

## Race & ethnicity

1. Administrative
2. European colonialism  
(*continued*)
3. Origins of racial & ethnic categories
4. Prejudice, inequality, & racism
5. *Discussion:*  
Denis (2015)

The slides in this lecture contain some disturbing images, including racial stereotypes and images of Nazi scientific instruments. Images like these have been used to justify and propagate racist institutions and further prejudice, violence, and genocide.

I include these images to help understand the historical origins of contemporary racial categories. They serve as examples of the visual schemas and methods that were commonplace among Europeans during the Colonial and Enlightenment eras. I believe it is important to be able to examine such images in order to critique and dismantle racial and ethnic prejudices, cultures, and institutions today.

# European colonialism (continued)



## Major types of colonialism

- ∴ *Exploitation colonialism*

- ∴ Colonized population monitored by minimal colonial settlement
- ∴ Oversee extraction of resources for metropole

- ∴ *Settler colonialism*

- ∴ Metropole establishes cities and moves population to colonized areas
- ∴ *Terra nullius*

- ∴ *Neo-colonialism*

- ∴ Economic and cultural exploitation

## *Terra Nullius*

- ∴ View of land without settlement or active cultivation as empty
  - ∴ Language of conquest becomes language of discovery
- New World; Age of Discovery; Explorer*



## Manifest destiny

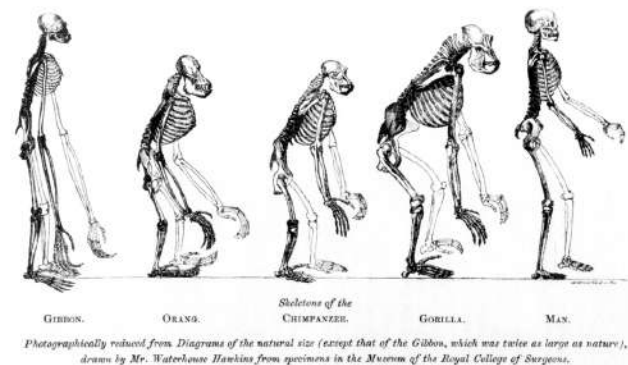
- ∴ Term specific to United States, but ideology widespread
- ∴ Colonized land is “culturally” empty
- ∴ Duty to “uncivilized” people to teach about true religion and proper society
- ∴ Characterized by Europeans as a burden or responsibility





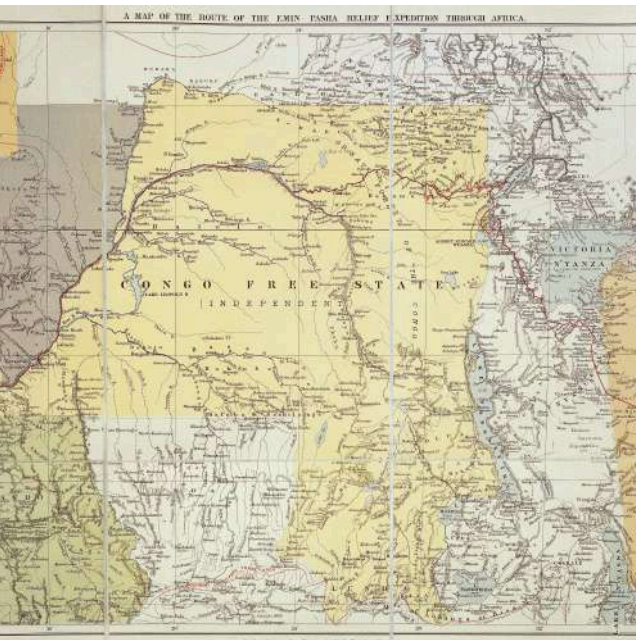
## Dehumanization

- ∴ Conceptualization of non-European populations as less than human
- ∴ Environmental determinism
- ∴ Justifies both *terra nullius* and manifest destiny



## Geographical boundaries

- ∴ Colonial powers viewed geographical delineation as primary
- ∴ Not (then) common in much of the world
- ∴ Boundaries used to frame discourse both between colonial powers and between colonizer/colonized



## **Destruction of cultures/societies**

- ⋮ **Genocide**  
Entire populations singled out and killed  
Cultural frameworks systematically destroyed
- ⋮ **Internalization of colonial ideologies**  
Ideologies of colonization became accepted  
(to varying degrees) by colonized cultures

## **Indigenous displacement**

- ⋮ **Populated land claimed by settlers**  
Existing nations forcibly displaced or replaced  
Violently, formally, or informally
- ⋮ **Complicated by settler struggles for independence from colonial metropolises**  
Simultaneous fight against colonial control  
and complicity in colonial domination

## Race/racism

- ∴ Modern understanding of race  
Global slave trade made possible by and supported colonialism
- ∴ Contemporary racial categories defined in the context of colonial European systems

## Institutions

- ∴ Many "standard" modern institutions emerged in a colonial context
  - Legal frameworks (e.g. property rights)
  - Family
  - Education
  - Trade (domestic and international)



## Current colonial presence in Canada

- ⋮ **Continued British rule**  
Minimal real control, but symbolic and some de facto power
- ⋮ **Violence against indigenous populations**  
Violent conflicts and disease killed large numbers of people living in Canada before European conquest  
Continued explicit and implicit violence
- ⋮ **First Nations displacement**  
Existing nations forced to cede territory through conquest and (often reneged) treaty
- ⋮ **First Nations sovereignty struggles**  
Continued view as subordinate and illegitimate
- ⋮ **Cultural indoctrination**  
Widespread prejudice toward indigenous practices  
Residential schools

# Indigenous (non-colonial) territories in Turtle Island (North America)



This map is a work in progress  
For more information visit [Native-Land.ca](http://Native-Land.ca)

# Origins of racial & ethnic categories



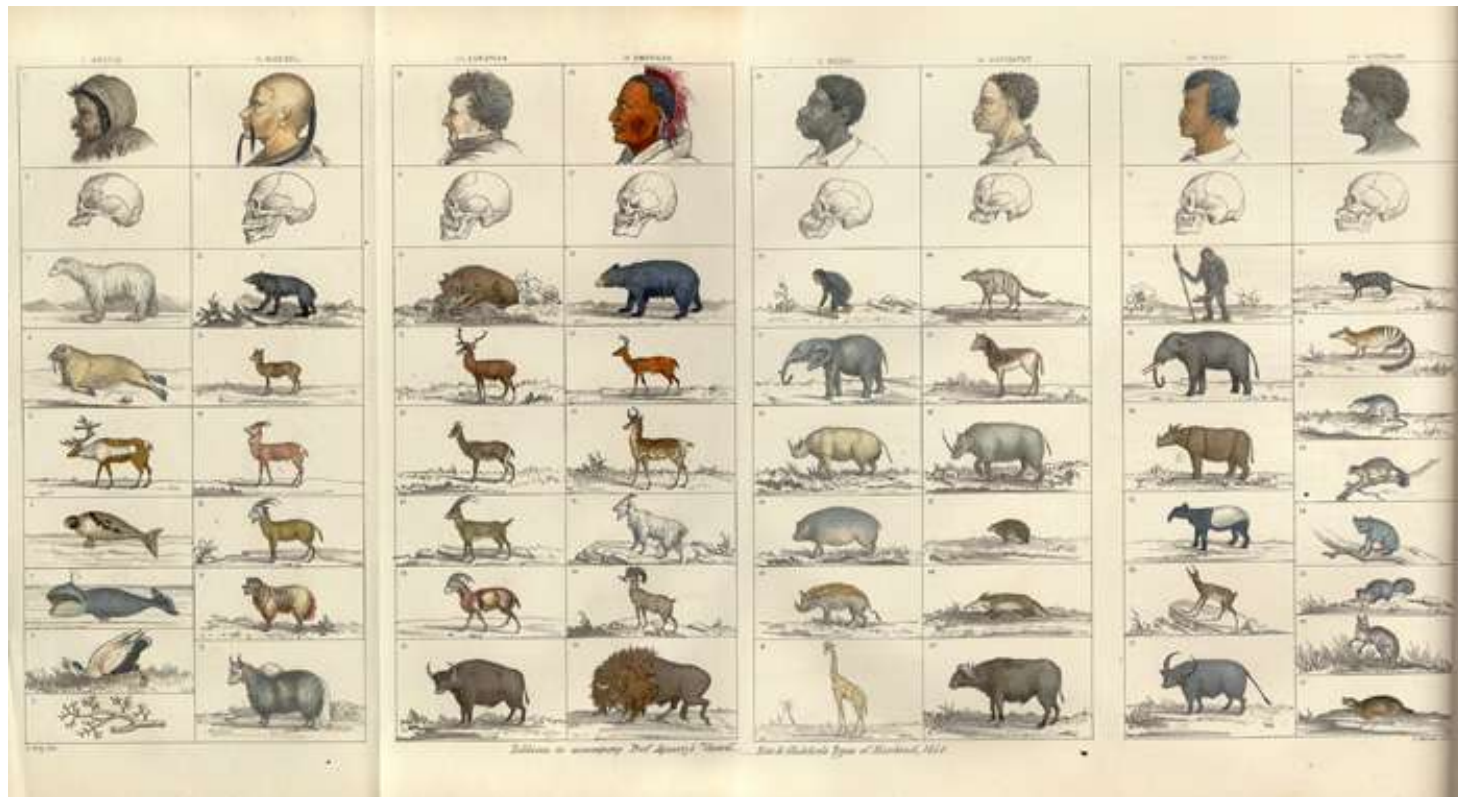
# European enlightenment

## Emphasis on *taxonomic descriptions*

- ∴ Hierarchically structured categorizations

## Emphasis on *naturalistic classification*

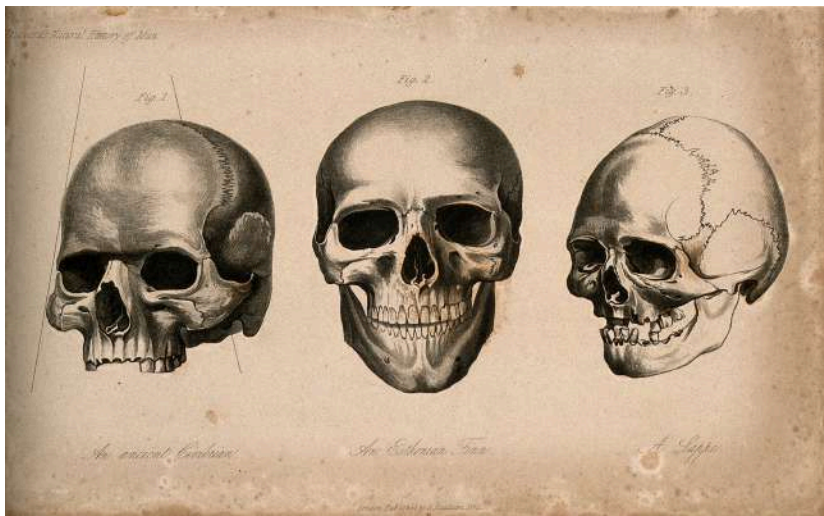
- ∴ Differentiation resulting from observable physical contexts





Colonial enterprises and Enlightenment thought led to the emergence of formalized (and inconsistent) definitions of "race"

Historically, highly variable and inconsistent, but based mainly on *phenotype* and/or *ancestry*



From Dr. Prichard's *Natural history of man* (1843)

## **Phenotype** (physical description)

- ∴ Skin type; skeletal structure; hair form; facial proportions; ...

## **Ancestry** (geography/genealogy)

- ∴ Polygenism: theory that different subspecies of human emerged from different geographies
- ∴ Natural selection of race: theory that natural races emerge from categorically different (and geographically located) selective forces

## Racial inheritance precisely delineated

(See also racial hypodescent in the United States and "Indian status" in Canada)

## Racialized physical criteria

(In cases of ambiguity, physical definition of "Jewishness" prevailed)



Chart describing Nazi "Nuremberg Laws" defining Jewish racial inheritance (1935)



Nazi instrument used for measuring facial features



## Failures of *biological* definitions of race:

Neither *phenotype* nor  
*genotype* can account  
for race

- ∴ Much more variety within any category of humans than between them
- ∴ Huge variety in human biology, but no sharp divisions

Historically, no consistent  
definitions

- ∴ Racial categories and criteria differ substantially depending on time and place
- ∴ The most *consistent* aspect of racial definitions is that they tend to support a society's dominant power structures

Current (strong) consensus among biologists and physical anthropologists is that there is no empirical basis for race as a *biological* reality

## Race as social construct

- ∴ If race is not biological, does that mean race is not real?
- ∴ Race as a *social* rather than *biological* category
- ∴ Racial classification affects people's experiences, behavior, and perceptions

## Racial categorization is *persistent*

- ∴ Changes to racial schema are slow
  - Connection to ethnicity and community
  - Perpetuated by structural inequality
  - Use as an administrative category by governments (and social scientists)

## Racial categorization is *consequential*

- ∴ Dramatic influence on lived experience

# Prejudice, inequality, & racism





Co-defined with  
power structures

- ∴ Race, ethnicity, and nationality are often employed in the definition and maintenance of *power relations*
- ∴ Power relations between *groups*
- ∴ Power relations between *people*



## Some modes of *formal* state oppression

States may employ racial, ethnic, and national categorization to justify formal policies of dominance

### Mass homicide

- ∴ Holocaust
- ∴ First Nations, Inuit, Métis
- ∴ Congo Free State

### Segregation

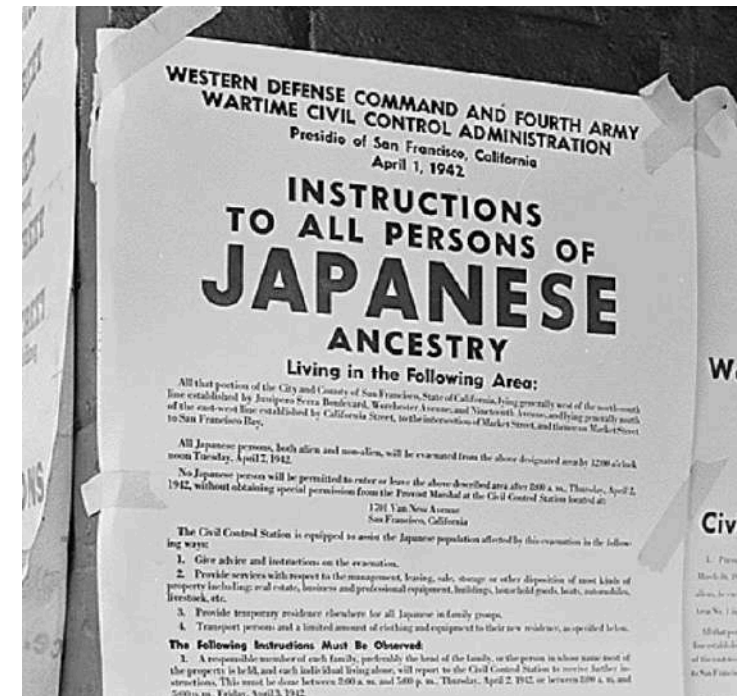
- ∴ South African Apartheid
- ∴ American slavery and "Jim Crow" laws
- ∴ Suffrage (voting) restrictions

### Expulsion

- ∴ Acadian expulsion
- ∴ First Nations, Inuit, Métis
- ∴ Jews (1492) and Moriscos (1609) from Spain

### Assimilation

- ∴ Residential schools
- ∴ Colonial religious conversion
- ∴ Banning behavior/dress (e.g. Loi 21)





## Some modes of *non-state* oppression

Racial, ethnic, and national oppression exists outside of formal legal frameworks (but may still be supported by legal frameworks)



### Physical violence

- ⋮ Increased violence against racialized groups
  - ⋮ Selective enforcement of laws
- MMIWG  
Police violence  
"Stand your ground" laws

### Unequal opportunity

- ⋮ Education
- ⋮ Employment and wages
- ⋮ Housing (redlining)
- ⋮ Credit
- ⋮ ...

### Everyday perceptions

- ⋮ Discrimination in treatment and expectations
- ⋮ "Status characteristics"
- ⋮ Self-perception

### Privilege

- ⋮ Dominant groups define "normal"
- ⋮ Marginalization of others
- ⋮ De facto benefit
  - Trust versus distrust
  - High versus low expectations
  - Benefit of the doubt versus suspicion



# Discussion: *Denis (2015)*

Check for updates



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## Contact Theory in a Small-Town Settler-Colonial Context: The Reproduction of Laissez-Faire Racism in Indigenous-White Canadian Relations

Jeffrey S. Denis<sup>a</sup>

### Abstract

This article builds on group position theory and the subcategorization model of intergroup contact by illustrating how, in a small-town settler-colonial context, contact tends to reproduce, rather than challenge, the inequitable racial structure. In Northwestern Ontario, Indigenous-settler relations are characterized by widespread intergroup marriage and friendship as well as pervasive prejudice and discrimination. Using 18 months of fieldwork and 160 interviews and surveys with First Nations, Métis, and non-Indigenous residents, I show that although contact is associated with less “old-fashioned” prejudice (i.e., overt categorical hostility), it does not necessarily eliminate whites’ superior sense of group position. Even white individuals who have close Indigenous friends or spouses often express laissez-faire racism. Three mutually reinforcing social processes—subtyping, ideology-based homophily, and political avoidance norms—interact to sustain whites’ sense of group superiority and justifications for racial inequity. These processes are facilitated by historical and structural conditions, in this case colonization and small-town dynamics.

### Keywords

contact, prejudice, racism, group position, settler-colonialism, Indigenous, Canada

According to the contact hypothesis, intergroup interaction, over time, alleviates stereotypes and hostilities. In the best-known formulation, Allport (1954) specified four necessary conditions within the contact situation: status equality, common goals, cooperation, and support from authorities, laws, or customs.<sup>1</sup> Additional conditions, such as face-to-face interaction with friendship potential, have also been proposed (Pettigrew 1998). Yet, a meta-analysis of 515 quantitative studies found that, even without these conditions,

“intergroup contact typically reduces intergroup prejudice” (Pettigrew and Tropp 2006:751). Moreover, psychologists have identified several mechanisms whereby contact might reduce prejudice, including

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## First "proper" scholarly text of the semester

- ⋮ Published in *American Sociological Review*, one of two flagship, generalist journals in the discipline
- ⋮ Asks a specific sociological question
- ⋮ Uses empirical data and methods to *argue for* an answer to that question
- ⋮ Can be *challenging* to read, especially for those with less experience with the format

So: why this text?

## Good example of sociological writing

- ⋮ **Organization**  
Introduction; theoretical framing; data and methods; analysis; conclusion
- ⋮ **Well described *methods***
- ⋮ **Good use of *theory* to motivate a explicitly articulated *question***

## Good examination of race and racism

- ⋮ Articulates different ways that racial disparities manifest
- ⋮ Roots contemporary racial dynamics in a historical colonial context
- ⋮ Incorporates structural and social-psychological explanations

# Legacies of European colonialism

Racial  
categories

Social  
institutions

Cultural  
dominance

- ⋮ How does Denis link these legacies of colonialism to laissez-faire racism in the communities he studies?
- ⋮ How does this differ for "old-fashioned" (categorical) racism?