

Lecture Outline  
Stigmatization

Stigma  
Stigma classifications  
Stigma characteristics  
Functions of stigmas

Stigma

Consensual beliefs about undesirable attributes or characteristics

Stigma Classifications  
*(Goffman, 1963)*

1. Tribal identities
2. Abominations of the body
3. Blemishes of individual character

Stigma Classifications  
*(Goffman, 1963)*

Tribal identities:

Social groups into which individuals are born

- >religious groups
- >ethnic groups
- >racial groups
- >national groups

Stigma Classifications  
*(Goffman, 1963)*

Abominations of the body:

Physical ailments:

- >deformities
- >illnesses
- >paralysis

Stigma Classifications  
*(Goffman, 1963)*

Blemishes of individual character:

Moral transgressions, weakness of will:

- >drug addiction
- >prostitution
- >homosexuality
- >mental illnesses

Stigma

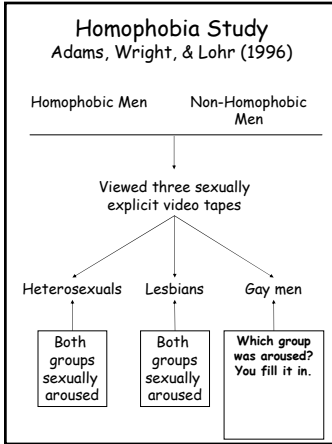
According to Goffman (1963):

Stigmatized groups regarded by many as flawed

People report that they do not emulate, or try to be like, the stigmatized

Stereotypes about stigmatized groups are negative

Individuals with stigmas are victims of prejudice, discrimination, hate crimes



Stigma Characteristics

Dimensions along which stigmas can differ

Concealability

Extent to which a stigma can be hidden from others

Stability

Extent to which a stigma can change over time

Disruptiveness

Extent to which a stigma disrupts social interactions

Aesthetic Qualities

Extent to which a stigma is physically unappealing to others

Responsibility

Extent to which a stigmatized person is seen as personally responsible for their stigma

Danger (Peril)

Extent to which a stigmatized person is seen as dangerous

What we do know...

Stigma characteristics are not all-or-none

What we do know...

Stigma characteristics are not mutually exclusive

What we do know...

People can hold different beliefs about a stigma's characteristics

Functions of Stigmas

Self-enhancement function  
 Social identity function  
 System justification function  
 Terror management function

Self-Enhancement Function

Stigmatizing out-groups make people feel better about themselves

Based on Downward Comparison Theory

Social Identity Theory

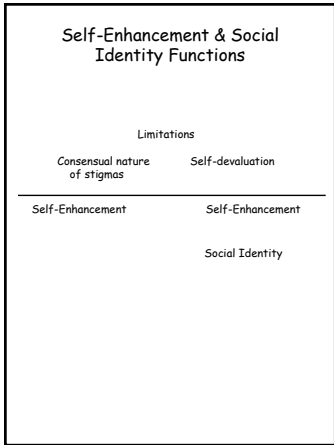
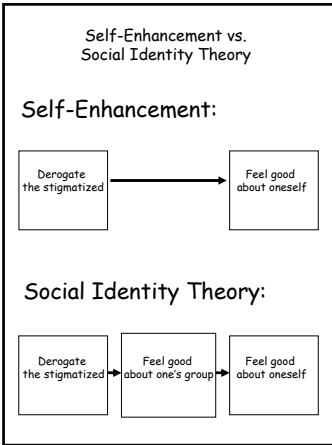
Assumptions:

People categorize others into in/out groups

Categorization creates a social identity

People want to be in groups held in high esteem

People sustain positive identity by derogating out-groups



Self-Devaluation Study  
 Clark & Clark (1939)

253 African American children

Presented with 4 dolls

- 2 brown with black hair
- 2 white with yellow hair

Children asked questions

Self-Devaluation Study  
 Clark & Clark (1939)

Identify actual color of doll

Example questions:

"Give me the brown doll"

"Give me the white doll"

Self-Devaluation Study  
 Clark & Clark (1939)

Result:

Children correctly identified the doll's color

- 93% gave the brown doll when asked
- 94% gave the white doll when asked

Self-Devaluation Study  
Clark & Clark (1939)

Identify racial identity of doll

Example questions:

"Give me the doll that looks like an African American child"

"Give me the doll that looks like a White child"

Self-Devaluation Study  
Clark & Clark (1939)

Results:

Children able to identify the doll's racial identity

- 93% gave the brown doll when asked for the one that looked like an African American child
- 93% gave white doll when asked for the one that looked like a White child

Self-Devaluation Study  
Clark & Clark (1939)

Identify child's racial identity

Example questions:

"Give me the doll that looks like you"

Self-Devaluation Study  
Clark & Clark (1939)

Results:

Children not as good at identifying their own racial identity

- 66% gave the brown doll when asked which looked like them
- 33% gave the white doll when asked which looked like them

Self-Devaluation Study  
Clark & Clark (1939)

Identify racial preference

Example questions:

"Give me the doll you like best"

"Give me the doll that looks bad"

"Give me the doll that is a nicer color"

Self-Devaluation Study  
Clark & Clark (1939)

Results:

Children devalued own racial identity:

- 66% liked the white doll best
- 59% said the brown doll looked bad
- only 38% said the brown doll was a nice color

System Justification Theory

Assumptions:

Group inequalities in every society

Advantaged groups derogate stigmatized groups to justify why they have more

Justifications show how the system is fair

System Justification Theory

Through system justification people:

1. Come to believe that they deserve their privilege
2. The system under which their culture operates is fair
3. Perception of fairness reduces intergroup conflict

System Justification Theory

Limitations:

Cannot explain social revolutions that initially heighten intergroup conflict

Terror Management Function

Assumptions:

People are aware of their own mortality

This awareness creates anxiety

People protect self from this anxiety by subscribing to a cultural view that provides order & meaning to an otherwise random world

Terror Management

Stigmatization serves to reject those who are different and who violate and challenge cultural views

Prejudice

Theories of Racism

Theories of Prejudice

Prejudice

Definition:

A positive or negative attitude, belief, or feeling about a person generalized from attitudes, beliefs, or feelings about the person's group.

Components of Prejudice

Stereotypic beliefs  
typical attributes

Symbolic beliefs  
values, traditions, customs

Emotions  
affective reactions (e.g., disgust)

Theories of Racism

Old Fashioned Racism

Modern (Symbolic) Racism

Old Fashioned Racism

Premise:

People are consciously aware they are racist, but may conceal that from others.

Examples of Self-Report Measures of Prejudice

Old Fashioned Racism Scale

Generally speaking, do you feel blacks are smarter, not as smart, or about as smart as whites?

If a black family with about the same income and education as you moved next door, would you mind it a lot, a little or not at all?

Modern (Symbolic) Racism

Premise:

People feel ambivalent toward the stigmatized - torn between the egalitarian values they truly hold and the racism they harbor.

Modern (Symbolic) Racism

Theory proposes that....

People deal with their ambivalence by letting it come out in disguised form - as support for conservative American values.

Examples of Self-Report Measures of Prejudice

Modern Racism Scale

Over the past few years, blacks have gotten more economically than they deserve

Blacks are getting too demanding in their push for equal rights

Self-Reported Prejudice

General pattern:

Prejudice is subsiding

Explanations

People are less prejudiced now

Social Desirability