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Title: The coping strategies of individuals in multiple jeopardy settings: The case of unemployed older women.

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Running head: Multiple discriminations and coping

Abstract:

This research investigates the harmful consequences of discrimination on self-esteem and examines the coping options of individuals belonging to several stigmatized groups (i.e., unemployed older women) within the multiple jeopardy perspective. Our sample comprised 420 individuals selected by age, gender and professional status. We tested whether the positive and negative links between discrimination and psychological distress induced by discrimination, would vary according to the number of disadvantaged categories individuals belong to. An analysis of the mediating role of some coping options was also conducted. Overall, the results support most of our hypotheses and suggest that the assumed impact of perceived discrimination on psychological outcome increase with the cumulation of discriminations. We also found that, among the various coping options used by individuals in our sample, commitment, but not age-group identification, mediated the links between the cumulated discrimination and self-esteem. The discussion addresses issues related to workplace discrimination in light of the multiple jeopardy perspective.

Keywords: ageism, coping, multiple jeopardy, perceived discrimination, unemployment.

The contrast between the demographic importance of older workers and their professional depreciation is both a scientific and a political question. As evidenced by numerous studies on age-based discrimination in recruitment (Albert, Escot, & Fernandez-Cornejo, 2011; Richardson, Webb, Webber, & Smith, 2013), and on the seniors' precarious professional situations (Loretto & White, 2006), older workers are a disadvantaged social category. While they are often perceived as warm, such representation is tampered by a general belief in their incompetence (Cuddy & Fiske, 2002; Fiske et al, 2001). Accordingly, a lack of skills in older adults is generally attributed to their age, while the incompetence of younger adults is often minimized or attributed to a lack of attention or effort (Erber, Caiola, Williams, & Prager, 1997). As such, they tend to experience psychological distress because of that status (Wamala, Boström, & Nyqvist, 2007; Vogt Yuan, 2007; Fischer & Holz, 2007; Klonoff, Landrine, & Campbell, 2000). Other studies have shown that the ways of coping with perceived discrimination vary according to the individual's membership in either a privileged or a disadvantaged social group (Garstka, Schmitt, Branscombe, & Hummert, 2004). Comparatively, the coping strategies of individuals who belong to several stigmatized social groups has received far less attention. Similarly, there has been very few studies on the additive or multiplicative effects of multiple group membership. However, the multiple jeopardy hypothesis (Ferraro & Farmer, 1996) suggests that members of multiple stigmatized groups perceive more discrimination, experience lower self-esteem, and are thus likely to use more coping strategies.

The present research relies on the multiple jeopardy model (King, 1988; Wilks & Neto, 2013). It is based on a sample comprising individuals who experience simple or

multiple stigmatization and it was designed to examine how various coping strategies (i.e., age-group identification and commitment) mediate the relationship between the sensitivity to multiple discrimination and outcomes such as self-esteem. More precisely, it aims at showing that 1) members of multiple stigmatized groups perceive discrimination more, 2) this perception negatively influences their self-esteem, 3) this negative impact increases with the cumulation of discrimination, and that 4) the negative consequences of multiple stigmatization might be mitigated by several coping strategies.

Discrimination in the workplace

Discrimination in the workplace is one of the greatest challenges faced by contemporary societies (Colella & King, 2018). Its recurring presence in both the media and the judicial systems reminds us that prejudices die hard, especially for those social categories whose lack of professional advancement has been made a symbol of the fight against discrimination. Research has shown that the grounds for workplace mistreatment and discrimination are particularly varied. Some of these grounds include, among others, disability (Colella & Stone, 2005), race (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2002), weight (Puhl & Brownell, 2001; Roehling, 1999), or sexual orientation (Hebl, Foster, Mannix, & Dovidio, 2002). The present study deals with age-based (Loretto & White, 2006), gender-based (Colella & King, 2018), and unemployment-based (Karren & Sherman, 2012) discrimination.

Age-based discrimination

Despite the increase of both the average age of workers (Eurostat, 2012, 2013; Toossi, 2009) and the life expectancy (Vaupel, 2010), age-based discrimination remains a major political and economic question that has gained prominence because of the effects of the economic crisis on employment (restructuring plans, reduction of costs of labor etc.). Researchers have addressed these concerns by shedding light on the skepticism of employers about the

productivity level and competences of older workers (Van Dalen, Henkens, & Schippers, 2010). Even when evidence of the contrary is available (e.g., Cuddy & Fiske, 2002), older workers are still often perceived as a high-risk category, being less creative or adaptable, and little receptive to technological innovation and subsequent retraining (Brooke & Taylor, 2005; Johnson, 2009) and rather indifferent to career development (Cox & Nkomo, 1992). This negative perception of older adults fails to take into account their skills and ambition and induces professional difficulties. Employers often consider that it makes more sense to train and promote younger employees (Brooke & Taylor, 2005; Finkelstein & Burke, 1998; Finkelstein, Burke, & Raju, 1995; Hassel & Perrewe, 1995). Generally speaking, some management practices are influenced by current age-based prejudices. That is why managers are more likely to notice a lack of skills in older adults than in younger adults. For example, Erber and colleagues (Erber, Szuchman, & Rothberg, 1990) have shown that memory failure of older targets were rated as signifying greater mental difficulty than failures of young targets; failures of young targets were attributed to unstable causes such as lack of effort and attention. Rupp, Vodanoviche and Crede (2006) have shown the existence of an age bias about the performance errors of older *vs.* younger workers. Their results indicated that older employees received more severe recommendations (e.g., being fired) for poor performance than did their younger counterparts whose usual recommendation was to make sure that they got the support that needed in order for them to gain awareness about their mistake.

The distrust of employers towards older workers stands in sharp contrast with the way their professional experience and their capacity to pass on their knowledge, skills, and expertise are praised. This specific valorization somehow alleviates some of the prejudices older workers suffer from (Faurie, Fraccaroli, & Leblanc, 2008) but these prejudices remain nonetheless strongly anchored in the workplace (Picchio & van Ours, 2013; Richardson, Webb, Webber, & Smith, 2013). The impact of prejudices and discrimination against older

workers can also be deduced from the important number of both early retirements (Saba & Guérin, 2005; Van Dalen, Henkens, & Wang, 2015) and long-term unemployment in older adults (Minni, 2012).

Gender-based discrimination

Despite women's increasing workforce participation, explicit (Bosak & Sczesny, 2011; Eagly & Karau, 2002) or implicit (Huang & Kisgen, 2013; Latu, Schmidt Mast, & Stewart, 2015; Moss-Racusin, Dovidio, Brescoli, Graham, & Handelsman, 2012) gender-based discrimination persists in the workplace. Numerous studies have shown the existence of a gender bias favoring men over women, as men take on traditional gender roles in hiring (Eagly & Karau 2002; Foschi, 2000), earnings (Cavalcanti & Tavares, 2016; Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, & Tamkins, 2004; Krefting 2003), promotion (Derks, Van Laar, Ellemers, & de Groot, 2011; Lyness & Heilman 2006), or career opportunities (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly & Carli, 2007).

The strength and persistence of gender-based discrimination have been addressed by the general (Becker, 1975) or specialized (Tam, 1997) human capital hypothesis, according to which, the male advantage is nothing but men's return on investment in the most demanding qualifications and competences that they were given the opportunity to develop. Other authors refer to the lack of fit model (Heilman, 1983, 2001, 2012) and to the role congruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002) which studies the mismatch between attributes believed to be required to reach success in organizations (i.e., masculine attributes), and attributes commonly ascribed to women. That is why performance, rewards and bonuses, especially in managing positions (Eagly & Carli, 2007), are more often attributed to men (Schein, 2001) than to women. As a matter of fact, traditional organizational culture seems to reflect continuing gender social stereotypes. Sayings, such as "women take care and men take charge" (Prime,

Carter, & Welbourne, 2009), and gendered attributions (i.e., attributing “command and control” to men while portraying women as “facilitative and collaborative” (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010, p. 173)), tend to be the lens through which men and women are perceived. Research has shown that employers worldwide seem to have interiorized the illusory “think manager - think male” correlation (Schein, Mueller, Lituchy, & Liu, 1996). Similarly, competent women, viz., women (e.g., tough, forceful, attribute-oriented women) whose personal attributes violate the prescriptive stereotypes of women, are more likely to be negatively evaluated than the men who adopt the same role requirements (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Glick & Fiske, 1996; Heilman & Okimoto, 2007; Heilman et al., 2004). As a consequence, women are over-represented in segregated, less prestigious, and lower paying occupations (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Méron, Omalek, & Ulrich, 2009; Reskin, 1993; Reskin, McBrier, & Kmec, 1999). In addition, discrimination against women is detrimental to their well-being and self-esteem (Swim, Hyers, Cohen, & Fergusson, 2001).

Unemployment-based discrimination

In modern societies, paid employment is both a core value and a powerful vehicle for socialization (Gurr & Jungbauer-Gans, 2013) but the job market is competitive and complicated. In the European Union for instance, it is estimated that 20 to 26 million people are currently unemployed (Eurostat 2017). However, in free market societies where employment is considered as a driving force for social valorization, unemployed individuals are a recurring target of cultural and professional stigmatization (Biewen & Steffes, 2010; Bonoli, 2014; Bonoli & Hinrichs, 2012; Lockwood, 1991; Oberholzer-Gee, 2008). They are often described as lacking skills, warmth, motivation, moral qualities and proactive abilities (Camus & Berjot, 2015; Ho, Shih, Walters, & Pittinsky, 2011) and are often rejected and depreciated (Furåker & Blomsterberg, 2003; Gurr & Jungbauer-Gans, 2013). Unemployment stands out as an unfulfilling status that has been shown to be the least likely to favor personal

development, self-esteem, well-being, and skill promotion (Konrad, Moore, Ng, et al., 2013). Such status is particularly problematic in recruitment situations (Karren & Sherman, 2012; Oberholzer-Gee, 2008). For employers, unemployment, and especially long-term unemployment, is often associated with a decline in professional skills; it might also indicate a worker's discouragement and demotivation. That is why unemployed individuals are less likely to be invited for an interview (Eriksson & Lagerström, 2006; van den Berg & van Ours, 1996). Such discrimination harms well-being and mental health (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2006; Konrad, et al., 2013; Krug, Drasch & Jungbauer-Gans, 2019) and induces psychological distress.

The links between unemployment and ill health (i.e., poor mental and physical health, unfavorable health habits) on the one hand, and between unemployment and poor self-esteem on the other, have been established in numerous studies (Bourguignon & Herman, 2007; McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki, 2005; Paul & Moser, 2009). These links are observed on three different levels: gender, age, and perception of discrimination. When it comes to gender, the nature of that link is still widely discussed. Some studies suggest that unemployment has a greater negative impact on men than on women (Artazcoz, Benach, Borrell, & Cortes, 2004; Jahoda, 1982; Paul & Moser, 2009). One possible explanation of this gender difference is that women have an alternative to employment that is available to them, becoming a homemaker, which “provides some time structure, some sense of purpose, status and activity even though it offers little scope for wider social experience” (Jahoda, 1982, p. 53). However, other studies have shown the opposite, i.e., that the impact of unemployment on well-being are more important in women than in men (McKee-Ryan, et al., 2005). The changing gender role of women in the workplace and the central presence of work in their lives and identities is a likely explanation (Waters & Moore, 2002). A third category of

studies shows no difference between men and women (Ensminger & Celentano, 1990; Hammarström & Jamlert, 2006; Kulik, 2000; Reine, Novo, & Hammarström, 2013).

Next, regarding age, the harmful effects of unemployment have very different rationale at different age levels. Quantitatively, younger people suffer from unemployment more than old adults (O'Higgins, 2001). The high rate of unemployment for younger people is often explained by the business cycle (i.e., the characteristics of the job market, the fall in demand, the economical crisis) as well as by their supposed lack of skills and experience (Axelrad, Malul, & Luski, 2018). Psychologically, younger adults are described as more insecure (see also Fiori, Rinesi, Spizzichino, & DiGiorgio, 2016 for a link between employment insecurity and poor mental health among young adults) than older adults. The latter might deal with their distress by considering early retirement, along with the social advantages brought by a pension. However, this age gap is still debated as other studies find no difference based on the age of individuals when it comes to the impairment of self-esteem (Broomhall & Winefield, 1990) and to poor well-being (Paul & Moser, 2009; Reine, Novo, & Hammarström, 2004) resulting from unemployment).

Last, the effects of perceived discrimination should thus be taken into account. For example, several studies on aged-based discrimination have shown that the fact of experiencing and perceiving age-based (Redman & Snape, 2006; Thorsen, Rugulies, Longaard et al., 2012) discrimination, is also harmful to psychological well-being (Berger, 2006; Kwok, Atencio, Ullah et al., 2011; Lagacé & Tougas, 2006). For instance, older workers (Ginn & Arber, 1996) and senior job-seekers (Herman, 2007) have been shown to experience more stress and to self-depreciate more than younger workers (Kluge & Kring, 2008). This is less obvious in employed individuals since employment provides them with opportunities to fulfil their needs for autonomy, competence, and mastery (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Unemployment also emphasizes feelings of shame and social uselessness (Desmette,

2003; Herman, 2007), and brings a decline in life satisfaction. However, this decline should be reconsidered when discriminated individuals use various resources to cope with it and that is why research on the coping options of older individuals in such multiple jeopardy situations is particularly relevant.

Coping with stigmatization

The ways in which members of stigmatized categories cope with discrimination is a well-documented question. Commitment, psychological disengagement, and in-group identification are some of the main coping options that were investigated by researchers (Garstka et al., 2004; Outten, Schmitt, Garcia, & Branscombe, 2009; Lagacé & Tougas, 2006, Lagacé, Tanguay, Lavallée, et al., 2012; Schmitt, Branscombe, Kobrynowicz, & Owen, 2002).

Commitment is considered as a psychological state that 1) characterizes the employees' relationship with their organization and 2) has implications on their decision to continue or discontinue membership in their organization (Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993). Meyer and Allen (1991) have described three forms of commitment. Affective commitment (e.g., feeling loyal) refers to the individual's emotional attachment and identification to the organization (i.e., individuals stay with the organization because they want to). Continuance commitment (e.g., having external opportunities) refers to costs associated with leaving the organization (i.e., individuals stay with the organization because they need to). Normative commitment refers to perceived obligation to remain with the organization (i.e., individuals stay with the organization because they feel they should) (Irving, Coleman, & Cooper, 1997; Lee, Carswell, & Allen, 2000; Snape & Redman, 2003b). However, Allen and Meyer (1990) have noticed that the distinction between the components of affective and continuance commitment was clearer than that between those of the affective and normative components. In addition, the normative scale is often referred to as lacking psychometric solidity (Meyer,

1997). That is why, and like Snape and Redman's study (2003a), the present research focuses both on affective and continuance commitment.

Psychological disengagement implies an alteration of the link between the perception of unfavorable treatment and self-examination (Lagacé & Tougas, 2006). It enables individuals who feel that they are discriminated against to virtually withdraw from the situation (Lagacé, Tougas, Laplante, & Neveu, 2010), e.g., from their workplace. Disengagement is therefore conceived as a strategy for temporary adaptation and protection of one's self-esteem (Lagacé et al., 2010; Major, Spencer, Schmader, Wolfe, & Crocker, 1998). "Psychological disengagement often goes hand in hand with the wish for early retirement (Saba & Guerin, 2005), which may compensate for the lack of professional recognition experienced by some older workers (Thorsen et al., 2012). Unemployment emphasizes feelings of shame and social uselessness (Desmette, 2003; Herman, 2007), and brings a decline in life satisfaction. However, this decline is of short duration because unemployed individuals can compensate this frustration by opting for early retirement. Retirement can certainly induce a role loss and decreased social interaction, but, in general, an increase in subjective well-being is also observed. Actually, retirement raises the identity utility of former job-seekers because it changes the social norms they are expected to adhere to (Hetschko, Knabe, & Schöb, 2014). For example, Hetschko and colleagues (2014) showed that the switch from unemployment to retirement increases the life satisfaction of older job-seekers, which can be interpreted as a consequence of their entry into a category that is more socially valued than their previous status".

Increased in-group identification (Tajfel, 1978) is another well-documented coping option. This identification is supposed to offer social support against stigmatization (Bourguignon, Seron, Yzerbyt, & Herman, 2006), and to produce a sense of belonging and acceptance (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002). Building on the social identity framework, the

Rejection-Identification model (Garstka et al., 2004; Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002) argues that experiencing rejection from the dominant group in the form of discrimination leads disadvantaged groups to increase their ingroup identification. This identification, in turn, alleviates some of the harms to psychological well-being (self-depreciation, depression, anxiety, and stress) and increases self-esteem. The Rejection-identification model has been validated in studies with several disadvantaged groups, including African-Americans (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999), women (Schmitt et al., 2002), and older adults (Garstka et al., 2004).

Discrimination, especially when it is cumulative, influences well-being, but victims of discrimination can try and cope with it through a whole array of attitudes. Referring to the multiple jeopardy hypothesis, we thus tried to establish whether cumulative discrimination (e.g., in the case of senior job-seekers) determined individual coping strategies.

Belonging to cumulatively disadvantaged social groups and coping: the multiple jeopardy perspective.

The multiple jeopardy hypothesis belongs to the field of intersectionality. The term *Intersectionality* was coined by Crenshaw (1989) in order to describe the various ways in which race and gender interact to shape multiple dimensions of black women's employment experiences. Her approach relies on a critique of the "single axis framework", which underestimates the multidimensionality of black women's experiences and focuses on the experience of most privileged members of subordinate groups. Crenshaw reports legal cases that have shown that sometimes black women experience 1) discrimination in ways similar to white women's or black men's experiences, 2) double discrimination, i.e., the combined effects of being black and female, and 3) discrimination as black women (Cole, 2009).

The intersectional approach to identity categories holds that individuals have multiple identities that ought to be considered within a given social and historical context (Warner, Settles, & Shields, 2016), and that not all identities are equally valued in society. In addition, the interaction of these identities actually reinforces each of them (Shields, 2008), which contributes to the emergence of a specific identity profile that cannot be equated to the sum of each of its component (Warner, 2008). The interaction of identities also influences the personal and social outcomes of each group member (Cole, 2009; Yap, Settles, & Pratt-Hyatt, 2011; Zander, Zander, Gaffney, & Olsson, 2010). However, the most important contribution of the intersectional approach lies in its cross-examination of all the mechanisms of oppression that certain social groups face. The multiple jeopardy hypothesis includes an additive version and a multiplicative version (Berdahl & Moore, 2006; King, 1988). The additive version of the multiple jeopardy hypothesis predicts that each factor of discrimination can influence individual outcomes regardless of other factors, while the multiplicative version explains that stigmatized identities are interrelated. Accordingly, it predicts an interaction of the factors of discrimination and a subsequent amplification of the detrimental effects of discrimination.

However, the positive and negative outcomes resulting from multiple discrimination is still discussed. Some authors refer to the multiple advantage hypothesis to demonstrate that the cumulation of discriminations does not necessarily induce negative psychological or social outcomes. This counter-intuitive hypothesis has been validated in studies that investigated the recruitment (Hosoda, Stone, & Stone-Romero, 2003; Petit, Duguet, L'Horty et al., 2013; Powell & Butterfield, 1997), the wages (Aït Ben Lmadani, Diaye, & Urdanivia, 2008; Greenman & Xie, 2008; Petit et al, 2013) but also the health and well-being (Himmelstein, Pulh, & Quinn, 2017) of individuals who experience multiple discriminations. However, drawing on the multiple jeopardy model, some researchers have shown that the

various discriminations experienced by individuals compound or multiply each other and strengthen the detrimental effect of belonging to stigmatized groups (Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Bowleg, 2008; Derous & Pepermans, 2019; Reid, 1984). Consistent with this perspective is research showing the devalued status of minority women in the workplace (Browne, Hewitt, Tigges, & Green, 2001; Greenman, & Xie, 2008) or the worse mental health of women (Harnois & Bastos, 2018) and of underprivileged adolescent females (Mendelson, Kubzansky, Datta, & Buka, 2008).

The present research relies on the multiple jeopardy perspective and aims to measure the links between the number of stigmatizations and the poor outcomes they induce.

The multiple jeopardy hypothesis has been examined through a series of studies that aimed at validating the existence of a link between exposure to high level of cumulative discrimination and 1) the disproportionate sensitivity to subtle bias and discriminatory acts, 2) the increase in stress, psychological distress, and various health disorders, and 3) the increase in coping strategies. The target group in most of these studies was African-American female participants. Some of these studies have shown that, compared to advantaged or singly disadvantaged individuals, cumulatively disadvantaged individuals (including lower-status individuals) are more sensitive to discrimination (Harnois, 2015; Hirsh & Lyons, 2010), are under more stress (Meyer, 1995; Meyer, Schwartz, & Frost, 2008; Stuber & Meyer, 2008), and resort to more numerous (Grollman, 2012; Perry, Harp, & Oser, 2013; Thomas, Witherspoon, & Speight, 2008), and more varied (Fine & Weis, 1998) coping resources. Other studies (Ainsworth, 2002; Bavishi, Madera, & Hebl, 2010; Handy & Davy, 2007; Rosette & Livingston, 2012) have focused on the relation between multiple discrimination and career outcomes, showing that the professional outcomes of doubly jeopardized individuals (e.g., black females or female older adults) were more negative than those of

simply jeopardized individuals (e.g., white females, black males, male seniors) or advantaged groups (e.g., white males).

Despite the contributions of intersectional research, the methodological challenge presented by the intersectional approach is worth considering. Indeed, there is no consensus on the method that would be the most compatible with the objectives of intersectional research. Several authors hold that the intersectional framework is incompatible with the positive view and statistical assumption of quantitative research (Bowleg, 2008; Shields, 2008); while others argue that the experimental methods and the use of quantitative data are not antithetical to intersectional analysis (Cole, 2009; Reisen, Brooks, Zea et al., 2013). Other reflections set out to theoretically specify intersectional relationships among social categories. According to the “intersectional only model” (Weldon, 2006, p. 241), social categories have no autonomous effects, i.e., social categories should be considered along with their interactions and their mutually reinforcing ways (McCall, 2005; Weldon, 2006). However, for other authors, the addition of identities is the approach that can best transcribe the experience of stigmatized groups (Beale, 1970). This approach holds that different social categories might induce different types and degrees of stigmatization (Ward, 2004) and thus have independent effects (Hancock, 2007; Weldon, 2006). Just like the multiplicative model, this additive model can also provide information concerning the experience of individuals that belong to several disadvantaged groups (Reisen et al, 2013).

In the present study, we argue that intersectional issues can be addressed in various and complementary ways (Reisen et al, 2013). Like Weldon (Weldon, 2006), we consider that the effects induced by a given approach do not rule out the effects induced by the alternative approach. In our view, the concept of multiple discrimination includes both the “additive discrimination” and the “multiple jeopardy” (Harnois, 2015, p. 977). On that basis, we hold that what matters is not so much the model but rather the potential of the research design used

by social scientists to account for the complexity of the mechanisms that underlie the experience of multiple stigmatization.

Overview and Hypotheses

The present study thus adopted an intersectional framework in order to examine the many impacts of one type of stigmatization (e.g., employed seniors) or of multiple stigmatizations (e.g., unemployed female senior) experienced by individuals in workplace setting. We also aimed at examining the mediating role of coping strategies against the negative psychological outcomes of these stigmatizations.

First, in the various theoretical models we refer to, two elements are worth noticing: 1) the link between membership to one or several stigmatized categories and the sensitivity to discrimination, and 2) the impact of perceived discrimination on well-being. Several studies have shown that members of disadvantaged groups were more sensitive to the factors of discrimination in a given social context (Grollman, 2012; Harnois, 2015; Perry et al., 2013; Thomas et al., 2008) than members of privileged groups. For example, Luzzo and McWhirter (2001) have shown that members of discriminated groups (women and ethnic minorities) perceive substantially greater number of educational and career-related barriers than men and European Americans do. This example provides us with the hypothesis that the cumulating of disadvantaged membership will be associated with higher level of perceived experience of discrimination (H1).

Second, the Rejection-identification model (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002) suggests that the perception of discrimination can harm the individual's self-esteem and can lead members of disadvantaged groups to develop negative expectations for their future (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002). This has been supported by empirical research showing that, because of their differing social realities, members of disadvantaged groups (Garstka et al., 2004; Schmitt et al., 2002; Schmitt, Branscombe, & Postmes, 2003), are subjected to lower

psychological well-being. Accordingly, we predicted that the perception of discrimination will be negatively associated with self-esteem (H2).

Third, according to the Rejection-Identification model the perception of discrimination also increases group identification, particularly for members of low status groups. Group identification protects the discriminated target's well-being (self-esteem and life satisfaction) and it keeps feelings of failure and distress at bay, even if it seems that the benefits of this identification vary according to the group's social status and to the opportunities for social mobility (Garstka et al, 2004). On that basis, we predicted an indirect positive association between the cumulation of discriminations and self-esteem, mediated by age-group identification (H3).

Fourth, Snape and Redman (2003a) among others have highlighted the question of occupational commitment. They have laid emphasis on the fact that the emotional attachment to the organization is related to the perception of a supportive and equitable exchange relationship between the workers and their workplace (King, Hebl, George, & Matusik, 2010). Since the discrimination experienced by older workers challenges such relationship, a drop in their level of loyalty can thus be expected, along with a feeling of discouragement and self-depreciation. This feeling of distress is even more perceptible in an economy that does not favor older people's employment. However, because of a lack of satisfactory opportunities, discriminated individuals have no choice but to display professional commitment. That is why we predicted an indirect positive association between the cumulation of discrimination and self-esteem, mediated by affective and continuance commitment (H4).

The theoretical model (Figure 1) suggests that cumulatively disadvantaged individuals are subjected to the psychological harm (self-esteem) that is associated with perceived

discrimination, and they cope with it by increasing their age-group identification and their commitment to their organization or to the work search process.

[Insert Figure 1]

Method

Sample and procedure

The sample included 420 participants from Western France, aged 20 to 64 (M age = 42.7, SD = 12.6). There were 246 females (M age = 41.9, SD = 12.7) and 174 males (M age = 43.9, SD = 12.5). 228 participants (M age = 45.2, SD = 11.7) were job-seekers and 192 participants (M age = 39.8, SD = 13.0) were employed. 20 participants had no qualification at all (N = 10 males and N = 10 females), 203 participants had a vocational qualification (N = 85 males and N = 118 females), and 145 had an academic background (N = 67 males and N = 78 females). On average, job-seekers had been unemployed for 12.2 months and employed participants had been working in their current organization for 7.4 years.

An age variable was also examined. To do so, we reviewed the literature on the age-groups that were the most commonly used in similar studies (Berger, 2006; Gautié, 2003; Hassel & Perrewe, 1995; Kluge & Krings, 2008; Lagacé, 2008; Lagacé & Tougas, 2006; Loretto & White, 2006; Thorsen et al., 2012). In these studies, the most frequent split is younger adults (i.e., below 30 years of age) and older adults (50 years old and more). These two categories are also similar to the age groups that are usually referred to by labor services and administrations as well as by reference documents on career management issued by private companies and organizations (Bellini, Duyck, Laval et al., 2006; Carrer, 2007; Dujardin, Randaxhe, & Cornet, 2014). In the latter, the term “senior” is used to refer to employed individuals aged 45 or older, i.e., a category of people that is often victim of age-based prejudices, is often invited to retrain and is gradually perceived as being of little interest

for potential employers. Conversely, the expression “younger adults” refers to individuals aged 24 to 30 whose career is about to peak and who are often seen as having a strong potential.

However, an extensive investigation of the *ad hoc* literature lead us to conclude that there is no consensus on a precise distinction between younger and older individuals. Some researchers refer to the 35-45 age group as younger adults while 45 to 55 years old individuals are considered as older adults (Ichino, Schwerdt, Winter-Ebmer, & Zweimüller, 2017). Other authors consider the 18-39 age group as younger adult while the rest of the adult population is deemed older (Fiori, Rinesi, Spizzichino, & DiGiorgio, 2016). Last, some studies have labelled the 20-24 age group as the younger adults and refer to all individuals aged 25 to 54 as prime-age adults (O’Higgins, 2001).

This variation in age groups and labels raises many questions. In our view, the “distance to retirement” (Hairault, Langot, Ménard., & Sopraseuth, 2012) can lead to a working solution. Following this model, employed and unemployed individuals face a given probability of retiring, which is interpreted as a measure of their distance to retirement. Therefore, individuals with a higher probability of retiring belong to the older adult category (over 45 years old), while those with a lower retirement probability correspond to the younger adults (below 45 years old). Based on this, we have distinguished between two groups: the first group comprised 221 younger participants who were below 45 (M age = 32.5, SD = 8.6) while the second group included 199 older participants aged 45 and more (M age = 54.0, SD = 3.1). Participants were contacted by email, either via web forums or through associations supporting the seniors as they return to the workforce. They all volunteered to participate in the study.

Measures

Participants responded to survey items using a 7-point scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*, and 7 = *Strongly agree*). In the present study, we have used several validated scales from which we selected relevant items. Since the sample included both employed and unemployed individuals', several items were rephrased so as to fit each situation. Similarly, given that the number of items per scale was inferior to or equal to 5, we calculated the average inter-item correlation \bar{r} , which is an alternative item homogeneity index instead of calculating a Cronbach's α (which would yield a low value). Inter-item correlation \bar{r} does not depend on the size of the scale. According to Briggs and Cheek (1986), this index is considered robust if it ranges between .20 and .50.

Perceived age discrimination ($\bar{r} = .254$) was measured using a 4-item scale drawn from Redman and Snape's (2006) measure of perceived discrimination among older individuals (e.g., "My age prevents me from getting jobs for which I think I am qualified").

Work/job self-esteem ($\bar{r} = .404$) was measured using 4 items drawn from the Lagacé and Tougas (2006) adaptation of the Rosenberg (1965) 10-item self-esteem scale (e.g., "At work, and in general, I tend to think I am not good at all").

Affective Commitment ($\bar{r} = .571$) was measured using 3 items drawn from Allen and Meyer (1990) 8-item subscale measuring the affective commitment (e.g., "This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me").

Continuance commitment ($\bar{r} = .267$) was measured using 3 items drawn from Allen and Meyer's (1990) 8-item subscale measuring the continuance commitment (e.g., "It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to").

Age-group identification ($\bar{r} = .255$) was measured using the 5-item scale of Garstka et al. (2004) measure of age-group identification among younger and older adults (e.g., "I like being a member of my age-group").

Results

Preliminary results

[Insert Table 1]

The present study relied on an intersectional perspective and focuses on the impact of the number of discriminations on their psychological consequences as well as on the coping strategies used by targeted individuals. Table 1 shows the repartition of participants according to the number of discriminations. The cell size varied between $N = 49$ and $N = 152$. Despite the variation of the cell size between the conditions, the sample size was large enough for conducting statistical analyses.

In order to take into account, the cumulation of discrimination, and instead of performing a usual 2 (age: younger adults *vs* old adults) x 2 (gender: female *vs* male) x 2 (employment status: job-seekers *vs* employed) ANOVA model, we constructed a contrast system. On the basis of the ordinal variable corresponding to the cumulation of discriminations, this contrast system enabled us to make comparisons between individuals according to the number of discriminations they experience. Moreover, only the additive model makes it possible to analyze the indirect effects of this cumulation of discriminations on self-esteem through perceived age discrimination, affective commitment, continuance commitment and age group identification.

[Insert Table 2]

In the present study, three comparisons are thus considered: one experience of discrimination *vs* no experienced discrimination (1 *vs* 0); two experiences of discrimination *vs* 1 (2 *vs* 1); three experiences of discrimination *vs* 2 (3 *vs* 2). Therefore, this model allows us to study the difference in self-esteem that can be attributed to the addition of an additional discrimination. Table 2 provides us with the descriptive statistics for the variables of interest regarding all subgroups and the number of discriminations.

[Insert Table 3]

We had predicted that the cumulation of disadvantaged memberships would be associated with higher level of perceived experience of discrimination (H1). The comparative analysis partially validated this hypothesis (see Table 3). Concretely, the sensitivity to discrimination of the singly discriminated individuals differed from that of the non-discriminated individuals ($b = 0.417, p = .048$) $b = 0.735, p < .001$). Similarly, the sensitivity of the doubly discriminated individuals was higher than that of their singly discriminated counterparts ($b = 0.735, p < .001$). However, the comparison of the difference between the sensitivity to discrimination of the doubly discriminated individuals and the triply discriminated ones ($b = -0.026, p = .885$) was not significant.

The analysis validated the second hypothesis (H2), which posited a negative relation between the perception of age discrimination and self-esteem ($r = -0.30^{**}$, see Table 3). Indeed, Table 2 shows that the higher the number of discriminations, the lower the level of self-esteem. Accordingly, the level of self-esteem of the triply discriminated individuals was significantly lower than the level of self-esteem of the doubly discriminated individuals ($b = -0.409, p = .05$). Similarly, the level of self-esteem of the doubly discriminated individuals was significantly lower than that of the singly discriminated individuals ($b = -0.749, p = .001$). However, the difference between the level of self-esteem in singly discriminated and non-discriminated individuals was not significant ($b = -0.046, p = 0.849$). To complete this analysis, these differences were further explored by considering all subgroups corresponding to the cumulative discriminations. This implied to fit a regression model from the contrasts that can be constructed from these subgroups. Table 4 provides the results of this regression model.

When we consider only one type of variable (i.e., being older, being a woman, or being unemployed), unemployment-based discrimination is the only one that induces a significant decrease in self-esteem ($b = -0.68^*$). It's worth noting that for unemployed

individuals, this low self-esteem goes with a greater sensitivity to age-based discrimination ($b=0.88^{**}$).

To consider the cumulative effect of discrimination, we have then compared doubly discriminated individuals to those who only experience one of the two discriminations at stake. In that case, results show several combinations associated with a significant decrease in self-esteem and some others that did not reach significance: 1) as compared to employed older men, a decrease was noticed for unemployed older men ($b = -2.05^{***}$) but not for employed older women ($b = 0.07$), 2) as compared to employed young women, a decrease was noticed for unemployed young women ($b = -0.63^{**}$) but not for employed older women ($b = 0.13$, and 3) as compared to unemployed young men, a decrease was also noticed for unemployed older men ($b=-1.05^{***}$), but not for unemployed young women ($b = 0.16$).

Last, triply discriminated individuals (i.e., unemployed old women) display a significantly lower self-esteem than that of the employed older women ($b=-1.45^{***}$), and that of the unemployed young women ($b=-0.68^{**}$). Conversely, unemployed older women display a higher level of self-esteem level than that of the unemployed older men ($b=0.53^*$). This result is linked to the fact that unemployed older women identify significantly more to their age group ($b=0.48^*$), which offers a buffering effect.

All in all, unemployment is associated with a significant decrease in self-esteem in all cases, whether individuals are singly, doubly or triply stigmatized. Overall, these results confirm that the link between self-esteem and the cumulation of discrimination can be considered even if these discriminations are different in nature.

[Insert Table 4]

The observed levels of correlations (Table 5) between the set of variables were also consistent with our expectations. Self-esteem was related to a poor perceived age

discrimination ($r = -.30^{**}$) to a high affective commitment ($r = .10^*$) and to a poor continuance commitment ($r = -.13^{**}$). Perceived age discrimination was negatively and significantly correlated with affective commitment ($r = -.14^{**}$), and was positively and significantly correlated with continuance commitment ($r = .13^{**}$). Age-group identification was positively associated to affective commitment ($r = .23^{**}$) and to continuance commitment ($r = .15^{**}$), but not to self-esteem ($r = .06, n.s.$). A positive link was found between affective and continuance commitment ($r = .54^{**}$). No relation was found between the perceived age discrimination and the age-group identification ($r = -.03, n.s.$).

[Insert Table 5]

Mediation Analysis

Data analysis

The antecedent variable in our model was categorical (ordinal); that is why we used the methodology introduced by Hayes and Preacher (2014) for whom direct and indirect effects become relative direct and indirect effects. Our methodological aim was to study the difference of self-esteem between two adjacent levels of stigmatizations. The mediation analysis enables a breakdown of this difference into several pieces. The first piece corresponds to the share associated solely with the addition of all levels of stigmatization (denoted by relative direct effect). The other pieces quantify a part of the difference in self-esteem between adjacent groups, resulting from the effect of discrimination on self-esteem, through the effect of discrimination on the four mediators (perceived age discrimination, affective commitment, continuance commitment, age group identification).

Estimates of the indirect effects were generated using bootstrapping, with 5,000 bootstrap replications (Hayes, 2018). The bootstrap confidence intervals for the relative indirect effect were

constructed using the Bias-corrected method. According to this method, if the Bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval does not contain 0, then a significant relative indirect effect is found.

Model specification

In order to test the model, perceived age discrimination, age-group identification, commitment, and self-esteem were used as measured variables. We also used a parallel mediator's model (see Figure 2) to estimate the relative effects of cumulated discrimination on self-esteem. In this model, all the mediators were included but we assumed that there was no path between them (see Hayes, 2018 for details on this model). Moreover, all the contrasts were used unlike for the modalities of the antecedent variable (three contrasts to replace three modalities 1, 2, or 3 discriminations, with the employed young male as the reference group).

Results

The analyses were performed in R (R core Team, 2016) using the boot package (Canty & Ripley 2019).

The hypothesized model predicted that the cumulation of gender, employment status and age stigmatization would explain perceived age discrimination, which in turn would predict poorer self-esteem. We had also assumed that age-group identification and commitment would mitigate the negative effect of the cumulated discrimination.

[Insert Figure 2]

Figure 2 provide the results for the fitted mediation model with self-esteem as an outcome. Table 5 displays the relative indirect effects through the mediators (age group identification, continuance commitment, affective commitment and perceived age discrimination).

First, in the preliminary analysis, we found a significantly lower self-esteem among triply discriminated individuals than among doubly discriminated individuals (estimate = -

0.409*, see Table 2). A significant part of this loss of self-esteem is significantly attributable to a loss of continuance commitment among triply discriminated individuals than among doubly discriminated individuals (relative indirect effect via continuance commitment ($I = -0.111$, $CI = [-0.242, -0.031]$, see Table 5). But this loss is compensated by a greater affective commitment for the triply discriminated individuals. To say it differently, these individuals show a greater affective commitment, which has a protective effect on their self-esteem (relative indirect effect via affective commitment $I=0.112$, $CI = [0.032, 0.246]$, see Table 5). The parts related to perceived age discrimination or age-group identification are not significant (respectively relative indirect effect via perceived age discrimination $I=0.006$, $CI = [-0.069, 0.082]$, and relative indirect effect via Age group identification $I=0.032$, $CI = [-0.019, 0.116]$). Results show that a significant part of the loss of self-esteem cannot be related to the considered mediators in the model, excepted for affective commitment. (relative direct effect $D = -0.45^{***}$, see Figure 2).

Next, we found a significantly lower self-esteem among doubly discriminated individuals than among individuals belonging to just one stigmatized category (estimate= -0.749^{***} , see Table 2). As previously, a significant part of this loss of self-esteem can directly be associated with the accumulation of discrimination (relative direct effect $D = -0.55^{***}$, see Figure 2). Concretely, this loss can only be significantly attributed to a greater perceived age discrimination for the doubly discriminated individuals than for the individuals belonging to one stigmatized category (relative indirect effect via Perceived age discrimination $I=-0.153$, $CI = [-0.270, -0.069]$). None of the other components of this loss can be significantly related to the other variables (relative indirect effect via Age group identification $I=-0.016$, $CI = [-0.074, 0.008]$, via Affective commitment $I=-0.025$, $CI = [-0.111, 0.033]$, and via Continuance commitment $I=0.000$, $CI = [-0.067, 0.068]$).

Although we did not find a significant difference in self-esteem between singly discriminated individuals and non-discriminated individuals, a significant amount of loss of self-esteem seemed to be associated with a greater perceived age discrimination for individuals belonging to one stigmatized category (relative indirect effect $I=-0.087$, $CI = [-0.217, -0.011]$).

[Insert Table 6]

Discussion

Previous research has shown that members of minority groups are particularly likely to be discriminated. However, the impacts of multiple discrimination on both well-being and coping strategies are yet to be studied. Based on the multiple jeopardy model (King, 1988; Wilks & Neto, 2013), the present research was thus conducted on a sample comprising both men and women, older and younger individuals, who were either employed or unemployed, and who experienced simple or multiple stigmatization. It was designed to examine how various coping strategies (i.e., age-group identification and commitment) mediate the relationship between the sensitivity to multiple discrimination and outcomes such as self-esteem. More precisely, it aimed at showing the sensitivity to discrimination of members of multiple stigmatized groups, the negative effects of this sensitivity on their self-esteem, the increase of these effects along with the cumulation of discrimination, and how various coping strategies (age-group identification and commitment) mediate the relationship between the sensitivity to multiple discrimination and outcomes such as self-esteem.

The contrast and mediation analyses seemed to validate most of our hypotheses. First, the hypothesis of an existing link between the cumulation of disadvantaged membership and the perception of discrimination (H1) was partially supported, since the doubly discriminated individuals feel more discriminated than the singly jeopardized ones who, in turn, feel more discriminated than non-discriminated individuals. However, the presumed difference of

sensitivity to discrimination between the doubly discriminated individuals and the triply discriminated individuals was not found. This result is in line with Remedios and Snyder (2018) who found no difference in perceived discrimination between participants with three stigmas and those with two stigmas. It also suggests that there is a threshold effect on the impact of the number of discriminations on the level of perception of discrimination, which should be examined in further research.

The predicted negative link between the perception of discrimination with self-esteem was also observed (H2). This means that the self-esteem of the triply discriminated individuals was lower than that of the doubly discriminated ones. Similarly, the self-esteem of these doubly discriminated individuals was lower than that of the individuals belonging to one stigmatized category. However, the difference between the level of self-esteem of individuals belonging to one stigmatized category and that of non-stigmatized individuals was not found. This result suggests that being a victim of only one form of discrimination has no influence on a person's self-esteem. Unexpectedly here, gender made little difference on self-esteem. However, the reverse was found for the unemployment status variable. In the present study, we have observed that the decrease of the level of self-esteem of unemployed individuals is the most significant. This result can be interpreted by referring to other authors (War, 1987; Jahoda, 1982; See also, McKee –Ryan et al, 2005; Desmette, 2003; Herman, 2007) according to whom unemployment leads to negative psychological and physical outcomes because unemployed individuals do not experience the various positive manifest and latent benefits associated to employment. For instance, Jahoda (1982) has listed a host of benefits of employment such as time structure on the day, socialization with others, collective purpose, increased status, and activity. As expected, unemployment has a more negative impact on self-esteem and self-image as compared to other forms of stigmatizations. This negative impact reflects upon the importance of employment in free market economy societies in

which having a job is the prime means of survival and social recognition. However, this negative impact is also related to a growing lack of control over one's life and to a marked feeling of helplessness (Desmette, 2003 ; Herman, 2007). The self-esteem of unemployed individuals decreases because their status induces a sense of guilt and makes them feel responsible for their situation : unemployed individuals often feel that they could find a job if they really wanted to.

Nevertheless, it seems that the more we experience discrimination, the more we are sensitive to signs of discrimination and that this sensitivity affects one's self-esteem. This result is in keeping with the numerous studies that have consistently showed that perceived discrimination is associated with lower self-esteem and less positive self-feelings (Borders & Liang, 2011; Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009; Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002) than with those that have suggested that stigmatization may also protect the self (Crocker & Major, 1989; Thijs & Piscoi, 2016). As recent literature on sexism and racism has shown, ageism is a social stressor that induces harmful psychological consequences. The impact of these negative outcomes needs to be considered since members of disadvantaged groups often have little or difficult access to coping resources (Brondolo, ver Halen, Pencille et al., 2009; Perry et al, 2013).

The prediction of an indirect positive association between perceived discrimination and self-esteem through the mediation of commitment (H4) was partially validated. We first noted that the relation between the cumulation of discrimination and self-esteem was significantly mediated through the affective commitment coping strategy. The use of that strategy was more important in triply jeopardized individuals than in less stigmatized individuals. This result thus shows that the affective commitment to an organization protects the self-esteem of discriminated individuals. It also suggests that discriminated individuals are likely to reflect on their situation by distinguishing the organization as an abstract entity from

the ways its members work and function within that structure. In other words, the organization is perceived through a public image or is seen as the conveyer of several values that make it socially desirable, even if management and workplace relationships are sometimes more questionable. Affective commitment towards an organization would thus indicate that discrimination is mitigated or that it is considered as an isolated event within one's career, which is made of ups and downs. The affective commitment towards an organization that perpetuates discriminatory practices can also be explained by the fact that discriminated individuals compensate the negative consequences of discrimination by the feeling of professional usefulness or contribution. The expected role of seniors as the conveyors of corporate memory (Duncan & Loretto, 2004) or as mentors to younger colleagues could also strengthen their affective commitment.

However, the result of the mediation analysis concerning the continuance commitment was not clear-cut. If the level of commitment increases with the cumulation of discrimination, it does not protect individual self-esteem. This commitment could develop because of a lack of better options, with professional disengagement leading to negative consequences. For discriminated individuals, commitment is mostly about keeping up appearances in a context that does not favor senior employment. Older workers' continuance commitment goes with a "feeling of being 'trapped' in the organization" (Snape & Redman, 2003a, p.81). Nevertheless, we have also noted a more positive evolution in the way older workers are seen in the wider society (Oberlé, 2014). The many attempts at including older people (e.g., inclusions schemes relying on inter-age-group accommodation sharing or inter-age leisurely activities) as well as the institutional recognition of their economic power or of their role in charity and non-profits help them to 1) distance themselves from their stigmatized age-group, 2) to explore alternative social identities and 3) increase their self-esteem.

Unexpectedly, the predicted mediation between perceived discrimination and self-esteem through age-group identification (H3) was not found. This result is surprising because it stands out from commonly reported findings. In our view, this can be explained by the fact that identification to a devalued ingroup can only be considered if the said ingroup is capable of showing social creativity in order to compensate its disadvantages. Indeed, according to the social identity theory (Tajfel, Turner, & Austin, 1979), members of underprivileged groups cope with their disadvantages through social creativity. They compensate the loss of their group distinctiveness by valuing alternative attributes, such as engaging in a downward comparison, re-evaluating the value or attribute of the comparison dimension, or changing the comparison dimension (see also Cambon & Yzerbyt, 2018; Derks, Van Laar, & Ellemers, 2007; Mummendey & Schreiber, 1984). It is likely that the older adults in this study had shown little trust in their group's potential to bear comparison with other social categories.

It is too soon to assume that the protection of self-esteem necessarily relies on an asserted membership to a stigmatized ingroup. However, the idea according to which the necessity to protect one's self-esteem leads members of stigmatized groups (e.g., seniors) to explore alternative social identities is also worth considering.

We acknowledge that this study leaves several questions unanswered that need to be addressed in the future. Quite unexpectedly, gender made little difference in our study despite the fact that the direct or indirect link between gender and self-esteem, via identification, is regularly evidenced (Schmitt et al., 2002). A likely explanation is that because of its banality, gender as a source of discrimination did not benefit from the depth of cognitive processing that is usually observed. Another explanation could be related to the nature of our design, and more precisely to our measurements (Perceived age discrimination, Work/job self-esteem, commitment), which might have led participants to assume that age and professional status (more than gender) were the real issues of the study. Thus, future research should perhaps lay

greater emphasis on gender so as to restore its “Master” category status (McCall, 2005; Warner, 2008).

Next, one can assume that feelings of stigmatization may also vary according to the targets’ type of job, work conditions, and business sector. For instance, senior workers are more likely to be discriminated if their position requires skills (Krings, Sczesny, & Kluge, 2011) that are commonly associated to younger workers (e.g., dynamism, creativity, adaptation to new technologies), rather than to older workers (e.g., stability and experience). Future research should thus also include additional variables, such as the type of work or the professional context.

In addition, if quantitative analyses enabled us to precisely compare the effects of discrimination according to the cumulation or number of discriminations, they still raise many methodological questions on the ways we could optimize the contributions of the intersectional approach. When aiming at understanding discrimination and its effects, researchers either opt for a qualitative (Bowleg, 2008; Shields, 2008) or quantitative (Cole, 2009) approach. They can also opt for an additive (Beale, 1970; Hancock, 2007; Weldon, 2006) or multiplicative (King, 1988; McCall, 2005, Weldon, 2006) approach. We can consider that these approaches are complementary, and not necessarily antagonistic. In that sense, future research aiming at understanding the complexity of responses within the intersectional perspective should try to consider the link between discriminations, mediators and psychological outcomes with a multi-methodological approach.

Last, we acknowledge that the variables of interest used in this study are measured, but not manipulated, and this methodological choice prevents us from talking about causality. Thus, further experimental studies are needed to corroborate a causal link between our variables.

These various limitations call for caution. Notwithstanding, the present study seems to show that the intersectional approach can be an efficient and effective contribution to the analyses of cumulated discriminations and psychological outcomes as well as to the role of several coping options. Indeed, the findings of this research can help to better understand the seniors' experiences of employment or unemployment. Indeed, given the current evolution of the job market, the tightening of work opportunities and the developing culture of early retirement, this research may remind the public authorities about the psychological and social consequences of cumulative discrimination experienced by older workers. Our results could thus prompt institutions, in France for instance, to give a legal framework to the status of older workers. It also calls on unions to develop proactive social and legal watch so that they could make sure that institutions and employers comply with current legislations.

This study may lead one to consider awareness programs that would enable HR officers and personnel managers to get acquainted with the suffering induced by stigmatization in the workplace. These programs could also help officers to implement plans that would keep older workers in employment; they could also safeguard social justice practices within organizations (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). We can indeed avoid the loss of skills, experience and corporate memory (Duncan & Loretto, 2004) by implementing a progressive work-time reduction for older workers. A part-time position could also help older workers transition towards retirement, while enabling them to transfer their knowledge, experience, and know-hows (Johnson, 2009) in supporting younger workers, providing institutional memory, and acting as mentors and socializers (Dorfman, 2000; Naudé, O'Driscoll, & Kalliath, 2009).

Finally, the results of this study may also pave the way for a greater awareness on the untenable ambivalence of society, which encourages the circulation and persistence of anti-senior prejudices while placing a high value on the seniors' experience and wisdom.

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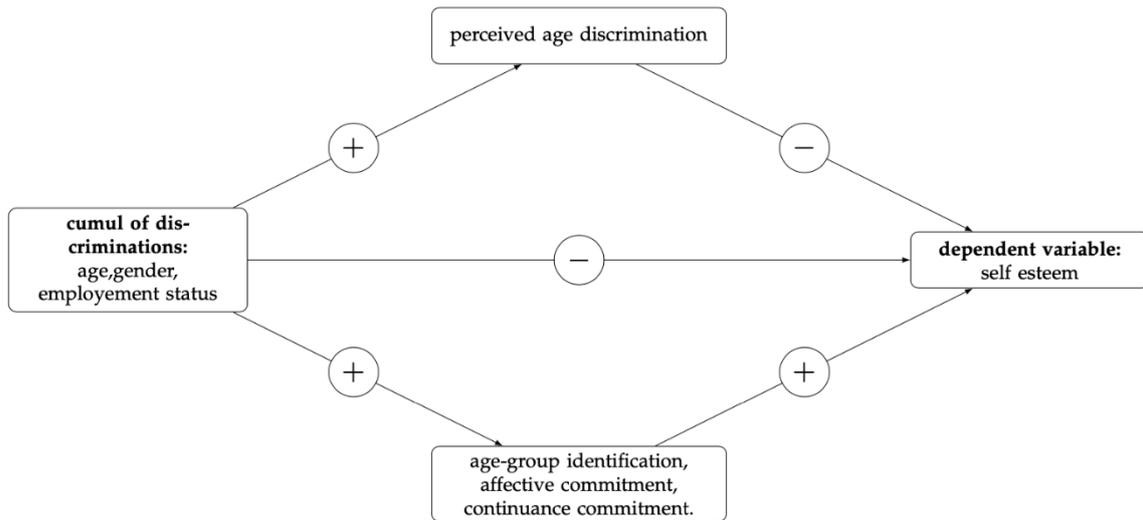


Figure 1. Hypothesized model of relationships between the main variables of the study: with perceived age discrimination as a mediator through which the association between the cumulation of discriminations and self-esteem is negative, and age group identification, affective commitment and continuance commitment as mediators through which this association is positive.

Table 1: Frequency table of the discrimination count variable.

| Levels | Counts | % of Total | Cumulative % |
|---------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 0 | 49 | 11.7 % | 11.7 % |
| 1 | 144 | 34.3 % | 46.0 % |
| 2 | 152 | 36.2 % | 82.2 % |
| 3 | 75 | 17.8 % | 100.0 % |

Note:

- The level 0 corresponds to the reference group: i.e., employed young men (EYM);
- The level 1 to employed young women (EYW), or to employed old men (EOM), or to unemployed young men (UYM);
- The level 2 to employed old women (EOW), or to unemployed old men (UOM), or to unemployed young women (UYM);
- The level 3 corresponds to unemployed old women (UOW).

Table 2: Means and Standard deviations of the five variables of interest for all the subgroups corresponding to the number of stigmas displayed. These subgroups are described in Table 1

| | n | Self Esteem | | Perceived Age Discrimination | | Affective Commitment | | Continuance Commitment | | Age Group Identification | |
|--------------------|-----|-------------|------|------------------------------|------|----------------------|------|------------------------|------|--------------------------|------|
| | | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD |
| 0 stigma (EYM) | 49 | 5.77 | 1.11 | 2.28 | 1.07 | 4.41 | 1.57 | 3.97 | 1.41 | 5.13 | 1.07 |
| EYW | 76 | 5.88 | 1.24 | 2.47 | 1.03 | 4.33 | 1.69 | 4.17 | 1.54 | 5.14 | 0.98 |
| EOM | 31 | 6.08 | 1.06 | 2.69 | 1.38 | 4.47 | 1.89 | 4.15 | 1.23 | 5.17 | 0.95 |
| UYM | 37 | 5.09 | 1.43 | 3.16 | 1.51 | 3.95 | 1.64 | 4.11 | 1.63 | 4.62 | 1.41 |
| 1 stigma | 144 | 5.72 | 1.31 | 2.70 | 1.27 | 4.26 | 1.72 | 4.15 | 1.50 | 5.01 | 1.12 |
| EOW | 36 | 6.01 | 1.14 | 2.94 | 1.69 | 4.43 | 1.72 | 4.26 | 1.65 | 5.07 | 1.31 |
| UYW | 59 | 5.25 | 1.47 | 3.55 | 1.20 | 3.55 | 1.93 | 3.68 | 1.75 | 4.54 | 1.28 |
| UOM | 57 | 4.04 | 1.61 | 3.63 | 1.22 | 4.44 | 1.95 | 4.56 | 1.80 | 4.78 | 1.28 |
| 2 stigmas | 152 | 4.98 | 1.65 | 3.43 | 1.36 | 4.09 | 1.93 | 4.15 | 1.78 | 4.75 | 1.29 |
| 3 stigmas (UOW) | 75 | 4.57 | 1.59 | 3.41 | 1.22 | 4.84 | 1.92 | 4.78 | 1.57 | 5.25 | 1.17 |

Table 3: Unstandardized regression weights (b) for the different contrasts between adjacent groups in term of cumulation of discrimination. For instance, 1 vs 0 indicates the comparison between a singly discriminated group and a non-discriminated group.

| Contrast | Self-esteem | | | Perceived Age Discrimination | | | Affective Commitment | | | Continuance Commitment | | | Age Group Identification | | |
|----------|-------------|------|-------|------------------------------|------|-------|----------------------|------|-------|------------------------|------|-------|--------------------------|------|-------|
| | b | SE | p | b | SE | p | b | SE | p | b | SE | p | b | SE | p |
| 1 vs 0 | -0.05 | 0.24 | 0.849 | 0.42 | 0.21 | 0.048 | -0.15 | 0.30 | 0.616 | 0.18 | 0.27 | 0.504 | -0.12 | 0.20 | 0.525 |
| 2 vs 1 | -0.75 | 0.17 | 0.000 | 0.73 | 0.15 | 0.000 | -0.17 | 0.21 | 0.417 | 0.00 | 0.19 | 0.994 | -0.26 | 0.14 | 0.065 |
| 3 vs 2 | -0.41 | 0.21 | 0.050 | -0.03 | 0.18 | 0.885 | 0.75 | 0.26 | 0.004 | 0.63 | 0.23 | 0.006 | 0.50 | 0.17 | 0.003 |
| R2 | 0.09 | 0.00 | 0.093 | 0.10 | 0.00 | 0.104 | 0.02 | 0.03 | 0.021 | 0.03 | 0.01 | 0.025 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.024 |

Table 4: Unstandardized regression weights (b) from the different contrasts between all subgroups that can be constructed in terms of cumulative discrimination.

| First stigma | Contrast | SE | PAD | AC | CC | AGI | |
|----------------|----------------|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| Unemployment | UYM-EYM | -0.68* | 0.88** | -0.46 | 0.14 | -0.52 | |
| | UYW-UYM | 0.16 | 0.38 | -0.40 | -0.43 | -0.07 | |
| | UOW-UYW | -0.68** | -0.14 | 1.29*** | 1.09*** | 0.71 | |
| | R ² | .091*** | .134*** | .078*** | .073*** | .065** | |
| | UYM-EYM | -0.68* | 0.88** | -0.46 | 0.13 | -0.52 | |
| | UOM-UYM | -1.05*** | 0.47 | 0.48 | 0.45 | 0.16 | |
| | UOW-UOM | 0.53* | -0.22 | 0.41 | 0.22 | 0.48* | |
| | R ² | .158*** | .142*** | .028 | .042* | .042* | |
| | Gender | EYW-EYM | 0.11 | 0.19 | -0.09 | 0.20 | 0.00 |
| | | EOW-EYW | 0.13 | 0.46 | 0.10 | 0.09 | -0.07 |
| UOW-EOW | | -1.45*** | 0.47 | 0.42 | 0.52 | 0.19 | |
| R ² | | 0.18*** | 0.13*** | 0.02 | 0.04* | 0.00 | |
| EYW-EYM | | 0.11 | 0.19 | -0.09 | 0.20 | 0.00 | |
| UYW-EYW | | -0.63** | 1.07*** | -0.78* | -0.49 | -0.59** | |
| UOW-UYW | | -0.68** | -0.14 | 1.29*** | 1.09*** | 0.71*** | |
| R ² | | 0.14*** | 0.19*** | 0.06** | 0.06** | 0.06** | |
| Age | | EOM-EYM | 0.31 | 0.41 | 0.06 | 0.18 | 0.03 |
| | | EOW-EOM | -0.07 | 0.24 | -0.05 | 0.11 | -0.10 |
| | UOW-EOW | -1.45*** | 0.47 | 0.42 | 0.52 | 0.19 | |
| | R ² | 0.21*** | 0.11*** | 0.01 | 0.05* | 0.00 | |
| | EOM-EYM | 0.31 | 0.41 | 0.06 | 0.18 | 0.03 | |
| | UOM-EOM | -2.05*** | 0.93*** | -0.03 | 0.41 | -0.39 | |
| | UOW-UOM | 0.53* | -0.22 | 0.41 | 0.22 | 0.48* | |
| | R ² | 0.24*** | 0.17*** | 0.01 | 0.04* | 0.03 | |

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$., *** $p < .001$

Table 5: Means, standard deviations, and correlations

| Variable | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---------------------------------|----------|-----------|--------|--------|-------|-------|
| 1. Self esteem | 5.25 | 1.54 | | | | |
| 2. Perceived age discrimination | 3.04 | 1.34 | -.30** | | | |
| 3. Age-group identification | 4.98 | 1.20 | .06 | -.03 | | |
| 4. Affective commitment | 4.32 | 1.83 | .10* | -.14** | .23** | |
| 5. Continuance commitment | 4.24 | 1.63 | -.13** | .13** | .15** | .54** |

Note.

M and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

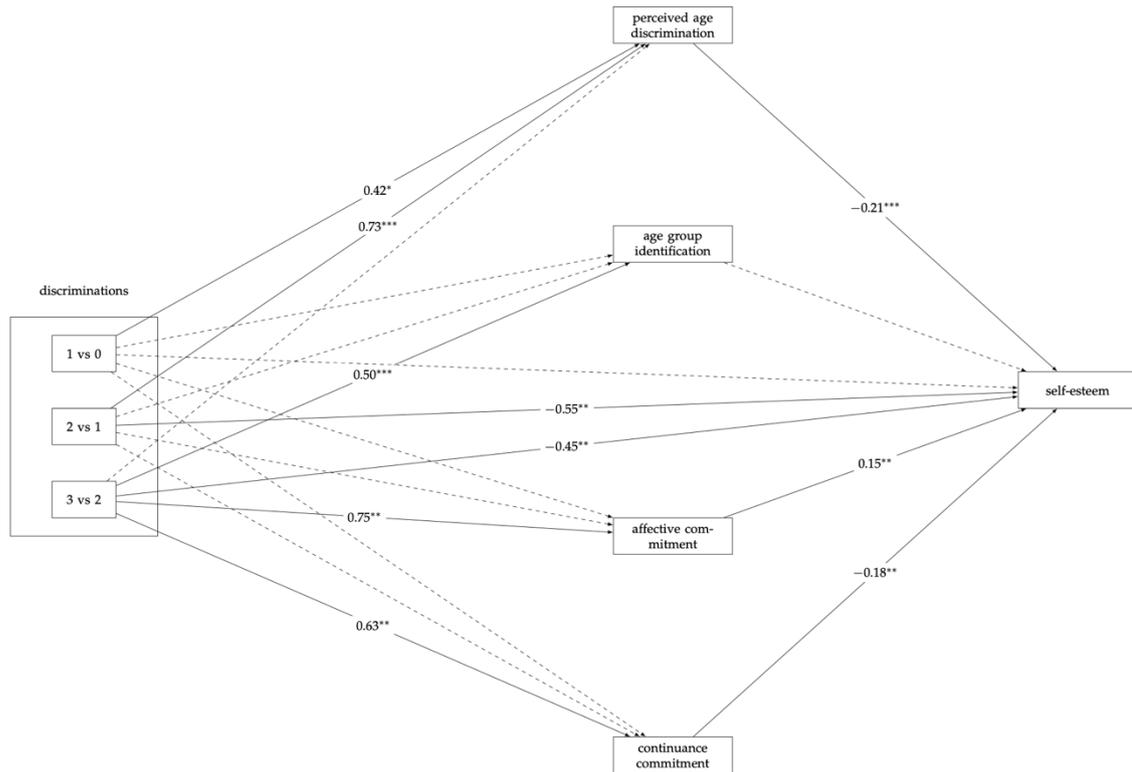


Figure 2: The theoretical model adopted for self-esteem. Only the significant paths are reported in the figure. The estimated path weights (ie regression coefficients) between continuous variables are unstandardized.

Note:

• $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 6: The relative indirect effects of the cumulation of discrimination on self-esteem. CI denotes Bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval with a significance level of 5%.

| | estimate | ci_lower | ci_upper |
|---|----------|----------|----------|
| 1 vs 0 via Perceived age discrimination | -0.087 | -0.217 | -0.011 |
| 2 vs 1 via Perceived age discrimination | -0.153 | -0.270 | -0.069 |
| 3 vs 2 via Perceived age discrimination | 0.006 | -0.069 | 0.082 |
| 1 vs 0 via Affective commitment | -0.023 | -0.130 | 0.064 |
| 2 vs 1 via Affective commitment | -0.025 | -0.111 | 0.033 |
| 3 vs 2 via Affective commitment | 0.112 | 0.032 | 0.246 |
| 1 vs 0 via Continuance commitment | -0.032 | -0.153 | 0.051 |
| 2 vs 1 via Continuance commitment | 0.000 | -0.067 | 0.068 |
| 3 vs 2 via Continuance commitment | -0.111 | -0.242 | -0.031 |
| 1 vs 0 via Age group identification | -0.008 | -0.070 | 0.013 |
| 2 vs 1 via Age group identification | -0.016 | -0.074 | 0.008 |
| 3 vs 2 via Age group identification | 0.032 | -0.019 | 0.116 |