

# Racisms in the New World Order



Racisms in the New World Order  
Realities of Cultures, Colours and Identity

Edited by

Narayan Gopalkrishnan and Hurriyet Babacan



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# INTRODUCTION

NARAYAN GOPALKRISHNAN  
AND HURRIYET BABACAN

## *“Race” and Racism*

“Race”<sup>1</sup> and Racism are value-laden terms that are perpetuated through societal messages and public discourses on immigration, ethnic minorities, Indigenous people, multiculturalism, refugees and citizenship. In many contemporary nation-states, discourses on “race”, ethnicity, and culture have formed the basis of nation building and have determined who is included in the boundaries of national identity and who is considered the “other”. Although racism is a lived reality for many people across the world, it remains largely a silent or invisible issue. It diminishes the social fabric of society, creates social tension, and perpetuates social inequality and impacts on the life chances of the people involved. Racism affects many sub-sections of society: those who perpetuate it, those who are at the “receiving end”, and those who are not directly involved in the problem.

Defining racism is a difficult task as it changes its forms and meanings in different historical contexts. These forms are multiple, historically specific, situationally variable and often contradictory. They also are gendered, and interconnect with nationalist and religious identities in complex ways (Hollinsworth 2006). There have been many attempts to define racism. One definition that is offered by Zelinka 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. This exclusion (and often exploitation) is seen as legitimate simply because of the difference or supposed inferiority of the other group’s race, ethnicity or nationality (Zelinka 1996:1).

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Race’ is a social construct that does not exist in the essence nor is the result of the biological make up of individuals. Yet the term ‘race’ is used widely as if it were a reality. The term is put in inverted commas to indicate that we are problematising it and points to the difficulties of the discourses and language of racism.

Mellor (2004) notes the complexity of racism and demonstrates how everyday racism occurs through a range of means by a range of players. He identifies four useful categories of understanding racism: *Verbal racism* that is predominantly individual in nature expressed through verbal remarks, name-calling, general overheard comments, jokes, taunts and threats; *behavioural racism* in which racist sentiments are expressed through action including avoidance of particular types of people in interpersonal situations, staring, patronizing, segregation, harassment, assault and denial of identity; *discrimination* embedded in institutionalised practices which is perpetrated by individuals through denial of equality of treatment, restriction or exclusion, excessive or punitive measures including over-application of laws or procedures; and *macro level racism* which occurs at the societal and institutional levels and includes elements such as lack of concern by society or government, selective view of history, cultural dominance, institutions of society and media and misinformation. The processes of racism, while able to be categorised in this way, are much more complex and there is often an enmeshment of different types of racism in the way it is enacted. Troyna explains this complexity as follows:

What is evident, then is that racism is an ideology that is continually changing, being challenged, interrupted and reconstructed, and which often appears in contradictory forms. As such, its reproduction in schools, and elsewhere can be expected to be complex, multi-faceted and historically specific... specific forms of racism can be expected to change, and inherited racist discourse are likely to be reconstituted. New circumstances are likely to lead to new formulations of racism. (Troyna 1993:15)

It is important to note that racism is referred to as an “ideology” by many writers, such as Troyna. Although the notion of biological classification of “races” is discredited by contemporary science, the notion of racism still persists. The reason for this, as noted by Castles (2000), is that the process of categorising certain groups or individuals as inferior involves the use of economic, social or political power and generally has the purpose of legitimating exploitation or exclusion. The dominant group constructs ideologies of the inherent difference and their power is sustained by developing structures such as laws, policies and administrative practices, often referred to as institutional racism (Vasta & Castles 1996:31). Macdonald (1993) points out that in different types of racism we are confronted with prejudice plus power. Many writers have noted that a lack of questioning of the power relations in society results in a continued silence on the topics of racism and discrimination (Bennett 1998; Castles 2000; Papastergiadis 2000). Some authors prefer to use the term “racialization” as a way to denote that racism is embodied through

attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, laws, norms, and practices that reinforce power asymmetries (Miles 1989).

While racism is complex and is continually shifting boundaries, it is important to recognise its ordinariness. Essed (1991), the Dutch sociologist, has identified that the notion of “everyday racism” consists of inequitable practices that infiltrate everyday life and become part of what is seen as “normal” by the dominant group, even in the context of formal commitment to equality. It takes the form of everyday actions or interactions whose effects taken individually may seem trivial, minor and not worth making a fuss over. However, their cumulative impact can be far less trivial. Each racist joke or comment occurs in the context of a personal and collective history of such trivial incidents. Racism is not an individual act of but a social one. Hage (2002) points out that the perpetuation of racism is a collective social act and not the responsibility of individuals only:

Violent racists are always a tiny minority. However, their breathing space is determined by the degree of “ordinary” non-violent racism a government and culture allow to flourish within it (2002: 247).

While “racism” flourishes and takes on new forms, it has become invisible in the rhetoric of governments and communities, being replaced by less confronting terms like “living in harmony” and “community relations” and “social cohesion”. However, race structures continue to persist and determine, in real or imagined ways, the way people express their own and other’s identity and place in society (Chambers and Pettman 1986; Pettman 1992).

### ***New Racisms***

Today we live in a world that is rapidly changing. Processes of globalisation and migration have moulded a new sense of identity in individuals and communities so that people have a layered sense of identity and how they define themselves. Globalisation and its many manifestations - changing power relations, technology, media, finances, terrorism, war, movements of people and ideas- sets the stage for racism to mutate and change in terms of ideology, behaviour manifestations, intersectionality with other forms of “isms”, spatial spread as well as immediacy of escalation (Bulmer and Solomos 1998; Kondos 1992; Malik 1996). The last few decades have also seen the rise of fear and hate-based politics, with Pauline Hanson in Australia, Georg Haider in Austria and the Bharatiya Janata Party in India as just some of the examples of where fear of the “Other” has been effectively transformed into political capital (Gopalkrishnan 2003; Stratton 1998; Hollinsworth 1998; Quinn 2003). The use of fear and insecurity are key elements of the discourse of the new racisms

(Gopalkrishnan 2003; Babacan & Babacan 2006). This has been particularly the case with the global shift towards Neo-Conservative and Neo-Right politics. Beck (2000:11) points out that from now on, what happens in the planet is not only a limited local event and that “all inventions, victories, catastrophes affect the whole world, and we must reorient and reorganize our lives and actions, our organizations and institutions, along a “local-global” axis”.

The development of racist movements has also been linked to the crises that many of the counties face as global economic decisions cause societal changes. The shifts and fluctuations of global capital has changed national economies, and migration processes intersect with and are constitutive of networks of political, military and cultural relations which lie with either nation states, transnational corporations or international bodies (Held. et al. 1999; Castles & Miller 1998). Wieviorka (1995:25) argues that the rise of modern racism is linked to the “decomposition of national industrial societies” with high levels of unemployment, industrial restructuring, and reduction in welfare support. This has also led to an evolving configuration of the transformation of the State, particularly in term of management of the mobility of people and border control (Ghosh 2000; Brochmann & Hammar 1999). The State is enmeshed in the production of the labour market as a commodity in a contradictory manner of mobility and de-mobility, wanted and unwanted immigrants. Thus, in the new global order, racism is very much part of the production of the labour market. The corner stone of the democratic nation-state is the establishment of rights: political, social and civil. What citizenship rights and entitlements are to be given to the “Other” is one of the key discussions in contemporary societies and goes to the heart of the debates on multiculturalism (Brubaker 1992).

Mass movements of people have destabilized citizenship, nationhood and territory as we witness greater hybridization of societies. The response from the State has been greater assertion of dominant identities.

The roots of contemporary racism are deeply steeped in historical processes. As Stoler notes

There is good evidence that discourses of race did not have to await mid-nineteenth century science for their verification. Distinctions of color joined with those of religion and culture to distinguish the rulers from the ruled, invoked in varied measures in the governing strategies of colonial states. In the nineteenth century, on the other hand, race becomes the organizing grammar of an imperial order in which modernity, the civilizing mission and the “measure of man” were framed. And with it, “culture” was harnessed to do more specific political work; not only to mark difference, but to rationalize the hierarchies of privilege and profit, to consolidate the labor regimes of expanding capitalism, to provide the psychological scaffolding for the exploitative structures of colonial rule (1995: 27).

The contemporary forms of racism have shifted their focus away from biological notions of racism to cultural notions. These are referred to as “new racisms”. The features of new racisms are related to a broader understanding of “race” issues and include cultural dimensions, linkages with identity or ethnic signifiers, construction of whiteness as an invisible factor, intolerance of minority religious groups, assertion of certain religious beliefs, assimilationist emphases, interconnections between “race”, culture, nationalism and patriotism and discourses of the New Right, (Solomos & Back 1996; Mac an Ghail 1999). It is acknowledged that the new racisms are fundamentally supported by the old racisms linked to essentialist arguments such as skin colour (Modood 2005; Babacan 2006)

The significance of the “new racisms” has been the move beyond the idea of a single monolithic racism and to acknowledge the wide range of contemporary racisms that are located in specific historical and spatial conditions. Another important factor to emerge from the focus on “new racisms” is problematising “whiteness” as a concept. There has been considerable focus on difference but not on sameness, focus on “colour” but only those who are black or brown. Sameness and whiteness had been rendered invisible and the hegemonic subject position of “white” was untouched as the notion of colour was to do with “blacks”. Thus whiteness studies have seen a shift in the critical gaze from the colonised and disadvantaged to the colonisers and the privileged. Critical studies address the way in which whiteness is privileged and normalised. The spotlight has been turned on the powerful and privileged although its effectiveness in understanding the structural and historical process of racism and in developing anti-racism strategies remains limited (Anderson 2003; Babacan 2006).

The new racisms are observed across many Western countries. Although new racisms are moulded by specific historical, situational and spatial contexts, they nevertheless exhibit similar elements of “othering” and exclusion. Since the events of 9/11 we observe specific targeting of Muslims in many countries across the world as part of the effort by governments in the “war on terror”. We also see the State being engaged in creating and being created by discourses of “new racisms” through its involvement in security and ethnic crime prevention initiatives. Moreover, there is considerable debate about the policies of multiculturalism as both a preventative measure against racism and also a cause for racism by reifying culture and replacing racism with “culture”.

### ***Plan of the Book***

The chapters presented in this book explore the complexity of racism in the context of a globalized world. The book presents a collection of writings

relating to the impact of global trends on intercultural responses, the experiences of Indigenous and ethnic minority groups, intersections of racism with other forms of discrimination, spatial issues as well as international comparisons and institutional responses. This book is made up of 6 key sections: Theorizing Racism; Indigenous Perspectives on Racism; The New World Order and Racism: Manifestations; New Racisms and the State; and Future Challenges for Anti-Racism. A range of authors, with expertise and knowledge in this field, has made valuable contributions to this collection.

Chapter 1 offers perspectives on ways to theorise new racisms. Professor Floya Anthias discusses the complex nature of racism and its intersections with gender and class. She examines issues of transnationalism, ethnicity, identity, ethnic violence and nationalistic ideology and suggests that an approach using the concept of “Translocational Postionality” is valuable in terms of understanding and responding to the complex and varied aspects of the modern world.

Chapter 2 focuses on Neo-Liberalism and the role of the State. Mr. Narayan Gopalkrishnan discusses some of the consequences of adoption of a neo-liberal model of economic policy within a liberal democracy. He examines the increasing use of “Infearthment” as a way of drawing the polity together, one that leads to new forms of racism, discrimination and marginalization of the “other”. He excavates the consequences for multiculturalism and looks at some positive directions towards the future.

Chapter 3 offers a practitioner perspective of racism in the context of the other “isms”. Mr. Basil Varghese argues that prejudice, discrimination and oppression take a variety of forms in society including sexism, ageism, elitism, cultural chauvinism and racism among others. These forms of oppression have much in common, while also being different in critical ways. The chapter focuses on racism to clarify its nature, social history and its effects.

Chapter 4 examines the complex interaction of sexism and racism in the context of Indigenous people. Ms Jackie Huggins excavates the construction of identity and the relationship to developmental processes and community engagement. She further looks at the context of Human Rights and the ongoing struggles for recognition of Indigenous people.

In Chapter 5, Ms Nahanni Fontaine discusses the historical and contemporary context of Aboriginal girls and women involved in gangs in Manitoba, Canada, addressing the narrative construction of place, race, class and sex. She contests mainstream constructions of Aboriginal gang members, reflects their own stories, examines the political economy context and draws attention to the contested nature of so-called “collective” social fields.

In Chapter 6, Dr Rahil Ismail examines the War on Terror in the context of how dialogue, perceptions, depictions, interpretations and

management of the conflict are affected by racist inclinations. The nature of the political debate and the role of the media in demonizing the “Other” are also discussed, as well as the normalization of Islamophobic views and policies.

In Chapter 7, Dr. Kevin Dunn and Jim Forrest argue that racism and racist attitudes show wide spatial variation across the national space and that spatial variation in one form of racist attitude does not correspond with regional variations for another. They further argue that the recognition of such spatial variation is essential when it comes to thinking about anti-racism initiatives. The ideological bases of anti-racism are not only specific to a nation, but are also likely to vary across a national space.

In Chapter 8, Associate Professor Danny Ben-Moshe uses Australian and international data to explore the global emergence of the “new anti-Semitism” since September 2000. He considers what distinguishes the new from the old, and the characteristics, manifestations and implications of the new are considered both in terms of policy and identity. Strategies to respond and counter the process are also discussed

In Chapter 9, Dr. Santina Bertone and Dr. Christopher Sonn use research conducted in regional Australian towns to examine how the language of economics plays a key role in framing peoples’ perspectives on multiculturalism and on making judgments about those who are acceptable and those who are not in these towns. The many layers and manifestations of racism are excavated in the study as also the impact of levels of bridging capital on social exclusion,

Chapter 10 focuses on the moral panic about ethnic crime in Australia and in western societies. Professor Jock Collins argues that, in general, ethnic crime is highly exaggerated and uses the criminality of a few to portray a culture as criminal. Using criminological evidence and research findings, he argues that policy responses developed on the basis of this moral panic are likely to fail, while broad based policy responses that relate to socio-economic disadvantage, educational outcomes, labour market outcomes, infrastructure needs, avoidance of sensationalism and effective policing are far more likely to produce desired outcomes.

Chapter 11 focuses on the responses of governments to groups that interfere with dominant interests and threaten perceived and reified unity of the nation-state. Examining two areas of policy in Australia, with Indigenous Affairs and the incarceration of children in immigration detention facilities, Professor Linda Briskman argues that the solutions are often sought in terms of assimilation into the mainstream or in rejection by placing people outside the citizenry of the nation-state or a combination of the two.

In Chapter 12, Dr. Alperhan Babacan examines the state policies of regulating asylum in the aftermath of September 11 in a comparative study of

Australia, Canada and New Zealand. This chapter looks at that the changes in asylum laws and policies post the September 11 terrorist attacks, examines the variances across the three countries and suggests that the conjoining of asylum and security matters has unjustifiably “criminalised” asylum seekers, portraying them as threats to national security.

In Chapter 12, Professor Hurriyet Babacan explores the contemporary challenges for anti-racism. She interrogates the challenges for developing a discourse of anti-racism in a climate of denial of racism, silencing of the voices of victims of racism and the sophisticated manner in which racism is enacted in contemporary societies. The chapter identifies strategies that may be adopted to develop an alternative discourse and a platform for action.

This collection of writings should be read in the context of a complex scenario of racism where issues of “race”, “culture”, ethnicity, migration, multiculturalism, gender, citizenship and the war on terror are conjoined and intertwined. These readings are offered as a contribution towards the creation of critical thinking on racism and for the development of anti-racist futures...

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**SECTION ONE:**  
**THEORIZING NEW RACISMS**

## CHAPTER ONE

# BOUNDARIES OF “RACE” AND ETHNICITY AND QUESTIONS ABOUT CULTURAL BELONGINGS

FLOYA ANTHIAS

### *Introduction*

We are confronted today with many different forms of ethnic and racist violence. The recent riots in Paris and other French cities have also reminded us of the fragility of social order in our societies and the frustration, alienation and violent exclusions that foster such social acts. There has also been a significant growth of violence and resistance in other European cities (for example in Oldham in the UK), especially by those on the margins of the economy and society. Moreover, ethnic conflict has characterised many societies in the past and certainly has been one of the most significant developments since the end of the 1980s in Europe. Such ethnic conflict has had an impact both on ideas and practices of racism and on the flows of people fleeing violence and persecution in many parts of the world. The growth of anti-Muslim racism and racial attacks and the racialisation of refugees and asylum seekers has also been an important development.

In the post September 11<sup>th</sup> and post July 7<sup>th</sup> world and in the aftermath of the Iraq war, we have seen the growth of terror, violence and the increasing dehumanisation of categories of people on the basis of colour, class and faith and it is a terrifying world that we live in. From the point of view of academic and political debate, these phenomena have helped to correct the tendency in the past to differentiate between ethnicity and “race” categories, showing that forms of violence based on group boundaries share many characteristics. The enemy within, hatred towards particular categories of the population and practices of dehumanisation and violence cannot be easily pigeonholed into those of race on the one hand, stemming from race differentiations and “otherness” and those of ethnicity.

### ***Transnationalism: a global world***

Although ethnic and racist violence manifests itself at local levels and in specific sites we cannot ignore the transnational and global dimensions involved in terms of policies, practices and identities. Transnationalism itself involves the crossing and challenging of borders. However, it is often accompanied by increased expressions of inequality, uncertainty, ethnic conflict and hostility (Bulmer and Solomos 1998). It is not therefore the case that the dismantling of national or ethnic borders of particular types leads to the dismantling of all borders. A good example is that of Europe and Islam. New borders achieve prominence in particular constellations of political and economic practice. New enemies emerge or may be resurrected in new ways. The ways the violence or hatred is expressed may also be reconfigured.

Globalised networks certainly now characterise modern societies at all social levels, including the cultural and the economic. Although this does not minimise the importance of ethnic and cultural ties, it does mean that these ties operate increasingly at a transnational rather than merely national level. Groups involved are also at the leading edge of the emergence of new more transcultural forms on the one hand, and communication flows around racist hatred and insularity on the other. We must be careful not to treat such developments outside the parameters of unequal power relations that exist between and within cultures.

### ***Defining racisms***

There is increasing recognition that there can be no definitive definition of racism as it comes in many forms. Racism is opportunistic, it is relational to other social processes, and it is therefore a fluid and shifting phenomenon that evades clear and absolute definition in a once and for all type of way.

All racisms, however, are underpinned by a notion of a natural relation between an essence attributed to a human population, whether biological or cultural, and social outcomes that do, will, or should flow from this (Anthias 1998b). Racist ideas become emergent in new ways through practices i.e. through enactment and response.

In the context of islamophobia on the one hand and anti-asylum forms of exclusion and disadvantage on the other, there is a question mark about the continuing importance of “race” markers (e.g. some people say that religion and fear of asylum seekers are more important than “race”). Race markers constitute, it is true, only one of a variety of ways for defining exclusionary group boundaries.

We must also include crosscutting exclusions to do with gender and class.

The differential treatment of women, particularly as it intersects with race means not turning a blind eye to sexist violence and inferiority in the name of upholding the cultural traditions of groups, for example as in the treatment of Asian women and girls by the public services (cases quoted in the activities of Southall Black Sisters in their writings) (Patel 2002) which at times have prioritised the culture of minority groups at the expense of women.

The importance of power relations cannot be overstressed in these processes. For example, power exists in the very fabric of common sense taken-for-granted understandings of a society. Knowledge and access is a form of power. Underclass “white” youths, as individuals, may have neither access to jobs or positions of power. Indeed they may be excluded from access to these, through their position in class relations and through class and gender discourses about competencies in a society in the throes of economic recession and cultural crisis. The violence may indeed be symbolic of the very little power they still have manifested in their concern with territory, which may be a mode of contesting the threat to their own ethnicity (Cohen 1988). Working class white youth may redefine themselves as an ethnic English collective claiming a greater share of the scarce resources of the working class urban areas they inhabit. The collapse of employment structures and other infrastructures for young men may be part of the reason for some of the symbolic and other violence (the defiling of the Stephen Lawrence memorial in London, for example, mirrors the desecration of Jewish graves and attacks on mosques in many parts of the world).

These developments are not unique to Britain, but have been frequently identified as reactions to the homogenising effects of globalisations. Local particularities and identities, ethnic violence and extreme nationalist ideologies such as neo-fascism may provide refuge for marginalized populations who claim rights to territory and national belonging. Over the past decade, within a global context of increased ethnic conflict, we have seen alarmingly high levels of racist violence, physical attacks on asylum seekers and electoral support for the extreme right (in Austria, Belgium and France for instance). These developments are often concentrated when large numbers of young men come together, notably in violence between football supporters.

Masculinity is an important issue here, since the perpetrators of most racial attacks are young men attacking other young men. Racial violence functions within a racialised space where the importance of the masculinist culture of the school playground can be transported to claims over territory outside the school, a point noted by the Macdonald enquiry (MacDonald et al. 1989) into the murder of an Asian pupil at Burnage High School in Manchester.

Racialised relations are complex (Back 1996) and there may be a link between racialised violence and male bonding.

### ***Recent developments in Border controls and culture in Britain***

The last few years have seen major debates as well as shifts in policies concerning these issues in Britain. More restrictive and repressive policies, especially towards irregular migration and asylum, have emerged. These are increasingly being brought under the umbrella of a managed migration framework that seeks to lay down limits to different kinds of migratory flows.

After September 11 2001, we have seen an intensification of criminalization of irregular migrants and asylum seekers. Their depiction as dangerous strangers allows the increasing threat to their human rights. Moreover, surveillance and policing characterise the internal processes in Britain of identity checks as well as taking place at the border through immigration and other controls. Economic migrants are also included in these processes. All categories are seen as dangerous strangers (particularly male and those of South Asian origin or those who look like they come from that part of the world). They are also seen as potential terrorists.

Given strict immigration rules, only the highly skilled are able to enter Europe. Paradoxically, with the virtual abolition of border controls within the Schengen area of the EU, their replacement by identity checks have moved border controls from the periphery into the centre (Yuval Davis, Anthias and Kofman 2005).

The dominant discourse in many European countries reinvoles the notion of social cohesion. This is also part of the backlash against multiculturalism and its problems. Recognizing the fetishisation of cultural attributes and claims (found in some forms of multiculturalism) has been important in this new politics of social cohesion and is to be welcomed. The old multicultural style, partly reasserted in the Parekh report's construction of Britain as a community of communities (Parekh 2000), has the pitfalls mentioned earlier of putting cultures in little boxes thereby reifying and fixing them. Social cohesion politics refuses such essentialising. However, the new politics of social cohesion has the danger of throwing away some of the achievements of multicultural policies and of reasserting the view that the progress of groups away from racism and disadvantage lies in convincing them to go mainstream by adopting the language and culture of dominant whites (even though the inherent problems of class are equally well known in the policies of the British Labour government's take on widening educational participation).

### ***Multiculturalism and celebrating cultural diversity***

Claiming difference and celebrating it has been one way of fighting racism, particularly in various forms of multiculturalism. Such a position may have the effect of ethnicising and producing modes of struggle that focus on culture and identity, repeating for themselves the static and ahistorical nature of racialised definitions. This is found within discussions of the limits of identity politics, for example (MacLaren and Torres 1999). It also failed to acknowledge the gender specific and indeed at times sexist elements of ethnic culture, or the ways in which both ethnic and race boundaries were exclusionary.

A liberal multiculturalist framework means that the dominant group within the state is able to set the terms of the agenda for participation by minority ethnic groups and involves a bounded dialogue where the premises themselves may not be open to negotiation. This is one reason there has been increasing debate around the issue of multiculturalism and critical multiculturalism (May 1999; Parekh 2000). Multiculturalism or critical multiculturalism, unlike liberal multiculturalism, is concerned with the removal of barriers to the legitimacy of different ways of being and is compatible with transnational and transethnic identities as well as those that have been discussed using the notion of hybridity.

A starting point in debates on critical multiculturalism is that it must move away from the idea of one dominant culture that lays the frame of reference, and the existence of tolerance towards other cultures. The idea of a community of communities is offered by the Parekh report (Parekh 2000). Whilst this may be recognition of what exists it cannot be a way forward. Such communities are not homogeneous in any case or have members who agree on the forms of participation best for them in society. Who constitutes the membership and who defines the boundaries? Who are its representatives? Who are able to speak within it (Anthias 1998b; Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992)?

Understanding new forms of identity and consciousness, within a global context, requires even more that we attempt to think through the implications of the articulation of gender, ethnicity, “race” and class. I have argued elsewhere that this understanding lies at the heart of social theory (Anthias 1998a.)

### ***Intersectionality and the concept of translocational positionality***

Here I would like to discuss some of the problems and some of the potential to be found in bringing together the analysis of the different forms of oppression on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity and class. This is not just a theoretical question, as we all know.

The metaphors of intersectionality, crossroads, intermeshing have been used to denote the complex relationships of social identities and divisions.

However, it is important not to focus on the intersections in terms of constructing people as belonging to fixed and permanent groups, which then all enter, in a pluralist fashion, into determining their lives. One view of intersectionality (for example around human rights) is that categories of discrimination overlap and individuals suffer exclusions on the basis of race and gender, or any other combination (Crenshaw 1994). One can see the usefulness of this approach, even though it merely scrapes the surface in terms of the issue of belonging we are concerned with here. The sexual trafficking of young Albanian women in Greece for example cannot be seen as either merely a gender problem or a racist problem (about the position of Albanians in Greek society) (Anthias 2000). One aspect of this is the production of data that cross references the divisions within formulated groups. However, the very act of already presupposing the groups per se as useful classificatory instruments as opposed to groups who are positioned in a particular relation to the state (e.g. focusing on Albanians rather than working class or poor migrants who are located in Greek society in a particular way) has the danger of placing too much emphasis on the origin of the migrant and not enough on a shared terrain of disadvantage across country of origin based lines (or those of religion etc).

I have introduced this term translocation to capture a number of aspects of our modern world. I would argue that the notion of translocational positionality (Anthias 2001, 2002a, 2002b) is a more useful way of thinking about the potential found in diasporic processes than the terms identity, belonging or intersectionality.

Locations can be thought of as social spaces defined by boundaries on the one hand and hierarchies on the other hand. Therefore when we think of our located identities we are forced to think of them in relation to each other and also in terms of some of the contradictions we live in through our differential location within the boundaries in terms of hierarchies. The notion of “location” recognizes the importance of context, the situated nature of claims and attributions and their production in complex and shifting locales.

Positionality combines a reference to social position (as a set of effectivities: as *outcome*) and social positioning (as a set of practices, actions and meanings: as *process*). The term “translocational” refers to the complex nature of positionality faced by those who are at the interplay of a range of locations and dislocations in relation to gender, ethnicity, national belonging, class and racialisation.

A summary of the potential value of an approach using the concept of translocational positionality is presented here:

First, difference and inequality are conceptualised as a set of processes, and not possessive characteristics of individuals. The concept of translocational positionality, and all the processes that are involved, allow us to develop radical

conceptualizations of difference and inequality which are non-essentialist and therefore dynamic and changeable.

Secondly, the term signals a refusal to think of issues of population movement and settlement in terms of culture and identity but in terms of social inequality and transformation and in relation to the crosscutting social divisions of gender, ethnicity and class difference and stratification.

Thirdly, it signals a refusal to think of movements of population as involving only processes of dislocation and relocation. For dislocation assumes a fixed and given location from which we become dislodged. Although this may appear in our imaginations to be the case, our locations are multiple and span a number of terrains such as those of gender and class as well as ethnicity and nation, political and value systems. To be dislocated at the level of nation is not necessarily a dislocation in other terms if we find we still exist within the boundaries of our social class and our gender but nonetheless it will transform our social place and the way we experience this. Hence the interconnections and intersections involved here are important. From this point of view to think of translocations opens up not only thinking of relocations but also of the connections between the past, the present and the future.

Fourthly, the term helps us to think of lives as located and therefore our identities as always relational to our location both situationally but in terms of the intersections of gender, ethnicity and class and other important social boundaries and hierarchies. For example we might be white working class men or women or black middle class men or women. We might occupy a disadvantaged or subordinate position within one boundary e.g. as a woman I occupy a generally subordinate role vis a vis men, I occupy a more advantaged position in class terms.

Moreover, it helps explain why the intersections of social relations can be both mutually reinforcing (e.g., minority ethnic unemployed man may occupy a relation of subordination in both class and “racialised” ways in many different political, economic and cultural contexts) and contradictory (e.g., in a relation of subordination to his boss, while in a relation of domination with his wife). In the first case, social divisions articulate to produce a coherent set of practices of subordination, while in the second, social divisions lead to highly contradictory processes in terms of positionality and identity.

This opens up the possibility of more reflexive forms of political struggle and avenues to greater dialogue and collaboration between groups organising around particular kinds of struggles rather than particular kinds of identities.

What this requires a concerted effort against all those social practices that construct identities and differences in naturalised, collectivised and binary ways and in terms of hierarchical otherness, unequal resource allocation and modes of

inferiorisation (see Anthias 1998a). This includes engagement at a political level around the following:

- Naturalisation: a denaturalisation of difference and identity by showing the ways they are located historically and as social constructs.
- Collective attributions: a recognition of differences within individuals in terms of the interaction between ways in which they are constructed and construct themselves situationally and contextually: therefore an emphasis also on gender, class and other forms of categorisations. A refusal to construct people or selves in terms of singular identities.
- Hierarchical cultures: the development of legal and other state mechanisms which embody the principle of multiculturalism where it does not conflict with the basic ethical principle of personal autonomy as a basic human right.
- Racial and ethnic categories to be disassociated from the space of political voice at the overall societal level but not in terms of the construction of internal communities with their own rights to culture and ways of life as long as they do not conflict with principles of human rights.
- Rights and responsibilities: human rights to be also ways in which ethical principles in terms of confronting the other in terms of responsibilities to the “other’s” human rights.
- Mechanisms of accountability within institutional frameworks: scrutiny of procedures in terms of outcomes as well as intentions and rules, so that racialised sexist and class unequal outcomes are made prominent even where no intentionalities are found, and redressed through corrective and sustainable procedures such as positive action frameworks.

### ***Concluding remarks***

In what the British and US governments refer to as the post September 11th and post July 7<sup>th</sup> world, we are living with the failure of liberal multiculturalism, failures indicated by the young on the streets of Oldham, Bradford and Burnley, all of whom spoke English, most born in UK and therefore the events cannot be put down to cultural failures but rather indicate much deeper systemic problems. However, the integrationist policies in France cannot be regarded as providing an alternative model to that of liberal multiculturalism. We must be careful not to throw out a multiculturalist imagination that pursues policies of equalisation and structural incorporation as well as forms of cultural synthesis and dialogue. The idea of cultural boxes that people live within needs to be abandoned. Such a depiction of the cultural differences in society is found within liberal multiculturalism. The practices of liberal multiculturalism have also fostered cultural and spatial segregation,

however unwittingly. We must therefore move to a new conception of developing societies that encompass both difference and equality.

We live currently in a time when the “war against terror” is used as an arm ideologically to pursue often racist and exclusionary policies and practices. We live in a global world with great transnational and international movements of capital and labour. We live at a time of huge displacements of people, of forced migrations and of people indeed seeking what David Blunkett, the former British Home Secretary, has called a safe haven. However, to be such a place Britain (like all societies) requires the breaking down of the secure borders that he refers to.

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## CHAPTER TWO

# NEO-LIBERALISM AND INFERTAINMENT: WHAT DOES A STATE DO?

NARAYAN GOPALKRISHNAN

### *Introduction*

One of the key dimensions of modern-day globalization is the widespread adoption of the neo-liberal model of economic policy, based on the premise that the market economy is paramount and works perfectly if it is free and unfettered, a throwback to the laissez-faire policies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Neoliberalism has had widespread support from international Multilateral Economic Institutions, support negotiated through the use of a variety of tools including targeted foreign aid, structural adjustment programs as well as multilateral and bilateral trade agreements and the competition for Foreign Direct Investment (Gopalkrishnan 2004; Hirst et al. 1996; Hurrell et al. 1999).

In terms of the nation-state, adherence to a neo-liberal agenda reduces the role of governance to the bare minimum. On the one hand, this involves total or partial withdrawal of the state from some of its traditional roles, and shifting the onus of responsibility for costs from the state to the individual. In this process, sometimes referred to as *de-stating*, nations across the world have witnessed the state divest itself of roles in the market, in the social services and even in the provision of the bottom-line safety-net (Ife 2002; O'Connor et al. 1998). The processes involved include liberalization, privatization and deregulation and the state restricts much of its functions to focusing on maintenance of internal and external security and a minimum of other roles.

On the other hand, the state is also changing the way it operates even in the roles it continues to perform. Considine uses the term “market bureaucracy” to refer to the changed structures and processes in public institutions. He describes these as pushing bureaucratic services out into the market to face competition, or outright sale on the one hand, while, on the other hand, bringing market mechanisms inside the organisation to structure the internal workings of public programs (Considine 1996). The “user pays” motto has become very

common across the education, health and social welfare arenas of countries like Australia, incrementally demolishing the existing systems that were built on principles of social justice and “a fair go for all”, and replacing them with individualism.

In terms of liberal democracy, the increasingly changed role of governance gives rise to questions around the relationship between the polity and the elected government. If the government is constrained from providing anything more than minimal support to the citizens, what do politicians draw on to gather their vote banks? What about the traditional view of the contract between state and society, based on the concepts of rights and duties (Marshall 1992)? How do the elected representatives keep themselves in power if they cannot respond to the demands of the polity? How do governments cope with their helplessness in the face of big business and the “Virtual Citizen” in the form of Trans-National Companies? And finally, how does the state deal with the tension between the selectively increasing permeability of national borders as against the concept of sovereign nationhood as the base of social cohesion. It is in this context that the use of fear as a force of social cohesion comes into its own.

### *Infearntainment*

Fear is a very powerful emotion. It is a trigger to the “flight or fight” response to threat and is genetic at one level and a product of socialization at another. Fear can be an appropriate way of responding to danger or can be a conditioned reflex that is debilitating and destructive.

The use of fear to bring people together against a real or imagined enemy is not a new tool in the world of politics. In fact, it has been used as a tool by power-mongers and powerbrokers over the centuries and across the world to draw their in-groups together. As a former Prime Minister of Australia stated in 1942:

Fear has not only been a large and deadly element in international relations. It has also been a recognized and potent instrument of domestic policy. Indeed, a powerful case might be made out for the view that the emotion of fear is the most significant of all emotions on the field of politics.

(Menzies R. G. cited in Lawrence 2006:18)

In a world based on neoliberalism, however, the use of fear has achieved a new level of sophistication and reach. Technology has enabled a world where reality and fiction are easily blurred, while the enormous power of the media is very effective in presenting narratives in convincing forms that may

or may not have anything to do with the objective truth. The role of the media in creating an atmosphere of fear is crucial and is well facilitated by the highly concentrated ownership of the media and the global nature of media networks (Appadurai 1996; Glassner 2004). The messages of fear become even more ominous when they are targeted on racial lines that frequently occur in the media (Jakubowicz & Goodall 1994; Stratton 1998).

Fear, presented within this sophisticated environment, has the capability of building cohesion within the chosen members of the in-group, normally the majority, around the core value of safety (Furedi 1997). Fear of an external or internal foe can easily supplant day-to-day issues around job insecurity, changing power relationships in the workplace, increasing indebtedness, loss of social support frameworks, alienation, and the sense of helplessness in the face of powerful forces. Used in this context, fear becomes an instrument of elite rule used in various ways by political leaders either because it helps them to pursue a specific political agenda and/or lends support to their beliefs (Robin 2004).

In this global age, post September 11 and the unending “War on Terror”, the use of fear has become of increasing importance. As Lawrence (2006:2) argues, fear continues to fuel cycles of worry in Australia at a time when the country has never been safer, with increased life expectancy, reduced child mortality, lessened civil strife and moderate murder levels. The endless repetition of messages of fear has enabled a climate where citizens of liberal democracies have allowed their civil rights to be steadily diminished, and the political rights of certain sections of society to be severely curtailed. The climate of fear has made it seem reasonable and rational to engage in assaults on human rights, such as the use of torture, in ways that would have been unthinkable among the developed nations a couple of decades ago. These changes assume great significance if we relate them to the assertion that one of the strongest motives for adopting democracy is the desire to be protected from state-sponsored fear by limiting the scope and concentration of political power (Lawrence 2006: 16-17). An environment of fear enables these limits to be removed and for increasing concentration of power to occur.

In the context of fear mongering, Glassner (2004) suggests that three basic techniques are used to ramp up fear: repetition, use of narrative techniques and misdirection. By repeating the same message frequently, the message gains currency and validity. By constructing a narrative, such as the use of “trends” around single incidents, they can then be used to exacerbate levels of fear. And by using fear, the attention is misdirected from issues that may be of more immediate importance but are inconvenient to the elite.

I have developed the word *Infearntainment* as a composite term that brings together many of the above elements of the fear discourse. Infearntainment