

**ICS PhD Project 6:**

**Coping strategies to avoid being the target of ethnic discrimination: a longitudinal study of job searches (PhD project 2 in TARGETS)**

**Aim**

To understand: 1) whether and how members of disadvantaged groups try to avoid discrimination while searching for jobs; 2) under which conditions they interpret employers' reactions as discriminatory; 3) whether and how they adapt their job search strategies in reaction to perceived discrimination.

**Theoretical background**

Ethnic discrimination in the labour market is persistent and pervasive. As demonstrated in many field experiments, job applicants with an ethnic minority background have to apply significantly more often than the majority group to receive an equal number of positive call-backs from employers (Di Stasio & Lancee, 2020). Previous research, however, has long neglected the job search behaviour of members of disadvantaged groups and the strategies they may adopt to avoid discrimination. For example, ethnic minorities may conceal ethnic cues when applying for jobs, or broaden their search to maximize employment chances (Kang et al., 2016). These job search strategies are crucial to avoid discriminatory employers but have received little attention in the literature. The key contribution of this PhD project is to analyse the job search behaviour of disadvantaged groups as it unfolds over time. Do members of ethnic minorities try to avoid employers that they perceive as discriminatory? Do they interpret rejections and unsuccessful searches as evidence of discrimination? To what extent, and how, do they adapt their search behaviour in response to episodes of perceived discrimination?

**Research design**

We will take a dynamic approach and use digital daily diaries to collect real-time longitudinal data on the job search behaviour of ethnic minorities in the Dutch labour market, and how it evolves over time. We will track how job seekers react to the feedback received from employers and whether they adapt the job search in response to perceived discrimination. We will combine the organizational psychology literature and its focus on core job search dimensions (e.g. search intensity, content and persistence) with the sociological literature on stigmatization and the coping strategies of stigmatized groups.

**Project**

This project is part of a larger ERC-funded project ('TARGETS') on ethnic discrimination in the labour market. Combining insights from sociology, social and organizational psychology, sociolegal and organizational studies, TARGETS approaches the study of ethnic discrimination from a multi-actor and dynamic perspective.

**Literature**

- Di Stasio, V., & Lancee, B. (2020). Understanding why employers discriminate, where and against whom: The potential of cross-national, factorial and multi-group field experiments. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 65, 100463.
- Kang, S. K., DeCelles, K. A., Tilcsik, A., & Jun, S. (2016). Whiteness résumés: Race and self-presentation in the labor market. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 61(3), 469-502.

**Project initiators**

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**Location**

Utrecht University