevance when it is interacted with attractiveness, especially for women.

To summarize our main results, we could say that if you want a job in Italy and you are not Italian, it will be difficult to find it, but it is always better to be foreigner than to be an unattractive Italian woman. Thus, searching for a job seems to be just like a beauty contest: it is better for unattractive women to invest on aesthetic surgery than in education.

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⁴ Obviously, the probability to find a job in the South of Italy remains lower than in the Center-North because the number of vacancies is lower.

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