

Project 10: How organizations shape ethnic discrimination in the labour market: studying employers

Aim

To examine how the organizational context moderates the effect of employers' interethnic attitudes on discriminatory behaviour

Theoretical background

Existing studies have found a surprisingly low correlation between interethnic prejudice reported in observational surveys and discriminatory behaviour (Schütz and Six 1996). One reason for this might be that observational data are not useful in picking up prejudice. Implicit Association Tests (IAT) might improve on this by measuring implicit attitudes, which can be activated without awareness. There is indeed some evidence that implicit attitudes predict discriminatory behaviour of employers (Rooth 2010).

However, another reason for the low correlation between interethnic prejudice and discriminatory behaviour may be that the workplace setting is rarely accounted for. For example, Ziegert and Hanges (2005), find that implicit attitudes and the organizational climate interact. To understand discriminatory behaviour of employers, it is crucial to account for the context in which employers make their decisions. While there is ample research on the relation between interethnic attitudes and discrimination, there is virtually no scholarly work that studies how the effect of (implicit) attitudes and recruitment behaviour is shaped by the organizational context.

Hence, a pressing question that has not been yet been sufficiently addressed is: How does employer's attitudes and recruitment practices affect discrimination? This project seeks to study how the organizational context moderates the effect of employers' interethnic attitudes on discriminatory behaviour.

Research design

The project collects unique organizational data and conducts a vignette study and implicit association tests among employers in four countries (UK, NL, DE, ES). Furthermore, there is the possibility to carry out laboratory experiments. It is also possible to work with existing cross-national field experimental data on hiring discrimination. The position is part of the VIDI project: 'Bringing the context back in: How national institutions and organizations shape ethnic discrimination in the labour market. A multi-method comparative study'. Within the framework of the VIDI, candidates are encouraged to develop their own dissertation project. Possible projects cover, but are not limited to, de-biasing strategies, implicit bias and group decision-making dynamics. Candidates have a background in sociology, social psychology, or a related field. Good proficiency in one or more of the languages of the countries of study is desired. For questions or information about the project, please contact Bram Lancee (B.Lancee@uva.nl).

Literature

Rooth, D.-O. (2010). Automatic associations and discrimination in hiring: Real world evidence. *Labour Economics*, 17(3), 523-534.

Schütz, H., & Six, B. (1996). How strong is the relationship between prejudice and discrimination? A meta-analytic answer. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 20(3), 441-462.

Ziegert, J. C., & Hanges, P. J. (2005). Employment discrimination: the role of implicit attitudes, motivation, and a climate for racial bias. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90(3), 553.

Project initiators

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Location

Amsterdam