



Lecture 2:

Group identity and the need to
belong



Social identity theory (SIT)

- Theory of inter-group behaviour: group membership is a real, vital and true part of every individual
- 1979: Tajfel & Turner
- To understand the Ψ basis of inter-group discrimination

Studies of inter-group behaviour

- Sherif's idea of *realistic inter-group conflict*
- *Social identity theory* & Tajfel's experiments with *minimal groups*
- General tendency to privilege ingroup members over outgroup members
- People are in search of a positive social identity, which they accomplish by making a positive distinction between their ingroup and other relevant groups.



National identity and the 'Other'

- 'us' versus 'them'
- in-group (*our* group): a group one identifies with & 'ingroup bias'
- out-group (*the other* group): a group one does not identify with & 'outgroup homogeneity bias'
- Main 3 elements of SIT: identification, social comparison, social categorisation



Stereotype

- Ordering chaos of the world & categorising
- Simplification
- Generalisation
- Exaggeration
- Negative (Scots are stingy, Montenegrins are lazy) and positive (Italians are romantic, Germans are diligent etc.)
- National stereotypes: autostereotypes, heterostereotypes, metastereotypes



Prejudice

- The process of *pre-judging* somebody or something
- A value judgement made without any verification and without empirical base in reality
- Based on generalised and stereotypical images and judgements, simplified
- Very resilient to change



Ethnocentrism

- The general term for the belief that your own group's cultural traditions and values are correct and superior to all others.
- It is usually coupled with dislike and even contempt for people who have other cultural traditions.
- It is universal – all around the world people have these beliefs to some degree.
- Most neighbouring ethnic groups resort to ethnocentrism, using ethnic, linguistic, religious, ... whatever criteria to make reliable distinctions.
- Ethnocentrism is not racism, though it is usually connected with racism.



Racism

- Ideology of racial domination
- Based on beliefs that certain 'racial groups' are (biologically or culturally) inferior/superior
- Racism uses such beliefs to justify the way a given society treats certain groups (discrimination, segregation, etc.)
- Harmful prejudice, discrimination, and/or persecution based on presumed ethnic/racial differences.



Xenophobia

- Fear, dislike, contempt and hate towards the 'others', those different, the 'them' in opposition to 'us'
- Usually directed against a population group present within a society, which is not considered part of that society (e.g. immigrants)



Next week's reading list:

- From the "**Ethnicity**" Oxford reader (Hutchinson & Smith, 1996): Manning Nash 'The Core Elements of Ethnicity'; T. H. Eriksen 'Ethnicity, Race, Class and Nation' (also available in The Ethnicity Reader & <http://folk.uio.no/geirthe/Ethnicity.html>); Pierre van den Berghe 'Does race matter?'; Fredrik Barth 'Ethnic groups and boundaries'
- From the "**Nationalism**" Oxford reader (Hutchinson & Smith, 1994): Renan and Connor if you haven't read it already + Ernest Gellner 'Nationalism and Modernization' (+ 'Nationalism and High Cultures'); Benedict Anderson 'Imagined Communities'
- From "**The Ethnicity Reader**" (Guibernau & Rex, 1997) read Anthony D. Smith 'Structure and persistence of ethnies'; Benedict Anderson 'The nation and the origins of national consciousness'
- And check the info system for pdf files!