

Chapter 9

1. Here are some competing theories and concepts pertaining to race and racial categories used or criticized by sociologists. Match the authors whose ideas are discussed at various points in the text to the ideas listed in the right-hand column from A to F. You will need to read from pages 167 to 173 plus the Global Thinkers feature in order to find the relevant excerpts and discussions.

J. Rex	A. Where social actors are exposed to several types of discrimination and oppression simultaneously it is likely that these will interact in complex ways and reinforce each other. In some modern Western societies, one particularly severe instance of this phenomenon of intersectionality is experienced by black women who face discrimination on the combined grounds of race, gender and class. This has been called the matrix of domination.
A. Jenson	B. For much of the nineteenth and early twentieth century certain natural and social scientists decided that racial categories were useful tools for understanding human differences. Consequently they divided human kind into different biological races and assumed that the particular social, emotional and intellectual characteristics supposedly displayed by each were biologically determined. This led to the idea that there was a hierarchy of races that could be graded along a continuum expressing greater and lesser degrees of potential for demonstrating 'civilized' behaviour and intellectual capacities.
P. H. Collins	C. Most sociologists today argue that the category of 'race' possesses little or no value. Thus it explains almost nothing about social behavioural differences and merely points to certain physical or phenotypical differences such as skin colour. Where it does have some meaning for social actors this derives from the way meaning has been socially and politically constructed in and through innumerable social interactions which then crystallize, sometimes temporarily, into expectations and stereotypes that are projected onto others.

<p>E. Williams</p>	<p>D. At times, and in certain situations, the interactions between different social groups lead to, or generate, conflicts, misunderstandings, forms of discrimination and even violence and oppression meted out to whole groups of people. Where these instances occur we have 'race relations situations'. Armed with this concept sociologists can investigate where and when such instances erupt and try to determine why different labels and reactions were imposed on certain groups and in some contexts and not others.</p>
<p>R. Miles</p>	<p>E. One school of thought believed that most of the differences occurring between people in terms of their measured IQ performance were due to hereditary factors. Making a considerable leap from this position they then asserted that entire racial groups tended to demonstrate lower average intellectual scores in some tests. One such group for whom this claim was made were African Americans. However, later research undermined this argument on a number of grounds. For example, it was shown that the average IQ scores revealed by other groups of African origin revealed no such differences compared to the white and other population groups.</p>
<p>N. Stephen</p>	<p>F. Capitalist plantations cultivating tropical export crops such as cotton, tobacco and sugar were established in the Americas from the seventeenth century onwards. They required large numbers of labourers able to cope with the tropical conditions and hard work. Neither the indigenous Indian populations nor indentured labourers from Europe proved able to satisfy this demand. Consequently, the farmers began importing captive Africans in huge numbers. They shipped them across the Atlantic to be sold into slavery for their entire lifetimes. Slaves lacked any legal rights and were forced to work often under brutal regimes. However, European Christians and the Church found this practice hard to justify. The 'solution' was to argue that Africans belonged to an inferior, almost sub-human, race whose members neither needed nor deserved the same rights as the superior whites.</p>

2. Read pages 173-6 of your textbook then write short answers to the following questions.

(a) What is significant about Alphaville in Brazil (located to the west of São Paulo) in respect to discussions concerning the consequences of severe and probably increasing inequality?

(b) What do the authors of your textbook mean by the term 'siege mentality' and how has it apparently shaped certain responses by both very rich and poor people to the situation prevailing in California?

(c) How and why did the 'prism of race' interacting with social inequality in South Africa result in the continuation of incidences of violent crime, especially in urban areas, despite the end of apartheid?

(d) What is meant by 'situational identity' and 'situational ethnicity'? Why is it sometimes unhelpful to apply these concepts to the real-life street environment found in many cities?

3. Read pages 175-8 of your textbook then decide which of the statements below is true and which is false.

(a) All young urban migrants eventually join gangs linked to neighbourhood territories and their ethnic backgrounds.

(b) It is their experiences of cultural marginality in the host society that invariably generates the greatest difficulties for young migrants.

(c) The media's role in representing young migrants as dangerous criminals is often a key factor – along with the unwise and distorted actions and statements made by the police and certain politicians – in explaining the lack of self esteem and sense of alienation felt by young migrants.

(d) For some young migrants particular kinds of music, especially rap and hip hop, may provide a vehicle enabling them to create an identity for coping with their situation.

(e) In Sweden most young migrants live in homogeneous ethnic ghettos and their sense of non-belonging is caused solely by their social distance both from their parents' generation and the latter's homeland.

4. Read pages 178-180 of your textbook and answer 'yes' or 'no' to the following questions.

(a) Isn't it the case that the focus on intersectionality requires the researcher not to give too much emphasis to any one dimension of inequality, however obvious its impact may seem to be?

(b) In analyses involving intersectionality is the researcher interested only in the three axes of race, gender and class?

(c) Isn't it the case that when employing the concept of intersectionality we need to first examine the impact of one kind of inequality, e.g. class, before moving on to consider the effects of others in turn, e.g. gender and disability?

(d) Didn't Hale's work on factories in the Global South convincingly demonstrate that young female employees were exposed in equal part to sexual harassment and patriarchal oppression, both in and outside the workplace, and to economic exploitation and, moreover, that each of these dimensions of inequality reinforced each other to such an extent that attempting to separate them had little value?

(e) Isn't there a danger of rendering some analyses of intersectionality too complex and perhaps, in the end, rather unworkable if too many forms and degrees of oppression are fed into the matrix used by the researcher?