

ASA Resource Ideas for Domain 3

Domain 3 - Social Relationships: Self, Groups, and Socialization



**"I'm bringing litigation against everyone
who is responsible for my overly demanding socialization."**



Download from
Dreamstime.com

This content may be used for personal or internal business use only.

33800674

Andreygoran | Dreamstime.com

NCSS Conference - Washington, DC
American Sociological Association Symposium
December 2, 2016

Presenter - Hayley Lotspeich, Wheaton North High School, Wheaton, IL

Hayley.Lotspeich@cusd200.org

Resource

Social Construction of Race, Ethnicity, and/or Gender Through Media



Abstract: The social construction of race, ethnicity, and gender are common topics in sociology classes and can be difficult for students to grasp on their own. This assignment has students look at the media and advertising displays of race, ethnicity, and/or gender and how those portrayals build upon and reinforce the concepts. Through examining and discussing the social construction of race, ethnicity, and gender in advertising and news or magazine articles, students come to recognize the how traditional gender roles and stereotypical racial/ethnic displays are not only all around them but also make arbitrary and unnecessary distinctions between groups of people. This assignment by its very nature is intended to allow for students to be creative and to be able to apply the concepts of the social construction of race, ethnicity, and gender to something that they interact with and see every day. With the assignment instructions, students are provided expectations of both successful and unsuccessful discussions of the social construction of race, ethnicity, and gender. In past experience, students have responded positively to this assignment and are able to go beyond explaining that race, ethnicity, and gender are social constructions to the point in which they can articulate more fully examples of the social construction of these concepts and discuss the racist and sexist images that are out in society.

Details:

Author(s): Amy Baumann Grau, Eastern New Mexico University

Date Published: 6/26/2014

Subject Area: Race, Class and Gender

Usage Notes: Students will want to use YouTube and other video related resources for this project; however, this works to varying degrees of success. An issue that comes with video rather than picture files is the tendency for students to describe the video more than what the video represents.

Learning Goals and Assessments:

Goal 1: Be able to demonstrate and explain the social construction of race, ethnicity, and gender and build upon or operate within the ideas of racial/ethnic stereotypes and traditional gender roles through advertising and other media portrayals.

Assessment 1: In discussing each of the images chosen, explain how the image reflects upon the social construction of race, ethnicity, and/or gender and how stereotypical portrayals of race/ethnicity or gender reinforce ideas about race, ethnicity, and gender.

Assessment 2: Through a conclusion page to the project, students will make connections across all of the images that they selected and describe how these media portrayals reinforce or demonstrate racist and sexist views and ideas.

Abstract. The social construction of race, ethnicity, and gender are common topics in sociology classes and can be difficult for students to grasp on their own. This assignment has students look at the media and advertising displays of race, ethnicity, and/or gender and how those portrayals build upon and reinforce the concepts. Through examining and discussing the social construction of race, ethnicity, and gender in advertising and news or magazine articles, students come to recognize the how traditional gender roles and stereotypical racial/ethnic displays are not only all around them but also make arbitrary and unnecessary distinctions between groups of people. This assignment by its very nature is intended to allow for students to be creative and to be able to apply the concepts of the social construction of race, ethnicity, and gender to something that they interact with and see every day. With the assignment instructions, students are provided expectations of both successful and unsuccessful discussions of the social construction of race, ethnicity, and gender. In past experience, students have responded positively to this assignment and are able to go beyond explaining that race, ethnicity, and gender are social constructions to the point in which they can articulate more fully examples of the social construction of these concepts and discuss the racist and sexist images that are out in society.

Learning Objectives.

1. Be able to demonstrate and explain the social construction of race, ethnicity, and gender and build upon or operate within the ideas of racial/ethnic stereotypes and traditional gender roles through advertising and other media portrayals.

Learning Assessments.

1. Students will create a media project that includes at least six (6) images from online or print advertising, newspaper articles, or magazine articles that show people from racial/ethnic groups or men and women. From these images, students will:
 - a. Explain how the image reflects upon the social construction of race, ethnicity, and/or gender.
 - b. Explain how stereotypical portrayals of race/ethnicity or gender reinforce ideas about race, ethnicity, and gender.
2. Through a conclusion page to the project:
 - a. Students will make connections across all of the images that they selected and describe how these media portrayals reinforce or demonstrate racist and sexist views and ideas.

Notes.

Students will want to use YouTube and other video related resources for this project; however, this works to varying degrees of success. An issue that comes with video rather than picture files is the tendency for students to describe the video more than what the video represents. Additionally, students treat video files as more self-explanatory than picture files.

Students also will attempt to use memes and other internet generated resources within the project. The intended nature of the project is not suited for memes; however, memes can provide an interesting avenue for discussion on race, ethnicity, and gender and on the social construction of these concepts.

Selected Readings:

Andersen, Margaret L. 2014. "The Social Construction of Gender." Pp. 20-53 in *Thinking About Women: Sociological Perspectives on Sex and Gender*. Boston: Pearson.

Andersen, Margaret. 2014. "Gender, Culture, and the Media." Pp. 54-80 in *Thinking About Women: Sociological Perspectives on Sex and Gender*. Boston: Pearson.

Fitzgerald, Kathleen J. 2014. "Taking Account of Race and Privilege." Pp. 3-36 in *Recognizing Race and Ethnicity: Power, Privilege, and Inequality*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Kilbourne, Jean. 2013. "'The More You Subtract, The More You Add': Cutting Girls Down to Size in Advertising." Pp. 179-185 in *Race / Gender / Class / Media 3.0: Considering Diversity across Audiences, Content, and Producers*. Boston: Pearson.

Rodriguez, John R. 2013. "Advertising and Hispanic Culture." Pp. 172-178 in *Race / Gender / Class / Media 3.0: Considering Diversity across Audiences, Content, and Producers*. Boston: Pearson.

Wilson, Clint C. II, Felix Gutierrez, and Lena M. Chao. 2013. "Media Matter." Pp. 30-54 in *Racism, Sexism, and the Media*, 4th edition. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Instructions:

For this project you will be examining different media portrayals of race/ethnicity and gender. When compiling different examples of media portrayals of race/ethnicity and gender, think about what these portrayals tell us about race/ethnicity and gender and how they shape understandings of these constructs.

In order for you to get full credit for this project you **MUST** provide evidence of all your examples. For those that you find online, this requires that you include the image as well as a hyperlink to the image that use. For those that you find that are print based media, please scan the object or provide a high-quality photo of the object.

HINT: It may be beneficial to view advertisements or other types of media that are specific to particular populations in terms of race/ethnicity and/or gender.

Media Types:

- Newspaper articles (online or print)
- Magazine articles (online or print)
- Print advertisements (i.e. magazine ads, mailers, flyers)
- Online advertisements (i.e. banner ads, email ads)

Your project should:

- Have (at least) six individual pages with images/ads:
 - Each individual image should be on the same page as your description of them.
 - See examples 1 and 2 below for what is expected.
 - Refer to example 3 for what will result in a terrible, terrible grade (and potential need to re-do the project).
- Have an overall discussion to draw conclusions across ads and your thoughts about race, ethnicity, and gender in relation to those ads.
 - This discussion should be at least one-page, double spaced and will serve as the conclusion to the project.

Option One

Choose one type of the above listed types of media and find 3 of examples that speak to race/ethnicity and 3 of examples that speak to gender. Examine all of your examples and then consider the following questions.

These questions are to help you organize or frame your discussion of the media portrayals.

1. How are these portrayals racialized and gendered?
 - a. Consider how the portrayals could be different if the person(s) shown were of a different race or gender.
2. Do these portrayals build upon or play into stereotypes about particular racial/ethnic groups and men or women?
3. As you focused on portrayals of race/ethnicity and portrayals of gender, how do these portrayals reflect intersectionality?

Option Two

Focus either exclusively on race/ethnicity or gender and find 6 of examples from different types of media (at least 2). Examine all of the examples that you have collected together and then answer the following questions.

These questions are to help you organize or frame your discussion of the media portrayals.

1. How are these portrayals racialized or gendered?
 - a. Consider how the portrayals could be different if the person(s) shown were of a different race or gender.
2. If you focused on gender, what do these portrayals say about race? Alternatively, if you focused on race, what do these portrayals say about gender?
3. Do the different types of media portray similar or different messages about race/ethnicity or gender?

Example 1: The Princess Phone.

This advertisement from the 1960's shows a phone specifically designed for women. The phone is made in female friendly colors such as pale blue, pale pink, white, and cream. Beyond the colors of the phone itself, the advertisement is clearly designed to be attractive to women and says a lot about femininity. Firstly, the phone is called the princess phone, so marking it for women only. Further descriptions describe the phone as little, lovely, and that it lights up! What more could a woman ask for! All of the images and descriptions of the phone reinforce views about women being small, dainty, attractive creatures and thus all of the objects they own should mirror those characteristics.

Even though this advertisement is from the 1960's, this phone was clearly advertised to white women and specifically white women who were homemakers. The phone is shown in various places around the home and associated with various tasks that homemakers would be performing. It is not in the office, but in the library or at a ladies'

writing desk.

This advertisement, while not overly so, also shows the ideal user for the phone is a white woman. The hands shown picking up or touching the phone are those of a white woman. This could be due to the fact that other racial groups had less disposable income during the 1960's. However, regardless of why, the phone clearly displays traditional white femininity. While the phone could still be bought by and used by minority women, the ad does not read as directly appealing to a wide variety of women from diverse backgrounds.





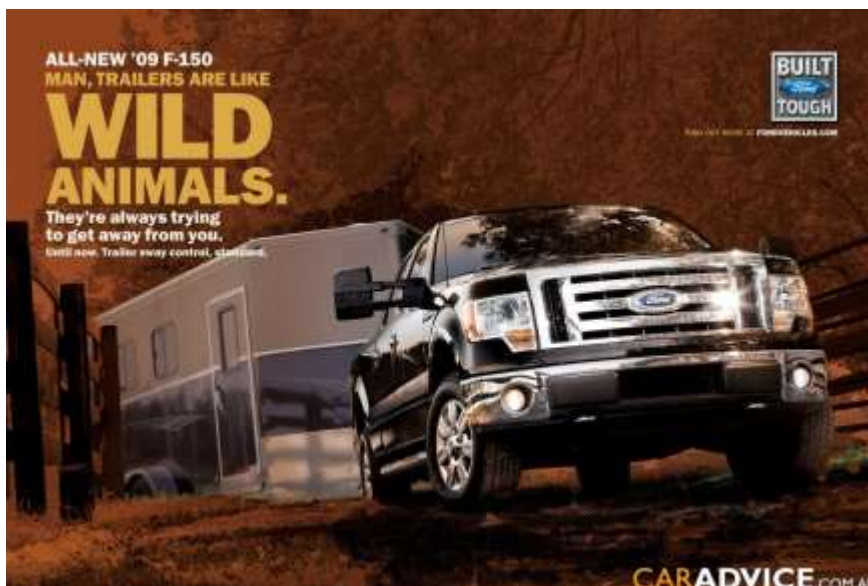
Example 2: Weave Care.

This ad, from a December 2008 issue of *Ebony* magazine features a black model, and seemingly, her hair weave. This is a product that would not be advertised broadly in mainstream media as hair extensions and, in particular, hair weaves are not as commonplace. The ad is clearly targeted to the audience of *Ebony*. This is evident through the usage of terms such as “natural hair” and the use for which the product has been created, to care for hair weaves.

This ad speaks to standards of beauty in the black community as well as beauty expectations for women over all. There is the expectation for black women to have hair weaves or extensions and to maintain them at all costs. This not only denigrates their natural hair but it also attempts to emulate “white” hair in texture. It is telling that society, in essence, tells black women that they, in there “natural” state, are not as desirable and need to improve themselves in this way.

This ad also reflects broadly on the expectations of women. While the product is for a hair care product, the model is portrayed with cleavage, makeup (for which to increase her “natural” beauty), and overall to be appealing to a male audience. The woman is sexualized so that men may stop and look at the ad and so that female buyers can hope that the product will make them attractive, too.

Example 3: **WHAT NOT TO DO**



This ad for a Ford truck is for men. It says “Man, trailers are like wild animals.” The use of the word man makes it clear that this is for men. That and that is an ad for a truck pulling a trailer.