

The Ethnic Dimensions in Social Movements

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Abstract:

This paper develops a conception of three “ethnic” dimensions derived from scholarship on the social construction of race and ethnicity: domination hierarchies, network relations, and intergenerationality. These abstract “ethnic” dimensions both are critical axes of analysis for all social movements and provide a theoretical account of when and how “ethnic” differences are central axes of movement mobilization. “Ethnic” distinctions, which include ethnicity, race, nationality, caste, language group and sometimes religion or clan, are distinguished from other axes of difference by intergenerational inheritance, ascription, childhood socialization into group membership, and ties to kinship. Some “ethnic” divisions are tied to the deepest foundations of modern nation-states. “Ethnicity” matters when ethnic boundaries are relatively sharp, consequential, and highly correlated with domination structures and social networks. Strong “ethnic” boundaries divide societies into majorities and minorities. Regardless of whether their goals are group-oriented or issue-oriented, all movements have an “ethnic” dimension in the sense that they draw from or map onto one or more ethnic groups. Movements arising from “ethnic” majorities have different dynamics from movements by “ethnic” minorities or mixed-ethnic movements. Processes of group formation derived from theories of the social construction of ethnicity illuminate other movement-relevant group formation processes, including class formation and political subcultures. Lying at the intersection of the sociology of social movements and the sociology of race and ethnicity, the “ethnic” dimensions are revealed as a lens for understanding the general problems of group and identity formation and collective mobilization that lie at the heart of both areas.

Note: This is a complete draft of a paper that is in the process of being further revised and edited between its preparation on 1/6/16 and the ASA meeting in August 2016 to tighten arguments and provide more citations to relevant literature. Please contact the author for an updated version before citing or quoting.

Introduction and Preliminaries

The thesis of this paper is that “ethnic” dimensions derived from considering the social construction of race and ethnicity need to be brought to the center of social movement theory. When groups are socially segregated, persistent across generations, and differ in power and privilege, group boundaries and us-them dynamics arise and are reinforced. When these differences exist, social cleavages are reinforced and social movements tend to be organized within rather than across ethnic lines. Groups that are majorities have inherent advantages in mobilizing and determining policy, while groups that are minorities have inherent disadvantages. These majority-minority dynamics are central to understanding mobilization, identity formation, intra-movement dynamics, repression, alliances, and the likelihood of success. Analyzing and abstracting the dimensions that make ethnicity more or less salient provides tools for understanding the social bases of all movements, and these tools provide a way to understand who supports which movement. That is, theoretical analysis both locates the “ethnic” dimensions as understandable using general concepts and uses these general concepts to explain why divisions (or their absence) along broadly-defined “ethnic” lines are so important in understanding movement mobilization. These same concepts explain why movements by dominant ethnic majorities so often either ignore or are hostile to the needs of subordinate ethnic minorities. Empirical cases that are on the agenda in the present era include the racial politics of policing and incarceration in the US and the tendency of some populist movements to take an anti-minority nationalist turn. Further, the general theoretical approach provides an explanation in network segregation and intergenerational transmission of group identity for the problem of group formation and mobilization along social-political lines.

My own theorizing on these issues has been affected by reflection on a number of empirical problems. The first is the problem mass incarceration of African Americans in the US and the broader issue of racial disparity in criminal justice, including the more recent mobilizations around police killings, which I see in the context of repression of minorities and minority movements (Oliver 2008). My involvement with the local movement to address racial disparities in criminal justice, including the recent Black Lives Matter mobilization, has given me ample opportunity for first-hand observation of the mobilization problems for small stigmatized minorities and for cross-race and cross-class movements that attempt to redress these issues. Relatedly, I am aware of the research literature on the mobilization issues of other movements by minorities, including the literatures on “ethnic movements” and “intersectional” movements. Another important phenomenon is the relative strength in recent decades of majority movements, both the middle-class liberal “social responsibility” movements and the mixed-class conservative anti-minority movements. Finally, I have been reflecting both on the ethnic conflict literature, which focuses on identifying the conditions under which ethnicity becomes an axis of conflict in a society, and the question of why people of the same class and ethnicity (e.g. working-class Whites in the US) often gravitate to opposed political movements.

The abstract dimensions that arise from considering the social construction of ethnicity provide useful analytic tools for addressing all these questions.

Types of Movements and Movement Carriers

My theoretical departure is Morris and Braine's (2001) paper on cultures of opposition and structures of domination which criticizes other work on culture in movements for ignoring issues of power and domination and assuming that "all movements confront basically similar tasks and operate out the same internal logic" (p.20). Morris and Braine laud feminist and gay-lesbian-queer theorists for seeing the connections between the cultural and the structural and for recognizing the central point that "social constructions themselves are products of power relations and historical forces, not neutral negotiations among individual or collective actors of equal social resources and standing" (p. 25). (Although they do not cite the literature on the social construction of race, this same point is central to that literature as well, a point I discuss further below.) Drawing on Morris's earlier work (1992), Morris and Braine define a system of human domination as "that constellation of institutions, values, ideas and practices which successfully enables one group to achieve and maintain power and privilege through the control and exploitation of another group" (p. 25) and stress that cultural and material domination are intertwined. Their central argument is that movements by people in entrenched subordinate communities whose identities are externally imposed are different from what they call social responsibility movements around chosen issues and identities. Entrenched subordinate groups develop cultures that intertwine themes of acceptance and resignation (cultures of subordination) with themes of resistance and critique (cultures of opposition). All entrenched subordinate groups have cultures of opposition, but bringing these to a fully blown oppositional consciousness to motivate collective action requires overcoming the culture of subordination. Morris and Braine stress the importance of physical and social segregation for the formation of oppositional consciousness. They contrast segregated racial minority and working class communities with the typical integration of women and men in creating the conditions for consciousness, draw on another paper in the volume that contrasts the integration of the blind and the segregation of the deaf in influencing those movements, and note that women's consciousness developed when they created separate political spaces.

My thinking builds directly on their arguments about the huge difference between movements of oppressed peoples and social responsibility movements but unpacks their argument and refines and extends it. Specifically, except for their discussion of physical segregation, Morris and Braine lump together all structures of domination and treat ethnic/racial or class subordination as similar to gender, sexual minority or disability subordination. I move the matter of segregation and network ties to a more central place in the argument and consider the importance of intergenerational communities as well as ascription. I argue that gender and

sexuality movements are fundamentally different from ethnic/racial movements on these dimensions and that class movements vary on them.

Morris and Braine use the term “movement carrier” rather loosely to refer to the stratum or segment of society from which the activists in a movement are drawn. This is different from the “social movement community” concept as it is usually defined to refer to the loose network of activists a movement draws from (Buechler 1990; Stoecker 1995; Taylor and Whittier 1992). However, there are many common casual usages of the term “the community” that are closer to their idea of a movement carrier, as when people speak of “the Black community” or the “LGBTQQ community.” Related concepts are the older resource mobilization concept of “beneficiaries” (the social group who are meant to benefit from a movement), the “constituency” (the group who feels represented or spoken for by the movement), and the “adherents” (the people who agree with a movement). All of these terms are both useful and somewhat problematic for the purposes of this paper. The goal of this paper is to be able to identify segments of society that are or might be the social bases of social movements and analyze their properties. I refer generally to these as “social groups,” or “social categories,” or “collectivities,” stressing that the way in which the people in society define these is precisely part of what is at issue, but have found no better language than “movement carrier” for referring to the segment of society from which a movement draws participants.

Morris and Braine distinguish three types of movements: liberation movements, whose carriers are historically subordinate and which are aimed at overthrowing systems of domination; equality-based special issue movements that address issues that exclusively or disproportionately affect one group, and have more limited ideologies; and social responsibility movements that challenge conditions affecting the general population. Building on but reworking these ideas, I classify movements across two dimensions, first according to their movement carriers, with emphasis on their ethnic and class bases, and then according to whether they are group-focused movements whose central goal is to improve the position of some subgroup of society (e.g. Blacks, Whites, women, sexual minorities, workers, business owners) or issue-focused movements whose central goal is an issue that affects society as a whole (e.g. environment, peace, abortion). Unlike Morris and Braine, I recognize that there are group-focused movements arising from dominant groups as well as entrenched subordinate groups and explicitly recognize, as Morris and Braine do not, that there are White supremacist and other movements by and for majorities or the powerful that seek to improve their own position by subordinating others. In this paper, all issue-focused movements will be mapped back onto the groups that support them and categorized according to the characteristics of their movement carriers, i.e. the groups from which they are drawn.

The typology of movement carriers is based on three crucial dimensions, what I call the “ethnic” dimensions: (1) dominance versus subordination; (2) network integration versus segregation and cleavage; and (3) the degree of intergenerational inheritance of group membership. I will both treat these dimensions as abstractions that apply to all social divisions and argue that these dimensions explain why the categories we call ethnicity or race or nationality are so often the crucial cleavages in society that are central to social movements. I will argue that the mapping of a movement carrier onto the “ethnic” structure of a society is central to understanding everything about a social movement and thus needs to be attended to in all movement theorizing.

Ethnicity (and Race) as a Socially Constructed

The arguments of this paper depend on a social constructionist view of ethnicity, race and nationality (Brubaker 2002; Brubaker 2009; Brubaker 2012; Brubaker 2013; Omi and Winant 1986; Omi and Winant 2014; Saperstein, Penner and Light 2013; Winant 2000) which, in turn, is tied to a broader literature on the social construction of groups and group boundaries (Bernstein 2005; Lamont and Molnár 2002). Consistent with most work in the field (Brubaker 2009; Wimmer 2008; Wimmer 2013a; Wimmer 2013b), I use “ethnicity” as a general tag for a class of relationships that also encompasses race and nationality and other distinctions such as religion or caste or tribe or language group that may have similar properties (Brubaker 2012; Brubaker 2013). I agree with the argument that “race” has a historical meaning that always encompasses domination and hierarchy, while “ethnicity” may not be hierarchical, (Bonilla-Silva 1997; Bonilla-Silva 1999a; Bonilla-Silva 1999b; Omi and Winant 1986; Omi and Winant 2014; Winant 2000), but I prefer to treat domination and hierarchy as a variable dimension to ethnicity rather than a qualitative difference.

Ethnic (or other) groups are created at the level of a society as a whole and generally involve relations of domination and subordination. As social constructions, ethnicities or races or any other social groups are constantly created and re-created in social interactions. At the same time, the result of this social construction is group definitions and boundaries that are treated in practice as natural facts about people. Within this field, it is understood that ethnicities are social categories that may or may not be social groups. That is, there may or may not be social bonds among the people in an ethnic category that support collective identities or collective action. It is further understood that social classification of people into these ethnic categories and the definitions of the categories themselves are inconsistent, shifting and blurred and that people’s beliefs about the origins or histories of groups do not necessarily stand up to objective historical research. Scholarly debates in the field differ in the extent to which they emphasize the active processes of defining differences and creating boundaries and collective identities and the ways these constructions are myths or fictions that over-emphasize the “groupness” of boundary-making (Brubaker 2002; Brubaker 2004; Brubaker 2009; Loveman 1999a) or

emphasize the ways these processes create or resist structural and material inequalities and structures of domination (Bonilla-Silva 1997; Bonilla-Silva 1999a; Bonilla-Silva 1999b; Calhoun 2003a; Calhoun 2003b). All scholars agree that this social construction is not merely an individual psychological phenomenon, but a product of social interactions, power relations, and political processes.

Social constructions are very real. Religion is obviously social, not biological, but it is very real as a basis for group divisions in many societies, including Northern Ireland, India, Malaysia and (at least until recently) the Netherlands. Citizenship is entirely a social construction that operates at the level of laws and institutions; one's citizenship has huge and very real material consequences. Ethnic, racial, nationality or religious groups are constructed by laws and institutions as well as by cultural and social practices. In some societies, some group definitions and boundaries are very sharp, legally enshrined, nearly universally accepted, and of very high salience. In some countries, ethnic or other group differences define or limit the rights of citizenship. In some countries, particularly in the Americas, "race" has historically defined the limits or rights of citizenship and remains today a powerful axis of structures of domination.

A large body of comparative historical research has established the centrality of ethnicity in state formation. States and ethnicities create each other. Ethnicity is generally implicated in the process of state formation and the definition of nation and citizenship; states distribute resources and repression along ethnic lines, foster ethnic mobilization and define ethnic groups (Alonso 1994; Barkey and Parikh 1991; Enloe 1981; Enloe 1978; Loveman 1999b). The colonial and post-colonial states throughout the Americas as well as other settler states including South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand were constructed around European/White supremacy and continue to show these legacies, although in different ways in different countries (Bonilla-Silva 1999a; Marx 1995; Marx 1996). Elsewhere, nation-states were constructed in many different ways around ethnic boundaries in the wake of the dissolution of empires and subsequent migration even as ethnic groups were created, redefined, and activated in many different ways in the process (Brubaker 1995; Brubaker 1998; Wimmer 2008; Wimmer 2013a; Wimmer 2013b)

These "ethnic" social constructions are not trivial or accidental but are direct consequences of the major forces of history and tied to the core foundations of modern nation-states. The idea of a nation-state is that there is a "people" who logically should be united under one government and that the boundaries between states should be the boundaries between nations. Who is a part of the "nation" and who is outside it or subordinate to it are direct products of the political and military conflicts that created the state. At a minimum, the "ethnic" category of nationality or citizenship is hugely consequential for a person's life. In most countries, there are further ethnic subdivisions that define some groups as dominant and others as subordinate.

Scholars of ethnicity and nation often stress that the ethnic or racial group as it is understood today is a modern higher-level social group construction that is a product of nation-formation and that smaller units such as villages or clans or tribes were historically the more important basis of group identity and action. I do not engage that empirical debate but instead point to it as an example of social construction. Similarly, I do not engage (although I am influenced by) the rich scholarship on the social construction of race in the Americas, nor do I engage the debates about whether the visibility of race makes it a different kind of group distinction than ethnicity or religion, which can be more easily changed by acculturation or conversion. That is, I am not trying to reify the ethnic group as a particular type of object, but rather am using the term ethnicity in a very abstract way to point to the processes whereby the boundaries between “people like us” and “people not like us” get created. In this abstract conception, nationalities are also social constructions and are ethnic. Importantly, I am stipulating that the markers of group boundaries and group difference that seem “obvious” and “visible” to members of a particular society are themselves products of social construction. Their visibility is itself a product of structures of society (themselves products of history) that constrain socialization and social interaction, not an immutable biological fact.

Like age or education or economic class, ethnicity may sometimes function as relatively continuous variation (e.g. skin color as a marker of race) or fuzzy sets rather than discrete categories. Just as income or education hierarchies are linked to power and privilege despite their continuous variation, continuity and fuzzy boundaries in ethnicity can still be linked to systems of domination. Work in the social construction of race and ethnicity addresses the myriad ways in which ethnicities can be more or less sharply defined, more or less salient for group action and collective identity, more or less tied to other systems of inequality. This paper is less focused on these processes of construction and boundary-formation and more focused on how the ethnicities they create shape social movements.

Finally, I must directly address the US-centric understanding of “ethnicity” as something voluntary that White people have and “race” as an imposed external structure of domination on non-White people. In this paper I am using “ethnicity” as a general term that encompasses both White ethnics and racial differences while, I hope, also providing analytic understanding of why race is a strong axis of domination and identity in the US while White ethnicity, today, is not. This analysis recognizes the historical construction of the US as a “White” nation and the ongoing patterns of network segregation, racial endogamy and disadvantage. Ideally there would be a different word that could encompass both and not carry all the baggage associated with the empirical meaning of “ethnicity” in different countries, but I have not come up with an adequate neologism. Using ethnicity as the general term is consistent with most, although not all, of the scholarship on the social construction of race and ethnicity. To highlight my awareness of these issues, I generally place “ethnic” and “ethnicity” in quotes.

To sum up: all societies have an “ethnic” structure that varies between societies, and all social movements can be characterized by the mapping of their “ethnic” composition on the “ethnic” structure of the societies within which they operate. Whether ethnicities are mere categories into which people are classified or groups with intra-group social ties and collective identities is part of what is captured in the ethnic dimensions.

Ethnicity and Group Formation

Using the term “group” in its broad sense as a synonym for category rather than its narrow sense to refer to people who have social connections with each other, ethnicity involves three mutually-reinforcing elements: group differences, group boundaries, and intergenerational inheritance of group membership, as Figure 1 illustrates. The essence of any group or category formation is that they are seen as different from each other and this entails both boundaries (people are in one group or another) and perceived differences between groups. The distinctive features of “ethnic” groups is that by definition they are both intergenerational and ascribed: you are born into an ethnicity, you inherit it from your parents, and you are acculturated into it through childhood socialization. In many countries and eras, ethnicity or race or religion or caste has been considered important enough to be recorded on birth records and other official documents. Children can be born and socialized into ethnic groups. Socialization matters because differential socialization of children into different cultures can replicate group difference into the next generation and reinforce group boundaries. Further, families and kinship networks are typically mono-ethnic and whole communities can be mono-ethnic. This is important both for creating real social ties that can make a group out of a category, and for creating high levels of common fate. This can be contrasted with gender, which is also ascribed at birth, but families and communities are inherently mixed-gender. Ethnicity may also be contrasted with groups one voluntarily joins as an adult.

Ascription is closely related to but different from intergenerational inheritance. Morris and Braine argue that it is important to distinguish groups you choose from those forced upon you by the larger society, regardless of your own preferences. This is an important distinction, but one that requires refinement and analysis. At one extreme are biologically-determined traits such as sex or genetic heritage or physical impairment; at the other are groups organized around freely chosen avocations or opinions. But there is a continuum between these extremes. Race is understood to be an ascribed physical trait tied to genetic heritage, but many people are of racially ambiguous physical appearance and make choices about whether and how to display their racial categorization (Khanna 2004; Khanna 2010; Sims 2012; Sims 2013). Ethnic classification is treated as ascribed for some groups in some societies and as voluntary for other groups in other societies. While language is cultural and not biologically determined, mother tongue and regional dialect or accent are deeply imprinted in childhood, effectively ascribed, and frequently mark one as “other” and subject to discrimination. Although some

linguistically talented individuals can speak a foreign language or dialect acquired as an adult well enough to pass as a native, most adults are unable to do so and are identifiable when they speak. One's accent has been used throughout history to identify outsiders and ferret out spies. Religion similarly is cultural, not biological, but has been socially constructed as a freely-chosen belief system in some times and places and as an ascribed race- or ethnicity-like category that is inherited regardless of one's personal opinions in other societies. One's parents' social class is clearly ascribed, in the sense that it and all the other characteristics of parents influence children's social position. But in some societies, parents' class is seen as an inherited trait that marks a person regardless of individual achievement while in other societies, parents' class affects adult class only through mediating opportunities for achievement. And, of course, a major political debate this decade centers on the extent to which sexual orientation and sexual identity are voluntarily chosen or ascribed and immutable. In short, ascription itself is socially constructed.

"Ethnic" group construction, like all group construction, entails both external and internal aspects, as Figure 2 illustrates. Externally, groups are differentiated from one another and boundaries are defined through the mutually-reinforcing ethnic dimensions of structures of domination, network segregation and maintenance of group difference across generations. (More about these dimensions below.) These external forces can operate whether you believe in them or not. Internally, group membership is reinforced through collective identities, a consciousness of difference, and group organization. The internal processes lead people to identify with the group, see their group membership as a salient individual characteristic and have some willingness and ability to act in concert with other group members. Both the internal and the external aspects of "ethnic" group construction vary greatly among groups and in their impact on social movements.

As Figure 3 illustrates, it is important to stress that these processes of group construction are linked to the ethnic character of states which, in turn, is a product of the history of political conquest and migration. This is why ethnicity is in general tied to structures of domination and subordination.

Ethnicity and Structures of Domination

Ethnicities are constructed in interaction with states and, as such, always entail some sort of relationship to structures of domination, but the nature of this relationship varies. The ethnic/racial distinctions of all the nations of the Americas are derived directly from European conquest of indigenous Americans and the creation of slave economies using the forced labor of Africans. In these nations, Whites explicitly created rules of the game that ensured White political and economic dominance and defined non-Whites as subordinates; racial structures of domination are intrinsic to state institutions, the economy and the fabric of daily life. Nation- and state-formation on other continents has varied but has also entailed the creation of

dominant nationalities who have state power and the simultaneous creation of subordinate ethnic or national minorities.

These historical political processes have varied between places, creating variations in the ethnic character of states. There are few societies that are truly ethnically homogeneous, but societies vary greatly in the size of the largest ethnic group, the number and sizes of ethnic minorities, the degree of cultural difference among ethnic groups, and the extent to which there are substantial differences among ethnic groups in economic and political power. The existence of majorities and minorities is never accidental, but is always consequence of a particular society's history and formation. War, conquest, genocide, slavery, and legal exclusions are implicated in the creation of group differences, while political and cultural domination that lead to forced linguistic assimilation and political incorporation create homogeneity out of prior diversity. Migration across millennia has put people of different ethnicities into contact with each other; the migration patterns of the most recent decades are different from those of the past only in the direction of the flow of people, not in the extent to which immigration has disrupted people's societies. Today's countries differ in their ethnic structure and the ethnic structure of each country is constitutive of its national identity. Some countries define themselves as ethnically homogeneous; this self-definition generally obscures the subordination or forced assimilation of some minority. Some countries define themselves as ethnically heterogeneous, and the definitions of this heterogeneity vary greatly. In these countries, there is usually some difference in the power and economic standing between different groups, but the degree of difference varies greatly between countries.

Nevertheless, amid all this between-country diversity in ethnic structure, most countries have a numerically and politically dominant ethnic category that can meaningfully be called the majority ethnicity. Groups that are both numerically and politically dominant have the political power in a democracy to tyrannize minorities if they want to. The "tyranny of the majority" is the very real danger of democracy and history is replete with examples of ethnic majority movements that have attacked, purged, murdered, or subordinated ethnic minorities. Let me highlight this, because too often "ethnicity" is seen only as a property of minorities. Ethnic majority movements are the single largest category of movement types and too much movement scholarship has been blind to the ethnic-ness of ethnic-majority movements.

Ethnic minorities vary greatly in their structural characteristics. In some countries, a numerical minority ethnicity is politically or economically dominant. Ethnic minorities vary greatly in their size, power, resources, and spatial distribution. Some minorities are large enough that their votes can have significant impact in elections, either as swing votes between competing parties or in controlling some subnational regions. Other minorities are too small to have any impact on electoral outcomes. Distribution in space matters as well. Some minorities are

geographically concentrated and may make claims for separation and self-determination, especially if they are concentrated on their ancestral lands, while other minorities are scattered across territory and are less likely to make such claims. Depending on the rules of group formation created by the dominant groups, some minorities have the option of assimilating into the majority, while others do not.

Morris and Braine's central point is that historically subordinate and oppressed groups are different from those that are superordinate and dominant. These structures of domination can take a wide variety of forms and clearly vary in degree. Some societies are relatively egalitarian and have only modest variations in power and privilege, while others are highly stratified. In some cases, the term "structure of domination" is clearly appropriate, while in other cases "structure of advantage" would be a more apt characterization. A group's sheer size matters in a political democracy: voting majorities can tyrannize minorities and larger minorities have more political clout than smaller minorities. Political domination can also be maintained in a democracy by controlling the rules to disenfranchise others. Military or coercive domination involves control of weapons and other means of coercive force. Economic domination is maintained by control over land, the means of production, and other resources. These forms of material domination are important and the subject of a great deal of study in political sociology.

Structures of domination also take cultural form. Symbolic dominance includes rituals of submission (e.g. bowing, stepping aside, averting eyes) and other practices that reinforce social definitions of groups as superior or inferior. Practices of cultural or symbolic domination often reinforce material domination. These often include restrictions on daily life such as physical separation or ghettoization, exclusion from some occupations or activities or places or surveillance requirements as well as enforced ignorance through bans on literacy and restrictions on education. Subordinate groups are often required to speak, dress and act differently, to mark themselves as different from dominants. Cultural practices like these reinforce group boundaries, difference, and hierarchy. Morris and Braine argue that subordinated groups tend to have cultures that mix elements of domination and submission, even as they tend to have a strong sense of group consciousness and awareness of their subordination. But dominant majority groups also have cultures. Dominant majority cultures tend to may reinforce the habits of domination and privilege; dominant groups may be aware of their dominant position, or may be blind to it. I will return to this point below after developing arguments about the interrelation of networks and domination.

Cultural domination may also take the form of erasing or blurring group differences. Language, cultural or religious minorities may be required to adopt the language, religion or cultural practices of the dominants. In some cases this is part of a liberal or integrative strategy by dominants, intended to reduce people's material subordination in exchange for their disappearance as a distinct group, as when immigrants are offered full citizenship in exchange

for cultural assimilation. In other cases, language or religious suppression is associated with military conquest and coercive control of one territory or group by another and is meant to reduce the capacity of subordinates to resist domination; historical examples include European nation-formation, the European conquest of the Americas, and the Japanese occupation of Korea. In these cases, group boundaries remain despite cultural assimilation.

Ethnicity and Other Axes of Hierarchy and Domination

A longstanding concern in political sociology has been the extent to which social cleavages in society are overlapping or concentric versus cross-cutting or intersecting. Social policies affect people differently, depending on their social location. People have class interests around economic policies like tax systems, labor regulations, wages and welfare programs that are tied to their economic and occupational positions. They have linguistic interests tied to the dominance of their mother tongue and the ability to communicate easily with those around them. They have cultural interests tied to the ready accommodation to their preferred lifeways and ritual calendars. They have status or prestige interests about the social honor or respect accorded tied to the various social groups they are members of. Ethnic divisions matter more if they coincide with other divisions and hierarchies.

It especially matters whether the state is dominated by or biased toward one ethnic group, rather than incorporating all groups into state power on a relatively equal or fair basis. Ethnicity is implicated in the formation of most states. The United States, for example, was overtly founded as a White nation that opposed American Indians and enslaved and subordinated Africans. But even when ethnic distinctions are not legally overt, and even when majorities do not use their numbers to create laws that disempower and disenfranchise others, majorities can dominate democratic states and pursue their interests over those of minorities.

“Ethnic conflict” research is focused on identifying the factors that predict when protest or violence will occur along ethnic lines (Brubaker and Laitin 1998; Hechter and Okamoto 2001; Olzak 1985; Olzak 2004; Williams 1994). This research generally finds that overt conflict is more likely to occur along ethnic lines when ethnic differences coincide with differences in economic class or political power. Ethnic competition theory emphasizes structural conditions that put groups (existence and salience are already given) into conflict over scarce resources. Research also tends to find that political leadership, public discourse and social movements play significant roles in activating ethnic distinctions and discursively creating group differences and group boundaries.

Relations, Networks and Social Cleavage

Social networks are the key link between ethnicity as a mere category and ethnicity as a social group and collective identity. In addition to interests tied to the individual characteristics of people, there are interests that derive from the relations people have to each other. There are

spatial interests: regardless of their individual characteristics, people who live near each other share common consequences from environmental pollutants, crime, local services, weather and other factors that affect places.¹ There are also interests derived from indirect or network effects. These network interests are often ignored in social policy and social movement theory, but are central to my argument.

This argument is represented heuristically in Figures 4 and 5. Figure 4 schematically portrays two societies, one in which the ethnic groups (represented by dark and light figures) are intermixed and another in which they are physically (and by implication socially) segregated. In figure 5, the explosion represents a policy that disproportionately impacts the light stick figures; the ring around the explosion represents the side effects of being in social or spatial contact with someone directly affected by the policy. When the light and dark figures are segregated, all the direct and indirect effects of the policy are concentrated on the light figures. When the groups are integrated, the indirect effects of the policy impact most of the dark figures as well as the light figures, even though the direct effects of the policy are still concentrated on the light figures.

These indirect effects through social networks are material, emotional and cognitive. The “social capital” concept recognizes that individuals are affected by the wealth or poverty and knowledge of the people they are socially connected to, not just their own. The concept of economic multipliers recognizes that people benefit from having other people spend money in their community. But these relational or network effects are not just material. Individuals respond emotionally to crimes committed against people they know, to the grief of people they know, to the hardships of people they know. And their perceptions of reality and the circumstances of “typical” people are similarly shaped by the people they know. These emotional and cognitive effects affect the group identities and perceptions of grievance that are central to much social movement theory, alongside the enduring importance of material interests. The clear bottom line is that for predicting how a person views a given social issue, it is not enough to know that individual’s personal characteristics but also essential to know the characteristics of the people that person is linked to spatially or socially.

The existence and maintenance of distinct cultures depends upon networks of social relations, specifically a higher density of social ties within subcultural groups than between them. In Figure 4, the extent of social segregation is represented heuristically as separation in space between the dark and light stick figures. The figure elides the important difference between cases in which groups are spatially segregated from those in which they are spatially integrated but have few social ties, or spatially dispersed by have strong social ties. Both spatial and social integration are themselves multi-dimensional. People may reside in spatially segregated neighborhoods but be integrated at work, in school, or in public spaces. Similarly, the social ties

of coworker or fellow student or neighborhood acquaintance may be relatively superficial compared to the deeper ties of coreligionist or fellow immigrants from the same place in a larger hostile society.

Network relationships and cultural differences among groups are, of course, a structural property of the society as a whole. Thus the network dimension is both a property of the whole society and a property of any group within the society. The central question for the ethnic dimension of social movements is how segmented or cliqued the networks are. Groups that are socially and spatially isolated are both more likely to have non-overlapping and cleaved interests rather than cross-cutting interests and also more likely to develop the distinctive cultural practices that separate groups and, concomitantly, create sharper boundaries between them.

Morris and Braine suggest but do not emphasize the network position of a movement carrier as crucial to what I am calling its “ethnic” character, although they do stress that oppressed groups tend to have distinctive cultures. Network structures that are cliqued along network lines tend to reinforce ethnic differences and ethnic boundaries. Groups that are spatially and socially isolated are more likely to develop distinctive cultures that are ethnically distinct, as well as to nurture cultures of opposition and subordination. Isolated groups and culturally distinct groups are less likely to intermarry outside the group and thus to persist across generations. Groups that are endogamous across generations tend to become more physically and culturally distinct.

A great deal of social movement theory has focused on the structure of networks within a movement carrier including the extent to which they are dense enough to support mobilization or on the subgroups within a movement. In this paper I am focusing more on the extent to which there are network ties between the movement carrier and the rest of the society more generally and the dominant groups in society more specifically.

Social Networks and Structures of Domination: Cross-Cutting and Reinforcing Cleavages

We can avoid debates about hierarchies of oppression and still recognize that not all axes of dominance and subordination are the same. One important way in which they differ is in their network structure. Gender is an axis of domination but not of network cleavage: all communities and families have people of both sexes and all sexual preferences and gender identities. All communities also have people of all ages and people who are disabled. By contrast, in the United States, race historically was a clear social cleavage, especially along the White/Black axis, and to a large extent still is. That is, some families and communities and social networks are essentially all White and others are essentially all Black; American Indians on reservations and many Latinos are also in largely ethnically homogeneous networks, and Asians

were also segregated or excluded historically. In Northern Ireland, the Protestant/Catholic divide was a social cleavage; religion is similarly a social cleavage in Israel/Palestine. In much of Europe today there is a social cleavage between a national majority (e.g. French, German, Dutch) and some immigrants (e.g. Muslims or Blacks) who are seen by the majority as unassimilable challenges to the character of the society.

Distinguishing the network structure from the dominance structure of group boundaries gives us new tools for understanding economic classes. The question is whether there are network ties across class lines and how these network ties relate to the networks structured by race/ethnicity. In the United States, there is both class heterogeneity within all nearly all racial/ethnic groups and substantial differences between racial/ethnic groups in the central tendency and dispersion of these distributions. Recent research suggests that the spatial residential segregation of economic groups within racial groups may be as high as or higher than the spatial residential segregation of racial groups within economic groups. What is less clear is how deeply these patterns of residential segregation map social segregation. For example, middle class Blacks are much more likely than middle class Whites to have poor relatives who made economic and personal demands and them and, conversely, poor Whites are more likely to have non-poor relatives who can offer them assistance. A substantial body of research examines the “social capital,” i.e. resources available through network ties, of people of different classes and races.

Social scientists have long attended to the importance of reinforcing versus cross-cutting cleavages. The importance of the extent to which different dimensions cross-cut or reinforce each other is well recognized as a central feature of comparative ethnic-racial relations and is well-recognized in modern political science theories of public opinion. Some social movements work is recognizing this. Most visible [to me, anyway] is recent work on White racist movements and politics, which are shown to be fostered in certain social contexts. KKK groups in particular have been the subject of a flurry of recent research that identifies their political and network contexts and consequences (e.g. Cunningham 2012; Cunningham and Phillips 2007; McVeigh 1999; McVeigh 2001; McVeigh and Cunningham 2012) Consistent with this paper’s emphasis on the network dimensions of movement carriers, McVeigh (2004) emphasizes White social isolation that creates a structured ignorance makes white supremacist worldviews logical and meaningful. Adams and Roscigno (2005) examine the online discourse of white supremacist organizations, finding that nationalism, religion and definitions of responsible citizenship are interwoven with more specific racial claims.

Intergenerationality, Networks, Domination

Figure 6 emphasizes the ways in which social networks, domination and intergenerationality reinforce each other in ethnic group formation. Inter-marriage between ethnic groups is both an

indicator and cause of reduced of social distance between them. People tend to marry people with whom they have contact on a relatively equal basis. Groups that at time 1 are distinct groups will blend and mix over time if they intermarry and produce children of mixed origins.² If groups are endogamous (marrying within the group), they tend to persist over time and, conversely, endogamy is a precondition for maintaining sharp group boundaries over time. Social scientists have long recognized the importance of marriage patterns as markers of class closure (e.g. Van Leeuwen, Maas and Miles 2005). To the extent that economic classes or educational groups or members of a particular religion or linguistic group practice endogamy, they are more like ethnic groups in that they will tend to persist over generations.

Social networks obviously impact marriage patterns and, thus, intergenerationality. Structures of domination that create social distance and segregation reinforce network cleavage and intergenerational persistence of group difference. Groups that are intergenerational and relatively segregated tend to develop separate cultural practices and identities that reinforce group differences and tend to maintain social distance and reduce intermarriage that reinforce group boundaries.

Structures of domination can affect network ties. Day-to-day restrictions on life, rules of segregation and exclusion, differential access to resources, enforced ignorance and rituals of symbolic or cultural dominance can all contribute to physical or social separation between people in different groups. Populations experiencing enforced segregation do tend to develop distinct subcultures and to have few ties to the larger society. Rituals of domination that prohibit inferiors from speaking to or contradicting superiors can create social boundaries that block communication and create different worlds of experience. Alternately, assimilationist cultural dominance can destroy a group's separate identity if it is accompanied by integrationist policies that lead to genuine social mixing.

Ethnic Networks and Social Movement Carriers

"Ethnicity" matters for social movements if and when it functions as a network cliquing structure that tends to affect the factors that are important for movement formation. That is, "ethnicity" as network cliquing and intergenerationality matters if and when it

- creates both shared fate within a group and a lack of common interests between groups,
- fosters conflicts of interest between groups,
- fosters subcultural divergence between groups,
- promotes common identities within groups and contrasting identities between them, and
- promotes common understandings of reality and common frames within groups and different understandings and frames between groups.

Groups that are relatively socially isolated from other groups tend both to have distinctive interests and to develop distinctive cultures and views of the world. Groups that are socially isolated and culturally distinct tend to misunderstand each other and view each other with suspicion or hostility. These differences are the social structural underpinnings for movements and conflicts organized around ethnic/racial differences. Such movements may be movements by minorities challenging structures of domination, but they may also be movements by majorities seeking to impose structures of domination on other groups or violent genocidal or exclusionary movements seeking to eliminate other groups entirely.

But ethnicity is also relevant for movements that are not “about” ethnicity. Even people who share interests due to a common position in an axis of domination/subordination may be divided by ethnicity. Ethnicity as network cliquing and subcultural group differentiation makes it difficult for people to work together across these boundaries even when they have interests in common.

There has been significant research mapping the networks of relations among movement organizations and movement activists, but less attention has been paid to understanding the network position in society of the movement carriers, the population from which movement participants are drawn. Just as all people have a gender and all people have a race, all social movements have an ethnicity. That is, all social movements have an ethnic/racial make-up that maps onto the ethnic/racial structure of the society it is in, and that ethnic/racial make-up is a critically important feature of a social movement that shapes everything about it. All social movements are either internally homogeneous or they are internally heterogeneous; it matters either way. All social movements are either dominated by a majority ethnicie, dominated by a minority ethnicie, or are ethnically mixed. It matters regardless of which it is. All movements either have extensive network ties to the broader society, or are insular and isolated. All movement discourses are either relatively central to or relatively peripheral to mainstream discourses. All movement participants either identify with dominant social groups or they do not. It is impossible to do good theorizing about social movements without theorizing their ethnic dimension. Unfortunately, too much theorizing has ignored this dimension and has attempted to draw inferences about social movements in general from one narrow type of movement.

Figure 7 gives an oversimplified heuristic example of these ideas. The vertical axis is domination or advantage. The horizontal axis is network integration with the majority. Example movement types are hypothetically located in the space. The point is to emphasize that social movements differ markedly in their location in this space, and that the extent to which a movement has social ties to the larger society is just as important in its dynamics and trajectory as the extent of its material resources.

Figure 8 expresses these ideas in another way. In this figure, economic class or advantage is on the vertical axis, and several stylized ethnic groups are on the horizontal axis. In this figure, there is a correlation between class and ethnicity. The dotted lines heuristically sketch different configurations of social movement supporters. These dotted lines represent the social locations of actual participants or supporters, not the theoretical beneficiaries of the movement. Some draw some draw on people of the same class across ethnic group lines, and others on people of the same ethnicity across class lines. Some draw from only one intersectional class/ethnic fraction, some draw from several. In this figure, as in real life, no movement draws from all segments of society.

These spatial graphs imply an empirical and theoretical claim that gender, age, disability and other personal characteristics that vary inside families and communities (rather than between them) are structurally different as a basis of domination. However, the theoretical tools we have developed, specifically the focus on networks, provides predictions about movements around such characteristics. Specifically, we expect that movements around such characteristics will be organized not through families and communities, but through organizations or institutions that provide a basis for network ties. For example, the structural bases for the women's movement of the early 1970s were political organizations and employment, places where women gathered with other women. The structural bases for disability rights movements were organizations of caregivers and schools for the deaf.

Majorities and Minorities: An “Ethnic” Typology of Social Movements

Previous sections of this paper have argued that “ethnic” groups are the socially constructed products of political processes. These social construction processes are ongoing and the constructed groups are not static but evolving. However, this section of the paper takes these social construction processes as givens, and considers the importance of majority-ness versus minority-ness in movement dynamics. This typology has two dimensions. One is the actual empirical membership of the groups, where we contrast majority movements with minority movements and mixed majority-minority movements, but also consider other axes of domination, particularly class. The second dimension is whether the movement is focused on improving the position of an ethnic group or focused on an issue that (at least in principle) transcends groups. Although group-focused movements almost by definition activate ethnic identities, issue-focused movements may not, even when their membership is empirically mono-ethnic. Because dominant ethnic majorities have access to more power and resources than subordinate ethnic minorities but do not necessarily have externally-imposed collective identities, they face different issues in mobilization from ethnic minorities.

Ethnic Majority Movements

Ethnic majority movements are movements that are empirically overwhelmingly dominated by ethnic majorities. There are four broad types of ethnic majority movements: (1) group-focused

movements promoting the interests of the ethnic majority as opposed to ethnic minorities (e.g. White supremacist or Hindu nationalist movements); (2) group-focused movements promoting the interests of a group subordinated on a different axis of domination within the ethnic majority (e.g. gender or class movements); (3) issue-focused movements promoting issues that affect society as a whole (e.g. peace, environmentalism, animal rights); and (4) group-focused ally movements promoting the interests of ethnic minorities. The last type is comparable to mixed-ethnicity groups for ethnic minorities, which will be discussed below.

Ethnic majority movements tend to be in the most advantageous position for mobilization. Ethnic majorities draw on larger pools of potential participants and resources. They have the numbers to exert electoral influence or power. They are much less likely to be repressed and are more likely to generate sympathetic backlash from the rest of society if they are repressed. Ethnic majorities are more likely to be able to gain advantages from violent tactics without being violently repressed.

The processes of developing collective identities are different for ethnic majorities than for minorities. In line with the arguments of Morris and Braine, dominant ethnic majorities may not have particular ethnic majority group consciousness, instead identifying themselves either with the nation as a whole or with some subgroup within the majority such as their class or religion. People typically become members of majority movements by choice, not ascription, although some types of movements lodge within subcultures within the majority. This latter possibility, which I think of as proto-ethnic subcultures, will be discussed more below.

Majority movements may be further subdivided according to their stance with respect to minorities, which can be positive, hostile, or neutral. Some majority movements are organized around positive support for minorities. The dynamics of these movements are best discussed with mixed-ethnic movements, to be discussed below, even though there are many solidarity groups that are empirically majority-dominated.

Many majority movements are overtly hostile toward other groups and have explicit anti-minority ideologies, including White Supremacist, anti-immigrant, or anti-Jewish or anti-Muslim or anti-Catholic movements. Such movements tend to appear in many multi-ethnic countries and are the subject of much of the “ethnic conflict” literature. Hostile majority movements tend to view minorities as threatening their status or power or cultural dominance. Hostile majority movements typically are aroused or enflamed by politicians whose goal is to gain votes and win elections. White supremacist movements appear to have been increasing in recent years in the US and elsewhere (Bonilla-Silva 2000).

Majority movements addressing non-ethnic issues such as gender, sexual orientation, class, environment, peace, or morality often have a shifting or mixed position with respect to minorities. In many cases, they see themselves as speaking for or to “society as a whole,” and

may encourage minorities to join them. However, majority movements addressing non-ethnic issues often take on an anti-minority agenda. Historical examples in the US include the [White] labor movement and the [White] women's movement, which each had factions in some eras that were virulently and even violently anti-minority. Moral reform and religious movements also often associate immorality or religious error with minorities. Many studies focus on the ways putatively general social issues or concerns are racialized. This is most clear with respect to crime control policies which disproportionately target minorities and are more supported in the US by Whites who are anti-minority (Staples 1975; Tonry 1995; Tonry and Melewski 2008; Unnever, Cullen and Jonson 2008; Weaver 2007). Felon disenfranchisement was promoted as an explicit way to maintain ethnic dominance (Behrens, Uggen and Manza 2003). On the opposite pole, Matsueda and Drakulich (2009) demonstrate that perceptions of bias in criminal justice is associated with other pro-minority attitudes and policy opinions. Opinions about social welfare programs in the US are also highly racialized, with Whites who dislike minorities being more opposed; Faist (1995) finds that this is a growing pattern in Germany as well as in the US. One phenomenon worthy of study is the extent to which populist anti-elite movements by ethnic majorities frequently become explicitly or implicitly nationalist and anti-minority in tone and practice.

That majority movements that are not "about" ethnicity may take on an anti-minority agenda is empirically well established. Why this happens is less clear. One reason may be due to the fact that majorities inherently have less contact with minorities than minorities have with majorities as long as there is even a partial tendency for like to associate with like (Blau 1977a; Blau 1977b). This makes majority people more ignorant of the needs and interests of minorities and also more at risk of stereotyping. This structural tendency to reduced network ties with minorities contributes to the processes of ethnic group construction and us-them dynamics that lead majority group members to view minorities as competitors or enemies rather than potential allies or co-occupants of the same societal boat. McVeigh (2004) draws on Schwartz's ideas of structured ignorance, theories of bounded rationality, and Blau's discussion of social structure as a multidimensional space of social positions to identify the conditions under which a white racist interpretation of the facts around a person can make sense.

Economic or political elites often fan ethnic conflict. Ethnic/racial labor conflicts in the US have generally been tied to employer practices of segregating workers by ethnicity and paying minorities less; majority workers have viewed minorities as direct competitors driving their wages down. Political elites competing for ethnic majority votes often promote fears of minorities as a vote-getting strategy.

Even when majority people are not hostile to minorities and would welcome them as allies, patterns of ethnic spatial and social segregation reinforced by group differences in economic resources create gulfs between groups in both their objective interests and their subjectively

experienced realities. They may pursue policies that benefit them but hurt others, not out of hostility to others but out of genuine ignorance of the interests and conditions of life of other groups.

In short, ignoring the majority-ness of majority movements and both their advantages in mobilization and the ways in which they generate direct or indirect problems for minorities puts severe limitations on understanding movement dynamics and outcomes.

Ethnic Minority Movements

Ethnic minority movements are movements that are empirically dominated by ethnic minorities. Ethnic minority movements include both group-oriented and issue-oriented movements. Group-oriented minority movements specifically advocate the advancement of the ethnic minority. Depending on their structural location and ideology, they may be civil rights movements seeking a change in their legal status within a particular state, separatist movements seeking political autonomy for a homeland, or cultural separatist movements. They also include “intersectional” movements that explicitly link ethnic subordination issues to another issue. Examples of intersectional movements include the environmental justice movement (Novotny 1995; Perrolle 1993) and the movement of women of color for reproductive rights (Cole and Luna 2010; Luna 2009; Luna 2010; Luna 2011) or the Black Lives Matter movement that focuses on police violence.

Ethnic minorities are often economically disadvantaged, although not all are. Even if they are not disadvantaged, they may experience discrimination and their sheer minorityness typically gives them little power in an electoral democracy, although they may sometimes have power as swing votes or in certain local areas where they are a majority. Historically, ethnic minorities have often been politically disenfranchised. Ethnic minorities typically lack sufficient resources and political power to achieve their goals without allies from the majority group, and this is especially so if the minority is disadvantaged.

This need for outside allies is one theoretically important way in which minority movements diverge from majority movements. Another is that movements by ethnic minorities are subject to higher rates of repression than majority movements and are less likely to generate widespread backlash when they are repressed. As Morris and Braine argued, minorities that are disadvantaged, and especially those that have been subject to overt repression and oppression, typically develop subcultures that intermingle themes of subordination and opposition. Awareness of group identity and a sense of grievance and opposition are typically givens, but so are fear of the consequences of resistance and customs and rituals of subordination, acquiescence and compliance.

Just as movements may be empirically dominated by ethnic majorities without the “issue” being ethnicity, movements may be empirically dominated by ethnic minorities without being

framed as ethnic or having an ethnic collective identity. A substantial amount of work in the academic study of ethnic conflict is precisely concerned with the circumstances under which issues and movements become framed as ethnic. Movements that are framed as ethnic minority movements include civil rights movements, national liberation or secessionist movements.

In addition to movements that explicitly identify or frame themselves as ethnic minority movements, there are movements that define themselves as class-based or place-based movements that are empirically peopled by ethnic minorities. There are also movements by and for particularly oppressed groups of people who are disproportionately minority, such as felons or undocumented migrants. Movements that are empirically peopled by disadvantaged minorities have most of the characteristics of minority movements whether or not they frame their movement in ethnic terms. That is, they tend to be weaker in resources, have fewer social ties to the broader majority-dominant society, and are vulnerable to repression.

It is important to stress that, analytically, the problems of minority movements are due to the hierarchical or vertical issues of subordination that make them resource-poor, small numbers and structural exclusions that give them low influence with the state, and too few network ties to the broader ethnic majority to draw in allies.

Mixed Majority-Minority Movements

Some movements empirically mixed majorities and minorities in their ethnic composition. Some are peopled primarily by ethnic majorities but have substantial minority participation, while other movements are peopled primarily by ethnic minorities but have significant majority participation. Some multi-ethnic groups combine professionalized advocates who are disproportionately of majority ethnicity with disadvantaged beneficiary adherents who are primarily of minority ethnicity; this is the configuration that dominates the racial disparities movement that I have been working in. "Solidarity" movements in which majority people organize themselves to support minorities also have many of these dynamics.

It is well recognized among activists that it can be very difficult for culturally-different groups to work together, especially if there are also different levels of privilege and disadvantage that are correlated with ethnic differences. In practice it is often difficult to hold such groups together and they are typically marked by tensions along the majority-minority ethnic divide. These lines of tension include privilege, hierarchy and power, cultural practices, and agendas.

Marx and Useem (1971) identify common problems that have arisen in movements for minorities (US civil rights and anti-slavery, Indian anti-untouchability plus similar movements in Japan, South Africa, England and for Mexican Americans) when members of dominant and subordinate groups try to work together. Outsiders (members of the dominant group) have more resources and political power, which both makes them more effective and leads them to

want to control the organization. Insiders are more radical in both their goals and tactics and are less concerned with their relations to other movements. Cultural differences mirroring the larger society lead to conflicts about how to interact and run the organization. Appel (2003) finds similar patterns in an analysis and critique of the white supremacist tendencies in leftist politics that arise despite good intentions. Eder, Staggenborg and Sudderth (1995) describe racial divisions at a women's festival, as well as conflicts between lesbians and straight women.

Problems of privilege plague movements that seek to bridge the privileged and the disadvantaged. Some of these gaps are material and practical, including access to telephones, email, copiers, computers, cars, travel money, days off, and discretionary time. Some are tied to levels of education and knowledge. Some are tied to the unconscious internalization of social hierarchies. People from privileged backgrounds typically have habits of domination and skills of self-assurance and confidence in talking and writing, while people from disadvantaged backgrounds may have been trained in submission and have absorbed what Morris and Braine call "cultures of submission." Privileged people are often uncomfortable when disadvantaged people are assertive and claim authority and want to do things their own way. These practical and interactional differences plague all groups that seek to work together across lines of privilege.

The privilege issues merge into the hierarchy and power issues. Privileged people typically have more access to outside sources of power and are more likely to be viewed as knowledgeable and objective by outsiders. The privileged are more often in control of an organization's purse strings due to being seen as more legitimate in the eyes of funders, and they are more likely to be gate-keepers for jobs or benefits needed by less advantaged group members. The privileged are also much less likely to be repressed for their actions, while disadvantaged members often have genuine reason to fear repression. These hierarchy and power issues are especially acute in professionalized organizations, or organizations with outside funding.

Even when issues of privilege and hierarchy are not acute, different ethnic groups may have difficulty working together because of cultural issues tied to the fact that network cliquing gives them different expectations about what it means to "do" collective action. This is obvious whenever groups speak different languages, but it comes up whenever people's background and experiences are markedly different. Groups from different networks may have had different experiences that give them radically different view of "reality." These lead to different group identities and different ways of talking about and framing issues. In addition, cultural groups vary in the practices that undergird collective action. They have different ways of holding discussions and structuring meetings and different understandings about the proper forms of action. One especially important difference is that ethnic groups vary markedly in the ways in which disagreement is expressed. In some ethnic groups, overt and challenging statements of disagreement and confrontational language are the norm, while in other ethnic

groups, any overt expression of disagreement is taboo and all communications must be made under norms of ritual politeness and circumlocution. Of course, even this simple contrast is too simple to capture the huge variability in the cultural practices around having conversations and making decisions. People from different backgrounds who are not aware of these cultural differences can infuriate each other in meetings and can find it nearly impossible to work together.

Finally, there are agenda issues when groups work together. People from different backgrounds will often have divergent goals. There can be internal conflicts over the allocation of resources within a movement, such as access to paid positions for dispersion of funds to different work groups. There are often conflicts over leadership. In addition, the mixing of conscience constituents and beneficiary constituents inevitably raises concerns about shared fate. Who will suffer the consequences if things go wrong? Are the conscience constituents really in for the long haul, or will they leave when things go sour or they don't get their way?

Mixed Minority Movements

Another type of movement is made up of multiple minorities. They arise in various ways. Some groups are dominated by one ethnicity but reach out to incorporate others, some are formed as coalitions between groups representing different ethnicities, and some are drawn from constituencies that are multi-ethnic. Groups that mixed multiple minorities often combine the dynamics of minority movements in terms of lacking political clout and needing outside allies to win with the cultural conflicts of mixed majority-minority movements. However, most multi-minority movements are formed around issues in which members are similar to each other in terms of not being particularly privileged, and the common sense of being ignored by the majority is often a basis of solidarity.

Some researchers have examined multi-ethnic movements. Diaz Veizades and Chang (1996) describe the conflicts that led to breakups of coalitions between Blacks and Koreans and Latinos and Blacks, including low resources, power struggles, and nationalist ideologies in the larger communities. Brown and Brueggemann (1997) compare successful and unsuccessful cases of building interracial (Black-White) labor unions in US history, arguing that success required both more favorable economic relations and concrete strategies for incorporating Blacks. Jung (2006) describes how Japanese, Chinese and Filipino workers in Hawaii built strong multi-ethnic Communist unions by explicitly incorporating race/ethnicity into their representational structures.

Applying the Abstract Dimensions to Group Formation More Broadly

The processes of group formation, of defining difference and boundaries, apply to all groups, not just ethnicities. Recognizing the interrelations among structures of domination, network structures, and intergenerational continuity provides tools for understanding other axes of

domination and cleavage. Class and ethnicity are often intertwined, as subordinate ethnicities typically occupy lower class positions and employers have historically intentionally exploited ethnic differences and fanned ethnic conflict as a strategy of labor control. Additionally, to the extent that people of different economic classes are in separate social networks and exhibit endogamy and intergenerational transmission of class position, class identity, and class subcultures, so that families, kinship networks and even communities may be mono-class, classes may be said to have an “ethnic” character.

Religion or political orientation may also take on an “ethnic” character if people with particular beliefs have high network connections to each other and low connections to others, especially if people come to marry only like-minded people and socialize their children into intergenerational communities of like-minded people. It is already the case that many localities in the US are politically or religiously quite homogeneous. People are already creating distinct subcultures and universes of discourse which shape their political orientations and worldviews. Social movements are already drawing from these distinct movement carriers defined by politics and religion. There is already rhetoric about “attacks on Christianity” and anti-immigrant or anti-minority rhetoric that is contributing to perceptions of group difference and group boundaries. One view is that this is evidence of a resurgence of White Evangelical Christian as a salient ethnic identity. There may also be another emergent White Liberal ethnic identity.

Summary and Implications

I have argued that different movement carriers are in different ethnic-structural locations that affect everything about them: mobilization processes, choices of strategy and tactics, core framing tasks and consciousness raising, the likelihood of repression, and the ability to influence the larger society. The three groups of ethnic dimensions are the vertical dimension of structures of domination, the horizontal dimension of network ties and network cleavages and the temporal dimension of intergenerational transmission. These three dimensions are the analytic tools for characterizing the social location of any group. Any theory of social movements needs to pay attention to these dimensions as part of its analysis.

Ethnicity in the broad sense is always an important dimension of movement analysis because ethnic group definitions and boundaries are always intertwined with state formation and state functioning. States are generally biased in favor of some ethnic groups and against others, and in many cases, ethnic categories (especially racial categories) are the bases for strong structures of domination.

Not all types of movement carriers are equally likely to need to or to be able to generate social movements and collective action. Ethnic majorities typically have the numbers, resources,

electoral clout and network ties that facilitate mobilization, enhance the chances of success, and reduce the chances of repression. Advantaged majorities may not need movement mobilization at all if they are able to satisfy their desires through ordinary individual or political channels. If they are opposed by other members of the ethnic majority who have differing political views, we may see the development of movement-counter movement pairs, with each side able to gain adherents and influence, and neither side subject to excessive repression.

By contrast, ethnic minorities are often in situations that hinder movement success. On the plus side, network cleavages may give them the internal network ties and associated sense of identity and solidarity to facilitate collective action. But on the negative side, ethnic minorities are more easily repressed and the very structures of domination that oppress them may enforce habits of subordination as well as reduce the resources and network ties that would provide a basis for achieving their goals.

Finally, it seems to me that bringing the expanded idea of the “ethnic” into social movements theory provides tools for answering Andrew Walder’s (Walder 2009) challenge about explaining the content of movements. Walder reviews and critiques social movement research for narrowing its focus to the problem of mobilization and ignoring the problem of content. As Walder’s review acknowledges, older class-centric or deprivation theories that tried to explain movement content were generally unsatisfactory. One of the paradoxes we know is that people who seem to be in objectively the same material condition often embrace wildly different political and movement ideologies. This is the problem of “unexplained” ideological divergence. In the United States today we can observe that White Americans in roughly the same socio-economic circumstances are embracing divergent ideologies. We also know that non-“interest” factors, particularly religious affiliation and geographic location, are strong predictors of this divergence in opinions.

We who study social movements have some theoretical tools for making sense of these patterns. People of different ideological views are in different networks: they live in different neighborhoods, participate in different secular or religious organizations, and read or watch different information sources. They live in radically different universes of discourse. Movements mostly recruit from populations or movement carriers that support the general world-view of the movement, and concentrate on activating and extending the basic values and opinions of the movement carrier. Further, a common response to encountering people who are talking from a different or unfamiliar universe of discourse tends to produce outrage and polarization, not influence. There is evidence that people form ethnic-like identities that are associated with their political opinions, and that group identity and reactions against outsiders help to fuel support for or affiliation with movements.

This approach does not immediately answer the questions of movement content, but it does point toward a strategy for answering it. It says that we cannot expect to read movement

content directly from an individual's personal circumstances, but from the larger network of affiliations in which people are embedded. These larger networks of affiliations affect what ideas they are exposed to and how they react to new ideas. People are making sense of the world they live in, but they do so in a socially-defined context in which some things are taken as unquestionably true or real and polarization develops when they are aware of others who are actively supporting different views.

To sum up, we find that starting with taking seriously the difference between ethnic majorities and ethnic minorities in their prospects for mobilization and seeking to identify the theoretical dimensions of ethnicity and how they influence social movements leads us to a new set of ways of looking at the core problems of meaning-making and the construction of movement identities.

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Notes

¹ There are typically interactions between individual characteristics and spatial effects so that a spatial interest generally does not affect everyone in the area in the same way, but this does not change the basic point that there is some common spatial effect.

² Scholars of race and ethnicity recognize that the rules defining the race or ethnicity of children of mixed unions vary between societies and can be quite complex. Sometimes mixed children are seen as a distinct group, sometimes as belonging wholly to the group of one of the parents. Whether mixed unions are treated as legal marriages or as informal unions affects the status and categorization of their offspring. These complexities are beyond the general point being made here that endogamy, or more precisely in-breeding, is closely tied to maintaining a distinct ethnicity.

Pamela Oliver

Figures for The Ethnic Dimensions

Submission to ASA 2016

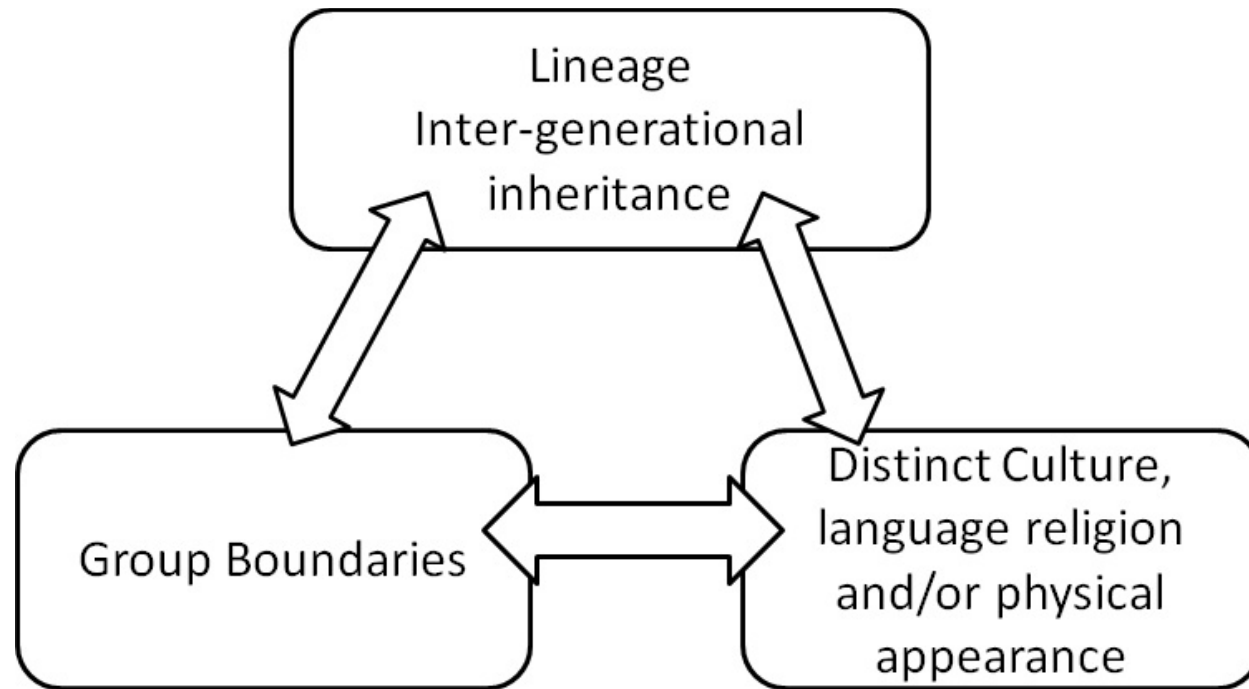


Figure 1 Ethnicity as mutually reinforcing boundaries, differences, intergenerationality

External Ethnic Dimensions

Internal Ethnic Dimensions

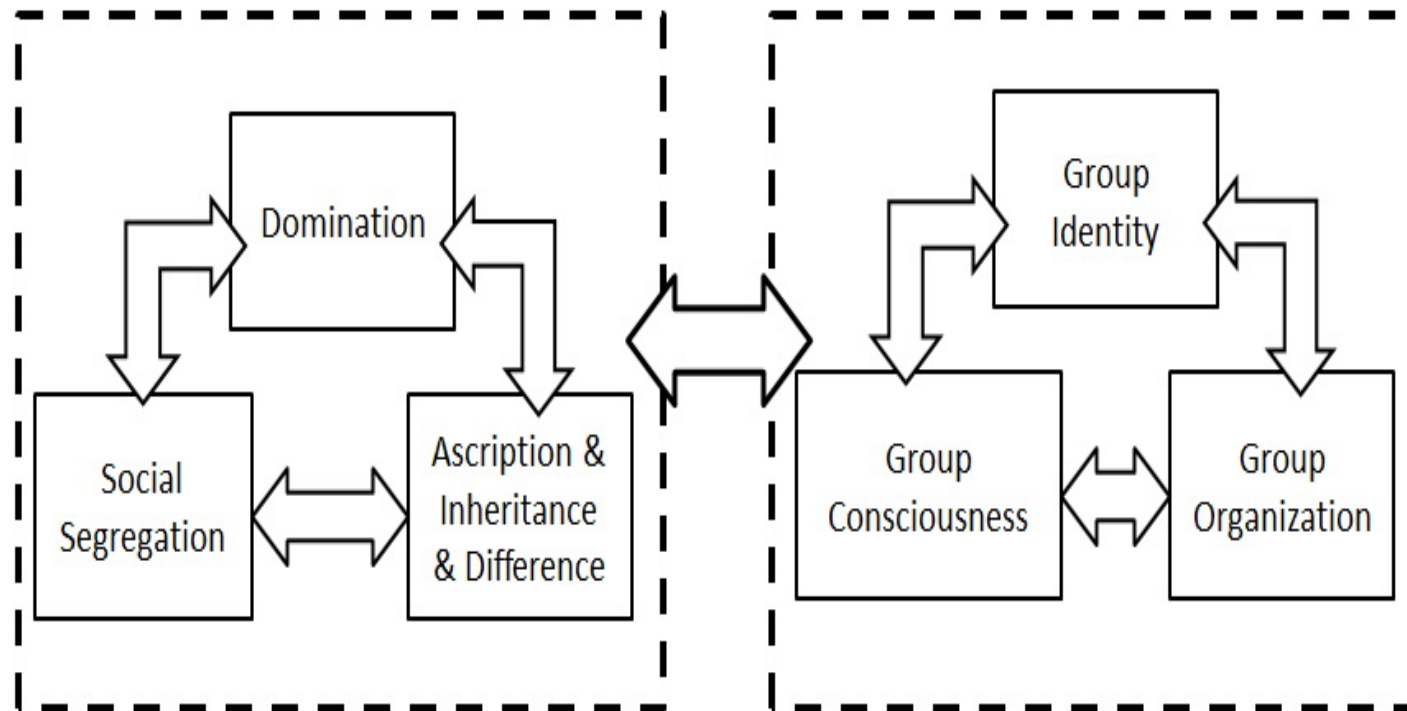


Figure 2 Internal and external processes of ethnic group formation

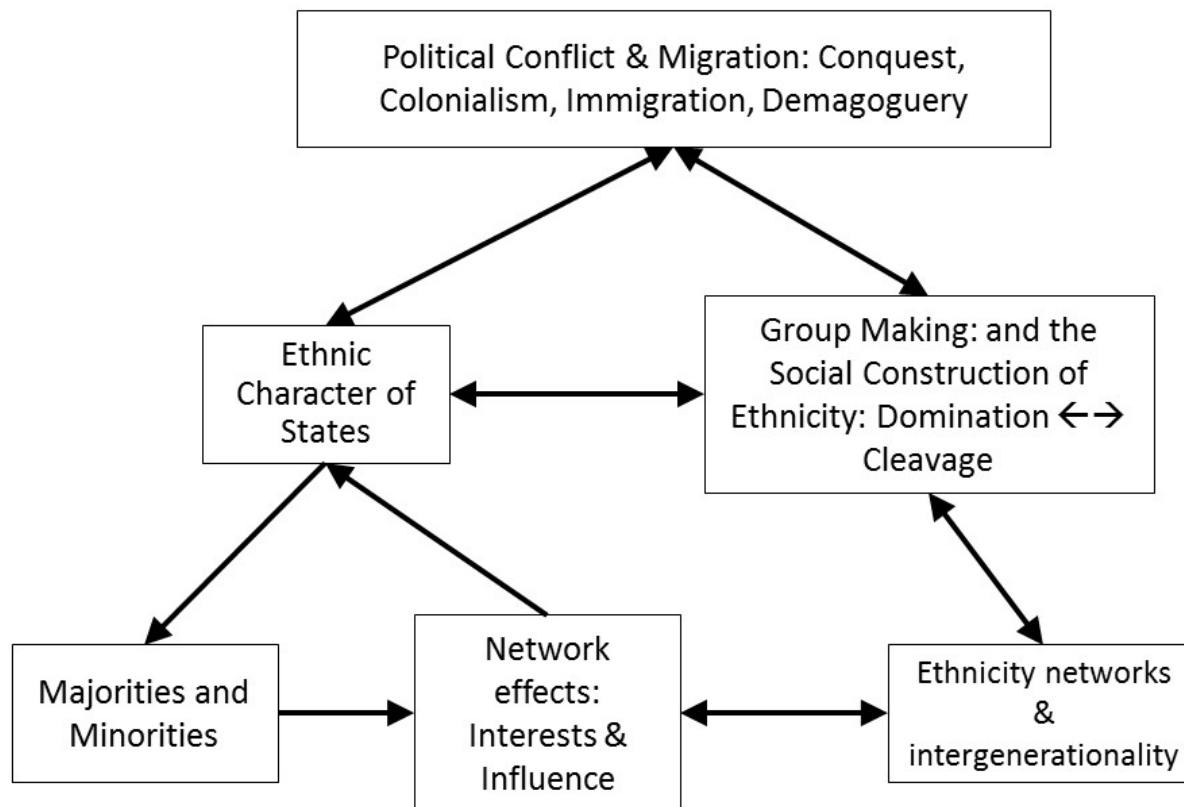


Figure 3 Ethnicity and states

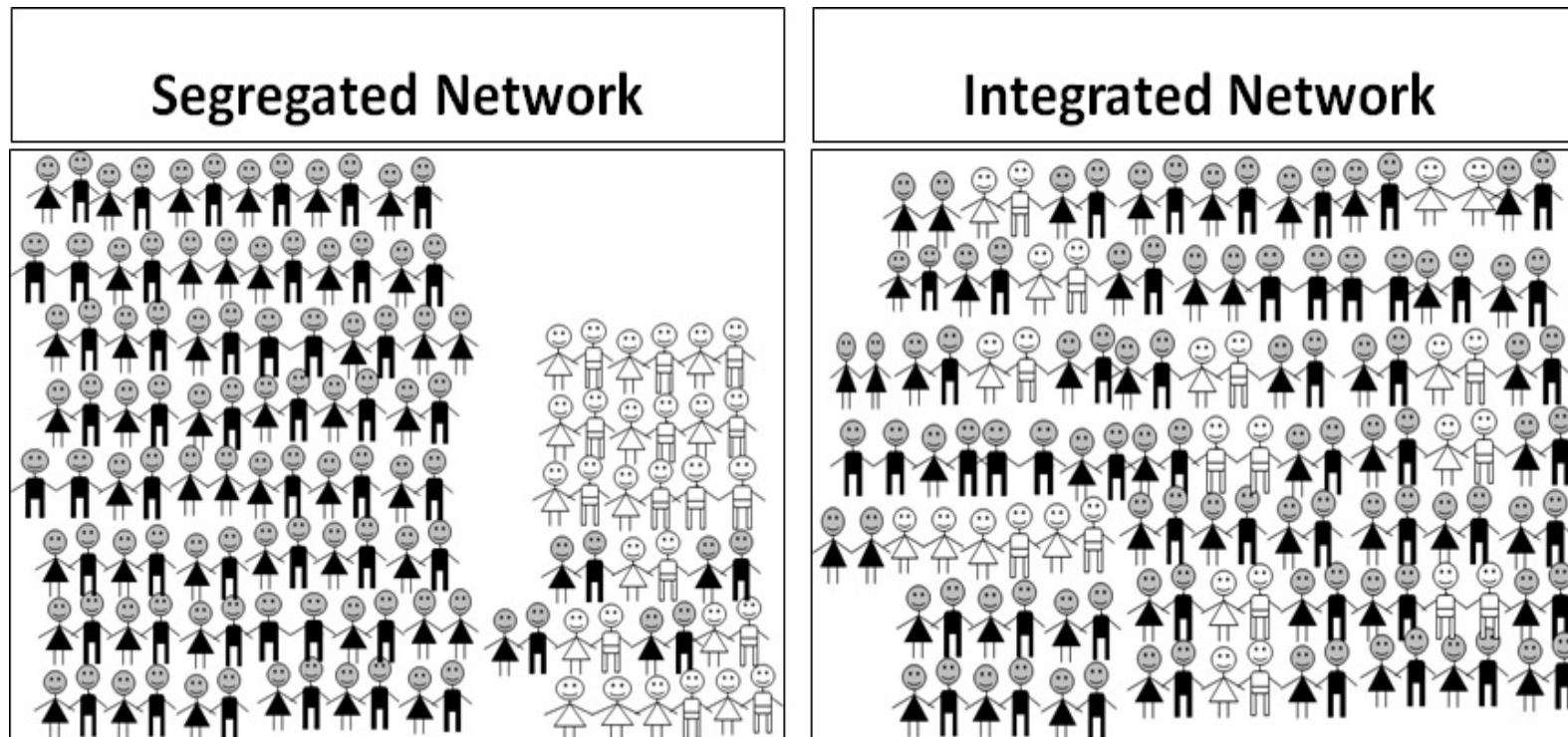


Figure 4 Segregated and integrated networks

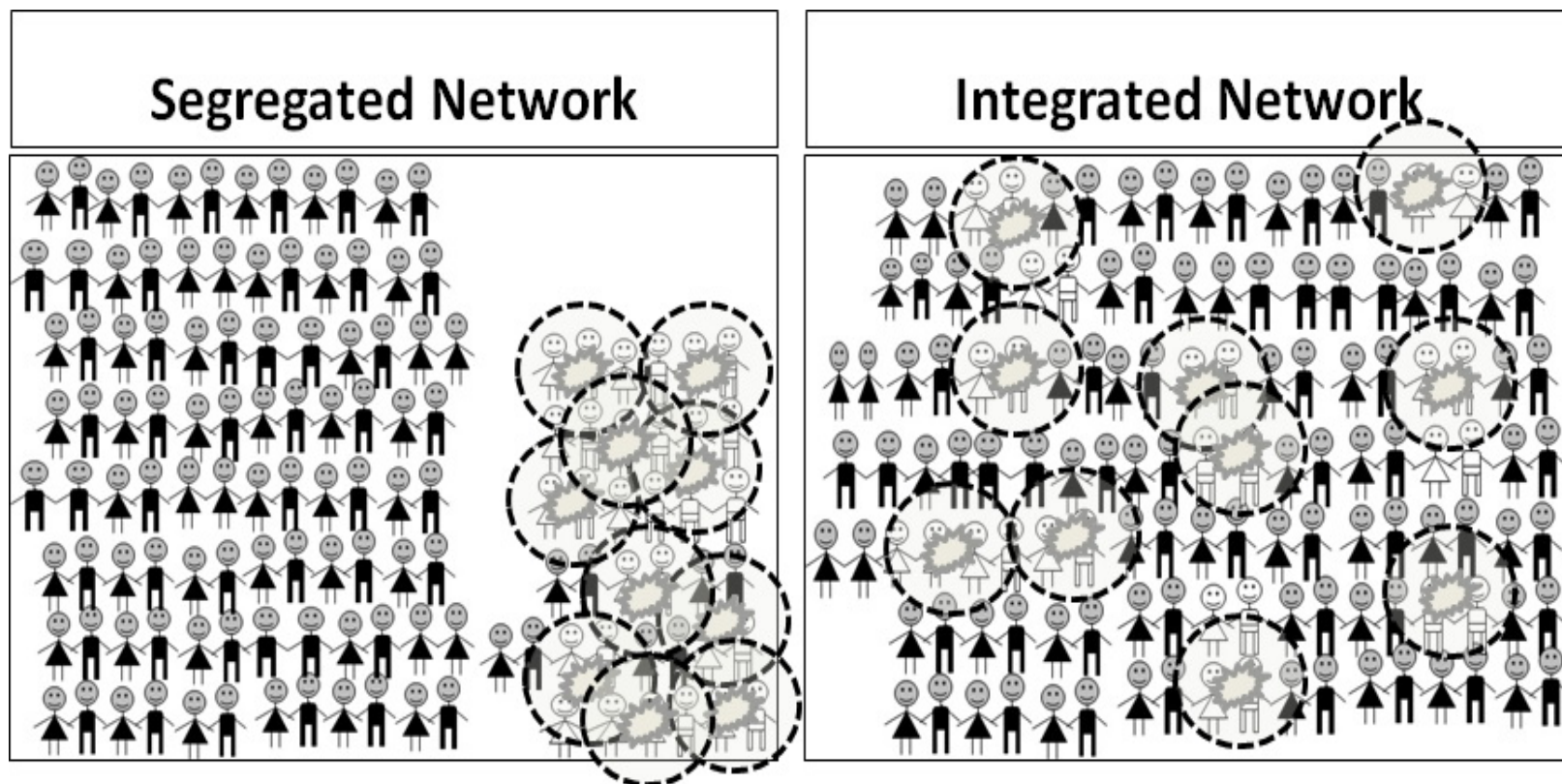


Figure 5 Policy impacts in segregated and integrated networks

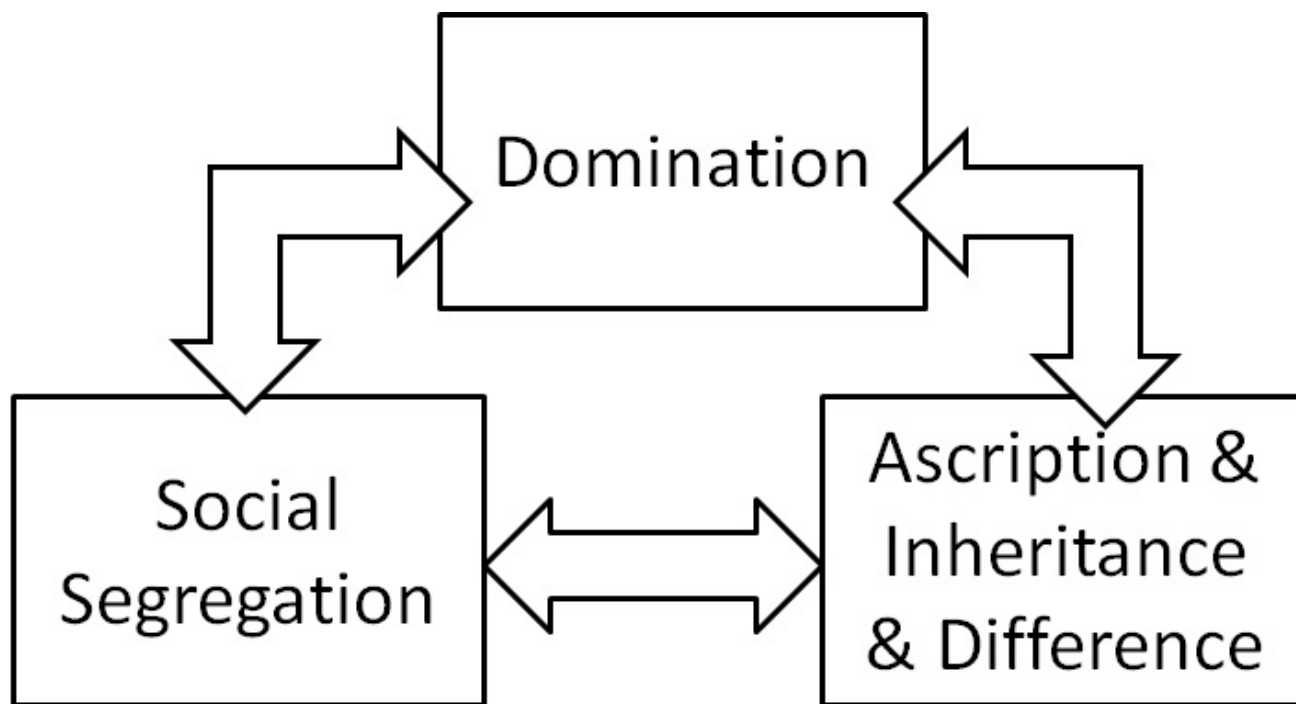


Figure 6 Mutual reinforcement of domination, networks, difference and inheritance

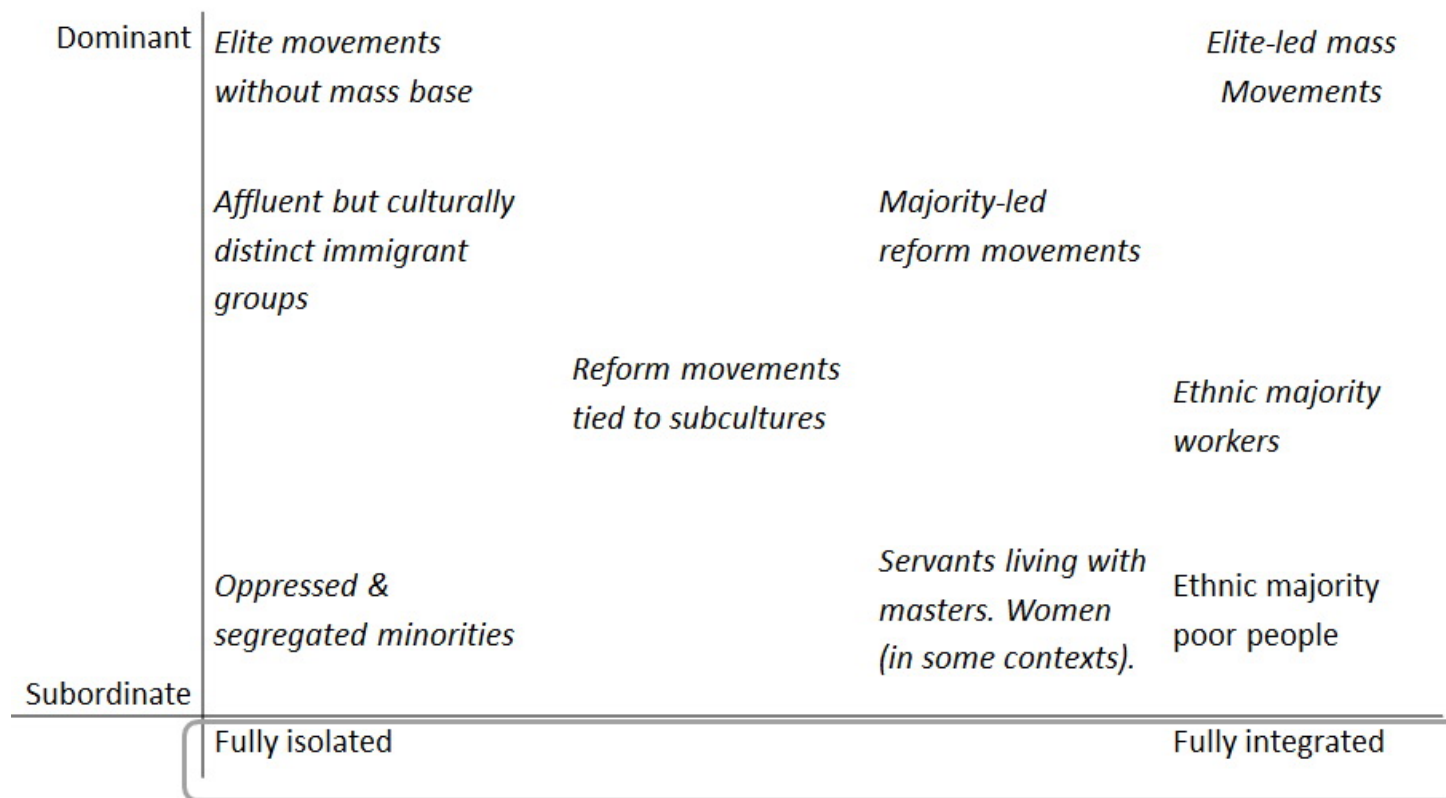


Figure 7 Movement carriers in a two-dimensional space of dominance and integration

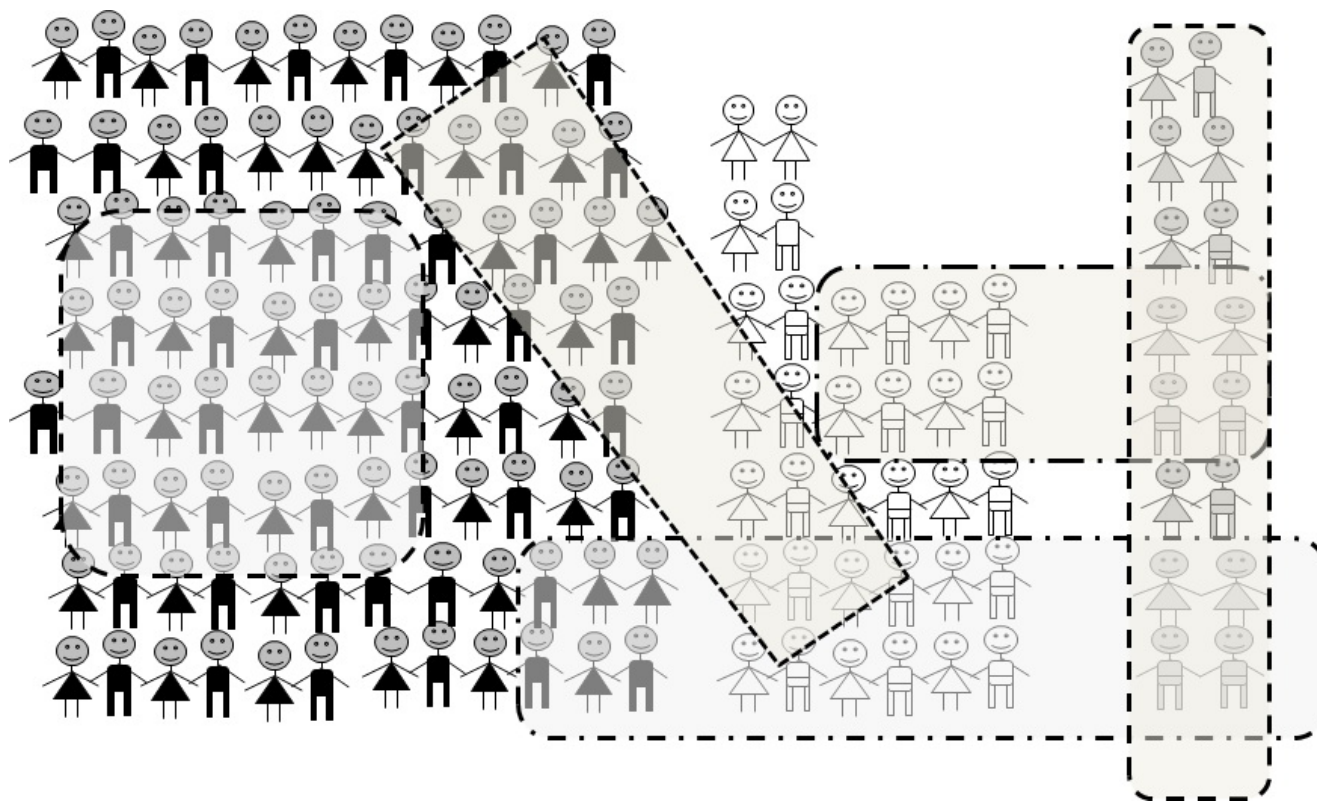


Figure 8 Different movements draw from different ethnic bases