Different Definitions of Discrimination

Dictionary:

1. Unfair treatment of one person or group, usually because of prejudice about race, ethnic group, age group, religion, or gender

2. The ability to appreciate good quality or taste
3. The ability to notice subtle differences
4. The selection of a transmitted signal with a particular characteristic, such as frequency, by elimination of signals with other characteristics, using a discriminator
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Legal:

Equal pay act of 1963 requires equal pay for equal work.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964) requires equal pay for work of equal skill, effort & responsibility performed under similar conditions, and equal treatment in hiring, firing, wages, training, promotions, fringe benefits and other terms and conditions of employment.

This has been interpreted to prohibit both Disparate Treatment and policies with Disparate Impact (e.g. job requirements not actually related to job performance).
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Harassment that creates a hostile work environment on the basis of race or sex is also illegal under Title VII. Since 1998, it is the employer responsibility to take action to prevent harassment.

(Note that it is currently not illegal to harass ALL of your workers equally, unless there are disparate impacts).
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Economics:
Becker “Taste” model--discriminatory preference is a willingness of employers to pay a cost to hire workers from a preferred group
Wage Discrimination--the wage differential that results if discriminatory tastes are widespread
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Sowell argues that under the economic definition of discrimination, there may be widespread bias and prejudice and yet no effect of discrimination on wages.

He also argues that sometimes there has been a larger effect of discrimination on wages in places and times with less bias or prejudice. (Where labor markets were less competitive.).