

Definitions

It is self-evident that in the following book many concepts are needed to present the arguments and the problems concerned. A few of them have been contextualised or scrutinised so often that their basic characteristics should be given beforehand. Repetition will be avoided in this way and the aim of the book can be confirmed. In particular, it is hoped that one of the evils of much academic work (including my own) can be minimised: to produce dangerous, abstract generalisations, let alone those beyond every proof or reasonable proportionality.

In a book about the basic features of the dramatic relationships between perpetrators and their victims in our time generalisations are too often used as tools of the former with serious consequences for the latter. To be concrete as possible is one remedy against it; another is to be clear and consequent in the language used.

The following definitions should be seen as *preliminary* in several respects. Some of them like *race*, are excellently discussed in *Wikipedia* with wide-ranging explanations. It is unavoidable that some are the same as given below, but mostly they are different. It is, therefore, advisable to consult this source before reading or using the following definitions. They are also scrutinised in the chapters to come.

As a starting point, I want to give the following example. In an otherwise interesting and relevant study, an American sociologist recently defined three of these concepts as follows:

The terms *race*, *ethnicity*, and *nationality* ... are related social categories ... By *ethnicity* I refer to differences between individuals and groups in skin colour, language, religion, culture, national origin/nationality, or sometimes geographic region. Ethnicity subsumes both nationalism and race. Current notions of *race* are centred exclusively on visible (usually skin colour) distinctions among populations, although its historical origins and usage were broader and included religious and linguistic groups (such as Jews or the Irish) who were considered to be "races". *Nationalism* commonly is viewed as a particular kind of ethnically based social identity or movement generally involving claims to statehood or political autonomy, and most often rooted in assertions of cultural distinctiveness, a unique history, and ethnic or racial purity."¹

Let's scrutinise these definitions, and in the following chapters many kinds of detail and new (counter)arguments shall be discussed.

Race

The definition of the concept: *race* is hardly discussed in zoology, but complications arise thanks to its application to human systems. Its history starts, first and foremost, not with German theories and practices, but with American or Anglo-Saxon scholars like Francis Galton (1822–1911), Houston Chamberlain (1855–1927), Madison Grant (1865–1937), Charles Davenport (1866–1944; see chapter 7), Lothrop Stoddard (1883–1950), their many influential American pupils and the thinking and practices they introduced.²

Its daily use in words like ‘race-riots’ or ‘racism’ is not very complicated. It cannot be defined logically and technically as *Wikipedia*’s main definition: “Race is a classification system used to categorise humans ...”. It will be possible eventually to create some classification system by means of races or racial characteristics, but that is *not* in itself a race: apparently, its application to humans became so controversial that it remains empty!

The OED or Webster’s provide so many uses over time that they confuse more than they enlighten. The latter dictionary tries to do this by discussing a synonymous relation between “Race, Nation and People”, but cannot indicate what is similar among the three items, except that they are all mixed up in popular use. This is not very helpful without an in-depth discussion. In addition, the English/American language distinction creates special difficulties.

Whatever it is, in our case here it concerns “the common physical characteristics of a rather large human population”, but, for instance, all people with brown hair or eyes do not form a race. Something should be added to this definition; not even all brown dogs form a race. What if brown hair stems from a specific genetic combination? Or: are people with brown hair deemed “less valuable” – say, “typically cowards” – compared to people with black, blond or red hair? Should they all be killed because of this quality? Do they then form a race? It is only a matter of definition, but there must be a chance to make one!

How it is defined in Cashmore’s dictionary is a good example of how complicated the case is.³ Its development is divided here over two articles called ‘perspective one’ (Michael Banton) and ‘perspective two’ (Pierre L. van den Berghe). The authors are both social scientists and experts on the subject.

The first describes the history of the concept in the sense of not what ‘race’ is but the way it is used from the beginning of the sixteenth century when it first appeared in the English language.⁴ From then until early in the 19th century “it was used primarily to refer to common features present because of shared descent.” The chief paradigm for explaining this was given by the Old Testament, which furnished genealogies tracing the peopling of the world as