

Discrimination

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

This tutorial will cover the topic of discrimination through the definition and discussion of:

1. Prejudice and Discrimination
2. Institutional Discrimination

1. PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION

Prejudice and discrimination are distinct, yet interrelated ideas. The key to understanding the difference between prejudice and discrimination is to recognize that **prejudice** is an unfair attitude or idea about another group, and **discrimination** involves putting that idea into action in the world.

Discrimination can be positive or negative. You can have discrimination that is positive in the sense that it opens up opportunities for a group that is discriminated against. Conversely, you can have negative discrimination that restricts the opportunities for a group in society.



TERMS TO KNOW

Prejudice

An attitude or judgment about another group that is unfair and usually involves stereotypes.

Discrimination

Action based on prejudice.

2. INSTITUTIONAL DISCRIMINATION

Ideas of prejudice and discrimination can transfer from individuals to institutions, such that the institutions in society are also discriminatory. This is known as **institutional discrimination** and prejudice. Institutions have more power than individuals to shape opportunities and constraints in society, and it is important to note that these institutions are composed of people with their own prejudices and discrimination. Institutions are nothing but the collective ideas of the people within them.



EXAMPLE The police and law enforcement, courts, schools, and banks, for instance, are institutions made up of individuals, and these institutions can exert their own prejudice and discrimination. This is more harmful because institutions are often more powerful than individuals.

IN CONTEXT

The **Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka** Supreme Court ruling was a landmark rebuke of institutional discrimination. Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka was the Supreme Court ruling that put an end to the idea of separate but equal, which meant that black students were in one school, and white students were in another school--separate, but equal. In reality, though, it wasn't equal. This separation of black and white students was an example of an institutionalized discrimination in American society. Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka overturned this concept and schools became blended.

Work resume studies are another example of institutionalized discrimination in American society. Resume studies involved scholars submitting identical resumes with black-sounding names and white-sounding names and seeing differential outcomes solely as a result of the name on the resume.

Researchers have also found that banks have denied mortgages on the basis of some kind of racial discrimination, or else given mortgages, but with higher interest rates, based upon racial discrimination.

All of these examples of institutional discrimination illustrate the power the institutions can have over individuals, and their ability to engage in discriminatory action.



TERM TO KNOW

Institutional Discrimination

Discrimination that results from the day-to-day operations of some institutions in society.

Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka

A landmark supreme court decision that ended institutional discrimination in the American education system.



SUMMARY

Today you reviewed the concepts of **prejudice** and **discrimination**, and learned about its application in institutions, known as **institutional discrimination**.

Source: This work is adapted from Sophia author Zach Lamb.



TERMS TO KNOW

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An attitude or judgment about another group that is unfair and usually involves stereotypes.