

# An imperfect match? gender and racial discrimination in hiring and applicant-job requirement matching as an unequal burden of proof

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Discrimination in hiring screening decisions against Black men, Black women, and White women compared to White men has been well-documented in social science research, yet a fundamental aspect of the hiring process—the extent to which job applicants meet the job requirements—has not been clearly integrated into our understanding of hiring discrimination. In this paper, we develop an intersectional framework that conceptualizes applicant-job requirement matching as a form of “proof” that the applicant meets the evaluative standard for the job, and that the burden of proof is unequally distributed across job applicants’ combined gender and racial statuses. White men applicants, who align with the abstract evaluative standard for professional positions, benefit from assumed abilities even without evidence of matching job requirements, whereas Black men, Black women, and White women applicants must match job requirements to “prove” that they meet screening standards. We test this theory empirically with two original experimental studies: a nationally representative survey experiment and a correspondence audit study of accountants. We find that stereotyping and hiring screening discrimination varies across the applicant-job requirement match: discrimination is heightened when job applicants do not meet the requirements, and reduced when matched to requirements. The burden of proof through matching requirements therefore falls to Black men, Black women, and White women—and we find that Black women applicants experience unique outcomes due to their “intersectional invisibility.” This article contributes to our understanding of hiring discrimination and gender and racial inequality in the labor market.

**Key words:** race/ethnicity; gender/sex; inequality/social stratification.

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## Introduction

Racial and gender discrimination remains a feature of hiring screening decisions in the United States labor market. Dozens of audit studies of employers—field experiments in which experimentally-manipulated applications are sent to real job openings—have shown persistent discrimination against Black job applicants, compared to White applicants (Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004; Gaddis 2015; Quillian et al. 2017), and discrimination against women compared to men (typically comparing White women and men) in more masculine occupations (Galos and Coppock 2023; Quadlin 2018; Yavorsky 2019). While few audit studies specifically examine Black women's experiences, those that do illustrate that Black women also experience discrimination compared to White men, and in some cases compared to White women (see Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004; Chavez, Weisshaar, and Cabello-Hutt 2022; Di Stasio and Larsen 2020; Pedulla 2018; Weisshaar, Chavez, and Hutt 2024). A large body of evidence using other methodological approaches also documents that intersectional gender and racial stereotypes factor into unequal work evaluations and hiring outcomes (e.g., Ridgeway, Korn, and Williams 2022; Ridgeway and Kricheli-Katz 2013; Rosette et al. 2018).

Even with this robust body of scholarship on gender and racial discrimination in hiring, we argue that a fundamental aspect of discrimination remains under-examined: the extent to which discrimination depends on the interface between applicant traits and the job requirements, or the *applicant-job requirement match*. Research on employer decision-making has theorized and empirically documented that employers' primary concern in hiring decisions is finding job applicants who match the job's demands and can presumably perform well on the job (Bills, Di Stasio, and Gërkhani 2017; SHRM 2019). Yet, prior research on discrimination has mostly treated applicant qualifications as fixed characteristics, overlooking the applicant-job requirement match as a relational quality in the evaluative process. In practice, it is common for job applicants to not match the job requirements perfectly (Galperin et al. 2020; Kulkarni, Lengnick-Hall, and Martinez 2015). Moreover, although intersectional scholarship has shown that race and gender shape evaluations, it has not examined how those dynamics vary depending on whether candidates match or do not match the job requirements. If gender and racial discrimination varies across the applicant-job requirement match, this variation could represent an important source of inequality in the labor market, affecting which groups have the opportunities over others to obtain jobs for which they do not perfectly match the job requirements.

In this paper, we develop an intersectional understanding of hiring discrimination in which we conceptualize applicant-job requirement matching as a form of "proof" that the applicant meets the abstract evaluative standard for a given position (Acker 1990; Gorman 2005). Moreover, the burden of providing proof through matching is contingent on the intersection of race and gender statuses that the applicant occupies. Our theory builds on status characteristics theory (Berger, Fisek, and Norman 1977), but takes an intersectional approach by integrating it with theories of gendered and racialized organizations (Acker 1990; Ray 2019) and intersectional invisibility (Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach 2008; Ridgeway and Kricheli-Katz 2013).

More specifically, we theorize that when White men embody the implicit, abstract, and taken-for-granted evaluative standard found in many professional positions (Acker 1990; Gorman 2005; Ridgeway et al. 2022), employers are lenient in assuming White men meet the standard and stringent with Black men and women and White women, who must "prove" that they meet the standard by matching the explicit job requirements. For White women and Black men, matching job requirements counters employers' assumptions about their sub-standard abilities based on hegemonic gender and racial stereotypes (e.g., Mong and Roscigno 2010; Ridgeway and Correll 2004); for Black women, it allows them to be "seen" as viable candidates at all during the hiring screening decision, countering processes of intersectional invisibility (e.g., Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach 2008). White men, in contrast, are not penalized for a lack of "proof" of their abilities, since employers assume they meet the evaluative standard even when they do not perfectly match the explicit job requirements. Under an

unequal burden of proof, discrimination against White women, Black men, and Black women decreases at higher levels of applicant-job requirement match, due to employers' *changing* perceptions of White women, Black men, and Black women's shortcomings, and relative *stability* of their assumptions regarding White men's abilities across levels of applicant-job requirement match.

We draw from two novel experimental studies to assess the unequal burden of proof argument. The first study, based on data from an original, nationally representative survey experiment of 1078 employed adults, demonstrates the uneven role of hegemonic gender and racial stereotypes in the unequal burden of proof. We find that when White women and Black men applicants do not match job requirements, they are viewed to have shortcomings compared to White men along dimensions associated with hegemonic gender and racial stereotypes (Ridgeway and Kricheli-Katz 2013); when they do match requirements—thus offering “proof” of their abilities—they are evaluated equivalently to White men. Black women do not experience the same stereotype-based shortcomings as Black men and White women, which aligns with Black women's experiences of intersectional invisibility (Carter and de Leon 2023; Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach 2008). Evaluations of White men remain unchanged whether matched or unmatched to the job. The second study, a correspondence audit study of 5403 fictitious accountant job applications, applies the unequal burden of proof argument to real hiring screening decisions, focusing on applicants' match (or mismatch) to the required years of experience for the position. We find that White women, Black women, and Black men experience significant hiring screening discrimination relative to White men when under or over matched to job requirements, but reduced discrimination when applicants are more closely matched to required years of experience. This change is driven by variation in callbacks across levels of match for White women, Black women, and Black men applicants, compared to the more stable callbacks White men receive regardless of level of match.

This article contributes theoretically to scholarship on labor market inequality, discrimination, and stereotyped evaluations. First, we build on and further develop insights from status characteristics theory (Berger et al. 1977; Correll and Ridgeway 2003), by showing that *applicant-job requirement matching* is a distinct relational quality that has been largely overlooked. Whereas prior work has focused on applicant characteristics, such as experience and credentials, we theorize that the applicant-job requirement match itself operates as a relevant piece of positive information that is salient in the hiring decision-making process. We also examine the bidirectional nature of matching and demonstrate how both under- and overmatching to job requirements has consequences for discrimination. Second, we advance scholarship on stereotyping and information by developing an explicitly intersectional theoretical approach (Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach 2008; Ridgeway and Kricheli-Katz 2013; Rosette et al. 2018). We demonstrate that applicant-job matching interacts with racial and gender stereotypes, such that matching job requirements helps White women and Black men overcome prototypical gender and racial stereotypes they face when mismatched, while for Black women it offers an avenue to be seen as viable job candidates at all.

We also make an important empirical contribution by documenting the extent of discrimination against Black men, White women, and Black women relative to White men when applicants do not perfectly match the job requirements, suggesting that some field experimental studies that condition applications on the applicant-job match may underestimate the amount of discrimination commonly experienced by women and minoritized racial groups in the labor market (see also Neumark 2012). More generally, this paper demonstrates the implications of gendered and racialized assumptions in evaluations and hiring decisions by showing that White men receive the benefit of the doubt about their skills and abilities. As a result, White men may have a wide range of job opportunities, whereas Black men, White women, and Black women may face a narrower set of conditions to secure jobs.

## Gender and racial discrimination and applicant-job requirement matching

### Current understandings of discrimination and information

Current sociological understandings of hiring discrimination draw from social-psychological theories of stereotyping to explain how biased decisions emerge during the evaluation of job applicants. Status characteristics theory offers one dominant theoretical explanation, positing that employers form “performance expectations” of job applicants’ abilities to perform on the job—expectations that are, in part, a function of assumptions based the applicants’ gender, race, and other “status characteristics” (Berger et al. 1977; Correll and Ridgeway 2003). For instance, employers may have higher performance expectations for men compared to women, or White people compared to Black people, that are rooted in stereotypes about men and women’s, or White and Black people’s abilities.

Importantly, the level of discrimination between disadvantaged and advantaged status groups is expected to decrease with additional *positive, relevant information* about the job applicants. Positive relevant applicant information should reduce discrimination as it provides employers with disconfirming evidence that applicants from the disadvantaged group can perform well on the job, thus improving employers’ performance expectations (Berger et al. 1977; Correll and Ridgeway 2003). In contrast, positive relevant information may be redundant for evaluations of the advantaged status group, thus not drastically improving employers’ expectations. The result is reduced discrimination.

The general theorized process outlined above has been foundational for discrimination researchers over the years; nonetheless, there are two opportunities for theoretical refinement when applying the theory to hiring screening decisions. First, status characteristics theory focuses on the importance of applicant information that is relevant for the task at hand (Correll and Ridgeway 2003:33) yet the theory does not itself offer insights into what forms of applicant information are relevant in the context of hiring. And while this has led to a wide variety of applications in studies of hiring discrimination—for example, considering applicant characteristics such as educational background, work experience, or credentials (Gaddis 2015; Pedulla 2018; Quadlin 2018)—these empirical applications have paid less attention to the contexts and decision-making criteria under which the same information may be interpreted differently—or may not be relevant at all.

Second, status characteristics theory is well-equipped to explain discrimination as it relates to a single-axis identity such as comparing outcomes for women compared to men (gender) or for Black people compared to White people (race) (Berger et al. 1977). However, predictions become less clear when examining discrimination across particular intersectional identities like White women, Black men, and Black women, compared to White men. Indeed, there are several intersectional theoretical frameworks that offer diverging predictions as to the existence and patterns of intersectional variation in stereotyping and discrimination (Carter and de Leon 2023; Chavez and Wingfield 2018; Heiserman 2023; Ridgeway et al. 2022; Ridgeway and Kricheli-Katz 2013; Weisshaar et al. 2024). This lack of consensus limits our ability to identify the hiring conditions under which discrimination is more or less likely for particular groups.

To fill these gaps, we integrate key insights from organizational scholarship on employer decision-making (Bills et al. 2017; Kulkarni et al. 2015; Rivera 2020), embodied standards (Acker 1990; Ray 2019), and intersectional invisibility (Carter and de Leon 2023; Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach 2008; Smith et al. 2019). We first theoretically refine what counts as relevant applicant information in the context of hiring, specifying the applicant-job requirement match as a key relational concept. Second, we build on this to develop a decidedly intersectional approach that theorizes how the applicant-job match operates differently across gender and racial groups in both stereotyped evaluations and hiring discrimination outcomes.

## Matching as a relational quality

Scholarship on employer decision-making illustrates that employers are primarily interested in hiring workers who will likely perform well on the job, and therefore seek out job applicants whose skills and abilities align with those required (Bills et al. 2017; Kulkarni et al. 2015; Rivera 2020). Building on this body of work, we argue that employers' concern with finding job applicants who can do the job means that the applicant-job requirement match functions as a key piece of positive relevant evidence of the applicant's abilities—in line with status characteristics theory. Moreover, we suggest that it is the *match*—as a relational quality between the applicant and the job's requirements—that matters to employers: any particular applicant credential or skill is not necessarily important to employers unless the skill is required for the job in question. Our conceptualization of matching as a relational quality facilitates greater theoretical clarity as to what relevant information is in the context of hiring. Prior studies of gender and racial discrimination tend to examine either variation in discrimination across applicant traits (e.g., Gaddis 2015; Quadlin 2018) or job requirements (e.g., Pedulla 2018; Yavorsky 2019), and pay less attention to how the match between applicant traits and job requirements affect levels of gender or racial discrimination.<sup>1</sup>

Mismatches can go in either direction compared to a perfect match between the applicant and job requirements. When job applicants are *undermatched*—not meeting the minimum requirements for a position—they may lack evidence that they can do the job. When applicants are *overmatched*, or surpassing job requirements, employers may similarly be concerned about the applicant's commitment, interest in the position, or reasons why they are seeking a position below their stated abilities (Galperin et al. 2020; Kulkarni et al. 2015). We refer to a deviation from matching the requirements in either direction in subsequent sections, but we primarily focus on the comparison of undermatching relative to matching since it reflects a more straightforward application of our theoretical predictions.

## Embodied standards and consequences for intersectional stereotypes

While scholarship on employer decision-making documents employers' practical concerns with finding job applicants who match the job requirements, organizational theories of embodied standards problematize what the job requirements themselves represent. According to these theories, the explicit and formal job requirements listed in job ads are an instantiation of the position's abstract evaluative standard—albeit one that is incomplete and imprecise (Gorman 2005). This standard is embodied by an abstract image of the type of job-holder “who ha[s] performed [in the position] successfully in the past or could do so in the future,” and the skills, abilities, and traits they possess (Gorman 2005:704). It is this imaginary and embodied standard that employers are evaluating job applicants against (Acker 1990; Gorman 2005; Ridgeway 2011).

Although these imaginary standards are nominally genderless and raceless, in professional occupations they are often assumed to be embodied by a man, unless the job is explicitly feminine-typed (Acker 1990; Ridgeway 2011), and in most U.S. workplaces, are also assumed to be *White* (Moore 2008; Ray 2019). As a consequence, a White man embodies the imaginary standard against which employers evaluate job applicants (Acker 1990; Gorman 2005; Ridgeway 2011). Employers will perceive social differences *from the perspective of White men*, meaning that employers' scrutiny will be focused on how women and racially minoritized workers fall short of the evaluative standard (Moore 2008; Ridgeway and Kricheli-Katz 2013:302).

To go further, theories of intersectional invisibility help us better understand how employers perceive non-White men who fall short of the White man standard (Ridgeway and Kricheli-Katz 2013). According to these theories, hegemonic gender stereotypes that women are less capable, less committed, and have less leadership ability and assertiveness than men should be salient under a White man standard (Eagly et al. 2020; Ridgeway and Correll 2004), as well as hegemonic racial stereotypes that Black workers are less capable, less committed, have less leadership ability, and have less personal responsibility than White job applicants (Mong and Roscigno 2010; Moss

and Tilly 2001; Rosette, Phillips, and Leonardelli 2008). However, who these hegemonic gender and racial stereotypes apply to depends on prototypicality. Since White women and Black men are prototypical of the hegemonic images of “women” and “Black people,” respectively, hegemonic gender stereotypes are often linked to White women, and hegemonic racial stereotypes are often linked to Black men (Ridgeway and Kricheli-Katz 2013).

Black women are less aligned with prototypical images of either “women” or “Black people” in comparison to White women and Black men, meaning employers may be less inclined to associate hegemonic gender and racial stereotypes with Black women under a White man standard (Carter and de Leon 2023; Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach 2008; Smith et al. 2019). However, this comes with costs: intersectional invisibility. Decision-makers may not have a clear cognitive framework to view Black women as viable job candidates, and Black women may be unacknowledged by decision-makers (Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach 2008; Ridgeway and Kricheli-Katz 2013; Rosette et al. 2018). In previous studies, the invisibility of Black women results in evaluators not noticing Black women’s input, not taking it as seriously, or not remembering Black women after interactions in comparison to both Black men and White women (e.g., de Leon and Rosette 2022).

## The unequal burden of proof across gender and race

Building on the theoretical insights outlined above, we theorize that when White men embody the evaluative standard, White women, Black men, and Black women will have the burden to “prove” that they meet the evaluative standard by matching to the job requirements, while White men—who represent the intersectionally favored identity—escape this burden. In the language of status characteristics theory, we suggest that matching to job requirements offers employers novel and relevant information for White women, Black men, and Black women, thus increasing employers’ performance expectations; however, for White men, matching only confirms what employers already assume about their ability to perform, and thus does not improve employers’ performance expectations. In other words, an applicant’s burden to prove that they meet the evaluative standard is unequally distributed across gender and race.

Moreover, we argue that the embodiment of the hiring standard by a White man has implications for what matching “proves” for White women, Black men, and Black women. For White women and Black men, matching to job requirements provides some proof that White women and Black men do not fit the hegemonic stereotypical images of “women” and “Black people,” respectively, reducing the assumption that they fall short of the standard in stereotypical ways. For Black women, however, matching job requirements may help to overcome perceived shortcomings to the evaluative standard, not by reducing hegemonic gender and racial stereotypes, but by improving Black women’s visibility and thus reducing discrimination in hiring screening outcomes.

Our argument regarding what matching proves for Black women, which draws on insights from intersectional invisibility, differs from what other intersectional theories might imply. For instance, intersectional prototypicality theory would similarly argue that Black women evade hegemonic gender and racial stereotypes when White men embody the evaluative standard, but unlike our argument, it might suggest that Black women face less discrimination in hiring screening decisions compared to White men as a result (Ridgeway and Kricheli-Katz 2013). Alternatively, double jeopardy theory would suggest that Black women are subject to both the hegemonic stereotypes of women and Black people, and face more hiring discrimination than either White women or Black men (see Carter and de Leon 2023). We favor our argument based on intersectional invisibility theories because recent empirical research on discrimination at the hiring screen suggests that Black women may not face more discrimination than White women and Black men as double jeopardy suggests, nor avoid discrimination as prototypicality theory may suggest (see Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004; Chavez et al. 2022; Di Stasio and Larsen

2020; Pedulla 2018; Weisshaar et al. 2024). Thus, intersectional invisibility appears to be the most applicable to this context.

## Predictions of an unequal burden of proof at the hiring screen

We make two types of predictions: (a) predictions regarding *evaluations*, and (b) predictions regarding hiring screening *decisions*. To address the predictions of an unequal burden of proof regarding *evaluations*, we draw on a nationally representative survey experiment, which allows for an investigation of the underlying perceptions of job applicants' shortcomings and variation in these perceptions across types of job match (Schachter and Weisshaar 2025). To address predictions regarding hiring screen *decisions*, we use an audit study methodology in which we experimentally manipulate the gender and race of the fictitious job applicants, apply to real job openings, and record employer callbacks.

A novel insight of our theoretical approach is that since the evaluative standard is implicitly embodied by a White man and decision-makers perceive differences from a White man's perspective, White men's evaluations across applicant-job requirement match should be stable. We predict the following:

**Prediction 1a:** Matching to job requirements, compared to not matching, will result in substantially similar evaluations of White men applicants.

**Prediction 1b:** Screening decisions for White men applicants will not substantially vary when matched to job requirements compared to when they do not match job requirements.

Second, we expect that White women and Black men will have the relative burden of "proving" they meet the evaluative standard by matching to job requirements, else employers assume they fall short of the evaluative standard in the stereotypical ways discussed above. As evaluations of Black men and White women's shortcomings improve through matching, they are expected to face reduced discrimination compared to White men.

**Prediction 2a:** Matching to job requirements, compared to not matching, will decrease the difference in stereotype-relevant evaluations of White women and Black men applicants compared to White men.

**Prediction 2b:** Matching to job requirements, compared to not matching, will decrease discrimination in callbacks against White women and Black men compared to White men.

Third, in contrast to Black men and White women, matching to job requirements may have little effect on the extent to which employers perceive Black women to have gender and racial stereotypical shortcomings, given their intersectional invisibility (Carter and de Leon 2023; de Leon and Rosette 2022; Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach 2008). But matching job requirements may allow Black women to be less likely to be overlooked as viable job applicants, thus decreasing discrimination. This leads to the following predictions:

**Prediction 3a:** Black women applicants will not differ in evaluations according to hegemonic gender and racial stereotypes compared to White men, either when matching or not matching job requirements.

**Prediction 3b:** Matching to job requirements, compared to not matching, will decrease discrimination in callbacks against Black women compared to White men.

We consider these predictions in the context of accountant hiring for both theoretical and practical reasons. Accounting is a relatively diverse occupation in terms of gender and race: about 61% of accountants are women and 25% are non-White (Data USA 2021). While accounting may be a conservative case of the unequal burden of proof theory since it is less associated with White men than other professions, such as architects (Ridgeway et al. 2022), accounting remains implicitly associated with masculine and White stereotypes given its focus on finance and analysis (White and White 2006). Moreover, for practical considerations, accounting positions vary across skills and required experience and are commonly obtained through online applications (Robert Half 2017).

## The survey experiment: matching and stereotyped applicant shortcomings

### Data

We conducted an original survey experiment to test whether the extent and content of the perceived shortcomings of job applicants vary by applicant gender (man, woman), applicant race (Black, White), and applicant-job match (not matched, matched) in line with the predictions of the unequal burden of proof theory. The survey experiment was fielded by the National Opinion Research Center on their nationally representative, probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel.<sup>2</sup> The survey experiment was fielded in January and February 2020, with a total of 1814 employed respondents aged 18 or older. We restrict the sample to working-age respondents (between ages 22 and 70) and exclude low-quality and inattentive responses. Our final sample size is 1078.

In the survey experiment, respondents were asked to review a fictitious accountant job applicant's cover letter and resume. The applicant-job match experimental treatment was established by telling respondents that recruiters at the firm have determined that the job applicant meets (or does not meet) the job requirements for the position. Applicants' gender and race were signaled through the applicant's name, which were pretested to signal the appropriate gender and race (see [Appendix A](#)). The experimental treatments were randomized between respondents, and aside from the experimental manipulations, all information about the job and applicant was identical.

We designed the survey experiment questionnaire to tap into assessments of applicant shortcomings using a deliberately subtle approach. Respondents were instructed to read the applicant's cover letter and resume and then propose ways to improve the applicant's materials to help increase their chances of being hired. The evaluation questions were framed to respondents as "suggest[ing] areas in which the applicant should improve" and participants were specifically asked how much the applicant "need[s] more emphasis on" his or her capability, commitment, leadership potential, assertiveness, and responsibility—each of which are common gender and racial stereotypes relevant to work-related skills and traits—in their application materials to improve their chances of being hired. Response options to these questions ranged from 1 (not at all) to 7 (much more). Throughout the results, we refer to the measures as "areas for improvement" and higher values of the measures indicate that respondents recommended that job applicants required greater improvement in a particular area, thus having a greater perceived shortcoming in that area, and being farther from the evaluative standard.

We framed the survey task as suggesting areas for improvement, rather than directly evaluating shortcomings, to avoid the social desirability bias that is prevalent in evaluations of women and minoritized racial groups in surveys ([Gaddis 2022](#); [Pager and Quillian 2005](#)). By framing the task in this way, respondents could express their perceptions of job applicants through a positive lens, thus "saving face" if they expressed potentially socially undesirable responses ([Holtgraves, Eck, and Lasky 1997](#)). Moreover, asking how the applicant might improve the application *materials* adds another layer for respondents to "save face" by avoiding direct evaluation, and allows respondents with strong essentialist beliefs to indicate shortcomings even if they believe improvement is not possible ([Morning, Brückner, and Nelson 2019](#)). See [Appendix A](#) more detail about the survey design.

### Methods

For each measure, we estimate multiple ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models (see [Appendix B](#) for full regression tables) using the applicant gender and race condition, the matching condition (unmatched vs. matched), and the interaction between these two conditions as explanatory variables. Based on the OLS linear regressions for each of the five evaluation measures, we calculate the marginal effects of being a White woman, Black man, and Black woman, relative to a White man, in the matched and unmatched conditions, as well as the difference in marginal

Table 1. Average marginal effects from the survey experiment.

|   | Capability | Commitment        | Leadership | Assertiveness | Responsibility |
|---|------------|-------------------|------------|---------------|----------------|
| <i>Panel A: Evidence Needed Relative to White Men, Unmatched Condition</i>                            |            |                   |            |               |                |
| Black Men   | 0.20       | 0.59**            | 0.27       | 0.10          | 0.50*          |
| White Women   | 0.05       | 0.35 <sup>†</sup> | 0.02       | 0.25          | 0.03           |
| Black Women   | 0.10       | 0.14              | 0.02       | 0.00          | 0.03           |
| <i>Panel B: Evidence Needed Relative to White Men, Matched Condition</i>                              |            |                   |            |               |                |
| Black Men   | -0.23      | -0.34             | -0.26      | -0.24         | -0.10          |
| White Women   | -0.16      | -0.20             | -0.17      | -0.26         | -0.24          |
| Black Women   | 0.00       | 0.05              | -0.10      | 0.01          | -0.09          |
| <i>Panel C: Change in Evidence Needed Relative to White Men, from Unmatched to Matched Conditions</i> |            |                   |            |               |                |
| Black Men   | -0.43      | -0.92**           | -0.53*     | -0.34         | -0.60*         |
| White Women   | -0.21      | -0.55*            | -0.19      | -0.51*        | -0.28          |
| Black Women   | -0.10      | -0.09             | -0.12      | 0.01          | -0.12          |
| <i>Panel D: Change in Evidence Needed from Unmatched to Matched Condition</i>                         |            |                   |            |               |                |
| White Men   | -0.18      | 0.11              | -0.05      | 0.01          | -0.01          |
| Black Men   | -0.61**    | -0.81***          | -0.58**    | -0.33         | -0.61**        |
| White Women   | -0.39*     | -0.45*            | -0.24      | -0.50**       | -0.29          |
| Black Women   | -0.28      | 0.02              | -0.17      | 0.01          | -0.13          |

Note: \*\*\* $P < .001$ , \*\* $P < .01$ , \* $P < .05$ ; <sup>†</sup> $P < .10$ . In Panels A and B, the significance refers to two-tailed tests of each applicant gender-race group compared to White men in the same matched or unmatched condition. In Panel C, the significance refers to comparisons of marginal effects relative to White men, across the unmatched and matched conditions—e.g., the marginal effect for Black men relative to White men in Panel A (unmatched) to the same marginal effect in Panel C (matched). In Panel D, the significance refers to the within-group change in required evidence across unmatched and matched conditions—e.g., the required evidence for White men in the unmatched condition to the required evidence for White men in the matched condition. Predicted values are derived from OLS linear regressions for each of the five measures (see Appendix B for full regression tables). Higher values indicate more need to provide evidence of the trait.  $N = 1078$ .

effects across the matching conditions. We also examine the marginal effect of the matched condition relative to the unmatched condition, within each applicant gender/race grouping.

## Survey experiment results

Table 1 presents the marginal effects of the applicant's gender and race relative to White men within the unmatched and matched conditions (Panel A and B), the change in marginal effects across matching conditions (Panel C, i.e., the difference between Panel A and B), and finally the marginal effects of matching (compared to not matching) within each gender/race grouping (Panel D). Panel D provides the estimates most relevant to Prediction 1a, Panel C provides the estimates most directly relevant to Prediction 2a, and Panels A and B provide the estimates most directly relevant to Prediction 3a.

We first examine outcomes for White men given our prediction that under an unequal burden of proof, White men's assessments are stable across applicant-job requirement match. As depicted in Panel D of Table 1, we find no statistically significant changes for White men on any measure when not meeting requirements, compared to when meeting requirements. In other words, White men were perceived to have the same need to improve their demonstration of capability, commitment, leadership ability, assertiveness, and responsibility regardless of whether they met or did not meet the job requirements. This provides support for **Prediction 1a**: for White men, the recommended level of improvement did not change whether the applicant meets requirements or does not meet requirements.

We also find support for **Prediction 2a**: matching to job requirements, compared to not matching, decreased the difference in the amount of improvement recommended for Black

men and White women applicants compared to White men. We describe the differences in the level of recommended improvement for Black men and White women, compared to White men, when applicants *did not* match the job requirements, when applicants *did* match the job requirements, and, most crucially for our prediction, the change in difference, across the matched and unmatched conditions.

When applicants *did not* meet the job's requirements, Black men, and to some extent White women, had higher levels of improvement recommended, in line with gender and racial stereotypes, compared to White men. As depicted in Panel A, when unmatched to job requirements, respondents suggested that Black men should improve on their commitment (0.59,  $P < .01$ ) and responsibility (0.50,  $P < .05$ ) more than White men. These perceptions are in line with racial stereotypes about Black men being less committed to work and less responsible and reliable than White men (Moss and Tilly 2001). In accordance with gender stereotypes, White women were recommended to improve emphasis of their commitment (0.35,  $P < .10$ ) more so than White men (Ridgeway and Correll 2004). However, when applicants *did* meet job requirements, shown in Panel B, we find no statistically significant differences in the recommended need for improvement on any measure for Black men or White women relative to White men.

Most importantly, the extent of improvement recommended for Black men and White women, relative to White men, was significantly reduced when meeting job requirements compared to when not meeting job requirements, as displayed in Panel C of Table 1. For Black men, the difference in recommended improvement relative to White men regarding commitment ( $-0.92$ ,  $P < .01$ ), leadership ( $-0.53$ ,  $P < .05$ ), and responsibility ( $-0.60$ ,  $P < .05$ ) significantly decreased when applicants meet the job requirements. For White women, the recommended improvement on commitment ( $-0.55$ ,  $P < .05$ ) and assertiveness ( $-0.51$ ,  $P < .05$ ) significantly decreased when applicants meet the job requirements. Notably, Prediction 2a was not supported uniformly across all of our measures. For Black men, we did not find a significant change in the capability measure relative to White men across the matched and unmatched conditions, nor did we find for White women a significant change in the capability measure and the leadership ability measure relative to White men across conditions. We discuss these (non) findings in the discussion section.

An implication of our unequal burden of proof theory is that the level of improvement recommended for Black men and White women should decrease when matched, compared to unmatched, irrespective of the level of improvement recommended for White men. Panel D of Table 1 presents the change in marginal effects of recommended improvement, comparing matched to unmatched conditions, within each gender and racial group. Black men had statistically significantly less need for improvement across all dimensions except assertiveness when meeting requirements, relative to not meeting requirements. White women also experienced less need for improvement when meeting the job requirements, on measures of capability ( $-0.39$ ,  $P < .05$ ), commitment ( $-0.45$ ,  $P < .05$ ), and assertiveness ( $-0.50$ ,  $P < .01$ ).

Finally, we find support for **Prediction 3a**: Black women's intersectional invisibility appears to mute the application of some common gender and racial stereotypes. In contrast to White women and Black men, Black women did not statistically differ from White men in the amount of improvement recommended along the qualities measured in either experimental conditions—when applicants *did* (Panel B) or *did not* meet the job requirements (Panel A). Neither are Black women asked for significantly more or less improvement when meeting requirements compared to not matching requirements (Panel D).

## The correspondence audit study: matching and hiring screening discrimination

### Data

To examine how applicant-job matching operates in real employer decision-making, we conducted a correspondence audit study of accountant positions from November 2018 through

February 2020. We focus on a specific form of applicant-job match: the extent to which applicants' years of experience match the years of experience required for the position, for early- and mid-career general accountant positions (i.e., staff or senior accountants).<sup>3</sup> In general, having the appropriate years of experience is particularly important in hiring screening decisions, since it signals deep, often unspecified work knowledge and ability, as well as job socialization and commitment, and is easily observed during quick resume screens (Chen, Huang, and Lee 2011). The audit study data consist of 5043 fictitious applications (4386 after excluding missing data, described below) to full-time accountant job postings across the 50 most populated U.S. metropolitan areas (U.S. Census Bureau 2021) through a large online job listing website. This data collection approach covers a range of mid-sized and larger labor markets, although it does not capture smaller city or rural geographic areas (Lahey and Beasley 2018:83). To reduce employer suspicion and avoid "template bias" (Lahey and Beasley 2018), we sent two resumes with randomly assigned details to each job opening, typically 1 day apart. We used web scraping techniques to save the online job listing text, which we then used to code the job's required years of experience (described below).

The audit study used randomly assigned names to signal the applicant's gender (man, woman) and race (Black, White).<sup>4</sup> Applicants matched the job title to which they were applying (staff or senior accountant); staff accountants were randomly assigned 2, 3, or 4 years of experience, and senior accountants assigned 4, 5, or 6 years of experience. We modeled the applicant materials on publicly available resumes and cover letters. Applicants to the same job posting had random variation across skills, university, major, and current company. To ensure some level of realism we pretested the general quality of the applicant material with a sample of accounting and finance professionals. See Appendix D for more details on the application materials.

## Variables and methods

Our dependent variable is a "callback," which was recorded when an applicant received a request for an interview or a positive response with follow-up questions from the employer. Our primary independent variables are the applicant's perceived gender and race and the applicant's experience relative to the job's required experience.

To create our measure of years of experience matching, we used computational text parsing strategies (Macanovic 2022) to identify the section of the job listing that referenced required years of experience, and we hand-coded the minimum required years of experience for the job. The minimum required years of experience is a singular threshold that provides a clear comparison for evaluation: for example, an applicant who has 4 years of experience is better matched to a job requiring 5 years of experience than to a job requiring 10 years of experience. We operationalize *years of experience matching* using a relative measure, comparing applicant's years of experience to the minimum required years of experience (applicant – required). We are also able to examine a specific case of when applicants *exceed* required experience (positive values of this measure).

We first present aggregate callback rates across all jobs by applicants' signaled gender and race. We then conduct logistic regression models clustered by the job, with the relative years of experience measure interacted with the applicant gender/race, along with control measures. We include a squared term for the experience interaction given that we expect a curvilinear pattern: as applicants approach matching the minimum level of experience, we expect less gender and racial discrimination, with greater discrimination levels when applicants are mismatched on experience. We control for the region of the job (dummy variables for each region), the applicant's college and major, the applicant's years of experience, the order of application, the version of the name used, the applicant's city of residence, the budget amount the applicant has experience managing, and whether the job application is submitted on a company site or directly through the job board. We present results graphically with predicted probabilities along the experience matching measure with 95% confidence intervals. We privilege a predicted probabilities framework given the difficulty of interpreting interaction coefficients in nonlinear models (see Mize 2019). Regression results are given in table form in Appendix E.

Table 2. Audit study descriptive statistics.

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| <i>Applicant Gender/Race</i>               | N           |
| White men                                  | 1254        |
| Black men                                  | 1310        |
| White women                                | 1257        |
| Black women                                | 1222        |
| Total                                      | 5043        |
| <i>Experience Variables</i>                | Mean (SD)   |
| Years of Experience Required               | 3.45 (1.68) |
| Relative Experience (Applicant – Required) | 1.10 (1.70) |

Source: Correspondence audit study of accountants, November 2018–February 2020. Note: *Applicant Gender/Race* indicates the signaled applicant gender and race in the audit study. *Experience Variables* refers to the years of experience in the job requirements and the applicant's years of experience relative to the job requirements. The N for experience measures is 4386, because of some missing data on required experience.

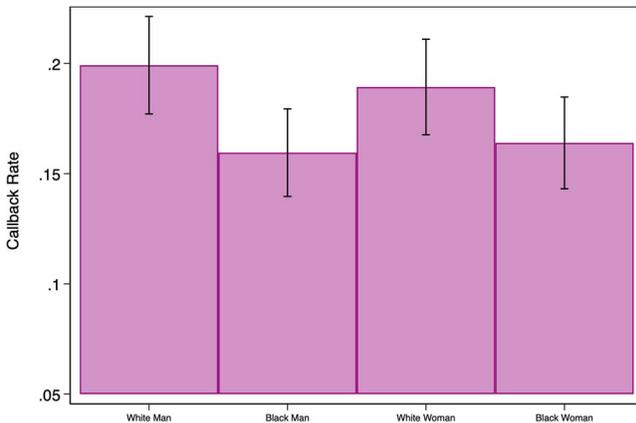


Figure 1. Correspondence audit study predicted callbacks by experimental condition. Note: N = 5043. Error bars reflect 95% confidence intervals.

## Audit study results

Table 2 presents the audit sample size disaggregated by gender and racial groups in addition to descriptive statistics for the required experience and relative experience measures. On average, the accountant positions in the sample required 3.45 years of experience, and our applicants had an average of about one year of experience above the minimum experience required.

Figure 1 presents the aggregate callback rates, by applicant gender and race. On average, White men received a callback rate of 19.9%, which was significantly higher than Black men, who received a callback rate of 16.0% ( $P < .01$ ) and Black women, who had a callback rate of 16.4% ( $P < .05$ ). White women's callback rate was 18.9%, about one percentage point lower than White men, but not statistically different from White men's callbacks. These results show that, when aggregating across all levels of applicant-job match, there is significant racial discrimination toward both Black men and Black women in the initial stages of the hiring process of accountants, both when compared with the callback rates of White men and White women. In contrast, we find no significant gender differences in callback rates within racial groups.

To examine how the aggregate discrimination patterns vary by relative experience matching, we estimate the predicted callback rates across applicants' relative years of experience. Figure 2 displays these estimates, ranging from undermatched (negative values), perfectly matched (0) and overmatched (positive values) of relative experience compared to the minimum. Table 3 provides

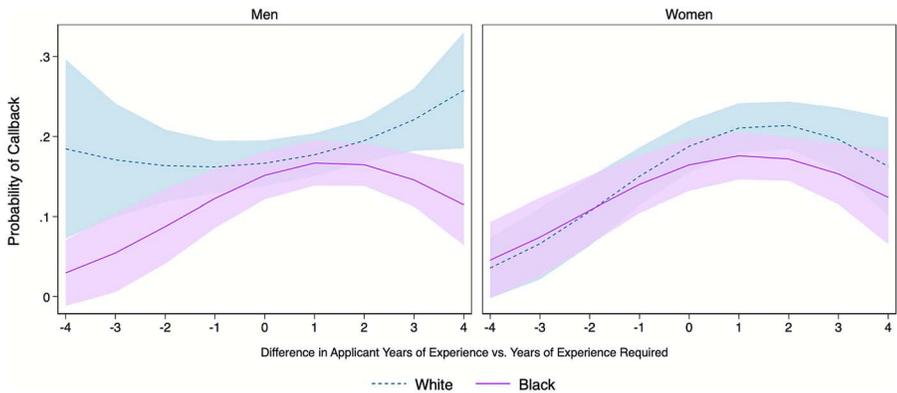


Figure 2. Predicted callbacks by experimental condition and relative years of experience. Note: Error bands are 95% confidence intervals.  $N = 4386$ . Source: correspondence audit study of accountants.

Table 3. Ratio of predicted callbacks of White men relative to black men, White women, and black women.

|                              | Black Men | White Women | Black Women |
|------------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| Overall                      | 1.24**    | 1.05        | 1.21*       |
| Relative Years of Experience |           |             |             |
| –4 years                     | 6.13*     | 5.11*       | 4.00*       |
| 0 years                      | 1.10      | 0.88        | 1.01        |
| +4 years                     | 2.26***   | 1.59*       | 2.08**      |

Note: Overall indicates the estimates for the full sample, across all years of relative experience. *Relative Years of Experience* provides estimates at particular years of experience, derived from the regression model in Appendix E. Two-tailed tests for difference in callback rates relative to White men. \*\*\* $P < .001$ , \*\* $P < .01$ , \* $P < .05$ . Source: correspondence audit study of accountants.

the callback ratios of White men's callbacks, compared to Black men, White women, and Black women, estimated at  $-4$ ,  $0$ , and  $+4$  on the relative years of experience measure.

Our theory predicts that White men's callbacks should not markedly increase as applicants become better matched to the required years of experience. We find that this is the case: White men's callback rates were relatively consistent, and do not statistically significantly vary between years of relative experience from  $-4$  to  $0$ , indicating that White men received comparable callbacks regardless of whether they fall below or meet the position's minimum years of experience required, providing support for Prediction 1b.

In line with the unequal burden of proof Predictions 2b and 3b, we find that the magnitude of discrimination for Black men, Black women, and White women, compared to White men, varied significantly across applicants' relative experience, or the extent to which an applicant meets or surpasses a job's required experience. The left-hand portion of the x-axis illustrates when applicants fell short of the required years of experience. We find that Black men, White women, and Black women, faced discrimination relative to White men when they did not meet the required years of experience. For instance, at 4 years below required experience, White men, with a predicted callback rate of 18.4%, experienced over 6 times the predicted callback rate as Black men (3.0%), over 5 times the callback rate of White women (3.6%), and about 4 times the callback rates of Black women (4.6%), each of which are statistically significant compared to White men ( $P < .05$ ). As relative experience increased (i.e., the applicants more closely met the minimum years of experience required), the callback rates of Black men, Black women, and White women increased.

When applicants matched the minimum years of experience—or are close to matching, within one year below or two years above the minimum—applicants did not face gender or racial discrimination compared to White men. In fact, when matching the minimum required experience directly, White women had slightly higher predicted callbacks than White men (a ratio of 0.88, not statistically different), and Black men and Black women had very comparable predicted callback rates to White men (with callback ratios of 1.10 and 1.01, respectively). These findings, compared to the extensive discrimination when undermatched on experience, support Predictions 2b and 3b.

While the unequal burden of proof argument most directly speaks to the comparison between applicants who do not meet experience requirements and those who meet the requirements, the logic of an unequal burden applies to cases of overmatching. When applicants mismatched experience by exceeding minimum required experience, we find that Black men, Black women, and White women faced increased discrimination in callbacks relative to White men, as seen in the right-hand side of the panel in [figure 2](#). For example, at four years beyond the minimum required experience, White men's predicted callbacks were 2.26, 1.59, and 2.08 times the callback rates of Black men ( $P < .001$ ), White women ( $P < .05$ ), and Black women ( $P < .01$ ), respectively. However, unlike for undermatching, White men's callbacks were not consistent when overmatched compared to matched: the callback rate for White men increased by 9.1 percentage points when exceeding experience requirements by 4 years compared to matching experience requirements perfectly ( $P < .05$ ). These findings do not fully align with Prediction 1b, since White men's callbacks increase with overmatching, but align with predictions from Predictions 2b and 3b: discrimination increases when applicants are overmatched.

Overall, the audit study provides strong evidence in support of the unequal burden of proof theory. Mismatching the required experience—either under- or overmatching—is associated with greater discrimination against Black women, Black men, and White women than matching requirements, while White men are offered the benefit of the doubt and are not penalized for their lack of “proof” of abilities.

## Discussion and conclusion

In this paper, we examine how discrimination in hiring screening decisions against Black women, Black men, and White women, compared to White men, varies according to the level of applicant-job requirement match—a key relational quality that, despite being a central factor in employer-decision making, has been largely overlooked in hiring discrimination research. We argue that applicant-job requirement matching offers proof of meeting the abstract evaluative standard for the job, and when that standard is itself embodied by a White man, it is White women, Black men, and Black women, but not White men, who have the burden of providing proof through matching. In specifying how the burden of proof is unequally distributed across gender and race, we advance our understanding of intersectional patterns of discrimination across applicant-job requirement match.

We find substantial support for the unequal burden of proof theory across two original empirical studies: a nationally representative survey experiment and a correspondence audit study of accounting positions. As demonstrated in the survey experiment, supplying proof through applicant-job requirement matching lessens respondents' assumptions of Black men and White women's shortcomings when undermatched based on widely held gender and racial stereotypes; for Black women, who are often overlooked due to intersectional invisibility ([Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach 2008](#); [Ridgeway and Kricheli-Katz 2013](#)), providing proof through matching helps to make Black women more salient as viable candidates. In contrast, evaluations for White men are consistent whether or not they match or undermatch to job requirements. In the correspondence audit study, applicant-job requirement matching reduces discrimination in hiring screening decisions because of *changing* outcomes for Black men, White women, and Black women applicants, in contrast to *stable* callbacks for White men applicants when matched compared

to undermatched. Hiring screening discrimination also increases in the case of overmatching, compared to matching.

Some findings were not expected. For instance, in the survey experiment, we do not find that applicant-job requirements matching decreases the difference in evaluations of leadership ability for White women applicants compared to White men, nor the difference in evaluations of capability for White women and Black men applicants compared to White men. It may be more socially undesirable to identify gender or racial differences in leadership ability and capability compared to the other stereotypical traits we measure in the experiment.

We build on status characteristics theory to make two theoretical contributions to our understanding of discrimination at the hiring screen. First, we add conceptual clarity to status characteristics theory by considering what counts as relevant information, and how its meaning depends on the applicant's relation to the job's evaluative standard. We delineate the applicant-job requirement match as a fundamental positive piece of relevant information at the hiring screening interface—one that is explicitly relational and thus distinct from applicant's skills, traits, abilities, and credentials. It is its relational nature to a specific job that makes applicant-job match so influential when employers form their performance expectations: an employer hiring for a job that requires five years of experience may think highly of an applicant who has five years of experience; she might think less highly of the same applicant if the job required 10 years of experience, or conversely, two. Moreover, we clarify that applicant-job requirement matching is bidirectional, and relevant when applicants are undermatched but also when they are overmatched, which can lower expected performance capacity compared to perfect matching by introducing new employer concerns. In other words, possessing more of a required skill or quality may not only reduce bias (as is the expected outcome), but could also increase bias if applicants surpass a "perfect match."

Our conceptual clarification has important methodological ramifications for the study of discrimination. Typically, audit studies feature clear designs with respect to the job applicant's characteristics, but only rarely are attributes of the job integrated into the analysis (see [González, Cortina, and Rodríguez 2019](#); [Yavorsky 2019](#)). Aggregate callback rates, while informative in their own right, may mask heterogeneity in callbacks across the applicant-job requirement match. Research designs that match the fictitious applicants to the job requirements risk missing the key location of gender and racial discrimination. Audit studies would benefit from transparency in terms of how jobs are selected for application, and the extent to which fictitious applicants meet or do not meet job requirements.

Our second theoretical contribution is to construct an explicitly *intersectional* argument as to how applicant-job requirement matching affects hiring discrimination. Status characteristics theory offers foundational insights into the relationship between the applicant-job match and hiring discrimination, particularly how matching may improve employers' performance expectations for the disadvantaged group but not necessarily for the advantaged group ([Correll and Ridgeway 2003](#)). Despite these theoretical insights, its intersectional nature has not clearly been theorized in this literature—only recently have scholars considered status characteristics theory, and theories of discrimination more generally, through an intersectional lens ([Chavez and Wingfield 2018](#); [Heiserman 2023](#); [Weisshaar et al. 2024](#)). We advance theory by drawing on organizational theories of gendered and racialized standards ([Acker 1990](#); [Ray 2019](#)), and intersectional invisibility ([Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach 2008](#); [Ridgeway and Kricheli-Katz 2013](#)) to conceptualize a fully intersectional process of discrimination—involving intersectional standards of evaluation and intersectional stereotypes—and the disparate consequences for White women, Black men, and Black women. Moreover, by taking an intersectional approach, we reinvigorate theoretical attention to how applicant-job matching uniquely affects the perceptions of White men, Black men, White women, and Black women—thus shining analytical light on how White men escape a burden of proof, rather than only emphasizing the scrutiny that women and Black job applicants face, as may occur in research focusing solely on discrimination as the outcome of interest.

Future studies should address an important limitation of the current study, which we consider to be our indirect examination of intersectional invisibility as a mechanism of discrimination for Black women. In our study, intersectional invisibility is represented by the absence of difference in evaluations between White men and Black women. Future research should conceptualize and directly measure Black women's invisibility through other methods and instruments. While we find evidence for intersectional invisibility of Black women in the context of our study, future studies could also determine the occupational conditions under which intersectional invisibility occurs in contrast to double jeopardy—when Black women experience a cumulative disadvantage due to their gender and racial status (see [Carter and de Leon 2023](#) for a theoretical overview).

There are also fruitful ways future research could theoretically and empirically extend on the unequal burden of proof theory. One area is to clarify how employers perceive overqualified White men to understand the increasing callbacks White men received when overmatched. It is possible that when applicants are overmatched on experience, employers' reference point subtly shifts from the current job opening to higher-level positions within the organization, and employers perceive overly experienced White men as having the potential to quickly be promoted ([Kulkarni et al. 2015](#)). It is also possible that overly experienced women or racial minorities are viewed as potential threats since their promotion to higher level positions would disturb the gender or racial hierarchy ([Rudman et al. 2012](#)). Yet, it is also likely that there are limits to the leniency that White men experience—whether under- or overmatched—and more extreme forms of mismatch may prompt different social-psychological assumptions about White men. Future research should assess the underlying cognitive perceptions of White men's mismatching and the thresholds at which White men do or do not benefit from a low burden of proof.

Finally, future research should also consider whether and how an unequal burden of proof applies to different applicant characteristics beyond the categories of gender and race used here; to applicants that are less skilled than our fictitious applicants; to matching on different dimensions such as skills, credentials, or job level; and to later stages of the hiring process as applicants undergo interviews or receive a job offer ([Gaddis 2018](#); [Lahey and Beasley 2018](#)). It would also be worthwhile to consider how these processes differ when the evaluative standard is not embodied by White men or not solely by White men, for example, in more feminized occupations ([Galos and Coppock 2023](#); [Yavorsky 2019](#)), or in occupations with relatively more racial and ethnic diversity (e.g., [Chavez 2020](#)).

Altogether, our study underscores that gender and racial discrimination remains a feature of modern labor markets. When White men embody the taken-for-granted standard, an unequal burden of proof may result in women and Black job applicants being less likely to secure jobs to which they are mismatched compared to requirements. This form of discrimination at the hiring interface compounds existing labor market inequalities, considering that women and Black applicants may be less able to secure “reach” jobs for which they will learn and acquire new skills, which may contribute to their increased likelihood to be unmatched for the next position. Women and Black applicants may also need to walk a tightrope between matching requirements, but not overmatching, to escape discrimination. As an initial step toward solving this form of discrimination, employers could draw from our findings to assess the role of job requirements in their hiring processes, reconsidering how job demands can be used to establish a fair standard, without relying on biased assumptions of abilities. Until the deeply embedded assumptions about default workers within organizations are dismantled, racism and sexism will continue to limit opportunities for Black women and men and for White women in the labor market.

## Endnotes

1. Some audit studies attempt to align applicant traits and job requirements to make the experimental materials appear realistic ([Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004](#):996). This methodological form of matching deliberately reduces the variation in the applicant-job requirement match, which we argue is consequential for the extent of gender and racial discrimination.

2. See <https://amerispeak.norc.org/about-amerispeak/Pages/Panel-Design.aspx> for details on the panel.
3. Senior and staff accountant positions are combined for analysis since there is significant overlap in required experience and both fall under the umbrella of general accounting. In [Appendix C](#), we discuss this decision and present supplementary analyses that suggest that the main findings of the audit study do not significantly vary across position type.
4. We use the same names as in the survey experiment, plus an additional name per race/gender condition based on the same selection criteria described above.

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**Koji Chavez's** research is broadly focused on gender and racial inequalities in the labor market and in the workplace. He relies on both quantitative and qualitative methods to understand trends in discrimination and how and why they occur. Koji received his Ph.D. from Stanford University. He was a postdoctoral fellow at Washington University in St. Louis before becoming an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Indiana University.

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## Conflicts of interest

None declared.

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## Data availability statement

The data underlying Study 1 are available on Open Science Framework at <https://osf.io/75wxp>. The data underlying Study 2 are not available for sharing due to IRB restrictions, but the corresponding author can provide code and specific estimates upon request.

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