Social Construction of Race

- Concept of race was first applied to humans in 1775.
- Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, one of the founders of anthropology, came up with a taxonomy that divided humans into 5 racial categories.
  - Caucasian or Caucasoid - European (White)
  - Mongolian or Mongloid - Asian (Yellow)
  - Malayan - Central America (Brown)
  - American - Native American (Red)
  - Negroid - African (Black)
- Polygenism
  - Conceptualization of race among nineteenth century scientific scholars and spiritual leaders.
  - Evidence clearly indicates that the pure-blood White is the creature whom God designed should perform the mental labor necessary to subdue the earth...the Negro is the creature whom God designed to perform the manual labor. Chas Carroll, 1900
- Ashley Montague, anthropologist, showed that there was no agreement on racial groups.
  - He identified taxonomies that ranged from 2 to 2,000 racial groups.
  - He identified 40 different races.
- South Africa - Four racial groups under apartheid.
  - White - European descent.
  - Coloured - Mixed race.
  - Asiatic - Asian and East Indian
  - Bantu - African
- Mexico - Six racial groups
  - Negro - Black
  - Indio - Indian
  - Hispano - White
  - Mestizo - Indian and White
  - Lobo - Indian and Black
  - Mulatto - Black and White
Social Construction of Race (Continued)

- The United States - Multicultural society.
- Most discussions of race are limited to just 2 races.
- Clear distinction between white and black.
- In the United States, during segregation:
  - Kentucky - having at minimum one black grandparent meant the individual is defined as black.
  - Indiana and Maryland - having at minimum one black great-grandparent meant the individual was defined as black.
  - Louisiana - having at minimum one black great-great-grandparent meant the individual was defined as black.

- What is race?
  - Genetically, all humans on the planet are 99.9 percent identical.
  - 94 percent of the variation found in the 0.1 percent variation is found among people from the same populations.
  - 6 percent of the variation found in the 0.1 percent variation is found among people from the different populations.

  - Socially constructed categories of people who share physical traits.
  - Society defines those different physical traits as important.
  - Distinguishing between the races is tied to beliefs about differences tied to the physical differences of individuals.

Race and Ethnicity

- Racial Group
  - Set apart as a distinct “other” based on obvious, identifiable physical differences.
  - Socially and culturally constructed and reinforced definitions and beliefs about differences.
Race and Ethnicity

- Ethnicity
  - Ties that bind: religion, language, dress, music, food, and so on...
  - Ascribed ethnicity
  - Ethnicity has connotations of being something foreign or exotic.

- Ethnic Group
  - Group that’s members identify with one another resulting from national origin, cultural patterns, shared identity.
  - “Consciousness of kind”; shared values, beliefs, norms, food, dress, music, etc.

A sense of Your Ethnicity

- Ashley Doane writes that our ethnic identity is heightened or reduced based on our identification with the “greater power” or dominant group.
- The more a group or individual identifies with the dominant group, the greater their sense of belonging to the larger society.
- If the group is any of the following:
  - Relatively small
  - Has less power
  - Distinct physical characteristics
  - Distinct cultural practices
- The greater their sense of and sensitivity to “otherness” and discrimination.

Minorities

- Subordinate group whose members have less control or power over their lives (structurally).
- Any category of people distinguished by physical and cultural differences.
- Distinct identity (other identity)
- Subordination
- Involuntary membership
- Solidarity
Stereotypes

- Necessary for interaction.
- Learned.
- Dangerous.
- Deny the existence of individual differences among members of particular social groups.

Prejudice and Prejudgement

- Prejudice comes from the Latin word for prejudgement.
- There is nothing inherently wrong with prejudgement.
  - Underlies the whole learning experience when it comes to human interaction.

Prejudice

- Negative, rigid, and unfair generalizations about a category of people.
  - The categories are socially constructed (human made).
  - Can be positive.
  - Positive or negative it denies personhood.
- Often based on inaccurate information and/or illogical arguments.
  - Frequently unjustified.
- People tend to hold on to prejudice even when they are presented with contradictory information.
- Prejudice is sustained or fueled by stereotypes.
- Related to the term: ethnocentrism.

Social Distance Scale

- A measure of prejudice.
- Measures how closely members from one category of people are open to or willing to interact with members from another category of people.

Social Distance Scale

- I would accept (member of a particular group) as a:
  - Family member by marriage - 1
  - Close friend - 2
  - Neighbor - 3
  - Co-worker - 4
  - Speaking acquaintances - 5
  - May visit my country - 6
  - Bar from my country - 7

Prejudice & Discrimination

- Prejudice and stereotypes involve attitudes and beliefs.
- Discrimination involves behavior.

Discrimination

- Denial of opportunities and equal rights to individuals and groups based on some type of bias.

### Merton’s Typology of Discrimination and Prejudice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discrimination</th>
<th>Prejudice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
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Categories of Discrimination

- Allport’s Scale of Discrimination
  - Verbal Rejection
  - Avoidance
  - Discrimination
  - Physical Attack
  - Extermination

Individual Discrimination

- Occurs when an individual discriminates against another individual (cultural).

Institutional Discrimination

- Denial of opportunities and equal rights to individuals and groups that result from the normal operation of society (structural).

Institutional Racism

- **Review:** Public Issues / Private Troubles
  - Private trouble perspective limits our ability to see how we may be caught in larger patterns of racism without being aware of it.
  - The Racial Contract - Charles W. Mills
    - Inherited Wealth
    - College admissions
    - Established norms

- Institutional discrimination / racism occurs even when people have no intention of subordinating others because of race (or other ascribed characteristic) and are totally unaware of doing so.
Discrimination and “ISMS”

- Isms are different from ordinary discrimination.
  - Ageism
  - Racism
  - Sexism
  - The suffix “ism” is applied to acts of discrimination that occur at the institutional level or, when they occur at the individual level, the discriminatory acts are consistent with institutional patterns of discrimination.

  **For Example:**
  
  When a person who is African-American tells an anti-white joke it is discriminatory.

  When a white person tells an anti-African-American joke it is an “ism”.

  - The difference… from a sociological perspective the “ism” is used to signal the difference in **potency** of different types of discrimination.
  - Discriminatory acts are “ism” when the source is a member of a dominant group and the target is a member of a subordinate group within society.

- Reverse racism…. impossible.
  - When the rights or privileges are extended to subdominant, subordinate, or minority groups, the perception, for the dominant group, is a loss of privilege.
  - Minority groups have a certain familiarity with and expectation of discriminatory acts.
  - For dominant groups discrimination is unfamiliar.

**Truly Disadvantaged - Wilson**

- From the 1950s through the 1970s the Civil Rights Movement focused on equality of individual opportunity.
- The focus did not adequately address the lingering effects of prolonged periods of bias and discrimination.
Truly Disadvantaged – Wilson (Continued)

- **Affirmative Action**
  
  Wilson argues that affirmative action policies benefit those members of previously discriminated against populations who have the most potential and greatest amount of resources in spite of the prolonged bias.

Confessions…

- What kind of contradictions did Kelley experience as the “nice negro”?

- What does he mean when when he says that he has always been “safe”?

- What kind of contradictions did he experience as an intimidating black man?

- Meeting the dominant race’s expectations, in terms of how one conducts themselves, creates a ________________

  racism definition of the situation.

Symbolic Interaction and Racism

- **Labeling Theory** - Racial profiling, action based on the means attached to one’s tribal stigma rather than their actual behavior.

- **Contact Hypothesis** - Contact between people of different races in cooperative circumstances results in less prejudice.

- **Scapegoat Theory** - Frustration among the disadvantaged; Someone with less resources is blamed for the suffering of persons just slightly better off, but still disadvantaged.