Using Photovoice to Uncover Perceptions of Poverty and Social Class
NCFR Resource Exchange Roundtable
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Course: SOCI 445 Social Stratification
In this course, we will be using Photovoice as a way to identify and represent your point of view on the topic of social class through photographs and associated narratives. You will need access to something with which to take digital pictures: your phone, a digital camera, or anything else (see me if you do not have access).

Assignment 1: Perceptions of Poverty (second week of class)
For this first assignment, we will be using photovoice to help recognize what defines your ideas, perceptions, and/or experiences of poverty.

1. Go into your community and take photos of poverty:
     - *What do you think poverty looks like?*
     - *What are your perceptions of poverty in the community?*
2. Choose your 3 favorite photos to bring to class:
     - Print each photo on a single piece of paper (black and white is fine)
3. Write a short reflection of each photo (we will also be sharing this in class)
     - Briefly describe your photo
     - What is happening in your photo?
     - Why did you take a picture of this?
     - What does this picture tell us about your life?
     - What does this photo tell others about our community?
4. Submit photos and reflections in a Word document to the D2L Assignment dropbox

Rules of Engagement when Photographing
 - Be discreet. Focus on the community. NO FACES of individual PEOPLE in photos.
 - Be safe. Do NOT put yourself or anyone else at risk in order to get a photo!
 - Never put yourself in an unsafe place. Do not trespass.
 - Never take a photo of criminal activity. Your personal safety is the highest priority, so no photo is ever worth personal danger.
 - Be creative but accurate and truthful about the subject of the photo
 - Be creative. There are always abstract ways to present an idea or tell a story.

Instructor notes: After all the students have shared their photos and reflection, have the students look for common themes in the photos. How did our class describe poverty?

Assignment 2: Class on a Personal Level (after midterm)
For the second assignment, you are to use photovoice to help you see how social class impacts you on a personal level.

1. Take 5 photographs documenting the salience (importance, striking features, and/or highlights) of social class in your everyday life.

2. Engage in theoretical storytelling (analysis):
   - Write a theoretical description of each photograph using the sociological vocabulary learned in the course. Apply a different concept/idea to each photograph. Include a reference to the texts.
   - The description should be approximately 200-300 words. It can include a reflection of what is really happening in the photo and how this relates to your life.
3. Bring your photos and analysis to class:
   - Prepare a powerpoint with each photo and share your narrative with the class
   - Also, submit the powerpoint and analysis to the D2L Assignment dropbox

Instructor notes: One suggestion from the students was to take photos that focus on different areas of life, such as social class in schools, health care, death, etc.

Assignment 3: Perceptions of Poverty Revisited (final weeks of class)
Now that we have discussed poverty and social class throughout the semester, I would like you to revisit your perceptions of poverty.

1. Go into your community and take photos of poverty:
   - *What do you think poverty looks like now?*
   - *What are your perceptions of poverty in the community?*
2. Choose your 3 favorite photos to bring to class:
   - Print each photo on a single piece of paper (black and white is fine)
3. Write a reflection on how your photos compare to your photos in the first assignment. Have your ideas of what poverty looks like changed, and if so in what ways? In what ways are your ideas the same? What can we take away from this assignment?
4. Submit photos and reflection in a Word document to the D2L Assignment dropbox

Instructor notes: Include a group discussion about how students have noticed changing views and attitudes. You could also display the photos from Assignment 1 on the wall, and compare them visually with the photos from Assignment 3. This would help facilitate the discussion.

Final Reflection
Reflect on the use of the photovoice assignments. Include the following:
   Did this project alter your understanding of social class? Explain please.
   What was the easiest part of the project?
   What challenges did you encounter?
   Did this project help you learn more about your own perceptions of poverty and social class? If so, how and/or why?

Optional Gallery Walk
Instructor notes: During MLK week on campus, we will be participating in a Visual Sociology Display, showcasing our favorite photos of social class. Each person will select 2-3 photos to share, along with the written narrative. My goal is to display a sociological story of social class. We will be working out the details as a class to determine how to best approach this and how to select the photos.