Chapter 27
Discrimination:
Forms, Consequences, and Anti-Discrimination Strategies

Simona Rodat
Adventus University, Romania

ABSTRACT

The chapter provides an analytical framework for the concept of discrimination, that is, the different, unfair treatment of some people based on their actual or perceived membership in certain groups or social categories. Discrimination is referred to in the broader context of stigmatization, as the action-related component of the stigma process. After discussing several definitions of discrimination and outlining its main features, the different forms of discrimination are addressed and exemplified, such as direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, victimization. Also, the most relevant aspects regarding victims of discrimination are discussed, a special focus is given to the negative impact of discrimination on victims in terms of social and economic status, well-being, and health. Besides the threatening effects on individuals and groups, the consequences of discrimination on communities and society as a whole are also outlined. The final part of the chapter deals with the major anti-discrimination strategies that can be undertaken at the macro, mezzo, and microsocial levels.

INTRODUCTION

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood". This is proclaimed by the Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights from 1948. And yet, not all individuals, without distinction, are granted the same fundamental rights and freedoms. Some people are treated differently from others, only based on criteria such as race, nationality, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, social background, social class, religion, language, beliefs, health, body etc. To this different, unequal, unfair treatment refers the concept of discrimination, as opposed to equity. Discrimination means the illegal practice of treating some individuals less favourably than others because they are different on the

basis of one or more of the above elements. It refers to any difference, exclusion, restriction or preference based on the criteria set out in the legislation.

This chapter addresses the topic of discrimination, providing a scientific framework for this phenomenon and the strategies to prevent and combat it. In the first part of the chapter a conceptual and analytical framework is outlined, discrimination being referred to and defined in the broader context of the process of stigmatization, more exactly as an integral part of the stigma process. In this regard, the link between, on the one hand, discrimination, as the action-related component of stigma process, that is, inequitable actions against some people, unfair behaviours towards them, their differentiation and separation based on certain criteria, and, on the other hand, the labelling process, stereotypes, and prejudices, as the attributional and attitudinal component of stigma process, is outlined, explained and exemplified. In addition to defining discrimination, the first part of the chapter approaches the forms of discrimination, that is, direct, indirect, structural, and multiple discrimination, harassment, bullying, mobbing, harm to the dignity of the person, victimization, as well as the order to discriminate. All these types of discrimination are defined and analysed in detail, and relevant examples are provided for each.

Furthermore, the most relevant aspects regarding victims and perpetrators of discrimination are discussed. Discrimination can have a significant negative impact on victims in terms of social and economic status, well-being and health. That is why the chapter deals further with the negative consequences of discrimination, both at an individual and at a group and community level. However, as discrimination has a threatening effect not only on individuals, groups and communities, but also on society as a whole, leading to economic dysfunctions, distortions of competition between companies and undermining social cohesion, its social and societal consequences are also addressed.

The final part of the chapter deals with the ways, measures and strategies to prevent and combat discrimination. Thus, the chapter discusses in this part the most common anti-discrimination strategies as regards both individuals, groups, communities, and society as a whole, including intervention strategies from the perspective of social work.

DISCRIMINATION RESEARCH: A CONCEPTUAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Discrimination in the Context of the Process of Stigmatization

Stigmatization is the process by which a person is associated with a stigma, which means a negative attribute that discredits the individual in society. It also involves generalization, that is, the attribution of additional features, usually depreciating, which are not objectively related to the original characteristic. This generalization corroborates the social process of differentiation, underestimation and devaluation of stigmatized people, and can contribute to the appropriation of an "altered" social identity (*spoiled identity*, in the terms of Goffman, 1963). Being aware that they do not meet the normative expectations of society, stigmatized people presume to be treated with derogatory attitudes and behaviours and may experience a reduced self-esteem and self-respect (Petersen & Six, 2008).

Moreover, stigmatization involves assigning the person concerned to a certain socially disregarded group, which leads to social disapproval, loss or diminished status, marginalization and humiliation, as well as the person's perception primarily through the prism of her stigma and reducing her to the negative characteristic assigned. Furthermore, all other possible negative attributes of the person in question,

19 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:
www.igi-global.com/chapter/discrimination/279560

Related Content

Business Models for Smart City Solutions: An Overview of Main Archetypes
Edoardo Crociand Tania Molteni (2021). *International Journal of Urban Planning and Smart Cities (pp. 94-109).*
www.irma-international.org/article/business-models-for-smart-city-solutions/280155

Characterizing e-Inclusion Intermediary Actors in Europe: Exploring the Role of Third Sector Organizations
Cristina Torrecillas, María Garrido, Gianluca Misuracaand Gabriel Rissola (2014). *International Journal of Public Administration in the Digital Age (pp. 1-20).*
www.irma-international.org/article/characterizing-e-inclusion-intermediary-actors-in-europe/119975

An Evaluation Framework for the Impact of Digitalization on the Quality of Governance: Evidence From Indonesia
Darusalam Darusalam, Marijn Janssen, Jamaliah Said, Zuraidah Mohd Sanusiand Normah Omar (2023). *International Journal of Public Administration in the Digital Age (pp. 1-21).*
www.irma-international.org/article/an-evaluation-framework-for-the-impact-of-digitalization-on-the-quality-of-governance/332880

An Analysis and Detection of Misleading Information on Social Media Using Machine Learning Techniques
Ritushree Narayan, Keshav Sinhaand Devesh K. Upadhyay (2022). *Handbook of Research on Cyber Approaches to Public Administration and Social Policy (pp. 520-541).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/an-analysis-and-detection-of-misleading-information-on-social-media-using-machine-learning-techniques/299200

A Strategic Foresight about Future Public Service Developments from the Citizens' Perspective
Falko Walther, Sebastian Vogtand Rüdiger Kabst (2016). *International Journal of Public Administration in the Digital Age (pp. 19-42).*
www.irma-international.org/article/a-strategic-foresight-about-future-public-service-developments-from-the-citizens-perspective/143030