

Ethnic Discrimination in Hiring Decisions: A Meta-Analysis of Correspondence Tests 1990–2015

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Objectives

For almost 50 years field experiments have been used to study ethnic and racial discrimination in hiring decisions, consistently reporting high rates of discrimination against minority applicants.

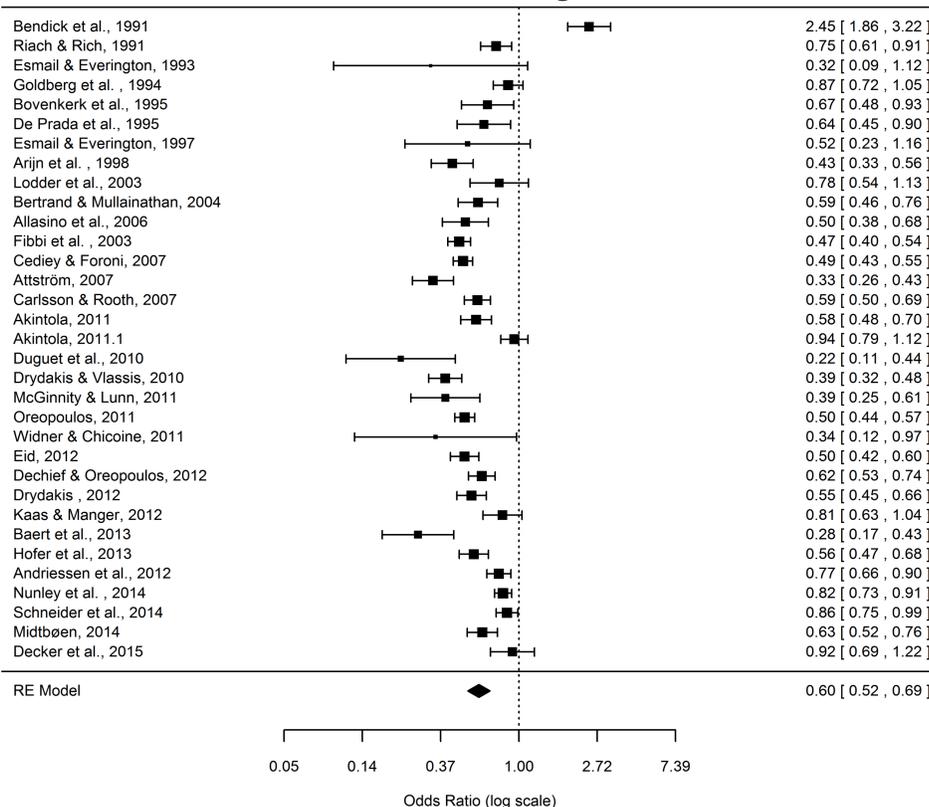
While systematic reviews of these experiments exist (e.g. Riach and Rich 2002, Rich 2014), no study has undertaken a meta-analysis to examine the findings of these studies.

Methods

- Meta-Analysis
- Geographic limit: OECD countries
- Time frame: 1990–2015
- Focus on written correspondence studies, exclude in-person audits
- Differentiate between study level and subgroups
- 42 Studies from 18 different countries, 730 subgroups

Results

Ethnic and Racial Discrimination in Hiring Decisions



Notes: given are the odds ratios of each study (point estimate as square, two standard errors as lines) on the left, along with the numerical representation on the right. At the bottom, the rhomboid summarizes the effect size across studies. N= 33 studies (study level).

Hypothesis 1: Minority candidates are discriminated against across all countries and time.

Confirmed: Minority applicants have to write 1.5 times as many applications as their majority peers

Hypothesis 2: Discrimination is lower for second generation youths than for first generation immigrants. **No clear pattern**, points towards taste-based discrimination

Hypothesis 3: More distant and visible minority groups are discriminated against more.

Confirmed: Results show clear ethnic hierarchies

Hypothesis 4: Discrimination is likely to be lower following the adoption of the EU Directives on discrimination in 2000.

Rejected: Higher discrimination rates after 2000

Hypothesis 5: Due to more extensive application packs discrimination is lower in German speaking countries than in other European countries.

Confirmed: Lower discrimination rates in German speaking countries

Conclusion

Our results show that discrimination against minority candidates is still wide-spread, irrespective of the ethnic or racial group, the length of stay, the country under study, gender, skill level, or the anti-discrimination legislation in place.

There are strong indications that ethnic discrimination in hiring reflects taste-based discrimination, although statistical discrimination also seems to occur.

Information and References

Draft Paper:

Zschirnt, Eva and Ruedin, Didier, Ethnic Discrimination in Hiring Decisions: A Meta-Analysis of Correspondence Tests 1990–2015 (April 22, 2015). Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2597554>

References:

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