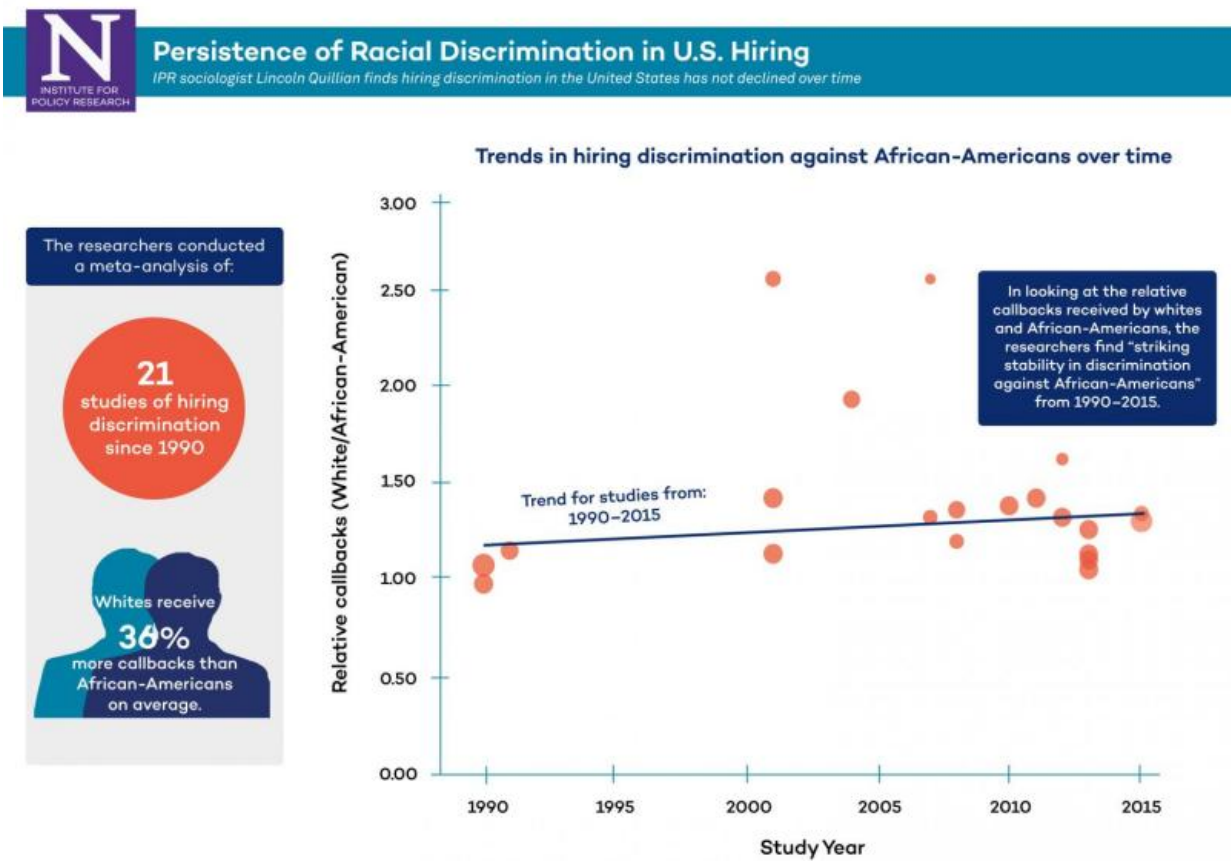


Research finds entrenched hiring bias against African-Americans

September 13 2017, by Hilary Hurd Anyaso



Quillian, L., D. Pager, O. Hexel, and A. Midtboen. 2017. The persistence of racial discrimination: A meta-analysis of field experiments in hiring over time. *Proceedings of the Academy of Sciences*. doi:101073.

Credit: Northwestern University

The jobless rate for African-Americans persists regardless of their level

of educational attainment, when compared with whites. Racial discrimination factors into company decisions, resulting in racial gaps in the labor force—these were the focus of two recent news articles.

In a new Northwestern University meta-analysis, the largest and most comprehensive of its kind, researchers aiming to assess trends in hiring [discrimination](#) in America against African-Americans and Latinos found no change in rates of discrimination against African-Americans in field experiments of hiring from 1990 to 2015.

"It is often suggested that prejudice and discrimination are fading out over time through a gradual process of liberalization of attitudes," said Lincoln Quillian, senior author of the study and professor of sociology in the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences at Northwestern. "But we found striking stability in discrimination against African- Americans."

The researchers found some evidence that discrimination declined during this period for Latinos, although the small number of field experiments including Latinos means the trend results are not highly certain.

Quillian said the analysis was important to understanding the sources of [racial inequality](#), especially in employment, and to generally understand the changing status of race in American society. They realized that this could be investigated by putting together data from field experiments of hiring discrimination, which provides a much more valid method to assess discrimination than the much more indirect methods that others have used.

He said it was striking and depressing to find a lack of change in rates of hiring discrimination over a 25-year period.

"During this time, the country saw some favorable racial trends, like

declining black-white test score gaps, slow declines in racial residential segregation and the election of the country's first black president," said Quillian, a faculty fellow with the University's Institute for Policy Research. "But whites received on average 36 percent more callbacks to interview than African-Americans with equal job qualifications, and we found no evidence that this level of discrimination had changed."

Quillian said the support for the principle of equal treatment regardless of race has increased, and explicit prejudice has declined, but other measures of more subtle racial biases had not shown similar change.

"Our results are consistent with the idea that the subtler racial biases are important for hiring discrimination," Quillian said. "The results suggest we need to realize direct discrimination on the basis of race in hiring still exists and is something that the country needs to confront."

The results support the need for efforts to enforce anti-discrimination laws and suggest a continued need for compensatory policies like affirmative action in hiring, Quillian said, adding that he and his co-authors are writing other papers based on meta-analyzing discrimination in hiring. One analysis puts the U.S. in international context by comparing rates of hiring discrimination between the U.S. and Europe.

"Meta-analysis of [field experiments](#) shows no change in racial discrimination in hiring over time" published online in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)* Sept. 12.

More information: "Meta-analysis of field experiments shows no change in racial discrimination in hiring over time," by Lincoln Quillian et al. www.pnas.org/content/early/2011/09/12/10737

Provided by Northwestern University

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