

Class & Race

LCD 205: Sociolinguistics
Queens College, CUNY

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Outline

- Individual Speech
- Group Presentation
- Class & Race

Individual Speech

- Fill out outline, template for Tuesday
- Draft speech on Wednesday

QUESTIONNAIRES

Using Language

- You were to have worked with your group to develop and administer the survey
- With you group, come up with a summary of your findings
- What is the thesis for your presentation?
 - What is the story that you are telling?
- What articles did everyone find?

RACE

- Define race.
 - What are some examples?
- Define ethnicity
 - What are some examples?
- How do you identify?

- **Race**
 - classification based on physical or biological criteria, e.g. skin color, etc.
- **Ethnicity**
 - classification based cultural practice etc.
 - Ethnicity is not about what one *is*, but rather about what one *does*.” (Fought 2002: 444)

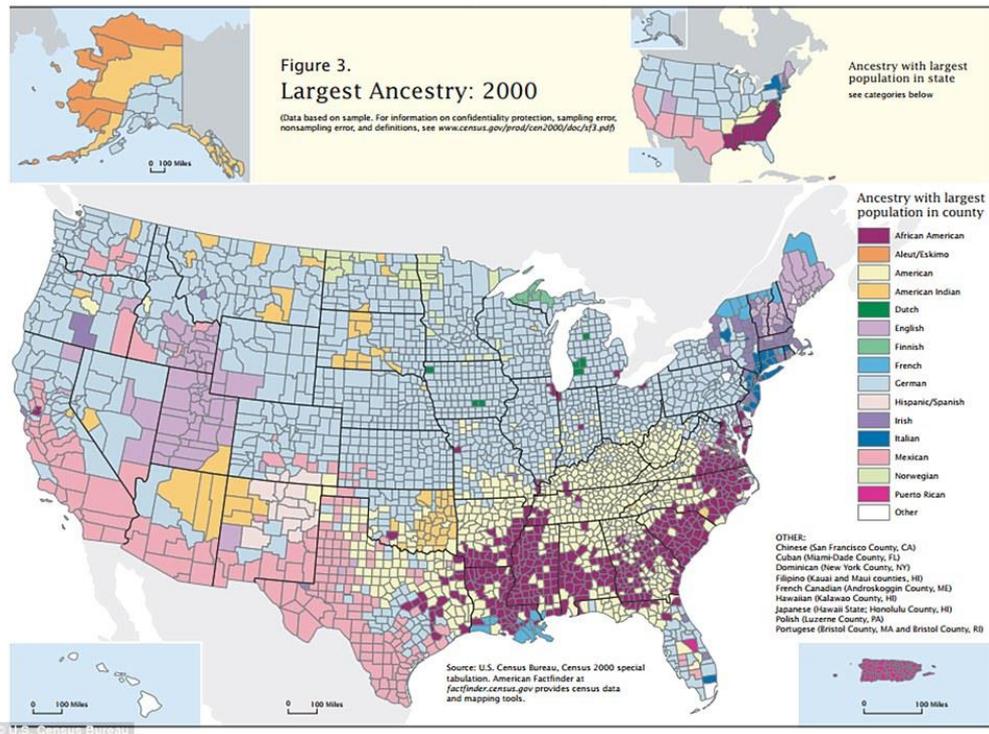
But, these kinds of designations are often very *ideological*.

- “White” ethnics in the U.S.--e.g. of German, Irish and Italian descent--were at one time counted as different “races.”
- Urciuoli (1996):
 - “Ethnicity” as a respectable, “safe” kind of difference.
 - “Race” as a problematic kind of difference.

- 3 P's—some aspects of the concept of ethnicity across contexts:
 - *Paternity*: Ethnicity is descent-related, i.e. inherited.
 - *Patrimony*: Ethnicity involves practice.
 - *Phenomenology*: Ethnic groups view themselves and define themselves in different ways. Sometimes language is a criterion; sometimes not.

- *Mutability of ethnicity.*
- Basque Country
 - “Basqueness” previously defined in terms of religion—Christianity and surnames.
 - Now defined in terms of language & politics
- French Empire
 - Frenchness defined in terms of religion, language, and culture

- “American” ethnicity



- Different groups (and different members of groups) define group membership in different ways.
- Constructions of ethnic identities often also involve other kinds of social meaning
 - e.g. class, religion and lifestyles

- Language is a resource for constructing ethnic identity.
 - It can be used to indicate group membership
- But is there a language of a race or ethnicity?

- But
 - We often describe language and sounding
 - White
 - Black
 - Asian
 - Spanish
- Is there such a thing as “white” English?

Ethnolect

- Language of an ethnic group
 - Not deterministic
 - If you are black you don't have to speak AAVE
 - Not innate
 - A hispanic is not born speaking Spanish

Ethnolect

- What are some ethnolects?
 - Chicano English
 - AAVE
 - Asian English

Ethnolect

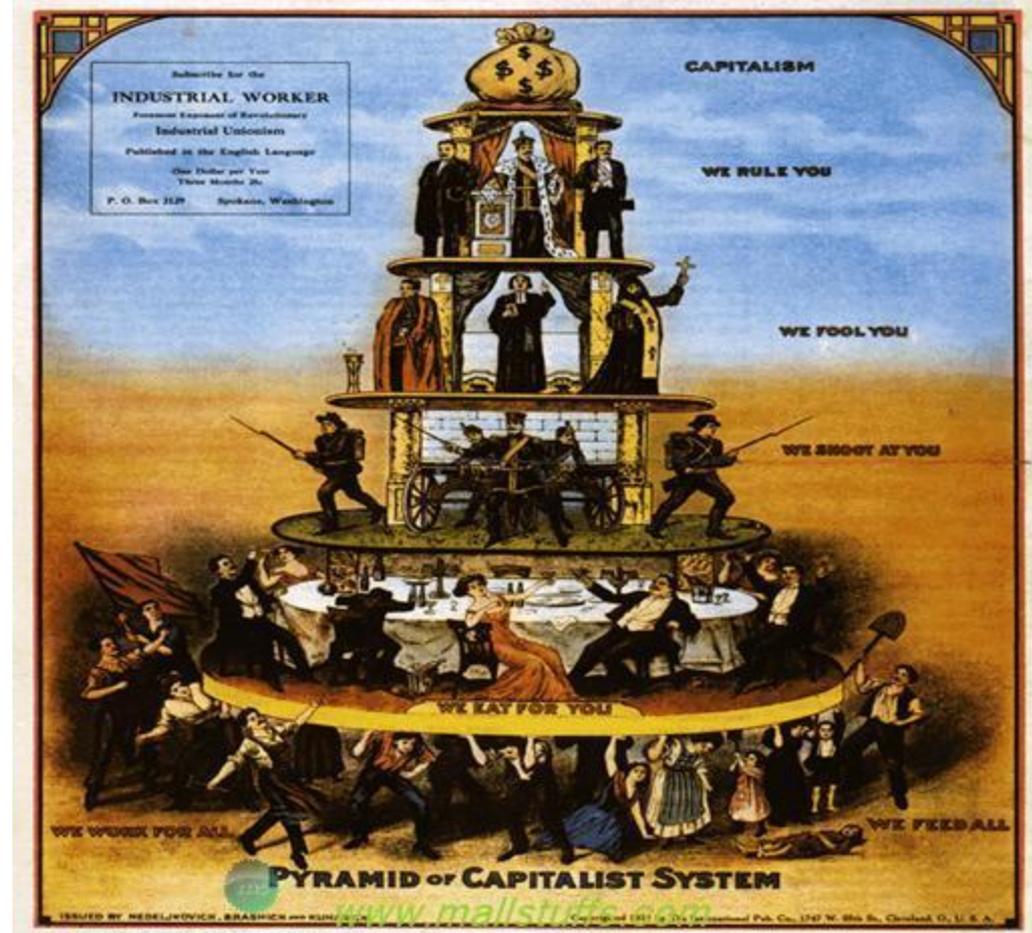
- Read the article and identify the variable, and how they defined groups
 - Alam, F. & J. Stuart-Smith (2011). Identity and ethnicity in /t/ in Glasgow-Pakistani high-school girls. In: ICPHS XVII, 17-21 Aug 2011, Hong Kong
- Find a different article about an ethnolect
 - What variable did they look at?
 - How did they define their groups?
 - How did they treat race & ethnicity?

CLASS

- What is class?
 - Define class
 - What are the options?

- What things go into determining someone's class
- How would you operationalize class?

- Defined by **Marx** and **Weber** and in structural economic terms
 - as one's relation to the means of production.
- Contemporary Western social scientist typically treat **class** as involving **status**,
 - a scalar concept of prestige that involves more than one's position in market.



- Some social science researchers rely on standardized *scales of occupational prestige* (SIOPS, ISEI, ICOS).
- ICOS (Ganzeboom and Treiman 1996):
 - 1000 Legislators, senior managers
 - 1210 Corporate managers
 - 2000 Professionals
 - 3000 Technicians and assoc. professionals
 - 4000 Clerks
 - 5000 Service workers and shop workers

- Rank 20 jobs on your own scale of occupational prestige (0-100)
 - Not just about income

- *class* is often operationalized through *composite indices* including:
 - Occupation
 - levels of education
 - Income
 - wealth
 - housing type
 - Aspirations
 - mobility
 - etc.
- They pick a variable, assign levels and points
 - Sum points to come up with total score

- Trudgill's (1974) study of Norwich.

occupation	score	education	score
professional	5	university	5
managers	4	A level	4
non-manual	3	O Level	3
skilled	2	up to 15	2
semi-skilled	1	up to 14	1
unskilled	0	up to 13	0

- Make a composite variable
 - What would you use?
 - What variables are most important?
- What kinds of people prove difficult to classify?