

Critical Race Theory (Race in America): What Is It and Why the Controversy?

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Origins of (CRT): a Multi-Racial Enterprise

CRT originated in the 1970s among lawyers, activists and legal scholars **of various races and ethnicities.**



CRT scholars found that “the so-called American [racial] dilemma was not simply a matter of prejudice but a matter of **structured disadvantages** that stretched **across American society.**”

Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/10/01/us/critical-race-theory-explainer-trnd/index.html> (quoting interview with Prof. Kimberle Crenshaw)

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Welcome to Detroit

What is Critical Race Theory (CRT)?

- CRT is concerned with “studying and transforming the **relationship** among **race**, **racism**, and **power**.”
- CRT “considers . . . [the] same issues that conventional civil rights and ethnic studies discourses [consider] . . . but places them in a broader perspective that includes **economics**, **history**, **context**, **group- and self-interest**, and even **feelings and the unconscious**.”
- “[T]raditional civil rights . . . embraces incrementalism and step-by-step progress, [while] critical race theory questions . . . **foundations and structures**”

Source: Richard Delgado & Jean Stefancic, Critical Race Theory: an Introduction (3d.) (2017)



Basic Tenets of CRT

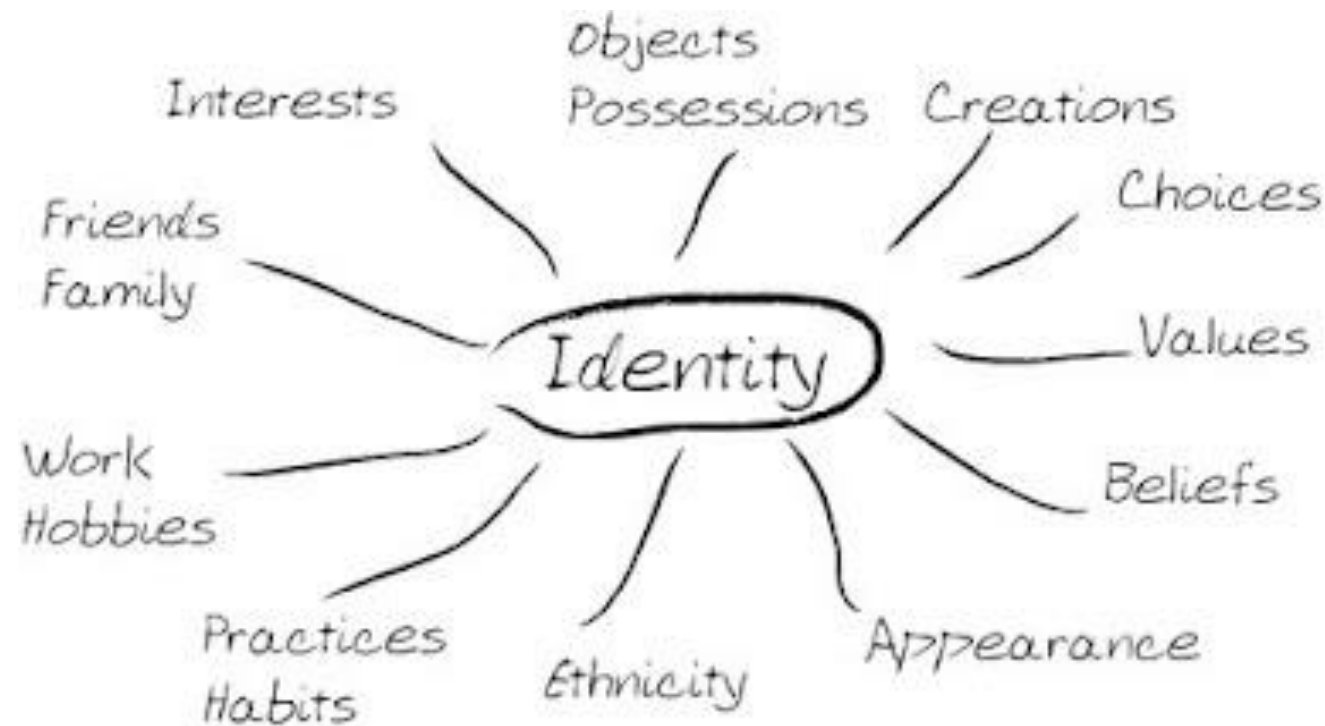
- “**Racism is ordinary**, not aberrational” – Therefore it is difficult to eradicate with “color-blindness”
- “**Interest convergence**” – advancements in racial justice only occur when they also advance the interests of the majority
- “**Social construction**” thesis – race and races are socially constructed, not naturally occurring

Source: Richard Delgado & Jean Stefancic, Critical Race Theory: an Introduction (3d.) (2017)



CRT, Differential Racialization & Intersectionality

Majority society **racializes** different minorities in different ways at different point in history.
No one has a unitary identity



Critical Race Theory (CRT)

What It Is

The study of the “**relationship** among **race**, **racism**, and **power**” with a lensed that places “them in a broader perspective that includes **economics**, **history**, **context**, **group- and self-interest**, and even **feelings and the unconscious**” and in doing so “**questions . . . foundations and structures**”

What It Is Not

- A DEI program
- Anti-American
- Just about African-Americans
- Racist
- Divisive



Why is CRT taking up so much space in the public arena?



Christopher F. Rufo ✕
@realchrisrufo

Replying to @realchrisrufo and @ConceptualJames

We have successfully frozen their brand—"critical race theory"—into the public conversation and are steadily driving up negative perceptions. We will eventually turn it toxic, as we put all of the various cultural insanities under that brand category.

3:14 PM · Mar 15, 2021 · Twitter Web App



Christopher F. Rufo ✕
@realchrisrufo

Replying to @realchrisrufo and @ConceptualJames

The goal is to have the public read something crazy in the newspaper and immediately think "critical race theory." We have decodified the term and will recodify it to annex the entire range of cultural constructions that are unpopular with Americans.

3:17 PM · Mar 15, 2021 · Twitter Web App

Anti-CRT Backlash and CRT Bans

- First anti-CRT media articles published in aftermath of protests of the murder of George Floyd
- The laws are vague (using terms like “discomfort” “guilt” or “divisiveness”) and often reach illogical conclusions
 - Arizona law would ban that teaching that a white slave owners oppressed enslaved black people

