Lecture Notes

# Chapter 8: Race and Ethnic Group Stratification: Beyond “Us” and “Them”

## Learning Objectives

1. Distinguish between racial and ethnic groups.
2. Describe the difference between prejudice and discrimination.
3. Provide examples of dominant and minority group contact in the world today.
4. Outline effects of prejudice, racism, and discrimination on minority and majority groups.
5. Describe efforts to reduce racial and ethnic inequality at the micro-, meso-, and macro-levels of analysis.

## Chapter Overview

Chapter eight highlights the causes and significance of racial and ethnic stratification. The authors first detail the differences between minority and dominant groups in societies. They begin by discussing issues specific to race and race relations. The authors highlight three main aspects of race; the idea that race is a relatively modern idea in society, the social construction or race and racialized traits, and the correlation between race and social class in many societies. The authors then discuss issues related to ethnicity. After distinguishing between race and ethnicity, the authors turn to a discussion of prejudice and discrimination. They illustrate important micro-level theories of prejudice, specifically frustration-aggression and scapegoating. The authors also show how institutionalized discrimination persists due to side-effect and past-in-present discrimination. Finally, the authors turn to a discussion of group relations between the dominant and minority groups. In this discussion, the authors emphasize the role of power in shaping group behavior. They show how dominant group power can lead to exclusion and subjugation, and a lack of power can lead to assimilation and avoidance in the minority group. The authors also highlight the importance of the labor market in race/ethnic relations, and show functionalist and conflict perspectives of racial and ethnic inequalities in the labor market. To conclude their discussion on group relations, the authors describe policies and reform at the micro-, meso-, and macro-levels that address prejudice, discrimination, and racism. The authors end with a discussion of Affirmative Action policies in the US and Global Human Rights initiatives worldwide to show macro-level changes to lessen ethnic and racial inequalities.

## Lecture Outline

1. Introduction

II. What Characterizes Racial and Ethnic Groups?

A. Minority groups are characterized as a separate group from the dominant groups in society

i. Minority groups are *distinguishable* from the dominant group

ii. Minority groups are *excluded* or *denied full participation* in economic, political, educational, religions, health, and recreational institutions of society

iii. Minority groups are *defined and valued differently*, usually less favorably, by the dominant group based on their characteristics as minority group members

iv. Minority groups are *stereotyped, ridiculed, condemned, or otherwise defamed* in order to justify unequal treatment, allowing dominant group members to justify and not feel guilty about poor treatment based in political or religious ideologies and ethnocentric beliefs

v. Minority groups develop *collective identities* among members to insulate themselves from the unaccepting world

1. This perpetuates their group identity by creating ethnic or racial enclaves, intra-group marriage, and separate group institutions

B. Minority groups are determined by history and ideology

C. Dominant groups are not always a numerical majority

D. Ethnic and racial groups are the most common minority groups in the world

E. The Concept of Race

i. *Race* is a group within the human species that is identified by a society as presumably having certain biologically inherited physical characteristics

ii. Racial classifications have been based on combinations of appearance such as skin color and shade, stature, facial features, hair color and texture, head form, nose shape, eye color and shape, height, and blood or gene type

F. Origins of the Concept of Race

i. 18th and 19th centuries, four major groupings assigned: Mongoloid, Caucasoid, Negroid, and Australoid

1. These categories were then subdivided into 30 categories

2. Physical differences resulted from human migration

ii. Societies choose to define race through what is culturally convenient for the dominant group

iii. In the 1970s, the United Nations issued a “Statement on Race” that stated:

1. All people are born free and equal both in dignity and in rights

2. Racism stultifies personal development

3. (Racial) conflicts cost nations’ money and resources

4. Racism foments international conflict

iv. Racist doctrines lack *any* scientific basis

1. People belong to the same species and have descended from the same origin

v. Problems arising from *race* relations are *social* in origin

1. Not in biological origin

G. Social Construction of Race: Symbolic Interaction Analysis

i. The social reality of race is that people are defined or define themselves as belonging to a group passed in part on physical appearance

1. *Social significance* is the idea from Symbolic interaction theory that social consequences constitute reality

a. People are defined or define themselves as belonging to a group based, in part, on physical appearance

b. All individuals classify objects, which leads to the classification of humans

i. Piaget suggests that classification is one of our most basic cognitive tools

c. Classifications have been used to scientifically study humans and to subjugate and exploit minority groups

d. Classifications also provide individuals with an identity

ii. Sociologists believe that “races” are meaningful categories because members of a society know what “race” means

1. “Races” have social significance because people think there are differences between them

2. Some of these differences are presumed psychological and moral characteristics, which is used to justify discriminatory treatment

III. The Continuing Significance of Race

i. A clear racial economic hierarchy exists with white Americans on the top and other racial groups below

ii. Education is one of the key means of social mobility

iii. Income differences for return on education persist along the lines of race

B. The Continuing Significance of Race-Ethnic Groups

i. *Ethnic groups* are groups where membership is based on shared cultural heritage and is often connected with a national or geographic identity

1. Ethnic groups are the second major type of minority group

2. Most racial groups are also ethnic groups

ii. Ethnic groups sometimes live in *ethnic enclaves,* or segregated communities with highly concentrated populations of an ethnic group

iii. The federal government plays a large role in creating ethnic groups in the United States by naming and providing funds to the groups

1. This forced members to become part of the group to receive services

h. Biracial and Multiracial Populations: Immigration, Intermarriage, and Personal Identification

a. Race is a social construct that can change with conditions in a country

b. Many European countries are now host to immigrants from their former colonies, making them multiracial

c. The resulting mix of peoples has blurred racial lines and created many multiracial individuals

d. These patterns illustrate that push factors drive people from some countries and pull them to other countries

e. The most common push-pull factors are job opportunities, living conditions, desire for security, political or religious fear of persecution, and promise of individual liberties, availability of medical care, and educational opportunities

IV. Prejudice: Micro-Level Analysis

A. Prejudice: Micro-Level Analysis

i. *Prejudice* are *attitudes* that prejudge a group, usually negatively and not based on facts

ii. Prejudice influences dominant-minority group relations

iii. Prejudice can refer to positive attitudes and exaggerations, but it can also refer to negative attitudes

iv. *Discrimination* refers to differential treatment and harmful actions against minorities that occurs when prejudiced attitudes are manifested into *actions*

B. The Nature of Prejudice

i. Prejudice is often a result of deep in-group preferences

ii. *Stereotyping* is the categorization of large numbers of people by prejudiced individuals

1. Stereotypes are often distorted, oversimplified, or exaggerated ideas passed down over generations through the culture

2. Stereotypes are applied to all members of a group

3. Stereotypes are used to justify prejudice, discrimination, and unequal distribution of resources and opportunities

4. Stereotypes are often rooted in traditions and cultural beliefs

5. Hate crimes against Muslims spiked after the attacks on the New York World Trade Center in 2001 and the Boston Bombing in 2013

iii. A *self-fulfilling prophesy* is the incorporation of stereotyped behavior into an individual’s view of themselves

C. The Nature of Prejudice

i. *Frustration-aggression theory* is a theory which states that acts of prejudice and discrimination are motivated by anger and frustration individuals feel when they cannot achieve their work or goals

1. Individuals displace this anger on minority groups who lack social power to negate the negative actions

ii. *Scapegoating* is a form of aggressive action motivated by frustration against minority groups because an individual is unable to vent frustration toward the real target or cause

1. Scapegoating is usually easier than accepting personal blame or projecting institutional blame for personal problems
2. Scapegoating theory does not predict when frustration will lead toward aggression, why only some people who experience frustration vent their feelings on the vulnerable, and why some groups become targets
3. Explaining Racial Discrimination at the Micro-Level

V. Discrimination: Meso-Level Analysis

A. *Discrimination* is actions taken against members of a minority group

i. Although discrimination can occur at the individual and small group level, it is particularly problematic at the organizational and institutional level

B. *Individual discrimination* is action taken against minority group members which can take the form of exclusion, avoidance, or violence

C. *Racism—*any meso-level institutional arrangement that favors one racial group over another

i. Involves a normal or routine part of the way an organization operates that systemically disadvantages members of one group

ii. Jim Crow laws in the United States that prevented blacks from living, working or investing in certain places is an example of institutional discrimination

D. *Institutional discrimination* – intentional and unintentional actions engrained in the normal or routine part of the way an organization operates that have consequences that restrict minority group members

i. Institutional discrimination is built into organizations and cultural expectations in the social world

ii. *Intentional discrimination* is purposeful discrimination that is built into the law or is part of the explicit policies of an organization

iii. *Unintentional discrimination* is unintentional discrimination resulting from broad policies that face one group and disadvantage another

1. *Side-effect discrimination* are the practices in one institutional area that have a negative impact because they are linked to practices in another institutional area

iv. *Past-in-present discrimination* are practices from the past that may no longer be allowed but that continue to affect people today

1. Past-in-present discrimination shows the cumulative effect of stratification

E. Discrimination and prejudice are often found working together and reinforce one another

VI. Majority Group Policies to Manage Racial and Ethnic Relations

A. The form of dominant and minority group relations in a nation depend on several factors

i. Who has more power

ii. The needs of the domination group for labor or other commodities which could be provided by the minority group

iii. The cultural norms of each group, including level of tolerance of “out-groups”

iv. The social histories of the group, including their religious, political, racial and ethnic differences

v. Physical and cultural identifiers which distinguish the groups

vi. The times and circumstances

B. It is possible for groups to live in harmony whether their power is equal or unequal

C. However, there are different types of groups’ relations that exist in societies

D. *Genocide* is the systematic effort of a dominant group to destroy a minority group

E. *Subjugation* is the subordination of one group to another that holds power and authority

F. *Slavery* is a form of subjugation where one individual is the property of another individual

G. *Segregation* is another form of subjugation, where minority groups are kept powerless by formally separating them from the dominant group and depriving them of access to the dominant institutions

H. *Domestic colonialism* is the exploitation of minority groups within a country

I. *Population transfer* is the often-forced removal of a minority group from a region or country

J. *Assimilation* refers to the structural and cultural merging of minority and majority groups which can cause minority members to lose their original identity

i. *Forced assimilation* is when a minority group is forced to suppress its identity

ii. Assimilation is more likely to occur when the minority group is culturally similar to the dominant group

K. *Pluralism* is when each ethnic or racial group in a country maintains its own culture and separate set of institutions

i. Legal protection is often necessary in order to have pluralism

L. Theoretical Explanations of Dominant-Minority Group Relations

i. Conflict Theory

1. Conflict theorists argue that a “lesser” group protests the dominant group’s advantages

2. Privileged people perpetuate prejudice and discrimination against minority group members to keep privileges and resources

a. Marx argued that the exploitation of the lower classes is built into capitalism because it benefits the ruling class

3. Three critical factors contribute to hostility over resources

a. If two groups of people are identifiably different in appearance, clothing, or language, then “we” versus “they” thinking may develop

b. If the groups come into conflict over scarce resources that both groups want for themselves, hostilities are very likely to arise

i. Conflict over resources is likely to create stereotypes and animosity

c. If one group has much more power than the other, intense dislike between the two groups and misrepresentation of each group by the other is virtually inescapable

i. Stereotyping results from dominant groups trying to justify their actions

ii. *Split Labor Market theory* is a branch of conflict theory that characterizes the labor market as having two levels; the primary market where workers have “clean” jobs, largely supervisory roles, high-salaried wages and advancement possibilities; and the secondary market where workers have undesirable “dirty” jobs, low hourly wages, and few benefits or career opportunities

1. Minorities, especially those from the urban underclass, are most likely to work in the secondary market

2. This labor structure keeps minorities in competition against one another for jobs, which focuses antagonism between worker groups and not against employers

a. Employers also get cheaper labor as workers compete against each other for positions

iii. Conflict theory focuses on the dominant group intentionally oppressing others in order to protect their own self-interests

1. This makes the theory less useful to explain side-effect and past-in-present discrimination

M. Structural-Functional Theory

i. Structural-Functionalists see maintaining a cheap pool of labors who are in and out of work serves several functions for society

1. A cheap pool of labor provides a labor force to do “dirty work”

2. They make occupational which service the poor possible

3. They buy goods others do not want

4. They set examples for others of what not to be

5. They allow others to feel good about giving to charity

ii. Prejudice, racism, and discrimination are dysfunctional for society in many ways

1. They result in a loss of human resources

2. They cost society due to poverty and crime

3. They maintain hostilities between groups

4. And they fuel disrespect for those in power

N. Cultural Explanations

i. Cultural explanations point out that prejudice and discrimination are passed on from generation to generation through cultural transmission through socialization, institutional structure, and media stereotypes

1. It is stereotypes, then, that limit the opportunities available to minority group members

VII. Minority Reactions to Prejudice, Discrimination and Racism

i. There are five common reactions to dealing with a minority group status:

1. Four are micro-level responses:

a. Assimilation

i. Attempting to “pass” or assimilate as members of the dominant group so as to avoid bigotry and discrimination

b. Passing – pretending to be a member of the privileged group when one is not fully a part of that community

c. Acceptance

i. Learning to live with their minority status with little overt challenge to the system

d. Avoidance

i. Shunning all contact with the dominant group

e. Aggression

i. Retaliation or violence resulting from anger and resentment over minority status and subjugation

ii. *Indirect aggression* is aggression through arts or job-related actions

iii. *Displaced aggression* is hostility directed toward individuals or groups other than the dominant groups

2. One is a macro-level response

a. Change-oriented actions directed at the social structure

i. Pursuing social change in the meso- and macro-level structures of society

3. In some countries, minority groups embrace violent tactics as a means to bring about change

a. This is done to destroy the dominant power structure or to threaten the stability of the current macro-level system enough that the group in power is willing to make some changes

VIII. Policies Governing Minority and Dominant Group Relations

A. Civilians, mostly women, children, and elderly people, are fleeing the Darfur region of Sudan in great numbers, trying to find a degree of safety, food, and shelter after people in their villages have been penetrated by bullets and machetes

B. Refugees who cannot return home may end up in a new country, perhaps a new continent

C. If we accept the premise that discrimination is destructive to both individuals and societies, we need to find ways to address the root problems effectively

D. Successful strategies must bring about change at every level of the social world

i. Individual or Small Group Solutions

1. Human relations workshops, group encounters and therapy

2. These measures can effect tolerance

3. However, they do not address the underlying social conditions which create the problem

ii. Group Contact

1. Integrated housing projects, job programs to promote minority hiring, busing children to schools

2. These measures do tend to improve relations on a micro-level

3. But, they also do not address the underlying social conditions which create the problem

iii. Institutional and Societal Strategies to Improve Group Relations

1. Lobbying, watchdog monitoring, educational information dissemination, canvassing, protest marches, rallies, and boycotts

2. Also includes government agencies, like the Civil Rights Commission, Fair Employment Practices Commission, and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, that protect rights and work toward equality for all citizens

3. Legislation can also modify behaviors

a. Affirmative Action is a social policy created to change the unequal distribution of resources

i. *Strict affirmative action* is a policy that involves affirmative or positive steps to make sure that unintended discrimination does not occur

1. Under strict affirmative action policies, employers must advertise a position widely to attract a diverse applicant pool

2. The employer is also expected to *hire the most qualified candidate that applies* to provide opportunities for the *best-qualified people*

ii. *Quota systems* are policies that require employers to hire a certain percentage of minorities

1. Quota systems have been widely ruled unconstitutional

2. They apply only in cases where a court has found a company to have a substantial and sustained history of discrimination against minorities and where the employment position does not really have many requirements

iii. *Preference policies* are policies based on the belief that sometime people must be treated differently in order to treat them fairly and to create equality

1. Preference policies are institutional attempts to “level the playing field”

2. Supreme Court, in 2013, upheld Fisher v. University of Texas, saying that affirmative action could be permissible, in order to achieve the goal of a diverse student body

3. Preference policies:

a. Eliminate qualifications that are not substantially related to the job but that unwittingly favor members of the dominant group

b. Foster achievement of objectives of the organization that are only possible through enhanced diversity

c. Require employers and education institutions to take account of race or sex and make special efforts to hire and retain workers or students from groups that have been under-represented because of race

4. Preference policies also take into consideration that being a member of a particular ethnic group can actually make one *more* qualified for a position

E. Global Movements for Human Rights

i. Global issues and ethnic conflicts in the social world are interrelated

ii. The United Nations passed a Declaration of Universal Human Rights after the Holocaust to ensure that every global citizen is awarded particular human rights

iii. International organizations and privately funded advocacy groups work for international human rights

IX. What Have We Learned?

A. Inequality is not limited to social classes, race or ethnic groups, or religious communities

B. It can infect relations between human males and females in everything from the home to the boardroom and from the governance of nations to the decisions of global agencies