DISCRIMINATION FORMS IN THE PROFESSIONAL AREA[1]

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Abstract: *When a group, irrespective of the species, uses identification elements/signals between its members and ones of differentiation against one or more individuals to adopt a certain delimitation attitude, we deal with discriminative behaviour. Always rooted in the prejudices widespread in the society, the nature and reasons of such behaviour depend both on the way in which society and its institutions are structured, and on collective representations and cultural patterns. The marginalisation or discrediting practices of the "weak" (women, elderly or disabled individuals) or of promoting a model of citizen with a certain cultural profile, physical aspect, and socio-professional condition involves, inherently, the existence of a part of population that is excluded to a certain extent. This paper presents the opinions of Romanians regarding minorities in general, and about their access to labour market, being the outcome of analysing data resulting from a 2011 survey.*

Keywords*: discrimination, tolerance, inclusion policies, minorities*

Relevant theoretical background for approaching the discrimination phenomenon

Discrimination (Latin discriminatio – separation) is a concept closely related to the one of difference. The original meaning of separation has the significance of a neutral act, even a passive one of establishing a difference – which is closely linked to the identification process. Territoriality is the one determining individuals to notice the presence of a different being in their proximity and, in the identification process, to

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adopt an attitude against this being, either aggressive or non-aggressive. Hence, when a group, irrespective of the species, uses elements/signals of identification between its members and ones of differentiation against one or more individuals for adopting a certain delimitation attitude, we deal with discriminatory behaviour, which does not presuppose any moral connotation. Thus, identity represents a "*posture adopted for the duration of an interaction, a possibility of an individual, (or of a group of individuals) to organise relationships against one another (...) From this perspective, the individual is not perceived as determined by his belonging because he is the one which gives a significance to the latter.*" (Ogien, 1987, p. 135)

In the fifties, under the influence of social movements, the negative connotation is developed with respect to the term of discrimination. The initial, neutral meaning, synonymous with the distinction, took over a pejorative connotation. Now, it is about differentiation actions either abusively or illegally, by separating a social group and treating another in a disfavouring manner, one way or the other. At the same time, the term of non-discrimination emerges, with the entire associated conceptualisation.

There are differences in the social contexts in which individuals practicing discrimination function. In the case of Europe, we might talk about a shared common definition of discrimination, and of its institutionalisation/regulation by laws, actions of repression taken by authorities against discriminatory acts. However, there are outside the democratic states, governments openly legitimising, in the name of morality, religion, or ideology, forms that we call discrimination. Examples therefore are the laws limiting fundamental liberties of women, or that deny the rights of indigenous people; it is a type of discrimination depriving *de facto* individuals from the viewpoint of human rights. As result, defining discrimination is related closely to the values of the societies. Some individuals may be discriminated based on the complex of elements constituting their identity, such as the case of an indigenous woman – she can be discriminated as woman, but also as person belonging to the indigenous populations.

According to the sociologist Mihăilescu Ioan (1993), discrimination represents any difference, restriction, exclusion, preference or differing treatment which disadvantages an individual/group, as compared to others in the same situations, or the use of unequal treatment against a person or against a group of persons in relationship with other categorical features: racial, ethnic or religious belonging, or class attachment. The term "*is used for describing the action of a dominant majority in relationship with a minority and involves a prejudice caused to an individual or to a group*". (Mihăilescu I., în Zamfir and Vlăsceanu, 1993, p. 177).

The discrimination represents, consequently, the differentiated treatment applied to an individual by its inclusion into a certain social group. Discrimination is an individual action, but if the members of the same group are treated similarly, then it represents a social model of collective behaviour (Banton, 1998). In social sciences, the term refers to the differentiated treatment against the large majority, with negative effects on the individual exposed to it.

The United Nations Organisation includes in discrimination "*any conduct based on the distinction operated in relationship with certain natural and social categories and which is not related to*

the individual capacities and merits, or to the actual behaviour of an individual". This type of unequal treatment still exists in all societies, to various degrees, and the evaluation is made in accordance with the social norms and values dominant within the society. It is relevant that in all democratic societies, it is legally prohibited any type of discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, race and religion yet, nevertheless, societies do not comply entirely with the constitutional provisions. (Mihăilescu, in Zamfir and Vlăsceanu, 1993, p.177)

At macro-social level, the discrimination phenomenon operates in relationship with two dimensions: the economic and the legal dimension.

The economic dimension refers to resources' distribution, to access to various occupations, to economic activities and welfare distribution in an equitable manner, justly and based on transparent and broadly accepted criteria. In order to attain these desiderates and avoid discrimination with an economic underlay, history showed that a democratic regime is one of the desirable forms of government, because any form of authoritarianism is associated with various forms of discrimination. Democratic regimes create a favourable framework for the operation of some institutions and non-governmental organizations enabled to fight with the display manners of discrimination within society. However, on the other hand, the capitalist economic regime, the social liberalism (Calves, 2006, p. 25-26) have generated competition on wide-scale among individuals and some groups are disadvantaged against others as part of this competition, because of their origin, religion, etc., and hence these groups are possible victims of discrimination.

Discrimination varies depending on the sectors of activity on the competitive market. In France, as Jean-François Amadieu shows *"it can be more often encountered in activities where contact to customer exists, in services and other trade activities"* (Amadieu, 2006, p. 82). Amadieu refers to the surveys achieved by the French International Labour Office for direct services, trade, hotels and restaurants. This Office shows that in 2005 an immigrant had four times less chances to be employed against a native candidate. Amadieu (2006) notices improvements and initiatives for fighting against discrimination. Thus, there are fields in which social dialogue practices were instituted with the role of democratising the access to resources, based on the participation of the population without symbolic power. The banks, for instance, attempt to measure the discrimination risk, just as they manage financial risk, and the industrial sector adopted a series of measures for diminishing the phenomenon.

From the legal perspective, discrimination aims rather the individual than the group. An individual is discriminated when in a certain circumstance, he/she is treated differently from the others without any substantial reason based on one or several illegitimate criteria. The legal dimension is so important, that it can be stated that: *"A difference of treatment is discriminatory whenever it is illegal"* (Mine, 2003, p. 15).

As result, it might be said that establishing discrimination presumes the existence of two elements:

- A competitive situation between candidates, based on objectivised criteria and actual stakes;

- The use of an illegitimate criterion by which the candidates are differentiated.

In order to re-establish balance between opportunities, democratic states commit to policies against discrimination. This fight may take several ways. Firstly, the legislation ensures protection for natural persons. On the other hand, an attempt is made to formulate rebalancing policies, called generically "positive discrimination", which aims to balance chances between groups. By "positive discrimination" we understand measures that some states take for removing inequalities the victims of which certain minorities are. One such measure is what is called generically „politically correctness". The correct expression from the political point of view *"consists in using systematically the euphemism in order to get rid of the suspicion of pejorative connotation. The anathema is cast on some terms assumed as promoting contempt against minorities, just as well"* (Deliège, 1999, p. 98). This reconstruction of language within the public space is achieved by adopting neutral verbal forms, sometimes even neologisms which comply with physical and any other differences.

However, there is also the risk of some perverse effects of these policies. *"Defending minorities might seem at first sight a display of multiculturalism, but often leads in the opposite direction, the one of a communitarianism closed in itself and, consequently, hostile to the coexistence of various cultures"* (Touraine, 1996, p.292). Institutionalised discrimination might enter the collective memory and creates a feeling of marginalisation and disobedience. Yet, symbols are not enough in promoting egalitarianism.

The most debated measure for fighting against discrimination is, as already shown, positive discrimination. Positive discrimination reverses the conventional operational way of classic discrimination by favouring groups that are usually disadvantaged. Indeed, the policies and right fight one another for re-establishing the balance between social groups, precisely because disadvantaged groups do not have the same possibilities as the others (the same cultural, social, and educational capital within the society) and, implicitly, their chances of accessing material resources and opportunities for social mobility are low. These groups are structurally disfavoured, even without undertaking a certain discrimination action. However, it is not enough to eliminate legal inequality (segregation, colonisation) in order to promote equitable treatment.

Positive discrimination was born in The United States under the name of affirmative action based on two objectives: first to compensate for structural socio-economic inequalities against historically inherited ethnic minorities (Afro-Americans and Indians), but also in order to improve representativeness based on meritocracy. The idea was exported (Europe, India, South-Africa, etc.) and diversified and thus extended beyond the limits of ethnic minorities to all discriminated social groups (Wuhl, 2007). Legal changes emerged in the area of social competition, intended to encourage disadvantaged groups, thus compensating for a de facto situation.

Discrimination may be either direct or indirect. In the first case, discrimination is obvious: it might be detected and denounced. However, as result of the evolutions in the fight against discrimination, hidden practices emerge. These practices have as purpose to eliminate indirectly candidates. The concept of indirect discrimination was introduced as an effort to reach a certain balance between various population groups.

The representation of the various groups in different sectors allowed detecting apparently irreproachable practices, but which generate damages for a certain group. Identifying direct discrimination might be done by legal analysis which may detect a difference in treatment, or might result from statistical analysis: it is identified by effects and not by reasons (Calves, 2004, p.46).

Indirect discrimination emerges whenever a practice, rule, criterion or an apparently neutral condition have, in fact, a disproportionate effect against certain individuals or categories of individuals, except for the case when this practice (rule, criterion or condition) cannot be justified. The governments are compelled to consider the relevant differences presented by the various groups in order to prevent indirect discrimination.

Discrimination is always rooted in the prejudices widespread within the society. The nature and reasons for discrimination depend both on the way in which society and institutions are structured, but also on collective representations and cultural patterns. With respect to law enforcement, abuses are possible whenever certain groups are regarded as "potential delinquents". These individuals are more susceptible to be arrested and jailed than any other population segments. They also might be probable victims of abuses or bad treatment whenever they are arrested / detained. Some authorities tolerate violence acts, motivated by prejudices. As result, there is the risk that certain groups or individuals would not enjoy equal protection against violence motivated by the existence of differences regarding religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation.

Level of confidence in other people

This section presents the opinions of the Romanian population regarding minorities, in general and about access to labour market. They are research data collected in a survey from 2011, part of the research in the project POSDRU/97/6.3/S/54973: "Support for women discriminated on the labour market". Various minority groups are investigated, as indicated by the first wave of the survey from 2010[1] and by other surveys undertaken in Romania, as being the most strongly discriminated ones: Rroma, people who were in prison, persons with disabilities, persons suffering from HIV/AIDS. At the same time, there are analysed the attitudes regarding access to labour market depending on age or gender, because most of the researches indicate a higher discrimination level against elderly on employment and against women regarding the access to management positions.

First of all, we have looked at the level of confidence in other people. The data analysis indicates that less than half of the population considers that they can have confidence in other people, in four out of the five analysed regions of Romania. The only exception is the West region, where the share is of 56%. At the opposite pole is placed Bucharest-Ilfov region, with the lowest level of confidence, less than one third considering that they can trust in most people. The low level of trust is explained by the

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[1] See Tomescu C., Cace S. (2010). Studiu asupra fenomenului de mobbing și a unor forme de discriminare la locul de muncă în România" [Study on the phenomenon of mobbing and some discrimination forms at workplace in Romania (Romanian language)], Expert Printing House: București.

increased feeling of insecurity characterising large, agglomerated cities, with weak neighbourhood and community links like Bucharest.

Figure 1. *Might one trust most of the people?*
(Share of those answering "yes")
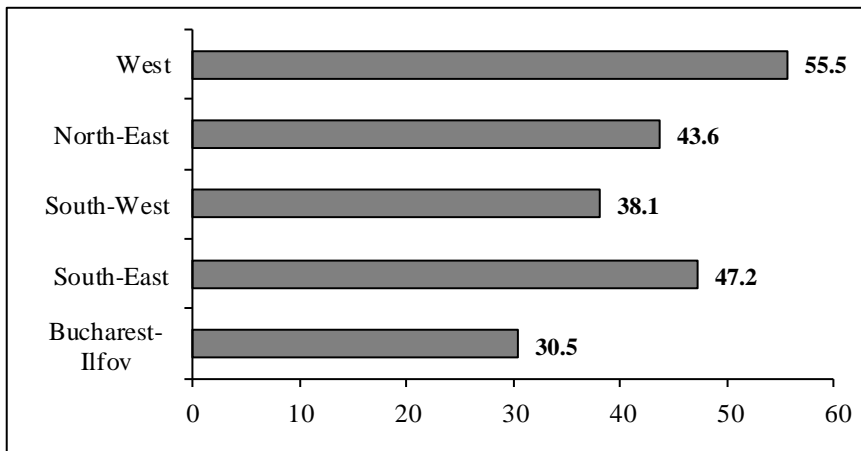
In general, there are no statistically significant differences according to socio-demographic criteria. However, in two of the regions there are differences depending on gender: in Bucharest-Ilfov, women seem to have a significantly lower level of trust (26.4%) against the one of men (35.8%), while in the Western regions they have significantly higher level (59.1% against 51.1%).

Attitude against minorities

The survey intended to capture the attitude against three minority categories, identified in the first wave of research in 2010 as being most strongly discriminated: persons with disabilities, Rroma, and people who were in prison.

The acceptance of all three investigated groups follows, as it was expected, Bogardus's social distance model: the stronger and closer the supposed relationship between respondent and minority representative is, the more acceptance would be lower. The minority representatives are most accepted as colleagues or neighbours than as friends or even more, as family members. From the analysed groups, the highest level of acceptance is enjoyed by individuals with disabilities, then the Rroma and the most rejected are individuals who were in prison.

Individuals with physical disability are accepted widely by their colleagues (86% -94%) and neighbours (86%-95%), to the largest extent as friends (80% - 90%), and to a lesser extent as members of the family (49% - 66%). The highest acceptance of individuals

with physical disability is found in Bucharest-Ilfov region, followed closely by the West region and the least acceptance in the North-East region.
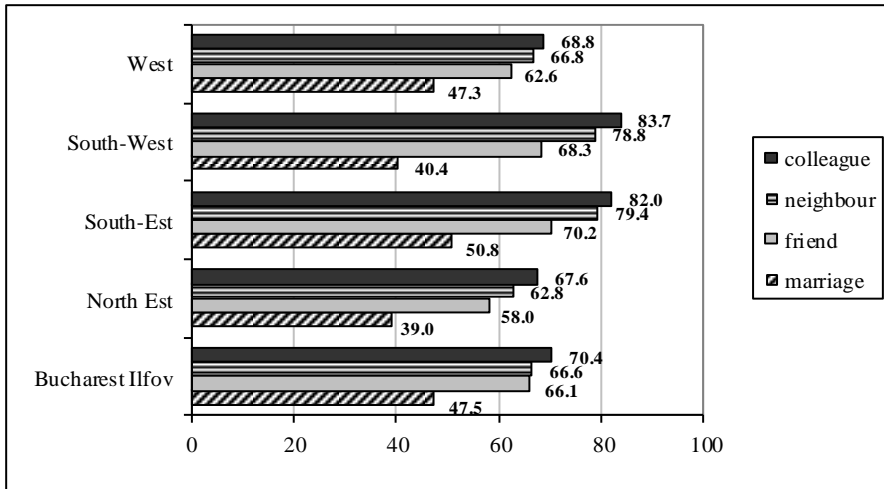
Figure 2. *Acceptance of persons with disabilities*
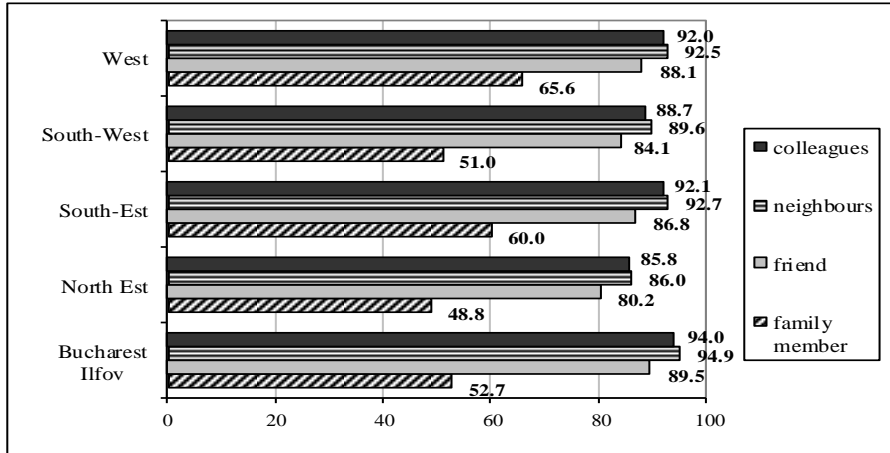
Note: The share of answers "total agree and "agree" with the statements "Would you agree to a person with a physical disability as colleague/neighbour/friend/marry you or another member of the family?"

The acceptance of Rroma takes the same pattern: the highest level agrees to have them as colleagues (68%-82%), then neighbours (63%-79%), friends (58%-70%) and to the least extent as family members (39%-51%).

The highest tolerance towards Rroma is encountered in the South-Eastern region (the only region where over half of the respondents states that they would accept that he/she or a family member would marry a person of Rroma ethnicity) and in the South-West one, probably because of a higher share of the Rroma population in the region. The more frequent are the contacts with Rroma, the more direct experience increases tolerance against them. The lowest levels of acceptance for Rroma are in the North-Eastern region (less than 40% would agree to marriage and only approximately two-thirds would accept them as colleagues).
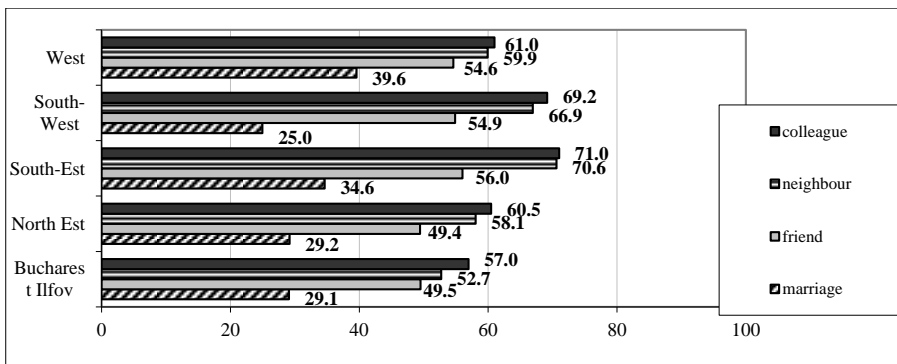
Figure 3. *Acceptance of Rroma*

Note: The share of answers "total agree" and "agree" with the statements "Would you agree to a Rroma person as colleague/neighbour/friend/marry you or another member of the family?"

The acceptance of individuals who exited prison is the lowest from the analysed minority groups: the lowest level is registered in the case of marriage (29%-35%) and the highest in the case of collegues (57%-71%).

The South-Eastern region is the most tolerant, registering the highest values for all four indicators, and the region Bucharest-Ilfov is the most intolerant.

Figure 4. *Acceptance of individuals who were in prison*

Note: The share of answers "total agree" and "agree" with the statements "Would you agree to a person who was in prison as colleague/neighbour/friend/marry you or another member of the family?"

The analysis regarding the acceptance of minorities, at regional comparative level, indicates a model where the regions with a high development level, such as Bucharest-Ilfov and West are tolerant towards individuals with disabilities, the Southern regions towards Rroma and persons who were in prison, while the North-Eastern region shows a lower acceptance of all analysed groups.

The main conclusions show that:

- The South-East and South-West regions are the most tolerant against Rroma and individuals released from prison.

- The region Bucharest-Ilfov is the most tolerant against individuals with disabilities and the least tolerant against individuals exiting prison.

- The Western region has an intermediary position, with high tolerance against individuals with disabilities and the somewhat lower regarding Rroma or individuals who were in prison.

- The North-East region is the most intolerant, with the lowest levels of acceptance regarding Rroma and individuals with disabilities, and low levels of acceptance for individuals who were in prison.

In most of the surveys, a relationship between the high economic and social development level and the more open, tolerant attitudes was discovered. The differences identified between the regions have several explanatory factors:

- The different economic welfare level: Bucharest-Ilfov registers highest incomes per household, followed by the region West, with high discrepancies to the South-East and South-West, while the North-East region is the poorest one.

- The different level of education: if in Bucharest-Ilfov the share of those with higher education is of 36%, or in West of 22%, for the other three regions, the share is of 16%-17%.

- The share of the rural area (with more conservative, traditional attitudes, but also with lower development level): if in Bucharest-Ilfov region or the West region only 9%, respectively 34% from the population reside in the rural area, in the North-East region, the most intolerant one, the share of the rural is the highest – 53%.

Regarding the entire sample (including all analysed regions) the acceptance of minorities depends on[1]:

- Area of residence (higher in the urban area);

- Education (higher in the case of those with higher level of education);

- Gender (higher for men);

- Age (higher in the case of younger generations)

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[1] All other variables held under control at a significance level of p= 0.01

Acceptance of minorities at the workplace

To see the attitudes of individuals related to the acceptance of various minorities on the labour market, several groups were identified based on the survey from 2010[1], as well as based on other surveys, as the most rejected: Rroma, persons released from prison, persons infected with HIV/AIDS.

Even though, as seen above, there is a wide acceptance of Rroma and even of former detainees as colleagues (varying depending on region from 60% to 80%), faced with deciding and the responsibility of the option, their acceptance turns out lower. Almost half of the respondents from each region would refuse to recruit Rroma or persons recently released from jail, in a position of employer. About the same share of the respondents consider that minorities have too many rights in Romania.

Table 1. Attitudes on employment regarding Rroma and people who were in prison
(on regions - %, partial and total agreement)

	BUC.-ILFOV	NORTH-EAST	SOUTH-EAST	SOUTH-WEST	WEST
If I were employer, I wouldn't hire Rroma because most of them are lazy and steal	44	**59**	43	43	51
Minorities have too many rights in Romania	52	**61**	42	56	48
Rroma don't need schooling because they don't make any use of it	18	**41**	17	24	**39**
If I were employer I wouldn't hire a person just out from prison	44	**55**	47	49	**55**

As the case with accepting minorities shown above, the region with the most discriminating attitudes against employment is North-East with 55% who would not hire former detainees, 59% who would not hire Rroma and 61% who consider that minorities have too many rights in Romania.

At the opposite pole is Bucharest-Ilfov and the South-East, both regions recording also the smallest percentages of Rroma discrimination regarding the right to education – only 17-18% of the respondents from this region considering that Rroma don't need schooling, against the other regions where the share reaches even 39-41% (West,

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[1] See Tomescu C., Cace S. (2010) *Studiu asupra fenomenului de mobbing și a unor forme de discriminare la locul de muncă în România*, [Study on the phenomenon of mobbing and of other discrimination forms on the workplace in Romania, (in Romanian)] Expert Printing House, Bucharest

respectively North-East). On areas of residence, the rural discriminates more than the urban in this respect, in four out of the five analysed regions, the percentage of respondents against education for Rroma reaching a maximum of 51% in the North-Eastern rural, a region that also in this instance confirms the highest level of intolerance.

At the same time, the various age groups have different perspectives about the employment of individuals released from prison in all five regions, with a trend of the extreme age groups to show higher intolerance: individuals aged 55-64 in Bucharest-Ilfov (52%), South-East (52%) and West (69%), respectively very young age groups, 18 to 24 years of age in the North-East (63%) and South-East (52%).

The acceptance in communities of infected with HIV/AIDS individuals registers lower shares, however with some difference between the analysed regions. Thus, if for discrimination at the workplace, a relatively low percentage is recorded in Bucharest-Ilfov (19%), the Western area is more intolerant and the respondents agree with the isolation of the affected individuals by a share of 54%.

In four out of the five regions, high shares are recorded (between 44 and 51%) regarding the agreement for isolating those with HIV/AIDS. Bucharest-Ilfov shows again a less discriminating attitude, with an agreement of 35%. It should be noticed that regarding the discrimination of this group of individuals, Bucharest-Ilfov registers a homogenous attitude on all demographic sub-categories. For the other four regions, the rural area proves often more intolerant that the urban area, with a maximum of 59% in the rural South-West regarding education, respectively 61% in the rural West regarding the acceptance at the workplace.

Figure 5. *Attitude towards HIV/AIDS infected individuals*
(share of those who answered "yes")
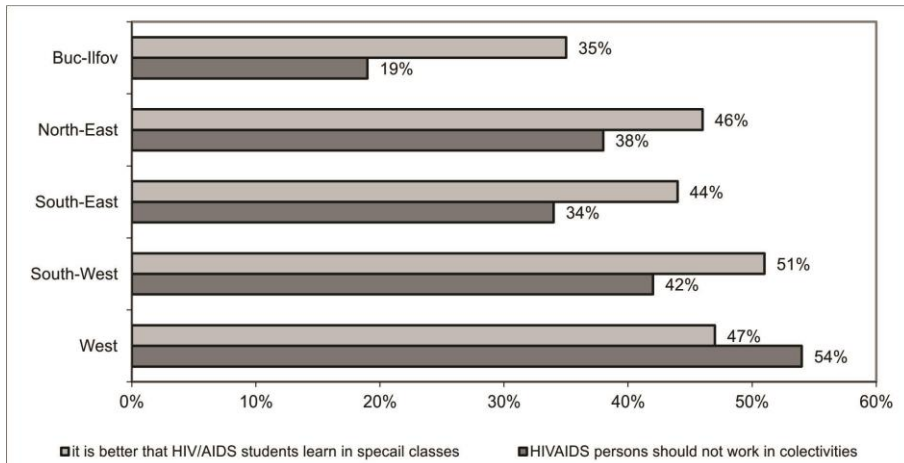
By analysing age-groups, individuals from the two age-group extremes of the interval (youths with ages between 18-24 years, respectively elderly from 55 to 64 years) have the most discriminatory tendencies. Thus, youths from the West region record a maximum agreement share of 65% regarding the isolation of HIV/AIDS infected individuals from the community and in the South-West, both young and elderly mentioned above agree to educate these individuals in separate classrooms, by a share of 58%, thus registering another maximum on these statement, as compared with the other age groups.

With respect to the gender of the respondents, men prove less tolerant only in the South-West region (46% regarding job, respectively 55% regarding education), while in the other regions no significant differences were recorded.

Attitude against elderly on the labour market

Discrimination against elderly regarding access to labour market is shown in a significant proportion. Even though the majority agrees that if you are good in what you are professionally doing, then you will find a job irrespective of age, whenever put in the situation to chose, because there are only few jobs, over half of the respondents consider that youths should have priority against elderly on hiring in all five surveyed regions.

Table 2. Attitudes regarding access to labour market on age criteria

|	BUCH.-ILFOV	NORTH-EAST	SOUTH-EAST	SOUTH-WEST	WEST
Whenever there are few jobs, on hiring, youths should be given preference against elderly.	56	73	68	**79**	61
If you're very good at what you're doing, you will always find a job, irrespective of what age you have.	60	75	77	**82**	75

The South-West region is the most discriminating regarding access to market based on age criteria (79%, against the opposite pole represented by Bucharest by 56%). All respondents from South-West are the most confident about own capacities to the detriment of discrimination based on age. The smallest percentage is registered in Bucharest, with only 60% of the individuals agreeing with this statement.

Following the discrimination theory in view of supporting their group, youths aged between 18 and 24 years have a stronger bias than other age groups regarding jobs for the youths to the detriment of elderly, when the hypothesis is the one of a limited number of jobs. This attitude is recorded in four out of the five regions, with a maximum of 90% approving this idea in the South-West region, while in West region no significant differences are recorded between the interviewed age groups.

Discrimination on employment

Moreover, elderly discrimination on labour market results also from the statements of the participants to the survey, when asked if they know personally cases of individuals who were not hired based on other reasons than the professional ones. In four out of the five regions, not getting hired on age criteria was the most often mentioned one, save for the West region, where Rroma not getting hired is somewhat wider spread.

Figure 6. In your case, or of an individual you personally know,
it happened that she/he did not get a job because of...
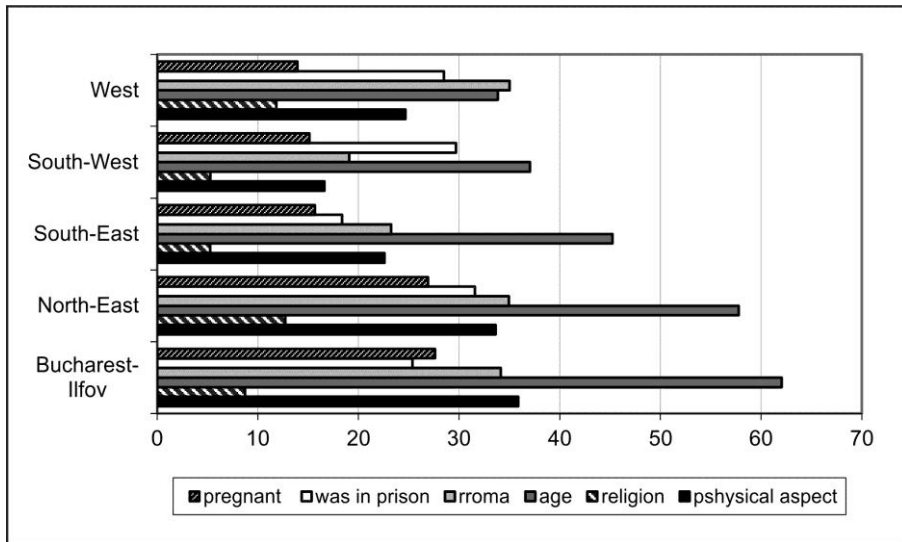
After the elderly, the most frequently discriminated on hiring are Rroma and people who were in prison. Discrimination based on the physical aspect seems also to be more frequently encountered. Pregnant women are seldom discriminated (perhaps also because the situation in which they are hired while already pregnant is less frequent), and religious reasons as criteria in not obtaining a job are the most seldom encountered instances (the very high percentage of the Orthodox majority provides one explanation for the infrequency of the situation).

In Bucharest, there were mentioned the most instances of discrimination according to the majority of the investigated reasons (only religion and the former detainee did not record the highest values). To the contrary, in South-West and West the lowest values for all reasons are recorded.

Discriminations were more often mentioned in the urban area, save for the region Bucharest-Ilfov (the latter a more urban region of the county Ilfov bearing more the characteristics of a suburb) and South-West. The more frequent mentioning of

discrimination in the urban area should not surprise, because work experience, exposure to diverse situations and social contacts is higher in this area. The outcomes agree with the first wave of the survey from 2010, when such discriminations based on age where more frequently called upon, and the region Bucharest-Ilfov[1] seems to indicate a higher level of discrimination overall.

Attitudes regarding work acknowledgement and promotion on the job

With respect to the ways of acknowledging work and obtaining promotions the outlined attitudinal profile is a contradictory one: albeit, as seen, the majority believe that if you are good at what you are doing, you will always find a job at the same time they believe that also a high level of competences matters much less against personal preferences of the superior, or against "backdoor influence".

A percentage of 82% respondents from the South-East and from the South-West consider that you must be liked by the superior in order to be appreciated, against the other regions where percentages under 79% are recorded; also, in Bucharest and West smaller percentages are registered regarding the system's functioning based on "backdoor influence", by 79%, respectively by 82% as compared with the other regions, where over 86% from the respondents acknowledge the existence of these practices.

The differences regarding the other socio-demographic criteria are, by and large, insignificant with respect to these aspects. The rural area admits to a higher share the need for these discriminatory practices for promotion, as compared with the urban area in the South-West (85% against 79% regarding the preferences of the superior – 90% against 85% regarding the need for backdoor influence), North-East (82% against 76%, respectively 89% against 84%) and Bucharest-Ilfov (93% against 76%, respectively 90% against 78%) regions.

*Figure 7. Attitudes about acknowledgement of work and promotion*
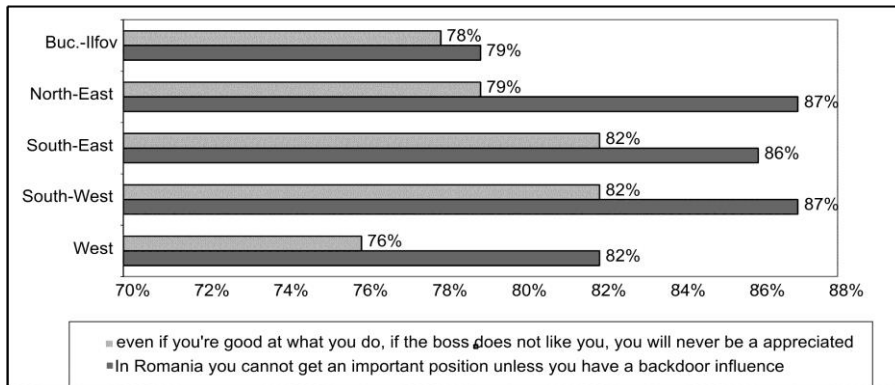
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[1] See Tomescu C., Cace S. (2010) *Studiu asupra fenomenului de mobbing și a unor forme de discriminare la locul de muncă în România*, [Study on the phenomenon of mobbing and of other discrimination forms at workplace in Romania, (in Romanian)] Expert Printing House, Bucharest.

The Bucharest-Ilfov region is the only one recording significant differences about age, the youths with ages between 18 and 24 years standing out as the ones with the lowest percentage of agreeing with the requirement of "backdoor influence" for access to an important position by 72%, while at the opposite pole is the category of elderly, with ages between 55 and 64 years, by 86%.

Attitudes towards gender regarding management positions

Regarding access to management positions depending on gender, positive attitudes are balanced in relationship to the negative ones in all five regions. The West region and Bucharest-Ilfov record the smallest percentages in agreement with the better appreciation of men in management positions (44%), while in the South-West region this aspect is supported by 62% of the respondents.

Figure 8. *Men are more suitable as managers than women*
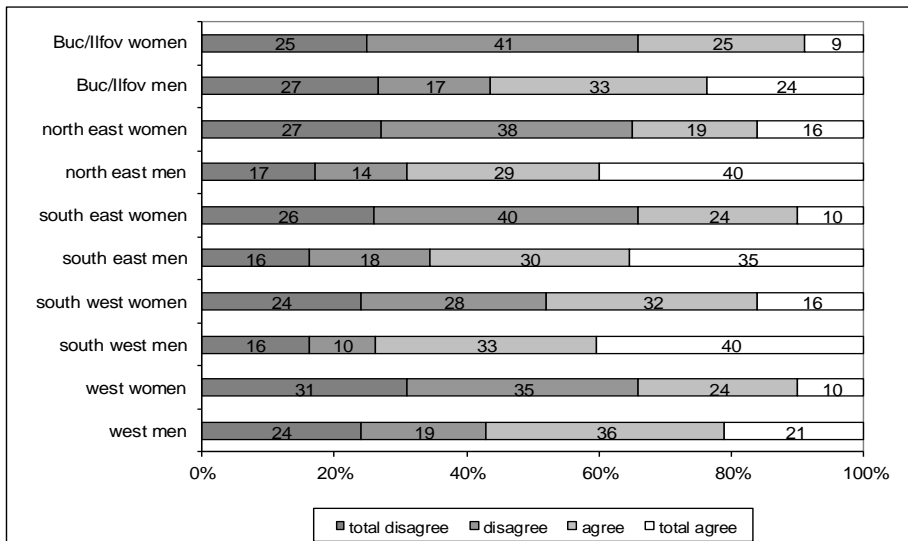

The situation shows differences on the two genders, the differences between the opinions of men and women in this respect being significant in all five regions. It should be noted, however, that women in the South-West (the region with the highest discrimination) register a considerable percentage (48%) in agreeing with the priority of men, thus reinforcing the disadvantageous perceptions about gender roles.

The opinions in this respect are polarised also depending on the area of residence in North-East, South-East and South-West, those siding with men residing in the rural area 64%, against 42% in North-East, 63% against 40% in the South-East, respectively 66% against 58% in the South-West. The same regions register significant differences also on age groups, youths and elderly being again the two categories with the highest

percentages regarding discrimination (by maximum 63% for those aged between 18 and 24 years of age in North-East, and 59%, respectively 70% for those with ages between 55 and 64 years of age in the South-East and in South-West).

When asked about the general situations, the majority believe that men are more appropriate to lead, while when asked specific questions on types of institutions, the respondents consider to their majority that it does not matter, that women and men are equally able to lead/manage. The most discriminatory attitudes are encountered in the case of town-halls and more egalitarian ones about schools.

Figure 9. Who do you think is suitable to lead a school? (percentages for each region)
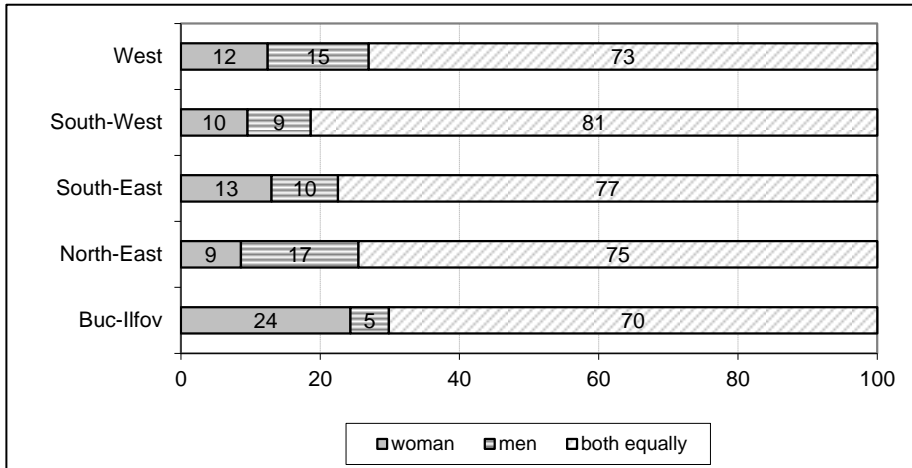

In the case of schools, the highest share is recorded for those considering that women are more appropriate to lead/manage, reaching to about a quarter of the respondents in the region Bucharest-Ilfov. The least egalitarian attitude is encountered in the North-East region.

The education system is one of the fields where the weight of employed women in managing positions is high. Hence, school is an egalitarian institution not only at objective level, but also at the subjective one, as it proves the attitudes identified during this survey. However, at the same time, this egalitarian attitude might hide the reproduction of the gender roles with the image of the woman as suitable to environments where they deal with the education of children and, implicitly, with the same pressure to assume more regarding their education.

To the contrary, the political system is the field in which the participation of women is low and where conservative attitudes predominate. As result, even if the share of those answering that gender does not matter is high, there is a significant share – about 30% - who consider that men have the adequate competences. The most discriminatory attitude is encountered in Bucharest and lest discriminatory in the West region.

Figure 10. Who do you think is suitable to manage the town-hall/local council? (% for each region)
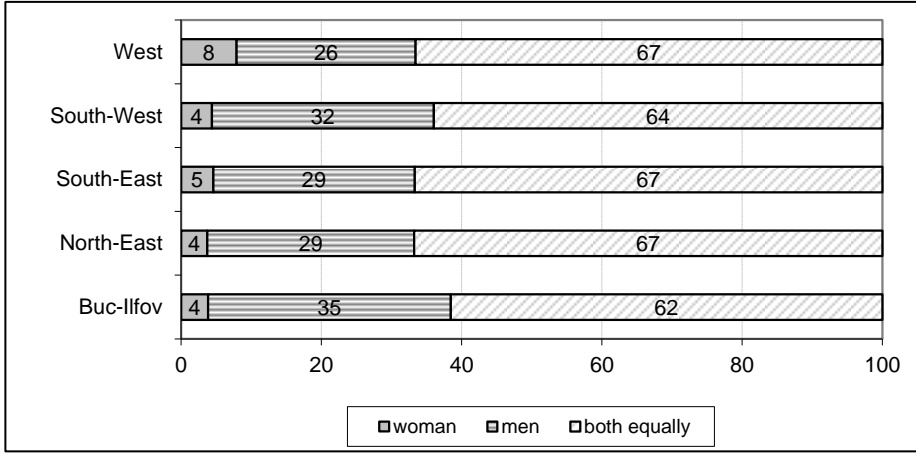
Also in the case of companies, the weight of those considering that men should lead is higher, and the weight of those considering women more adequate to lead is lower for all analysed situations. The most conservative attitude is found in the South-East region, and the most egalitarian ones in the West and North-West regions.

Figure 11. Who do you think is suitable to lead a company? (% for each region)
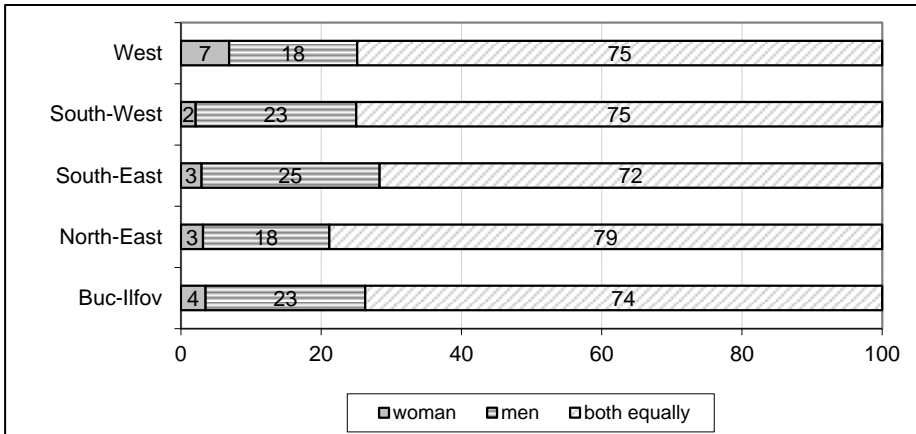
Interesting is the case of the region Bucharest-Ilfov, where the highest share of those supporting women for managing/leading schools is encountered, along with the one of those supporting men for managing/leading town-halls, at the same time with a high share (at just small difference against the South-East and the South-West regions) of

those supporting men in managing/leading companies, as well. The profile taking shape in this region is a conservative one. The fact that women are supported for managing/leading schools is in this context an indicator of the same attitude – supported for managing positions, but in the only feminised system from the three analysed ones.

The outcomes agree with the survey of 2010, when the other 4 regions of the country were analysed along with the Bucharest-Ilfov region. Men were stronger supported in that survey as well for managing/leading town-halls (30-35%), then for managing companies (17-20%), and the shares are, as it can be seen, comparable. Women were supported, as well, to a higher extent for managing/leading schools, with comparable shares (9-13%), except for the Bucharest-Ilfov region where a considerable lower percentage was registered (15% then, in opposition to 25% currently). The differences can be related also to the sample, but also to the fluctuations in the attitudes of the subjects in the year since then.

Conclusions

The attitudes of the Romanians regarding the employment and workplace are somewhat conservative. The acceptance of minorities is at an average level, even low, and non-homogenous. The more developed regions (status according to education, income, the share of rural area) such as Bucharest-Ilfov, accept individuals with disabilities but to a lesser extent Rroma individuals and, especially, the persons who were in prison. The poorly developed regions, such as South-East and South-West show higher tolerance towards them, as compared to the developed ones. The poorest region of development, North-East, shows the lowest acceptance degree regarding all groups.

Regarding access to the labour market, it is remarkable the discriminatory attitude against elderly: the respondents consider that youths should enjoy priority on hiring. The attitudes from the micro-social level are found also in the institutional practices: most cases of discrimination on hiring known by the respondents involve also elderly. Thus, the discrimination of elderly takes double meaning: both subjective (based on the attitudes identified at the level of the respondents), but also objectively (the subjects know about most cases of discrimination also related to age inside their circle of acquaintances).

After the elderly, the most frequently discriminated on hiring are Rroma and people in jail. Discrimination based on physical appearance seems also to be frequently encountered. Pregnant women are not as often discriminated, and the religious reasons as criterion for not getting hired is rather an exception.

The Romanians have a lower level of discrimination based on gender. An important weight of the population believes that men are more apt to manage/lead, but faced with concrete situations, on types of institutions, the respondents consider that women and men are equally suitable to manage/lead. The most discriminatory attitudes are encountered in the case of town-halls and the most egalitarian ones in the case of schools.

The region with the most discriminatory attitudes against labour market and minorities, in general, are encountered in the North-East region, while the regions with the most open attitudes are Bucharest-Ilfov and the West region. The level of economic and

social development is also, in this instance, the most important factor in explaining the attitudinal differences between regions.

Marginalisation or discrediting practices of the "weak" (women, elderly or individuals with disabilities), or practices of promoting a citizen model with a certain cultural profile, physical appearance and socio-professional condition involves inherently the existence of part of the population which becomes excluded to a certain extent.

The grounds for discrimination can be diverse: religion, ethnicity, gender, disability or age. Discrimination is favoured by situations such as: insufficient knowledge about that group, generalising own experiences of life (one unpleasant experience of one member or of few members of the group to which they belong), ethnocentrism, the existence of stereotypes which coincide with various beliefs, previously formed opinions, and promoting prejudices about individuals with whom they enter competition.

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