

1 **CHAPTER 3**

The Microcultural Context

2 **The Nature of Identity**

- Cultural identity refers to one's sense of belonging to a particular culture or ethnic group.
- Social identity develops as a consequence of membership in particular groups within one's culture.
- Personal identity refers to people's unique characteristics, which may differ from those of others in their cultural or social groups.

3 **Characteristics of Cultural Identity**

- Cultural identities provide a framework for organizing and interpreting one's experiences of others.
- Cultural identities are central to one's sense of self.
- Cultural identities are dynamic and can change with one's ongoing life experiences.
- Cultural identities are multifaceted.

4 **Metaphors of U.S. cultural diversity**

1. The melting pot metaphor

- It is the oldest metaphor
- Used to represent a blending of cultural groups with loss of original

5 **Metaphors of U.S. cultural diversity**

2. The tributaries metaphor

- Acceptable and desirable for cultural groups to maintain their identities, but only in the short term
- Assumption is that all of the "secondary" creeks will

- eventually blend into a single common river
- Subordinates tributary cultures to the “mainstream” culture

6 **Metaphors of U.S. cultural diversity**

3. The tapestry metaphor

- A tapestry, like the U. S., is made up of different threads, colors, cloth, and patterns
- Suggests static society that does not change
- Cultural groups in the U.S. are more fluid and are more easily altered

7 **Metaphors of U.S. cultural diversity**

4. The garden salad metaphor

- Salad made up of different, distinct ingredients being continuously tossed
- U.S. made up of distinct cultures that together make up a unique mixture

8 **Terms for cultural groups in the U.S.**

- *Dominant culture* may imply superiority of the main-stream culture
- *Majority culture* is emotionally charged for some and may not be an accurate term, i.e., the majority group may not be the dominant culture
- *European American, African-American, & Latino/Latina* are the types of inclusive terms that refer to cultural rather than racial groups

9 **Terminology**

Microculture

vs.

Minority Group

vs.

Subculture

10 **Characteristics of Microcultures**

1. Physical or cultural trait
2. Membership is usually not voluntary
3. Generally practice endogamy
4. Awareness of subordinate status
5. Experience unequal treatment

11 **Muted Group Theory**

- Suggests that the speech and writing of microcultural groups are not valued by the dominant cultural group.
- In response, microcultural group members can:
 - Attempt to change the dominant mode of expression.
 - Create their own “private” language.

12 **Examples of Microcultures**

- Microcultures discussed in text:
 - Hispanic/Latino
 - African American
 - The Amish
 - Laotian Hmong
 - Arab Americans
 - LGBT
- Not exclusive list => changes as demography changes

13 **Examples of Microcultures**

- Other countries?
- Often a source of conflict in the world today
- China: Tibetans, Uyghers
- Russia: Caucasians

- Germany: Turks
- Spain: Basques, Romas

14 **Hispanic/Latino**

- Size—approximately 15% of the U.S. population
- Values—family and the Roman Catholic faith
- Language/Dialects—Spanish, Spanglish, Chicano English
- Stereotypes: *siestas*, *machismo*

15 **George Lopez on Spanglish**

16 **Is Lopez perpetuating stereotypes?**

- George Lopez: Mexican-American, born and raised in California
- Too late for English as the official language of U.S.
- Buying shoes
- Hotel housekeeping

17 **African Americans**

- Size—approximately 12.5% of the U.S. population.
- Language/Dialect: Ebonics, “call-and-response” communication pattern.
 - Cultural attitudes about Ebonics.

18 **Ebonics in L.A. Schools**

19 **Ebonics**

- Steve Harvey – examples of speech
- Black English – a Creole
 - Not just different words, pronunciation
 - Also different grammar, speaking style
- “Academic English Mastery”
 - Experimental program in Watts
 - Purpose: make children in effect bilingual
 - Taught in 5th grade class

20 **The Amish**

- Why in the US?
- Size—approximately 150,000 in the U.S.
 - Average of 7 children per family
- Religion—Anabaptist, adult baptism
- Isolation—do not serve in the military, pay taxes or serve on juries.
 - Do not receive social security, welfare or collect settlements.
- Language—High German and dialect (Pennsylvania Dutch, not Low German)

21 **The Amish: Terms and Sayings**

- Rumspringa (Simmie)
- Das alt Brauch ist besser
- It's not all pies and cakes
- He got his hair cut
- He went English

22 **The Hmong**

- Size—approximately 150,000 in the U. S.
- Family—grouped into clans.
 - Patrilineal.
 - Value arranged marriages.
- Dialects
- paj ntaub

23 **The Hmong: Sayings**

- Playing a flute into a water buffalo's ear
- The grinder doesn't taste salty
- The devil will not eat anyone for it
- Go check the mousetrap
- Come sharpen your knives

24 **Arab Americans**

- Size—Approximately 1.2 million people in the U.S.
- Religion
 - Christian (approximately 2/3) and Muslim.
- Muslim values:
 - Modesty
 - No interfaith marriage
 - Five-times-daily prayers
 - Month-long fast at Ramadan

25 **LGBT**

- Most difficult of the microculture examples to characterize and define.
- Sexual orientation generally accepted to be involuntary
- Change in perceptions in US
- Gay marriage a hotly debated issue
- “Soft discrimination”