

FAQ

Isn't Rank about perception?

Not really. This is one of the hardest elements of our model for people to grasp. One way to connect to the idea at the heart of Rank is that it has to do with cost. Let's look at a couple of examples that may seem exaggerated.

A person who as far as they have known is European American discovers on their 37th birthday that they have an African American grandparent. If we base our analysis of Rank on perception, we would surmise that the person did not experience racism until after their 37th birthday, if at all. Under our definition, that person would have experienced the impact of such oppression their whole life. Why didn't they know about their African American roots? The secrecy and invisibility result from White supremacy; oppression has prevented the person from knowing the truth about their family and their own identity.

Another example would be a person who as far as they know does not have a disability. Sometime later in their life, they come to consciousness about their disability. One likely reason for their late discovery is ableism. Thus ableism has cut the person off from self-knowledge and from access to accommodations.

FAQ

What if people don't know or can't tell you're Gay or a Person of Color?

These questions come from people's attempts to sort out whether social membership is a function of perception. We propose that it is not exclusively or primarily perceptual.

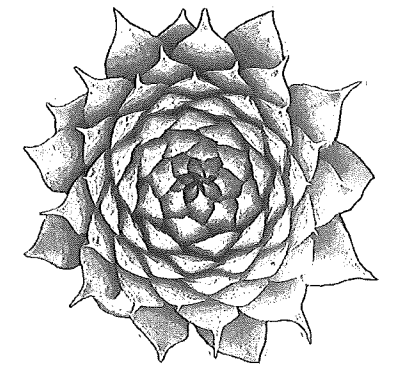
In discussing what Rank is or is not in trainings it is sometimes helpful to illuminate using these kinds of so-called "extreme" examples. What if you're Native and don't know you're Native? What if you have a disability and don't know you have disability? We bring these examples up in order to highlight that Rank is not about perception, neither others' perception of the person or the person's own perception. This contrasts with the widely held understanding of social memberships as purely perceptual. Instead, we suggest that Rank dynamics are trans-perceptual, peri-perceptual. They are related to the economy of energy, access, and costs – the ways that Rank can limit a person's experience.

Why do so many people not know that they have Indigenous heritage? Because anti-Indigenous oppression forced families to keep that ancestry secret, the shame-related associations with Indigenous heritage lead to families "forgetting" their authentic heritage. The descendants who don't know their background have been Targets of such oppression. Recognizing the costs to a person who lost part of their ancestry is anti-oppressive. Recognizing the benefit of "passing" as non-Native is also anti-oppressive.

If the reason a person has not come out to themselves is compulsory heterosexuality, then they have been a Target of heterosexism and homophobia – both external and internal – regardless of whether or not they appear gay to anyone else or themselves. Recognizing the cost of homophobia to a person who doesn't recognize their own sexuality until later in life – or ever – is an anti-oppressive awareness.

The ADRESSING Model

Remember that Rank is constructed, artificial, and even arbitrary. We've discussed how Rank categories have real implications for people's lives while simultaneously being based on false and outdated notions. It is difficult to expound on social categories, given how problematic they are. Yet, it is necessary to make a serious analysis nonetheless. To begin a comprehensive examination of Rank, we will look at nine categories for Ranking human beings that currently operate in the United States. All societies have categories for Ranking human beings, which vary not only by geography but also by human era. Rank categories do change over time, but this happens only slowly, on a scale best measured in generations or centuries. Looking at some of the Rank category definitions that have changed, we come face to face with how arbitrary they are. For example, in the 19th century Irish immigrants to the United States were not considered White, as they are now.



Nine Categories of Rank

The nine categories of Rank we identify, following the work of Pamela Hays (2001), are: age, disability, religious culture, ethnicity, social class culture, sexual orientation, Indigenous heritage, national origin, and gender.

Age

The first Rank category is age. Anyone younger than 18 or older than 64 is a member of the age Target group, while people between age 18 and 64 carry Agent Rank. Unlike most Rank categories, membership in this category changes; anyone who lives long enough will experience being a member of a Target group, an Agent group, and a Target group again. Age Target group membership is the only Target category that everyone has experienced, and for a small number of people will be the only type of Target group membership they ever experience.

Childhood and adolescence don't have to be painful. In fact, for many, they are joyful. Even those with happy childhoods experienced effects of ageism such as being discounted, having less say, and being stereotyped. Much of the suffering experienced by children and adolescents is a direct result of a societal tendency to devalue them. Even the most privileged and favored members of society have shared the vulnerability and powerlessness of being a child and adolescent.

While some elements of age-privilege may begin before or after age 18, or continue past age 64, generally 18 is the age at which we acquire civil rights

Loss of memory, poor concentration, fatigue, apathy, are classic symptoms of depression in a 20 or an 80 year old.

What does it mean to be depressed because people's attitudes toward you are so annihilating, and then to have your depression diagnosed as hopeless senility?

Jean Swallow (1986, p. 202)

and are formally acknowledged as an adult in society. Age 65 is generally recognized as retirement age, and this marks a watershed in the loss of Agent group membership.

The oppression associated with this category is ageism. It relates to unnecessary suffering of children, adolescents, and elders caused by societal, institutionalized, and systematic overvaluing of adults.

After fifty years as a business owner and interior designer I have arrived at my 80th year reasonably intact. I dress neatly, my hair is lightly graying and well styled. My hardly-discernible hearing aids allow me to perceive sounds well. I am socially active and able to communicate with intelligence, courtesy and some degree of wit.

Is it a wonder then that I am astonished when tradespeople fail to acknowledge me as being worth their attention? I seem to have fallen into the category of "unimportant" without recognizing all that much change in myself. I feel tolerated at best, ignored at worst. I find this disconcerting though I retain a healthy sense of my own worth through it all.

It is disturbing and bewildering to me that older people are so often treated as almost invisible here in the United States.

If I were somehow restricted to one outing a week to shop for food or medicine in stores where I may be treated inhumanely, how long would it take for me to lose my self worth? How long would it take anyone? I am truly saddened to consider this probability.

LaVerne Smith

Age Target Group Member

Social Class Agent Group Member

Disability

Disability and able loss can range from visible physical limitations and sensory differences to invisible mental, intellectual, and emotional losses. A person with no use of their limbs is a Disability Target, and so is one with undiagnosed dyslexia. Society is organized to exclude and to limit the possibilities of people with disabilities, even so-called "mild" disabilities. People with "invisible" disabilities, such as learning disabilities, often have the experience of being a Target without knowing why.

Disability, unlike most Rank categories, can change during a person's lifetime. Able loss is intrinsically a part of the human experience; an illness, injury, or temporary medical condition can make anyone a Disability Target, for varying periods of time. Most people will have Target Rank in this category at some point in their lives. People with no disability have Agent Rank, while people with any disability are Target group members.

Many experiences of able loss are painful in themselves. Ableism is not associated with that pain. There are inherent struggles in living with restricted mobility. Ableism has to do with the compounding effect of societal devaluing on top of any difficulties associated with the disability itself. For example, many people within the Deaf culture make it clear that being Deaf is not in itself undesirable to them. Hearing dominance is what is oppressive.

The oppression associated with this category is Ableism.

FAQ

Why are some things considered a "disability" while some are not?

Ableness, just like all the other ADRESSING categories, is a construct, and a faulty one. The truth is that able loss is intrinsically a part of the human experience. Under ableism we all limit our definition of what it means to be human to able-persons. This leads to a tendency to minimize able loss and to resist taking into consideration the needs of ableism Targets.

One symptom of this resistance is to only acknowledge visible and pronounced able loss. An anti-oppressive position would be to recognize that all able loss matters and that ableism affects all who experience able loss. The goal is not to suggest that every person's experience of able loss is equivalent, just that able supremacy affects all ableism Targets.

Hearing-Sighted Privilege

- Hearing-sighted people can expect not to have to deal with non-hearing/Deaf-Blind people.
- Hearing-sighted people can expect not to be in the presence of Deaf-Blind people most of the time.
- Hearing-sighted people expect Deaf-Blind people to be grateful to hearing-sighted people if he or she is nice or helps them.
- Hearing-sighted people don't expect not to be thanked. They will wait, linger a bit, waiting for their profuse thanks.
- Hearing-sighted people expect their personal spaces to be the right personal space and any other definition of personal space is wrong.
- Hearing-sighted people have the privilege to ignore messages or points they don't like.
- Hearing-sighted people expect all of their own points or messages to be listened to.
- Hearing-sighted people have a huge, huge privilege in "selectiveness" – they have the most options and they have the most privilege to select exactly what they want.
- Hearing-sighted people have the privilege to believe that they are totally independent, even when they are dependent on certain things.
- Hearing-sighted people can believe any alternative forms of independence are not considered independent.
- Hearing-sighted people have the privilege of many, many things being designed particularly for them: audio, visual information, driving, reading, PA communications, computers, everything – they are basically designed for hearing-sighted people.
- Hearing-sighted people have the privilege of having the national language and its most common medium – speech – be accessible to them only.
- Hearing-sighted can expect Deaf-Blind people to be friendly, yet Deaf-Blind people have many more barriers which causes a daily frustration. If everything were Brailled, roped, wheelchair accessible, the message would be everyone is truly welcome, but it is not. The everyday message is exclusion, which causes isolation, frustration, and hopelessness.
- Hearing-sighted people can have a medical emergency, robbery, anything and expect to receive immediate help.
- Hearing-sighted people have the privilege to be an individual. If a Deaf-Blind person arrives for work late (or does something) they represent the entire group of Blind people ("those Deaf-Blind people are always late").
- Hearing-sighted people can go to any lecture, movie, and workshop without preparation. They can just show up. A Deaf-Blind person has to plan, arrange an interpreter and be expected to show up because hearing-sighted people paid for the interpreter – IF the agency even provides an interpreter.
- Hearing-sighted people can say what they want anytime, anywhere, and they can expect to be understood.
- Hearing-sighted people do not have to explain themselves.
- Hearing-sighted people are not assumed to be dumb first and patronized, then met with a surprised "Oh, you have a brain?"

aj granda

Religious Culture

Religious culture refers not to a person's avowed religious faith, but to the religious culture in which they were raised and/or participate. Religious culture is institutionalized in social practices such as having a Christmas holiday with sanctioned time off, but not one for Ramadan, Tet, Rosh Hashanah, or Buddha's birthday. We make a distinction between the words Christendom and Christianity. Christendom refers to the historical spread of norms and values that society has come to associate with Christianity. Christendom is a large category that includes faithing Christians and people raised in the United States who do not identify with Christianity but are also not members of another religious group. Members of Christendom carry Agent Rank under this category, even if they are not practicing Christians. People who grew up in families with Christian roots are members of Christendom, even if their family was not a church-going one. People who grow up with exposure to Christianity and Christendom-defined values in their family, but are also members of a religion or religious culture outside Christendom are Target group members.

Atheists and agnostics who were raised within Christendom hold Agent Rank. Encountering this part of the ADRESSING model, if we identify as atheists or agnostics we may feel inclined to debate the boundaries of this membership, based on our experiences of exclusion. Of course, as you've read, the categories are flawed.

We see the distinction between Status loss and Target Rank as significant here. Status loss is a momentary condition that can be delineated in time (there's a before and an after), in which a particular something about ourselves can be used against us. An incident of exclusion can stand out to our consciousness because it's rare and not the norm for our lives. We refer to that as a Status loss experience. For example, being teased at school for not being a Christian, and rather for being an atheist, constitutes a Status loss experience.

However, if that person who is an atheist or agnostic is raised with an understanding of the cultural codes of Christendom, they are able to participate and have access to the dominant cultural trends, values, and ways they are advantaged by virtue of not being a member of another religious culture. One way we put this is "If you were born and raised in the United States and you are agnostic or atheist, then a cultural assumption imposed on you is that the God you don't believe in is the Christian God." The exclusion felt by an atheist or agnostic who is culturally a member of Christendom is different from the systemic oppression which faces members of other religious cultures, such as Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh, and Indigenous religions, including dissenting and atheist members of those traditions. Members of Christendom who participate in other religious practices, such as meditation, yoga, chanting, or Indigenous ceremony, maintain their Agent Rank. If this

FAQ

Why are agnostic and atheist listed as Agent?

In this model, the focus is on cultural groups that carry supremacy. In the United States, the religious group in dominance is not only members of Christian religions but members of Christendom. We use this term to refer to the control group, those who have been affected and shaped in large part by the spread of Christian religions. For example, at the present time, individuals in the U.S. who participate culturally in the Christian calendar are members of Christendom, regardless of whether they identify as people of faith.

Members of the Target group under religious culture include both active believers and people raised within other religious faiths; Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Bahai, Paganism, Santeria, and Indigenous religions from any region of the world. Members of the Target group may be secular or believers; what matters is their cultural membership, not their specific belief system, practices, or faith.

FAQ

Why are Catholics not listed as Targets?

It is because Catholics are members of Christendom and Christianity. In the history of the U.S. and the world, different religious groups have carried dominance at different times. Currently, Catholicism is not outside of Christendom.

In some workshops, participants have asked whether Catholics have become Targets due to society's response to sexual abuse by priests, which has sometimes created a negative view of Catholicism among non-Catholics. When negative stereotyping and generalizing occurs against members of an Agent group, it is a function of prejudice, ignorance, or laziness. It is harmful, hurtful, and irresponsible and results in costs including Status loss, but it does not change that person's membership from Agent to Target.

category seems particularly ambiguous to you, consider the possibility that you may hold Agent Rank.

This distinction can be subtle; people do change religions, and many of us participate in elements of multiple religious cultures at different times in our lives. We're talking about deep conditioning and access to cultural orientations that persist whether or not we see ourselves as actively aligned with Christianity. Those of us who participated in Christian cultural activities growing up (such as having a Christmas tree, hunting for Easter eggs), or were exposed to Christian religious doctrine (attending church or Sunday school, reading the Bible at home) hold Agent Rank, unless we have actively converted and claimed a religious membership outside of Christendom. Barbara Rogoff's (2003) way of thinking about what makes up culture is useful here.

"Variations among participants in a community are to be expected. Participants do not have precisely the same points of view, practices, backgrounds, or goals. Rather, they are part of a somewhat coordinated organization. They are often in complementary roles, playing parts that fit together rather than being identical, or in contested relationships with each other, disagreeing about features of their own roles or community direction while requiring some common ground even for the disagreement. It is the common ways that participants in a community share (even if they contest them) that I regard as culture" (p. 81).

One form of oppression associated with this category is anti-Semitism, also called anti-Jewish oppression. Corollary terms would be anti-Muslimism, anti-Paganism, or anti-Sikhism. Christian Supremacy is also an appropriate term.

A proven fact: Experts found out why Black men have high and higher blood pressure. It's the daily grind of the way White people look at them.

from the poem **Self Defense** by Carmen Hoover

Ethnicity

You may notice that race is not one of the categories in the Pamela Hays ADDRESSING model (2001). The term "ethnicity" refers to membership in ethnic or racial groups as they are currently (and falsely) defined. White or European American people are members of the Agent group under this category, and all other people are in the Target group. The term "People of Color" includes all ethnicity Targets.

The notion of race comes from a historical attempt to limit the definition of "human being" to some people and to define other people as not quite human. Many categories were invented to classify certain people as less than human, in order to justify inhumane practices, including slavery, genocide, removing people from their land, and forcible conversion. The construct of race has been used to justify these practices, which existed before the notion of race was invented.

Few people in the United States are of entirely European, African, Latino, Asian, Indigenous or any other single heritage. Most of us are of mixed descent, and this is becoming more and more apparent with each generation. The truth about race is that it's quite difficult to use it as a way of sorting people, because each person comes from many ancestors, who came from many places. But the Rank system is focused on the abstraction called "whiteness." It assesses for European American membership, rather than authentic ancestry. In trainings, one way we work with this is we say – 'If as far as you know, you are European American, look at yourself on the Agent side.' The phrase 'as far as you know' reminds us that these are constructs and allows for the possibility that there may be things we don't know which could result in a different categorization on the Agent-Target system. The fact that we don't know them is likely as a function of oppression. Imagine an adult who, having lived their life identified as European American, comes to find out that in fact they are mixed race. The reasons for the secret are likely connected with racism.

The oppression associated with this category is racism.

From history class to health class, I had been informed about all of the things that White people had done to other races and how hard the other races have worked to try to force the White people to open their eyes and look past skin color and accompanying stereotypes and judgments.

However, not one person has ever so boldly stated to me that I had privileges and advantages that I didn't have to work for and that many things were just assumed about me due to my light skin. I had no problem getting into the college of my choice, getting the job I wanted, or getting a house in the neighborhood of my choosing. I assume that I can do almost whatever I want as long as I am willing to put in the effort. I am now learning that my preconceived notion about the playing field being level is incorrect.

Antonia Stigall

How the Irish Became White

In the early 19th Century, Irish immigrants in America were not considered White. They were an ethnic target group, who experienced discrimination in housing, work, and education, as well as other forms of oppression. Irish were identified as dirty and lazy, and "No Irish Need Apply" signs were ubiquitous in East Coast cities. As a result of specific historical and political processes, carried out by people of European ancestry, and in which people of Irish descent themselves participated, the ranking of Irish people changed. Today, Irish immigrants and people of Irish descent in the United States are considered "White," and hold Agent rank in the category of ethnicity.

For further reading: Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (1995).

Reverse Racism Could Not Exist

An insight from our discussion for me involves the concept of reverse racism and how it could not exist. I made sense of this concept by using the terms situational and systemic. If I, as an ethnicity Agent, walked into an elevator and saw a group of ethnicity Targets inside and they closed off their body language and clutched their purses and belongings, I may have wondered if this action was due to my ethnicity. I may have concluded that I was being "singled-out" by these individuals. I could have further surmised that this group of people was being "racist" toward me as a "White" person and may even have thought that reverse racism had taken place. I could go through the day, week, or even years remembering how horrible I felt in the elevator when that group had judged me simply based on the color of my skin. I may have referenced the situation as an unfair injustice in my life that could have been comparable to racism that other Targets felt when the situation was reversed. I may have watched the movies Do the Right Thing (Lee, S., 1989), Mi Familia (Nava, 1995), and Yes (Potter, 2004), and drawn similarities in the vivid examples of racism with those that I had experienced on that day. However, I would have been severely, inaccurately portraying my experience. To even have begun to compare my situation to that of a Target group member, I would have had to picture every minute of my life and the lives of the people in my family, being a continuous elevator of people closing themselves off to me and all that I am.

Jen Knopp

White privilege is any advantage, head start, or protection the system grants whites but not people of color. It's the flip side of discrimination. If people of color are victims of housing discrimination 3 million times a year – and that's a safe estimate – then that's 3 million more opportunities for housing that whites have. If people of color are discriminated against in employment, then that's more employment opportunities for whites. The flip side of disadvantage is advantage. You can't have a down without an up.

Tim Wise (Cook, 2009)

Social Class Culture

The social class culture category refers to both access to institutions and to tools of social class influence. Social class Agent group membership is associated with fluency with social codes. Consider what conditions result in a person understanding and feeling comfortable with the institutional systems of society and their "language." Members of the Agent group in this category are people who have access to education, to property, and to the institutions of control. This does not necessarily mean being wealthy, or financially comfortable, or middle- to upper-class. It is entirely possible to have a minimal income, yet to be a social class Agent. This applies to a person from a middle-class background who has a college degree and currently earns a minimal income. A working-class person who owns their own business and is able to purchase property, or vehicles, is also a member of an Agent group.

Members of the Target group in this category are people who cannot own property, and lack access to education. More than simply money, they lack access and influence over social institutions. Social class Target group members are likely to have difficulty gaining access to health care or legal representation, and if they have a problem with an institution they may find their grievances are ignored.

For social class culture Targets, much time is spent on subsistence necessities. To give a superficial example, class culture Targets, who need to take the bus to a laundromat and pay a fortune in quarters to do the wash, spend much more time, money, and energy on laundry than social class Agents, who usually have a washing machine in their own home or apartment building. This is the economy of energy at work. To make time available to take classes, invest in self-care, participate in community action, or resolve disputes with public agencies represents significant hardship. Classism refers to both conditions that promote and maintain economic inequality and the attitudes and systems that devalue and blame social class Targets.

Classism in the U.S. is linked to capitalism, privatization of social resources, and free market structures and policies. Classism can be seen in tax breaks for corporations, CEO pay levels, lack of health insurance for working people, and income gaps.

In addition, social class Targets are likely to have been kept unfamiliar with the communication and behavior codes of institutional control. Members of the class Target group who enroll in college classes may be faced with the added stress of an unfamiliar environment, which may or may not be welcoming and may or may not be responsive to their needs; these challenges can add to the difficulties of staying in school. Having access to higher education means not only that you can begin attending college, but that conditions of the environment permit you to participate successfully.

It is possible, though difficult and unusual, to change from Target to Agent

FAQ

Why are low-income college students considered middle class/social class Agent group members?

Our focus here is on access, rather than attempting to define what all members of a particular Agent group have in common. College students have access to higher education (when the conditions of the environment permit them to participate successfully) and this represents access to the systems of control and influence in the culture. Looking only at what members of Agent groups or Target groups have in common serves to keep the status quo in place. It keeps the attention off of access and supremacy.

Social Class Culture:

The *truth* is that Agent-normed views of resources are that they are economic and financial, but there are other kinds of resources both material and abstract. Working-class and poor communities have resources that are related to interdependence, sustainability, creativity, and cooperation. The *reality* is that members of working-class and poor communities often have to choose between going to the doctor and paying their rent.

Did you grow up in rented apartments? Do you own a house? Did your family own a home or a business? Are you among the first in your family to attend college? Does your family own a summer home?

Have you had to rely on public transportation exclusively because you could not afford a car? Have you traveled internationally? Have you shopped with foodstamps? Are you a second (or more) generation college graduate? The answers to these questions may help you to get a sense of your social class culture.

group membership in this area. Making such a transition requires not only access to higher education and accumulating property, but also learning the behavior codes, and especially the communication codes, of the middle- and owning-class. Although the social pressures against it are enormous, a few class Targets are able to succeed in business, or gain access to higher education, and to leverage themselves into Agent group membership in this category. Those who believe that "anyone can make it in America" often hold up these few as examples.

The oppression associated with this category is classism.

FAQ

FAQ: What happens to my earlier experiences as a poor or working class person when I later jump to Agent Rank?

Agent conditioning is so potent, insidious, and self-perpetuating, that having the experience of access in the middle-class or owning-class can alter the Target group conditioning we had if our class of origin was poor or working-class.

Think of it like this: Often we are struck by how even a very vivid dream will be forgotten in the process of waking up. The movement of muscles, especially large muscles in the legs, is part of what washes away the images of our dreams – so that we feel as though we can't bring back something that just seconds ago was right there.

Agent conditioning has a similar effect. Having had tangible experience of the world as a member of a Target group seems like a dream we would never forget. Yet, relatively soon after gaining access as members of the middle or owning class – once we started to use the major muscles of Agent group membership – our worldview as historical members of the Target group can wash away.

We may imagine that having experienced life as members of the Target group continues to inform our lived experience and disposition in the world, but that is often not the case.

Making much of what we wear

the rips in our streets

kindly care of medicine

chanting of similar-enough insides

beggars at heart.

We sense never-instantly

we would not part with the close eases

and kiss of comfort

the deadly sweet occupation.

On our way to a co-op

belching out excess

refuse to re-use recycled guilt.

Leticia Nieto

Sexual Orientation

The Rank system is binary; human beings are not. Elsewhere in this book we discuss how gender may not be as binary a proposition as once believed. If gender is not binary, sexual orientation certainly cannot be. The sexual orientation category of the Rank system relates to affectional and sexual realms ranging from leanings and attractions to preferences and choice. The gender category of the Rank system relates to the ascribed membership in one of two genders. Please notice these two categories are distinct and less related to each other than they appear to be.

We are not binary, yet the Rank system classifies us into one group called heterosexuals and another group encompassing everyone else. Research into people's actual sexual behavior, affectional desire, and erotic imagination makes it clear that the majority of people are, to some degree, bisexual. A few are purely homosexual, a few purely heterosexual. But the Rank system organizes "heterosexual" people as members of the normative Agent group, and bisexual, gay, lesbian, queer, and questioning orientations as members of the Target group. Society is organized to favor heterosexual living patterns and the assumptions that go with them.

Under the Rank system, heterosexuality is compulsory. It is the only acceptable way of expressing one's sexual and affectional self. We are all assumed and expected to be heterosexual in the absence of direct evidence to the contrary. So, if we are gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, or questioning, we are likely to face a steeper path to authentic sexual and affectional expression. Sexual orientation Targets have to expend additional energy to claim and assert our space.

As we've mentioned, Rank membership is ascribed. Yet, it is not exactly about how we are perceived or even how we perceive ourselves. This makes conversations about Rank difficult. In our trainings it's common for a participant to raise this question: 'If someone is gay, but they don't know they are gay and have lived their whole life as a heterosexual person, receiving the benefits and advantages granted straight people, than they have not been affected by heterosexism and homophobia, right?' Our response is, of course they have been affected under compulsory heterosexuality. The reasons why a person would not know they are gay have everything to do with socialization that includes the message of compulsory heterosexuality and the overvaluing of heterosexual norms to the exclusion of even the possibility of any alternatives.

Again, if the usual notions of gender are inaccurate, then what happens to the idea of sexual orientation? As with the other Rank categories, looking deeply at this category reveals its essentially arbitrary nature. Oppressions associated with this category are heterosexism and homophobia.

An Example of Internalized Heterosexism

During an advanced training, participants were caught up in delineating the definitions of sexual orientation membership and discussing an imaginary case. They were arguing about whether or not a person who had lived as a sexual orientation Target but then entered a heterosexual relationship would still be considered a Target. One person suggested that the individual in question was defining him/herself as a sexual orientation Agent because of being in a heterosexual relationship. The facilitator asked the group "why would that person not identify themselves as bisexual?" This was an important teaching moment because it gave the participants an opportunity to notice that oppression results in erasing whole decades of life experience in order to fit into heterosexuality.

FAQ

Why LGBTIQ?

While transgender and intersex are gender categories, the reluctance on the part of the women's movement to recognize transgender and intersex people as fellow gender Targets, resulted in the need for lesbian, gay, bisexual initiatives to include intersex and transgender communities.

Q is for questioning, which applies to both sexual orientation and gender Target group membership. Q is also used for the re-claimed word *Queer*.

Some of the ways we are taught to be heterosexual

Think about your childhood and the images and ideas you were exposed to regarding romantic long-term relationships. Many of us recall games such as "wedding" where we were corrected if, in our play, we played the roles "incorrectly." Growing up in a Spanish-speaking environment, when singing love songs, we were encouraged to change the gender of the love object in the song to be sure it was a heterosexual sentiment. Anything from playing house to playing with Barbies® to fairy tales can be considered heterosexist content. All of the elements that orient our sexuality for us in the direction of the opposite sex result in compulsory heterosexuality. Regardless of your views on sexual orientation, consider how the societal landscape might look different if more choices were presented from early in our lives.

Sex, Gender and Sexual Orientation

Expression of our sexuality changes during the course of our lives. Expressions of gender and sexual orientation differ significantly from one historical era to another. Think about fashion and the way different eras have emphasized different body parts – what is considered attractive is not static. In the course of our lifetimes, our affectional and sexual preferences shift and change. We may go through seasons of our lives when we're most comfortable being connected with people of our same gender and times when we are drawn to those of other gender(s). People's sexual experience varies significantly from person to person, and even for one person over time. The aspects of human experience encompassed in words like sex, gender, and sexual orientation are unfathomably fluid and changeable. Yet within the Rank system these elements are encoded in binary and restrictive ways. While related, the dimensions of gender and sexual orientation are less determinant than they seem.

Consider this non-exhaustive list of possibilities, for example:

- A transgender person who is not involved in transitioning on the gender binary may express same-sex or heterosexual preference or both.
- A transgender person may express a heterosexual preference while carrying one gender identification and again a heterosexual preference after transitioning to another gender.
- A transgender person may express preference for another transgender person.
- A transgender person may express a heterosexual preference in one gender and, after transitioning, may express a same-sex preference.
- A transgender person may express a same-sex preference prior to transitioning and a heterosexual preference after transitioning.
- A transgender person may express a same-sex preference prior to transitioning and a same-sex preference after transitioning.
- A transgender person may express bisexual preference before and after transitioning.

Questioning Winter 1996 by Laurel Collier Smith

She was a punk and equestrian with an angular jaw.
I felt round and nerdy – trying hard to appear interesting.

Resolved I would kiss her
Right there in the field.

I leaned in and put my mouth to her stunned mouth.
Then, blurring "I'm not gay" almost made it so.

With that I buried my first kiss
in so much hay and ice.

The parking lot is puddled with oil
 and shadows of oil, there is the slash
 of the flagpole, white against horizons.
 Graves from the Indian Wars
 stand still here.
 We read as many markers as we can,
 strangers moving in and out
 between us, quiet.
 This is a church, a prairie,
 a place where children died.
 Their stones are lambs with ribbons,
 verses, some without names.
 We cup our hands over the lambs'
 heads, look into their worn
 faces, drag our fingers
 down their nappy marble bodies.

Little Bighorn Battlefield Cemetery Carmen Hoover

Indigenous Heritage

Because we are in the United States, the term Indigenous heritage refers to people whose ancestors are native to the Americas. It is a Rank category distinct from ethnicity. We see colonization as ongoing. People of Indigenous heritage are still subject to colonization, which is a current event rather than a purely historical one. While the notion of race is a historical artifact that seems in the process of becoming less significant (albeit a slow process), Indigenous people in the United States face an ongoing campaign of invasion, physical removal from land, cultural and religious appropriation, and denial of legal existence.

This is not an artifact of the past, but a continued policy. Although Native Americans have been depicted as “vanishing” people since the 17th century, the campaign against Native rights and Native people continues today. Examples of colonization continuing into the 21st century include denial of tribal recognition; Indigenous people being relocated from their traditional or reservation lands; traditional and reservation lands being used in ways that significantly damage the environment and human health, such as nuclear testing and waste storage; the denial of treaty rights; the destruction

*America, likes to say her Indians...
 American doesn't like to see us poor but
 doesn't like rich either...*

Performance artist James Luna (2008)

FAQ

Why does Indigenous Heritage get its own category?

The idea of Indigenous group membership having its own category puzzles some people. We address the question by bringing up the idea of ongoing imperialism and invasion processes that have a compounding effect when added to dynamics of race, racism, and ethnic Targetship.

Legal slavery is not currently in force in the U.S.; racism is. Anti-Indigenous oppression and colonialism are ongoing, current realities. The treaties made between Indian tribes and the U.S., which in principle have the force of federal law, have never been fully honored. They have been consistently violated, over decades and centuries.

There is refusal to honor Indigenous membership as its own separate category. News articles discussing issues of racism will often leave out Native Americans. Even when racism is explicitly being addressed, anti-Indigenous oppression will be left out. Recognizing that Indigenous people face oppression specifically because of their Indigenous heritage, in addition to the experience of racism they share with other People of Color, helps us recognize the complexity of the Rank system.

of natural resources resulting in the loss of traditional use for Native people; and destruction of cultural resources including languages and religious practices. Historically, American Indians have been subject to displacement, genocide, and colonization caused by the conquest of North America by European people. In addition, removal from traditional lands and the degradation of natural resources have made it necessary for Indian people to leave their traditional and/or reservation lands to survive economically. The accumulated impacts of colonization have devastating consequences for surviving Indigenous people.

Our focus here is on the Indigenous people of the Americas. Indigenous peoples exist on other continents as well (such as Indigenous Australians, Sami and Basque Europeans, and Ainu people of Hokkaido), and they often face similar issues within the dominant societies that surround them.

Several different terms are currently used to refer to Indigenous people. "Indigenous" is a term for the original inhabitants of a place, and can be used for people from any place on earth. Scholars commonly use "Native American," and federal law uses the term "American Indians." Indigenous people themselves often use the terms "American Indian," or "Indian." Some groups have advocated the terms "Native People" and "First Peoples." The term "First Nations" is commonly used in Canada. When speaking of specific tribes, the tribal name is often used, e.g. Nisqually Tribe. Individuals are often identified by tribal membership, e.g. Sherman Alexie (Spokane/Coeur d'Alene).

Non-Indigenous people who were born and grew up in the U.S. have internalized supremacy over Native people, and have often been conditioned to believe that Indigenous people no longer exist. American Indians carry a double burden: ethnicity Targets as People of Color and Indigenous heritage Targets as well. This is one reason that Native peoples' concerns are often left out of discussions of ethnic diversity, social justice, and multi-culturalism.

Anti-Indigenous oppression is the clearest term we've found for this category of Rank.

I was also here
first, before myself.
So I know things
that I don't know,
that I shouldn't know.
This involves not knowing
things that I do know.
Perhaps there is no one
"tree of knowledge."
There is no resolution
for this dilemma
of information. It appears/disappears
on a circle, but under a slow,
drifting spotlight.
Time has lost its authority,
as has motion.
This is the problem
with having a mixed genetic
memory: are the wires
conjoined or just crossed?
I'd be happy
to disagree with any right answer.
Does this mean that I do know

what I'm talking about or that I don't?
Some days I'd trade in
every solution I ever thought up
just for a nap. Part of me
is always not-American, no
matter how I look at it.
In this, I am
very American.

When I'm feeling down I dress up as Chief Joseph and read the U.S. Constitution. I am Chief Joseph, but I never really knew him.

Afternoons grow longer. Mountains wait.
 Winds are hot with news of other struggles.
 The north world listens and learns.
 Migrant birds of all species, even grounded ones,
 live to tell the story.

Leticia Nieto

National Origin

In the category of national origin, those born in the United States are assigned Agent group membership and those born anywhere else are assigned Target group membership.

Documented and undocumented immigrants, international students, refugees, and others born outside the United States face serious legal and bureaucratic issues, from heavy burdens of paperwork to the possibility of being deported without warning or detained without due process. The oppression associated with national origin is reinforced, for many, by restricted access to legalization and legitimization. Undocumented immigrants may be incarcerated or deported without due process; they may be unable to access medical care or to attend school. National origin Targets' access to basic rights as workers or human beings is constrained.

Even when national origin Targets have legal documented standing or naturalized citizenship, they do not share in all of the rights granted to people born in the U.S. In recent years, for example with the passage of the PATRIOT Act (2001), we have seen changes that highlight that distinction. For example, people born outside the United States encounter extra paperwork if they leave the country and may have difficulty re-entering the U.S., they can be detained and/or deported without due process, and naturalized citizenship can be revoked. In the political climate of the early 21st century, these issues are critical. The safety and personal freedom of persons born outside the U.S. are threatened daily.

Anti-immigrant oppression is the clearest term we've found for this category of Rank.

"Where are you from?"
 "How long have you been in the U.S.?"
 "I like your accent."
 "You hardly have an accent."
 "You look like you could be Italian, Middle Eastern, Greek even—"
 "How did you get legal?"
 "Do you go back often?"
 "Is your family also here?"
 "I thought you were a foreigner—"
 "I've visited your country, I love it there."

Leticia Nieto

The lesson: I am other, belong elsewhere, conditionally admitted but never fully accepted.

FAQ

Aren't naturalized citizens and legal residents free of Anti-Immigrant oppression?

Questions such as this one arise because of the confounding questions about oppression versus overt discrimination, and because of the challenging task of sorting out the impact of various Target group memberships such as ethnicity, social class, Indigenous heritage, and national origin.

Being born in the U.S. grants individuals rights that are not shared by those born outside of the United States, even when those national origin Targets have legal, documented standing or naturalized citizenship. National Origin Target group members are vulnerable, legally, economically, and socially, in ways that U.S.-born Rank Agents are not.

Descending on stone steps
 steps of wood
 she will cross paths of sand
 with her own virgin self.
 All the women before her,
 gone animal now,
 speak warnings and a promise:
 your body is true.

Leticia Nieto

Gender

As complex as gender is, the Rank system reduces it to a simple formula: biological males are members of the Agent group. Females, transgender, and intersex people are members of the Target group. If our sex is the membership we are ascribed based on our anatomy, and sexual orientation has to do with our sexual and affectional attractions, then gender is associated with the expression of our identity as members of a particular gender group.

You'll notice transgender and intersex people are listed as members of the Target group in the gender category, where typically they might be listed in the sexual orientation category. We are signaling a couple of things here: 1) the distinction between gender and sexual orientation and 2) the reasons for the GLB group's decision to include transgender and intersex. Just as African American women were once excluded from the women's movement, transgender and intersex people are excluded from the women's movement while clearly belonging to the Gender Target group.

Gay, lesbian, and bisexual people have embraced transgender and intersex people in their movement: GLB has become LGBTIQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, and questioning). This is a response to horizontal sexism: the refusal by the women's movement to acknowledge transgender and intersex people as members of the same Target group. While transgender and intersex individuals and communities find many shared concerns with gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, and questioning communities, the LGBTIQ group definition causes some puzzlement by including transgender and intersex as sexual orientation rather than gender categories.

Remember: Rank categories are artificial constructs. They are faulty at best. They are applied with degrees of arbitrariness. We recognize that these questions are complex. If a transgender or intersex person identifies as male and their affectional and sexual attractions are for males, they do not access male privilege. Rather, their life is restricted by sexism as well as heterosexism and homophobia.

Gender oppression is characterized by the authority and access granted to biologically male, male-identified men due to their sex and gender identity. Society is organized to exclude intersex people, transgender people, and biologically female people from institutions and social practices with great regularity. If we are biological males who identify as men, we may debate the benefits of this membership due to experiences of emotional isolation and other habits and rules imposed on us by gender – however, we will recognize that as Agent group members we are more likely to attain work of our choosing, be compensated more competitively, be taken more seriously, be given priority in health care research, and be given a greater degree of freedom to determine how we spend our time than Target group members in this category.

The oppression associated with this category is sexism.

Gender & Sizeism

While the nine elements of the Pam Hays (2001) ADRESSING acronym are by no means comprehensive, we have found them to be a useful set for working with social memberships and supremacy in the U.S. in the current moment. Sometimes participants ask why size doesn't have its own category. Status loss and discrimination related to body size affects a great number of people in the United States. Concerns around body image are commonplace among different age groups, gender groups, etc. We recognize this to be an important dynamic along with things like height, looks, temperament. We have chosen to use the ADRESSING categories as lenses through which dynamics of sizeism can be examined. A strong case can be made for how sizeism is a way ableism is expressed. There is also good work by Susie Orbach (1997) clarifying the role of sizeism as an expression of sexism.

FAQ

How can women, intersex and transgender people be classified in the same Target group?

When looking at the Target skills model, we often discuss perplexity about who is a member of one's own Target group. When we focus on what Targets have in common as our mechanism for determining who belongs in a Target group, we miss the point. Target members may, in fact, not have very much in common, except the ways in which Agent supremacy advantages Agents and disadvantages them.

For example, Asian Americans and African Americans may not immediately see their shared membership under White supremacy. Women may have difficulty recognizing intersex and transgender people as members of their Target group under male supremacy. Individuals with mobility able loss and members of the Deaf community may not immediately recognize their shared membership under ableism. These tendencies to define one's Target group membership in narrower terms ultimately serve oppression.

Women, intersex, and transgender people have different life experiences, but all experience oppression under the institution of male supremacy.

Gender and Binary Categories

The notion that people can be sorted into binary categories is clearly absurd in most categories. Many people have multiple ethnic identities. Straight, gay, and bisexual labels denote a wide spectrum of actual desires, behaviors, and preferences. Religious affiliations may be ambiguous and multiple, and change over time. Disability may be visible or not, permanent or intermittent, mild or severe.

To many people, the category of gender may appear as a "natural" binary system. Yet as people defined as "intersex" or "transgendered" make their experiences known, and as researchers look more closely at the chromosomal structures and hormonal patterns associated with gender, it has become obvious that there are far more than two genders. The Intersex Society of North America (ISNA) provides statistics on the frequency of specific chromosomal and anatomical intersex conditions, as well as discussion of the difficulty of accurately counting the percentage of births that have some intersex characteristics.

The ISNA web site <http://www.isna.org/> (2009) notes that the problems associated with intersexuality are primarily problems of "stigma and trauma, not gender." The definition of "intersex" varies, depending on who is doing the defining, and the ISNA documents 15 different types of "intersex" conditions, some chromosomal, some anatomical, and some a mixture of both. The most commonly cited figure is 1 in 1,500 to 1 in 2,000 births; ISNA suggests that this number is on the low side.

Biochemical intersexuality is even more common than genetic intersexuality, and many intersexual patterns make themselves evident only later in life. It may be that strictly male and female identities are actually rare, and that some degree of intersexuality is the human norm. What is clear to us is that many people have biological, anatomical, biochemical, and psychological characteristics associated with both standard "male" and "female" definitions.

An ear on the other end of his call, an existence and gender I assume
projecting onto him that which is in me (he, below my window, may merely speak to move the air)

she (in my projective hetero-centric imaginings) has the key to times returning, relational mending
his words are garbles to me though sounds of languages I know
his tone -in known, familiar, patterns- speaks libraries for me,
but not to me- tuned in and only close enough for static

my mind speaks this same voice to me, filling dreams and waking hours
tilling memory for a stone of error
tumbling the rough and bleeding stone to brilliant sheen
a glinting hateful opulence – remorse— a remnant of lucidity
a carcinogenic luxury of experience,

I sing time's mutations into trials nightly
terrors and inquisitions (I as witness, judge, prosecution, and accused am cast)
I plead for chances:
even if only imagined self can dance, I dance
the phantasmal curiosity of ghost-runners and second chances.

The real and trying voice from below winces and pleads with more vibrato, (a singing tear or words?)
my ears this tone do know though these lips are sealed by pride to such hopeless words
my voice will never utter the true and dreaming wishes
for my voice is a product of a watery will
and my dreams a product of a power yet unknown, too powerful to yet invoke.

from **Between Waveform and Regret** by D.H. Shultis

Here voice casts a magic
Ze washes your mind and your hair.
You favor the cadence
of these words.
Delight in being boggled
with your talent for
knowing here well.

Leticia Nieto

from **Self Defense** by Carmen Hoover

Self defense is intimate.
If a man is hitting you, he is checking
up on you double. How delicate we are,
all of our thin skulls. If you are being
physically insulted, you must know
you cannot fight at arm's length.
The air between you is all his.
If you feel yourself falling
backwards, grab on tight to lapels,
coat zippers, hair, you must
hit the ground before he does
and get up first. Never kick
where his hands could reach.
Kick from behind, from below, run.
You need to know
what you will do before
you do it. There is no
time, during, to decide.
You must know now.

Nicholas

Once when we were playing in Grandma's basement on the Chinese checkers and backgammon printed carpet, we decided to dress our cousin Jason up like a girl. I could tell he didn't want to be a girl, but he was outnumbered three to one so I guess he figured he had no choice. Ang, Micki, and I gave him our underclothes, then lifted a pink nightgown over his head. We called him "Jennifer."

All six of my cousins were boys. They played with Star Wars action figures and made explosion noises while the three of us girls tagged along. We played kickball in grandma's back yard. Being the youngest, I was always the last to be picked for the team. Sometimes I stomped off the field crying, "It isn't fair!" I just wanted to be as fast and good at everything as the boys were. Even though Grandma liked us girls best, I knew that if I could just be a boy, I'd get picked for a team sooner and I'd have no reason to whine.

We were always playing dress up; trying on mom's high-heeled zip-up leather boots and patterned dresses. One day while getting ready to go to the community wading pool, I had the idea to play a different kind of dress up.

"Let's pretend I'm a boy and see if anyone can tell I'm not," I suggested. My sisters looked at me like "Say what?" then agreed. I wore shorts, a t-shirt, and flip-flops to the pool without my bathing suit underneath. Walking with my sisters, I wondered if anyone would guess I was really a girl. Would they point and laugh at me? Would they call me names? Would I run home crying?

When we reached the pool, Ang and Micki took off their shirts and shorts to reveal one-piece bathing suits. My stomach started turning. For a minute I thought about running home to grab mine, but I knew I couldn't go back alone and they were both already splashing around in the water. I considered wearing my shirt into the pool, but I decided at the last minute to lift it over my short afro and throw it on the pavement.

"Hurry up, Nichole!" Micki yelled and I shot her an evil eye. "Oh right," she remembered, "Come on, Nicholas!" I looked around, trying to see if anyone had caught their slip. Kids and their parents were busy eating picnic lunches or laying under the shade of nearby trees. I took off my shirt and went running into the pool, at first covering my "mosquito bites" with my fingers, then letting my hands fall to my sides. The wind hit my chest like it wanted to lift me up. I went to stand under the fountain with the other boys, far away from my sisters, letting the water flatten my fuzzy fro. The boys were playing tag and one of them punched my arm and yelled, "You're it!" I pretended it didn't hurt and ran and splashed until I caught someone else, punched him on the arm, and yelled, "You're it!"

Eventually, the game died down and the sun slid behind the trees. I went over to my sisters, who were drying off and putting their clothes back on. I waved goodbye to the boys I had been playing tag with and they yelled, "See ya, Nicholas." Ang and Micki looked at me with wide eyes. We started off toward home, my sisters' bathing suits soaking through their shirts. I felt the last bits of sun warming my bare back and looked up toward the darkening sky.

Cholee Gladney

What if the bridge is swinging,

heads fading,

children forgotten at school?

What if flowers insist on wilting,

time on escaping,

big dogs on blood?

What if the edge is sudden,

honor forgotten,

communication a figment?

Still cross.

Still pick.

Still speak.

Leticia Nieto

No Hierarchy of Oppression

There is a temptation to reduce the question of oppression to a single lens. We all experience times when it seems clear to us that, regardless of all the complexity, the question of injustice comes down fundamentally to, for example, economic injustice and the tyranny of social class. In anti-racism workshops, European American women often want to talk about the implications of gender. In heterosexism and homophobia trainings, many heterosexual men bring up class. It is a natural impulse to peer into our lived experience in search of evidence about oppression. One can make the argument for classism, sexism, racism, or others, as the ultimate or fundamental injustice.

In our workshops, we see people trying to figure out which oppression is the biggest. We joke that the biggest oppression is obvious: "mine," based on whichever one applies to us personally. Both members of Agent groups and members of Target groups may believe that certain categories of oppression cancel out all others. Some argue that the powerlessness of young children trumps any other kind of oppression and that ageism is the main problem. Many have insisted that patriarchy and gender supremacy are the original source of oppression, from which all other oppressions derive. Others believe that because of historical conditions and the consequences of slavery, ethnicity is the most significant membership, and racism the greatest challenge in the U.S. Many suggest that social class or economic access is fundamental to all Rank systems.

It can seem that social justice activists are in competition to establish which group is most seriously oppressed. Because this is an interpersonal model, we suggest a different approach. We invite you to a discipline where you hold in perspective an interplay among nine elements of supremacy and devaluing.

Dynamically, an argument about hierarchy of oppression ends up serving oppression because the focus is on presentation of the argument rather than on listening, which we see as central to liberation. All nine categories of Rank are always present, and they interact in forceful ways. Multiple Target group memberships combine to create situations of extraordinary marginalization, and multiple Agent group memberships combine to create super supremacy. These memberships are not just additive; they are exponential. Bearing this in mind, we can give up the impossible task of choosing which one is the worst.

The Web of Oppression Exercise

In the workshops, we say, "Let's create a profile of someone with Target group memberships. Let's start at the top of the chart we're using." We ask the group to call out the specific age of a Target group member in the age category, and someone says: "fourteen years old." We ask a person to call out a characteristic

FAQ

Isn't this whole thing just your opinion?

Yes, these models and frameworks are our best attempt at putting the problem of oppression and the goal of liberation into language as best we can, based on our respective and collective experience, scholarship, and wisdom.

FAQ

Do people who have Jewish family roots but have not been raised as Jews still face anti-Semitism?

Yes. The thing about internalized oppression is that its patterns are passed without being identified with a particular Target group. So, a person who is raised by parents and grandparents who don't even know they are Jewish still has internalized oppression. Why don't they know that they are Jews? This erasure of history has everything to do with historical anti-Semitism. A person whose Jewish ancestry was erased, by anti-Semitism and internalized anti-Semitism, is a religious culture Target group member. People who have this background say they don't know what it's like to live as a Jew and have Jewish experiences. This is a culturally Jewish experience. Ancestors who were so terrified that they had to rewrite who they were and took on a whole different identity to survive, if they didn't pass on the recipe for matzo ball soup or Sephardic charoset, still might have passed on ancestral memory of terror, and still might have passively taught the skills of hiding, adapting and shape-shifting in order to survive.

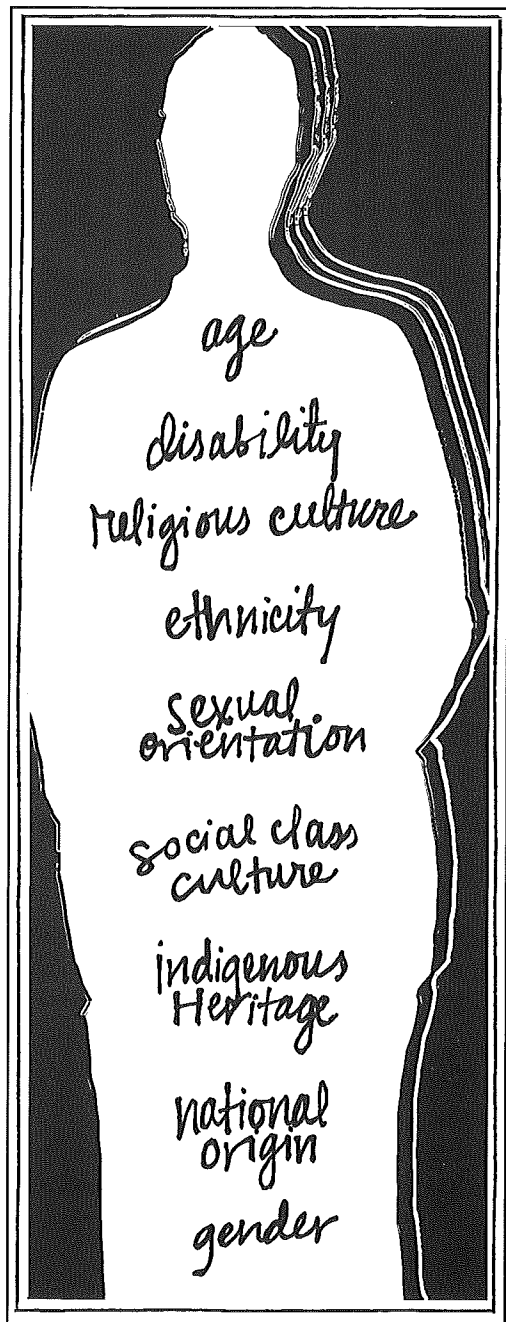
Becka Tilsen

that would constitute membership in the Disability Target group; someone says, "asthma." At that moment, all we know about the person that we imagine is that they are 14 and asthmatic. We ask workshop participants simply to imagine that person and to notice compounding effects of the two Target group memberships they have named. We ask the group to consider how they might attempt to provide services for this person in their organization or school and to call out some of their reactions. Participants typically will say that their organization or school is not really set up well to provide services for this person and that they would be concerned about this person's needs being met within the context of their organization or school.

We continue, asking for a religious culture Target group membership. Someone might say "Muslim." Then we ask for an ethnicity Target group membership, a social class Target group membership, a sexual orientation Target group membership, an Indigenous Target group membership, a national origin Target group membership. With each Target area that we add to our imaginary person, the group responds with increased concern about the possibility of their agency, school, etc., to respond well. The expression of feeling increases as the group notices the compounding, exponential way in which challenges increase - not because it is inherently challenging to be a member of those Target groups, but because of the unnecessary suffering that piles on with each added membership and the supremacy and devaluing and marginalization that the person encounters every day.

Usually at this point in the conversation, we point out that the group has been constructing the imaginary person as a boy. Even though the point of the exercise is explicit and all participants know we are building a profile of a Target person on all nine memberships, 95% of the time it seems the group will gender the person as male. When we come to the last area of the ADDRESSING model, which is gender assignment, and we ask for a Target gender assignment, the group expresses desolation when we electively render a person female, transgender, or intersex instead of male.

The exercise helps illustrate three things. First, we see compounding and exponential effects of multiple Target group memberships. Second, we understand how under supremacy we default to the Agent group in our imagination of persons, unless Target group membership is specifically referenced. The exercise is particularly poignant given that participants know the task is explicitly to envision Target group membership and still Agent supremacy imposes itself. Third, we notice that the tendency to imagine Agent Group membership as a mechanism for hope is itself a reflection of supremacy. Some workshop participants request that the imaginary person be made White instead of a Person of Color. Some ask, "Could they be second generation instead of an immigrant?" Others wishfully request that we imagine the person as male.



The job of the Rank Machine is to exclude the largest number of people for the smallest possible reason.