

## INTERSECTIONALITY AND SYSTEMIC DISCRIMINATION

=> *To what extent do multiple identities and systemic discrimination impact contemporary societies?*

A voir/lire au sujet du racisme:

Movies: **"Selma"** (Ava DuVernay, 2014) **"Moonlight"** (Barry Jenkins, 2016) - "**Hidden Figures**" (Theodore Melfi, 2016)

Books: ***Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*** Kimberlé Crenshaw, (1989), ***The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*** Michelle Alexander (2010)

Series: **"When They See Us"** (Netflix, 2019) - Mini-série sur les "Central Park Five", illustrant le racisme systémique dans la justice

**"Orange Is the New Black"** (Netflix, 2013-2019) - Explore l'intersectionnalité en milieu carcéral avec des personnages féminins divers

**"Pose"** (FX, 2018-2021) - Sur la communauté trans et queer afro-américaine et latino dans les années 80-90

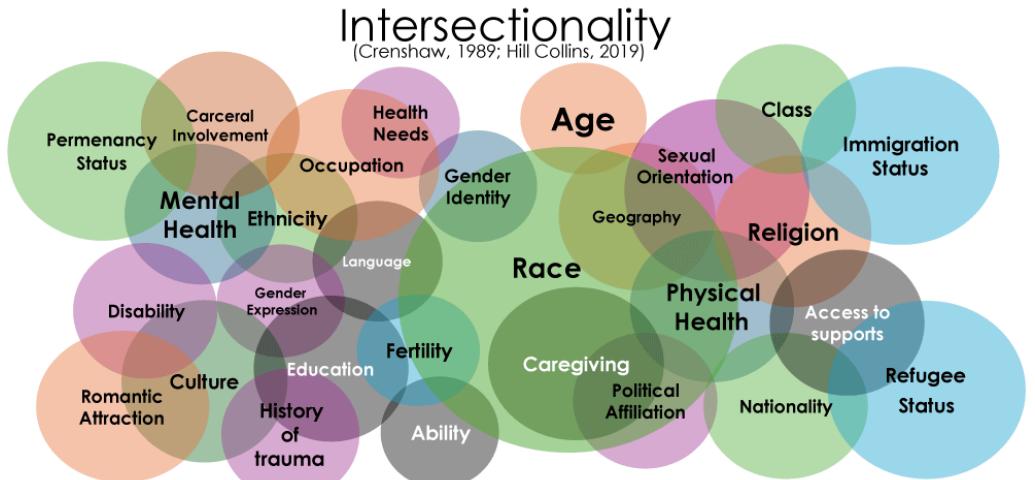


Image adapted from [Intersectionality in the LGBTQIA Community | icma.org](https://icma.org/intersectionality-in-the-lgbtqia-community)

(© Beltrano & Myer, 2024)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akOe5-UsQ2o>

## **PART I - Intersectionality and Systemic Discrimination in Modern Societies**

### **DOCUMENT A- What is intersectionality?**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=cNEDS5BP\\_C8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cNEDS5BP_C8)

1. Watch the video and sum it up in 3 key points.
2. Why does intersectionality matter in our current society?

#### **Tool box**

**Overlapping identities** = Identités qui se chevauchent

**To shed light on** = Mettre en lumière / Éclairer

**Compounding discrimination** = Discrimination cumulée

**Blind spots** = angles morts / zones aveugles

**One-size-fits-all approach** = Approche universelle / uniforme

**To capture the complexity** = Saisir / Capturer la complexité

**Systemic barriers** = Obstacles systémiques

**Inclusive policies** = Politiques inclusives

**To address root causes** = S'attaquer aux causes profondes

**Representation matters** = La représentation compte

**To fall through the cracks** = Passer entre les mailles du filet

**Nuanced understanding** = Compréhension nuancée

**To tackle inequality effectively** = Lutter efficacement contre les inégalités

**Lived experiences** = Expériences vécues

### **DOCUMENT B - 'United in Diversity', the EU motto**

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/general-secretariat/careers/diversity-and-inclusion/>

European Council, September 2025

We are committed to diversity and inclusion. Our D&I initiatives and actions are driven by the GSC Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2030.

We celebrate differences and encourage innovation coming from all backgrounds, perspectives, abilities, and experiences. We believe diversity benefits everyone. We prioritise merit and equality of opportunities without any discrimination or bias.

We make sure that everyone enjoys full respect for who they are and plays an active role in co-creating an inclusive workplace.

Our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy embraces an intersectional approach to diversity and an integrated approach to inclusion.

We acknowledge the interplay of multiple diversity parameters, focusing on:

- promoting gender balance
- becoming a fully disability-inclusive organisation
- supporting LGBTI+ people
- enhancing ethnic diversity
- attracting more socio-economic diversity
- fostering cross-generational collaboration

To integrate diversity and inclusion more widely, we endeavour to:

- diversify our outreach to make sure everyone knows about our commitment to diversity and inclusion
- optimise working conditions so that all of our staff perform at their best
- foster a culture of respect for the well-being of both our staff and our organisation
- promote unity to reinforce our sense of purpose and belonging

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1. Read the text and pick out 10 key words.
2. Do the crosswords p3
3. WRITING TASK: Write a memo to your boss explaining the importance of developing DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) strategies in your company. Suggest some concrete ideas to implement. Approximately 250 words.

#### Tool box

**To implement** = mettre en oeuvre

**Hiring practices** = pratiques de recrutement

**Underrepresented** = sous-représenté(e)

**Policy** = politique/ règlement

**To promote** = promouvoir

**Fair** = juste/équitable

**Systemic bias** = biais systémique

**To leverage** = tirer parti de / exploiter

**To address disparities** = remédier aux disparités

**To mitigate** = atténuer/ réduire

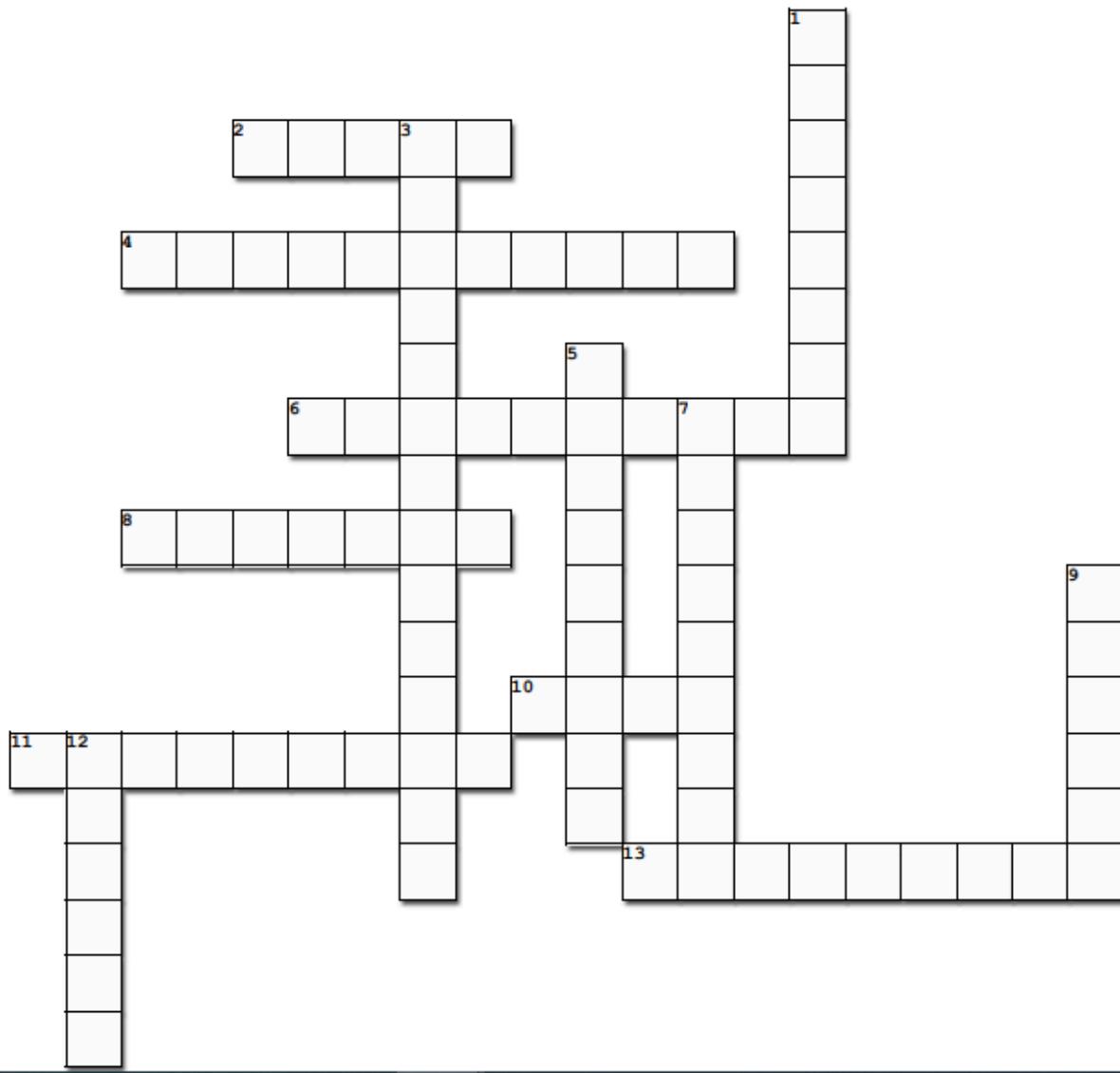
**Tangible outcomes** = des résultats tangibles

**Measurable goals** = des objectifs mesurables

**To drive change** = impulser le changement

**Blind recruitment** = recruitment anonyme

**Pay equity** = équité salariale



### **Across**

2. the quality of being good and deserving praise
4. the possibility of doing something
6. an illness, injury, or condition that makes it difficult for someone to do some things that other people do
8. to improve the quality, amount, or strength of something
10. the action of supporting or opposing a particular person or thing in an unfair way, because of allowing personal opinions to
11. a feeling of being happy or comfortable as part of a particular group
13. to try to do something

### **Down**

1. the right of different groups of people to have a similar social position and receive the same treatment
3. related to the way in which different types of discrimination are
5. The condition of having or including people from different ethnicities and social backgrounds.
7. the action or state of including
9. to encourage the development or growth of something
12. the situation in which everyone is treated fairly according to their needs

## DOCUMENT C - Anti-black discrimination systemic in Met - report

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c1lq711n2e2o>

BBC, November 7, 2025

The Metropolitan Police has a structural problem with "**systematic racism**", an independent report into anti-black harm within the force has warned.

The review looked at the Met's systems, leadership, governance and culture and concluded racial harm was "maintained through a repeated institutional sequence" within the force.

Report author Dr Shereen Daniels said racism and "anti-blackness" were systemic "institutional design" within the force.

Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley said the force recognised the scale of the challenges and London's mayor, Sir Sadiq Khan, said the **pace** of cultural reform had to speed up. The National Black Police Association said action to address issues had not been taken.

The review, commissioned from the consultancy HR Rewired, concluded that darker-skinned Met staff were "labelled **confrontational**" while lighter-skinned employees might receive quicker empathy and **leniency**.

Dr Shereen Daniels said that systemic racism was "not a matter of perception", adding that "true **accountability** begins with specificity".

"The same systems that sustain racial harm against black people also enable other forms of harm. Confronting this is not an act of exclusion but a necessary foundation for safety, fairness and justice for everyone," she said.

The report **drew on** more than 40 years of evidence showing how racism had shaped the Met's relationship with black communities and affected black officers and staff.

Within communities, this meant darker-skinned people were more likely to be read as suspicious or aggressive, and "force is more readily authorised", the report said.

It also highlighted the "adultification" of black children - where children are perceived as more adult-like and grown up - and said their vulnerability was **downplayed** and their actions were criminalised.

Baroness Lawrence said that discrimination "must be acknowledged, accepted and confronted in the Met", adding that racism was the reason why her son had been killed and why the police had failed to find all of his killers.

She added: "The police must stop telling us that change is coming whilst we continue to suffer. That change must take place now."

The report is the latest to highlight racism within Britain's biggest police force, after Louise Casey's 2023 review - commissioned after the murder of Sarah Everard - concluded that the Met was institutionally racist, misogynistic and homophobic. Reviews conducted decades ago have criticised discrimination within the Met - including the 1999 Macpherson report that called the force "institutionally racist" after the **mishandling** of Stephen Lawrence's case. Earlier this year, secret BBC filming found serving Met Police officers calling for immigrants to be shot and **revelling** in the use of force.

The president of the National Black Police Association, Andy George, said Friday's report was the latest in a long line of reviews "which have highlighted the same issues again and again".

"There is a culture of denial, **dismissal**, of almost waiting for the spotlight to be on - and as soon as the spotlight goes, then it's business as normal," he told BBC .

1. Read and match the words in boldface to the definitions:

- a. the act of treating something as unworthy of serious consideration
- b. to use information or your knowledge of something to help you do something
- c. the fact or quality of being more merciful or tolerant than expected
- d. responsibility
- e. make (something) appear less important than it really is.
- f. to get great pleasure from a situation or an activity
- g. manage or deal with (something) wrongly or ineffectively.
- h. forms of racism that are pervasively and deeply embedded in systems, laws, written or unwritten policies, and entrenched practices and beliefs that produce, condone, and perpetuate widespread unfair treatment
- i. the speed at which something happens
- j. tending to deal with situations in an aggressive way; hostile or argumentative

2. Read and pick out information about:

- Andy George
- Dr Shereen Daniels
- BBC
- Sarah Everard
- Baroness Lawrence
- Sir Sadiq Khan

3. Pick out words associated with the Met (Metropolitan Police):

4. Explain how systemic racism manifests itself both within the Metropolitan Police force (regarding its staff) and in its interactions with Black communities. Illustrate your answer with specific examples from the text.

 Drawing on the information in the text and your own knowledge, **discuss why institutional reform in cases of systemic discrimination often fails despite repeated reports and recommendations. What measures do you think would be necessary to ensure meaningful and lasting change? (250-300 words)**

Tool box

- To perpetuate** = perpétuer
- Ingrained** = ancré, enraciné
- To undermine** = saper, miner
- Pervasive** = omniprésent
- Complacency** = complaisance/ autosatisfaction
- To implement** = mettre en oeuvre
- Scapegoat** = bouc émissaire
- To tackle** = S'attaquer à
- A pledge** = promesse, engagement
- Grassroots** = base/terrain (coming from ordinary people, not leadership)
- Tokenism** = symbolisme, action de façade
- Shortcomings** = lacunes, défaillances
- Overhaul** = refonte complète
- Entrenched** = bien établi

## Curiosity didn't kill the cat - Systemic racism in the US

Systemic racism in the US has deep roots in **slavery** and **Jim Crow laws** that legally enforced racial segregation until the 1960s. This legacy created **lasting inequalities** across key institutions. In housing, practices like **redlining** denied Black Americans mortgages and confined them to underinvested neighborhoods, creating **wealth gaps** that persist today. Schools in predominantly Black areas receive less funding, perpetuating **educational inequality**. Black Americans face higher unemployment and lower wages in the job market. The criminal justice system shows the **starkest disparities**: Black people are disproportionately stopped, arrested, and incarcerated at much higher rates than white Americans for similar offenses. These **interconnected systems** work together to maintain racial inequality long after legal segregation ended.

Language:

1. Observez les expressions soulignées dans le texte.
2. De quoi se composent-elles ?
3. Qu'expriment-elles ?

A retenir !

 Le plus-que-parfait (past perfect ou pluperfect)

Il s'emploie pour exprimer une action passée qui a eu lieu avant une autre action passée (au présent).

=> He showed how racism had shaped the Met's relationships with Black communities.

=> She understood racism was the reason why her son had been killed.

- ★ On peut ajouter l'adverbe "just" au pluperfect pour rendre le moment de l'action encore plus récent. "I had just arrived when the phone rang".
- ★ Pluperfect + for ou since pour traduire l'imparfait français: action toujours vraie dans le passé + durée de cette action. => He had been working for 2 hours when she arrived
- ★ Concordance des temps dans la subordonnée introduite par if => If he hadn't driven so fast, he wouldn't have lost his license.
- ★ La subordonnée de condition peut également être exprimée par une inversion auxiliaire-sujet-verbe (comme dans les questions directes) et en supprimant le if => Had

he thought about it: tournure plus emphatique que le simple “if he had thought about about it”.

**Exercises:**

1. Complétez les phrases avec le verbe au pluperfect

- a) By the time civil rights legislation was passed in the 1960s, discriminatory housing policies \_\_\_\_\_ (already/create) deeply segregated neighborhoods that would persist for decades.
- b) Researchers discovered that Black applicants \_\_\_\_\_ (face) systematic rejection from job interviews even when they \_\_\_\_\_ (submit) identical resumes to their white counterparts.
- c) The investigation revealed that the police department \_\_\_\_\_ (not/address) numerous complaints about racial profiling before the scandal finally became public.
- d) By 2010, sociologists documented that the wealth gap \_\_\_\_\_ (widen) significantly because Black families \_\_\_\_\_ (deny) access to homeownership opportunities throughout the 20th century.
- e) Before the landmark court case, many citizens \_\_\_\_\_ (never/realize) how redlining practices \_\_\_\_\_ (systematically/prevent) minority communities from building generational wealth.

2. Traduisez les énoncés suivants

- a) Si les autorités avaient écouté les plaintes que les résidents avaient déposées depuis des années, la tragédie aurait pu être évitée juste avant qu'elle ne se produise.
- b) Les enquêteurs ont découvert que les officiers avaient déjà utilisé une force excessive plusieurs fois depuis leur recrutement, mais personne n'avait agi jusqu'à ce que l'affaire devienne publique.
- c) La victime venait juste de rentrer chez elle quand la police l'a arrêtée, bien qu'elle n'ait commis aucun crime et qu'elle avait respecté toutes les lois.

d) Si le département de police avait réformé ses pratiques discriminatoires qu'il avait maintenues pendant des décennies, la communauté aurait eu confiance en ses forces de l'ordre depuis longtemps.

e) Depuis que les familles avaient témoigné de la brutalité qu'elles avaient subie, le mouvement pour la justice venait juste de prendre de l'ampleur, mais si les médias avaient couvert ces histoires plus tôt, le changement aurait commencé bien avant.

#### **DOCUMENT D - The principle of non-discrimination**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBdDB5PKrmk>

1. Watch and take notes

2. Fill in the grid

CEDAW	
Direct discrimination	
Indirect discrimination	
Patriarchy	
De jure / de facto	

3. What are the 3 CEDAW principles?
4. Use your notes to present the one developed in the video.
5. In your opinion, which of the 3 principles is the most important? Why?

**Tool box**

**From my perspective** = de mon point de vue  
**I would argue that** = je dirais que  
**It seems to me that** = il me semble que  
**Since** = puisque  
**Therefore** = par conséquent  
**For instance** = par exemple  
**Specifically** = spécifiquement  
**In particular** = en particulier  
**Without this principle** = sans ce principe  
**It ensures that** = il garantit que  
**Additionally** = en outre  
**Ultimately** = en fin de compte  
**All things considered** = tout bien considéré  
**To prevent** = empêcher

 Translate into French

### **Systemic racism affects maternity care for black women in England, say MPs**

Black women in England are still facing **poorer outcomes** in their maternity care due to systemic racism, **alongside** failures in leadership and data collection, according to a group of MPs.

Across the UK, black women are **more than twice as likely to die** in childbirth compared with their white counterparts, while babies born to black mothers are at an increased risk of stillbirth.

A report by the health and social care committee found that these **disproportionately poor outcomes** in maternity care for black women were due to a combination of factors including systemic failures in accountability and leadership, with black women's concerns "not taken seriously" due to bias, **stereotyping and racist assumptions**.

The Guardian, September 2025

## **Part II. The Impact of systemic racism on individuals and communities**

### **DOCUMENT E - The Hate U Give**

**The Hate U Give** is a powerful young adult novel by Angie Thomas, published in 2017. The story follows Starr Carter, a sixteen-year-old Black girl who lives in a poor neighborhood but attends a prestigious, predominantly white prep school. One traumatic night changes everything, when she witnesses the fatal shooting of her unarmed childhood best friend, Khalil, by a police officer. The novel explores themes of police brutality, systemic racism, code-switching, activism, and finding one's voice in the face of oppression.

I stop. Light from the kitchen stretches into the hallway.

“We have to investigate, Lisa,” says a second voice. Uncle Carlos, Momma’s older brother. “We want

the truth as much as anyone.”

“You mean y’all wanna justify what that pig did,” Daddy says. “Investigate my ass.”

“Maverick, don’t make this something it’s not,” Uncle Carlos says.

“A sixteen-year-old black boy is dead because a white cop killed him. What else could it be?”

“Shhh!” Momma hisses. “Keep it down. Starr had the hardest time falling asleep.”

Uncle Carlos says something, but it’s too low for me to hear. I inch closer.

“This isn’t about black or white,” he says.

“Bullshit,” says Daddy. “If this was out in Riverton Hills and his name was Richie, we wouldn’t be having this conversation.”

“I heard he was a drug dealer,” says Uncle Carlos.

“And that makes it okay?” Daddy asks.

“I didn’t say it did, but it could explain Brian’s decision if he felt threatened.”

A “no” lodges in my throat, aching to be yelled out. Khalil wasn’t a threat that night.

And what made the cop think he was a drug dealer?

Wait. Brian. That’s One-Fifteen’s name?

“Oh, so you know him,” Daddy mocks. “I ain’t surprised.”

“He’s a colleague, yes and a good guy, believe it or not. I’m sure this is hard on him. Who knows what

he was thinking at the time?”

“You said it yourself, he thought Khalil was a drug dealer,” Daddy says. “A thug. Why he assumed

that though? What? By looking at Khalil? Explain that, Detective.”

Silence.

“Why was she even in the car with a drug dealer?” Uncle Carlos asks. “Lisa, I keep telling you, you

need to move her and Sekani out of this neighborhood. It’s poisonous.”

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1) Read and pick out names.

2) Draw a diagram to show the links between the different characters.

3) Pick out key elements from their conversation.

4) What does the conversation reveal about the impact of systemic racism and prejudice on the community?

 Imagine you are Starr, the main character. Write notes to convince your parents either to stay in Garden Heights OR to move to a different neighborhood. Choose a side and give 3 arguments supporting your position

## DOCUMENT F - Discrimination can be harmful to your mental health

<https://newsroom.ucla.edu/stories/discrimination-can-be-harmful-to-your-mental-health>

Few would dispute the fact that discrimination based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and other characteristics continues to be a problem in the U.S., or that such injustices have contributed to everything from economic inequalities to inequities in some physical health **outcomes**.

But to what extent does being a target of discrimination — **overt** or subtle — affect one's mental health?

"We now have decades of research showing that when people are chronically treated differently, unfairly or badly, it can have effects **ranging from** low self-esteem to a higher risk for developing stress-related disorders such as anxiety and depression," says Vickie Mays, UCLA Fielding School of Public Health professor in the department of health policy and management.

And when the mental health of one person is affected, it can produce a domino effect extending beyond that individual. "We know that when people have a psychiatric disorder, it's not good for any of us," Mays says. "For example, it can affect parenting — a depressed mom might not be able to interact with her child in a way that best promotes that child's development, leaving the child more vulnerable to certain behavioral disorders. In that sense, we all suffer from the effects of discrimination."

Even after taking into account other potential causes of stress, Gee found a clear relationship between discrimination and increased risk of mental disorders.

A UCLA study collected data on data on 1,834 Americans between 18 to 28 years old. It found that the more discriminatory incidents a person experiences, the higher their risk of developing mental health and behavioral challenges.

Since that study, other researchers have reported similar results in African-American and Latino populations, as well as in other populations around the world, Gee says. He also found in a 2014 study of Latinas/os, that discrimination was significantly associated with increased risk of alcohol abuse among women and increased risk of drug abuse among men.

Discrimination is incredibly complex and experienced in so many different ways that it can be difficult to **pinpoint** the process by which it undermines mental health, researchers say. "There are so many different routes, some of them direct and some of them indirect," Gee explains. He points out that while a hate crime occurring in a community is certain to affect the mental health status of the victim and the victim's family, it can also have a **spillover effect** for acquaintances and non-acquaintances in the community.

Poor treatment based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and other factors can occur through interpersonal insults as well as through more insidious routes. “If you don’t get a job and you’re left to wonder whether it had to do with your race or gender, that can have an impact on your mental health,” Gee says.

Emerging research using neuroimaging tools is helping to isolate the brain mechanisms at play in these scenarios.

More recently, Mays has collaborated on a study showing that experiencing significant amounts of discrimination over time can lead to changes in the way the brain processes information, disrupting, for example, the regions involved in planning and decision-making.

Among other strategies, Mays suggests that a coordinated public health effort is needed to better integrate what is known about the outcomes of discrimination into health care profiles. “We **screen for** mental health disorders when we are putting together an individual’s electronic health record, but maybe we also need to ask about their experiences with discrimination, which would identify people at risk who could benefit from prevention efforts,” Mays says.

Gee believes public health can also do more to help shape future legislation that would both reduce discrimination and improve the mental health of its historic targets. “Policies that promote human rights can not only **buttress** the foundations of a civil society,” Gee says, “but they can also **make for** a healthier one.”

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1. Match the words in bold to the right translation:

- a. find or identify with great accuracy or precision.
- b. to test or examine for the presence of something (such as a disease)
- c. done or shown openly; plainly apparent.
- d. increase the strength of or justification for; reinforce
- e. Including everything from something to something
- f. the unintended consequences that occur when a policy or action affects individuals or groups outside the intended target population
- g. The way a thing turns out; a consequence
- h. tend to result in

2. Pick out words related to the effects of discrimination.

3. Explain why it is difficult to assess.

4. Pick out words related to the impact on health.

5. Pick out key words related to solutions

1. Complétez la règle:

Type de comparatif	Adjectif court	Adjectif long (plus de deux syllabes)
Comparatif de supériorité	..... Les irréguliers: - - -	.....
Comparatif d'égalité	.....  Pour exprimer la proportion:  deux fois plus grand que: .....	
Comparatif d'infériorité	.....	

★ Pour intensifier les adjectifs au comparatif, on emploie **far** et **much**

=> far cleaner / much more comfortable

★ Pour traduire les structures “le plus... possible”, on emploie **as +adj + as possible**

=> as quick as possible / as accurate as possible

★ Pour traduire une structure **d'accroissement parallèle** (plus il travaille, plus il est fatigué), on emploi le comparatif

=> Plus c'est grand, plus c'est cher = the bigger it is, the more expensive it is / Plus il boit, moins il comprend la situation = The more he drinks, the less he understands the situation / Moins il y aura de voiture, moins il y aura de pollution = The fewer cars there are, the less pollution there will be. The more we recycle, the better the environment will be.

★ Pour traduire “d'autant plus que”, on emploie **all the more so as/since/because**

=> Ce fauteuil est d'autant plus confortable qu'il est tout neuf = This armchair is all the more comfortable as it is brand new.

### **Exercise:**

Traduisez les énoncés suivants en anglais

- a) Plus nous éduquons les jeunes générations sur le racisme, plus nous créons une société tolérante.
- b) La lutte pour l'égalité raciale est d'autant plus importante que les discriminations persistent encore aujourd'hui.
- c) Les stéréotypes raciaux sont beaucoup plus dangereux qu'ils n'en ont l'air.
- d) Nous devons agir aussi rapidement que possible pour combattre les injustices systémiques.
- e) Plus il y a de diversité dans les institutions, moins il y a de discrimination.
- f) Les conséquences de la colonisation sont d'autant plus graves qu'elles affectent encore les générations actuelles.
- g) Moins les gens parlent ouvertement du racisme, plus les préjugés restent enracinés dans la société.

### **DOCUMENT G - The Glass Cliff phenomenon**

<https://theconversation.com/what-is-the-glass-cliff-phenomenon-and-why-do-women-often-find-themselves-on-the-precipice-256072>

Speaking to the media after being named leader of the Liberal Party, Sussan Ley was asked if this appointment was an example of the “glass cliff effect”. Ley said “I don’t accept that”. She went on: I do say it sends a signal to the women of Australia that the Liberal Party has elected its first woman leader but my agenda is much more than that.

Most of us are familiar with the concept of the “glass ceiling”, a metaphor used to describe the invisible barriers which prevent women from succeeding in senior leadership – and Ley could be seen as breaking the glass ceiling of the Liberal party. But the “glass cliff” applies to women who are elevated to positions of leadership in a time of crisis, meaning they are perceived as having a high probability of failure and will take the fall for their organisation. The glass cliff evokes imagery of a woman being at the top of a mountain cliff. Being on the cliff is a dangerous position: there is a high chance of falling – or being pushed off.

Against the historical backdrop of male-dominated leadership, the metaphor was coined to reflect women’s experience of leadership selection in times of organisational misfortune and crisis. The “glass cliff” has sometimes been invoked in misogynist ways to downplay the strengths of women in leadership, saying they have been put in a position of leadership with the express belief they will fail. But it does describe a commonly seen phenomenon which is important to observe and understand.

There are many prominent examples of women who have been associated with the phrase. British Prime Minister Liz Truss was elevated to the role at a time of significant uncertainty. The

US Presidential candidate Kamala Harris was given minimal time to campaign and establish herself as a genuine opponent to Republican candidate Donald Trump. Former Yahoo CEO Carol Bartz, who was appointed when the tech company was failing and share prices were down before being unceremoniously dumped via a phone call.

Some academics believe that these women aren't placed in the position of the glass cliff to be the fall guy, but instead these appointments relate to women's perceived ability to handle organisational crises. They propose an alternative phrase: "think crisis - think female". This phrase suggests women leaders perform better than men in a crisis, partly due to the assumption that women will garner more support than men in such times. It is based on stereotypes of women's perceived ability to build and repair relationships and reputations.

Both phrases link women leaders and crises. But the glass cliff explains how women are elevated into positions of leadership in turbulent times and are blamed when organisations fail. The phenomenon of the glass cliff is a professional risk for women in leadership. Organisations may prey on the career ambitions of outgroup women, knowing that they are more likely to accept any leadership position, even a precarious one, in order to advance their career. The privilege of the ingroup men, on the other hand, means they are protected from taking on a leadership position with risk and volatility.

Women leaders taking on these roles in turbulent times are also exposed to greater scrutiny from internal and external stakeholders, including individual performance criticism. If a woman leader then fails, her performance is seen to reinforce gender stereotypes about women's leadership competency. Further complicating this context are gendered stereotypes that assume women leaders have exceptional people skills, meaning senior women in high-risk leadership roles receive less support and fewer resources than their male counterparts.

The glass cliff presents a double bind for women leaders. If women leaders behave in stereotypically feminine ways they are seen as weak or indecisive. By contrast, if they behave counter to this they are labelled as harsh and aggressive. Either way, the glass cliff awaits. The glass cliff phenomenon draws our attention to the way in which women are set up to fail in high-risk leadership roles. But the metaphor also reveals the ongoing gender discrimination and stereotype bias women experience in taking on professional leadership roles.

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1. Underline the definition of "glass cliff" in the text. Pick out some key words to explain it.
2. List women leaders associated with the glass cliff and note what crisis or difficulty each one faced.
3. Pick out at least 3 challenges or problems.
4. In your opinion, should women accept leadership positions during times of crisis, even if they might be glass cliff situations? Why or why not?

The term "glass ceiling" was first popularized in the 1980s to describe the **invisible barriers** that **prevent women and minorities from advancing to top leadership positions**, regardless of their qualifications or achievements. The metaphor captures the idea that while these barriers are not explicitly stated or visible, they are nevertheless real and impenetrable. Women could see the higher positions above them but found themselves unable to break through to reach them. The concept gained widespread attention following a **1986 Wall Street Journal article** and was further reinforced by **the U.S. Department of Labor's 1991 report on workplace discrimination**. The glass ceiling highlighted **systematic discrimination in corporate and professional environments** where women were consistently passed over for promotions to executive roles.

### **Part III. Addressing systemic discrimination: challenges, progress and perspectives**

**Document H** - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZhUOw0KidZg>

1. Watch from the beginning to 1'40" and take notes about affirmative action and its origin.
2. Watch from 1'40" to 3'39" and fill in the grid

Pros of affirmative actions	Cons of affirmative action

3. Watch from 3'39" to 4'46": what can be the consequences of affirmative actions and what are the possible alternatives?
4. Watch from 4'46" to the end: Pick out the questions and try to provide a personal answer.

**Curiosity didn't kill the cat**  [Affirmative Action vs Positive Action](#)

Affirmative action and positive action both aim to promote equality, but they differ significantly in approach and legality.

In the United States, affirmative action allows organizations to use proactive measures such as quotas and preferential hiring based on race, gender, or ethnicity to address historical discrimination and increase diversity in education and employment.

In the United Kingdom, affirmative action is unlawful. UK law permits only "positive action" under the Equality Act 2010, which allows employers to encourage applications from underrepresented groups and provide targeted support programs. However, employers cannot use protected characteristics like race or gender as the main reason for hiring someone.

Positive action can only be used as a tie-breaker when candidates are equally qualified.

Essentially, US affirmative action is interventionist and outcome-focused, while UK positive action is limited to creating opportunities without guaranteeing results based on demographic characteristics.

 Translate into English

L'affaire du collège Auguste-Dédé a dépassé le cadre scolaire. De nombreux élus locaux, partis politiques, associations et citoyens affirment leur position sur le sujet depuis mercredi 1er octobre. Des sanctions sont demandées à l'encontre du couple de policiers qui aurait fait pression contre la direction de l'établissement et défendu leur enfant, en classe de 5e, qui aurait tenu des propos racistes.

Gabriel Serville, président de la Collectivité territoriale demande que "des mesures claires soient prises. Affirmer que "les Noirs doivent retourner dans les champs de coton" est d'une gravité inacceptable. Ces paroles offensent notre mémoire collective, heurtent la dignité des élèves et bafouent les valeurs qui fondent notre société."

Selon une source interne, c'est l'enfant des policiers qui se serait d'abord fait traiter de "sale blanc" par plusieurs de ses camarades. Il y aurait eu une médiation avec tous les élèves concernés. Ces derniers auraient tous reçu la même punition. Le parent policier aurait alors refusé que son fils soit puni, considérant qu'il était victime.

France-Guyane, 2 octobre 2025

**Document I - Affirmative action policies to increase diversity are successful, but controversial, around the world**

The Conversation, January 29, 2024

<https://theconversation.com/affirmative-action-policies-to-increase-diversity-are-successful-but-controversial-around-the-world-213941>

In a **landmark** judgment in June 2023, the US supreme court ruled against the use of race-conscious admissions in colleges and universities. This decision marked a controversial end to affirmative action in US higher education admissions.

Race-conscious admissions policies at American universities have a history that goes back to the 1960s civil rights movement. These policies aimed to increase the number of students from underrepresented groups and build more racially diverse student populations. Writing for the supreme court majority opinion, Chief Justice John Roberts wrote that many universities have “concluded, wrongly, that the **touchstone** of an individual’s identity is not challenges bested, skills built, or lessons learned but the color of their skin”.

Affirmative action is a relatively recent tool for most countries, with policies **gaining momentum** from the 1990s onwards, particularly in politics. This was followed by public sector employment and education in the 2000s, and later by private sector employment in the 2010s.

In Europe, “positive action” is a more common term than affirmative action. In some contexts, “positive discrimination” is understood as a synonym for both.

In some countries, there is a sharp distinction between terms. In Great Britain, employers are allowed to take positive action that may involve “treating one group that shares a protected characteristic more favourably than others”. This may mean providing targeted job training programmes. Positive discrimination, such as hiring a less-qualified candidate because she is from an **underrepresented** group, is prohibited under the Equality Act.

India is known as the first country to adopt affirmative action policies. The heart of Indian affirmative action lies in the reservation system. This system “reserves” **spots** in government employment, governing bodies, and educational admissions for “scheduled castes and tribes” and other marginalised groups. This system has roots in similar practices during the colonial period.

Like affirmative action in the US, India’s reservation system has been subject to intense debate. Members of groups not benefiting from reservations have publicly criticised the ethnic- and class-based quotas. Critics argue that these measures promote **unfair** preferences and reverse discrimination.

But the two countries have taken **starkly** different routes in how they handled this **contentious** issue. In the US, court decisions progressively led to softening or abolishing affirmative action programmes. In India, faced with similar court rulings, a series of constitutional amendments have preserved reservations.

With colleagues, we built a global dataset of affirmative action policies around the world. We also conducted a systematic review of the literature to determine whether they are successful.

We found that 63% of the 194 studies we reviewed concluded that affirmative action programmes indeed served to improve outcomes for ethnic, religious or racial minorities. These measures helped the target groups gain better education and employment **outcomes**, as well as **foster** meaningful political participation.

Nevertheless, as the US and India show, affirmative action is often deeply controversial. **Regardless** of what the research shows about the success of these policies, they are often met with protest and resistance.

- 1) Find the words corresponding to the definitions:
  - a) Encourage the development of
  - b) Not present or shown in sufficient numbers
  - c) an event or discovery marking an important stage or turning point in something
  - d) not based on or behaving according to the principles of equality and justice.
  - e) without regard or consideration for
  - f) controversial
  - g) Pick up speed and strength
  - h) Results
  - i) Frankly/ clearly
  - j) Fundamental feature of
  - k) a particular place

2) Pick out some key words defining race-conscious policies.

3) Find out the different places it was implemented.

4) What happened with the Supreme Court? Why?

5) Pick out countries and their specificities regarding race-conscious policies.

6) What are the consequences of such policies?

7) In your opinion, why do some people oppose affirmative action policies?

**Curiosity didn't kill the cat**  Algorithmic bias

Algorithmic bias occurs when computer systems and artificial intelligence reflect and amplify the prejudices present in their training data or design. Because algorithms are created by humans and trained on historical data, they can perpetuate existing societal inequalities related

to race, gender, and class. Hiring algorithms can discriminate against women or minorities if trained on data from companies with historically biased hiring practices. Even seemingly neutral systems like search engines or social media algorithms can reinforce stereotypes by showing different results or opportunities based on a user's demographic profile. While algorithms appear objective and scientific, they can actually automate and scale discrimination, making bias harder to detect and challenge.

Language:

1. Observez l'énoncé suivant: "This may mean providing targeted job training programmes."
2. Décomposez le groupe verbal.

=> La modalité est l'expression d'un commentaire ou jugement par un énonciateur E (personne qui s'exprime) sur la relation entre le sujet S et le prédicat P (prédicat = verbe + complément). C'est le domaine privilégié de la subjectivité.

3. Complétez le tableau avec les valeurs suivantes: Futur, Volonté // Possibilité faible // Capacité, Permission // Obligation, Forte probabilité // Capacité passée, politesse // Conditionnel, Politesse // Permission, Possibilité, Formuler un voeu // Suggestion, Futur (formel) // Conseil

Auxiliaire modal	Valeurs	Alternative/Synonyme	Exemple
Can		Be able to/may	Affirmative action <b>can</b> help address historical inequalities in university admissions.
Could		Was able to/might	Race-conscious policies <b>could</b> reduce disparities in employment opportunities.
May		Be allowed to	Diversity programs <b>may</b> face legal challenges in some jurisdictions.
Might		Could/may	Critics argue that quotas <b>might</b> create reverse discrimination.
Must		Have to / need to	Universities <b>must</b> consider alternative approaches to achieve diversity after recent court rulings.
Shall		Will / should	<b>Shall</b> we reconsider how diversity

			goals are implemented in hiring practices?
Should		Ought to / had better	We <b>should</b> examine the long-term effects of race-conscious admissions policies.
Will		Shall / be going to	The Supreme Court <b>will</b> continue to shape affirmative action policies.
Would		Used to / could	Without intervention, racial disparities <b>would</b> persist in education and employment.

## EXERCICES - LES MODAUX

A) Complétez les phrases avec le modal approprié :

1. According to the new legislation, companies \_\_\_\_\_ report their diversity statistics annually. (obligation)
2. Race-blind admissions \_\_\_\_\_ lead to less diverse student bodies in elite universities. (possibilité)
3. The court ruled that universities \_\_\_\_\_ use racial quotas in their selection process. (interdiction)
4. Policymakers \_\_\_\_\_ consider socioeconomic factors instead of race alone. (conseil/recommandation)
5. Despite these programs, achieving true equality \_\_\_\_\_ take several generations. (prédition/probabilité)

B) Traduisez les phrases suivantes en anglais :

1. Les politiques de discrimination positive peuvent aider les minorités à accéder à l'enseignement supérieur.
2. Les employeurs devraient promouvoir la diversité sur le lieu de travail.
3. Sans réformes systémiques, les inégalités raciales pourraient persister.
4. Les universités doivent-elles tenir compte de la race dans leurs critères d'admission ?
5. Ces mesures ne pourront pas résoudre le racisme structurel à elles seules.

**Watch the video, study the documents on the page and answer the question:** - To what extent does Atwood's dystopian vision resonate with contemporary debates about women's rights?

📺 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIVDoieqIHU>

### **Curiosity didn't kill the cat 🐱 Roe v. Wade**

Roe v. Wade was a landmark 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision that established the constitutional right to abortion. The case centered on "Jane Roe" (a pseudonym for Norma McCorvey), a Texas woman who challenged the state's restrictive abortion laws. The Supreme Court ruled 7-2 that the Constitution's right to privacy extended to a woman's decision to have an abortion, effectively legalizing abortion nationwide. The decision created a framework based on trimesters of pregnancy, with states having increasing regulatory power as the pregnancy progressed. For nearly 50 years, Roe v. Wade was considered settled constitutional law. However, in June 2022, the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade in the Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization decision, returning the power to regulate abortion to individual states. This reversal has resulted in significant restrictions or outright bans on abortion in many states across the country.



### **Global Gender Gap**



As the world navigates economic uncertainty, the future of growth is tied to achieving gender parity – which currently lies **123 years away**.

**68.8% closed**



Thème 40 Sujet

Source: World Economic Forum. (2025). *Global Gender Gap Report 2025*.

Depuis des années, je n'avais rien dit à personne. J'avais tout gardé pour moi. « Ce serait trop compliqué à vous expliquer, ai-je répondu.

Pourquoi ? Rien n'est compliqué... » J'ai fondu en larmes. Ça ne m'était pas arrivé depuis la mort du chien. Cela remontait bien à une douzaine d'années.

« Vous avez eu un choc, récemment ? m'a-t-elle demandé à voix basse.

J'ai revu quelqu'un que je croyais mort.

Quelqu'un de très proche de vous ?

Tout cela n'a pas grande importance, ai-je affirmé en m'efforçant de sourire. C'est la fatigue... »

Elle s'est levée. Je l'entendais, là-bas, dans la pharmacie, ouvrir et refermer le tiroir. J'étais toujours assise sur le fauteuil et je n'éprouvais pas le besoin de quitter ma place. Elle est revenue dans la pièce. Elle avait ôté sa blouse blanche et portait une jupe et un pull-over gris foncé.

La Petite Bijou, Patrick Modiano, Gallimard 2001

## VOCABULARY

### CONCEPTS & THEORIES

- Intersectionality = Intersectionnalité
- Systemic discrimination = Discrimination systémique
- Structural inequality = Inégalité structurelle
- Multiple identities = Identités multiples
- Identity markers = Marqueurs identitaires
- Overlapping identities = Identités qui se chevauchent
- Compounding discrimination = Discrimination cumulée
- Implicit bias = Biais implicite
- Unconscious bias = Biais inconscient
- Institutional racism = Racisme institutionnel
- White privilege = Privilège blanc
- Privilege = Privilège
- Patriarchy = Patriarcat
- Social stratification = Stratification sociale
- Power dynamics = Rapports de pouvoir / Dynamiques de pouvoir
- Hegemony = Hégémonie
- Marginalization = Marginalisation
- Oppression = Oppression
- Othering = Altérisation
- Tokenism = Tokenisme (présence symbolique)
- Microaggressions = Microagressions

### DISCRIMINATIONS, GROUPS & IMPACTS

- Racial discrimination = Discrimination raciale
- Gender discrimination = Discrimination de genre
- Class discrimination = Discrimination de classe
- Ableism = Discrimination envers les personnes handicapées (validisme)
- Sexism = Sexisme
- Racism = Racisme
- Homophobia = Homophobie
- Transphobia = Transphobie
- Ageism = Discrimination liée à l'âge (âgisme)
- Religious discrimination = Discrimination religieuse

- Minority groups = Groupes minoritaires
- People of color = Personnes racisées
- LGBTQ+ community = Communauté LGBTQ+

- People with disabilities = Personnes en situation de handicap
- Working class = Classe ouvrière
- Indigenous people = Peuples autochtones
- Immigrants = Immigrés
- Refugees = Réfugiés

- Glass ceiling = Plafond de verre
- Wage gap = Écart salarial
- Workplace discrimination = Discrimination au travail
- Hiring bias = Biais à l'embauche
- Employment discrimination = Discrimination à l'emploi
- Redlining = Discrimination géographique (pratiques bancaires discriminatoires)
- Housing discrimination = Discrimination au logement
- Gentrification = Gentrification / Embourgeoisement
- Voter suppression = Suppression du droit de vote
- Racial profiling = Profilage racial
- Educational inequality = Inégalité éducative
- Educational attainment gap = Écart de niveau d'études
- Healthcare disparities = Disparités dans l'accès aux soins
- Criminal justice system = Système judiciaire pénal
- Segregation = Ségrégation

- Social exclusion = Exclusion sociale
- Economic disadvantage = Désavantage économique
- Limited opportunities = Opportunités limitées
- Underrepresentation = Sous-représentation
- Poverty = Pauvreté
- Intergenerational poverty = Pauvreté intergénérationnelle
- Social mobility = Mobilité sociale
- Socioeconomic status = Statut socio-économique
- Barriers to access = Obstacles à l'accès
- Systemic barriers = Obstacles systémiques

## **RESISTANCE, ACTION & CHANGE**

- Civil rights movement = Mouvement des droits civiques
- Activism = Militantisme
- Grassroots movement = Mouvement de base
- Grassroots activism = Militantisme de base
- Social justice = Justice sociale
- Equality = Égalité

- Equity = Équité
- Equity vs. Equality = Équité vs. Égalité
- Affirmative action = Discrimination positive
- Inclusive policies = Politiques inclusives
- Empowerment = Émancipation / Autonomisation
- Advocacy = Plaidoyer
- Allyship = Fait d'être allié·e
- Representation matters = La représentation compte
- Systemic change = Changement systémique
- Intersectional approach = Approche intersectionnelle

- To discriminate against = Discriminer
- To marginalize = Marginaliser
- To oppress = Opprimer
- To exclude = Exclure
- To challenge = Remettre en question
- To challenge stereotypes = Remettre en question les stéréotypes
- To address (an issue) = Aborder / Traiter (un problème)
- To tackle = S'attaquer à
- To advocate for = Plaider pour
- To empower = Émanciper / Autonomiser
- To raise awareness = Sensibiliser
- To dismantle = Démanteler
- To dismantle systems of oppression = Démanteler les systèmes d'oppression
- To perpetuate inequality = Perpétuer l'inégalité

- To face discrimination = Faire face à la discrimination
- To experience multiple forms of oppression = Subir plusieurs formes d'oppression
- To be at the intersection of... = Se trouver à l'intersection de...
- A level playing field = Des conditions équitables

