

Virtual Ethnicity

- Ethnic Identity Construction
in the Internet -

02.11.04

Ethnicity II



Today's session

1. Observations
2. Last session: ethnicity in comparison
3. Transactional ethnicity
4. Example: The virtual second generation
5. Next session



Observation

- Any problems, questions, remarks on your observations?
 - dealing with mass of information
 - eg. by focussing on an issue or an interactive element
 - style of reports
 - will be commented on in course of term



Ethnicity in different countries

- the term ethnicity is used in many countries
- the local meaning and usage of the term differs however
- there are different concepts of ethnic minorities



Some types of ethnic groups

Ethnic groups can be considered any of the following:

- groups which have a (mythic) „homeland“ abroad
 - which live in the country since centuries
 - which have migrated recently
- groups which have an own language
- regional groups
- religious groups
- tribes
- groups which differ phenotypically
- those who are considered different
- those who consider themselves different
- ...

» Discussion: How do eg. Roma fit?



Context determines concepts

- the historical, social and political context determines the use of terms
- in the Philippines tribes are central
- in Germany foreigners
- in Romania non-Romanian speaking groups
- etc.



Theoretical approaches to ethnicity

- according to Hutchinson and Smith (1996)
dominant:
 - primordial: given ethnicity
 - Instrumentalist: ethnicity used as instrument
 - alternative:
 - eg. transactional: Barth

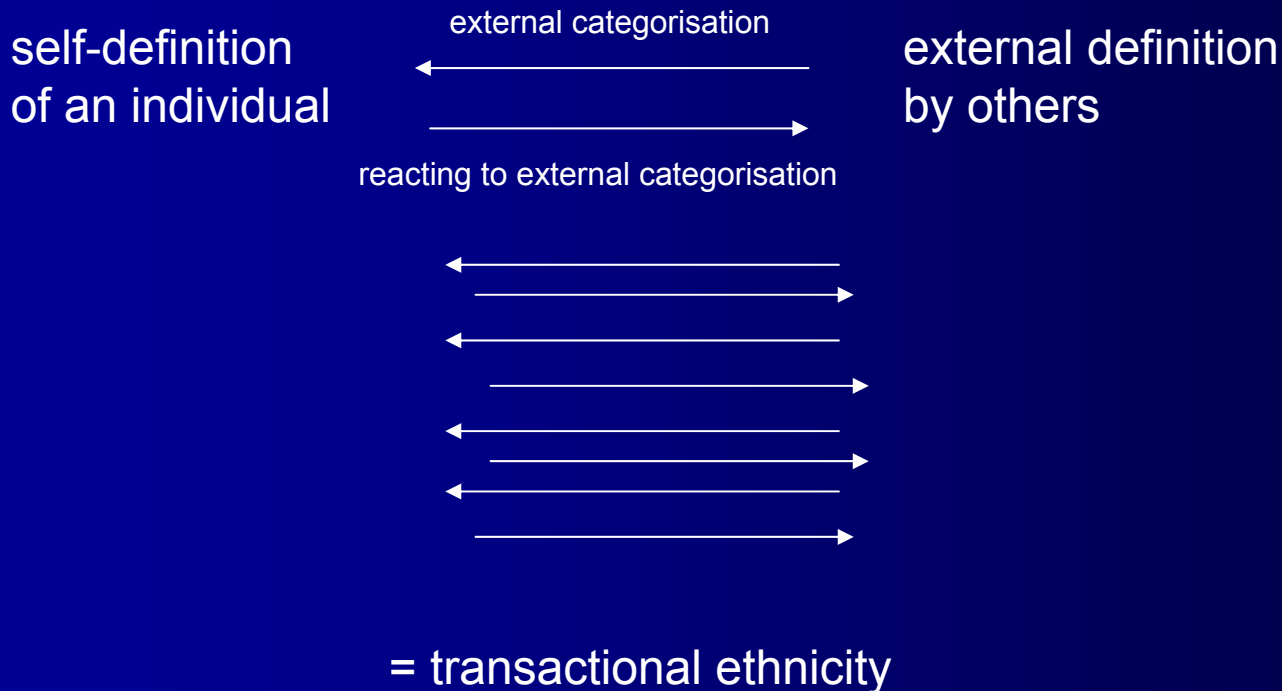


Jenkins (1994)

1. Is ethnicity something given?
2. What role play categories in defining ethnicity?
3. What is transactional about ethnicity?
4. How does Jenkins definition of ethnicity relate to or differ from the colloquial use in the different countries?



Transactional ethnicity



Transactional ethnicity

- ethnicity is not something given
- ethnic identity is formed through a continuous interaction of external and internal definition
- there are different ways of reacting to external definitions
- there are several sources of external definition
- power and authority determine the influence
- transactional ethnicity is a process
- which is never completed



Further concepts

- Barth (1969)
 - communities need boundaries
- Cohen (1985)
 - communities need symbols



Racism

- What is racism?
- How does the concept of ethnicity relate to racism?
- What about the term race?

- racism is a form of external definition
- which has impact on self definition



The virtual second generation

- observation:
 - [Nazi postings](#) on www.theinder.net
- questions:
 - Are these genuine Nazis?
 - How do users react?
- reporting:
 - What has happened?
 - What is the context?
 - What questions does this raise?



Next session: 09.11.04

- topic: diaspora
- text: Clifford (1994)
- question: What does diaspora mean?
- assignment:
- weekly report with topic:
 - Are there signs of transactional ethnicity?

