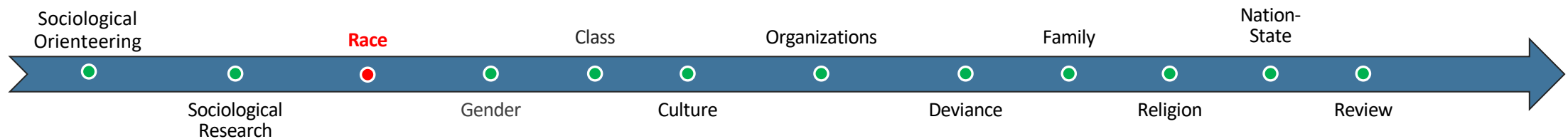


WEEK 3

Race & Ethnicity

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SC1101E Making Sense of Society



SC1101E MRT Line

MIND THE GAP

IDEAS

IDENTITIES

INTERACTIONS

INSTITUTIONS

Sociological
Orienteering

Race

Class

Organizations

Family

Nation-
State

Sociological
Research

Gender

Culture

Deviance

Religion

Review

Racist Math Problems



<https://youtu.be/jZtlJnTxnw>

Race and Ethnicity

□ Race

- a categorization of people based on perceived **biological** commonalities.
- epigenetic inheritance, physical traits (skin shade, hair type, height, etc.)

□ Ethnicity

- categorization based on discourses of **cultural** commonalities.
- language, religion, geographical origin, etc.

❖ Social constructs

- ideas that are created and given much importance as part of everyday functioning of society (part of historical processes and political claims).
- debate on race as a social construct – the argument that race is not rooted in biological difference fails to explain why physical variations are not related to racial boundaries. [We can see race!]

The Social Construction of Race

Country	Racial Classification	Ethnic Classification
Japan	No official categories – Japanese (98.1)	Ethnic minorities (Ainu and Okinawans), minority group/caste (Burakumins), foreigners.
USA	White Americans (77%) African-Americans (13.4%) Asian-Americans (5.9%) Native Americans (0.8%) Hawaiian & Pacific Is. (0.2%)	Hispanics and Latinos Irish, Italians, Arabs, etc. Black Caribbeans, African-Brazilians, etc. Chinese, Indians, Filipinos, etc. Cherokee, Inuit, etc. Western Samoans, Chamorros, etc.
Singapore	Chinese (76.2%) Malays (15.0%) Indians (7.4%) Others (1.4%)	Hakkas, Teochews, Peranakans, etc. Bugis, Boyanese, etc. Tamils, Bengalis, Punjabis, etc. Eurasians, Filipinos, etc.

The Social Construction of Ethnicity

- ❑ **Ethnic group** – a distinct population sharing a perceived common ancestry or geographical origin.
 - **selective forgetting** - a process by which people forget, dismiss, or fail to pass on an ethnic heritage.
 - **ethnic renewal** - one seeks to identify with a “forgotten” ethnic group.
 - **involuntary ethnicity** – subsumed under creates an umbrella ethnic category (i.e., Hispanic in the US, CMIO in Singapore).
- ❑ **Majority group** - The ethnic group who **controls valued resources** in society.
- ❑ **Minority groups** – subgroups distinguished by physical and cultural attributes, often **systematically excluded**.



The Consequences of Race and Ethnic Classification



- ❑ **Amalgamation** – happens when a majority group and a minority group/s merge to form a new group (e.g., the US as a “melting pot”).
- ❑ **Assimilation** – happens when one ceases to identify and abandons her racial or ethnic group to become part of another.
- **“Rojak integration”** – racial/ethnic mixing without losing the uniqueness of each part.
- ❑ **Segregation** – the physical or social separation of a people according to their race or ethnicity.
 - **De facto segregation** – communities develop into separate enclaves.
 - **De jure segregation** – laws separate people into different groups.

Race/Ethnicity and Inequality

- ❑ **Stereotypes** – widely held, simplistic, and sweeping description of members of a group (“typical characteristics”).
- ❑ **Prejudice** – (a thought process)
 - a stereotype that is upheld despite evidence against it.
- ❑ **Discrimination** – (an action)
 - practices detrimental to members of minority groups.
 - unequal treatment that is unrelated to ability, usually motivated by prejudice
 - individual or institutionalized (by organizations or state)



<https://www.psd.gov.sg/challenge/ideas/deep-dive/let-s-talk-about-race>

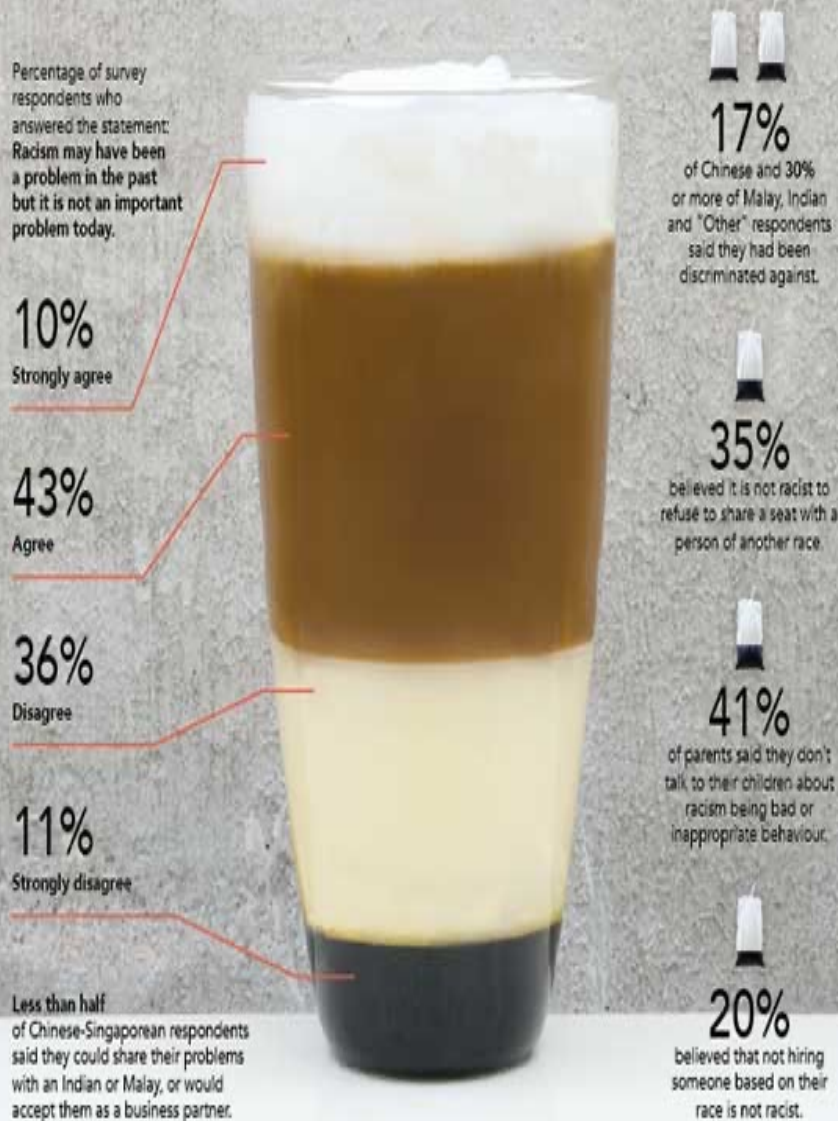
Discrimination and Dress Codes



- ❑ **Dress codes are a matter of public safety.**
 - used to limit patrons to a preferred clientele.
 - mostly directed at men, lower class, and minorities (often African-Americans, hip-hop culture).
- ❑ **Three responses to dress code enforcement:**
 1. they are racially discriminatory
 - a. nothing distinctive about permitted/not permitted clothing.
 - b. African-American clothing were quite expensive.
 2. unfortunate to have but not related to race
 - just insurance against wrong people, not unachievable
 3. bouncers selectively enforce the dress code
 - dress codes as race codes, constrained by race even when it comes to a night out.

Are we racist?

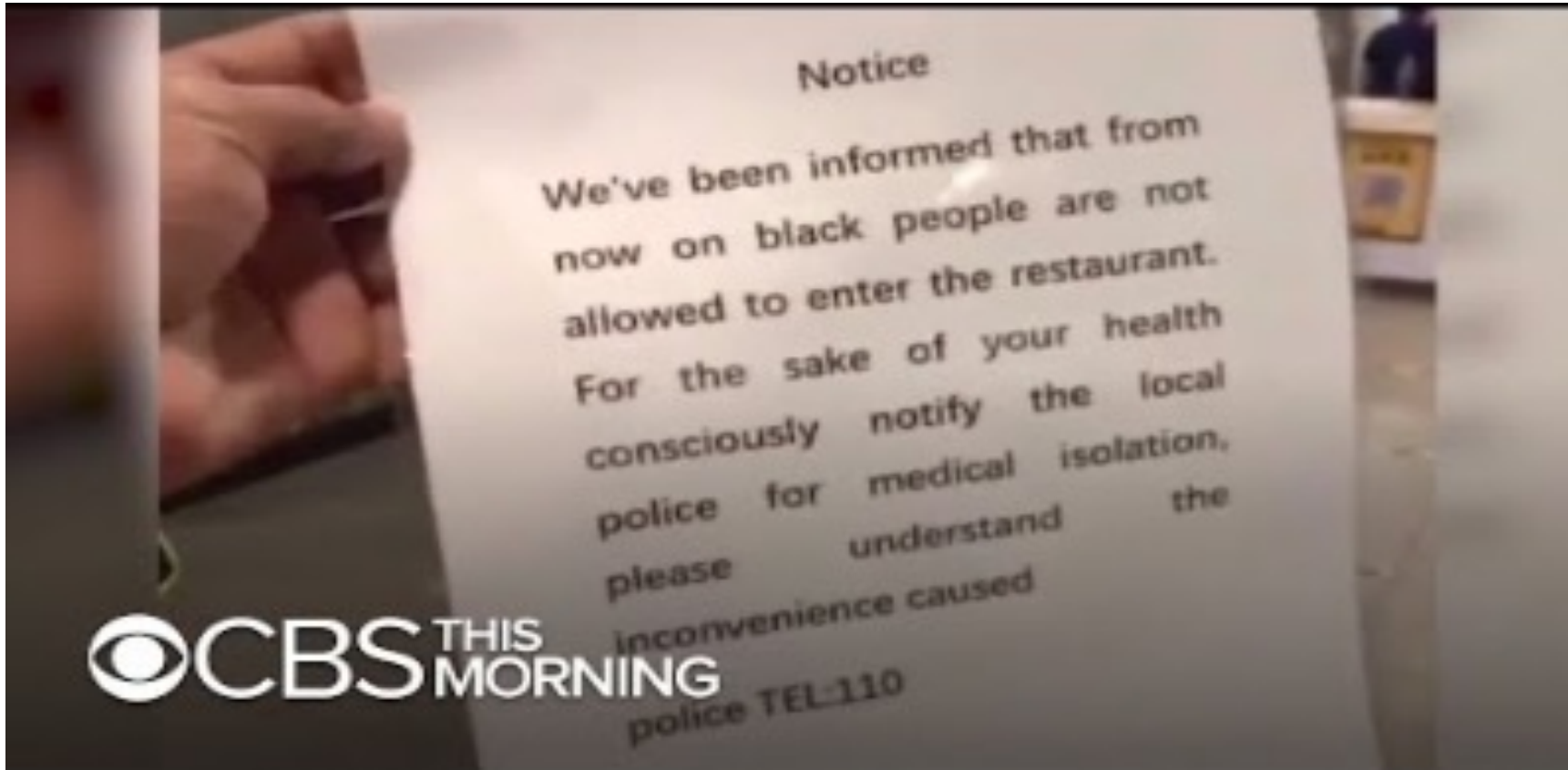
Channel NewsAsia and the Institute of Policy Studies surveyed 2,000 Singaporeans in 2016, asking them a range of questions on racial discrimination.



Ethnocentrism and Racism

- Ethnocentrism – the belief that one's group is superior to all other groups and serves as a yardstick against all the others are measured.
- Racism – a set of beliefs about the superiority of one racial or ethnic group.
 - **Scientific racism** – use of evolutionary “science” to support racial rankings (from savage to civilized).
 - Used to justify inequality
 - Often rooted in the assumption that differences between groups are genetic.

Racism and the Pandemic



<https://youtu.be/xiLKOj-UUKY>

Engaging Society: Viral Racism

- ❑ Do you think that this reaction to the deadly virus outbreak is a form of racism? Why?
 - a. Yes, it discriminates against certain groups.
 - b. No, people were just concerned about their safety.
- ❑ What solution can you suggest to stop this issue from escalating?

World

Chinese communities in Italy warn of 'racism' over Wuhan coronavirus



A woman wearing a mask walks in Via Paolo Sarpi, the commercial street in a Chinese district of Milan. (Photo: AFP/Miguel MEDINA)

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/wuhan-virus-coronavirus-italy-racism-12373002>

Understanding Race and Ethnicity: The Four Sociological Approaches

Functionalism	Conflict	Interactionist	Reorientationist
political stability economic development	dynamics of power and disparity between groups	explores how race or ethnicity is experienced	finding the historical roots of racial and ethnic conflicts, comparative race/ethnic analysis
impact of immigrants, link of race/ethnicity to insurgency and security, social cohesion among groups	split-labor market: white collar (majority group), blue collar (minority). affirmative action – a policy promoting greater inclusion of minorities	development of “racial myths” (abstract picture of other ethnic groups) identity-formation, stigma (physical trait or other attributes that disqualifies one from full social acceptance	racial/ethnic division as a legacy of colonialism colonial exploitation and underdevelopment

Conclusion



Race and ethnicity as **social constructs** – labels that we treat as “real,” forgetting that they are made up.



Race and ethnicity are important because of the **social meanings** people have attached to it.



Race and ethnicity allow **social inequality** to be created and maintained.