

Competition between gender and racial discriminations. The reason of the understatement of gender discriminations in quantitative surveys?

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Introduction

Discriminations remain difficult to measure in quantitative surveys. Particularly elusive, gender discriminations are almost invisible. Therefore their registration doesn't show the high levels of inequality between men and women that remains nowadays (salary, career development, access to the instances of power... only to name a few). The rates of gender discrimination statements in a recent French survey illustrate this registration gap. Only 2.1% of respondents reported having experienced gender discrimination during the past five years and the proportion is only 3.5% when considering only women.

This research is based on data from a French survey, named *Trajectories and Origins (Trajectoires et Origines, TeO)*, conducted in 2008 by INED and INSEE (French national institutes of demography and statistics). Carried out on 21 000 persons, this survey focuses on social trajectories and discrimination experiences. The discrimination registration combines two complementary approaches. The first approach tends to catch discrimination without mentioning the term "discrimination". This approach is based on the evocation of potentially discriminatory situations such as imposing educational orientation or experiencing unfair professional refusal. Questions concern various fields of social life: education, employment, housing, health, public services and leisure. For each situation experience by the respondents, they are asked to designate the reason that, according to them, caused this negative treatment. Six reasons are proposed including gender and race and also the possibility of specifying others. These statements of potentially discriminatory experiences combined with a prohibited ground are referred to as "situational discrimination" in this study. We build a synthetic indicator that allows to distinguish the respondent who reported at least one situational discrimination in one of the fields of social life. This approach is followed with a second method based on a direct question: "*Over the last 5 years, do you think you have suffered unequal treatment or discrimination?*". Discriminations revealed by this question are called "self-reported discrimination". The aim of this research is to study gender discrimination by considering an intersectional approach which combines gender and race. This approach allows to untangle gender and racial discriminations statements and to evaluate the possible competition within these statements.

First, we examine the rates of gender, racial and intersectional (combining gender and race) discrimination registered in the survey for men and women of four different racial groups (the mainstream population born in France with both parents born in France, descendants of immigrants from South Europe, North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa). Then we wonder how both types of discrimination, in terms of gender and/or race, of the respondents are articulated. Do men and women declare the same type of discriminations? How does the belonging to a visible minority influence their perceptions? As exposure to discrimination is closely related to stigmatized characteristics, how does an individual presenting several features commonly identified as vectors of discrimination, such as those related to gender and race, sense an unequal treatment? Is the perceived reason of discrimination always considered as exclusive or do respondents identify intersectional discrimination? Preliminary results tend to confirm the hypothesis of a competition between race and gender discrimination leading to gender discriminations understating. But it seems not sufficient to explain the lack of statement of gender discrimination. This will lead us to put forward three additional preliminary hypothesis.

Preliminary results

Table 1 shows that men of visible minorities (Descendants of immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa) are those who report the most frequently discriminations. Whereas among descendants of South Europe and mainstream population, women report more discriminations than men. The women from visible minorities are much more discriminated than the other two categories.

These differences concern mainly racial discrimination. Indeed, men and women often report having been discriminated because of their ethnicity or skin color. Reported discriminations based on gender or any other reason do not present significant differences from one category of population to another. There are few self-reported gender discriminations. The most frequent complaints are reported by daughters of South European immigrants and women of the mainstream population (4%). An equivalent rate is observed among women descendants of sub-Saharan African migrants, but in this case the gender discriminations are associated with racial discriminations. To a lesser extent, this fact is also reported by men of this racial group. Indeed, men declare gender discriminations.

Table 1 Rates of self-reported discrimination by sex and race

	Men				Women			
	Sub-Saharan Africa descendants	North Africa descendants	Southern Europe Descendants	Mainstream population	Sub-Saharan Africa descendants	North Africa descendants	Southern Europe Descendants	Mainstream population
Racial discriminations	47	40	5	2	37	23	2	1
Gender discriminations	0	0	0	1	0	1	4	4
Gender and racial discriminations	2	1	0	0	4	2	1	0
Other discriminations	3	4	5	5	3	4	6	6
No discrimination	48	55	89	92	56	69	88	89
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Origins and Trajectories survey, INED-INSEE, 2008.

Population: Mainstream population, immigrants' descendants (French natives having at least one immigrant parent born in sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa or southern Europe), aged 18 to 50 years old.

Explanation: 47% of men descendants of sub-Saharan African immigrants have reported being discriminated in the past 5 years on a racial base (skin color or origin).

Rates resulting from the situational approach - presented through the synthetic indicator defined previously - confirm these results with more pronounced gaps (Table 2). This result confirms that these two methods for measuring discrimination are complementary. As situational discrimination is identified by analysis construction, it requires a lesser degree of consciousness than self-reported discrimination to be registered. In addition, mentioning events involves remembering negative experiences whereas direct question remains more general.

Therefore, with this second method, the rates of discrimination are higher, whatever the type of discrimination. Racial discriminations are more frequent. One in two men descendants of sub-Saharan African immigrants suffered from this type of discrimination in at least one of the various social life fields studied. Even if they are less numerous than racial discriminations, gender and intersectional discriminations are much more common. For men, in this case, rates go from 1% to 3% and visible minorities are more prone to report intersectional discriminations. This result illustrates the existence of negative gender stereotypes which are specific to men of racialized categories. For women, the same disparity exists between gender and intersectional discriminations, with a rate of 6% for descendants of South European immigrants.

Table 2 Rates of situational discrimination by gender and race

	Men				Women			
	Sub-Saharan Africa descendants	North Africa descendants	Southern Europe descendants	Mainstream population	Sub-Saharan Africa descendants	North Africa descendants	Southern Europe descendants	Mainstream population
Racial discriminations	52	44	9	2	36	31	7	2
Gender discriminations	1	2	3	3	1	1	6	6
Gender and racial discriminations	3	3	0	0	5	3	1	1
Other discriminations	11	8	15	18	6	9	12	16
No discrimination	33	42	73	77	52	56	74	75
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

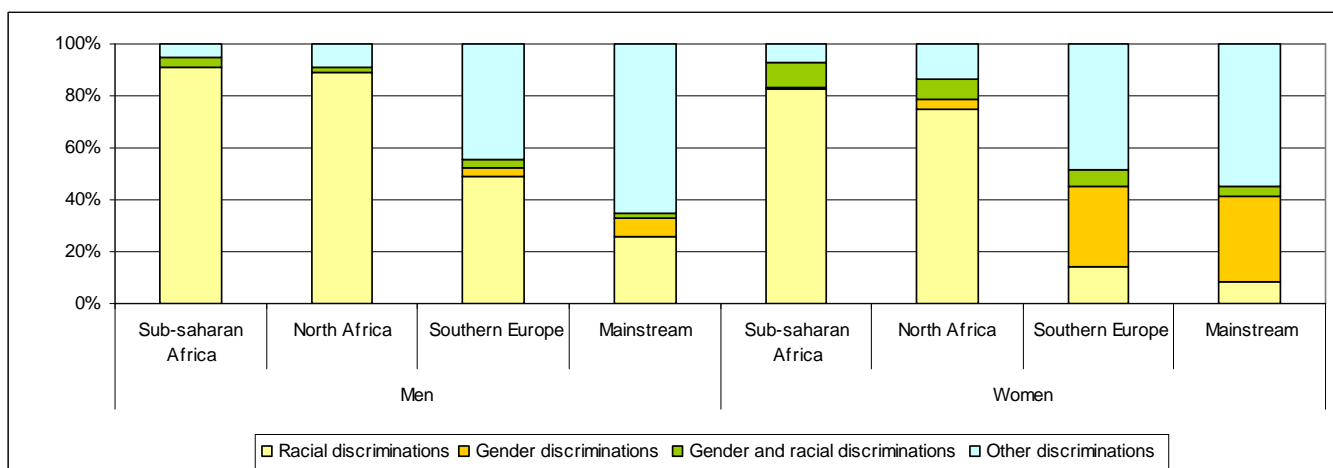
Source: Origins and Trajectories, INED-INSEE, 2008.

Population: Mainstream population, immigrant descendants with at least one parent from sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa or southern Europe, aged 18 to 50 years old.

Explanation: 52% of men immigrant descendants from sub-Saharan Africa have reported at least one situational discrimination in one field of social life because of their skin color or origin.

Analysis of statements by social life fields, leads to quite similar observations. Gender discrimination is rarely mentioned and is almost never reported by visible minorities. This points out the salience of racial discrimination statement. However, even if a competition effect exists, the “invisibility” of gender discrimination can not only be explained by this single hypothesis. This is confirmed by the low rate of gender discrimination reported by women from the mainstream population. Statements of intersectional discrimination are rare. Among women, we can observe an effect of transfer from racial discrimination to gender discrimination (Figure 1). Racial discriminations represent about 80% of discriminations stated by women from visible minorities. Consequently there are few “empty spaces” for the expression of gender discriminations. On the other hand, gender discrimination represents almost 50% of discrimination reported by daughters of South European immigrant and women from the mainstream category.

Figure 1 Distribution of self-reported discriminations by sex and race



Source: Origins and Trajectories, INED-INSEE, 2008.

Population: Mainstream population, immigrant descendants with at least one parent from sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa or southern Europe, aged 18 to 50 years old.

Read: Within men immigrant descendants from sub-Saharan Africa who have declared a self reported discrimination, 91% percent mentioned a self-reported racial discrimination.

Three other hypothesis can be made to explain the gender discrimination understatement.

First hypothesis is a lower awareness of gender discrimination. We indeed assume that race is more commonly associated with the term “discrimination” for two reasons. In French discourses, the formulation “gender inequality” is more frequent than “gender discrimination” or “discrimination against women”. Moreover, racial discrimination emerged recently as an important issue in France and therefore is given a lot of media coverage. In the TeO survey answers about the frequency of unequal treatments or discriminations based on gender and on race shows a much greater sensitivity to racial discrimination in the French population - regardless of sex or race of the respondents. Around 30% of respondents consider that discrimination against women is common while they are 60% to think that of racial discrimination.

The second hypothesis concerns the construction of the *TeO* survey. Even if respondents could report any reason of discrimination, this survey has been primarily designed to measure racial discriminations. Therefore, the facts described to identify situational discriminations are probably not the most efficient to capture experiences of gender discrimination.

Finally, our third hypothesis insists on the formulation difficulties that can alter respondents' statements. For instance, some reasons to discrimination provided in the survey, other than sex, are clearly gendered. It indeed appears that, family situation is almost exclusively evocated by women. Some reasons that are not necessarily gendered but mainly reported by women could enable an indirect identification of gender discrimination.

This study will be completed by multivariate analyses. We plan to conduct logistic regressions in order to determinate the socio-demographic factors, other than the race, which influence gender discrimination statements. This will help us to understand the under-reporting of gender discrimination.

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