IDENTITY MARKERS

COMPONENTS OF SELF THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE STRATIFICATION OF GROUPS

VARIABLE SYMBOLS OF A SOCIAL COLLECTIVE

• LANGUAGE
• STYLE
• SOCIAL PROPS
• GESTURES / MANNERISMS
• BODY SHAPE AND SIZE
• AND MORE.....

POWER LEVELS OF MARKERS

1. MASTER STATUS –
   - Bestowed, self revealing and affective without social action, and...
   - Unchangeable
     • Gender
     • Age
     • Race
     - Skin color
POWER LEVELS OF MARKERS

2. PRIMARY STATUS -
   - Bestowed or assumed, self revealing and affective, but generally through social action, and...
   - Changeable, but with effort
     - Economic social class
     - Language
     - Religion

POWER LEVELS OF MARKERS

3. SECONDARY STATUS –
   - Assumed, visible and affected and always revealed by social action
   - Easily changeable
     - Makeup
     - Hair Styles
     - Clothing Styles
     - Jewelry
THE POWER OF MARKERS?

• Foundation of Power:
  – Sociological Concept of “The Stranger:”
    • We are attracted to those whom we perceive to be the most like us;
    • Conversely, we create measurable social distance between those we perceive to be different, or “strangers”
  – Perception of difference is more powerful than objectively measurable difference

THE THOMAS THEOREM

If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences.

- W. I. Thomas

THE MATTHEW EFFECT

The greatest rewards go to those whom, based on prior perception, we believe to be the most deserving of those rewards…

- Robert Merton
CATEGORIC KNOWING

- ABSTRACT GENERALIZATIONS BASED ON VISUAL AND ORAL/VERBAL INPUT:
  - Initial Curiosity...
  - Frequently followed by
    - Suspicion
    - Distrust
    - Resistance
    - Fear
- ABSTRACT GENERALIZATIONS REPLACED BY CONCRETE ACTIONS

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

- Conflict Theory
  - Inequalities are maintained through constructed false consciousness with intention of subsequent exploitation
- Functional Theory
  - Inequalities are dysfunctions that are best overcome as social balance aimed at stability emerges
- S.I.
  - Inequality and discrimination are based on subjective interpretation, rather than on objective evaluation

RACE AND ETHNICITY

- Controversy over use of term “race,” but...
  - Component of law (de jure)
- Characteristic of social identity (de facto)
OVERT IMPACT OF LAW AND SOCIAL PRACTICE

• TIMES OF CRISIS
  – Economic
  – Political
  – Social

Emory Bogardus
(died 1973)
U.S.C.

• 1928: “Immigration and Race Attitudes”
  – Anticipated acceptance and exploitation during periods of economic expansion
  – Anticipated conflict during times of contraction and crisis
  – “Social Distance Scale” measures inter racial/ethnic acceptance and rejection

BOGARUS’ DEFINITIONS

Race: human group that defines itself and/or is defined by others as being distinct by virtue of perceived and assumed immutable biological differences.

Ethnic group: human group that defines itself and/or is defined by others as being distinct by virtue of perceived and assumed cultural differences.
PRIMARY SOCIAL USE OF DEFINITIONS

- CODIFIED DISCRIMINATION

- CIVIL RIGHTS LEGISLATION INCLUDING:
  - EEO LAWS
  - AFFIRMATIVE ACTION LAWS

BREAKING THE DIVIDE

- Assimilation – cultural; based on erosion of boundaries through sharing of material and non-material components of culture

- Amalgamation – biological; based on physiological mixing of members of identifiably different groups

POTENTIAL OUTCOME

- FULL INTEGRATION

- PLURALISM

- MULTICULTURALISM
OBSTACLES

GREATEST IMPEDIMENT –
PREJUDICE

SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF
PREJUDICE

1. SCAPEGOATING
2. ELEVATION OF SELF
3. EXPLOITATION OF LABOR

PREJUDICE AS SOCIAL
PRACTICE

• SURVEYS REVEAL AMERICANS
OVERWHELMINGLY DECLARE THEMSELVES
TO BEAR NO PREJUDICE
• EVEN FEWER OPENLY ENDORSE
PREJUDICE
• OVERT PREJUDICIAL PRACTICE NOT
TOLERATED
EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

MORTALITY AND MORBIDITY STATISTICS

NATIVE AMERICANS

- SUICIDE RATE: 2X
- ALCOHOLISM RATE: 20X
- DIABETES: 2X
- AUTO VEHICLE DEATH: 2X

AFRICAN AMERICANS

- HYPERTENSION: 6.5X
- RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE: 2.8X
- CHRONIC PULMONARY DISEASE: 3.8X
- ASTHMA: 4.4X
- ACUTE APPENDICITIS: 3.2X
- CERVICAL CANCER: 2/6X
- PROSTATE CANCER: .4X
LATIN AMERICANS

- TUBERCULOSIS: 4X
- DIABETES: 3X
- CANCER: 2-4X
- HYPERTENSION: 2X

GENDER

- DISTINCT SOCIAL ADVANTAGES CONNECTED TO GENDER

- MEASURABLE VIA:
  - ECONOMICS – DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME
  - INDEPENDENCE
  - DOMINANCE
  - FREEDOM AND FLEXIBILITY

FOUNDATIONS

- RELIGION
  - GENESIS: CREATION STORY
  - ORGANIZED RELIGIOUS GROUPS
    - ROMAN CATHOLICISM
    - ISLAM
    - MANY PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS

- LABOR STRUCTURES
SCIENTIFIC DIFFERENCE

• BIOLOGY
  – MALES LARGER
  • SHORTER LIFESPAN
  – FEMALES SMALLER
  • LONGER LIFESPAN

SOCIAL DIFFERENCE

• NON-SCIENTIFIC SOCIAL PRACTICE
  – FEMALE > DEPENDENT
  – FEMALES > NUTURANT
  – MALES > ACHIEVEMENT
  – MALES > INTELIGENCE

STEREOTYPICAL GENDER ROLES

• MALES:
  – BREAD WINNER, LEADER, DECIDER

• FEMALES
  – WIFE, MOTHER, HOME MAKER
IMPACT

• EDUCATION
  – WOMEN MAKING GAINS:
    • B.A. AND M.A. DEGREES:
      – 1900 – 20% OF B.A. AND M.A. DEGREES
      – 2000 – APPROXIMATELY EQUAL

• WORKFORCE
  – WOMEN COMPRIZE 55%
    • PAY LAGS BY 30-35%

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

• Conflict Theory
  – Inequalities are counter-productive and need to be resolved

• Functional Theory
  – Inequalities are based on historical evolution, have become entrenched even without functional basis; accepted until imbalance reaches intolerable level

• S.I.
  – Roles are perpetuated by subjective rather than objective evaluation; persist via cultural transmission

AGE

• MYTH AND REALITY
  – Physical Deterioration vs.
  – Failure to Maintain

  – Mental Decline vs.
  – Failure to Exercise Intellect
AGE BASED SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS

- Privilege
- Employment Expectations
- Expectations for social performance
  - Adolescence
  - Retirement
- Marketing Strategies
- Media Depictions

SHARED SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. ELEVATED VISIBILITY
2. UNEQUAL TREATMENT
3. ASCRIBED STATUS
4. GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS
5. ENDOGAMY

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

- SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM
  - Focuses on Media influences play huge role in mass presentations of symbols
    - Advertising
    - Movies
    - Television
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

• FUNCTIONALISM
  – Focuses on Managed Social Balance
  • DISENGAGEMENT THEORY
    – Focuses on Creation of Economic Opportunity through age displacement
  • Activity Theory
    – Focuses on relationship between aging and meaningful activity

Broad Concepts of Need for Balance of Social Health and Social Function

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

• CONFLICT THEORY
  – Focuses on Limited Resources and Competition between Age Groups

  • LARGER NUMBERS OF OLDER POPULATION
  • POTENTIALLY DISASTROUS DEPENDENCY RATIOS

POTENTIAL IMPACT OF RELIANCE ON IDENTITY MARKERS

RACISM
SEXISM
AGEISM