

Assigned Workshop C

Discrimination. In which ways is it scientifically localised and how is it defined and understood in policy discourse? How can we improve our scientific focus while keeping track of its range of manifestations?

Before social science research in this area can achieve theoretical and conceptual development, those involved must understand discrimination as a legal concept, its forms, and the measures designed to prevent unequal treatment. Yet a social science problematic cannot be confined to what counts as discrimination in law. It has to start from evidence of disadvantage, or inequality, and uncover its causes. Experimental social psychologists have shown how easily social categories can be created. Economists have identified the possibly miss-named 'taste' for discrimination that underlies some inequalities in employment and earnings. Geographers have analysed the factors, on both the supply side and the demand side, that lead to residential segregation. Sociologists have to investigate the sources of the preference for association with co-ethnics, and the trade-off between these and the norms of civic relationships.'