

Women, minorities face special hurdles in job market

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A new study from North Carolina State University shows that white men receive significantly more tips about job opportunities than women and racial minorities - particularly among people in upper management positions - highlighting racial and gender inequality in the labor market.

"Our research shows that 95 times out of 100, white men receive more job leads than white women or Hispanic men or women," says Dr. Steve McDonald, an assistant professor of sociology at NC State who was the lead author of the study. On average, there is no difference in the number of job leads received by white men compared to black men and women. "However," McDonald continues, "white males receive more job leads when they are high-level supervisors, while black men and women receive more job leads when they are in non-management positions that supervise no one." The findings of the study show that the disparity between white men, minorities and women is greatest among workers in high-level management. McDonald points out that "these gender and race differences in access to job opportunities help to explain why white men continue to fill a disproportionately large number of jobs in upper management."

The study, which examined data from a nationally representative survey of 3,000 people, looked at the amount of information people received about job opportunities through routine conversations without asking for it. McDonald says the gap in job information between white men and Hispanics is partially attributable to the fact that whites tend to have more "social capital" than Hispanics. McDonald explains that social

capital, in this context, is defined as the extent and quality of connections to people in various fields of employment.

However, the study was not able to ascertain why white women receive fewer tips on job opportunities than [white men](#), since the two groups have approximately the same amount of social capital. Nor was the study able to explain why the job leads disparity among [women](#) and minorities was greatest among high-level supervisors. McDonald says that while the study could not reach any firm conclusions on the issue, the [disparity](#) may stem from some form of either conscious or subconscious discrimination on the part of co-workers and employers.

More information: The study, "Networks of Opportunity: Gender, Race and Job Leads," will be published in the August issue of *Social Problems*.

Source: North Carolina State University ([news](#) : [web](#))

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