

Somewhere over the rainbow? An LGBT audit study of employment discrimination in Canada

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Labour markets are stratified by gender and sexual orientation. With few exceptions, research finds that heterosexual men earn more than lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals. What remains unclear is whether these differences result from employer's preference for working with heterosexual men, over women and LGBT people. To answer this question, we sent roughly 5000 job applications to 2500 entry-level white-collar job postings across Canada. We randomized first and last names, volunteer experience, gender, explicit disclosures of sexual orientation, and ethnicity on cover letters and resumes for recent university graduates. Overall, female applicants received significantly more callbacks than male applicants. Gay, bisexual and transgender male applicants received fewer callbacks than women and heterosexual men. Applicants with Chinese last names received fewer interview offers but there was no additive disadvantage for LGBT visible minorities. We found some evidence that employment discrimination may be greater outside Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal.

Keywords: LGBT; employment; discrimination; audit; Canada

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