Chapter 3

Theories and Thinking about Diversity

Introduction, Legislation, and Theories

 SECTION I
Chapter Objectives

After completing this chapter, readers should have a greater understanding of what constitutes minority groups and the processes surrounding people’s thinking about and treatment of those who are dissimilar to them. Readers can expect to

- examine the meaning of the terms minority group and nondominant group.
- understand characteristics used to identify minority groups and be able to use these characteristics to identify the nondominant groups in one’s particular environment.
- discuss thought processes related to stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination.
Chapter Objectives (cont’d)

After completing this chapter, readers should have a greater understanding of what constitutes minority groups and the processes surrounding people’s thinking about and treatment of those who are dissimilar to them. Readers can expect to

- understand in-group favoritism and out-group bias and how they disadvantage non-dominant group members and impede diversity efforts.

- understand ways to avoid automatic stereotyping.

- have a better foundation for synthesizing the material in the remaining chapters.
What is a Minority?

• Minority or Nondominant Group
  - Those subordinated to majority or dominant group members in terms of power, prestige, and privilege.
  - Does not necessarily refer to groups that are numerically fewer than majority group members.
  - Have four common characteristics: identifiability, differential power, the experience of discrimination, and group awareness.
Characteristics of Minorities

• **Identifiability**
  - Distinguishable, readily apparent differences in the physical or cultural traits of minority and majority group members.
  - These are sometimes artificially constructed to increase identifiability.

• **Differential power**
  - The dominant group’s use of power to control nondominant groups who have less power.
  - In their control of resources, the powerful also control access to education, employment, health care and other things that affect life chances of those without power.

• **Discrimination**
  - Differential and pejorative actions that serve to limit the social, political, or economic opportunities of members of particular groups.
  - The types of differences that are emphasized and ignored depend on choices of the dominant group in a society.

• **Group awareness**
  - The self-identification response of minority group members to subordination and discrimination by the majority. Group awareness may also come with resistance and activism.
Categorization and Identity

• What factors cause groups to be singled out for discriminatory and prejudicial treatment?
  ➢ *Negative stereotypes* (overgeneralizations)
    ❖ Job-related stereotypes
    ❖ Religious stereotypes
  ➢ “*Positive*” stereotypes have negative consequences also.
  ➢ *Social categorization*
    ❖ The tendency of individuals to perceive themselves and others as belonging to particular groups—ordering one’s social environment by groupings of persons.
Consequences of Social Categorization and Social Identity

• In-group favoritism and out-group biases
  - Those in power (dominant groups) hire, promote, and reward members of their in-groups.
  - By favoring dominant in-group members, non-dominant group members are disadvantaged.

• Fundamental attribution error

• Multiple group memberships

• Nondominant groups as the in-group
  - At times, the nondominant groups favor members of outgroups and stereotype their own group members.
Aversive Racism and Other Contradictions

• Aversive Racism

- Occurs when those who ostensibly adhere to egalitarian values and believe themselves to be unprejudiced still possess negative feelings and beliefs about racial issues and minority group members.

- Aversive racists do not openly discriminate, but when their actions can be justified by some other factor (e.g., lack of “fit” or some other factor other than race), they are likely to exhibit aversive racist behaviors.
Individual and Organizational Recommendations

• Reducing the Propensity to Stereotype

- Lead aversive racists to see the inconsistencies in their behaviors and their stated values.
- Engage group members in activities to achieve common, superordinate goals.
- Encourage groups to perceive themselves as members of a single, superordinate group, rather than as two separate groups.
- Implement organizational monitoring and control measures.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Identifiability (Visibility)</th>
<th>Power</th>
<th>Discrimination</th>
<th>Group Awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Little, but</td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>increasing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican Americans</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Little, but</td>
<td>Significant, but</td>
<td>Some, increasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>increasing</td>
<td>varies by race and identifiability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Ricans</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Little, but varies</td>
<td>Significant, but</td>
<td>Some, increasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>by location</td>
<td>varies by race</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuban Americans</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Some, but varies</td>
<td>by location and identifiability</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Americans</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Varies by country of origin</td>
<td>Significant, but varies</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>by sex</td>
<td>by country of origin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Little, but varies</td>
<td>Significant, but varies</td>
<td>Little, increasing‡</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>by location and identifiability</td>
<td>by location and identifiability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indians</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>by location and identifiability</td>
<td>by location and identifiability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Although the table is adapted from Dworkin and Dworkin, some categories were added and others were deleted. The ratings of the levels of appropriateness of the group to the criteria are the author's.
† Aside from Whites and men, all groups are nondominant groups.
‡ Dworkin and Dworkin’s definition of group awareness as resulting from discrimination makes this less relevant for Whites, although White ethnic identity is increasing—see Chapter 7. Group awareness for men of color varies by race but would not result from discrimination by women because women are not “dominant” to men.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Identifiability (Visibility)</th>
<th>Power</th>
<th>Discrimination</th>
<th>Group Awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Little, but varies by visibility</td>
<td>Some, but varies by identifiability and</td>
<td>Little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and self-identification</td>
<td>or ethnic background</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Some, but varies by race and ethnicity</td>
<td>Significant, but varies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>by race and ethnicity</td>
<td>by race and ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Significant, but varies</td>
<td>Significant for men of color, but varies</td>
<td>Some, but varies by race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>by race and ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with disabilities</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Varies by visibility and type of disability</td>
<td>Varies by visibility and type of disability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overweight, obese</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Little, but varies</td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>Increasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gays and lesbians</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Some, increasing</td>
<td>Significant, when sexual orientation is known</td>
<td>Significant, increasing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Table 3.2 Questioning Stereotypes

**Is it logical to believe that**

- there is considerable variation among my in-group, but all ______ are just alike?

- all Mexican Americans are undocumented immigrants, when people of Mexican descent have been in the United States for hundreds of years?

- all Whites are racist when White allies to diversity have worked as abolitionists, resisted discrimination, participated in boycotts, and risked their lives along with Blacks in the fight for equality?

- most women are uncommitted workers, when the great majority of women are employed and contribute substantially (or, for single women, completely) to their family income?

- Whites and men are not advantaged by systematic discrimination against minorities and women?

- all Arabs are terrorists when they have lived and worked among Americans for years?

- older workers are less competent than younger workers, but CEOs and executives should be older, rather than younger, people?

- experiences of immigrant Jews, Italians, German, and Irish would be the same as those of Blacks, for whom identifiability is high and discrimination persists?

- most Black men are criminals when they are represented among various levels of educational and occupational attainment?

- most people with disabilities are incapable of being good performers, when many people with invisible disabilities successfully work among us
Key Terms

• Aversive racism
• Discrimination
• Egalitarian
• Fundamental attribution error
• Neosexism
• Prejudice
• Social identity
• Stereotypes