# Reaction Paper 4
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Admittedly, as a foreigner, trying to understand and analyze the issues faced by today's American society can be a daunting task. These issues, in particular those concerned with employment, have proven to be incredibly complex as they inherently encompass gender, class, and race-related features that are in turn shaped by the US's history, culture (or shall I say amalgamation of cultures), economic conditions, and social stereotypes. Inevitably, in an effort to better understand these "US-specific" issues, I strive to find similarities between them and those found in Lebanon and Oman's working-places, which are analogously shaped by their respective histories, cultures, economic conditions, and social stereotypes. The article that particularly interested me was "Employer Practices, Local Labor Markets, and Occupational Segregation." In particular I liked how the author incorporated the fact that "For the majority of employers they interviewed, access to labor was important to their choice of current location (page 159)." I would like to address this issue in this Reaction Paper because this fact is visible in all the workplaces mentioned above and is not only a Policy-related issue but includes an urban-planning aspect to it as well. Specifically, I would like to suggest that the redistribution of people within the city or town to form a less visible separation of races and classes, while simultaneously offering more equal opportunities, may provide a solution to many of the issues.

There are, however, two premises that I would like to outline before presenting my arguments:

- While ideally, overcoming racism and sexism completely will solve most of the issues found in the workplace, the processes take an awfully long time. I am not suggesting that the struggle to overcome these issues should stop; however, I would like to provide an alternative short-term solution in the meantime.

- People of similar ethnic backgrounds live in the proximity of one another.

Be it in the US, Lebanon, or in Oman, people of similar ethnic backgrounds live in the proximity of one another. In Lebanon, the Syrian workers and other less-wealthy minorities live in certain neighborhoods thus are being distinctly secluded. They live there primarily due to economic constraints, as opposed to ancestral or hereditary reasons. Their seclusion allows for employers to target them and steer their careers. Employers often post ads, found almost exclusively in their local newspapers that encourage them to join the labor on construction sites. This phenomenon is described in the article, "Employer Practices, Local Labor Markets, and Occupational segregation." The fact that they cannot afford to live elsewhere, can be at least partially resolved using public policy. If policy-makers are capable of ensuring their integration with the other more privileged areas of the city, this will expose them to better education, and consequently their adoption of better skills that will in turn make them more competitive in the workplace. This could be done by enforcing policies that oblige building-owners to reserve a certain percentage of their rentable space to Syrians and other less-wealthy minorities.

This is just one example of how redistribution of people into other areas can help solve the issues faced in the workplace. The major challenge that I've found so far when

dealing with issues of race, class, and gender in the workplace, is the lack of an ideal and absolute standard to which we can compare the current status of our cities.

I just wanted to share this thought that opens the door to many other suggestions on how urban planning alongside policy-making can help solve many issues in the workplace. I realize the complexities and challenges that can arise from redistributing people, however, at least at the macro-level, it seems to me that many issues can be resolved in this manner. The major challenges that may arise with the redistribution of people:

- People are used to where they live and their businesses often thrive on their knowledge of people in their neighborhood.

- How does one ensure fair redistribution? I.e. how does one ensure that all the redistributed people are offered with equal opportunities?

- How does one ensure transportation to their old businesses?

Of course, this topic cannot be resolved in a one-page reaction paper. However, I thought it would be interesting to share these thoughts with you.