

Racism, Prejudice and Discrimination

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- Racism, Prejudice and Discrimination
- Prejudice and Discrimination in the Individual
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Struggle for Minority Rights

- *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* found that separate educational facilities were inherently unequal
- The Civil Rights Act of 1964 provided a means for fighting discrimination in employment and public accommodations by withholding federal funds to local government units that permitted discrimination
- Voting Rights Act of 1965 & Civil Rights Act of 1968 supported
- There is still a gap between legal equality and actual inequality
- The larger a group and the more segregated it is, the more hostility it encounters

Social Construction of Minorities

- **Racial minority**-a minority group made up of people who share certain inherited characteristics
- Most social scientists believe the three biologically determined races (Caucasoid, mongoloid, and negroid) are socially constructed
 - People take what are trivial differences and construct ideas about more general differences among groups
- **Ethnic minority**-a minority group made up of people who may share certain cultural features and who regard themselves as a unified group
 - Cultural features may include language, religio, national origin, diet, common history

Social Construction of Minorities

- **Assimilation**-the process by which members of a racial or ethnic minority group take on the characteristics of the mainstream culture by adapting their cultural patterns to those of the majority group and by intermarrying
- Five characteristics that determine minority status in society
 - Are subordinate segments of society
 - Special physical or cultural traits are seen as undesirable
 - Minorities have a “we feeling”
 - Based on descent
 - Practice **endogamy**-a norm stating that a person brought up in a particular culture should marry within the cultural group (pg. 230)
- Physical distinctiveness of racial minorities has made the attainment of assimilation and equality much more difficult

Racism, Prejudice and Discrimination

- **Racism**-behavior, in word or deed, that is motivated by the belief that human races have distinctive characteristics that determine abilities and cultures
- **Prejudice**-an emotional, rigid attitude toward members of a particular group that is maintained despite evidence that it is wrong
 - Strongly resists change
- People tend to be ethnocentric-see their own behavior patterns and belief structures as desirable and those of others as less so
- **Discrimination**-the differential (inferior) treatment of individuals who are considered to belong to a particular social group
 - Overt behavior, but sometimes hard to observe

Relationships between prejudice and Discrimination

- The relationship between prejudice and discrimination is complex
- Robert Merton's study and typology of the relationship between prejudice and discrimination
- Four patterns (pg. 227)
 - 1. Unprejudiced nondiscriminatory – integration
 - 2. Unprejudiced and discriminatory – institutional discrimination
 - 3. Prejudiced and nondiscriminatory – latent bigotry
 - 4. Prejudiced and discriminatory – outright bigotry

Origins of Prejudice and Discrimination

- **Prejudice and Bigotry in the Individual**
- **Frustration-Aggression** – when one feels or experiences frustration due to blocked needs, it is common to displace that frustration onto a scapegoat
 - Anger and frustration is often taken out on subordinate groups
- **Projection**- a means of releasing tension that involves attributing one's own undesirable traits onto some other individual or subordinate group
 - Ex. Attitudes toward black sexuality

Origins of Prejudice and Discrimination

- **Prejudice and Bigotry in Social Structures**
- The struggle for certain goods and power gives to the political dominance of one group and the subordination of the other
- Once established, political dominance is likely to be reinforced by economic exploitation
- Exploitation theory - prejudice is rationally and economically motivated on the basis of self interest
 - The dominant group benefits from prejudice in that it is rooted within the subordination and exploitation of a group

Origins of Prejudice and Discrimination

- **Cultural Factors: Norms and Stereotypes**
- **Social norm**-a social standard that specifies the kind of behavior that is appropriate in a given situation
- Normative approach - prejudice is patterned into the cultural norms and values of a group or society
- Prejudice is learned and is a function of conforming to the norms of a group
 - **Homogamy** - the norm that one must marry within one's own group
 - Similar in religion, social class, race, ethnicity, etc...
- **Stereotyping** – attributing a fixed and usually unfavorable or inaccurate conception to a category of people

Institutional Discrimination

- **Institutional discrimination**-discrimination that occurs as a result of the structure and functioning of public institutions and policies
- Institutional discrimination stems from the ongoing routines of societies' social institutions - such as work or education
 - Different from other types of discrimination since it is not always a conscious intent to discriminate
 - Native Americans-income and employment differentials
- Racial Profiling-the practice by law enforcement, security agents or any person in a position of authority of disproportionately selecting people of color for investigations or other forms of discrimination

Institutional Discrimination

- Racial profiling is a form of institutional discrimination because representatives of social institutions unfairly single out certain groups in seeking to enforce laws or rules
- Violates civil rights
- Ex. Speeding and Maryland State Police
 - 98% of drivers were violating traffic laws
 - Searched 823 motorists between Jan. 1995 and Sept. 1996
 - 600 (72.9%) were black
 - 661 (80.3%) were minority
 - Police were stopping minority drivers at a rate that was 316% greater than for whites

Education

- In this country, education has been seen as the road to social and economic advancement
- Family income is related to educational achievement and attainment
- A higher rate of poverty among minorities is related to less education
- As of 2004, people by race that hadn't graduated high school by age 25:
 - 15 % of whites
 - 20% of blacks
 - 43% of Hispanics
- As of 2004, completed 4 years of college or more:
 - 27% of whites
 - 17% of blacks
 - 11% of Hispanics

Education

- Minority group members at all levels of education earn less than their nonminority counterparts (pg. 235)
- *Brown v. Board of Education* mandated integration of public schools, basically wiping out de jure segregation
- **De jure segregation**-segregation that is required by law
- **De facto segregation**-segregation that is a result of housing patterns, economic patterns and other factors
 - May result from gerrymandered school districts and the departure of middle classes from communities with increasing rates of minority households
- Resegregation of the races is increasing
- In the past, busing was used to try to integrate schools, but now busing is largely seen as a failure

Housing

- Housing segregation refers to the separation of minority groups into different regions, cities, neighborhoods, etc...
- Some of the largest cities have failed to significantly reduce housing segregation, esp. in the north (pg. 237)
- *Failure to enforce federal laws produces rates of black segregation that are far higher than those experienced by any other group in U.S. history
- **Racial steering**-the deliberate refusal of real estate brokers to show houses to minority buyers outside specific areas
 - *Restrictive covenants*-agreements among homeowners not to sell their property to people designated as undesirable
 - Now illegal, but still practiced unofficially

Employment and Income

- Discrimination in education is related to discrimination in employment
- Oliver and Shapiro (1995)-found that about 1/3 of Americans have no assets other than a car...gap is widening
- Over 50% of Hispanic and black families were living paycheck to paycheck, with no other financial assets to fall back on
- Median net worth by race as of 2002 (pg. 240):
- Whites-\$88,651
- Hispanics-\$7,932
- Blacks-\$5,988...has decreased since 1996
- Low net worth related to event poverty (chapter 6)

Justice

- American justice system predicated on the principles that justice is blind & an accused person is innocent until proven guilty in a court of law
- The higher arrest rates of minorities are due partly to the higher arrest rates among the poor in general
- Racial Profiling
- Blacks and Hispanics three times more likely to experience police threat (use of force) during interactions with the police, and three times more likely to be arrested and searched
- Bail system discriminatory in that those who cannot raise bail must wait in custody for their case to be heard (punishment before conviction)

Justice

- Legal counsel is also expensive, and those who have been detained have less time to prepare defense
- Imprisonment and employment discrimination (pg. 241)
 - White offenders were more likely to be called back for an interview than a blacks without a criminal record (Pager 2003)
 - Same qualifications for blacks and whites
- Death penalty-more significant than the race of the offender is the race of the victim
 - 85% of those sentenced to death killed a white person, even though half of people murdered each year are black
- Felony disenfranchisement-after conviction of a felony, a person may lose the right to vote

Consequences of Prejudice and Discrimination

- Consequences can be drastic for children who experience discrimination and prejudice (Coles 1968-children's drawings)
- Children are conditioned to fear and distrust members of the other race
 - Contact between races decreases tension for children & their parents
- Protest often a reaction to prejudice and inequality
 - Montgomery bus boycott
 - End of Vietnam lowered amount of protests
- Conflicts among different nationality groups (USSR, Bosnia, Middle East) bring up the power of ethnic sentiments and their capacity to disrupt political and economic institutions

Social Policy Implications

- Should the U.S. government's priority be on increasing employment opportunities for the poor and ethnic minorities or should government not be involved in those pursuits?
- **Affirmative action**-programs that systematically increase opportunities for women and members of minority groups that have been the victims of past economic and social discrimination
 - Programs require that institutions that have engaged in discriminatory practices increase opportunities for minorities
- Pro-higher rates of access to good schools for minorities
- Con-some white students will not be accepted
- Some whites who lose the opportunity to attend professional schools because of affirmative action are victims of an effort to eradicate racism from the college environment

Social Policy Implications

- White male college graduates earn 10-15% more per hour than comparable female, black or Asian male graduates
- (Massey & Denton 1993)-real estate agents, banks, local governments, have engaged in discriminatory housing practices or failed to enforce the law designed to guarantee freedom of choice in housing decisions
 - The lack of enforcement in housing affects blacks and some Hispanic groups, resulting in a reversal of the 20 year trend toward decreasing school segregation
 - Busing is not a likely solution; no other solutions have been offered

Social Policy Implications

- **Head Start**-a blanket term that refers to federally funded preschool programs aimed at preparing disadvantaged children for school
- Studies have shown improvements of 8-10 IQ points
 - Still difficult to know what to teach, how, when and by whom
- Does Head Start do too little?
- If the parents do not emphasize intellectual development, are there better options? Would Head Start still be beneficial after the first three years of development?
- Is class a better option to use for offering assistance in the form of scholarships?

Immigration

- Nativism-the idea that only native-born persons deserve the full benefits of citizenship and that foreigners are a danger to the stability of the society
 - Common in countries with a history of immigration
- Employers argued that the nation needs the energies and motivation of workers who were willing to produce well at low wages
- The perception of economic and social competition from immigrants has clearly stimulated the rise of nativist feelings