

MEASURING THE EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION OF IMMIGRANTS – PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

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Introduction. Immigration is a phenomenon with increasing actuality on a world scale. Many of the immigrants are highly educated and relatively young, which in combination with their strong motivation to stay in the receiving country, make them important national resource. At the same time only their successful integration in the society allows the positive potential of the immigration as a factor contributing to the social-economical development to be realized.

It is a fact that the immigrants are among the most often discriminated groups, which definitely troubles their integration in the receiving society. Therefore there are needed purposeful precautions for mastering the situation and most of all instruments for monitoring and objective measuring the discrimination. In this connection the present paper presents some problems, connected with measuring the employment discrimination of immigrants, as well as recommendations for improving the existing methods and instruments.

Problems in measuring the employment discrimination of immigrants. Generally there are two basic methods for measuring the employment discrimination – objective and subjective [1]. The objective method is based on the use of traditional statistical indicators for labor integration (such as number of the employed, number of the self-employed, level of unemployment and average net annual income according to the citizenship/origin), on the basis of

which conclusions about the existence/the absence of employment discrimination are made [2]. Although it allows comparisons between different countries or between different time periods, this method could not be accepted as a trustworthy source of information at least for three reasons: 1) the often met scarcity and unreliability of the maintained statistical data base about the indicators; 2) the circumstance that the discrimination is only one of the factors, influencing the integration and therefore it is inadmissible the two phenomena to be measured with the same indicators; 3) the neglecting of the discrimination at the work place at the expense of the discrimination on the labor market.

The second method for measuring discrimination is subjective, i.e. through studying personal attitudes by the means of self-report. The discrimination here is not directly measured, but rather reflects perception, feeling of discrimination. Measuring the employment discrimination in this way is not easy at all, because it is a delicate process, rooted in the daily interactions and practices for human resource management in the organization. It is difficult to judge whether the perception of discrimination reflects a real discriminatory act. Different people have a different sensitivity towards discrimination and no matter that their perceptions are not always reliable, they form their psychological reality and shape their future work behavior. It is quite possible the respondent to

- not understand at all the meaning of the term “discrimination”;

- wrongly interpret the received attitude as discriminatory just because he (she) is not clear about the criteria for personnel selection and assessment, and their connection with the nature of work (for example, the requirements for professional qualification, work experience, etc. not always could be interpreted as a hostile attitude or act

of discrimination);

- not become aware of the discriminatory act (although people usually blame the discriminatory attitude which receive, they often do not realize that because of their stereotypes and prejudices they also become a source of discriminatory attitude);

- not be willing to share his feelings;

- underestimate the discriminatory act, because he does not recognize it as such (especially the so called “hidden discrimination”);

- be really discriminated, but on a different basis (for example, sex or age) or to exist multiple discrimination, etc.

Recommendations for measuring the employment discrimination. Having in mind the importance of the problem and the lack of existing effective solutions, the necessity of creating more perfect instruments for measuring the employment discrimination of immigrants is obvious. First of all they must measure and analyze the discrimination in two aspects: 1) on the labor market – i.e. with respect to the immigrants as an object of hiring; 2) at the work place - i.e. with respect to the immigrants as an object of management.

For example, since the immigrants may be an object of discrimination on the part of the employer, as well as on the part of their native “competitors” on the labor market and colleagues on the job, it is appropriately to study three basic groups of respondents: 1) seeking job or working immigrants; 2) seeking job or working representatives of the native population – potential or real colleagues of the immigrants; 3) offering jobs representatives of the native population – potential or real employers of the immigrants.

Such an instrument would give the opportunity for detailed analysis of the discriminatory situation in many aspects.

1. With respect to the immigrants to determine: their

subjective perceptions for discrimination, formed on the basis of the personal experience, i.e. in a confrontation with a discriminatory act; the level of satisfaction from different aspects of the work situation; the motivation for active job searching; the expectations for discriminatory attitude on the labor market and at the work place; the level of knowledge about the regime of admission to the labor market and about the rights of the employed, regulated in the labor and especially in the anti-discriminatory legislation; the inclination for approaching the relevant bodies for protection against discrimination, etc.

2. On this basis formulation of conclusions about: predominating perceived and expected forms of discrimination on the labor market and at the work place, including the most affected areas of human resource management (recruitment and selection, working conditions, occupied job position, work duties, work time, salary, opportunities for professional and career development, etc.); the correctness in interpretation of the reality as discriminatory; the impact of the discriminatory experiences upon the satisfaction from the work situation; the impact of the discriminatory expectancies upon the motivation for active work behavior (seeking a job); the factors forming discriminatory expectancies (real or shared experience, stereotypes, etc.); the groups of immigrants, which most strongly perceive themselves as objects of discrimination (according to their nationality, sex, age, etc.), including the existence of a multiple discrimination.

3. With respect to the receiving community to determine: the real acts of discriminatory attitude on the part of the receiving society – the employers and the colleagues; the tendency of the society to demonstrate a discriminatory behavior; the motivation for hiring immigrants; the level of knowledge about the procedures for hiring immigrants and about their rights, regulated in the anti-discriminatory legal

frame, including procedures and bodies for protection against discrimination.

4. On this basis formulation of conclusions about: predominating demonstrated forms of discrimination in the different areas of human resource management; the level of realization of the behavior as a discriminatory act; the factors forming discriminatory attitude (personal or shared experience, stereotypes about the immigrants, etc.); the similarity/discrepancy in the interpretation of different acts as discriminatory; the immigrant communities which the society is mostly inclined to discriminate; the representatives of the receiving society (according to their sex, age, education, etc.), mostly inclined to discriminate immigrants.

Conclusion. The discrimination of immigrants should be continuously monitored and measured. Only on the basis of objective and timely data it is possible to evaluate the effects of the politics for integration, to plan actions for reducing the discrimination and respectively to improve the employment integration of the immigrants in the receiving society. But this needs comprehensive methods, including many indicators.

References

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