

Discuss institutional discrimination. Comparing people's race and people's social class, what similarities and differences in institutional discrimination exist? Support your argument with evidence.

Institutional discrimination is an unfair treatment based on some social factor that is formed through organizational policy. It would seem that most institutional discrimination begins in the documentation that institutions keep about their constituents. Organizations will keep records of a lot of information, which is used to determine how individuals are handled.

Some of the most common occurrences of institutional racism are in the banking and insurance industries. Insurance premiums for an African-American male are higher than those for an equivalent Caucasian counterpart. The same situation holds true for an African-American applying for a mortgage. An equally qualified Caucasian is more likely to receive approval. Housing is an extremely discriminative area of society, as it is not only more difficult to get a mortgage for some races, there may also be real estate rules in place that will govern what race is allowed to purchase property in a certain area. Institutions mask this discrimination behind the labels of "risk assessment". Before World War II it was common practice for homeowners to be required to sign "restrictive covenants", which would prevent the homeowner from selling the home to certain minority groups. Another area where discrimination is slightly less present, but is still an issue is in the area of equal pay for equal work. There is a large discrepancy between the amount that white men are paid compared to what black men are paid. In general African-Americans and Hispanics are paid less than whites. Also, in each race the women are paid less than the men. Institutional racism can also be seen in the area of hiring. The more applicants there are for positions within an organization, the more selective the organization is allowed to be, which can result in discrimination in the hiring practices. Tactics such as using very specific job descriptions, for which only a few select people (perhaps some the employer already selected), are qualified. Often minorities are invited for job interviews and other formal components of the hiring process only to be denied employment in favor of someone who is more ideal in the mind of

the employer.

Race and social class are often closely related where discrimination is concerned. The biggest difference is that race is an ascribed status and social class is an achieved status. Race is often used as a discriminative factor in social situations, as well as in things like employment, whereas social class is more of a factor in conditions such as issuing credit or admission to universities. Class discrimination is usually on the basis of the perception of financial abilities. For example, in casinos, "high rollers" get more preferential treatment that is not afforded to those who are of a lower social class and do not have large amounts of money to spend on gambling. The same type of discrimination does not occur on the social dimension of race, or if it does, it is not to the same magnitude. While there are subtle differences in the way that racial and class discrimination occur, they both have the effect of being oppressive when they occur at the institutional level. Class discrimination hinders class mobility, which forces individuals as well as their offspring to remain in the same class, with little room for climbing the metaphorical social ladder. Race discrimination occurs because of prejudice attitudes relating to people of a common racial or ethnic background. The stigma that is perceived with those groups is often related to the perception of their motivation and intent within society. While most races in America share similar values when it comes to work or education, there is a mistrust between the Caucasians and the minorities. There is a cycle of discrimination that seems to begin with unequal treatment in education. In this country's history there has been discrimination in education, being most noticeably manifested in terms of racial segregation of schools. This segregation, while no longer legally supported, still exists in some school districts. Some teachers discriminate with the amount of attention they give students of a minority race. They do not put as much effort into those students, causing the minority students to be less interested in academics. This discrimination can often result in lower high school graduation rates for the minority students. In turn the lower graduation rates means less students going to college, reducing the employment opportunities for minorities. Because of the ascribed nature of race, there is no escaping from the discrimination, there is very little hope of breaking the cycle unless outside

forces encourage a more equitable job and education market. In racial discrimination all of the factors of discrimination are working against the minority individuals. Housing and economic discrimination restrict minorities to certain neighborhoods, which restricts the children to a specific set of schools. The educational discrimination then compounds with the problem of employment discrimination, further limiting the options and ensuring that another generation is forced to go through the same cycle.

Social class discrimination is less persistent. Social class is flexible, and therefore the attitudes towards people of low social class is less of an obstacle, however it is still problematic. Social class can impact the educational experience of a child, there may be discrimination in the classroom toward children who are from higher social classes who are seen as having more potential or in some way more worth giving attention to than students from lower classes. Students in lower classes do not have access to private school instruction, and are often limited to public institutions for higher education. This is based both on economic ability to attend private institutions as well as on certain qualitative factors of admission. People of higher social class are more likely to "know" people at the institution and are more likely to have an easier time with being admitted. Some institutions look favorably on students who have a relative who is in the alumni, and of course it doesn't hurt if the alumnus has made significant financial contributions to the institution. These factors of social class can determine if a student is able to receive the quality of education which they desire. Social class does not play a large part in the ability to acquire employment. Certain high-responsibility jobs, such as those involving the managing of large amounts of money may show signs of class discrimination in the hiring process, but in general it is not a major factor in employment itself. Where social class discrimination is more obvious is in the area of promotions and career advancement. In organizational advancement factors of job performance as well as who the candidate knows in the organization contribute to whether or not the candidate will receive the promotion. The interesting thing about this form of discrimination is that the individual can overcome it by networking and by becoming socially involved with people of a higher class. Through affecting the social aspects

of social class it is possible to gain social favor and gradually work toward a higher social class. The discrimination is present and is overall harmful, but its effect is less permanent.

Show how oppression (discrimination) and exploitation (paying people less than the value of their labor) work together. Which comes first, exploitation or oppression? In other words, does oppression lead to exploitation, or does exploitation lead to oppression? Support your argument with evidence.

Oppression and exploitation are related to each other in a variety of ways. Exploitation encourages oppression and discrimination. When a people are exploited, not only are they paid less for their work, but they are considered to be "worth" less as people, and as a result a social structure is formed in which discrimination occurs, leading to oppression of those people. If a people are treated as being inferior to another people, through exploitation, then they will be thought of as inferior in social classifications (discrimination), as a result, the cycle is allowed to continue. Because of exploitation minorities do not have the luxury of being of a high social class, and are therefore treated badly in terms of educational opportunities they are allowed and the types of jobs they will be hired for. Both oppression and exploitation work together to ensure the success of each other.

African-Americans have been a long-standing example of this type of occurrence. The African people were first exploited when Europeans traveled to African, captured the African people and then sold them to the Americas and to other places in the world. When the African-Americans were finally freed they were treated as second-class citizens. African-Americans were discriminated against, segregated from the rest of the population and then further exploited in low-paying jobs.

Mexican immigrants began a different way. The Mexican-Americans were never a conquered or captured people, and most came to the United States quite willingly. The attraction for the Mexican immigrants was the availability of jobs with which they could support their families. While the jobs were great pay compared to conditions in Mexico, they were still being exploited by American standards. The immigrants were not paid what American workers would be paid for the same work. Mexican-Americans were almost immediately faced with discrimination. In terms of political abilities Mexican-Americans were treated more as invaders than as citizens. Mexican-Americans were denied the ability to vote and when they were legally allowed to vote there were conditions placed on that right, such as literacy tests and

poll taxes.

The concepts of oppression and exploitation are so cyclical and co-dependent it is hard to isolate exactly how they form and which comes first, but in terms of chronology it seems as though exploitation comes first. The presence of a minority in a "host" culture comes with a certain level of "discrimination" just as a matter of distinguishing that the minority has difference, however, discriminative treatment does not always have to result from that difference. If a foreign exchange student enters an American school there will be clashes of culture and some difference, but unless there is some pre-existing prejudice or stereotype, there is not likely to be any discrimination. From what I have witnessed in past experiences, there tends to be a curiosity about the culture of the student, but no negative or discriminative feelings typically arise. On the other hand, if a person were to arrive in the country for the purpose of finding a job, the person would likely be forced to select a low-end job because of those same cultural differences that would be novel in an exchange student. If the individual is offered a job for less than an American would be paid, the exploitation begins, and social tensions may form if the individual displaces an American. On a large scale this causes a general attitude or stereotype toward a group. Gradually the stereotypes result in discrimination and opportunities are denied to the non-native group.

Show that race is a socially and politically constructed ideology and not a biological trait. Please supply evidence for your argument

All humans belong to the same species, Homo sapiens sapiens. Biologically there are very minor differences in genetics which cause skin pigmentation differences. The amount of genetic variation can often be greater between random samplings of the same racial group than between members of different racial groups. There should be no more special classification of people of different skin tones than between people who have freckles and those who do not. People of the same race do not all come from the same geographic region, share the same depth of skin color or share the same type of hair. This makes it incredibly difficult to draw any type of conclusion that would allow for a biological distinction of races.

While racial classifications may be made based upon skin pigmentation, the experience of people in the non-dominant races is based completely upon social and political ideology. The ideology of race is based on the concept of inequality. In the United States race has been used to distinguish between the peoples of the colonies who were from England and other European territories, the conquered people (Native Americans) and the people that were later enslaved for the use of the Caucasian settlers (African Americans). This ability to distinguish between people continued with the Mexican immigrations to California, Texas and other states in the region. Eventually, during the gold Rush it applied to the Chinese as well. Race does not seem to apply in the United States until the groups have a reason to be noticed. In the case of African-Americans, the race mattered as soon as they were useful for free labor, in the case of Mexicans, they were noticed and separated as soon as the majority population felt their job security threatened. In a more modern example, Americans have always accepted "middle easterners" as being a people that live among them. While most Americans probably did not have social connection to that group of people, the level of race acknowledgment that currently exists did not form until after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. As soon as the group was seen as a threat their 'race' mattered and the discrimination of the group increased. The modern manifestation of the political ideology of race comes from previous attempts to eliminate discrimination. Through policies to integrate segregated schools and laws to ensure equal opportunities of employment there is a great amount of attention being given to race. By drawing attention to race, there is a furthering of the belief that race is somehow an important and tangible trait that deserves discrimination

(either positive or negative discrimination). The view of race is completely arbitrary. In the United States race is based majorly on skin color, whereas in Germany in the 1930s and 1940s, Adolf Hitler's view of race included hair color, eye color, ethnicity and sexual orientation. The Jewish, disabled, mentally ill, homosexuals and others were grouped into their own separate races, considered to be different from the ideal "master race". This separation was quite artificial and was not based on any biological trait. Hitler's idea of the "master race" included individuals who were of white skin pigmentation, having blond hair and blue eyes.

Genetic traits have very little to do with race. A historical acceptance of some races as being inferior due to their genetics, whether they are believed to be unclean, closer related to apes than other races or simply weak, is a view that was developed before the modern understanding of genetics. People were given race because people in a position of power said that they should be given their own classification. When the concept of race was created, it was not created equally, and thus the present concept of race is not equal, whereas on the fundamental level, all humans are equal. There is no significant evidence to prove that there is a biological basis for what is called "race".