

Annotation 1

My research on how to make workplaces more equitable and inclusive of Black workers led me to an enlightening report, *Being Black in Corporate America, An Intersectional Exploration* from non-profit think-tank Coqual (formerly CTI). The data in the report consists of a national survey of 3,736 respondents, in-person and virtual focus groups of 150 people, a qualitative questionnaire answered by 200 people and one-on-one interviews with 40 people. Researchers Pooja Jain-Link, et. al, take us on a tour of the “Black experience” at work. They explore statistics on Black representation in Corporate America. The dismally low percentages (8% overall and .08% for Fortune 500 CEOs) do not correlate with college graduation rates of Black Americans, which leads to the false perception that there are few qualified Black people available to fill corporate positions. We are shown how the few Black professionals that have been hired, perceive their lack of prospects for advancement into upper management, despite being more than qualified and even more ambitious, as well as their perception of having little access to senior leaders. The data backs up their suspicions. 65% of Black professionals report being very ambitious vs 53% of white professionals. The researchers also provide us with an examination of Black workers’ experiences compared to other underrepresented groups. Consequently, the report uncovers the higher rates in which Black people encounter microaggressions and racial prejudice compared to others (4 times as likely), as well as lower rates of allyship, particularly from white women. The data that was reported suggests that to counter this, many Black employees leave within two years or start their own businesses.

This report is an important addition to my conversation on Black equity and inclusion because it establishes a baseline for issues Black workers feel need to be addressed in Corporate America. It helps quantify, and in some cases legitimize through data, what many Black employees knew anecdotally was happening at their own workplace but were never sure to what extent it was happening to their cohorts in other locations. One of the most valuable aspects of this report is its analysis of what makes Black employees want to *stay* at a company along with meaningful solutions for transforming workplaces into inclusive and equitable spaces.

Reference:

Pooja Jain-Link, et. al, “Being Black in Corporate America, An Intersectional Exploration”, *Coqual*, Dec 2019