

**GRADUATE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION  
SELF SELECTED SPECIALIZATION: RACE AND ETHNICITY**

**General Instructions:**

- 1) Do not cite the work or ideas of Bonilla-Silva. We want your answers to reflect your "sociological imagination."
  - 2) Avoid repeating topics (or issues) in the selection of questions, that is, do not answer questions that are kindred in any way. We expect you to demonstrate coverage of the field of race and ethnicity.
  - 3) In most questions we suggest you include a number of references in your answers. However, feel free to incorporate more as you see fit.
  - 4) Scholarship, organization, good-writing, and creativity will count and probably in that order.
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**Answer ONE of the following two questions on assimilation and immigration.**

- 1) In 5-6 pages, answer the following **two-part** question and make sure you cite 8 to 10 references from the list.

In 1963, Glazer and Moynihan stated: "The point about the melting pot is that it did not happen." Still, recent scholarship is proposing a "return to assimilation." Review the arguments for and against the concept of migrant assimilation to a host society. Draw on comparisons between the European experience and current immigration to discuss the applicability of the concept in the past and today.

In an influential publication, Huntington argues that, "The cultural division between Hispanics and Anglos could replace the racial division between blacks and whites as the most serious cleavage in U.S. society." Elaborate on the validity of such an assertion. Formulate a critique of Huntington's perspective from the assimilation and the segmented assimilation literature. Make sure you discuss the differences between these two perspectives in your answer.

- 2) In the early part of the twentieth century, sociologists such as W. I. Thomas, Robert Park, Jane Addams, and many others advocated for the "Americanization" of immigrants. Many other sociologists such as Edward A. Ross, Charles Ellwood, and William Graham Sumner objected to immigration based on the quality of the "racial stocks." Almost a hundred years later, America is experiencing yet another immigration wave and the social scientific community is divided once again on the immigration issue. Write a 5-6 page essay on the immigration crucible addressing the following five elements and make sure you cite 8-10 references from the list.

- 1) Who are some of the central academic voices (include but do not be limited to sociologists) opposing immigration and what is their rationale?
- 2) Who are some of the central academic voices (include but do not be limited to sociologists) supporting immigration and what is their rationale?

- 3) Compare and contrast the arguments of early proponents of “Americanization” with current advocates of “Assimilation.” Can one argue these analysts—those of yesteryears as well as those of today—are (were) “beyond racism?” (Note: You need not know all the ideas—or even quote them in your answer—and work done by the early sociologists cited in this question to answer this question effectively.)
- 4) We know how the battle over immigration ended a hundred years ago. Do you think history will repeat itself? Elaborate a sociological prediction about how this immigration ordeal is likely to end based on all the “social facts” available.
- 5) Conclude your essay with a policy suggestion that flows from the arguments you have articulated in your answers to 1, 2, 3, and 4.

**Answer the following question on racial theory.**

The area of race and ethnicity has been marred by conceptual confusion, theoretical weakness, and, recently, by enormous debate. We have theorists who deny the relevance and validity of race and racism as concepts and suggest replacing them with concepts such as “class,” “ethnicity,” or even “identity,” all terms they contend are better suited to comprehend “race relations.” We have theorists who claim race is (almost) all and do not wish to cede terrain to “class” or “gender.” We have theorists who preach intersectionality and contend one cannot do “correct analysis” of almost anything unless all these matters are analyzed together. In short, we have a theoretical mess.

Write a 5-6 page critique of the current state of racial theory and develop an outline of an alternative theory that flows from your critique. Make sure you address (even if briefly) the ideas mentioned above and that you cite authors in all these traditions. Also make sure your theoretical alternative is not American-centric (i.e., that your theoretical approach has international applications).

**Answer the following question on methodology.**

Much of what sociologists do involves counterfactual thinking and examining change over time. Using two distinct examples from the reading list discuss and compare the particular approaches employed in each case. This question should be answered in 5-6 pages and you should include 8-10 references from the list. Address the following issues:

- 1) What is the counterfactual thinking and longitudinal analysis in each case study?
- 2) How does the methodology used help/hinder understanding the “racial stratification” effect (Zuberi 2001)?
- 3) What is the level of analysis in the study (macro, meso, or micro) and what is missed specifically (if anything) by not including other levels in the analysis?
- 4) Choose ONE of the case studies and propose an alternative methodology to study the subject at hand which you think would yield a more robust interpretation. Make sure to explain why you believe this is the case.

**Answer ONE of the following five questions in 4-5 pages and cite 6-8 references.**

1) Drawing on the conceptual and empirical literature on whiteness and principles of symbolic interaction, what domains of interactive processes (e.g., defensive othering) would you deem as critical to examine in a study of how inequalities among poor whites and African Americans are created and reproduced? Please select, discuss, and justify the importance of these domains in one context of inequality of your choice (e.g., employment/labor markets; religious settings; education/schools; social services; health care systems; organized sports; marriage market; community political arenas).

2) In what ways does within-group colorism influence opportunities for social mobility among African Americans in the United States? Do these same paths of influence hold true for recent Latino or East Asian Indian immigrants to America? Why?

3) Over 40 years ago, Daniel Patrick Moynihan produced the highly controversial Moynihan Report which identified high joblessness among Black men as a principal cause of poverty and family instability among low African Americans. Was Moynihan right? Is the amelioration of male employment the magic bullet for curing the “ills” of African American males and their families? Why or why not?

4) What does having a strong ethnic/racial identity get you in the current social mobility market in the United States? Compare and contrast two ethnic/racial groups of your choice, highlighting how a prevailing theoretical perspective (also of your choice) informs your understanding of the similarities and differences in “identity capital” and social mobility between the two groups.

5) In mathematics and physics chaos theory has emerged as a theory to presumably apprehend complexity and “disorder.” Despite appearances, chaos theory proponents argue, once one knows the initial conditions of a system or process, one can model its outcomes. Critics point out that what these analysts label as “chaotic systems” are in truth simply more complex forms of systems and that, therefore, no one has truly been able to comprehend “chaos.” Critics point out that a true “chaos theory” necessitates envisioning multiple potential outcomes, processual open ended-ness, and the possibility of systems ending up in a “big crunch” (the extinction of the system altogether).

Using this debate as inspiration, elaborate arguments to explain or predict three of the followings four racial matters:

- 1) The failure of American social scientists to predict racial rebellions in the 1960s and 1990s,
- 2) The varying nature of racial structures in societies across the world,
- 3) Interracial relations in the United States versus Latin America, and
- 4) The final resolution to the racial problems afflicting the world-system.