

7 Questions on Eriksen, Ethnic Identity and Ideology (70-94); Eriksen, Ethnicity in History (95-114); and Maybury-Lewis, “Ethnic Groups” (47-79)

1. If you can, provide an additional example of an “anomalous” ethnic category similar to the two discussed by Eriksen (Pakistani children in Norway; “Black British”).
2. “People may be virtually forced to take on an ethnic identity, even if they would have preferred not to” (p. 77). Any examples come to mind?
3. “Generally speaking, social identity becomes most important the moment it seems threatened” (p. 81). Provide two examples. (Eriksen says the same about ethnic identity on p. 80.)
4. Eriksen mentions two possible ways new ethnic categories may emerge. What are they? (pp. 82-83)
5. Eriksen discusses an author who states that the Huron (Native Americans) “have achieved their present position...through the deliberate creation of an *ethnic counter culture*” (p. 84). What does this mean?
6. “The boundary between that which is useful and that which is meaningful becomes blurred” (p. 89). What is Eriksen referring to?
7. “Ethnic identity becomes crucially important the moment it is perceived as being under threat” (p. 92). List 3 kinds of threats.
8. What is ethnogenesis (p. 95 and following)?
9. Eriksen states (p. 100) that ethno-racial categorizations “and their accompanying evaluations and stereotypes, are the work of colonial history and a particular division of labour and political power,” and that they are not natural. Is this your opinion? Discuss.
10. Summarize Eriksen’s discussion of “‘Black’ ethnogenesis” (100-101).
11. In several places Eriksen speaks of “reifications” and uses the verb “to reify.” What does he mean?
12. Discuss some of the results of the interactions between Blacks and South Asians (from India) originally brought over as indentured servants in a number of Caribbean countries.
13. “The ‘Yoruba,’ a major Nigerian tribe or ethnic group, is a 20th-century phenomenon” (p. 106). Discuss, bringing in, if you can, Peel’s analysis of Yoruba ethnicity (pp.112-114).

14. “...the terms ethnicity and ethnic group only came into use recently...used systematically around the 1950s” (Maybury-Lewis, p. 50). What concepts were used previously—or perhaps there was no need for these concepts?
15. Maybury-Lewis describes a “supreme irony” resulting from the Soviet nationalities policy on p. 57. What was this irony? How does this situation compare to the Chinese one Gladney analyzes?
16. Describe the nation-building project in Indonesia—making a nation out of a huge, extremely diverse archipelago. How successful has it been?
17. How successful have Indonesia and Spain been at containing ethnic violence?

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