

Virtual Ethnicity

- Ethnic Identity Construction
in the Internet -

09.11.04

Diaspora



Today's session

1. Last session: transactional ethnicity
2. 9th November in Germany
3. Observation
4. Diaspora
5. Next session

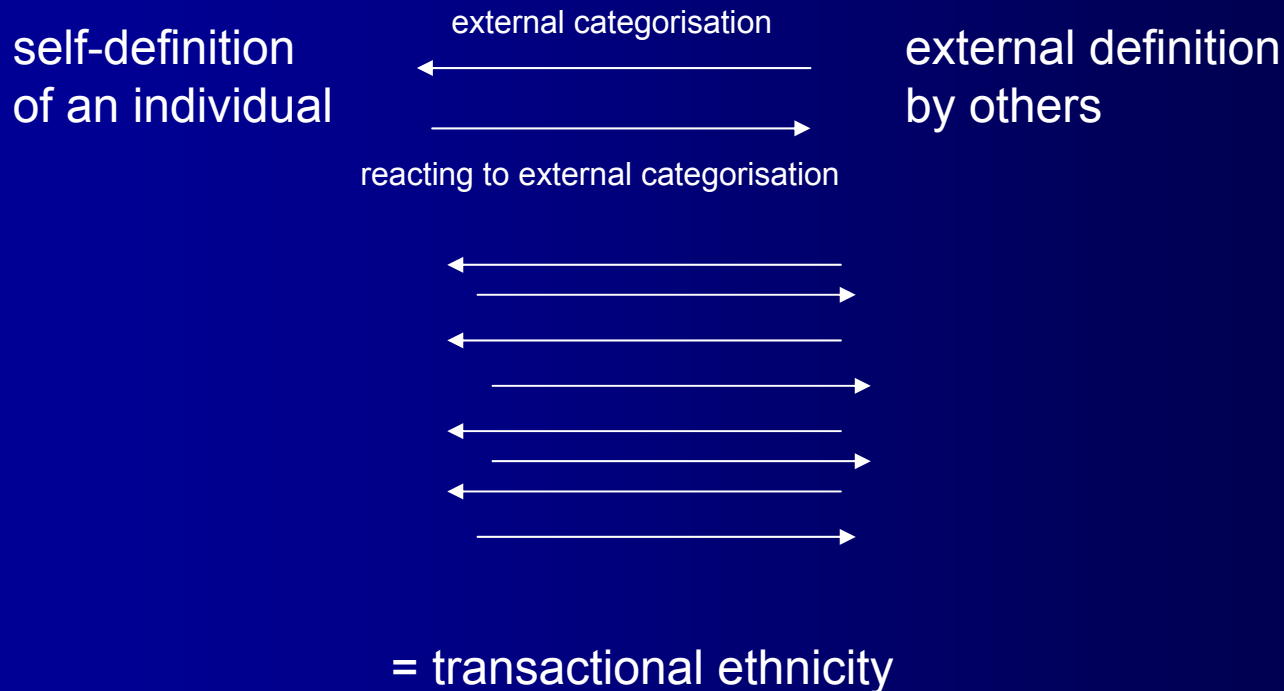


Transactional ethnicity

- many theoretical approaches to ethnicity
- transactional ethnicity one of them
- bases on Barth (1969)
 - communities need boundaries
- Cohen (1985)
 - communities need symbols
- Jenkins (1994) develops further



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



Racism

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



9th November in Germany

- 1848: End of the March revolution
- 1918: November revolution
- 1923: Hitler attempts a coup
- 1938: *Reichskristallnacht*
- 1989: Fall of the wall



Observation

- Any problems, questions, remarks on your observations?
 - observe flaming and digressing
 - be open in your observation (open for surprises)
 - analyse statistics
 - analyse who is responsible for the site and how they represent themselves
 - apply theoretical concepts
 - individual discussion of observations with me possible



Observations

- How can one observe transactional ethnicity?
 - self-definition
 - presented in articles, forums, etc.
 - external definition
 - articulated in forums
 - presented in articles, links
 - transaction
 - analyse the presentations of the self
 - how are they reacting to what?
 - how do they deal with external definitions explicitly and implicitly?



Traditional meaning of diaspora

- Saffran (1991, 83):
- „the exile of the Jews from their historic homeland and their dispersion throughout many lands“



Saffran's definition of diaspora

expatriate minority communities

share several of these characteristics:

1. dispersed from original „center“ to two or more „peripheral“ regions
2. collective memory, myth about homeland
3. feeling partly alienated from host society
4. idea of return
5. committed to maintenance of homeland
6. relate to homeland



Types of Diasporas according to Cohen (1997)

1. Victim diasporas:

- Jews, Africans and Armenians

2. Labour and imperial diasporas:

- Indians and British

3. Trade diasporas:

- Chinese and Lebanese

4. Cultural diasporas:

- the Caribbean case



Clifford's definition

- „Decentered, lateral connections may be as important as those formed around a teleology of origin/ return. And a shared, ongoing history of displacement, suffering, adaptation, or resistance may be as important as the projection of a specific origin.“ (1994, 306)
- How does this differ from Saffran?
- What points are stressed by Clifford?



Saffran and Clifford in comparison

- Saffran focuses his definition on
 - a home country
- Clifford focuses on
 - the connections in the diaspora
 - he stresses routes rather than roots
 - transnationalism rather than nationalism



Diaspora and ethnicity

- both are categories which are used
- they are used also as self-definitions
- diaspora is something collective



From my research

- seminar at the University of Heidelberg
- on South Asian Diaspora
- essays written
- struggling with the concept of diaspora
- eg.
 - Indian nuns and IT specialists
 - relate to their jobs not home country (cosmopolitans)
 - Tamil restaurant owner
 - individualist



Next session: 16.11.04

- topic: hybridity
- text: Werbner (1997)
- question: What is hybridity?

- assignment:
- weekly report with topic:
 - Is diaspora an issue in the observed space?

