CLASSISM

A Tutorial

Define classism and its' dominant and subordinate groups.

OBJECTIVE #10

What is classism?

• System of oppression

• Dominant group = privilege
  – Valued

• Subordinate groups = disadvantage
  – Devalued

• Cultural Classism
CLASSIST BELIEFS

Individualism

- (1a): a doctrine that the interests of the individual are or ought to be ethically paramount; also: conduct guided by such a doctrine.

- (b): a theory maintaining the political and economic independence of the individual and stressing individual initiative, action, and interests.

- (1a) Belief in the primary importance of the individual and in the virtues of self-reliance and personal;

- (2a) A doctrine advocating freedom from government regulation in the pursuit of a person's economic goals.

Meritocracy

- "This mythology ... denies the role of personal connections, wealth, background, gender, race, or education in an individual's success," writes Alice Marwick, a professor at Fordham University. "If, for example, women (or people of color, or gay people) are not getting venture-capital funding at the same rate as men, the myth maintains, it is due to their lack of ability rather than institutional sexism. It also justifies immense wealth as the worthy spoils of the smartest and best."

(Alice Marwick, professor at Fordham University as quoted in Hu, 2014)
The Upperclass

- Wealthiest 1% holds 34% of national wealth
- Wealthiest 20% hold 85% of total household wealth in U.S.
- .75% of adult population earn more than $1 million annually
- 400 billionaires in the U.S.
  - More than 12 of them worth more than $10 billion
- Income of top 1% rose by more than 180 percent (1979-2000)
  - Income of middle fifth of population grew by 12.4%

The Middle Class

- White collar jobs
- Fringe benefits
- Assets
  - Savings
  - Investments
  - Home ownership
The Working Class

- Blue collar jobs
  - Unpleasant / dangerous working conditions
  - Less job security
  - Higher unemployment
- Lower savings or assets
  - Less likely to own home
- More likely to spend more of income on housing

Class & U.S. Population
- Upper
- Middle
- Working Class
- Poor

The Poor

- Minorities
- Women
- Children
- Low paying jobs
- Low skill jobs
- Few / no benefits
- Hourly wages

U.S. Census (2009)
- 14.3% living in poverty

Rates of poverty
- Non-Hispanic Whites = 8.6 to 9.4%
- African Americans = 24.7 to 25.8%
- Hispanics = 23.2 to 25.3%
- Asians = 12.5% (no change)

Describe the relationship between class and violence, health/mental health, income/economics, employment, and housing

OBJECTIVE #11
Poverty & Health

• Higher rates of:
  – infant mortality
  – Eye and ear disease
  – Arthritis
  – Physical disability
  – Diabetes
  – Nutritional deficiency
  – Respiratory disease
  – Mental illness
  – Heart disease

  ❖ Lower levels of treatment for illness/disease

Education, Recreation, & Training

• Poverty decreases access to education, recreational activities, and training
  – Positive correlation SAT scores and family income
  – Now and then
    • 30 years ago, upper class children 2x likely to obtain training beyond high school and 4x likely to obtain a postgraduate degree
    • Similar today, except...
      • Getting into college has increased / completion has decreased
  • Increased access to education/decreasing completion of degrees

Housing

• Those in poverty more likely to live in areas high with environmental toxins
  – Louisiana Cancer Ally
  – Agriculture Street Landfill in New Orleans

• Southeastern State Study (GAO)
  – Blocks are majority in 3 of 4 communities built on landfills
NIMBY

• Suburban neighborhoods oppose low income housing
  – “brings down the neighborhood”
  – Lowers home values

Gentrification

• Government funding to “revitalize” abandoned property or assets that have decreased in value

Poverty & Employment

• More likely to be unemployed, or under employed
Poverty & Violence

- Women with low income (less than $7,500) 7x higher risk of being a victim of interpersonal violence than those making $75,000 or more — *Results in $727 million in lost wages annually*

- Abused and neglected children achieve lower levels of education in adulthood

- Youths in urban areas are more likely to be arrested than those in suburban and rural areas

**Dissect four myths that perpetuate classism**

**OBJECTIVE #10**
Four Myths of Classism

1. We are a classless society.

2. We are a middle class nation.

3. We are all getting richer!

4. We are all given an equal chance to succeed.

Contrast stereotypes in the media as they perpetuate attitudes about class.

OBJECTIVE #11

Class & the Media

- High status occupations
- Racialized jobs
Class Stereotypes & the Media

- Upper Class
- Middle Class
- Working Class

Stereotypes of the poor

- Functionally and/or morally inferior
- “kind of people” with set profile and values
- “White trash” – acceptable derogatory language to define the characteristics of poor Whites

The poor do not exist in the media.

- The poor are faceless.
- The poor are undeserving.
- The poor are an eyesore.
- The poor are to blame.
- The poor are down on their luck.
OBJECTIVE #12

Discuss framing techniques as they shape attitudes and stereotypes about class.

Framing Techniques & Classism

Upper Class
• Consensus framing
• Admiration framing
• Emulation framing

Middle Class
• Middle class values framing

Working Class
• Caricature framing

Poor/Homeless
• Thematic framing
• Episodic framing
References


American Perceptions

—

American Realities
American Perceptions

How Are the Rich Different from Average Americans?

Types of people are more likely to be asked, then:

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Note: Based on a national survey of 1,000 adults. The survey included questions about how the rich are different from average Americans. The questions were asked in a randomly selected sample of households.