

Lecture 2 & 3: Prejudice (& discrimination)

Two lectures today (break between 10:20-10:30)

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Prejudice (& discrimination)

What is prejudice & discrimination?

Prejudice refers to the holding of particular attitudes.

Discrimination refers to action whether personal or institution-based

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Poser: How are discrimination and prejudice linked?

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Prejudice & Discrimination

- Is discrimination a result of prejudiced attitudes?
 - A person can act in a discriminatory fashion without being prejudiced eg. Black sales clerks
- A person can be prejudiced without acting in a discriminatory fashion eg. (LaPierre, 1934)

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Discrimination

- Unfair treatment regardless of its source
 - On basis of race-racism
 - On basis of age- ageism
 - On basis of physical/mental impairment-stigma

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Stigma and mental illness

- Focus on how mental illness has been addressed
- Knowledge required of mental illness as a social phenomenon

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How can stigma surrounding mental illness be explained?

- Psychological accounts
- Sociological accounts
- Historical accounts

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Medical anthropology

- How is illness described and defined?
- How are the unwell treated or dealt with?
- How is illness managed?
- Who is responsible for its management?

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Historical/sociological background to stigma

- Distinction between “illness” and “disease” explanatory models (Kleinman, 1978)
 - “Illness” EMs close to the patient’s lifeworld
 - Disease EMs examine causation and draw on Biomedical knowledge
- The etiology of psychiatric conditions remains unclear (hence preferred nomenclature “disorder” and not “syndrome” or “disease”)

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Psychiatric illness and stigma

- Psychiatric illness has a biological and cultural character
- Persons in our culture labelled as “psychiatrically ill” come to negatively evaluate themselves and are negatively evaluated by others

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Fabrega (1990, p.290):

- “The negative image of the culture of psychiatric illness may be termed psychiatric stigma. It is important to be clear what this means. The symptoms of psychiatric illness have been characterised socially as frightening, shameful, dangerous, imaginary, feigned, fantastic, and incurable. Persons who are psychiatrically ill are shunned, less likely to be hired, and less likely to be accepted as neighbours. The legal system is likely to make exceptions for psychiatric illness, via a dispensation that formally stipulates a diminished social status. Finally, the symbols used to explain psychiatric illness, which are rooted in the histories of societies... included references to demons, witches, spirits, possession and sinfulness”

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Stigma- toward a definition

- “Stigma is thus a social phenomenon that implies a person, and audience, and a set of powerful images that connect the two” (Fabrega, 2000, p.290)
- “Stigmatised individuals possess ... some attribute, or characteristic, that conveys a social identity that is devalued in a particular social context” (Crocker et al, 1998 cited in V & H)

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How is stigma established and maintained?

- Medical discourse and practice contributes toward stigmatising various groups
- Folk medical discourse also contributes toward stigmatising
- Treatment by family and community can also stigmatise

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Discourse

- Discussion, statements, media programs, talk- all of these are examples of discourse.
- The discourse "terrorism" as an example.

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Historical roots of stigma can be traced to Ancient Greece

- Positive attributes- articulated in juxtaposition: reason, individuality, civic responsibility,
- Psychiatric illness equated with madness, insanity, the irrational
- The mysterious, the inexplicable, the fateful

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Medieval treatment of psychiatrically ill in the Euro-mediterranean tradition

- Two informing ideas- Greek medicine and Christian ideas of demon possession
- Treatments: folk medicine, spiritual healing, physicians trained in monasteries and cathedral schools, healing associated with shrines- assistance sought from families

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Social practices (12C-14C)

- Chronic and disruptive psychiatric conditions: the afflicted were congregated in churches, sent to jails or city towers, or Christian hospitals for confinement
- Commonest treatment – social ostracism

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Stigma

- Mark or sign of disgrace or discredit ; distinguishing mark or characteristic(Oxford)
- A social phenomenon which marks people as different
- The stigmatised individual suffers a degraded identity including restricted movement through social space

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Social Psychological Explanations of Prejudice & Discrimination

- Frustration-Aggression
- The Authoritarian Personality
- Social Identity theory

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The Frustration-Aggression thesis

- If behaviour directed toward a goal is frustrated aggression will ensue
- Scapegoating- directing aggression toward an innocent bystander
- Critique: scope of theory- overgeneralising; denies context-specific nature of prejudice and discrimination

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The Authoritarian Personality

- The Frankfurt school
- Horkheimer, Marcuse, Adorno, Fromm
- The stage of monopoly capital was seen as being associated with authoritarianism & fascism
- A central theme of the Frankfurt school: society is fundamentally irrational

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The Authoritarian Personality –2

- The idea of the autonomous subject (person type) failing to survive the changing industrial order
- Replaced by the irrational subject

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The Authoritarian Personality- 3

- An argument to explain the rise of fascism
- Horkheimer invited to set up research in the US under the auspices of the American Jewish Committee
- Adorno, T.W., Frenkel-Brunswik, E., Levinson, D.J., & Sanford, R.N. (1950) *The Authoritarian personality*. NY: Harper & Row. (the group's first research volume)

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The Authoritarian Personality-4

- Construction of opinion scales to measure anti-semitic attitudes (the F scale)
- Broadening of the scope of the project
 - Anti-semitism became prejudice toward any outgroup
 - Cognitive rigidity identified as an element in prejudice

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The Authoritarian Personality was...

- [someone] “whose features included a rigid adherence to conventional values, a resistance to introspective self-examination, and admiration of power, and exaggerated and prurient concern with sexual ‘goings on’, a tendency to think in rigid categories, and a belief in the inferiority of outgroups” (Billig, 1982, p. 105)

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F scale

- Later studies showed that authoritarianism
 - correlates +ve with Low socioeconomic status
 - Correlates -ve with Education

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The turn to language

- Language is both referential (refers to a world) and constitutive (constitutes the taken-for-granted world)
- The discursive construction of ‘reality’

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What is the role of discourse in prejudice making?

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Prejudice in discourse

- Said, E. (1981) *Covering Islam*. NY: Pantheon.

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The discourse of "Orientalism"-

- a corporate institution for dealing with the Orient (the Middle East)
- This institutional discourse produces prejudice

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Discourse analysis of the language of racism

- Wetherell, M., & Potter, J. (1992). *Mapping the language of racism*. NY: Columbia University Press.
- A critique of the fact/value distinction in cognitive approaches
 - “When is a description merely factual and when is it an interested account?”
 - If prejudice is ‘thinking ill of others without sufficient warrant’ (Allport, 1954, p.6) then what is an adequate warrant?” (p.206).

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Fragment of talk from Wetherell & Potter (1992, p.208)

- “...they're keeping apartheid going because at they see it over there, it's the only way that they're going to keep the good way of life (yes). I mean, you know, if somebody came round to me and said, 'look we're going to move a whole pile of these Maoris off Bastion Point and they're going to take over this part of Remuera, just this corner here, going round this block of houses here, I'd say no they're not (yes). And you know, no matter what happens they're not going to do it. I shall take such steps as a necessary to avoid it (yes). Now if somebody says, oh yes but this is how it's going to be (mm) I'd go flat out, I mean I don't care whether it's apartheid or whatever you call it. Build the barricades up there and you know put machine guns on the top (mmhmm)and that is what I see that they're just preserving (mmhmm)um what they've got. Okay maybe it isn't the best but it's far from being the worst.”

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Another view of Prejudice

- “Prejudice ...[is] social pathology shaped by power relations and the conflicting vested interests of groups. “ (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 208).

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