

Virtual Ethnicity

- Ethnic Identity Construction
in the Internet -

18.01.05

1. Virtual Ethnicity
2. Case Study: Virtual Islam



Today's session

1. Last sessions
2. Observations, problems
3. Impressions from India: Identities
4. Evaluation/ Break
5. Virtual Islam
6. Virtual Ethnicity
7. Next session



Last sessions

1. before christmas:

- Virtual communities (Mareile Paske)
- Presentation by Miruna Covaci and Luana Martin
- Revision class

2. last week: presentations



Specificity of internet

- speed
 - easy access and exit
 - overcoming distance
 - anonymity and freedom of expression
 - contact with others like oneself
 - control through moderators
 - power of webmasters, question of legitimacy
- raising issues of security



Further comments on presentations

- Line of arguing
 - in social and cultural anthropology:
 - start with empirical material
 - Develop theoretical questions from this
 - Discuss theory
 - Same for essay



Observation

- Any problems, questions, remarks on your observations, reports?
 - changes
 - (influence of) expectations
 - purposeful actions or signs of development?
 - indirect collection of information
 - registered users



Webmasters and community

- Are the webmasters leaders of the virtual community?
- What role do the webmasters have?
- How do we learn more about the community?



Impressions from India: Identities

- Which terms to use?
- Do they define identities?
- Who is excluded by labelling?
- What contexts are excluded by identity politics?



Miller & Slater: theory

- (2000, 10-11)
- expansive realization:
 - enact a version of oneself or culture
 - that is regarded as old or even originary
 - but could not be realised so far
 - i.e. „one can become what one thinks one really is“
- expansive potential:
 - envisage a quite novel vision of what one could be



Miller & Slater, Chapter 4

- What is the difference between „Being Trini“ and „Representing Trinidad“?
- How are they linked?
- How is the internet used for both?



Case study: Virtual Islam

Mandaville (2003, 135):

„... we need to understand these media as spaces of communication in which the identity, meaning and boundaries of diasporic communities are continually constructed, debated and reimagined.“

Discuss.



Virtual ethnicity

- What is virtual ethnicity?



Next session: 25.01.05

- Topic: Race and Racism in the Internet
- Reading:
 - Kolko et al (2000), 1-13.
 - McPherson (2000)
- Weekly report

