

PSYCHO-SOCIAL APPROACHES OF THE GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND SEX SEGREGATION IN THE WORKPLACE*

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Abstract: *Discrimination is a real phenomenon in Romania, which takes different forms and which affects different social groups. This paper is a synthesis of the theories explaining discrimination and it includes presentations of the theory of real conflicts, theory of the social identity, theory of equity, theory of the relative privation and theory of the behavioural interaction. The article also discusses sex or age segregation at the workplace and the factors that may influence these phenomena. The phenomenon of segregation is analysed via gender equality, revealing the reasons underlying the discriminatory acts/attitudes of employers towards women.*

Keywords: *discrimination, professional segregation, gender equality, age discrimination, employment*

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1. General theories on discrimination

1.1. Introduction

In a general meaning we may say that discrimination represents any difference, restriction, exclusion, preference or altered treatment which disadvantages an individual/group in comparison with the other individuals/groups in similar situations, or unequal treatment of a person or groups of persons due to racial, ethnic, religious or class reasons. The term "is used to describe the action of a dominant majority in relation with the minority and it involves a prejudice to a person or a group". (I. Mihăilescu in C. Zamfir, L. Vlăsceanu, 1993, p.177).

Discrimination is, therefore, the different treatment of a person because it belongs to a specific social group. Discrimination is an individual action, but if the members of the same group are treated in a similar manner, this is a social pattern of collective behaviour (M. Banton, 1998 in M. Voicu, 2002, p. 276). In the social sciences, the term refers to a different treatment by the large majority, with adverse effects on the person exposed to this treatment.

The United Nations includes in discrimination "any behaviour based on the distinction on the basis of natural and social categories, not on the individual capacity and merit or on the actual behaviour of an individual." (I. Mihăiescu, 1993, p. 177).

There are diverse underlying reasons of discrimination: nationality, religion, ethnic group, gender, language, sexual preferences, handicap, age. Discrimination is favoured by situations such as: insufficient knowledge of the other people, generalization of own life experience (of an unpleasant experience with a single member or with a few members belonging to a group), ethnocentrism, the existence of stereotypes of some beliefs, preformed impressions and prejudices regarding the opponents in a competition.

This kind of unequal treatment is applied in all societies, with different intensities, and the evaluation is done in agreement with the dominant social norms and values of the society. Legally, any kind of gender, ethnic affiliation, race and religion discrimination is banned in all democratic societies; however, the societies don't comply fully with the constitutional provisions. (I. Mihăilescu in C. Zamfir, L. Vlăsceanu, 1993, p.177)

In order to explain the process of discrimination and its emergence, the different theories reveal the mechanisms of thought and behaviour which may generate intolerance. Among the known theories are the theory of the real conflicts, the theory of the social identity, the theory of the behavioural interaction, the theory of preference for discrimination and the theory of the relative privation. Most theories

speak of the positive attitude towards own group and the negative attitude towards the other groups, in order to promote the group of reference to which belongs the individual which may eventually discriminate.

1.2. Theory of the real conflicts

The *Theory of Real conflicts* developed by Muzafer Sherif (1996) claims that discrimination appears when there is competition between two groups for limited resources and when the people tend to favour the members of their group.

The *Theory of Real conflicts* shows that one of the basic reasons for the development of prejudices and discrimination is the conflict for limited resources (R. Bourhis, A.Gagnon, L. Celine Moise, 1996, p. 132). The fight for limited resources is the proper field for the display of differentiated treatments and prejudices.

This theory reveals that the goods which are important for the people (food, health, power, natural resources, energy), are limited, so that the components of a group manage to reach a particular level of wealth at the expense of the other group.

The basic idea of this theory is that in order to understand the intergroup behaviour, one must examine the functional relations between these groups. Sherif says that the intergroup relations can be described as competitive and of cooperation. In the first case, the conflicts are generated by realistic reasons of competition for actual resources (goods, territories) or for abstract goods (power). In the second case, cooperation appears as a means to attain a common goal which can only be obtained by an active mutual support.

In Sherif's opinion, competition and conflict are due to objective reasons; competition can play a significant role in the generation of intergroup conflicts. Sherif documented his conclusions from the experiments conducted for several years on young subjects from white, middle class, Protestant families, with a good psychological profile. Without being informed, the young people became the actors of an experimental scenario consisting of four stages: establishment of the interpersonal relations of acquaintance between the young people; *establishment of two groups with independent activities; objective conflict of interest between the groups; intergroup cooperation to solve problems that can only be solved by joint effort*. The results of the study reveal the impact of intergroup competition and cooperation on the development of prejudices and discriminating behaviours. (D. Capozza, C. Volpato in R.Y. Bourhis, J. Ph. Leyens, 1997, p. 18-20, p. 132)

1.3. Theory of the social identity

Henry Tajfel (1981) is the founder of the theory of the social identity. He shows that the individuals tend to discriminate in favour of their own group so that it can get a better position in the society. When the group attains such a position, the members

of the group benefit of a higher standard. Using the theory of social identity we can build a meaning for what we are, placing us within the complex network of the social relations of the community.

The theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) defines social identity as the awareness of affiliation to a social group strengthened by the emotional significance and by the significance of the group member status (D. Abrams in G.M. Breakwell (coord), 1992, p.58).

The development of the theory of social identity has been significantly influenced by the research regarding the minimal conditions of intergroup discrimination. The discriminatory effect interpretation relied on the concepts of *categorisation*, *social comparison* and *social identity* (Turner, 1975; Tajfel și Turner, 1979; Tajfel 1981).

According to this theory, social identification can result from the identification with different groups, with the requirement of categorization of the social in readily perceivable units. While a particular context favours a stronger personal identity, comparison, as process of categorization and differentiation, takes place at the interindividual level. When the social identity is emphasised, comparison is done between groups and the involved persons act as group members. (D. Segrestin in R. Boudon (coord.), 1996, p. 127)

Tajfel (1978) launched the hypothesis that the individuals aspire to a positive social identity, they want to be part of the socially valued groups. The affiliation to less appreciated groups causes indisposition. The individuals tend to modify the existing situation so as to get a positive picture of self. These objectives "can be reached through strategies of action which target the individual or the whole group." (Tajfel, 1981, in R.Y. Bourhis, J. Ph. Leyens, 1997, p. 26)

According to the theory of social identity, discrimination contributes to social identity which, in turn, can influence favourably the self esteem of the individuals. This basic hypothesis of the theory of social identity is supported by different laboratory and field studies (Bourhis & Hill, 1982; Brewer & Kramer, 1985; Brown, 1988; Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Lemyre & Smith, 1985; Sachdev & Bourhis, 1985, 1987; Tajfel, 1982; Turner & Giles, 1981). The results of these studies confirm the premises of social identity theory that intergroup discrimination is associated to the reason of attaining and preserving a positive social identity.

1.4. Theory of equity

The psychologist J. Stacey Adams (1963, 1965) is the author of the theory of equity. He started from the premises that the source of motivation resides in the way in which the efforts and rewards of a person compare with the efforts and rewards of another person or group.

The theory of equity says that, in most situations, the individuals attempt to reach a specific justice in their relations with the other people and that they feel uncomfortable when they are confronted with social injustice. According to this theory, we evaluate the justice of a given situation function of the individual contribution to attain a goal and function of the specific outcomes. When we speak of contributions we refer to effort and time, competency and abilities or to obstacles such as exhausting work conditions, tough assignments, psychological harassment due to race, gender etc. The outcomes can include material benefits such as remuneration or promotion, or symbolic benefits such as reputation and social status. (Walster, Walster & Bersheid, 1978 in R.Y.Bourhis, A. Gagnon, L.C.Moise, 1997, p. 142-145, p. 228)

The theory of equity starts from the premises that the perception of social injustice generates a state of psychological discomfort which drives the will to restore equity. According to Walster *et al.*(1978), social justice can be restored materially or psychologically.

Because inequity can lead to conflicting situations, weakening the motivation, J.S.Adams suggested several possibilities to alleviate injustice and to promote equity: change the individual perception on own efforts and rewards; change the perception on the efforts and rewards of the individual or group of reference; selection of a different element, person or group of reference; change the personal rewards and efforts. (A. Azzi in R.Y. Bourhis, J.P.Leyens (coord.), 1997, p.228)

Generally, according to this theory, the intergroup conflicts appear when the individuals belonging to the disadvantaged group perceive the distribution as being unfair or when the groups do not agree on the rules of distribution.

A fair distribution of the material resources would be enough to eliminate the intergroup prejudices, discrimination and conflict. (Austin, 1986 in A.Azzi, 1997, p.229)

The characteristic of J. Stacey Adams' theory is that it relates the inequity to the reward, that it correlates the effort and the reward. The inequity due to over-rewarding can be alleviated behaviourally by increasing the efforts or by decreasing the rewards.

1.5. The theory of relative privation

The theory of relative privation is the theory that explains best the behaviour of the disadvantaged groups. According to Guimond and Tougas (apud R.Y.Bourhis, A.Gagnon, L.C.Moise in J.Ph. Leyens, 1997, p.144-145), the relative privation between groups is felt when the components of the disfavoured group notice the contradiction between the current state of the group and the one they consider to be

entitled to, like the rest of the people. They consider that the violent or non-violent vindictory movements are the outcome of the feeling of relative privation felt at intergroup level rather than at intra- or interpersonal level. (R.Y.Bourhis, A.Gagnon, L.C.Moise in J.Ph. Leyens, 1997, p.144-145).

The theory of relative privation completes the theory of equity. Both theories underline the importance of the processes of cognitive distortion, which explains why the disadvantaged groups don't always mobilise to stop the discriminating process. The theory of relative privation explains the extreme intergroup behaviours such as the collective marches, the violence against institutions or groups.

Lysiane Gagnon (in S.Guimond, F. Tougas, 1997, p. 156) presents the essential elements of the theory of relative privation, which relies on the following principles:

- (1) The relative privation is a feeling of dissatisfaction, injustice or frustration
- (2) This feeling is not a mere reflection of the existing objective conditions; rather, it depends on social comparisons
- (3) This feeling makes the individuals prone to revolt

In other words, the theory of relative privation suggests that the people protest and revolt when they feel "deprived" in comparison with other people, groups or situations.

There is *interpersonal relative* privation (in which the individuals compare with themselves) and *intergroup relative* privation, also called collective privation (Tougas, Dube & Veilleux, 1987) which aims the feeling of dissatisfaction caused by the way in which are perceived the inequalities and inequities for the group of affiliation and for an out-group, regarded as wealthier. (Runciman, 1966; Walker & Pettigrew, 1984 in S.Guimond, F.Tougas, 1997).

The difference between the intergroup relative privation and the interpersonal relative privation focuses initially on the compared object and then on the object of reference.

The relative privation might advantage the emergence of behaviours or attitudes aiming to change the situation of the group of affiliation, and this pertains to the field of social change.

According the researchers, not all types of relative privation are associated to social action. The intrapersonal and interpersonal privation determines behaviours which ameliorate the situation of the individual, not of the group of affiliation.

1.6. Theory of the behavioural interaction

The theory of behavioural interaction was developed by Rabbie (apud. Bourhis, Turner, Gagnon), who shows that discrimination in favour of the own group is a

rational, instrumental and economic thing. The individuals have the trend to favour the members of the group of affiliation and to disfavour the members of other groups, in order to maximize own gain. By assigning more resources to the members of the group of affiliation, the individuals expect them to return the favours, according to the norms of mutuality. Some of the groups most often discriminated are the ethnic minorities, the racial minorities, the religious minorities, the groups of immigrants, the women (within the professional environment), the people with disabilities, the old people.¹

2. Age discrimination at the workplace

Social discrimination at the workplace due to age involves the differentiated treatment of the employees belonging to different age groups. This is in opposition to the desideratum of equal work opportunity for all, irrespective of age.

The forms of social discrimination at the workplace due to age are as follows:

Professional discrimination of the old and young people

The professional discrimination of the old and young people relies on the context and prejudices regarding this categories of age.

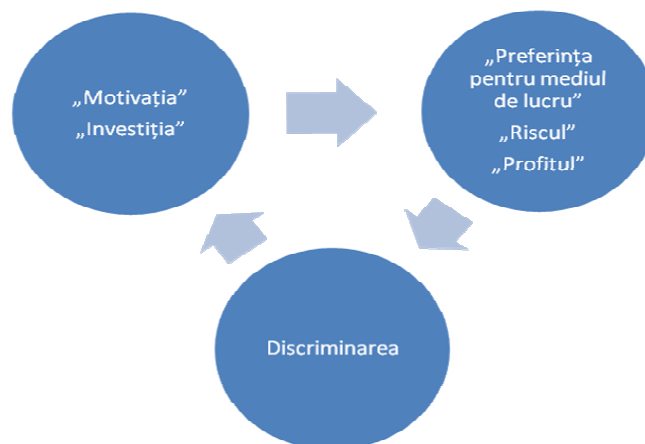


Figure 1. Causal cycle of the professional discrimination of the old people

¹ Mălina Voicu, Poverty dictionary, *Discrimination* <http://www.iccv.ro/node/112>, accessed on March 1st, 2011.

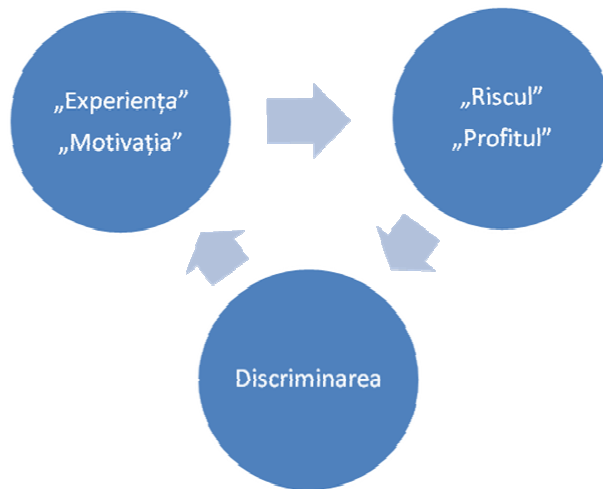


Figure 2. Causal cycle of the professional discrimination of the young people

Figures 1 and 2, show the causal cycle of the professional discrimination, taking into account both the offer and the demand of workforce (Banton 1998: p. 32-38).

The factors involved in workforce offer modelling are:

- „Experience” – Most of the young people don't have experience in a particular field.
- „Motivation” – In the case of the young people, the reason for finding a workplace is to make money, backed by the will for professional ascension. The average age when the young people start working is higher for the young people who are backed financially by the family or who attend higher education or post-higher education training. The reason of the old people tends to become narrower sometimes because of the professional marginalization or because the will for professional ascension diminishes.
- „Investment” – There is a stereotype according to which the old people invest no more in training because they are no longer capable to accumulate information and abilities and are no longer interested to perfect. Furthermore, they are said not to cope with the changes, remaining the adepts of the old ideas. The old people have the advantage of the life and work experience.

The factors involved in workforce demand modelling are:

- „Preference for the working environment” – This characteristic refers to the preference of the employer and colleagues to work in a homogenous

environment which doesn't yield tensions within the organisation. Performance can increase within an age-homogenous professional environment because of the friendship relations that may establish between the colleagues. The preoccupations and problems specific to each category of age are among the main factors which determine the rapprochement between employees.

- „Risk” – The employers are reticent to train young people for a specific position, considering that the young people will not remain within the organisation. On the other hand, the risk of employing older people are associated to the decay of the health state and to the low level of integration within the groups of younger fellow employees.
- „Profit” – Because of the presented risks, the performance of the older people can decrease, which affects the organisation profit. The same can happen in the case of the young people because of the high staff fluctuation. The current pattern of young people employment involves leaving to organisation for a higher wage and for a higher professional challenge after accumulating new abilities in the previous position.

The discriminatory behaviours towards the older and young people also appear during “staff recruiting and selection, during the professional formation and improvement; regarding the wages, sanctions and layoff” (CPE 2008: p.22).

Discrimination regarding the different access to occupations according the age

This type of discrimination regards the recruiting and selection only of people of a specific age category. This has been revealed by a research of the Centre for Social Development (CEDES) from 2003, which monitored the job offers in the daily newspaper „România Liberă” during the time interval March, 10 – 16 2003.

Table 1. Discriminating situations according to the age criterion

Nr. crt.	Demanded position	Demanded age limit (years)
1.	Real estate agents	Minimum 28
2.	Guardians	21-45, 25-35, 25-40, max 45
3.	Medical assistants	Maximum 36
4.	Barman	Maximum 24 , 18-24
5.	Cook	Maximum 40, maximum 45
6.	Garments worker	Maximum 30
7.	Hair stylist	Maximum 30
8.	Accountant	Maximum 35
9.	Irrigation systems engineer	35-40

Nr. crt.	Demanded position	Demanded age limit (years)
10.	Mechanical design engineer	Maximum 40
11.	Engineers, sales	25-35
12.	Car engineers	35-40
13.	Gypsum cardboard workers	18-35
14.	Car mechanic	Maximum 40
15.	Housekeeper	30-40, 30-48, maximum 35
16.	Doctor	30-40
17.	Unskilled worker, constructions	Maximum 40
18.	Waiter	Maximum 30
19.	Guardian	45-50, maximum 45
20.	Secretary	Minimum 24, maximum 25, maximum 30, maximum 35 <i>Observation: one advertisement didn't mention any age limit</i>
21.	Welder	Maximum 45
22.	Show supervisor	Maximum 30
23.	Driver	Maximum 35, maximum 40
24.	Saleswoman	20-30, 18-35, 20-40, maximum 30

Source: *Discriminatory employment* - CEDES, 2003.

3. Occupational segregation by gender criteria

3.1. General perspectives on gender equality

A brief analysis of the contemporary theoretical perspectives on this issue shows two major theoretical perspectives: biological and cultural.

The biological perspective promotes the idea that the gender relies on biology. The biological datum, according to the biological theories, determines the social behaviour and the relations between genders. The most consistent supporters of this approach are the ethologists and the socio-biologists such as: Desmond Morris, Konrad Lorenz and Edward Wilson.

The cultural perspective can be divided in several main directions: psychological, sociological and anthropological. All these perspectives have a common denominator: the idea that the biological is deeply instrumented, at the genus level, by the social aspect.

The gender identity, the gender relations occur “*throughout a continuous and laborious process of communication and social negotiation*” (Balica et. al., 2004). Therefore, the gender is a socio-cultural construct, variable in time and space, which

relies on the biological distinction between the two sexes. The gender roles are acquired through primary socialization (school, family) and through secondary socialization (workplace, inter-human relations outside the family). Gender is therefore, from this perspective, a socio-cultural distinction between men and women.

The academic studies on gender have a rather short history. They appeared during the late 1960s, and their development was prompted by the second wave of the feminist current. Once the critique of women-men social (mainly economic and political) inequality developed, the second feminist wave started to draw attention on the way in which the academic disciplines lead to the exclusion of the experiences and interests of the women. Within the context of these critiques, several social disciplines, such as art and culture, started to pay increasing attention to the gender. Thus, in the sociology of the 1970s, the differences and inequalities between men and women were regarded as problems that have to be investigated and explained.

The principle of gender equality claims the protection, promotion and observation of the human rights of men and women. Gender equality also implies equal opportunity for the men and women in all spheres of life, employment included.

According to the Oxford Dictionary of sociology: „gender equality refers to the equity of men and women; the freedom to develop and make choices undetermined by the gender stereotypes, by roles or prejudices; the different behaviours of the men and women, their aspirations and needs are considered, valued and treated as being equal. This doesn't mean that the women and men are alike, rather that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities don't depend on the fact that they were born women or men” (Marshall, 2003).

It is generally accepted by the community of sociologists that the difference between men and women results from attitudes and prejudices regarding the different roles assigned to men and women within the society. The gender roles are acquired through primary and secondary socialisation.

3.2. Gender occupational segregation

The gender relations within society can be characterised according to how much power they have on the resources and according to the mechanisms of social mobility used within the power structure specific to that particular society (Pasti 2003). In time, the privileges usually granted to the men, due to their dominant position within the society, were replaced by a rising trend of the equitable distribution between men and women. For instance, the voting right of women and pay rise are two measures adopted with the purpose to attain equal opportunity for men and women. However, the adopted measures didn't succeed to cover

completely the differences, the men still holding a dominant position in many organisations/institutions through the monopoly on the criteria used to select the choices for the evolution of the society/institutions.

Gender discrimination on the labour market affects mainly the “access to the labour market (recruiting and selection); professional formation and training; promotion, wage setting, maternity, raising and caring the children; sanctioning and layoff” (Aninoşanu, Martiş and Sorescu 2008: p.22).

The gender policies aim to increase the equal opportunity of men and women with the purpose to equalise the level of “visibility, autonomy, responsibility and participation of the two sexes in all the spheres of the public and private life” (Grünberg (coord.) et al. 2006: p.25). Both the man and the woman must have equal rights, equal responsibilities and opportunities concerning the household chores, child raising, access to the labour market and involvement in the community, cultural and political space.

The occupational segregation is the focus of the gender inequity debates. The level of segregation is considered to be accountable for the discrepancy between men and women incomes and for the constraints on the career. High levels of gender segregation are synonymous with high levels of social inequity. This subject raises problems pertaining to social justice, the efficient use of human resources, to wider social problems regarding the work and family life.

The gender occupational segregation is an unwanted characteristic of the labour markets because of several reasons. First, the fact that part of the population has difficulties to get access to some occupations may rigidify the labour market and, therefore, it may reduce the capacity of an economy to adapt to change. Second, the occupational segregation wastes abilities of the population which may go unused. Third, gender occupational segregation supports the perpetuation of gender stereotypes, with adverse impact on some economic and social variables such as poverty and income inequality (MacPherson et Hirsch, 1995).

Sociologically, segregation is the social separation of a category of people from another, which usually results in social inequities (Johnson, 2000). By extension, the concept of segregation acquires, in the acceptance of some researchers, the same connotation as the concept of discrimination, naming practices, institutionalised or not, which limit the access of some social groups to employment, income resources, status, social standing; this yields phenomena of social inequity based on practices of social inequity.

The gender segregation on the labour market is influenced by several factors which participate in the appearance and perpetuation of the phenomenon: the characteristics of the demand and offer of work, the welfare level offered through

social policies, the level of economic development, the development of the tertiary sector, etc. (Polch, 2010)

Part of the studies of professional development by gender criteria focused on the attitudinal differences between men and women regarding the career routes and the pace of promotion in career. (Morrison and Von Glinow, 1990). The gender analysis must take into consideration, however, within a broader context, the differences between the roles, responsibilities, the barriers and opportunities of the men and women in the social, economic and politic life, within a specific social context, under the influence of the social class, religion, culture, age, ethnic group etc. Thus, the gender roles can act in a flexible or rigid way, identical or different, complementary or conflicting manner. These gender differentiations can be modified and shaped because they depend on space and time.

Two types of segregation between men and women on the labour market are mentioned by the field literature: the horizontal segregation and the vertical segregation.

- The *vertical segregation* describes the grouping of men in the upper part of the occupational hierarchies and the grouping of women in the lower part;
- The *horizontal segregation* (Marshall, 2003) refers to the fact that at the same occupational level (or at the level of an occupational class or even regarding a specific occupation), the men and women have different tasks and/or incomes.

Reskin (Reskin, 1993) shows that the horizontal segregation can be defined as a high concentration of men and women within a specific sector of the labour market in general, or for a specific occupation. A labour market which shows a strong horizontal segregation is characterized by a multitude of sectors or occupations traditionally considered feminine or masculine.

The vertical segregation (Core, 1999 apud Valentova, Krizova and Katrnak, 2007) is characterized by a disproportional participation of the women or men at different levels of the professional hierarchy; for instance, monitoring and management positions which require a specific level of responsibility and the existence of subordinated staff. In most European countries, women have lower standings on the scale of jobs and they occupy less frequently than men monitoring positions.

Other empirical studies (Charles, 1992; Core, 1999; Bettio, 2002; Esping-Andersen, 2002) confirm that women are over-represented in the services sector, in the public sector, where the wages are lower than in the private sector. Another study (Rubery, 1998) shows that in many countries of the world, women are involved in less qualified professional activities, thus with lower wages. It is not an accident that the average wage of the women is lower than the average wage of men.

The people speak of a phenomenon of work division by gender. The sociological theories show that this phenomenon relies in the tradition and culture of each individual country. In other words, we expect to see higher (or lower) levels of occupational segregation in countries whose population adopts more (or less) traditional views on the gender roles.

The women joining the labour market are recruited for sectors and tasks which are already defined as “traditionally feminine jobs”: health care services, caring, education and other.

The literature shows the main reasons for women discrimination by the employers:

- The employer displays preconceived attitudes when employing women, considering them a lower work force (equal opportunity at employment); this attitude of the employees is an obstacle hindering the professional promotion of women (equal opportunity at professional promotion).
- The men employers prefer male workers due to reasons of socialisation or male solidarity; they prefer to work with men rather than with women and they consider that a male leader is more efficient.
- The employer forecasts the probable productivity of the women candidate because its activity can be disrupted by marriage, birth and care of children. This is why the male candidates are given priority or, when a woman is eventually employed, she is paid less. Some institutions have strong informal rules “un-supporting” the young women for marriage and birth.

Economically, the occupational segregation may entail long-time risks and expenditures. Thus, if the prejudices of an employer condition the employment of less productive workers, the profit will be lower and those workers might not cope with on-the-job situation.

A social reality of the developed countries is that the women become increasingly competitive and viable on the labour market because of their higher level of education, because they attend high quality studies, which provide them the opportunity to be employed in better positions. Thus, the cancellation of prejudices, the social protection from the state and the higher level of training can establish new perspectives for the consolidation of the equal opportunity between men and women on the labour market.

The occupational segregation is as important as it is difficult to measure. A multitude of measures are used to monitor the changes in the gender division of the work force over the past several decades, but an indicator can include all these dimensions of interest, particularly those regarding the vertical segregation, which explains much of the difference of income between sexes.

3.2.1. Structure of occupation by gender criteria in Romania

The current trend is to increase the access of women to paid work, but this doesn't involve balancing the household work of the men and women. Consequently, misbalances appear between the opportunities of the men and women to join, evolve and maintain on the labour market.

According to the Statistical research on the household workforce (AMIGO), the employment rate in 2008 in Romania was 65.7% for men and 52.5% for women (Table 2). The employment rate for women increased from 52% in 2002 to 52.5% in 2008.

Table 2. Employment rate in Romania, for the population of working age, by gender

Employment rate for the population of working age (15-64)	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total	58.0	57.8	57.9	57.7	58,8	58,8	59,0
Males	64.1	64.1	63.6	63.9	64,7	64,8	65,7
Females	52.0	51.5	52.1	51.5	53,0	52,8	52,5

Sources: Statistic Yearbook of Romania 2009 – INS, 2009

The women don't participate on the labour market due to their household work to raise the children, care for the old family members, for the household in general. Although these household activities should be performed both by the men and women, usually the women bear the whole burden. On the other hand, from the perspective of the traditional pattern, the men is in charge with providing the money, which determines the relation of financial dependence of the woman on the man.

Even if the access of women on the labour market increased, the decision power in many organisations is not entrusted to women. The women do in Romania jobs such as administrative officer (70.22% of the state officials), operative worker in services, trade and assimilated (76.75%) and technician (61.66%) (Table 3). The ratio of the women acting in the occupational elite (40.71%) to the men (59.29%) is negative, with a value of 0.68.

The incapacity of the women to undertake entrepreneurial activities in Romania is caused by the lack of the necessary initial capital, by the lack of support from the society, of women empowerment. The private initiatives need a huge effort of the entrepreneurial women to become profitable: overtime, managing tensed situations etc.

Table 3. Structure of the occupied population, by working age group, by groups of occupations and by gender in 2008, in Romania

Groups of occupations	Total employed population. of working age (thousands persons)	Females		Males	
		Total female population. of working age (thousands persons)	% employed female population. of working age (thousands persons)	Total male population. of working age (thousands persons)	% employed male population. of working age (thousands persons)
Members of the legislative body, of the executive, high officials of the public administration, leaders and officials from the economic-social and political units	232	69	29.74%	163	70.26%
Specialists with intellectual and scientific occupations	946	489	51.69%	457	48.31%
Technicians, foremen and assimilated	858	529	61.66%	329	38.34%
Administration officials	450	316	70.22%	134	29.78%
Operative workers in services, trade and assimilated	943	620	65.75%	323	34.25%
Agricultural workers and skilled workers in agriculture, forestry and fisheries	1804	880	48.78%	924	51.22%
Craftsmen and skilled workers in artisan crafts, in machinery and installation maintenance	1526	349	22.87%	1177	77.13%
Other categories of occupations	2122	706	33.27%	1418	66.82%
Of which: Unskilled workers	1000	408	40.8%	592	59.2%
Total	8882	3958	44.56%	4924	55.44%

Source Own calculation using raw INS data on the Labour force market from the Statistical research on the household work force (AMIGO), 2008.

The second form of segregation is income segregation: the women have lower incomes than the men, from similar sources of income. Income inequality by gender is shown by the GDP per capita at the purchasing power parity. In this case, the GDP per capita at PPP, in 2005, was 7,643 ROM for the women and 10,518 ROM for the men. Also, income inequality is also revealed by the average annual income by economic activity (Table 4). In the feminised industries, the income is lower for the women than for the men.

Table 4. Average annual gross income (expressed at the standard purchasing parity SPP), by economic activity, function of the gender and full-time/part-time program of the employees, in 2009

Economic activity	Full - time		Part-time	
	Females	Males	Females	Males
Extractive industry	15,311	15,850	5,664	6,650
Processing industry	6,450	8,376	2,215	3,479
Production and supply of electrical and thermal energy, gases, hot water and conditioned air	16,284	17,700	6,212	7,409
Water distribution; salubrity, waste management, decontamination activities	7,947	8,196	3,136	3,434
Constructions	8,306	6,902	3,189	2,473
Wholesale and retail trade, car and motorcycle repair	6,230	7,708	2,549	3,070
Transportation and storage	9,664	10,250	4,965	4,386
Hotels and restaurants	4,986	5,634	2,223	2,567
Information and communication	15,970	16,634	6,075	7,139
Financial intermediation and insurances	19,215	25,005	8,028	11,036
Real estate	7,923	7,930	2,998	3,048
Professional, scientific and technical activities	12,417	12,843	4,508	5,351
Administrative services and support services	6,535	5,373	2,902	2,297
Public administration and defence; public social insurances	15,042	13,677	6,994	6,122
Education	10,359	11,884	4,712	5,227
Health care and social assistance	8,638	9,773	3,736	4,322
Shows, cultural and recreational activities	8,147	8,608	3,056	3,068
Other activities and services	4,677	6,426	1,980	2,799

Source: Work force research – Eurostat, 2009.

The wages and pensions are the most important sources of income. The women have a higher access in the economic branches with lower pay (Table 5) such as health care and social assistance, education; public administration, services, while the men dominate the sector of constructions, transportation, industry, agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

The income from wages and pensions differ with the gender because the women hold/held poorly paid occupations in the state administration, health care, education, more than the men, or because their work history is shorter than that of the men.

Table 5. Number of employees, by activities of the national economy, at the level of CAEN section and by gender, on December 31, 2008

Activity (CAEN section Revision 2)	Total employees (thousands persons)		
	Total	Females	Males
Agriculture, forestry and fisheries	104	26	78
Industry	1618	708	910
• Extractive industry	81	12	69
• Processing industry	1352	646	706
• Production and supply of electrical and thermal energy, gases, hot water and conditioned air	82	21	61
• Water distribution; salubrity, waste management, decontamination activities	103	29	74
Constructions	460	59	401
Wholesale and retail trade, car and motorcycle repair	902	454	448
Transportation and storage	299	81	218
Hotels and restaurants	122	76	46
Information and communication	128	50	78
Financial intermediation and insurances	116	81	35
Real estate	33	15	18
Professional, scientific and technical activities	145	68	77
Administrative services and support services	211	65	146
Public administration and defence; public social insurances	220	122	98
Education	412	284	128
Health care and social assistance	377	299	78
Shows, cultural and recreational activities	43	25	18
Other activities and services	43	24	19
Total	5233	2437	2796

Source: Statistic Yearbook of Romania 2009 - INS, 2009; Statistic research on the workforce cost - 2008.

3.2.2. Factors influencing gender occupational segregation

The research show that there are several factors influencing gender occupational segregation between men and women. Among them are:

- Influence of state intervention (equal opportunity policies, anti-discrimination policies, policies reconciling family life with professional life),
- Factors related to the demand for workforce (demand for female workforce, employer preference),
- Factors related to offer of workforce (employer preference and the human capital).

Penn, Rose and Rubery (1994) claim that the gender difference on the labour market also appear because there are more women than men with part-time jobs and because the women get employed in sectors of activity which seem more appropriate for women because of their particular abilities (better relations with the other people, better communication, better care etc.)

They say that the women should learn how to capitalise on their abilities and skills so that they can negotiate better their incomes. The same goes, however, for the part-time jobs. The people on part-time jobs tend to self-marginalise, associating the part-time jobs with a lower status than the one associated to the full-time jobs. The part-time jobs demand specific professional training and abilities, which is why the employees should not assign a lower status to these jobs and they should learn to place themselves higher in the hierarchy of jobs (Penn, Rose and Rubery, 1994).

The gender occupational segregation is influenced by the attitudes regarding the gender roles. These concern the beliefs regarding the behaviours, responsibilities and activities specific to men and women (Eagly, 1987; Williams and Best, 1990). The men and women differ in terms of the gender roles and behaviours related to the paid work and family life. The traditional perspective is that the role of the woman is of household keeper and that the role of the man is of family provider.

The people with egalitarian views consider that women should contribute to the financial support of the family and that men should contribute to taking care of the children and to other activities traditionally considered as feminine household activities. The opinions of the society regarding the role of the women turned egalitarian as the women were more active on the labour market (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004; Loo and Thorpe, 1998; Spence and Hahn. 1997; Twenge 1997).

In the households run by single or divorced mothers (the number is increasing), the women were forced to contribute to the welfare of the family by paid work, while the married women too increased their participation on the labour market (Hayghe and Bianchi, 1994) and contribute with a substantial part to family incomes, more than in the past. (Raley et. al., 2006). Brewster and Padavic (2000) studied the changes

which occurred in the gender ideology between 1977-1996 and found out that the succession of the cohorts contributed to the liberalization of the attitudes regarding the gender roles. The two authors have noticed that the higher flow of mothers on the labour market in the 1960s and 1970s was crucial in modelling the attitude of the cohorts which turned adult people in 1985-1996.

Hakim (2002) suggested that the changes which took place in the industrialized societies (for instance, the laws regarding the equal opportunity on the labour market, availability of the contraceptive means and the larger number of part-time jobs among the white collars) increased the capacity of the women to fulfil their own preferences when mixing the family life with the professional life. Therefore, the differences between women in their attitude regarding the gender roles on the labour market should have a stronger predictive character than in the past, when labour force market analyses are performed. The attitudes regarding the gender roles have a high probability to affect the time spent in remunerated and non-remunerated activities. The women with traditional attitudes tend to focus their time and energy on household responsibilities and on household work. (Hakim, 2000)

Furthermore, if the financial resources from other sources of the family are enough, there is a rather strong, there is a rather high probability that the women with attitudes closer to the traditional pattern give up or reduce the time allotted for remunerated work, so that they can fulfil their household duties. On the other hand, the egalitarian women are more likely to give up working in the family and to negotiate for a better distribution of the family responsibilities with their husbands, or they seem more likely to externalize the household care services so that they have more time for paid work. (Hakim, 2000)

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, we may say that discrimination is the different treatment applied to a person or group of persons due to its/their affiliation to a specific social group. The phenomenon of discrimination can be explained using several theories among which the theory of real conflicts, of the social identity, of the equity, of the behavioural interaction, of the preference for discrimination and of the relative privation.

According to the theory of real conflicts, discrimination appears in the situations of crisis, when the resources are limited and the fight for resources is fierce. In such situations group solidarity acts to favour the members of one's group at the expense of the members of the other groups. The theory of social identity continues the previous theory, claiming that group solidarity is strengthened by the consolidation of own group identity. Identity is defined by the group conscience, the emotional and

value significance of the member quality (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; D. Abrams in G.M. Breakwell (coord), 1992, p. 58).

The theory of equity shows that the discriminated person or group interiorizes the social injustice regarding the contradiction between the current situation within the group and the situation in which the discriminated person or group considers that it/they have the right collectively, just like the others. In order to balance the current situation and the hypothetical one, the discriminated person or group behaves in a violent manner.

The theory of behavioural interaction shows that the person/group which discriminates tends to favour the members of own group and to disfavour the others, trying thus to maximize the benefits. This theory relies on the social norm of reciprocity.

The article also approaches gender and age discrimination at work, one of the most usual forms of discrimination. The social discrimination due to age at the work place involves the differential treatment of the persons belonging to specific age categories. The phenomenon refers to the inequality applied to the young and old people during the process of recruiting, selection, formation, professional betterment, promotion, wage, sanctioning and laying off and to limiting the access to different professional occupations depending on age.

There are two major theoretical perspectives regarding gender discrimination: the biological perspective and the cultural perspective. We have also detailed the occupational segregation by limiting the access to specific occupations and to income as forms of gender discrimination. The occupational segregation between men and women actually includes two basic types of segregation: horizontal and vertical segregation. The vertical segregation describes a social manipulation of the occupational hierarchies so that men are at the upper side, while women are at the lower side of the hierarchies. This form actually represent limiting the access to specific occupations, which causes social and economic damages such as rigidization of the labour force market; lower capacity of the economy to adapt to change; inefficient utilization of the human potential; human dignity distortion by perpetuating stereotypes and prejudices. The horizontal segregation shows that at the same hierarchic level and sometimes for the same position, the women receive different tasks and/or incomes than the men. The motivation of the employees who have discriminatory attitudes comes from stereotypes and prejudices regarding the quality of the work performed by women and the professional productivity of the woman, considered to be lower due to events such as marriage, birth of a child and child care.

Gender discrimination displayed a decreasing trend lately because an increasing number of women joined actively the public life. They attempt to achieve a balanced

distribution of the household and child raising responsibilities with their partners. The women who are professionally active in urban areas externalize the household care activities or child care, in order to achieve a balance of the family life with the professional life.

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