

UNIT 2 – NAME RESOURCE SUGGESTION**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	TITLES	PAGE #
	LIST OF SUGGESTED WEBSITES	2
1	Black Names a Resume Burden	3-5
2	Can a ‘Black’ Name Affect Job Prospects?	6-8
3	Evidence of Racial Gender Bias in Faculty Mentoring	9-10
4	Having a Foreign Sounding Name? Change it to Get a Job.	11
5	His Name is Jose Zamora	Video
6	Like it or not, a name can impact your career	12-14
7	(NBER) Employers’ Replies to Racial Names	15-16
8	(NBER) Labor Market Discrimination – Original Source Material	(PDF)
9	Social Science Research Network	(PDF)
10	Undercover Job Hunters Reveal Huge Race Bias	17-18
11	Workplace Discrimination Based on Names	19-20

Suggested Assignment:

1. Have students work in groups to create **(poster) infographics** from sections of the two pdf reports below.
2. From the infographics students can create **a precis**.
Statistics and research used in establishing an argument.

[National Bureau of Economic Research](#)64 page pdf – **Original Source Material**

* pdf file on labor market discrimination is good for academic analysis on the topic
Labor Market Discrimination and Racial Differences in PreMarket Factors
By Pedro Carneiro, James J. Heckman, Dimitri V. Masterov

[Social Science Research Network: EEOC](#)54 page pdf – **Original Source Material**

*pdf for Wisconsin Law Review and UC Davis Legal Studies Research

Research: Brief list of suggested websites and sources for names

1. [Black Names a Resume Burden](#) CBS News
2. [Can a Black Name Affect Job Prospects?](#) ABC News
3. [Have a Foreign Sounding Name? Change it to Get a Job.](#)
4. [Evidence of Racial, Gender Bias in Faculty Mentoring](#)
5. [Article: He Dropped One Letter in His Name While Applying for Jobs](#)
6. [Video: He Dropped One Letter in His Name While Apply for Jobs](#)
7. [Like it or not, name can impact your career](#)
8. [National Bureau of Economic Research](#)
9. [National Bureau of Economic Research - Original Source Material \(pdf\)](#)
10. [Social Science Research Network](#)
11. [Undercover job hunters reveal huge race bias in Britain's workplace](#)
12. [Workplace Discrimination Based on Names](#)

1 -Black Names a Resume Burden?

When Vonnessa Goode gives birth in a few weeks, one of her first decisions could be among the toughest: whether to give her daughter a distinctively black name.

On the one hand, Goode and the child's father don't want their daughter "robbed of her ethnicity," she said. On the other, she believes a distinctively black name could end up being an economic impediment.

"I do believe now when a resume comes across an employer's desk they could be easily discriminated against because they know that person is of African-America descent," she said. "It's a difficult decision."

Minorities of all kinds have wrestled with whether to celebrate their culture by giving their children distinctive names, or help them "blend in" with a name that won't stick out. Thousands of Jews have changed their names, hoping to improve their economic prospects in the face of discrimination, as have Asians and other minorities.

Blacks, however, have chosen increasingly distinctive names over the past century, with the trend accelerating during the 1960s.

Researchers who have looked at Census records have found that 100 years ago, the 20 most popular names were largely the same for blacks and whites; now only a handful are among the most popular with both groups. Names like DeShawn and Shanice are almost exclusively black, while whites, whose names have also become increasingly distinctive, favored names like Cody and Caitlin.

Two recent papers from the Cambridge-based National Bureau of Economic Research draw somewhat different conclusions about whether a black name is a burden. One, an analysis of the 16 million births in California between 1960 and 2000, claims it has no significant effect on how someone's life turns out.

The other, however, suggests a black-sounding name remains an impediment to getting a job. After responding to 1,300 classified ads with dummy resumes, the authors found black-sounding names were 50 percent less likely to get a callback than white-sounding names with comparable resumes.

If nothing else, the first paper, by the NBER's Roland Fryer and the University of Chicago's Steven Levitt, based on California birth data, provides probably the most detailed snapshot yet of distinctive naming practices. It shows, for instance, that in recent years, more than 40 percent of black girls were given names that weren't given to even one of the more than 100,000 white girls born in the state the same year.

The paper says black names are associated with lower socioeconomic status, but the authors don't believe it's the names that create an economic burden.

Using Social Security numbers, they track the changes in circumstances of women born in the early 1970s who then show up in the data in 1980s and '90s as mothers themselves. The data also show whether those second-generation mothers have health insurance and in which Zip

Codes they reside - admittedly imperfect measurements of economic achievement.

The data do appear to show that a poor woman's daughter is more likely to be poor when she gives birth herself - but no more so because she has a distinctively black name.

To Fryer, that suggests black parents shouldn't be afraid to choose ethnic names. It also, he says, suggests more broadly that for blacks to improve economically, they don't have to change their culture, but should push for greater integration in society.

"It's not really that you're named Kayesha that matters, it's that you live in a community where you're likely to get that name that matters," Fryer said.

The University of Chicago's Marianne Bertrand and MIT's Sendhil Mullainathan, however, appeared to find that a black-sounding name can be an impediment, in another recent NBER paper entitled "Are Emily and Greg More Employable Than Lakisha and Jamal?"

The authors took the content of 500 real resumes off online job boards and then evaluated them, as objectively as possible, for quality, using such factors as education and experience. Then they replaced the names with made-up names picked to "sound white" or "sound black" and responded to 1,300 job ads in The Boston Globe and Chicago Tribune last year.

Previous studies have examined how employers responded to similarly qualified applicants they meet in person, but this experiment attempted to isolate the response to the name itself.

White names got about one callback per 10 resumes; black names got one per 15. Carries and Kristens had call-back rates of more than 13 percent, but Aisha, Keisha and Tamika got 2.2 percent, 3.8 percent and 5.4 percent, respectively. And having a higher quality resume, featuring more skills and experience, made a white-sounding name 30 percent more likely to elicit a callback, but only 9 percent more likely for black-sounding names.

Even employers who specified "equal opportunity employer" showed bias, leading Mullainathan to suggest companies serious about diversity must take steps to confront even unconscious biases - for instance, by not looking at names when first evaluating a resume.

Both studies have their shortcomings; the California records give only broad indicators of economic achievement, and studying whose resumes elicit callbacks doesn't show who ultimately gets the jobs or what they do once employed.

But both also point to dilemmas for advocates of greater economic opportunity for blacks. Some, like Fryer, are eager to show black culture isn't a handicap, and black parents shouldn't shy away from it. On the other hand, Bertrand and Mullainathan's work suggests a black name could still conceivably hold someone back. The question is whether a distinctive name is a cause or consequence of black isolation.

Where is Goode leaning? She says her daughter will likely end up with a "neutral" name, Naomi or Layla perhaps, that won't signal her race either way.

Michelle Botus, a 37-year-old student at Bunker Hill Community College who has named her four children Asia, Alaysia, Khalima and Denzil, said she would advise mothers to choose names they like, then make sure their children get the education they need to rise above any

discrimination they face.

"The fact you didn't give the child the name you wanted, your regrets could be manifested in other ways later on," said Botus. "I would say go for it. Just the fact that the mother would have the insight to have a dilemma, that means she's thinking, and that's one of the most important skills in parenting."

By Justin Pope

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2 - Can a 'Black' Name Affect Job Prospects? (ABC News)

It's the first major decision new parents face, and their choice will stick with their child for a lifetime: what to name the baby. And today simple is out and variety is in, especially for many black Americans.

Many African-American parents say they're returning to their roots by choosing names that sound uniquely black.

For some a unique name has been an asset. For stars like Oprah Winfrey or Shaquille O'Neal or Denzel Washington, a distinctive first name can become a unique, identifiable brand, almost a trademark.

But some ordinary folks say being different is just too difficult.

Tiqua Gator says people just can't seem to get her name right. But she says her real burden runs even deeper. She's concerned about getting a better job, and sees her name as a potential handicap.

"Something that was supposed to separate you from everyone else is now at the same time hindering you," she said.

Gator has come to believe she'd have an easier time lining up a job in her chosen field of marketing if she had a plain name like Jane.

"I think that they feel that they can identify better with a Pam or Amber rather than a Tiqua," she said.

The Résumé Test

And Gator may be on to something. A recent University of Chicago study, "Are Emily and Brendan More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal?" by Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan, found that people with names like Pam or Amber got 50 percent more callbacks for job interviews than applicants with similar résumés and names like Lakisha and Shaniqua. (To read the full study, [click here](#).)

Even though the study looked at 5,000 résumés, a group of young professionals didn't quite believe the name on top of their résumés could make that big a difference. The skeptics included Carita, an attorney; Tavoria, a law student; Orpheus, an educator; Arsenetta, a statistician; Tremelle, a financial adviser; and Ebony, an M.B.A. student.

So 20/20 asked the six to participate in an experiment.

20/20 put 22 pairs of names to the test — the six skeptics included.

Each person posted two résumés on popular job-search Web sites — one under his or her real name, and the same identical résumé under a made-up, "white-sounding" names like Peter, Melissa and Kathleen.

You'd think the identical résumés would get the same attention. Instead, the résumés with the white-sounding names on them were actually downloaded 17 percent more often by job recruiters looking for candidates.

"You really never know why you don't get called back for that interview. I thought it was because of my job skills, or my résumé wasn't appropriate, but I never thought it was because of my name," Carita said.

She was shocked by the calls from potential employers — not to her, but to her fictitious white counterpart. "I was just blown away that Kathleen got phone calls for three of the four weeks of the study, and I didn't get any. And Kathleen does not exist," she said.

Arsenetta also was envious of her fictitious white alter ego, Kimberly.

"They were calling her morning, noon and night," she said. "I was standing there looking at my phone going, 'God, I want to answer that phone call and tell the man I'm interested in this job!' "

Ebony felt frustrated that companies were quick to stereotype her by name. "Once they get to know me, they say, 'Oh, you know, she is Ebony but she's not that militant one or she's not that rowdy little girl or she's not the ignorant one. She's very smart and very capable of doing this job,' " she said.

What kind of companies were responsible? Our independent research found biased responses from employment agencies, law firms and even large financial corporations.

Recruiter: 'There Is Rampant Racism'

But capable doesn't always matter. A job recruiter for Fortune 500 companies in northern California revealed an ugly secret.

"There is rampant racism everywhere. And people who deny that are being naïve," said the recruiter, who spoke on the condition her name would not be used.

The recruiter said if she were given two résumés, all else being equal, except one says Shaniqua, and the other says Jennifer, she would call Jennifer first.

It's a choice she says she was trained to make: When representing certain companies, do not send black candidates. And on a résumé, a name may be the only cue of the applicant's race.

"I think that the way that I had been taught and what has helped me to succeed in the industry is unfair," she said.

It's also racist, and, quite possibly, illegal.

That's why author Shelby Steele feels African-Americans must think long and hard before giving their children unusual or "black-sounding" names.

"It's a naïveté on the part of black parents," Steele said, "to name their children names that are so conspicuously different than American mainstream names. ... It suggests to people outside that community who hear those names a certain alienation. Certain hostility."

Steele, a researcher specializing in race relations and author of *A Dream Deferred: The Second Betrayal of Black Freedom in America*, is essentially telling black folks, don't name your child Deshawn or Loquesha.

"Yes. ... I'm saying don't name your son Latrelle. Don't do that. ... He's going to live 50, 60 years in the future. Give him a break. You know, call him Edward."

Challenge the Bias, Not the Names

But sociologist Bertice Berry says there are prominent African-Americans who've overcome the stigma of a black-sounding name, including top presidential adviser Condoleezza Rice.

"We've learned to say Condoleezza. And you just can't get more ghetto than Condoleezza," Berry said.

Opera diva Leontine Pryce also overcame any stigma attached to her name.

"We hear Leontine and you think opera," Berry said, "... When they're associated with power and wealth we learn them." Berry says what needs to change is society, not black names.

But the bias against those names, it seems, starts very early. University of Pittsburgh Vice Provost Jack Daniel studied 4- and 5-year-old children and found racist perceptions were deeply ingrained at an early age.

White children had a tendency to associate negative traits with black names, according to Daniel. "Your name can hurt you," Daniel said, "but you've got to change the people who hurt you because of your name."

So, Daniel and his wife, Jeri, rejected white-sounding names for their own children. They chose African names — Omari and Marijata. "We thought that it was really important that the assimilation process not dissolve who we were as a people," Jeri Daniel said.

The Daniels' children carried on the tradition, naming their children Amani, Akili, Deven and Javon. They see the names as a source of pride.

But some of today's black-sounding names are more about conspicuous consumption than tradition. There is a trend to name children after luxury goods, like Moet, Lexus, even Toyota.

Steele said that trend "suggests real cultural deprivation. And it's heartbreaking to hear it."

Berry feels that "There's a responsibility, when anybody names a child, to name them something that means something." But she added, "I don't think we need to tell people, 'Don't name them that, because I don't like the way it sounds.'"

Unhappy with her own name and her experience in the job market, Tiqua Gator named her son Derek to help him get by in white America. "If I was to have any more children, it wouldn't be any Tiquas or it wouldn't be any Tamikas or Aishas. It would be something common," she said. "I wouldn't want my child to go through the same thing that I've went through."

3- Evidence of Racial, Gender Bias Found in Faculty Mentoring.

Research found faculty in academic departments linked to more lucrative professions are more likely to discriminate against women and minorities than faculty in fields linked to less lucrative jobs.

STEVE INSKEEP, HOST:

Now, when preschoolers get to college, some will have professors who take sustained interest in guiding them. This often happens because a student reaches out for a mentor. Now let's hear how that time-honored process suffers from bias.

Our colleague David Greene sat down with NPR's Shankar Vedantam.

DAVID GREENE, HOST:

We should be clear of what we're talking about here. This is not professors who sort of help students acclimate to a university, give them directions. We're talking about professors who really invest in a student.

SHANKAR VEDANTAM, BYLINE: That's right, David. And perhaps the most important thing is this is intellectual guidance. This is guidance to say: Here's how you should best use your skills.

GREENE: And what's the bias you found?

VEDANTAM: The bias has to do with how faculty seem to respond to these requests, David. Group of researchers ran this interesting field experiment. They emailed more than 6,500 professors at the top 250 schools pretending to be the students. And they wrote letters saying, I really admire your work. Would you have some time to meet? The letters to the faculty were all identical, but the names of the students were all different.

Let me read you some of the names and you can tell if you can pick up a pattern.

GREENE: Mm-hmm.

VEDANTAM: Brad Anderson. Meredith Roberts. Lamar Washington. LaToya Brown. Juanita Martinez. Deepak Patel, Sonali Desai, Chang Wong, Mei Chen. Do you see something, David?

GREENE: It sounds like a diverse group. I mean these are names that come from different ethnic and racial backgrounds.

VEDANTAM: That's exactly what the researchers were trying to establish. And all they were measuring was how often professors wrote back agreeing to meet with the students. And what they found was there were very large disparities. Women and minorities systematically less likely to get responses from the professors and also less likely to get positive responses from the professors. Now remember, these are top faculty at the top schools in the United States and the letters were all impeccably written.

I spoke to Katherine Milkman at The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. She conducted the study with Modupe Akinola and Dolly Chugh. And Milkman told me she was especially struck by the experience of Asian students. Here she is.

KATHERINE MILKMAN: We see tremendous bias against Asian students and that's not something we expected. So a lot of people think of Asians as a model minority group. We expect them to be treated quite well in academia, and at least in the study and in this context we see more discrimination against Indian and Chinese students than against other groups.

GREENE: I mean Shankar, I guess that disparity, specifically is surprising. But disparities at all seem surprising early in the 21st century. I mean schools have been trying hard to diversify and attract diverse pools of students for a long time now.

VEDANTAM: Yeah. And one of the ways they try to do it David, is by attracting diverse faculty. And Milkman and her colleagues looked to see whether having diverse faculty protected against this kind of bias. Here she is again.

MILKMAN: There's absolutely no benefit seen when women reach out to female faculty, nor do we see benefits from black students reaching out to black faculty or Hispanic students reaching out to Hispanic faculty.

GREENE: So any idea why all of these faculty members are discriminating between students?

VEDANTAM: Milkman found there were very large disparities between academic departments and between schools. Faculty at private schools were significantly more likely to discriminate against women and minorities than faculty at public schools. And faculty in fields that were very lucrative were also more likely to discriminate. So there was very little discrimination in the humanities. There was more discrimination among faculty at the natural sciences. And there was a lot of discrimination among the faculty at business schools. Here's Milkman again.

MILKMAN: The very worst in terms of bias is business academia. So in business academia, we see a 25 percentage point gap in the response rate to Caucasian males vs. women and minorities.

GREENE: You know, I think of business schools and business programs, you think about money. You think of private schools vs. public schools and you're thinking private schools are generally wealthy. Is money playing a role here?

VEDANTAM: To be honest, it's not exactly clear what this means. Milkman told me there has been some research that suggests that wealth can make it harder for people to notice inequality. If you're very wealthy, for example, it's harder to notice the perspectives of people don't have very much. The truth is, we don't really know exactly what's driving this bias among the faculty of the different schools. More research is going to have to look into that.

GREENE: Shankar, thanks for coming in, as always.

VEDANTAM: Thank you, David.

4- Having a Foreign Sounding Name? Change it to Get a Job.

A new study finds French job applicants with foreign-sounding names are much less likely to get callbacks from recruiters. Researchers from the Paris School of Economics and Stanford University sent out fake resumes to apply for real jobs in Paris. All six resumes detailed identical work experience. The only differentiator was language skills on two of the resumes.

The two French-sounding names received 70% more callbacks than the other four names – two of North African origin, and two that sounded foreign, but were hard to place.

“Foreign applicants, whether their specific minority group is identified or not, are equally disadvantaged as compared to French applicants across all dimensions under study – for both genders, and whether or not more information is available in the application,” the paper found. The reason? Homophily – a preference for people who are more like you.

White-sounding names preferred in America

Unfortunately, findings like these are not limited to our French counterparts. American researchers had similar conclusions in a study: “Are Emily and Brendan More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal?”

Applicants with white-sounding names were 50% more likely to get called for an initial interview than applicants with black-sounding names. Applicants with white names need to send about 10 resumes to get one callback. Applicants with black names need to send about 15 resumes to achieve the same result.

Once again, homophily prevails.

“We’re not claiming that employers engage in discriminatory behavior consciously, or that this is necessarily an issue of racism,” wrote Marianne Bertrand, a researcher on the study. “It is important to teach people in charge of hiring about the subconscious biases they may have, and figure out a way to change these patterns.”

Lack of diversity hurts companies

Lack of diversity within top-tier companies has recently come under scrutiny. Just last month, Google revealed only 2% of the company’s global workforce was black, and 3% Hispanic. In the U.K., the BBC also recently came under fire for not hiring staff of black and minority ethnic origins.

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/ruchikatulshyan/2014/06/13/have-a-foreign-sounding-name-change-it-to-get-a-job/#4c8528225f21>

6- Like it or not, name can impact your career by Eve Tahminicioglu

Throughout Shuki Khalili's career, he suspected his name might be holding him back. When he worked for a Wall Street headhunter, he felt potential clients would blow him off when they heard his name. When he started his own business selling greeting cards, phone sales were initially a bust at first.

"I tried using an American name, 'Andrew Warner,' and suddenly I could at least engage them in conversation and sell them some ads so I could build my business," he said. He now goes by Andrew Warner and runs a successful entrepreneurial resource site called Mixergy.com in Santa Monica, Calif.

Like it or not, your name can make a difference in how seriously you are taken at work and whether you even get your foot in the door for the interview.

One study by researchers at MIT and the University of Chicago found that job applicants with names that sounded African-American got short shrift when it came to the hiring process. The researchers sent out 5,000 fake resumes, and it turned out that resumes with names such as Tyrone and Tamika were less likely to get calls from prospective employers than their Anglo-sounding counterparts, and qualifications seemed to have little impact.

For Larry Whitten, owner of the Whitten Hotel in Taos, N.M., names mattered so much that he ordered a group of Hispanic employees change their names to sound more Anglo Saxon. For example, changing Martin (pronounced Mar-TEEN) to plain-old Martin or Marco to Mark.

At the Taos hotel, Whitten explained, when some workers answered the phones and said their names, customers didn't understand what they were saying. For example, Mar-TEEN, sounded like "my thing," he said.

"I am not a racist," said Whitten, who fired several employees for insubordination. What motivated his decisions, he stressed, was the bottom line.

Advertise

"I'm not accustomed to Spanish lingo. A lot of people have the same thing," he said. "If a name is going to prevent me from getting a guest because they hang up or can't understand it or they get frustrated, I have to do something about it."

He said he had operated a hotel in Oklahoma where 99 percent of his employees were African American and did a similar thing. "I changed five or six names without any trouble there," he said. "Latasha to Tasha, to make it easy."

What's in a name

Indeed, it's what people don't know or understand that is sometimes at the heart of prejudice. And catering to such ignorance is no excuse for workplace discrimination, experts stressed.

"Customer preferences and co-worker preferences are never something that can justify discrimination," said Ernest Haffner, senior attorney adviser at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

“Changing somebody’s name is something that could be viewed as intentionally discriminatory or not but it still could have a disparate impact” on a certain group of workers, said Haffner, who would not comment directly on the New Mexico hotel workers’ situation because he did not know the details. “If the employer feels people are uncomfortable with workers that have foreign-sounding names, then the employer is adopting the biases of the customers or co-workers.”

If, however, the employer has some legitimate business reason for asking a worker to change his or her name, he said, and is not only singling out one group, then that may be a different story.

Full disclosure here: My own family, Greek immigrants from Istanbul, has grappled with the name issue for years.

My grandfather, whose first name was Soukias, worked in a New York textile factory and was told by his boss when he started: “Your name is now Joe.” Also, my sister, an attorney in Virginia, changed her name to Tahmin from Tahmincioglu because an employer told her to pick a name that sounded more American. And more than one editor has asked me if I used my whole name on a byline.

I chose to keep my last name, but my real first name is Evanthia. I go by Eve professionally.

Issue of perception

Tammy Kabell, a resume consultant, has often seen how names are perceived in her line of work. “I’ve had frank discussions with HR managers and hiring managers in the corporate world, and they tell me when they see a name that’s ethnic or a black name, they perceive that person as having low education or coming from a lower socioeconomic class,” she said.

And it’s only gotten worse during the recession, she added. “At 10 percent unemployment, they’re going through a lot of resumes, so they can be selective of who they call.”

Following Sept. 11, 2001, she noticed a particular bias against Muslim/Arab sounding names. One particular client who was an electrical engineer was from Pakistan and named Raheem. “He looked for a year and a half and couldn’t get anything,” she explained, adding that he could only find a job as a supervisor of a cleaning staff at a Miami hotel.

So how do you know if your name is holding you back?

One site, BehindTheName.com, actually provides feedback from readers on how a host of names from all different cultures and ethnic groups are perceived.

John, for example, was seen by those polled as largely “wholesome,” while Juan was rated higher when it came to being “devious.” And as far as the “strange” rating on the two names — 44 percent thought John was strange, while nearly 70 percent thought Juan was strange.

Bruce Lansky, the author of “100,000 Plus Baby Names,” is convinced a name could potentially make or break a child’s future career.

“Most people in America are not bigoted, but they do have comfort zones,” he said. “If you’re picking a name for your child, it’s reasonable to select a name that reflects your ethnicity but which will strike most people as ‘familiar’ or ‘mainstream’ rather than ‘foreign’ or ‘off-putting.’”

In search of the mainstream

HR managers, he said, tend to seek out applicants they feel are “familiar” or “mainstream.” “A foreign-sounding or highly ethnic-sounding name will have people wondering if they spoke English in the household, or if they’ll be able to get along and mix with Americans.”

He suggested finding names that are part of your culture or ethnicity but are not too overt. For example, he said, “if you’re Irish, you could choose Kevin or Shawn, instead of Dermott or Shamus.”

Or use an Anglo-sounding name as the middle name, he noted, giving a child a choice on what to use when they get older. “It can be Abdullah and his middle name can be Henry,” he said.

Dennis W. Montoya, the lawyer representing eight of the fired employees from Whitten’s Taos hotel, doesn’t buy the whole change-your-name-to-conform argument.

“At one point in time, it was society’s preference not to allow African Americans to sit at the front of the bus,” he pointed out. “If we continued to cater to societal preferences, we’d still be living in those days.”

The fired workers, Montoya said, objected to being told they had to change their Hispanic given names because of a “value judgment imposed by the employer.”

Montoya said the EEOC is investigating the Whitten case. An EEOC official said the agency is “prohibited by law from confirming or denying any investigations.”

The hope is that the situation can be resolved through mediation, Montoya said. “If this is not resolved through negotiations, then the case will proceed to a trial by jury,” he added.

Eve Tahmincioglu writes the [weekly "Your Career" column](#) for msnbc.com and chronicles workplace issues in [her blog, CareerDiva.net](#).³³²

7 - Employers' Replies to Racial Names

"Job applicants with white names needed to send about 10 resumes to get one callback; those with African-American names needed to send around 15 resumes to get one callback."

A job applicant with a name that sounds like it might belong to an African-American - say, Lakisha Washington or Jamal Jones - can find it harder to get a job. Despite laws against discrimination, affirmative action, a degree of employer enlightenment, and the desire by some businesses to enhance profits by hiring those most qualified regardless of race, African-Americans are twice as likely as whites to be unemployed and they earn nearly 25 percent less when they are employed.

Now a "field experiment" by NBER Faculty Research Fellows **Marianne Bertrand** and **Sendhil Mullainathan** measures this discrimination in a novel way. In response to help-wanted ads in Chicago and Boston newspapers, they sent resumes with either African-American- or white-sounding names and then measured the number of callbacks each resume received for interviews. Thus, they experimentally manipulated perception of race via the name on the resume. Half of the applicants were assigned African-American names that are "remarkably common" in the black population, the other half white sounding names, such as Emily Walsh or Greg Baker.

To see how the credentials of job applicants affect discrimination, the authors varied the quality of the resumes they used in response to a given ad. Higher quality applicants were given a little more labor market experience on average and fewer holes in their employment history. They were also portrayed as more likely to have an email address, to have completed some certification degree, to possess foreign language skills, or to have been awarded some honors.

In total, the authors responded to more than 1,300 employment ads in the sales, administrative support, clerical, and customer services job categories, sending out nearly 5,000 resumes. The ads covered a large spectrum of job quality, from cashier work at retail establishments and clerical work in a mailroom to office and sales management positions.

The results indicate large racial differences in callback rates to a phone line with a voice mailbox attached and a message recorded by someone of the appropriate race and gender. Job applicants with white names needed to send about 10 resumes to get one callback; those with African-American names needed to send around 15 resumes to get one callback. This would suggest either employer prejudice or employer perception that race signals lower productivity.

The 50 percent gap in callback rates is statistically very significant, Bertrand and Mullainathan note in **Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination** (NBER Working Paper No. [9873](#)). It indicates that a white name yields as many more callbacks as an additional eight years of experience. Race, the authors add, also affects the reward to having a better resume. Whites with higher quality resumes received 30 percent more callbacks than whites with lower quality resumes. But the positive impact of a better resume for those with Africa-American names was much smaller.

"While one may have expected that improved credentials may alleviate employers' fear that African-American applicants are deficient in some unobservable skills, this is not the case in our

data," the authors write. "Discrimination therefore appears to bite twice, making it harder not only for African-Americans to find a job but also to improve their employability."

From a policy standpoint, this aspect of the findings suggests that training programs alone may not be enough to alleviate the barriers raised by discrimination, the authors write. "If African-Americans recognize how employers reward their skills, they may be rationally more reluctant than whites to even participate in these programs."

The experiment, conducted between July 2001 and January 2002, reveals several other aspects of discrimination. If the fictitious resume indicates that the applicant lives in a wealthier, or more educated, or more-white neighborhood, the callback rate rises. Interestingly, this effect does not differ by race. Indeed, if ghettos and bad neighborhoods are particularly stigmatizing for African-Americans, one might have expected them to be helped more than whites by having a "good" address.

Further, discrimination levels are statistically uniform across all the occupation and industry categories covered in the experiment. Federal contractors, sometimes regarded as more severely constrained by affirmative action laws, do not discriminate less. Neither do larger employers, or employers who explicitly state that they are "Equal Opportunity Employer" in their ads.

Another finding is that employers located in more African-American neighborhoods in Chicago are slightly less likely to discriminate. There is also little evidence that social background of applicants - suggested by the names used on resumes - drives the extent of discrimination.

The advantage of their study, the authors note, is that it relies on resumes, not actual people applying for jobs, to test discrimination. A race is randomly assigned to each resume. Any differences in response are due solely to the race manipulation and not to other characteristics of a real person. Also, the study has a large sample size, compared to tests of discrimination with real applicants.

One weakness of the study is that it simply measures callbacks for interviews, not whether an applicant gets the job and what the wage for a successful applicant would be. So the results cannot be translated into hiring rates or earnings. Another problem of the study is that newspaper ads represent only one channel for job search.

-- David R. Francis

10 - Undercover job hunters reveal huge race bias in Britain's workplaces

Civil servants created false identities to send CVs to hundreds of employers in sting to uncover discrimination

A government sting operation targeting hundreds of employers across Britain has uncovered widespread racial discrimination against workers with African and Asian names.

Researchers sent nearly 3,000 job applications under false identities in an attempt to discover if employers were discriminating against jobseekers with foreign names. Using names recognisably from three different communities – Nazia Mahmood, Mariam Namagembe and Alison Taylor – false identities were created with similar experience and qualifications. Every false applicant had British education and work histories.

They found that an applicant who appeared to be white would send nine applications before receiving a positive response of either an invitation to an interview or an encouraging telephone call. Minority candidates with the same qualifications and experience had to send 16 applications before receiving a similar response.

The alarming results have prompted Jim Knight, the employment minister, to consider barring companies that have been found to have discriminated against employees from applying for government contracts.

"We suspected there was a problem. This uncovers the shocking scale of it," he said. "Candidates with an Asian or African name face real discrimination and this has exposed the fact that companies are missing out on real talent."

Researchers from the National Centre for Social Research, commissioned by the Department for Work and Pension (DWP), sent three different applications for 987 actual vacancies between November 2008 and May 2009. Nine occupations were chosen, ranging from highly qualified positions such as accountants and IT technicians to less well-paid positions such as care workers and sales assistants.

All the job vacancies were in the private, public and voluntary sectors and were based in Birmingham, Bradford, Bristol, Glasgow, Leeds, London and Manchester. The report, to be released tomorrow, concludes that there was no plausible explanation for the difference in treatment found between white British and ethnic minority applicants other than racial discrimination.

It also finds that public sector employers were less likely to have discriminated on the grounds of race than those in the private sector.

One reason for this discrepancy, according to the conclusion, is the use of standard application forms in the public sector which hide or disguise the ethnicity of an applicant. The research is also understood to have found that larger employers were less likely to discriminate than small employers.

Researchers have refused to release the names of the guilty employers, but it is expected that they will be contacted to let them know they had been targeted.

The report has been welcomed by senior race advisers as evidence of discrimination in the job market. Iqbal Wahhab, chair of the Ethnic Minority Advisory Group, which proposes policy changes for the government on race and employment, said: "The evidence of the DWP report is unquestionable – we live in a society where racial discrimination systematically occurs and currently goes in the main unchallenged." Wahhab, an entrepreneur, said that the employers should not be "named and shamed" but persuaded to change.

"The employers who fell foul of the DWP CV test are not bigots – they are business people. I don't suggest we slap injunctions on them and probably not even name and shame them, but instead we should help them understand that their current practices mean they are not fit to supply big customers like government departments," he said.

The findings echo the experience of black and Asian jobseekers contacted this weekend. James Nkwacha, 28, a physics graduate whose family are from Nigeria, said he has applied for 60 jobs this year but had only two replies. "The jobs are within my range. I am qualified for them. But for some reason I have been overlooked," he said.

Navdeep Sethia, 24, an unemployed architecture graduate from Chalk Farm, central London, has submitted more than 400 job applications, but has only heard back from 40 employers and has had fewer than 20 interviews.

"I personally feel that my foreign-sounding name makes a lot of difference. I am sure employers think of Southall when they see my name and that is enough for them to put my application aside," he said.

Peter Luff, the Conservative chairman of the Commons business, innovation and skills select committee, praised the survey as a worthwhile exercise – as long as the companies that have been targeted were not exposed to public ridicule.

"The conclusions are indeed deeply disturbing and indicate the probability of significant discrimination which will have to be analysed closely once the full report is released this week," he said. "I think this was a good exercise by the government, and on balance was worth the money."

Abigail Morris, employment policy adviser to the British Chambers of Commerce, said the research was flawed. "There are limitations to the results. The researchers only used nine occupations, and I am not sure that the number of replies they received is a representative sample. We are concerned that the results will be interpreted to say that most employers are racist, whereas they prove no such thing."

Morris also questioned whether the government should be involved in using a "sting operation" to uncover racism in the middle of a recession and whether it was worth the money. "Business is struggling with the worst recession for a generation. Is this really the time to be wasting government resources and the time of hard-pressed companies with fake CVs?" she asked.

Additional reporting by Sakshi Ojha

<https://www.theguardian.com/money/2009/oct/18/racism-discrimination-employment-undercover>

11- Workplace Discrimination Based On Names By Derek Mong

Shakespeare once wrote: “What’s in a name?” Apparently, if you’re a minority in America’s workplaces, a name can mean the difference between the opportunity for success and rejection.

A study from The University of Chicago Graduate School of Business in the early 2000’s studied the effects of names as a proxy for race or ethnicity on the propensity for individuals to be called in for job interviews. The study— titled “Are Emily and Brendan More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal?”—involved individuals responding to 1,300 ads for sales, customer service, and administrative type positions in the 2001-2002 time frame. The individuals who responded had not just similar, but identical, resumes—except for the name attributed to the resume. Their findings? Resumes with white names resulted in roughly 50% more callbacks than those with African-American names.

What’s even more intriguing is that higher quality resumes labeled with white names elicited roughly 30% more callbacks than the average resume labeled with a white name, yet high quality resumes labeled with African American names saw no similar increase in callback rate— suggesting that something deeper, and perhaps more sinister, than candidate credentials was at play.

Taking this study at face value and in isolation, we might approach this study with a grain of salt and prescribe casual remedies—perhaps, candidates can adopt a nickname in job applications or incentives can be given to employers who perform blind candidate reviews in their recruiting processes. However, if we take this study as a proxy for race or ethnicity and place these findings in the context of centuries of historical discrimination against minorities in the workplace, we might reach a different conclusion.

Recent scholarship on the history of race and ethnicity has highlighted how, in the post-Obama era with the changing demographic landscape of the American workforce, forms of overt racism that were once the norm have evolved into more covert, subjugated expressions. For instance, phrases like “low-income inner-city youth” or “undocumented worker” have come to hold very specific, culturally contingent meanings that are just as stereotypical, but perhaps less direct, than previous forms of overt racism.

In a study done at Wharton, researchers emailed 6,500 professors from 89 different disciplines at over 200 college institutions posing as students seeking meeting time with the professor. The only difference in these emails was the sender’s name: varying from Brad Anderson to Meredith Roberts to Deepak Patel to Chang Wong. Individuals with stereotypical white male names (i.e. Brad Anderson) were 25% more likely to receive a response over both women and minorities. Faculty at private, more prestigious universities were more likely to discriminate, and racial bias was more pervasive against Asian students. Katharine Milkman, the author of the study told *Asian Fortune* “Our work highlights that students of Asian descent face significant discrimination along one important pathway in Academia. In fact, students with Indian and Chinese names faced the most bias of any minority groups studied in our research (which included Black, Hispanic, Indian and Chinese students).”

There are signs that workplace discrimination among Asian Americans may be the worst of any racial or ethnic minority group. According to a Gallup Poll, 30-31% of AAPIs surveyed reported incidents of employment discrimination, the largest of any group, with African Americans constituting the second largest at 26%. However, despite this high percentage of perceived

workplace discrimination, AAPIs only filed about 2-3% of the total employment discrimination complaints received by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission against private employers.

Without intervention, it appears that the situation will only get worse. With the digital age of social media (like LinkedIn) used to source job candidates, the prevalence of information about race, religion, political affiliations, and other identifying characteristics have the potential to become weapons of workplace discrimination. With heightened litigation surrounding affirmative action and discrimination at-large, this litigation might have the adverse effect of discouraging employers from coming forth to report instances of employment discrimination. Finally, as workplaces become flatter and less hierarchical, the team-based nature of the workplace provides more opportunities for “soft” skills and reliance on intangible criteria to play a larger role in employment decisions.

In a recent press release, Advancing Justice—an organization that represents Asian Americans in employment discrimination cases in both individual cases and class actions where Asian Americans and other minority groups have been denied equal employment opportunities because of their race or national origin—cited a number of incidents recently in which Asian Americans have been adversely affected by workplace discrimination.

For instance, in Nevada, Advancing Justice is working on a case in which casino management excluded AAPIs from working at high profile poker tournaments and reduced their shifts after referring to them as “you people” and claiming that they could not speak English properly. The organization has also represented a group of 40 Filipino-American hospital workers who were prohibited from speaking Tagalog and other Filipino languages under a broad-reaching English-only policy that was selectively applied to them in a discriminatory manner.

So, what does this all mean for college students and for those in the workforce? To be honest, nobody knows. But, what’s undeniable is that the landscape of the American workforce is only becoming more diverse and steps can be taken to improve the reflection of diversity in our offices and our boardrooms. By 2050, there will be no racial majority in the United States.

As candidates and employees, it’s essential that we know our rights. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has a full listing of what employers can and cannot ask of you, and cognizance of employment discrimination as a recurring and nuanced issue can help to arm one against becoming a victim of it. For instance, knowing that an employer cannot ask what religious holidays you observe, your closest relative to notify in case of an emergency, what social organizations you belong to, how long your commute is, how long you plan to work before you retire, or even your maiden name, is the first step towards protecting yourself against employment discrimination.

Asian Fortune is an English language newspaper for Asian American professionals in the Washington, DC metropolitan area.