Situating Racism

Situating Racism:
The Local, National and the Global

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Ideas of "race" have shaped social and political relations all over the world over centuries. Racism is pervasive, permeating the fabric of everyday life and normalised in ways that render it invisible and neutral. The manifestations of it around the world make it one of the powerful forms of structural violence. It is often assumed that we have overcome many forms of 'isms' such as sexism and racism. Unfortunately, while medical science has made progress in discrediting 'race', racism persists as a concept, structure and action. Challenging racism has proved to be very difficult. Many who consider themselves not racist are complicit in racisms in ways they may not be aware of, but most particularly through denial of racism. Treating racism as an aberration allows it to persist and flourish globally. It continues to privilege those who benefit from it.

Zelinka (1996) defines racism as, "a belief in the superiority of one particular racial or ethnic group and, flowing from this, the exclusion of other groups from some or many aspects of society". Racism defines the way in which social relations between people or society are structured and operates through a range of personal, relational, systemic and institutional practices that serve to devalue, exclude, oppress or exploit people. It is an act of power and is a tool for maintaining privilege (Johnson, Rush et al. 2000). Studies indicate that discrimination and racism impact on the life chances of people who experience it in key areas such as economic participation (employment, income, and assets), health (mental and physical health), access to key goods and services (education, housing, and other services). Studies also indicate that racism results in social exclusion, barriers to civic participation and social isolation for those who are victims (Babacan 1998; Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) 2004; Karlsen and Nazroo 2004; Bromberg and Klein 2005; Babacan and Babacan 2006).

Over the past several decades, global manifestations of racism have undergone significant transformations. These have ranged from anti-colonial struggle, the civil and human rights movements and anti-Nazism to the antiapartheid resistance which have challenged the former

established racial regimes. During the last fifty years since the adoption of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (United Nations (UN) 1948), there have been advances made towards human rights through the creation of national and international laws, treaties and human rights instruments. However, the consolidation of global capitalism has also created new forms of racialization, racial hatred, exclusion and inequality very often along racial and ethnic lines. The dream of a world without racial hatred remains unfulfilled.

Institutionalized racism has been woven over centuries of colonialism and slavery, into the structures of society and institutions of government, local and central (Sivanandan 2006). Though the institutions go through change in themselves, if the underlying cultural assumptions do not change, the new arrangements will reproduce what is historically expected (Bowser 1996). Developing a strong analysis, Winant (2006) points to five themes that play a significant part in the making and unmaking of racism in a globalised world:

- *Non-racialism* as against *Race Consciousness* in the context of questioning "How can we both take account of race and get beyond it, as the present situation seems to demand?"
- *Racial Genomics* which, though at pains to distance itself from the eugenics of the past, simultaneously makes racial identity more fungible and flexible as well as reinforces the stereotypes its advocates challenge.
- The issues of the *Nation and its Peoples*, where many nations are maintaining unstable and contentious immigration, naturalization and citizenship laws in the face of changing patterns of immigration as well as internal political backlashes.
- The *Intersectionality of Race/Gender/Class* which also encompasses the complex connections and conflicts among anti-racist/anti-colonial movements, women's movements and labour/anti-poverty movements.
- The *trajectory of Empire, Race and Neo-conservatism* has been a racial theme for a long time and that while the link between racism and empire was wrongly considered terminated, it has instead been reinvented, principally through US neo-conservatism (Winant 2006).

Thus, contemporary constructions of racism are historically contingent and are shaped by making interrelated processes including conquest, colonisation and nation building. Racism in the twenty-first century needs

to be considered in the charged atmosphere of global power politics. Ideologies of racism are now inextricably linked to the ongoing process of *globalization.* These ideologies seek to legitimise and sustain an international system that tolerates a strong divide not only between the North and the South but also within nation states (Thompson 1990; Bonnett 2006). Racialized global hierarchies operate at the personal but also institutional and structural level. Commenting on global international relations, Jones (2008) asserts that the current world order is characterised by profound global inequality, depicted through reference to the developed and developing world. She notes that the racialized character of global inequalities involves power which is rarely acknowledged, as explicit racial discourse has been removed from the institutional form of the modern world order, and this apparent transcendence of "race" is mirrored in the lack of attention to "race".

As the process of globalization intensifies, there is an increased mobility of people across borders, through facilitated formal and informal channels. The United Nations (2001) identified 5 key areas of concern in which racism is manifested in the 21st century:

- Trafficking in women and children
- Migration and discrimination
- Gender and racial discrimination
- Racism against Indigenous peoples
- Protection of minority rights

This book explores the contemporary development of the global phenomena of racism. It uncovers the complexity of manifestations and causes of racism. The book critically draws upon and analyses global economic and legislative frameworks related to racism. We explore the key themes of global racisms and the interplay of hierarchies of colour, culture, identity and "race" developments and unpack the points of intersection between new and old racisms. The book also examines the manner in which racism exists and is reproduced through the formulation and application of rules, laws, and regulations and access to and the allocation of resources, as also processes where it is reproduced and reinforced, adapting continually to the ever-changing societal conditions in everyday life. We examine the impacts of factors such as fear, politics, the use of the "race card", nation state and nationalism. Whether we are able to get to a "post-race" society is debatable and whether we continue to engage with "race" as an anti-racism concept is disputed. What remains

clear is that in the context of globalisation, anti-racism is going to be on the agendas of scholars and practitioners.

The chapters presented in this book explore the complexity of racism in the context of a globalised world. We do not purport to a comprehensive coverage of all issues relating to racism but maintain our focus on covering the interplay of racism at the diverse levels on a global platform. Chapter 1 provides the *Introduction* and sets the rationale and synopsis for the book. Chapter 2 *Theorises Racism*. This chapter will provide a theoretical basis for the book. It will provide a sociological exploration of the conceptual frameworks for understanding race and racism and provide an overview of the critiques of theories of "race".

Chapter 3 explores and analyses the *Global Economies of Racism*. Globalisation theory posits that transnational corporations, global financial institutions and markets determine global governance arrangements. The disintegration of the 20th century industrial society, largely driven by the demand for unskilled labour, resulted in particular discourses on racism. The 21st century global economies are largely different, driven by technological change and information economy on the one hand and the need for limited types of unskilled labour on the other. The new global economies have produced new discourses, often contradictory, about culture, language, diversity and immigration. This chapter unpacks the central role played by global economics in creating hierarchies of "race", people and culture.

Chapter 4 focuses on the *Global Manifestations of Racism* and the way racism manifests itself in similar ways, albeit adapted to local situations. This chapter will outline the manifestations of contemporary racisms as a global phenomenon. It will outline the common causal factors, similarities and differences in discourse and practices. It will demonstrate the similar ways in which "othering" and exclusion occurs. The chapter will argue that there is a global hierarchy of "races" that is created and structured in a manner that delivers similar practices and arguments in different spatial locations. The chapter will also draw attention to the key racisms in the 21st century within the global framework.

Chapter 5 explores *Fear and Racism*. This chapter will focus on the way fear and insecurity is a key factor of racism. Linking with the themes of global economic insecurity (e.g. jobs lost as a result of industries shifting offshore), fear of the "other" and fear of terrorism, and how a new mindset has been created in individuals. The chapter will argue that fear strategies are deliberately used by a range of players such as governments (for legitimation), by corporations (for economic gain) and by media (for selling papers). The overall result is a barrage of ideas and images that are

reinforced in society about particular groups of people who are to be treated as the "other". The chapter also explores the psychological, social, economic and political ramifications of the use of fear and the consequent racisms that have emerged. Furthermore, the chapter will identify the consequences of the use of fear in creating societies focused on safety, law and order and security, limiting civil liberties, inward looking societies lacking in human compassion against others.

Chapter 6 focuses on the *Nation State and Nationalism*. This chapter excavates the nexus between immigration, multiculturalism and national identity. The chapter will argue that ethnic identities have been subsumed under a general banner of culture that is static and reified. The media contributes to this by negative stereotyping of ethnic identities and even racial profiling of some groups such as "Lebanese gangs" or "Chinese or Vietnamese drug rings". The chapter will review contemporary debates on immigration, settlement and multiculturalism and put forward the argument that official multiculturalism has remained at a rhetorical level and that despite the policy recognition of the right to ethnic identity and heritage, there has been an incremental return to assimilationism over the last few decades. We argue that this is exacerbated by a paranoid discourse about different groups of immigrants such as refugees, boat people, and Muslims that has resulted in significant setback of the rights of minorities. We examine the role of the nation state in creating nationalisms which are exclusionary and explore the challenges to the nation state in a globalised world. The nation state has undertaken a greater role as the "watch dog" of their society with stricter regulation of immigrants and asylum seekers, with assimilationist policies and greater emphasis on law and order while at the same time withdrawing from the delivery of services and programs.

Chapter 7 examines *Racism and Legal Measures*. Many nations have anti-discrimination and anti-racism legislation and agencies that act to monitor human rights. The legislation often outlaws direct acts of racism and discrimination. There has been considerable debate about the effectiveness of both legislation and such human rights bodies. Civil libertarians, human rights activists and others have posed different arguments for and against such legal measures. It is well known that there are very few cases of racism that have been successfully brought to justice before such legislation. Much of the legislation is highly technical and cumbersome. The evidence required to substantiate racist acts is detailed and overwhelming. This has resulted in many victims not using the legal measures or lodging complaints. The chapter examines the efficacy of legal measures and visits the arguments for and against these measures.

Chapter 8 is on *Developing Anti-Racism*. This chapter will provide an overview of the theoretical and practical measures of anti-racism. The difficulty of defining racism is reflected in the problems in constructing anti-racism theories. The anti-racism measures in practice contain a fragmented range of activities with varying degrees of impact. The chapter will provide an analysis of the barriers and challenges to developing anti-racisms and will identify challenges and future work that is needed. Chapter 9 is the *Conclusion* and brings the diverse themes of the book together.

The book establishes the complex scenario of racism which involves issues of "race", "culture", ethnicity, migration, gender, citizenship, fear, nationalism and the war on terror that are conjoined and intertwined. These chapters are offered as a contribution towards the critical thinking on racism and for the development of anti-racist futures...

CHAPTER TWO

THEORISING RACISM

Defining Racism

Racism is a set of beliefs and behaviours based on the presumption that "races" are inherently different, thereby excluding certain groups from equal access to social goods. Racist beliefs and actions are often manifested in multiple, historically specific, situationally variable, often contradictory ways that intersect very closely with nationalist and religious identity, and are gendered in complex ways. Issues of racism, racial/ethnic identity, citizenship and nationalism receive high media attention and stir up highly emotional debates and responses. Evidence of biologically distinct races is contested and discredited and sociologists now concur that there is no such phenomenon as "race": that it is a social construct that enables differentiation and discrimination on a false notion of race (Hollinsworth 2006; Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) 2007). Yet the use of "race" as a concept persists. This leads Mason (1994) to conclude that:

> "…race is a legitimate concept for sociological analysis because social actors treat it as a real basis for social differentiation and organise their lives and exclusionary practices in terms of it".

Defining racism is not an easy concept. Hollinsworth (2006) argues that racism is not just prejudice or the result of some psychological disorder. Racism is best understood as a relationship of dominance and subordination. That is, racism is not a moral failing or the result of ignorance. Racism exists as much in our established and respected institutions (the ways things are and should be done) as in the hearts and minds of those who work in institutional settings. It involves a description of processes and acts. There are numerous definitions of racism. The definition below brings a contemporary understanding of the term:

> Racism is a form of privilege or oppression resulting from a societal system in which people are divided into "races", with power unevenly distributed (or produced) based on these classifications. Classifications are socially constructed and are based on perceived biological, cultural, religious or other differences, which are reflected in and reinforced through attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, laws, norms and practices (Vic Health 2007).

Racism defines the way in which social relations between people or society are structured and operates through a range of personal, relational, systemic and institutional practices that serve to devalue, exclude, oppress or exploit people. It is an act of power and is a tool for maintaining privilege. It is important to note that racism is not just about acts of discrimination. Racism can be defined as actions or inactions by persons, institutions or societies that create or preserve unequal conditions and relationships between groups.

This process is referred to as *racialization.* Racialization can be defined as a way in which social relations between people or society have been structured by the signification of human biological characteristics so as to define and construct differentiated social collectivities (Miles 1989). Goldberg (1993) points out that race structures determine, in real or imagined ways, the way people express their own and other's identity and position in society. Racialization relies on essentialising, or explaining, differences that derive from historical development, social systems and economic structures as if they were fixed, immutable and inherent as characteristics of particular groups. Differences are "explained" in terms of such "essential" or inherent characteristics. Such essentialist explanations often use "commonsense" or supposedly "natural" understandings and are used as a basis of social exclusion. Dunn, Klocker & Salabay (2007) outline that racialization is the process by which groups are identified, given stereotypical characteristics and coerced into specific living conditions. It must be noted that the process of racialization does not depend on the intentions of social actors or institutions, but rather the actual effect of these actions.

New Racisms

Today we live in a world that is rapidly changing. Processes of globalization and migration have moulded a new sense of identity in individuals and communities so that people have a mixed sense of who they are. As borders of cultural difference become more porous, questions of culture increasingly become interlaced with issues of power, representation and identity. Today, identities are forged from a vast array

of social relationships including past anchoring points, family, friends, roles defined by work, ethnicity, gender, nationality and sexuality. Racism does not always assume a physical or biological basis for such distinctions. Increasingly culture, values, lifestyle, moral and/or religious characteristics are used where these are thought to be fixed, inherent and essential features of particular social groups. Racism changes its forms and meanings in different historical and political contexts. They are also gendered and interconnect with nationalist and religious identities in complex ways. It may therefore be useful to speak of racisms in the plural. The shifting boundaries of racialism, which are socially constructed, are not categories of essence such as blackness or whiteness but defined by historical and political struggles over their meaning (Bulmer and Solomos 1998; Hollinsworth 2006).

As racism is seen as offending modern sensibilities and contrary to the notions of fairness and egalitarianism, blatant forms of racism have become less socially acceptable and are legislated against in many countries. In turn, racism has become more subtle. Although "race and racism" are value-laden notions and appear contrary to democratic societal values, racism against asylum seekers, in Australia and other countries like the UK, has been articulated without denouncing democratic principles and through transformation into more "legitimate" and contemporary concerns (McCulloch 2006). Societal messages were perpetuated through coded public discourses on immigration, multiculturalism, refugees and citizenship (Henry, Tator et al. 2000), forming subtle and less direct forms of "new racisms". Given that inferiority based on physical markers has long been considered the clearest expression of racism, the avoidance of it would indicate a marked change in formal discourse, thereby creating "new racisms". These "new" formal expressions of racism are markedly different from the "old-fashioned" expressions because they are subtle rather than blatant, and covert rather than overt. Babacan and Gopalkrishnan (2008) point out that in common with old racisms, the new racisms still maintain the relationship of power based on constructing "others" as different in order to exclude, ignore or exploit them. The power to represent others, to negatively evaluate others and to make these representations and evaluations prevail in public domains are still key features of new racisms.

New racisms are therefore concerned with a broader understanding of "race" issues as they relate to:

- Subtle expressions of prejudice and discrimination
- cultural dimensions of racism

- linkages with identity, ethnic signifiers or markers
- construction of whiteness, invisibility of white majority
- racisms' impact on certain subgroups e.g. women
- interconnections between race, nationhood, patriotism and nationalism
- changing language of racism
- dynamic nature of racism
- incompatibility of certain groups
- specifity and change
- treating everyone the same (Back and Solomos 2000).

Aversive Racism is a theory based on the idea that evaluations of racial/ethnic minorities are characterised by a conflict between society's endorsement of egalitarian values and their unacknowledged negative attitudes toward racial/ethnic out-groups. This is in opposition to old-fashioned racism which is characterised by overt hatred for and discrimination against racial/ethnic minorities. Aversive racism is characterised by more complex, ambivalent racial expressions and attitudes (Gaertner and Dovidio 1986). Aversive racism is consciously knowing, and professing that all people are equal, yet subconsciously treating and judging some groups differently. In describing new racism, Gordon and Klug (1986) point to the importance of sense making, lay understanding and feelings of people. They state that new racism is:

> .. A cluster of beliefs which holds that it is natural for people who share a way of life, a culture, to bond together in a group and to be antagonistic towards outsiders who are different and who are seen to threaten their identity as a group. In this, the proponents of the new racism claim that they are not being racist or prejudiced, nor are they making any value judgements about the "others", but simply recognising that they are different. Whether people's fears about the "threat" from outside are justified does not matter. What matters is what people feel (Gordon and Klug 1986).

While authors have pointed to new racisms or aversive racism, Leach (2005) cautions us not to lose sight that new racisms are based on old forms of racism. He states that there is nothing new about formal expressions that criticize cultural difference or deny societal discrimination. Thus, there is greater historical continuity in racism than the notion of a "new racism" allows. Essentially, the key element of "*old racism*", the so called "incompatibility" of different ethnic groups and their "inability" to co-exist, remains as an integral aspect of "*new racism*" (Corlett 2002).

Leach (2005) points out although racial inferiority is central to most conceptualizations of racism, it is not necessary to assume that explicit reference to a genetic conceptualization of "race" is required. He points to historical examples of colonization and how racial ideology was used to essentialize certain ethnic groups in terms of culture, religion, origin, or more general practice, to achieve much the same as is achieved by a genetic concept of race. He also introduces the notion of flexible essentialism. Rather than utilizing the limited notion of a genetic transmission of attributes, racism assumes that a group has congenital characteristics inherent to an entity but not predetermined by genetics. Although a congenital inferiority is no less essentialized than a genetic one, it can be seen as resulting from environmental influences that lead particular people to be inferior (e.g. bad parenting, cultural influence, poor living conditions). This allows a flexible essentialization of ethnic groups that is free to cite environmental, cultural, or sociological influences, rather than genetics (Leach 2005).

Van Dijk (2005) provides a comprehensive overview of racism and points out that racism is reproduced in many ways and has many dimensions. The author offers a useful framework for thinking about racism:

> ➢ *Racism as domination* – a specific kind of power of one group over others.
> ➢ *Racism as discrimination* – at the micro level (socio-cognitive) of discriminatory practices that reproduce racism in everyday life but also at the social, economic and political, which limit access to control over resources causing inequalities.
> ➢ *Racism as Institution*- the macro level which penetrates the different levels of organisations and their procedures such as political and judicial institutions, the media, education systems and knowledge production (including research).
> ➢ *Racism as racist beliefs*- not just in discrimination but in beliefs which inform everyday interactions including prejudices, stereotypes, myths and racist ideologies
> ➢ *Racism as discourse*- which reproduces racism, learnt through literature, film, news, articles, gossip and professionalism. The access to discourse is one of key area of inequality and the denial of a voice is a way of perpetuating racism (van Dijk 2005).

Racism is manifested in complex and changing ways over time, space and place and this poses some difficulties in terms of analysis and strategies for combating it. Essed (1991) usefully describes racism as both "structure" and "process". It is structure because dominance and discrimination exists and is reproduced through the formulation and application of rules, laws, and regulations and through access to and the allocation of resources. As a process, it does not exist outside everyday practice where it is reproduced and reinforced, adapting continually to the ever-changing social, political and economic societal conditions (Essed 1991).

Levels of Racism

Racism can be present in hostile acts, as well as in apparently neutral arrangements. It can be the result of activities or arrangements that set out to discriminate or harm, or it can result from ignorance or inadvertence. Thus, racism can be intentional or unintentional; it may be detected by its effects. Authors have identified numerous forms of racism, some of which are covered here. It should be noted that these conceptual forms of racism are not mutually exclusive and overlap in practice.

Direct racism can be understood at a theoretical level because it fits easily into the notion of cause and effect, its perpetrators clearly identifiable and their motives investigated. *Indirect* racism refers to an unnecessary rule or requirement that is the same for everyone but which has the effect or result of disadvantaging a particular group. Indirect discrimination, whilst more difficult to grasp conceptually, can reveal otherwise camouflaged, yet considerably far-reaching acts of discrimination; systematic, policy based, management-led practices, supported by government and business at the highest levels. Such practices appear fair in form and intention, but are discriminatory in impact and outcome (1989; 2000). While overt, intentional acts of direct discrimination are usually greeted with understandable condemnation by the general community, indirect discrimination may continue in the workplace, in education, and in the provision of accommodation, undetected for years. And whereas an act of direct racism might affect one person, possibly several, indirect racism, in the form of an apparently neutral policy or procedure, can impact adversely on hundreds of people at once

It is also widely documented that racism occurs in both *individual* and *institutional* (systemic) forms. McConnochie, Hollinsworth & Pettman (1988), for example, explain that *individual racism* refers to "the expression of racist attitudes in the behaviour of individuals in face-to-face

situations", whereas *institutional racism* refers to "the ways in which racist beliefs or values have been built into the operations of social institutions in such a way as to discriminate against, control and oppress various minority groups". Individual racism includes racist abuse, threats and assaults, burning of mosques, unnecessary arrests by police, discrimination in housing, employment or the provision of goods and services, and many other aspects of daily life for many minorities. Institutional racism refers to the ways that major social institutions routinely maintain social inequality between racial or ethnic groups (Hollinsworth 2006). The death of an Afro-Caribbean person in police custody in the UK led to a major enquiry. The enquiry provided a useful definition of institutional racism as:

> The collective failure of an organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their color, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behavior which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage Black and minority ethnic people (The Stephen Lawrence Enquiry: Commission for Racial Equality 1999 cited in MacPherson 1999).

Institutional racism occurs when institutions such as governments, legal, medical and education systems and businesses discriminate against certain groups of people based on race, colour, ethnicity or national origin. Often unintentional, such racism occurs when the apparently non-discriminatory actions of the dominant culture have the effect of excluding or marginalizing minority cultures. This form of racism reflects the cultural assumptions of the dominant group, so that the practices of that group are seen as the norm to which other cultural practices should conform. It regularly and systematically advantages some groups and disadvantages other groups. Accordingly, Pettman (1992) argues that institutional racism is less about the racist thoughts and actions of individuals, and more about the unequal distribution of social resources by key institutions such as those that comprise the education, health and welfare systems. She explains:

> Institutions validate rules, roles and certain understandings about entitlements which are often seen as fair or universal, but which actually reflect and protect dominant social interests – through, for example, understandings about who is a good parent, a reliable tenant or borrower, or the best for the job. But these rules are not applied mechanistically or deterministically. They are activated by bureaucrats, social workers, receptionists and so on, whose own perceptions, priorities and values are

fused with cultural meaning that speak of their own personal histories and social location. Within particular constraints and in their own ways, they "do their job" (Pettman 1992).

Institutional racism is often the most difficult to recognise and counter, particularly when it is present in organisations which do not consider themselves to be racist. When present in a range of social and organisational contexts, it compounds and reinforces the advantage experienced by some groups and the disadvantage already experienced by other groups.

Exploring the experiences of Aborigines in Australia, Mellor (2004) identifies key categories of everyday racism: Racism that is predominantly individual in nature expressed through verbal or behavioural means; discrimination embedded in institutionalised practices which is perpetrated by individuals through violation of equality of treatment; and macro level societal and institutional racism. Mellor (2004) demonstrates how everyday racism occurs through a range of means by a range of players. The key areas of racism he uncovers include:

➢ *Verbal racism* including name-calling, remarks, general overheard comments, deliberate direct comments, jokes, taunts, comments meant to be hurtful, intimidating comments, and threats.

➢ *Behavioural Racism* including ignoring, failing to respond to an individual or interpersonal situation, avoiding (e.g. not sitting next to them in bus), looking/staring, patronizing, segregation, harassment, assault and denial of identity.

➢ *Discrimination*, the denial of equal treatment including unexpected, unreasonable and unnecessary denial, restriction or exclusion, excessive or biased or unnecessary punitive measures or over-application of law or procedures. Examples include refused entry into hotels, refused service or served last and denied housing.

➢ *Macro Level Racism* occurring at the broad level of society and including elements such as lack of concern by society or government, selective view of history, cultural dominance, institutions of society and media and misinformation (Mellor 2004).

In identifying the forms of racism, one often overlooked form of racism is that of *internalised racism*, which is where the individual who is disadvantaged incorporates dominant racist ideologies into their own world view and accepts them as normal. This is often referred to as a form

of internalised oppression. Young (1990) articulates the conceptualisation of oppression as exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence are ways in which the outcomes of racism and inequality can be articulated. The consequences of internalised racism can result in manifestation of all these forms of oppression for individuals and communities.

Identity Construction and Racism

We hear a great deal about "identity" at global, national, local and personal levels. Identity politics operates at these different levels in paradoxical ways. In the media it is often addressed in problematic terms, for example, as the loss of identity accompanying loss of employment or the ethnic identity of militant groups. In the global arena, national identities are contested and struggles are represented by conflicting national identities, often with disastrous consequences (Isin and Wood 1999). As borders of cultural difference become more porous and/or eventually collapse, questions of culture increasingly become interlaced with the issues of power, representation and identity. Although it can function as a point of identification and attachment, identity is constructed through difference, not outside of difference. Identities have the capacity to leave out and to render to the "outside" and not be inclusive of those who do not fit within it. Thus, every identity has, at its margins, something more in terms of what has been left out (Hall and du Gay 1996).

Identity is two pronged: self-perception and perception by others. It is not simply imposed but can be chosen by the individual or the group, and actively used within particular social contexts and constraints. The systems of identity classifications determine the in-group – out-group dynamics in society. Intergroup dynamics impact on groups that are considered out-groups (often marginalized minorities) who are de-personalised and distanced from others (Vaughan and Hogg 2002). This can provide the basis for discrimination and social exclusion. These social processes, in turn, impact on how minorities define their own identity. Responses can include internalisation of their oppression or dominance, resistance and different emotional responses (Bulmer and Solomos 1998). The other side of identity is the perception of others. Stereotyping by dominant groups and repression can occur in society. Against dominant representations of "others", identity offers a tool for resistance. Resistance against domination politicises relations between collectivities and draws attention to power relations in society (Bulmer and Solomos 1998).

Identity and, indeed, race are therefore socially constructed; "blackness" and "whiteness" are not categories of essence but defined by historical and political struggles over their meaning. Bulmer and Solomos (1998) also note that identities based on race and ethnicity are not simply imposed, but are usually the outcome of resistance and political struggle.

Ethnicity is a resource to be mobilised in circumstances such as marginality, alienation and social discrimination (Jayasuriya 1997). Jayasuriya (1992) introduces the idea of "dimensions" to the concept of ethnic identity: expressive and instrumental ethnic identity. The *expressive* dimension relates to the subjective and normative aspects of group membership such as language, common heritage and culture. The *instrumental* dimension is about the material aspects of identity such as the struggle for resources and the attempt to bring about structural change in society. It is this second sense of identity that is important in the struggle for social justice. Often the boundaries between the first and the second are blurred as groups use the expressive elements to secure justice. The failure to see the social justice element of ethnicity often leads to labelling by dominant groups as separatist, non-assimilationist, and nationalist. Action can take place to deny recognition of ethnic identity that further marginalises such groups. Taylor (1992) notes that withholding of recognition of identity can be a form of oppression.

Boundaries are particularly contested at the level of national identity in terms of the desperate production of a unique and homogenous national identity that corresponds to the perceived territory or homeland. Even if there is not a unified history and culture there is the strong desire to form such an *imagined community*. This was the term used by Anderson (1983) describing national identity as an "imagined community" and that the "differences between nations lie in the different ways that they are imagined". National identity is based on selective memory, which forms the basis of collective identity (Babacan 2003). Bulmer and Solomos (1998) point out that the danger of such fears:

> These fears can result in the defense of a cultural identity slipping into nationalism or racism: the nationalist affirmation of one group over another …it is a matter of the relative power of different groups to define their own identities, and the ability to mobilize these definitions through the control of cultural institutions. Tradition is not a matter of a fixed or given set of beliefs and practices which are handed down or accepted passively (Bulmer and Solomos 1998).

Globalisation produces different outcomes for identity. The cultural homogeneity promoted by global marketing leads to detachment of

identity from community and place; or it could lead to resistance which could reaffirm some national, local and ethnic identities; or it could lead to the emergence of new identity positions (Du Gay, Hall et al. 1997). Notions of belonging are changing and the traditional allegiances to space, place and homeland are being radically altered (Papastergiadis 2000; Westwood and Phizacklea 2000). *Social identity* refers to an individual's membership of various groups and the resultant experience of a self-image that in turn becomes a key determinant of social action. Brewer & Gardner (1996) argue that identity primarily provides the framework for interpreting, predicting of managing our behaviour or that of other people.

Social identity theory has its origins in the work of Henri Tajfel (1969) on social categorisation and later by Turner and Hogg (1987) on self-categorisation in generating group behaviours. According to these writers, social identity is associated with group and inter-group behaviours related to ethnocentrism, in-group bias, group solidarity and intergroup discrimination. "Sense making" is an important element as it is at the heart of prejudice and discrimination. Popular, lay understandings of events and experiences determine perceptions. Lay understandings are important because, really, they are shared cultural understandings and are individual and collective attempts to make sense of events (Fletcher 1995). The roots of racism, prejudice and discrimination can be found in particular kinds of sense making explanations that are supported by reference to in-groups and out-groups, racial and cultural difference and perceived injustice (Vaughan and Hogg 2002). In any given situation, our sense of self and meanings associated with perceptions hinge on a psychologically salient basis of self-conception. The principle that governs social identity is that people need to engage in social categorisation and to make sense of and reduce anxiety about themselves and others (Sedikides and Brewer 2001). People use limited perceptual clues such as what someone looks like, how they speak or their attitudes to categorise others. More importantly they categorise themselves in a particular "race" hierarchy.

Writings on identity often point to identity of minority groups. They neglect to note that identities are not only formed by groups seeking recognition but also by groups that seek domination (Isin and Wood 1999). Forms of classification and representation of various groups as stereotypical, deviant, pathological and abnormal are powerful instruments of domination in constructing the "other" (Erickson and Haggerty 1997). Often this type of labelling and definition is concerned with power and social or political control. Giroux (1993) states that "the right-wing Whites in America now echo a view of difference not as a marker for racial superiority but as a signifier for cultural containment, homogeneity

and social and structural inequality … they appeal no longer to racial supremacy but to cultural uniformity parading under the politics of nationalism and patriotism" (Giroux 1993). Giroux (1993) argues that race in this context is invoked not to eliminate racial differences structured in dominance but to preserve them. These arguments have led to a consideration of "whiteness".

Whiteness

Individual and group identity construction is complex and regardless of who we are and what our location is within a socially ascribed hierarchy of "race", we are all racialized. This means that understanding that "white" people are racialized beings is just as important as seeing "black" people as racialized beings (Dominelli 2004). Crucially, this requires "white" people to examine "whiteness" and its often taken-for-granted significance in their lives (Frankenberg 2001).   Racialized identities impact upon everyone, including those who are privileged. But, those who are privileged often fail to appreciate that in racializing others, they racialize themselves. Theories of whiteness attempts to show that whiteness is also a social construction, not a biological category.

Whiteness theories problematize the normalization and naturalization of whiteness. Frankenberg (1997) identifies three dimensions of whiteness: that it is a position or standpoint; that it is a position of privilege; and it is a set of cultural practices that is considered to be the norm. The privileging of "whiteness" within the Western world becomes an assumed or taken-for-granted aspect of life that is seldom commented upon (Frankenburg, 2001). Whiteness-privileging mechanisms work in several, sometimes contradictory ways. For example, on the one hand, whiteness is normalized; it is taken for granted and therefore invisible. On the other hand, it is treated as preferable. This reinforces the view that racialized identities affect "other" people, i.e., those with dark skins or those who are from different cultures. The overall effect of privileging mechanisms and power relations is that it allows whiteness to be positioned as a benign cultural signifier (Dyer 1997; Bonnett 2000). There is an externalisation of the issue that places the "other" out there as excluded people while those who are included are seen as "race-less" people.

Whiteness theories do not have a single claim. Broadly speaking they can be divided into four areas of focus. The first, on *material whiteness*, asks how whites as a group come to enjoy privileged access to tangible goods- everyday goods, well-paying jobs, health protection, housing, safe

neighbourhoods, access to good education, and basic civil liberties. *Discursive theories* of whiteness analyze the ways in which language, mass media, discourses, and symbols organize meaning so that whiteness is framed as both the preferred and the normal state of being. Discursive theories often identify binaries that treat blackness or brownness as the "other" allowing whiteness to emerge as special and rare. They also point to the meta-narratives implicit in our mainstream discussions of race. *Institutional theories* of whiteness are concerned with systems of privilege that have clear material consequences because they are part of the organization of institutions like schools, government agencies, banks, and hospitals; on the other hand, the main way in which white privilege is maintained in such cases is through formal or symbolic systems such as routines, practices of etiquette, policy, protocol, or procedure. *Personal/relational* theories of whiteness address the ways in which white privileging mechanisms embed themselves in our relationships, our sense of self, and our assumptions about growth, morality, and decency (Thompson 2001).

The contemporary scholarship on whiteness focuses primarily on examining and exposing the often invisible or masked power relations within existing racial hierarchies. Twine and Gallagher (2007) point out that new scholarship on the topic focuses on white inflections, the nuanced and locally specific ways in which whiteness as a form of power is defined, deployed, performed, policed and reinvented. There is also a body of scholarship that cautions us about thinking of whiteness in essentialized ways. Who is white and who is not is contentious and changes across spatial locations and situations. Thus, whiteness is a not static or uniform category of social identification (Roediger 2005). As Twine and Gallagher note (2007) "whiteness as a multiplicity of identities that are historically grounded, class specific, politically manipulated and gendered social locations that inhabit local custom and national sentiments within the context of the new global village".

The linking of whiteness with power, privilege and wealth do not always correlate with the experiences of white people who are economically deprived. Studies of poverty and white underclass indicate that these are shaped by situational, relational and historic contingencies which reposition white identities within the context of shifting racial boundaries. As Frankenberg (2001) observes "whiteness as a site of privilege is not absolute but rather crosscut by a range of other axes of relative advantage and subordination; these do not erase or render irrelevant race privilege, but rather inflect or modify it". Whiteness is useful to highlight power inequalities and the ways in which "othering"

takes place. However it needs to be remembered that it is not fixed, relational and situational and whiteness is at the same time a taken-for-granted entitlement, an unearned status, a perceived source of victimization and a tenuous identity.

Impacts of Racism

There is considerable evidence that racism leads to social exclusion on the basis of culture, language, ethnicity and perceived perceptions of "race". The impacts are both *distributional* and *relational*. The distributional relates to material elements of life such as access to good and services, employment, housing and so on. The relational include sense of belonging, trust, connections and networks, social inclusion, neighbourhood and community participation and recognition and respect for identity. The interplay of dimensions of racism in both these areas leads to social stratification and disadvantage. Both distributional and relational elements impact on ability of individuals and communities to exercise their citizenship rights (Li 1998; Quinn 2003; Babacan 2006).

An important impact of racism is on the physical and mental health of people who experience it. The relationship between race, ethnicity and health status is very well documented with studies on life expectancy, the infant mortality rates, mortality and morbidity rates indicating significant health disparities across different population groups (Reid and Trompf 1991; Krieger 2000). Victims of racism and discrimination are more likely to have respiratory illness, hypertension, a long-term limiting illness, anxiety, depression, and psychosis (Karlsen and Nazroo 2002). MacKenzie (2003) points to a growing body of literature on the link between perceived racial discrimination and both physical and psychological ill health. He points out that this has broader social costs such as reduced productivity and long-term costs to the health system. The Chief Executive Officer of Vic Health, Mr Rob Moodie, states "There is a growing body of evidence linking racial discrimination to psychological distress, depression, anxiety and poor self-esteem. For example in 2003, a review of international studies showed a positive association between perceived discrimination and levels of mental illness in 38 of the 47 studies examined" (Vic Health 2006). Racial discrimination has been found to be associated with a poorer sense of wellbeing, lower self-esteem and sense of control, psychological distress, major depression, anxiety disorder and other mental disorder (Vic Health 2005).

Karlsen and Nazroo (2004) point out that even the fear of racism has a strong impact on health outcomes. Writing from a UK perspective, the

authors identify significant policy implications of racism and health. They note the following points in relation to policy:

➢   Reducing differences in health across ethnic groups is becoming an important focus for governmental policy. This and previous work has suggested that the health consequences of racism could be crucial in explaining these variations.
➢   While direct experience of racism has been shown to be associated with poor mental and physical health status, elsewhere simply feeling vulnerable to experiences of racism may be associated with poorer health experience.
➢   Policy developed to tackle racism should therefore be mindful of the effects of the psychological environment in which people live, as well as aiming to reduce the racism that people experience more directly (Karlsen and Nazroo 2004).

The implications for public health policy is articulated by MacKenzie (2003) who argues that "Public health is the art and science of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health through the organised efforts of society. One of the chief responsibilities of public health medicine is fostering policies that promote health. I argue that countering racism should be considered a public health issue" (MacKenzie 2003).

Recent research from around the world demonstrates the impact of racism on many aspects of life. For example Fujishiro (2009) identified that being treated worse than other groups in the workplace has negative health and personal outcomes in USA. Ratcliffe (2009) showed the links between housing and differential housing and racism in the UK. He pointed out that traditional accounts did not identify racism as a factor in housing and used overly static notions of rational choice theory and examined constraints on housing without taking racism into account. Hardaway and McLoyd (2009) demonstrated how race and class together affect opportunities for social mobility through where African Americans live, whom they associate with, and how they are impacted by racial and class-related stigma. Gilborn (2008) identifies education inequalities in the English educational system. He points to false media focus on the topic and notes that "simultaneously the media increasingly present Whites as race victims, re-centring the interests of White people in popular discourse, while government announcements create a false image of dramatic improvements in minority achievement through a form of 'gap talk' that disguises the deep-seated and persistent nature of race inequality" (Gillborn 2008). The author further points out that conceiving

racism as one that saturates the system provides insight into the workings of "Whiteness" as a fundamental driver of social policy.

Conclusion

One of the difficulties in discussing racism is that it remains a topic which is deeply contested and widely disavowed. It is important to theorize and understand the contemporary power, persistence and durability of racism. Different forms of racism have their own conditions of existence and articulation, they require specific modes of analysis and intervention and it is very difficult to take a totalising approach. The range of practices where racialization can be found indicates that it is not outmoded thought but a complex phenomenon which continues to affect the lives of those subject to it. Racism does not exist outside everyday practice where it is reproduced and reinforced, adapting continually to the ever-changing societal conditions, intersecting with other forms of inequality and exclusion.

CHAPTER THREE

GLOBAL ECONOMIES OF RACISM

Background

> When we contemplate race and racism as global or national social structures, we are immediately struck by the extent to which they still stratify national societies and the social world as a whole (Winant 2006).

There is a growing awareness across the world that global forces are impacting on all aspects of people's lives, forces over which individuals, groups and nation-states have very little control. The processes of this *Globalization* are complex, involving the emergence of a global economy where radically different sets of structures are connected through what can be described as a "network society". Economic globalization is not a new concept, and Robertson (2006) delineates its stages back through history, especially in the processes of trade and colonization that were pushed by the European nations. However modern globalization is unique in the degree to which interconnectedness and fluidity of movement has been achieved across nation states. To some extent, rapid advances in information and communication technology have played an important role in enabling powerful interests to connect across national and cultural boundaries and transforming our conventional understandings of the nation state, society, community and the economy (Held, Mcgrew et al. 1999). While globalization involves more than the economy, also involving movements of people, culture, technology and power (Appadurai 1990), it is the integration of the economic activity, based on neo-liberal ideology, that drives much of the present stage of globalization (Beck 2000; Gopalkrishnan 2003).

Economic globalization based on neo-liberalism, or *Neoglobalization* refers to a reaching back to the Laissez-Faire form of economic theory. It is ideology that recommends a diminishing of the mixed economy as well as the withdrawal of the Welfare State from many of its traditional roles, suggesting that the market is a more efficient and effective way of dealing with these issues, converting the welfare state into the market state (Carf

2003). Neoglobalization involves a number of distinct powerful players, driven by politics, economic gain and ideology rather than being a product of conspiracy. Susan George (1999) argues that the neo-liberal paradigm is a totally artificial construct pushed by an "international network of foundations, institutes, research centres, publications, scholars, writers and public relations hacks". Numerous policy groups and coalitions draw inspiration from Friedrich Von Hayek and his students like Milton Friedman to push the neoliberal agenda (George 1999; Davis 2001; Davidson and Harris 2006). Support can also be found in the profit motives of the increasingly monopolistic media across the world (Hirst and Thompson 1996).

Further, the neoglobalization project has been consistently pushed by the "Bretton Woods" institutions, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank (Bonnett 2006; Gopalkrishnan 2007). Both these institutions, along with the World Trade Organization and numerous financial institutions, continue to push the Washington Consensus, which essentially consists of the three pillars of fiscal austerity, privatization and market liberalization (Stiglitz 2002), and act as the cutting edge of neoglobalization across the world (Soros 2002; Bonnett 2006). The methods used vary, from Structural Adjustment Programs imposed on debt-ridden nation-states to more subtle drivers such country credit ratings that guide the flows of Foreign Direct Investment to counties that most closely adhere to neo-liberal principles. Among the post colonial nations, the economic and social situation created by the processes of colonization, often including significant levels of debt, is exacerbated by this imposition of structural adjustment programs that put significant economic costs on many basic human needs such as water and energy, further marginalizing those already marginalized (Davis 2001; Winant 2006). The Human Development Report (2005) points to the inequality of the globalized world where one-fifth of humanity live in countries where people think nothing of spending $2 a day on a cappuccino while another fifth of humanity survive on less than $1 a day and children die for the want of a simple anti-mosquito bed net.

Neoglobalization is based on and promotes the dominance of transnational capital and financial movements of people (Wallerstein 2005). As the United Nations notes, "The world's richest 500 individuals have a combined income greater than that of the poorest 416 million. Beyond these extremes, the 2.5 billion people living on less than $2 a day—40% of the world's population—account for 5% of global income. The richest 10%, almost all of whom live in high-income countries, account for 54%" (UNDP 2005). Yet, there is insufficient recognition of