

The Transition from University to the Job Market. An Emigration Analysis of the University of Cagliari Graduates

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Summary. In this work, we analyze data provided by official records on graduates of Sardinian universities in the period 1991-2001 with the aim of obtaining contextually relevant information for the realisation of a survey on the transition from university to the job market. Examining data from the survey, we looked in particular at certain aspects of the conditions of graduates in search of employment, their postgraduate education and the opportunities for entering the labour market. We also present some initial results regarding the emigration of graduates and the evaluation of human capital.

Keywords: Graduates, Emigration, Survey, CATI, Human Capital.

1. Introduction

In the years immediately before the “3+2” Italian university reform, the percentage of high school graduates enrolling at Sardinian universities was about 65% for males, and as high as 75% for females. At the beginning of the 80s this rate actually decreased, coming more or less into line with national averages.

In this work, we analyse administrative data in order to carry out a survey on University of Cagliari graduates and their transition from university to the job market. The goal is to build up a general framework for analysing a local context characterized by the low input-output dynamics of university students.

Taking a sample of graduates of University of Cagliari in the years 1999 and 2000, we analyse their positions “vis-à-vis” the employment market,

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their postgraduate education and their opportunities for entering the labour market.

In addition, we present some initial results on the emigration of graduates and the evaluation of human capital. With regard to this latter aspect, we should underline that this analysis is preliminary. In fact, according to some recent definitions of human capital, recent theories have recognised that studies on human capital must take into account the concepts of social capital and training. These theories (Morgan, 2000) have begun to define the concept of social capital in terms of “resource capital” development and how this can be related to the resources that an organised society is prepared to make available for the cultural and social development of its members.

We should also note what all sectors of the economy have for some time been stressing, i.e. the need to have a workforce educated and trained in strict view of the new skills required by technological innovation. A region such as Sardinia, which is characterised by a slow economic development and a new phenomenon of emigration, is an interesting context in which to study which aspects determine the emigration of graduates.

2. Time series dynamics for graduates and higher education programmes at Sardinian universities

In the period 1991-2001 in Sardinia we had 27,599 graduates: 0.64% not resident in the region, 67.8% graduates at the University of Cagliari, 62.1% female (61.1% in Cagliari and 64.1% in Sassari).

Time series of indexes (base year 1992=100) of graduates in the period 1992-2000 in Sardinia, as pointed out by the high value of the correlation coefficient ($r=+0.97$), show a similar increasing trend for the two universities. This trend, as shown in Figure 1, has become more evident in the last three years (1998-2000); for the University of Cagliari the index goes from 151 to 190. In the same period for the University of Sassari it goes from 136 to 167. If we examine the time series for female graduates, we see that the trend is the same as it is for graduates as a whole (MF vs F $r=+0.98$).

The number and typology of university courses in Sardinia is less varied than it is on the Italian mainland, though not greatly so (Figure 2). The two Sardinian universities differ in the courses they offer because some courses are run in one university, but not in the other. What we can derive from this situation is a non-negligible dissimilarity ($z=0.34$) between distributions of graduates according to type of degree in the two universities.

The comparison between Cagliari and Sassari according to type of degree show a slightly higher concentration² for Cagliari (Cagliari $g=0.42$; Sassari

² Concentration was measured with Gini's index of concentration g (Leti, 1983).