

Ethnicity and Race

ECED7005

Session 3

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Definitions of race

A group or set, especially of people, having a common feature or features.

A tribe, nation, or people, regarded as of common stock [...] having in common distinct physical features or ethnic background.

The Problem of Defining 'Race'.

- The placing of the term 'race' in inverted commas is now seen by some sociologists as a useful way of indicating that this manner of categorizing individuals and population groups is not based on any biologically valid distinctions between the genetic make-up of differently identified 'races'.
- Racial categorization is frequently (though not always) based on **phenotypical** differences; that is, differences of facial characteristics, skin colour, and so forth.

(Scott & Marshall 2009)

The Problem of Defining 'Race'.

- 'The sociology of race is largely concerned with examining the causes and consequences of the socially constructed division of social groups according to their so-called race, regardless of whether this is legitimated by reference to any of the above factors, or none of them (as, for example, in the case of anti-semitism)'.

The Reality of 'Race'

- It is argued that the big difference among human groups are the result of culture
- NOT biological inheritance or race
- All human beings belong to the same species and the biological features essential to human life are common to us all
- Yet in spite of this truth and wisdom Racism remains a major hindrance to successful intercultural communication

(Samovar, 2010, p.178)

Personal Racism

- Consists of racist acts, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours on the part of the individual person

(Samovar, 2010: 176)

Definition of Racism

- Racism is the belief in the inherent superiority of a particular race
- It denies the basic equality of humankind and correlates ability with physical composition
- Thus, it assumes that success or failure in any societal endeavour will depend upon genetic endowment rather than environment and access to opportunity

(Samovar, 2010, p.176)

Institutional Racism

- Racial inferiorising or antipathy perpetrated by specific social institutions such as schools, corporations, hospitals, or the criminal justice system as a totality
- It can be intentional or unintentional
- In either case it has a detrimental effect on specific groups and society as a whole

(Samovar, 2010, p.176)

Early Socialisation

- Racism, stereotyping, prejudice are prevalent as they are learned early in life
- Learnt in the same way as culture
- Become part of our way of seeing the world

(Samovar, 2010, p.176)

Definition of Ethnicity

‘Ethnic character; the fact or sense of belonging to a particular ethnic group’

(Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 2009)

What is meant by ethnic group?

Definition of Ethnicity

Anthropologists define ethnic groups as:

- A group which is largely self-perpetuating
- A group which shares fundamental cultural values
- A group which makes up a field of communication and interaction
- A group which has a membership which identifies itself and is identified by others as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order (i.e. other ethnic groups)

Emergence & Persistence of Ethnicity

To understand what constitutes ethnicity we need to answer two interrelated questions:

What is the nature of ethnicity?

- i.e. is ethnicity that is inherited or something that is constructed?

What determines ethnic affiliation or identification?

- What makes a person choose to give their ethnic identity?

Nation, Race and Ethnicity



If a person moves to Wales can they ever be considered to be Welsh??

In anyone born in Wales immediately Welsh?

What is it that makes a person Welsh?

Recap...Race and Ethnicity

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7myLgdZhzjo>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FS4DGri-NBo>

Nation, Race and Ethnicity

What are your thoughts about the following questions?

Is Wales a NATION?

Are the Welsh a separate RACE?

Are the Welsh a separate ETHNIC GROUP?



Ancestry or Physical Attributes?

What is your ethnicity?

Other than a list of categories: white, black, Hispanic etc.

- What does the Question really mean?
- What is your ethnic group membership?
- Which ethnic group are you affiliated with?
- Which ethnic group do you identify yourself with?

Ethnocentrism

- Ethnocentrism is the notion that one's own ethnic culture is superior to any other
- It is the idea that other cultures should be measured by the degree to which they live up to our cultural standards
- We are ethnocentric when we view other cultures through the narrow lens of our own culture or social position

(Samovar, 2010, pp.178-179)

Theoretical Perspectives on Ethnicity

1. Primordialism
2. Constructionism
3. Instrumentalism

Primordialists

- Ethnicity is an ascribed identity or assigned status that is somehow 'given' to us
- It is sometimes inherited from one's ancestors
- E.g. if your forebears are Chinese then you will have inherited physical and cultural characteristics from them
- Thus, from a primordialist perspective, ethnicity is a 'very deeply rooted, primal bond to one's ancestral bloodline'

Primordialists

- Therefore a common ancestry determines ethnicity
- People belong to an ethnic group because members of that group all share common biological and cultural origins

(Yang, 2000: 42)

Primordialists

- The arguments put forward by this school of thought stress the role of primordial factors, lineage and cultural ties in determining ethnicity
- These bonds will give rise to and sustain ethnicity i.e. if you follow this school of thought your ethnicity is innate – it cannot change even over generations

(Geertz, 1973; Isaacs, 1975; van den Berghe, 1981 *cited in* Yang, 2000: 42)

Primordialists

- Socio-biologists attempt to use
 - Scientific approaches
 - Such as Darwinian and natural selection
 - Evolutionary biology
 - Genetics
- To explain social behaviour

(Joireman, 2003, p.34)

The Rwandan Genocide

- In 1994 the majority Hutu population in Rwanda organised themselves and in the course of two months proceeded to murder 800,000 Tutsi people living among them – the overwhelming majority of the Tutsi population
- The genocide was conducted in a methodical way, often through the leadership of the local town governments

(Joireman, 2003, p.34)

The Rwandan Genocide

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SVnOGsJY5RQ>

The Rwandan Genocide

- Hutus were encouraged to kill their **ethnic** Tutsi neighbours as a collective action for the public good
- The underlying causes of this violence were differences between the two ethnic groups that were both ancient and sustained
- **Primordialist perspective:** The Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda were unable to live together in peace because their inherent ethnic identifies set them at odds with each other

(Joireman, 2003: 34)

Primordialists

Tend to focus on:

- Ancient beginnings
- Evolution of an ethnic group over time
- And see ethnicity as a natural state of being

Some Primordialists view ethnicity as defined as;

- Defined by or intimately connected with
- Blood ties
- Or Kinship

Primordialism assumes that ethnic identity is;

- Fixed at birth
- And cannot change

Primordialists

- This type of explanation of the Rwandan genocide
 - one of the most notable and clear examples of ethnic based violence observed in recent times
 - is considered as a primordial justification (i.e. the clear ethnic differences were what caused the genocide)

(Joireman, 2003, p.34)

Social Constructionism

- **Social constructivism**
 - Theoretical school of ethnicity
 - Focuses on the fluid nature of ethnic identities
 - It does identify the role of political and economic factors in moulding ethnicity

(Joireman, 2003,p.34)

Social Constructionism

- **However**

- It addresses the origins of ethnic groups in shared
 - Language
 - Religion
 - And/or physical characteristics
 - Create a set of identities from which one can choose

(Joireman, 2003, p.54)

Social Constructionism

People choose an ethnic identity based on their identity set plus their own preferences

These are formed by

- Economic
- Political
- and even social conditions
- Is more concerned with
 - the emergence and disappearance of ethnic groups and movement

(Joireman, 2003, p.54)

The Rwandan Genocide

- In 1994 800,000 Tutsis were killed in Rwanda
- They were killed by Hutu people who desired to end the dominant role that Tutsis had played in the government and armed forces of Rwanda
- Moderate Hutus who opposed the violence or were involved in political alliances with the Tutsis were also killed

(Joireman, 2003: 34)

The Rwandan Genocide

- The reasons behind the genocide were the struggle for political power coupled with a desire for revenge on the Tutsi who had been favoured in terms of educational opportunities and political leadership during the colonial era
- This favoured position of the Tutsi was based on German and Belgian beliefs in the superiority of the generally taller and lighter skinned Tutsi
- Social constructionist explanation: Thus, in the case of Rwanda the ethnic violence that developed referenced an earlier era in which ethnicity was both constructed and manipulated to divide and conquer the country

Social Constructionism: The Formation of Ethnic Identity

Ascribed Traits + Social Inputs = Ethnic Identity

Ascribed Traits

- Appearance
- Place of birth
- Language

Social Inputs

- Ancestral myths
- Subjective beliefs
- Political power of group
- Economics
- Religion
- Language

Social Constructionism

Activity:

- What is your Ethnic Identity?
- Think about your Ascribed Traits and Social Inputs.

Instrumentalists

- Ethnicity as the means to some specific political end
 - It is focused on the goals for ethnic groups rather than the origins
- Instrumentalists believe ethnicity is changeable
 - It is **NOT** a characteristic acquired at birth and consistent over time
 - Ethnic identities may be important at some times and in some circumstances and completely absent at other times

(Joireman, 2003, p.54)

Instrumentalism & Politics

Instrumentalism is a belief that...

- Ethnic identities develop and nationalism ensues in the pursuit of particular political goals
- Thus they believe that ethnicity is manipulated and used by elites to achieve political goals or some form of political mobilization

(Joireman, 2003, p.54)

Instrumentalists

- There is an acknowledgement of
 - object markers of ethnicity such as
 - Symbols, Customs, Language or even appearances
- But focuses on
 - behaviours rather than appearance as defining an ethnic group
- We can define a person's ethnic identity
 - by examining their actions and choices

The Rwandan Genocide

- When Rwanda became independent in 1962, power was supposed to change hands from the Belgium colonial administration to the hands of an indigenous government composed mostly of Hutus, the group that comprised the majority of the population.
- This peaceful transfer of power was blocked by the minority Tutsi groups in the Rwandan population (about 15%) who wanted to retain control of positions they had long held under the colonial administration as the favoured ethnic group

(Joireman, 2003, p.4)

The Rwandan Genocide

- Civil war broke out, forcing many Tutsis to flee the country into neighbouring Congo and Uganda as refugees
- The Hutu took over the government and remained in power until 1994, challenged by armed Tutsi opposition movements from the early 1990s forward
- Violence broke out between Hutus and Tutsis in 1973, when the Tutsis were expelled from universities and public jobs because they exceeded ethnic quotas which had been set

(Joireman, 2003, p.34)

The Rwandan Genocide

- As a result of the restrictive quotas and the violence more Tutsi left Rwanda
- In 1994, the Hutu people, led by members of the media and their own local governments, killed 800,000 Tutsi Rwandans and moderate Hutus over 100 days;
- Most of the killing was done with machetes in local communities by community members.
- Instrumentalist perspective: The Hutus were led into the genocide violence by a desire to retain power and control of Rwanda

(Joireman, 2003, p.34)

Instrumentalists Explanation

- Some would argue that the behaviour of the Hutus illustrates the instrumentalist theory of ethnicity
- Instrumentalism is a belief that
 - **ethnic identities develop**
 - **and**
 - **nationalism ensues**
 - **in the pursuit of particular political goals**

Multi-culturalism: What does it Mean?

- The **demographic-descriptive** usage occurs where 'multicultural' is used to refer to the existence of ethnically or racially diverse segments in the population of a society or State.
- It represents a perception that such differences have some social significance-primarily because of perceived cultural differences though these are frequently associated with forms of structural differentiation.

Multi-culturalism: What does it mean?

- The **ideological-normative** usage of multiculturalism is that which generates the greatest level of debate since it constitutes a slogan and model for political action based on sociological theorising and ethical-philosophical consideration about the place of those with culturally distinct identities in contemporary society.

Multi-culturalism: What does it mean?

- Multiculturalism emphasises that acknowledging the existence of ethnic diversity and ensuring the rights of individuals to retain their culture should go hand in hand with enjoying full access to, participation in, and adherence to, constitutional principles and commonly shared values prevailing in the society.

Multi-culturalism: What does it mean?

- In the **programmatic-political** usage 'multiculturalism' refers to specific types of programs and policy initiatives designed to respond to and manage ethnic diversity.
- It was in this usage that 'multiculturalism' first gained currency after it was recommended in the 1965 Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism.

Multi-culturalism: What does it mean?

- This Report recommended that multiculturalism replace the bicultural policy based on the British and French Charter groups around whom policies for ethnic diversity in Canadian society had been organised for over a century.

List of Ethnic Groups Taken from 2011 Census

White

- English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British
- Irish
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Any other White background

List of Ethnic Groups Taken from 2011 Census

Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other Mixed or Multiple ethnic background
- **What groups have been added in 2021?**

List of Ethnic Groups Taken from 2011 Census

Asian or Asian British

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background

List of Ethnic Groups Taken from 2011 Census

Black, African, Caribbean or Black British

- African
- Caribbean
- Any other Black, African or Caribbean background

(Roma, Sikh, Jewish and Somali may be added in 2021)

(Gov.UK, no date)

Ethnicity

In the UK today...

- Legally every race is accepted
- Interracial families are not frowned upon
- Equal pay for every race

Does this always happen...?

BAME

- **Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)** households in the UK are over twice as likely to live in poverty as their white counterparts
- nearly half of Black African Caribbean households were in poverty, compared with just under one in five white families
- BAME families as a whole were between two and three times as likely to be in persistent poverty than white households.

(Social Metrics Commission, 2019)

BAME

- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) young adults continue to be at a greater risk of being unemployed than White young adults:
- BAME young adults are 58% more likely to be unemployed compared to the White group (7.9 percentage points compared to 5 percentage points).

(Carnegie UK Trust, 2020)

BAME

More specifically, the White group have a 5.1% probability of being unemployed:

- The Other group have a 9.2% probability of being unemployed.
- The Pakistani group have a 9.1% probability of being unemployed.
- The Black African group have a 8.7% probability of being unemployed.
- Those of Mixed Heritage are 8.2% probability of being unemployed.

(Carnegie UK Trust, 2020)

Race report statistics

Employment

- Unemployment rates were significantly higher for ethnic minorities at 12.9 per cent compared with 6.3 per cent for White people
- Black workers with degrees earn 23.1 per cent less on average than White workers
- In Britain, significantly lower percentages of ethnic minorities (8.8 per cent) worked as managers, directors and senior officials, compared with White people (10.7 per cent) and this was particularly true for African or Caribbean or Black people (5.7 per cent) and those of mixed ethnicity (7.2 per cent)
- Black people who leave school with A-levels typically get paid 14.3 per cent less than their White peers

(EHRC, 2020)

Race report statistics

Education

- Just 6 per cent of Black school leavers attended a Russell Group university, compared with 12 per cent of mixed and Asian school leavers and 11 per cent of White school leavers
- Black Caribbean and Mixed White/Black Caribbean children have rates of permanent exclusion about three times that of the pupil population as a whole

(EHRC, 2020)

Race report statistics

Health and Care

- There is a significant disproportionate number of ethnic minorities detained under mental health legislation in hospitals in England and Wales
- Black African women were seven times more likely to be detained than White British women
- Gypsies, Travellers and Roma were found to suffer poorer mental health than the rest of the population in Britain and they were also more likely to suffer from anxiety and depression

(EHRC, 2020)

Gypsy Roma and Traveller Ethnic Groups

- Highlighted by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in 2016 as being one of the four most disadvantaged groups in the UK
(EHRC, 2016)
- The 2011 Census included a “Gypsy and Irish Traveller” category for the first time. The Census put the combined Gypsy and Irish Traveller population in England and Wales as 57,680. (Is this accurate?)
- Family, extended family bonds and networks are very important to the Gypsy and Traveller way of life, as is a distinct identity from the settled ‘Gorja’ or ‘country’ population.
- Gypsies and Travellers generally marry young and respect their older generation.
- (Roma now included in 2021 census)

(The Traveller Movement, 2020)

Gypsy Roma and Traveller Families

- Rapid economic change, recession, the gradual dismantling of the ‘grey’ economy, the criminalisation of ‘travelling’ and the dire shortage of authorised private or council sites have driven many into hard times and many have been forced to give up their nomadic lifestyle.
- A study in Ireland put the suicide rate of Irish Traveller men as 3-5 times higher than the wider population and evidence suggests that the same phenomenon is happening amongst Traveller communities in the UK

(The Traveller Movement, 2020)

How do we Perceive Gypsy Roma and Traveller Ethnic Groups?

- Take a minute or two to think about this and feedback...

Common Myths...

- All Gypsies/ Roma/ Travellers live in caravans
- Everyone has 'Big Fat Weddings'
- All young women/ girls dress provocatively
- Gypsies, Roma and Travellers are workshy, lack education, and aspire to live on benefits
- <https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Policy-and-Performance/MythsandFactsGypsiesand-travellers.pdf>

The politics of nationalism and racism

The politics of nationalism and racism in post-Brexit Britain | LSE Research

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5Z2pydF_hw

Racism in the UK

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sI607wWfMSw>

Racism in the UK | DW Documentary

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTr29p4H4TE>

COVID19 and BAME

Racism in the UK

- Do you think that racism has decreased in the last 20 years?
OR...Is racism alive and well in the UK in the 21st Century?

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