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Exploring Career Stagnation in Employment Equity Groups Amongst Canadian Public Servants

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Brief Description

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However, contemporary metrics for determining inclusion in employment amongst racialized groups can fail to identify barriers to entry and career advancement and the quality and depth of the necessary data begs improvement.

Additionally, the nuances of measures of diversity and equity must be recognized.

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Persons belonging to historically excluded groups may enter a sector via the improvement of hiring practices, yet, they often remain disproportionally underrepresented in positions of leadership (a lapse in equity).

Increased availability and analysis of disaggregated employment data allows employers and employees to quantify equitable representation amongst historically excluded groups.

Here, median values, a quintile analysis and the definition of a disproportionality index are used as evaluation metrics.

Abstract

Public service sectors aim to represent the interests of a country's population in policy and decision making and should therefore act as leaders in racial equity in employment. In recent years, institutions globally have increasingly recognized that equitable representation of historically excluded groups is essential to healthy and productive workplaces. However, contemporary metrics for determining inclusion in employment amongst racialized groups can fail to identify barriers to entry and career advancement and the quality and depth of the necessary data begs improvement. Additionally, the nuances of measures of diversity and equity must be recognized. Many use aggregated diversity data as a "catch-all" for representation metrics. Persons belonging to historically excluded groups may enter a sector via the improvement of hiring practices, yet, they often remain disproportionally underrepresented in positions of leadership (a lapse in equity). Increased availability and analysis of disaggregated employment data allows employers and employees to quantify equitable representation amongst historically excluded groups. Here, median values, a quintile analysis, and the definition of a disproportionality index are used as evaluation metrics.

Methodology: Publicly available disaggregated data from the Treasury Board of Canada of salary range representation for federal public sector employees (2017-2021) is presented using the open source software, R. The salary range data was web scraped with the R package 'rvest' and grouped into quintiles. The distribution of employees in the bottom and top 20th percentiles were analyzed. Median salaries per group were estimated. Quintile classification of salaries allowed for comparison of employment equity over time. From this data, Disproportionality Indices (DI), measures of representation proportional to the overall sample population which account for differences, were calculated.

Results: DI's for the data in question demonstrate career stagnation and systemic disadvantage of Black employees. Black public servants were found to be consistently overrepresented at the lowest salary ranges and underrepresented at the highest ranges between 2017-2021, as visualized with the R package 'ggplot'. These results affirm the Canadian Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet's Call to Action on Anti-Racism, Equity, and Inclusion in the Federal Public Service, which includes a direction for public service leaders to transition racialized employees to leadership roles via career development and talent management. Discussion: This analysis is novel because the disaggregated data allows for the elucidation of trends in subgroups within the recognized "visible minority" employment equity group which has historically been presented and analyzed as a single classification. The disparity in the results for the median salaries was further examined by analyzing

the top and bottom 20th percentiles of the salaries. The DI values showing under or over-representation enabled comparison of the extent of adverse effects amongst the groups studied.

Conclusion: Our findings of career stagnation indicates that the additional barriers faced by the Black subgroup must be addressed to achieve equitable representation. The clear disadvantage in career progression amongst Black public servants must be resolved with a strategic plan to identify structural and systemic barriers and improve retention and success to levels achieved by their non-racialized peers.