

PLI Cohort 8A - The Miner's Canary - Chapter 3: Race as a Political Space

1. *How can racial group consciousness function as a political asset, rather than a liability, in an ongoing struggle for social justice”?*

*terms the race debate by shifting the ground away from race as a biological category toward race as a political space for pursuing democratic agenda." pg. 74

*People of Color face challenges beyond the capacity of personal effort, and they appreciate the necessity and efficacy of collective political struggle-Morris and Mansbridge refer to this as empowering mental state an oppositional consciousness. - is often based on righteous anger on the part of the group and is prompted by personal indignities suffered through membership in the group. pg. 75

*Racial bonds that are enhanced by cultural bonds can also connect people of color to common social identities and mobilize them to political action. pg. 79

2. *How do people of color and whites view race differently? How do Guiner and Torres explain their different views on race?*

People of Color- "Weak-we": construct their conception of self from their local experience of material reality, and they locate their conception of justice in tangible social practices rather than an abstract universal truth. Much more likely to develop a sense of group consciousness. pg. 88

Whites- "Strong-we": constructed of an abstract notion of an autonomous self that one then projects onto all humanity. Trusts that their institutions are reliably in tune with certain universal human essences. pgs. 88-89

Guiner and Torres' view: The water metaphor-the experience of race or ethnic identity is common to all, but consciousness of that identity and its relative importance differs profoundly. Water in the form of ICE-constraining-people of color "locks poor black people into a set of local relationships that have to be negotiated regardless of social position. Water in the form of VAPOR-non-constraining for whites-race is arbitrary and can be ignored.

3. *What is political race? How does political race differ from identity politics? From class politics?*

Political race: is diagnostic, aspirational, activist-signals a social movement for change (the term race-"connotes those who have made a concrete choice-or whose material conditions can encourage such a choice-to engage in transformative political struggle. pg. 106)

-->Differs from the following two terms because is more "militant" and serves as a "critical lens on identity politics, to the extent that identity politics is a thin version of both politics and identity." pg. 98

Identity Politics: "the person is political" - the subject position is simply affirmed and legitimized by virtue of its recognition of identity. pg. 98

Class Politics: there is simply no American vocabulary for class as linked fate or as a basis for critique for systemic failure. - Class does not appear to affect identity in qualitatively the same way as does race. - Class is often an unnamed, intentionally unnoticed variable in the lives of Americans, who are taught to identify individual hard work as the primary explanatory variable for social mobility. pgs. 102-103

4. *Which illustrated scenarios demonstrate political race in action? Which scenarios do not, and what ways do they fall short of this notion of political race?*

Political Race in Action: The Texas-10

*shifting the ground away from race as a biological category toward race as a political space for pursuing democratic agenda." pg. 74

*it describes a social, cultural, and political space that is tied both to identity as well as the capacity for political action. Pg.107

Not-Political Race in Action: Smithfield Packing Company

-When a racial hierarchy is in plain view, an oppositional consciousness comes almost effortlessly to many people of color. Pgs.75-76
stratified job duties (ex. Whites are mechanics, supervisors, blacks scrape up kill off the floor)
-non-unionized workers