

# Tokenism

Tokenism refers to the superficial or symbolic inclusion of individuals from underrepresented groups (e.g., women, minorities) without giving them real power, influence, or equal opportunity.

It often serves to create an appearance of diversity while leaving the underlying structures of inequality unchanged.

□ In Context (e.g., Neurosurgery): A woman might be invited to a panel or promoted to a visible position not because of her qualifications, but to fulfill a diversity requirement or improve the institution's image. This can:

Undermine her perceived legitimacy

Reinforce stereotypes

Conceal deeper systemic problems

□ Example: Creating a “women's session” at a conference without integrating female voices into the core scientific program may be seen as tokenism rather than genuine inclusion.

In short:

Tokenism is optics without equity, representation without transformation.

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