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RAB Draft Part 1 (Intro + First 2 Entries)

11/1/20

Topic: National Origin Discrimination at Work in the United States of America

National origin discrimination is a form of maltreatment that involves unjust or unfavorable attitudes toward individuals on the grounds of their ethnicity or nationality. In the workplace, national origin discrimination can mean denying people of certain nationalities work opportunities, punishing them more harshly for the same mistakes, and other toxic behaviors. This topic is particularly interesting for me because I have always had a feeling that despite being a “melting pot,” American society still has a lot of prejudice toward immigrants. Maybe today it is no longer direct confrontations or violence, but covert discrimination can still cause a great deal of harm to national and ethnic minorities.

The US law makes it illegal for an employer to introduce a practice that would disadvantage or hurt certain groups of people. Citizenship and immigration status are some of the characteristics that should not be used in the decision-making process when interviewing an applicant. However, when I researched the legal aspect of national origin discrimination, I realized that it is sometimes extremely difficult to prove it and take action. Indeed, the law protects against harassment, but as told by the US Employment Opportunity Commission, minor acts such as teasing or mocking accents are not illegal. I could readily imagine how some people could get away with such behavior and did not face consequences harsher than a warning from their manager. For this assignment, I would like to learn more about the first-hand experiences of people working in tech who suffered workplace national origin discrimination.

**Barton, LeRon. “Is Silicon Valley Using Culture Fit to Disguise Discrimination?” *Raconteur* (1 March 2019).** [**http://www.raconteur.net/hr/diversity-inclusion/silicon-valley-discrimination**](http://www.raconteur.net/hr/diversity-inclusion/silicon-valley-discrimination)**.**

Summary:

Barton argues that for an industry that values creativity, tech remains way too homogeneous. The author claims that Silicon Valley is not always ready to look beyond a person’s origin, which means that the world’s biggest tech think-tank is unavailable for many under-represented ethnicities. Among the sector’s giants such as Google and Apple, the share of ethnic and racial minorities barely reaches 2-3%. While it is illegal to use a person’s race, ethnicity, or origin as an excuse to mistreat, companies find leeways to stay true to their interests. After years of working in tech, Barton concludes that discrimination has become more covert and rebranded as “culture fit.” Employers can easily deny a person a job opportunity, claiming that their values are not aligned. In reality, however, it may mean that they let bias and prejudice inform their decisions.

Notable Quotables:

1. “Inclusiveness was not encouraged, yet “culture fit” – how you would get along in the current work environment – was bandied about (Barton, para. 10).”

2. “When they say ‘culture fit’, for me that means they are looking for a particular person they can personally identify with (Barton, para. 13).”

3. “I noticed when we would bring this to the attention of management, they would become visibly tense hearing these things. It challenged their own narrative of being very good people who would never have bias (Barton, para. 30).”

Rhetorical Analysis:

The author speaks from his personal experience, which gives more weigh to his words. With his article, he hopes to reach big tech company managers that still hesitate to address the issues. Barton strikes a balance between providing objective information from official reports and giving his perspective on things. Whenever the author talks about his own perception of the situation, he sounds pessimist and disenchanted.

Reflection:

I agree with Barton about the mental toll that discrimination in the workplace takes on people. In a way, corporations hurt themselves by hurting employees because the latter are prevented from realizing their full potential. Another good point that I agree with is that management’s ego is behind turning a blind eye on discriminatory practices. Oftentimes, people refuse to accept that they failed to do justice by someone because it would hurt their self-esteem.

**“Growing up Asian American… Racism, Discrimination, and Why I Deserve More.” YouTube, uploaded by TechLead Show, 10 July 2020,** [**http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bM444PDW3pY&t=46s**](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bM444PDW3pY&t=46s)**.**

Summary:

In his video, Patrick Shyu, known on YouTube under his nickname TechLead, acknowledges the existence of national origin discrimination in the United States. He elaborates on some hurtful stereotypes that he had to fight against at school, in academia, and in the workplace. The blogger does not appreciate it when people put labels on other based on their origin. At the same time, he thinks that Asian-Americans in the United States often do it themselves. They form tight-knit community where the only common denominator is their race while their unique identities are erased for the sake of shared interests. Shyu says that he refuses to identify himself only through the lens of his national origin, nor is he willing to play a race card to win more privileges in life. According to the blogger, playing a victim is counterproductive, and oftentimes a person may convince themselves that they are incapable and defeated just because they are different.

Notable Quotables:

1. “I realized very early on is that you can really only get so far by begging other people to help you out and to give you things.”

2. “I’m unique in myself and the skin color is not going to change that I may have more in common with somebody of a totally different race ethnicity [than another Asian-American].”

Rhetorical Analysis:

The author of this video is a former Google tech lead (leading engineer) of Japanese origin. Shyu’s argument is credible because as evidenced by his career, he was not impeded by his ethnicity, though at times, stereotypes were frustrating. The video is independent for general audiences, and especially those Asian-Americans who start to lose faith in themselves because of discrimination. Shyu’s tone is serious, introspective, and sincere: he knows how to convince the viewer without using any external sources and relying solely on his experience.

Reflection:

I chose this video because it is an example of how a person can cultivate self-agency and beat all odds. I do not think that Shyu shirks the responsibility for fighting discrimination of minorities. Instead, he argues that waiting for things to change may take forever. The best way to live one’s life is to build up self-confidence and get rid of victim mentality.