Producing knowledge on the phenomenon of ethnic discrimination

Potentials and shortcomings of selected measurement approaches

Lisbon, October 2006

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1 Introduction: The complexity of ethnic discrimination

Definition

Ethnic or racial discrimination includes distinction by race, skin colour, ethnicity, nationality, etc. "and <u>classifies people</u> into different groups in which group members receive distinct and typically <u>unequal</u> treatment and rights <u>without rational justification</u>."

Mooney Cotter, 2006

"If we want to understand the social reality of discrimination, we must start by recognising that we are speaking about a social phenomenon that is complex."

Rick Rubinstein, 2006

Differentiation
- ▶ direct – indirect
- ▶ Individual – institutional
- ▶ Subjective – "objective"
- ▶ Perception – mechanism – outcome
- ▶ Lawful – illegal
- ▶ Intentions and motives (racist attitudes, stereotypes, economic reasons, "good intentions" etc.)
- ▶ ...

2 Which approaches have been taken to measure discrimination?

The true extent of discrimination will never be unveiled. Discrimination "can only be approached by a process of approximation." (Olli 2005)

Selected measurement and research approaches

▶ analysis of large statistical data sets (national statistics or statistical surveys)

▶ police and court statistics

▶ analysis of complaints of discrimination

▶ (quantitative) victim surveys

▶ Discrimination testing

▶ qualitative interviews with potential perpetrator (gatekeeper)

▶ qualitative interviews with vulnerable group members

▶ Attitude approach: prejudice and negative attitudes of the majority

▶ analysis of court cases

▶ (participating) observation and personal participation

▶ ...

2 Which approaches have been taken to measure discrimination?

2.1 Statistical analysis of large datasets

▶ Systematic unequal treatment of a certain group is likely to leave its statistical traces

▶ What is the reason for the disadvantaged position? Human capital or discrimination

▶ Statistical analysis (e.g. multivariable regression analysis)

▶ "Discrimination may be an aggravating factor" (indirect indicator)

2.2 Discrimination testing

▶ Matched pair testing: test persons (e.g. job applicants) – one member of a minority group, one of the majority group – are matched for all relevant criteria (e.g. qualification)

▶ Both test persons apply for the same position (e.g. via telephone)

▶ Analysis of the personnel managers' decisions (rejection or invitation to interview)

▶ Most famous examples: ILO studies based on discrimination testing approach (1990s – 2003)

▶ Results: a certain percentage of jobs was closed to minority members irrespective of their qualification (in Germany: almost 20%; in Italy: 40%)

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2 Which approaches have been taken to measure discrimination?

2.3 Perceived discrimination: Victim surveys and interviews

▶ Core research interest: subjective experiences and perceptions of discrimination
▶ Quantitative approaches: questionnaires and standardised (telephone) interview
▶ Qualitative approaches: narrative, biographical interviews
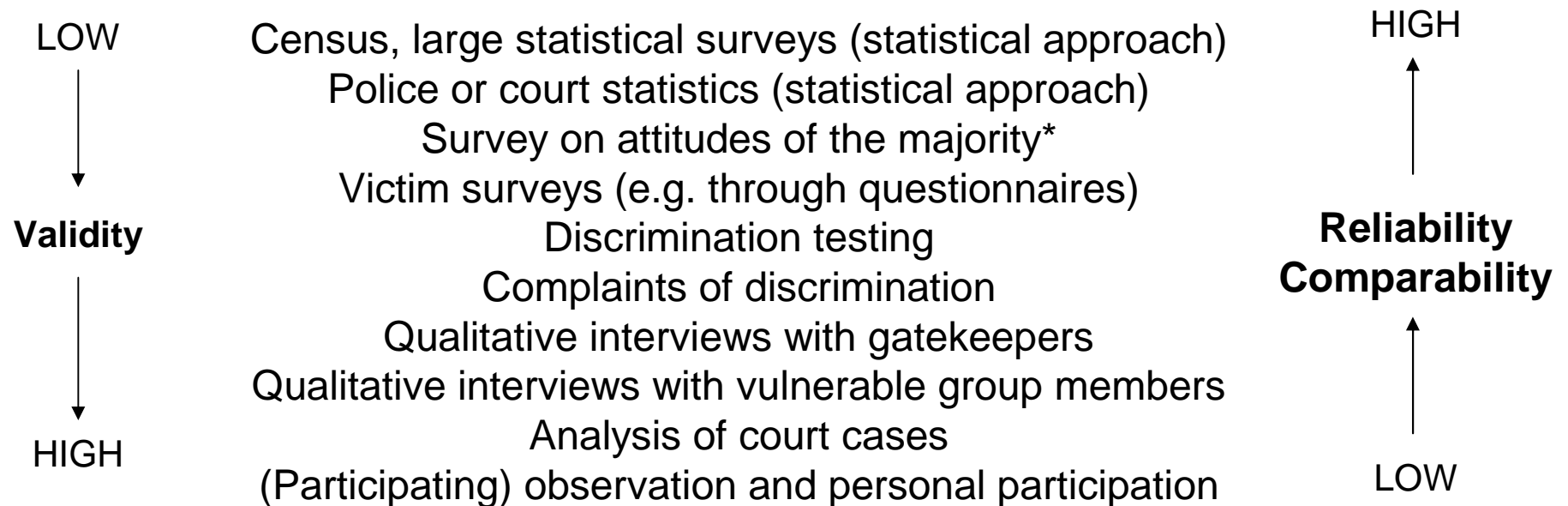▶ *Problem*: No direct conclusion on the "real" extent of discrimination

2.4 Practices of discrimination: interviews with gatekeepers

▶ "Just ask them": statements from gatekeepers on unequal treatment of minority members
▶ Difficult, but possible: information about the gatekeepers' motives
▶ Methods: qualitative interviews with gatekeepers; questionnaires
▶ Problem: very small sample, not representative

2.5 Attitude surveys

▶ Weak association between attitude and behaviour
▶ Statements on the disposition to discriminate
▶ Large datasets

2.6 Methodological categorisation of selected approaches in discrimination research (cf. Wrench 2005)

LOW   Census, large statistical surveys (statistical approach)   HIGH
                       Police or court statistics (statistical approach)
                       Survey on attitudes of the majority*
                       Victim surveys (e.g. through questionnaires)
Validity   Discrimination testing   **Reliability**
                       Complaints of discrimination   **Comparability**
                       Qualitative interviews with gatekeepers
              Qualitative interviews with vulnerable group members
HIGH   Analysis of court cases   LOW
              (Participating) observation and personal participation

* Attitude surveys with large number of respondents can lead to relatively reliable data, but only concerning the attitudes, not concerning the discriminatory behaviour.

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Conclusion: Multi-dimensional measurement approaches are needed

"No particular data collection method is enough in and of itself in order

to obtain a satisfactory picture of the extent and nature of discrimination.

Therefore, it is a necessity to adopt a multi-method and multi-disciplinary

approach to measuring discrimination."

Reuter/Makkonen/Oosi 2004

3 How to improve the methodological measurement tools?

3.1 Reducing shortcomings of individual measurement approaches

▶ Example 1: discrimination testing with large sample in several countries

▶ Example 2: statistical analysis of national and/or European datasets with a harmonised research design

▶ Cross-national (harmonised) research approaches

3.2 Multi-dimensional measurement approaches and triangulation

▶ Combination of quantitative (reliable) data and qualitative (valid) data on discrimination

▶ Explorative interviews → development of a questionnaires (target group and gatekeepers) → combining with results of victim surveys, attitude surveys and statistical analysis

▶ Discrimination testing in several countries + harmonised statistical approaches + qualitative research results (e.g. interviews with gate keepers)

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Thank you for your attention

…looking forward to your comments!