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The Extent to Which People are Hired Based on Race

Racism has been a highly exercised xenophobic, prejudiced belief in the United States for quite a long stretch. This belief in the superiority of the white race has come to harm and affect many different people of many different races in many different fields of work, education, and life for a very long time. While racial discrimination may be experienced in any setting, employment has proven to be the center of some very extreme cases of racism. In recent times, numerous studies have surfaced showing the reality and the magnitude of racial discrimination in urban American life. Whether these astounding findings have had an effect, negative or positive, on the professional treatment of non-white people in the country is debatable, and arguably not probable. Not only are people of color often paid less for doing the same jobs as caucasians; but in many situations, job applicants of color are hired at wildly lower rates than their white counterparts, regardless of their experience, academic accomplishments, and overall qualifications.

People of color already have many hard challenges to endure before even trying to start their careers. Getting a college education, which is harder for people of color in some cases, does not necessarily mean that they get equal opportunities in the labor force. Erik Sherman exhibits this knowledge in his article for *Forbes* titled "Hiring Bias Blacks And Latinos Face Hasn't Improved In 25 Years": "Getting a college education, which many people tout as the grand

solution for inequality, doesn't mean things improve that much" (Sherman para 9). Furthermore, when people of racial minorities are able to successfully find employment, they often find themselves in the midst of a large and unjust pay gap: Sherman also states that "Blacks and Latinos, even well educated, face adverse conditions that oppose the growth of wealth" (Sherman para 9). This means that while people of non-white races already frequently struggle with simply getting hired, they also experience what can be a huge difference in pay from their caucasian counterparts: "Whites possess roughly 12 times the wealth of African Americans; in fact, whites near the bottom of the income distribution possess more wealth than blacks near the top of the income distribution" (Pager and Shepherd para 31). In addition to setbacks regarding the lack of help education provides people of color in urban American society, residential separation by race continues to be a principal attribute of modern American cities as well. In their piece for the *Annual Review of Sociology*, Devah Pager and Hana Shepherd write about a specific example of racism from landlords: "Examples from a sample of discrimination claims filed with the Civil Rights Commission of Ohio point to the failure of landlords to provide adequate maintenance for housing units, to harassment or physical threats by managers or neighbors, and to the unequal enforcement of a residential association's rules" (Pager and Shepherd para 29). These troubles surrounding decent housing most likely contribute to other struggles of racial minorities, and most definitely add to the overall struggle of succeeding in a white-dominated country with a staggering history of racism. With the struggles to get decent housing, high-paying jobs, and treated with equal respect proving to be so hard for non-white individuals, it may come as no surprise that even just getting an interview with an obviously non-white, ethnic name can be extremely difficult for these people as well.

For African-Americans and Latinos, much harder work is required just to get an interview, even with the same qualifications and levels of experience as white candidates. Studies have shown specific examples of white people being favored over people of color in the process of hiring, despite how qualified each applicant was. In a study at George Mason University, it was found that the Fairfax County school district was “hiring black applicants at far lower rates than their white counterparts in 2012, even though black applicants had, on average, more experience and more education” (Balingit para 4). In another study, researchers “mailed thousands of résumés to employers with job openings and measured which ones were selected for callbacks for interviews” (Mullainathan para 4). Before sending them, these researchers “randomly used stereotypically African-American names (such as ‘Jamal’) on some and stereotypically white names (like ‘Brendan’) on others” (Mullainathan para 4). It was found that “the same résumé was roughly 50 percent more likely to result in callback for an interview if it had a ‘white’ name” (Mullainathan para 5). Furthermore, Pager and Shepherd describe the results of many similar studies done to prove the high levels of racism in the labor force. The results of these studies were astonishing: “Experimental audit studies focusing on hiring decisions have consistently found strong evidence of racial discrimination, with estimates of white preference ranging from 50% to 240%” (Pager and Shepherd para 21). These are only a couple of examples in a world of situations identical to these two.

The employment process can be grueling for applicants of color, with racism and discrimination being highly prominent in many areas of the labor force. Employers have varying reasons for being reluctant to hire those of a race that is different from their own. In a dissertation by Hilda Marciel L. Knechtel, a few of these reasons are given: “Several studies

document employers' discriminatory practices and unfair ranking of candidates. The main causes of these practices are attributed to a) stereotyping and prejudices b) uncertainty about the productivity of individuals belonging to certain groups and c) earlier negative experiences with individuals belonging to certain Groups.” (Knechtel 23). Additionally, Moriah Balingit points out another blaring issue with racial bias and discrimination using a quote from John B. King Jr., who served as education secretary in former United States President Barack Obama's administration: ““Part of the challenge with issues of bias is implicit bias operates without intention. That means you have to make extraordinary efforts to overcome that implicit bias.”” (Balingit para 20). Here, King is arguing that many people already have these racial biases implanted in their thoughts, and controlling their actions. He argues that people must actually work hard and make a strong effort to control these thoughts, and be aware of the biases of which they might not have even known the existence. No matter how hard people of color work to succeed in the United States, they will find that the odds are constantly against them, and that white people have it much easier simply because of the color of their skin. “The truth, based on lots of data over years, is that if you're Black or Latino in the U.S., you get far from an equal shake. Your efforts have to be longer, stronger, and chances are you still will be treated worse” (Sherman para 4).

Not only are people of color--African Americans, Latinos, Asians, Native Americans, and others--often paid dramatically less money for holding the exact same occupations as caucasians; but in many cases, job applicants of color are employed at severely lower rates than their white counterparts, regardless of their experience, academic accomplishments, and overall qualifications. Despite the clear showings of racism in modern American society and in many

aspects of everyday life, there has been minimal progress to improve these conditions for people of color in the United States in recent times. The American people can most likely expect many more studies to surface regarding racial discrimination and segregation in the labor force--as well as in many other aspects of life--and perhaps actions will be taken to encourage racial equality nationwide. Until then, non-caucasian American citizens will likely anticipate change; and continue to use their voices to persistently, strongly, and urgently speak out against the common racism in their home country of America.

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