



İSTANBUL  
**GELİŞİM**  
**ÜNİVERSİTESİ**

# INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

**NATION – RACE – ETHNICITY**

WEEK 10

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# Social Groups

- Individuals are members of different social groups
- Most of our social world is designed in interaction with social groups
- They are part of our perspective in understanding the social reality
- We identify with certain groups, but not with others



# Social Groups

- In-group: a group one identifies with
- Out-group: a group one does not identify with
- A tendency to privilege in group members over outgroup members
- People are in search of a positive social identity, which they accomplish by making a positive distinction between their in group and other relevant groups.
- A certain level of understanding through stereotypes is involved in our relations
- Similarly, our understanding is created by certain definitions developed through time



## Basic concepts: Ethnicity

- Ethny = *ethnie* (French) = ethnic group
- “Ethnicity is a shared cultural heritage. People define themselves—or others—as members of an ethnic category based on common ancestry, language, or religion that gives them a distinctive social identity.” (Sociology:p.320)
- Ethnic group refers to common cultural tradition and shared identity of a group in a larger society.



## Basic concepts: Nation

- Nation:
- A group of people sharing “assumed blood ties, race, language, region, religion, custom” (Gertz )
- “A nation only exists when a state has a unified administrative reach over the territory over which its sovereignty is claimed.” (Giddens)
- “A psychological bond that joins a people and differentiates it from all other people...” (Connor)



## Basic concepts: Race

- Race: “A race is a socially constructed category of people who share biologically transmitted traits that members of a society consider important. People may classify one another racially based on physical characteristics such as skin color, facial features, hair texture, and body shape.” Macionis (Sociology:p.320)
- “Although we think of race in terms of biological elements, race is a socially constructed concept. It is true that human beings differ in any number of ways involving physical traits, but a “race” comes into being only when the members of a society decide that some physical trait (such as skin color or eye shape) actually matters.” Macionis (Sociology:p.322)



## Basic concepts: Ethnicity

- Prejudices:

“Prejudices are prejudgments that can be either positive or negative. Our positive prejudices tend to exaggerate the virtues of people like ourselves, and our negative prejudices condemn those who differ from us. Negative prejudice can be expressed as anything from mild dislike to outright hostility. Because such attitudes are rooted in culture, everyone has at least some prejudice. Prejudice often takes the form of a stereotype (...) a simplified description applied to every person in some category. Many white people hold stereotypical views of minorities. Stereotyping is especially harmful to minorities in the workplace.” Macionis (Sociology:p.324)



# Prejudices

- Prejudices may lead to ethnocentrism, xenophobia, racism, extreme nationalism or chauvinism.
- **Ethnocentrism:** Evaluating other cultures by taking one's own culture as a reference.
- **Xenophobia:** Hatred towards strangers; often people from other cultures, religions, ethnicities and races.
- **Racism:** is the belief on the superiority of one race over another,
- **Extreme Nationalism:** Keeping one's own nation as a reference point in evaluating other groups by keeping a sense of superiority.
- **Chauvinism:** Extreme patriotism and aggressive sense of national superiority.





# Nationalism

Nationalism:

- Ideology/doctrine of popular freedom and sovereignty
- Entailing fraternity within a single historic homeland, legal equality among all members and a singular shared public culture
- A collective authentic identity



## Nation - State

- A territorial-political unit (a state) whose borders coincide or nearly coincide with the territorial distribution of a national group. A state in which a nation of principally the same type of people exists, organized by either race or cultural background. In the nation-state, generally, everyone would speak the same language, and share a set of cultural, “national,” values.



## Debates on Nations: Modernism vs : Primordialism

- Nationalists argue that nations are timeless phenomena started from the first groupings of humanity.
- Modernists see nations as entirely modern and constructed.,



## Benedict Anderson: Imagined Communities

- Anderson sees nations and nationalism as products of the modern world
- For him despite their relatively recent origins, nations like to see themselves as having ancient origins
- For Anderson nations are best thought of as ‘imagined communities’; communities having an imagined form of social solidarity and a horizontal comradeship of citizens.
- Horizontal comradeship: The members of a nation will never know each other or live physically together, but each think that the others share similar experiences: read the same newspapers, celebrate the same national holidays, watch the same television programs, share a common culture etc.



## Benedict Anderson: Imagined Communities

- For Anderson, the rise of capitalism and the inclusion of the masses into politics were important for the development of nations
- In addition, the emergence of printing press enabled the construction of a shared horizontal knowledge about the political agenda.
- By the decline of religion; nation took its place as a link to death and immortality.



## Anthony Smith: The Ethnic Origins of Nations

- Smith claims that the roots of nations are found in pre-modern ethnic communities
- Nationalism discovers the ethnic past of the nation as an important source of myths and memories

According to Smith an ethnic community has the following features:

- Shared collective name
- Shared history
- Shared culture, especially language and religion (creates sense of separateness from others)
- Association with specific territory
- Sense of solidarity which overrides class and other divisions.



## Anthony Smith: The Ethnic Origins of Nations

- The modern nation-state incorporates citizenship rights, a unified economy, compact territory, and a single mass culture
- Nation, relatedly, is a developed version of the earlier ethnic community