# Interrogating Racism: Toward an Antiracist Anthropology

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## Abstract

Over the past several decades, global manifestations of racism have undergone significant transformations. The anticolonial struggle, the civil rights movement, and the antiapartheid offensive have challenged the former established racial regimes. But the consolidation of global capitalism has also created new forms of racialization. A variety of antiracist strategies and interventions have emerged to confront new racisms. Analyses of racism have sought to interrogate its history and contemporary manifestations, how it is maintained and reproduced, and to predict its future. Anthropologists and other social scientists are challenged to develop theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches to advance our understanding of these new manifestations of race and racism.

## Contents

## INTRODUCTION

Over six decades ago, Gunnar Myrdal described racism as "an American dilemma" stemming from the contradiction between the U.S. ideology of equality and its practices of racial segregation and discrimination. A half century later, this dilemma echoed profoundly at the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Other Forms of Intolerance convened in August, 2001, Durban, South Africa, where representatives of the racialized global south sought to renegotiate their unequal relationship with the states of Europe and the Americas. The conference and its accompanying meeting of nongovernmental organizations was attended by more than 8000 representatives and delegates from over 160 countries. The delegates included not only African-descended and indigenous peoples from all over the globe, but also the Dalits from the Indian subcontinent, the Burakumin of Japan, the Roma of Europe, and Palestinians from the Middle East.

Racism is a widely used concept, both by academics and the broader public. How-

ever, it is a relatively recent term, coming into common use during World War II (see Fredrickson 2002). In the American historical literature, two distinct perspectives about the source of racism materialized. The "natural racism thesis" (see Allen 2002) generally conceptualized racism as a set of psychosocial orientations, prejudices, and beliefs, linked to in-group/out-group phenomena, the source of which is human nature, considered to be innate, natural, or primordial.[1] The more persuasive perspective links racism to structures of power that emerge through processes of accumulation and dispossession within local and transnational contexts. This approach appears in the writings of such social theorists as Eric Williams (1944), W.E.B. DuBois (1946), Oliver Cox (1948), St. Clair Drake (1987), Walter Rodney (1972), and their intellectual descendants. It is within the latter perspective that most contemporary anthropological, sociological, and historical work on racism is to be found, and this article privileges work in this tradition.

There are, however, contending conceptualizations of racism within this massive corpus of scholarly literature (Taguieff 2001, Winant 2000, Wodak & Reisigl 1999). Some scholars

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[1]This debate took place largely in American historiography with reference to the enslavement of African Americans. Historians frequently made reference to anthropological work on race, and anthropologists such as Marvin Harris (1964) were active contributors to demonstrating the weakness of the primordial approach. Winthrop Jordan (1968) and Carl Degler (1971) were two influential scholars whose work supported the "natural racism" hypothesis. This perspective opposed the thesis of Mary and Oscar Handlin (1950), suggesting that before 1660 African American bondsmen and women had basically the same status as European-American bond laborers and that ruling class policy, rather than a preconditioned race consciousness, was responsible for later transformation in their status. The important issue is that this debate took place in the post-World War II context of demands for racial equality. The debate posed critical questions: If racism was natural or primordial, was an end to racism possible? If racism arises under specific historical circumstances, could policies be implemented that would reduce, if not eliminate, racial inequalities? (See Allen 2002 for a discussion of these perspectives.) In anthropology, similar discussions were taking place with reference to the primordial nature of ethnicity.

consider the term "racism" to be of limited analytic value (e.g., Mason 1994, Wacquant 1997); others believe that the concept should be essentially limited to an ideological and/or subjective experience (e.g., Bonilla-Silva 1996); still others, although concurring that ideological and structural forces mutually shape racism, insist that the structural framework is the driving force (e.g., Stavenhagen 1999, Wade 1997). There are also many unanswered questions and significant areas of theoretical debate and controversy. When, how, and why does racism emerge historically? What are the varieties, directions, and manifestations of racism in the contemporary world? What do we know about how racism is maintained and reproduced? How does racism intersect with other forms of inequality such as class and gender? What are the strategies and tendencies against it?

As compared to its sister disciplines of sociology and history, anthropology's contribution to the study of racism in the last several decades has been modest. At the same time, key anthropological concepts of race and culture have been central to rationalizing inequality. Harrison's 1995 article provided a comprehensive review of the history of the race concept and anthropology, as well as the significant literature on race and racism to that point. Following Stavenhagen's observation that "Race does not beget racism, but rather racism generates races" (1999, p. 8), my concern in this review is not to debate the social construction of race but to consider how scholars have attempted to grapple with racism. Although race may be socially constructed, racism has a social reality that has detrimentally affected the lives of millions of people. An article of this limited length obviously cannot do justice to this important subject. I therefore highlight anthropological contributions to the study of racism whenever possible but draw heavily on related works in history, sociology, and other disciplines. The review focuses primarily on English language work, with some emphasis on the research of U.S. scholars. Because other chapters in this volume review specific aspects of race and racism as they relate to archeology, critical race theory, indigenous policies and movements, Latin America, language, migration and immigration, disease and public health, my treatment of these areas is limited. Following a brief discussion of anthropology and antiracism, a selected body of work is reviewed as it addresses the questions posed above.

## A Very Short History of Anthropology, Racism, and Antiracism

Although anthropologists have written extensively about race, anthropological contributions to the study of racism have been surprisingly modest. Perhaps this is due, in part, to anthropology's contradictory heritage. On one hand, it is the discipline that once nurtured "scientific racism" and the racial world view that provided a rationale for slavery, colonialism, segregation, and eugenics (Baker 1998, Blakey 1994, Mukhopadhyay & Moses 1997, Smedley 1993). On the other hand, anthropology also has a significant antiracist tradition, most notably during and shortly following World War II, as racism's genocidal consequences became all too clear.

In the 1940s and 1950s, the theoretical work of such anthropologists as Franz Boas, Gene Weltfish, Ruth Benedict, Ashley Montague, Robert Redfield, and others was critical to challenging the scientific justification for racial segregation in military service and to mounting an initiative around the highly contested United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's Statement Against Racism. The 1960s scholarship of Ashley Montague, Frank Livingstone, and Sherwood Washburn calling into question the concept of race was also a major contribution to the declining influence of racial determinism (Baker 1998, Harrison 1995, Lieberman 1997).

A lesser known stream of anthropological work focused more explicitly on the structure of racism. Key within this tradition were

African American anthropologists such as St. Clair Drake (1962) and Allison Davis (1941), whose work in the 1930s and 1940s interrogated structures of racial inequality in the U.S. north and south. Analyses of racism in southern communities by Hortense Powdermaker (1939) and Eleanor Leacock's examination of racism in stratified education (1969) strengthened this body of work. But despite an impressive early antiracist tradition and significant mobilization around the critique of the "culture of poverty," anthropological analysis of racism failed to become a major current in anthropology.

There are a number of issues that bear on this. First, anthropologists do not agree about the roles of race and racism within the discipline or in the society as a whole. Although most anthropologists reject biological race and racism (Lieberman 2001), and others have explored more meaningful ways of understanding human variation (e.g., Goodman 2001, Gould 1996), a consistently large minority (40%) of physical anthropologists make use of the race concept in gathering and analyzing data (Cartmill 1999), and some continue to defend the value of the concept of biological race as an important mechanism for understanding human variation (e.g., Shipman 1994). Many cultural anthropologists, in distancing themselves from the truly barbaric consequences of biological racism, have become "race avoidant" (Brodkin 1999, p. 68), considering race to be socially constructed, but in the process ignore racism. As Shanklin put it, "American anthropology won the battle and lost the war" (1998, p. 670). Furthermore, as anthropologists focused on ethnicity, rather than analyzing how categories of race emerge and persist, racism continues to be undertheorized in anthropology.

Several anthropologists (Baker 1998, Brodkin 2001, di Leonardo 1998, Visweswaran 1998, Willis 1972) in retrospect have argued that the theoretical weaknesses inherent in Boasian liberalism made it impossible to sustain a focus on racism. Boas and some (not all) of his students largely interpreted racism as a matter of ignorance, rather than as a fundamental element of the social structure; they consequently favored directing antiracist initiatives largely toward educating whites, rather than addressing the underlying historical and structural forces that created and sustained racism. Furthermore, the antiracist work in the discipline was disproportionately undertaken by women (Lieberman 1997), who were sometimes marginalized by the discipline, and by people of color, who were often marginal to or excluded from the academy. Finally it is essential to underscore the massive institutional and financial support for scholarly studies buttressing biological determinism (Baker 1998, Blakey 1994, Tucker 2002).

The publication of Gregory & Sanjek's edited volume, *Race*, in 1994 represented an important milestone in renewing anthropologists' attention to the study of racism. Despite its checkered history and late entry into the field, anthropology has the potential to make a central contribution to the critical study of racism.

## HISTORICIZING RACISMS

Notwithstanding Stoler's trenchant critique that "histories of racism often appear as narratives of redemption" (1997, p. 185), there is a very important body of recent research grappling with the history of racism that is useful to anthropologists as they try to make sense of contemporary racism. There is a fairly broad consensus that racism is associated with modernity and that it is linked to European expansion and consequent enslavement of Africans, colonialism, and imperialism. Most historians agree that racism (*a*) is inextricably bound with the historical emergence of nation states, (*b*) is frequently built on earlier conflicts, and, furthermore, (*c*) emerges amid contestation. However, not surprisingly, there is some difference of opinion about the precise dating, the centrality of racism to modernity, and the roles and

directions of causality of particular aspects of modernity.

Inconsistencies in dating can be attributed in part to different conceptualizations of racism and how it is distinguished from other forms of discrimination, such as xenophobia, cultural, ethnic, and class prejudice, as well as whether racism is defined as a fully developed ideology and system of domination or a modern manifestation of ancient phenomena of tribalism and group identity. For example, Snowden (1995), Fredrickson (2002), and Winant (2001) argue that there is no equivalence of race in the Greco-Roman world, nor among early Christians. In contrast Issac (2004), in a book entitled *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, contends that significant examples of "proto-racism" are to be found in Greek and Roman literature, despite his observations that racism did not exist in its current form of biological determinism, nor was there systemic persecution of any ethnic group by another. At issue is the relationship between "proto-racism" and modern racism. Most panoramic treatments of racism find it useful to mark a qualitative distinction between "prototypical forms" (Fredrickson 2002, p. 7)[2] or "significant rehearsals" (Winant 2001, p. 38) and the systematic racial classification that took center stage in the past two centuries (e.g., Fredrickson 2002, Goldberg 1993, Holt 2002, Smedley 1993, Solomos & Back 1996, Winant 2001)—a worldview that speaks to a notion of primordial ties but is a fully modern invention.[3]

However, scholars may attribute different degrees of significance to the precise roles of such characteristics as the concern for order and classification (Goldberg 1993); the ideological mediation of the contradiction between Christian universalism and Enlightenment notions of equal rights and freedom on one hand, and exclusion and inequality on the other (Fredrickson 2002); or slavery and abolition (Holt 2002).

Contesting the thesis that race and racism were a by-product of, or contradictory to, modernity, recent work has underscored the centrality of African enslaved labor to the development of the modern capitalist world economy (Brodkin 2000, Holt 2002, Rigby 1996, Winant 2001). Winant (2001) asserts, "modernity itself was...a worldwide racial project, an evolving and flexible process of racial formation...." (p. 30). Holt describes the ways in which the transatlantic slave trade "redefined the very conditions of possibility for production and consumption, forms of labor mobilization, the shape of revolution and reaction, as well as fundamental notions of personal and political identity" (Holt 2002, p. 31). As African and African American labor became the basis for the development of much of the Western hemisphere and an engine for the expansion of capitalism in Europe, the attendant accumulation created the conditions for the rise of the modern world system. Racialized labor was enabled by other features of modernism, and race and racism were made, transformed, and remade through slavery and the struggle against it (Brodkin 2000, Holt 2002, Winant 2001).

There is consensus that modern racism emerged in the context of European expansion. In fact, Wade (1997) suggests that the physical differences that are cues for contemporary racial distinctions may be seen as social constructions built of phenotypic variations,

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[2]Fredrickson (2002) argues that modern racism has two strands: anti-Semitism and white supremacy. Racism takes a prototypical form in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when exclusions were rooted in religion rather than natural science. At the point when eliminating Jews became preferable to converting them—based on the presumption that their essence makes them incapable of conversion—ethnic prejudice became racism. Fredrickson traces the emergence of this view in medieval Spain, underscoring the historical contingency, in contrast to the primordial character of racism.

[3]Wieviorka (1995) proposes that we distinguish among different levels of racism, which he identifies as infraracism (characterized by primarily xenophobic prejudices),

fragmented (disjointed) racism, political racism, and total racism, reflecting increasingly organized and state involved racisms.

which correspond to the "geographic encounters of Europeans in their colonial histories" (p. 15). One interesting theme is the mutability and historical contingency of the meaning of these perceptions and distinctions and how they are organized. English, French, and Dutch travelers portrayed Pacific Islanders differently at various points in time depending on prevailing global and regional agendas. Gailey (1996) notes that their willingness to reduce judgment to skin color was associated with the rise of capitalist slavery in West Africa and settlement colonization elsewhere. Hence, the skin color of Pacific Islanders is depicted as markedly darker over 35 years as colonialism develops (Gailey 1996). Similarly, Daniel (1996) describes a gradual process of "aryanization" of the Sinhala people during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as they appropriated Western racial categories in the context of colonialism and the spread of scientific racism. In the recent massacres in Sri Lanka, conflicts were at times framed in the discourse of race.

Along with enslavement, conquest, and colonialism, modern racism is frequently intertwined with both early and later stages of nation building and the drive for national consolidation. Although the variety of racism developed in the West had the greatest impact on the rest of the world, racial systems are simultaneously national and international projects. Racial projects as they appear in different parts of the world are constructed, in part, from tools and symbols already existing within local cultural repertoires as well as from new encounters and conflicts. As states make race, they do so from beliefs, symbols, practices, and conflicts, transmitted from the past yet interpreted in new ways.

However, in many instances scientific racism as developed in the West provided the predominant template for both internal conflicts and imperial projects in other parts of the world. In China and Japan, indigenous discourses of difference, reconfigured in the context of rising nationalism, converged with and drew inspiration from scientific racism,

which provided a framework for categorizing, ranking, and in some cases subordinating internal and external populations (Dikötter 1997, Weiner 1997). As Fredrickson put it, "The story of racism in the twentieth century is one story with several subplots rather than merely a collection of tales that share a common theme" (2002, p. 104).

In the context of modern nation building, racism facilitated the social construction of homogeneity through exclusion, but it also functioned to consolidate elites by neutralizing class and legitimating inequality. Providing a more recent example of national consolidation, Sagás (2000) argues that racism inevitably underlies the organization of nationalism as a political movement. In the Dominican Republic, as local elites confronted the challenge posed by the successful Haitian revolution that overthrew slavery, they incorporated racial constructs to forge a national credo of "antihatianism." This discourse, segueing easily from cultural to racial tropes and conflating race, culture, and nation, also became useful in later periods to thwart challenges to the hegemony of elites. The ruling class depicted Dominicans (through identity cards, as well as cultural constructions) as the descendants of Indians (although Indians had been exterminated centuries earlier) and Spaniards, eliminating any acknowledged link to African heritage. Similarly emphasizing racism's role in state consolidation, Marx (1998) compares race making in the United States, South Africa, and Brazil, arguing that in the United States and South Africa, ethnic elites formerly at war (the English and Boer in South Africa and the southern and northern elite in the United States) agreed to deploy state authority to unify whites within nation states by excluding blacks, whereas in Brazil, segments of white elites were not at war, and a rigid color line did not develop.

Some of the most interesting approaches further advance our understanding of the state by historicizing the notion of whiteness. They demonstrate that whiteness was not

necessarily a consciousness identity as compared with national and religious affiliations (Fredrickson 2002), but a category that had to be invented and reinvented. In the United States, as contemporary racialized groups were incorporated by conquest and/or labor exploitation, the state created and maintained racial hierarchies and racialized citizenship (see Merry 2001) through processes that were often contradictory and inconsistent. Access to whiteness could be conditioned by class. For instance, in the context of creating alliances between Anglo and Mexican elites, Mexicans in some areas were defined as white, although frequently only elites were able to take advantage of this racially privileged designation (Haney López 1996). For the majority of Mexicans, a racializing discourse equated the use of the Spanish language with "disorder," setting a pattern for perceptions of Caribbean Latins such as Puerto Ricans (Urciuoli 1996). Native Americans, moreover, who claimed sovereign status as autonomous nations, were granted citizenship only in 1924 (Biolsi 2001, Deloria & Wilkins 1999, Marable 2002).

Pem Buck's (2001) insightful historical and ethnographic study of two Kentucky counties demonstrates how ideas about race developed over 300 years. Poor whites, Buck observes, were persuaded to buy into the new dual race system through specific social, economic, and legal measures: tightening access to the vote, punishing intermarriage, segregated living quarters, prohibition of literacy to enslaved people, dispossession of native Americans, and distribution of land to a few landless whites, as well as through force.

These examples demonstrate how the construction of race and manifestestations of racism are historically contingent and shaped by many interrelated processes, including conquest and state-making. Citing Hannah Arendt, Harvey (2003) suggests that racism comes to the forefront of political thinking with the attempt to reconcile national and imperialist projects, suspending class struggle by constructing an apparent alliance between capital and other classes. Racism is the glue that holds this together, allowing imperial projects to proceed with "accumulation by dispossession" (p. 45).[4] Gender and class are also implicated in these processes, producing interlocking forms of oppression (Davis 1981).

## Contesting Racialization

Finally, the emergence of racism was not unchallenged but continually contested and reshaped by defiance and opposition (see Hanchard 1994, Winant 2001). In Japan, social Darwinism, embraced by the intellectuals, did not proceed without opposition (Weiner 1995). The racial state in the United States was constantly confronted by Native Americans, Mexicans, African Americans, and Asians through wars and revolts as well as day to day sabotage, strikes, and legal challenges—all of which contributed to remaking the rules of both race and racism. In fact, both Buck (2001) and Allen (2002) date the crucial turning point in elite construction of whiteness as a category in the United States to the suppression of Bacon's rebellion in 1676, when African and European indentured servants and poor free people together initiated an unsuccessful uprising against British colonial authorities in Virginia. Furthermore, as Aptheker (1993) and Solomos & Back (1996) argue, anticolonial and antiracist ideas and social movements have been a much more significant and influential trend among whites—abolition being perhaps the first modern transnational social movement—than most histories acknowledge.

There is now wide agreement that global expressions of racism underwent substantial

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[4]Throughout this review I borrow Harvey's (2003) phrase, "accumulation by dispossession," though I apply it somewhat differently to signal the relational aspect of racism: how the dispossession and disadvantage of the racialized produces accumulation and advantage for others.

reconstruction in the aftermath of World War II. Worldwide struggles against racism, as well as significant alterations in the international social order, brought about transformations in the racial worldview. The global realignment that emerged from the collapse of the European-based colonial empires was no longer compatible with older, cruder forms of racism. Simultaneously, the United States endeavored to project itself as the international leader in freedom and individual rights and sought to integrate the former colonies into the capitalist system (Harvey 2003, Winant 2001). Surprisingly muted in some analyses, however, is the critical role of the anticolonial, black liberation, and antiapartheid social movements in transforming the global racial domain. By contrast, Holt (2002) and Winant (2001) specifically attribute a major role in the global shift or "break" in the old worldwide racial system to the challenges posed by these movements.

Despite some areas of difference, the clear theme that emerges from these historical accounts is the fluidity, mutability, and historical contingency of racism—its differences, its transformations, and its contestations. To take account of this, a new set of concepts has evolved to give expression to the simultaneously dynamic and structural nature of race and racism. Concepts such as racial formation, "the sociohistorical processes by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed"; or racial projects as "simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along racial lines" (Omi & Winant 2002, p. 124); or "racialization," the social, economic, and political process of transforming populations into races and creating racial meanings (Barot & Bird 2001, Miles 1993, Omi & Winant 2002); as well as such expressions as "making race," all speak to the purposeful, functional, mutable, and constantly transforming nature of race and racism.

# CONTEMPORARY RACISMS

## Global Conditions

We have seen that racisms are both global and local: Although modern racism is a global system significantly influenced by Western conquest and racialized labor, racisms take local forms. Furthermore, though racisms reference permanent and unchangeable characteristics, they are in a state of constant transformation in relationship to new forms of accumulation and dispossession and the struggles against them. Whereas the United States and South Africa now appear to be moving toward societies characterized by "unmarked racisms" similar to those in Latin America, several Latin American countries typically characterized by "racism without race" are experiencing the emergence and growth of organized racial consciousness and indigenous movements making demands on the state. In addition, recent migratory processes have produced new manifestations of racism in various areas of the world, and new sites of racialization are being created by the ever expanding prison-industrial complex.

In the past five decades, two major developments have interacted to bring about substantive transformations in racism and the structuring of difference. First, as discussed above, the national liberation struggles in the third world, the black liberation movement in the United States, and the antiapartheid offensive in South Africa all effectively challenged white supremacy, overturning the old racial orders, and bringing about powerful changes in how race is lived.

However, the recent consolidation of global capitalism has resulted in strikingly new racialized consequences. This most recent phase of globalization, which is driven by the deployment of capital for production around the globe, has been accompanied by continuing crises within industrialized countries. With the relocation of industrial production to non-Western countries, there is rising unemployment, as well as a precipitous

decline in the redistributive functions of the state, dwindling social services and privatization of previously publicly funded institutions. These processes have their counterparts in many postcolonial countries subject to the legacies of colonialism, international debt, and structural adjustment policies. In addition, contemporary global communication technologies have simultaneously created new forms of dispossession and enhanced the potential for organization across borders based on common interests. Both developments—the resistance against racism and globalized capitalism—interact to create new forms of race, making it an unstable fluid order, characterized by old and new forms of dispossession, accumulation, and resistance.

Traditional forms of accumulation by dispossession—of land, labor, resources, and rights—continue. Along with discourses of multiculturalism and inclusion, there are fierce racialized struggles for land and resources, often linked to genocidal practices (Hinton 2002b). Struggles for land rights are major features of both indigenous and Afro-descended populations in Latin America. For example, Afro-Colombians, who have historically occupied land rich in timber, gold, farming potential, and biodiversity on the Pacific Coast, are being violently displaced by national and international concerns (Escobar 2003). Displacement of indigenous peoples continues and in some instances has intensified (Maybury-Lewis 2002). In sub-Saharan Africa, with its vast reserves of water, timber, oil, minerals, and gems, Klare (2001) predicts that conflicts that take the form of ethnic clashes and internal warfare will be increasingly linked to international resource wars. Among established racialized minorities in the metropoles, gentrification—through which their neighborhoods and communities are appropriated by means of various legal mechanisms—can be understood as a parallel process of dispossession and accumulation (Harvey 2003, Mullings 2003, Williams 1996). All these are linked to worldwide processes of privatization and "enclosure" of land,

public space, and public services integral to the agendas of neoliberalism and structural adjustment.

Racialized and gendered labor forces continue to be central to old and new forms of accumulation. As much of the world's population has become a reserve labor pool, "transmigratory racism" has been well-documented in western Europe, where immigrants from the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean face various forms of discrimination and the rise of right wing anti-immigration movements. This phenomenon is not limited to Europe, and recent scholarship has documented new forms of racism directly connected to the movement of labor in other regions. In Japan, for instance, the recent influx of Asian workers is widely perceived as a racial problem (Weiner 1997); in Hong Kong, racial discourse linking immigrant workers to crime and economic problems is directed against Philippina and Indian servants, as well as mainland Chinese (Lilley 2001); Bolivian, Chilean, Peruvian, and Paraguayian migrants to Argentina face xenophobic campaigns as Argentina confronts recession and high unemployment (Grimson 2001). In this context, there are frequently tensions between migrant and native workers.[5]

Women workers constitute a significant proportion of migrants (e.g., Parreñas 2001). Given the fertility decline among Europeans, articulations of racism, class, nationality, and gender may be expressed in racialized demographic anxieties. Krause (2001) notes that, in Italy, the public discourses of demographers,

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[5]The subject of immigration and labor competition with native minorities is complex. In the United States, recent studies demonstrate that immigration is associated with a significant drop in labor force participation rates of native born African Americans, as well as a significant wage penalty for African Americans and previous immigrants in occupations with an overrepresentation of minority immigrants (see Shulman 2004). Tensions are exacerbated when immigrants themselves participate in victim-blaming discourses directed against native minority workers. Furthermore, as Bowser (1995b) points out, racial scapegoating in "competitive racism" facilitates the transfer of jobs.

which inform media and political, academic, and state-sponsored elites, deploy alarmist language and metaphors in the guise of neutral, scientific analysis. Media commentary equates Italian women's low birth rates and the influx of immigrants to the decline of civilization, linking ideologies of gender, class, race, and nationality and enabling racist projects. Similarly, in the United States, the reproductive capacities of black women have been a focus of concern from slavery to the contemporary period (Mullings 1997). It is particularly in the context of patrolling the boundaries of gender and the national body that some of the more extreme forms of racism have emerged, from lynching black men in the American South to raping women in Rwanda or Bosnia.

An intriguing topic in this literature interrogates the domains within which racism is initiated and perpetuated. Although racism is frequently associated with working class populations, Cole's (1997) ethnographic study of racial attitudes toward immigrants from Africa and Asia among different classes in Sicily discovers flexibility and ambivalence among workers: Some reject the new immigrants, and others sympathize with them. Cole suggests that although the bourgeoisie tend to adhere to universalist ideologies, they are the greatest beneficiaries of race, class, and gender segmentation. Wodak, van Dijk, and their colleagues employ discourse analysis to examine the production of racism by symbolic elites in political, corporate, academic, educational, and media arenas in Europe. They conclude that elite racism enables the reproduction of racism throughout society by means of elite preparation of popular resentment (Wodak & van Dijk 2000).

Historical minorities in industrial countries may confront both continuity and sometimes intensification of racialized inequalities but may also face new forms of racialization. In the United States, former industrial and manufacturing workers, such as African Americans and Puerto Ricans, experience massive exclusion from the formal economy. In addition there are new configurations of bound labor:

Women are forced into new forms of semifree labor created by welfare reform (Davis 2004, Davis et al. 2003, Morgen & Maskovsky 2003); simultaneously, low-income men are warehoused in prisons (Marable 2002). In conditions of limited opportunities, the military becomes a viable option for employment of racialized men and women.

Incarceration has dramatically increased in many nations of the global North (Sudbury 2004), with the disappearance of jobs and "enclosures" of land in the third world. For example, in Italy, where the overwhelming majority of victims of police violence are immigrants and Roma, "discourses on crime and who commits it are saturated with the language of national citizenship, social class, gender and race" (Angel-Ajani 2002, p. 38). As a result of cutbacks, border crossings, exploitation in sex and drug industries, and general conditions of life in many former colonial countries, the number of women incarcerated by and large for nonviolent crimes related to survival has precipitously increased (Sudbury 2004). Furthermore, several observers suggest that in the context of the worldwide trafficking in illegal substances (e.g., Robotham 2003) and the globalization of armaments trade, the U.S. led "War on Drugs" is being waged primarily against people of color transnationally (Harrison 2002).

Contemporary forms of global communications and information technologies have tremendously fluid, complex, and sometimes contradictory implications for both racism and its contestation. For example, contemporary media technologies foster the global proliferation of U.S. racial meanings—the export of U.S. popular media is second only to that of their aerospace products (McLean 1995)—and introduce new forms of property for accumulation by dispossession. Transmission of racial imagery through popular media, which helps to promote the convergence of national racisms (Bowser 1995b), is more subtle, with striking images of hipness, coolness, and superstars counterposed by dangerous, ghettoized criminals transmitted transnationally,

from Hong Kong (Lilley 2001) to Sicily (Cole 1997). Although for Solomos & Back (1996), this expresses an "oscillation between racial adulation and racism," Baker (1998) insists that the bifurcation of imagery by class permits the circumvention of allegations of discrimination, promoting visions of a "color blind society." The appropriation, commodification, and marketing of such cultural forms, styles, and even identities of racialized peoples have become very lucrative, promoting what can be termed "corporate multiculturalism" (Marable 1995). Particularly in the case of African American styles and cultural products, the use of images of black urban culture to appeal to a global youth market (Solomos & Back 1996) is not only profitable in itself, but it facilitates accumulation through promoting emulation of U.S. consumerism. Nor is expropriation merely a matter of marketing: The appropriation of cuisines, musical forms, religion, cultural material, and sexuality is key to the construction of race and nation in Latin America (Wade 2003) as well as in the United States. Conversely, as discussed below, these new technologies have tremendous potential to bring people with common interests into communication that can be used for counter-hegemonic struggles.

## Concealing Racisms

Although overt racism has diminished in many countries, racial inequality continues and has in some instances worsened. Perhaps the most significant new feature is the transformation of practices and ideologies of racism to a configuration that flourishes without official support of legal and civic institutions. Struggling to interpret these complex new forms of racism, scholars have bestowed such appelations as "laissez-faire racism" (Bobo 2004, p15); postracism (Winant 2001); racism in consequence rather than by formal institution (Bowser 1995b); "unmarked racisms" (Harrison 2000, p. 52); neoracism or cultural racism (Balibar 1991); and cultural fundamentalism (Stolcke 1995).

Observers agree that often coexisting with flagrant forms of racism and genocide, "unmarked racisms" have been the trend in the colonial metropoles and former white settler societies. For example, Cowlishaw (2000) describes the postracial view that emerged in the 1970s as part of the modern repositioning of the Australian state, where the trend has been to expunge or conceal references to aborigines as a race, mystifying historically constructed differences and thereby obscuring the reasons for contemporary inequality—and the need for restitution.[6] In South Africa, where the rationale for apartheid was a racialized cultural essentialism, the society remains deeply stratified by race. The rhetoric of multiculturalism and color-blindness (Sharp 2001, Erasmus 2005) is employed to suggest that the playing field is now level, facilitating the widespread opposition by whites to affirmative action, redistribution, and other forms of compensatory justice (Fletcher 2000).

In Europe, observers have described a "new racism" that does not rely on notions of biological inferiority but rather appropriates the concept of culture and the "right to be different" to undergird a neoracism that essentializes cultural differences as unbridgeable. There has been some difference of opinion about whether this is a new formulation of racism (e.g., Balibar 1991); a reversion to pre–eighteenth century scientific racism in which cultural differences were seen as unbridgeable (Fredrickson 2002); or as Stolcke (1995) contends, a cultural fundamentalism based in notions of citizenship and distinct from traditional racism, which is grounded in biology.

In the United States, along with egregious forms of brutal racism, the theme of "color-blindness" has emerged as "not simply a legal

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[6]Horne (2004, p. 180) quotes the following directive from a 1944 Australian government memorandum, written in the context of World War II and fear of Japanese "seduction" of the aborigines, "The name 'White Australia Policy' should be dropped with advantage and without any change in policy."

standard...[but as] a particular kind of social order" (Brown et al. 2003, p. 7). Claiming that the legislative victories of the 1960s civil rights movement have ended racism and that we live in a color-blind society where each individual is free to determine his or her destiny, proponents of color blindness have sought to undermine many of the measures won during the civil rights period designed to prohibit and correct the consequences of the 300-year history of discrimination, such as affirmative action in education and employment, minority voting districts, and federal enforcement of antidiscrimination laws. [Custred (1995) is one of the rare anthropologists to take this position publicly.] In this view, pervasive racial inequality is due to cultural and, in a pinch, biological limitations of African Americans and Latinos, rather than to the history of conquest, enslavement, and continuous discrimination. The essence of "color-blind racism" according to Bonilla-Silva (2003, p. 2) is that it "explains racial inequality as the outcome of nonracial dynamics." Ironically, these frameworks incorporate the oppositional language of the civil rights struggle, calling for individuals to be judged "not on the color of their skin but on the content of their character," a phrase made famous by Martin Luther King's August 28, 1963, "I have a Dream" speech at the historic March on Washington, DC.

Lee D. Baker's (2001) account of the plight of Hawaiian natives, the descendants of the original Polynesians who populated the islands before British contact and U.S. domination and annexation in 1898, is illustrative of this trend. In 1978, the U.S. state finally fulfilled its responsibility (explicitly promised with statehood in 1959) to set aside 20% of revenues from the 1.4 million acres of Hawaiian land to improve the conditions of Native Hawaiians, who are at the bottom of the economic ladder. For 22 years, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, elected by people of Hawaiian ancestry, used the money to provide job training, health care, education, and housing as well as to promote the culture of Native Hawaiians. In 2000, in the context of a campaign largely funded by conservative groups, prominent among them the Campaign for a Color-Blind America, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the election for the commissioners of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs was not valid because only Native Hawaiians were permitted to vote, and "it demeans the dignity and worth of a person to be judged by ancestry instead of by his or her merit" (cited in Baker 2001, p. 70).

Although there are important variations among these regional and national racisms, they all emphasize cultural and individual explanations for inequality. This is not unlike the Latin American model that has generally "privileged culture over race," in which extensive racial discrimination coexists with the absence of formal laws enforcing racism and an official ideology denying racism (de la Cadena 2001). In Brazil, for example, the color continuum (rather than the one-drop model) and the ideology of "racial democracy" have traditionally facilitated the explanation that lack of advancement is due to individual failings (Twine 1998), insufficient education, or cultural deficiences (de la Cadena 2001, Guimarães 2001). In Colombia, both the black and indigenous populations were disadvantaged in different ways through the official ideology of *mestizaje* (racial mixture), which holds that Colombia is a mixed nation, and the popular notion of *blanqueamiento* (whitening through race mixture), which devalues blackness (Wade 1997).

It is also true that the introduction of "culture talk" (Mamdani 2002) is not new. Racism has historically invoked both culture and biology. For example, in the Netherland Indies, race was never a matter of physiology alone. Competence in a range of Dutch cultural distinctions could establish a European equivalent status and secure the same protections of privilege (Stoler 1997). In the United States, the interlocking paradigms of biology and culture have been the main explanatory frameworks for racial inequality. Despite recent emphases on cultural tropes, that ideologies of racism continue to move in and out of biology and culture is evident in the

relatively recent publication of *The Bell Curve*, biologizing intelligence (see Marks 2005 for a critical review), as well as the reinvention of a culture of poverty in the underclass (Mullings 1997).

Similar to earlier forms of racism, these new formulations seek to make the social appear natural and ruthless inequality appear as common sense. At the same time, there are important distinctions. This new racial ideology is integrally related to the hegemonic project of neoliberalism, which is about unrestricted open markets, flexible labor, the diminished role of government (at least for redistributive functions) (Clarke 2004), productivity as the measure of an individual's worth and personal responsibility. It incorporates older notions but speaks the language of individual merit, freedom of choice, and cultural difference. Like neoliberalism, these contemporary explanatory frameworks facilitate the denial of racism and conceal the inner workings of the social system by attributing contemporary inequality to individual culture or meritocracy. They simultaneously erase the actual history of racism and the collective histories of struggle against racism by subordinated populations. Perhaps most invidiously—like neoliberalism, which has commandeered the concept of freedom—these doctines astutely appropriate the language and concepts derived from contemporary oppositional struggles, such as multiculturalism, equal opportunity, and the right to be different. They function not only to rationalize inequality but also to delegitimize antiracist activities.

## Reproducing Racism: The United States

In an era when racism is no longer sanctioned by law, how do scholars explain the continuing persistence of racial inequalities in wealth, employment, housing, health, and education? We turn to the United States, where racism no longer has the formal authorization of law, to examine these issues.

As a discipline, anthropology still remains largely on the periphery of studies of racism. Anthropologists, with notable exceptions, rarely use the term racism and, despite a range of scholarship relevant to this subject, tend to approach racism obliquely. However, I argue that anthropologically informed and ethnographically sensitive studies can potentially illuminate the ways in which contemporary institutions, policies, and structures reproduce racial inequality without overtly targeting its victims. There is a substantial body of studies that have enhanced our understanding of how race is maintained and reproduced without formal structures, providing fresh insights into the ways wealth and power emerge from racialized processes. These studies have expanded our understanding by (*a*) illuminating the global and transnational processes that impinge on the local communities and populations; (*b*) attending to how structures and practices of racial inequality are created and reproduced, irrespective of the intentions of the actors; (*c*) probing the articulation among institutions, policies, and communities; (*d*) interrogating whiteness; and (*e*) exploring the intersections among various dimensions of stratification.

For example, antidiscrimination laws now prohibit the worst forms of overt discrimination, but studies have demonstrated how labor shifts in the new global economy—the departure of industry from unionized industrial countries in search of low-wage labor as well as mass migration to the United States in search of jobs—have accelerated rising poverty and unemployment. Contemporary anthropological studies of the structural dynamics of poverty (Susser 1996) and its racialization (Abramovitz 1996, Goode & Maskovsky 2001, Morgen & Maskovsky 2003) analyze the transnational and national processes that reproduce racial inequality. Other anthropological studies have taken an ethnographic approach, documenting how these structural processes interact with employer attitudes (Newman 1999) or allegedly neutral seniority rules (Goode 1994) to further

restrict job opportunities for low-income African Americans or how the characteristics of low-wage jobs themselves make it difficult for Latino and African American young people to move beyond the low-wage labor market (Stack 2001). Still other studies have demonstrated how the decline of the public sector and privatization (Mullings & Wali 2001) or a hostile work environment (Baker 1995) limits economic security for professional African Americans.

Similarly, although residential segregation is no longer accomplished through formal mechanisms of legal exclusion, spatial segregation is almost as intense as it was in the past. Sanjek's (1998) detailed description of the exclusionary practices of landlords, realtors, political policies, and white residents in maintaining segregated housing markets in a New York neighborhood, as well as the resistance of African American residents provides a nuanced analysis of how residential segregation is reproduced and maintained (see also Gregory 1998). In the contemporary context, struggles over neighborhoods are no longer merely struggles over segregated communities but concern gentrification and enclosures; for example, affluent gated communities (Low 2003) find it no longer necessary to post "white only" signs to preserve virtually all-white enclaves.

Still other studies underscore how various institutions, practices, and representations reinforce each other in producing racial inequality. Because the "United States is the world's most avid incarcerator…" (Sudbury 2004, p. xiv) of racialized peoples, social scientists have begun to interrogate the ways in which policies and practices in media, education, and criminal justice reinforce the criminalization of people of color. Ferguson's (2000) ethnographic study of a high school demonstrates that, although in everyday operations the school is race blind, through institutional practices and cultural representation the school ultimately tracks young African American boys into prison. Media practices frequently rationalize the indiscriminate in-

carceration of black men (Page 1997b). The war on drugs, mass incarceration, urban community destruction, and gentrification all may be spatially linked in constructing contexts for cumulative disadvantage (Mullings 2004).

Although coercion looms large in the history of racialized people, racialization cannot be accomplished without the manufacture of consent among the majority of Euro-Americans. Whiteness studies have emerged in the past decade and a half to mixed reviews. There is a range of whiteness studies projects: Some make claims based on the symmetry of white racialization (see Berbrier 1998 for a discussion of this process in the formation of white student unions); others focus exclusively on the construction of white identity. In this context Page's insight that "whiteness is not a culture, but it is a learned and behaviorally enacted cultural assertion about the naturalness and rightness of European…hegemony" bears consideration (Page 1997a, p. 561). To their credit, however, some whiteness studies have effectively decentered the naturalness of whiteness by underscoring the relational and dialectical aspects of race and racism—reminding us that all dispossession is inextricably connected to accumulation and that structured disadvantage is the inevitable foundation for privilege. A range of studies in several disciplines explores diverse aspects of white advantage: whiteness as property (Harris 1993) or the cash value of whiteness—the advantages that accrue to whites as a result of discriminatory housing markets and employment opportunities, even without intergenerational transfers (Lipsitz 1998).

Anthropologists have contributed an important ethnographic perspective, giving attention to the everyday experiences and the mediating effects of history, class, gender, and location. Bush's (2004) ethnographic analysis of the experiences of white students takes on the hard question of the everyday and unreflective ways in which whites participate in maintaining privilege and access. Racialization is embedded in all levels of the society, and Hill explores the ways in which language

use can function for the "elevation of whiteness" (1999, p. 693) by rendering white public space "invisible and normative" (p. 684). The message of Hartigan's (1999) study of three Detroit communities is that whiteness is not homogenous and that class, gender, and locality truly matter. Although clearly establishing the instability, ambiguity, and specificity of how whiteness works, particularly with respect to class, Hartigan's emphasis on locality prevents him from fully recognizing that the local situation he describes is highly atypical. Detroit's local government is dominated by African Americans, unlike that of most U.S. municipalities. He consequently underplays the significance of the larger historical and national contexts of racism.

Most whiteness studies demonstrate how racism frequently obfuscates class interests and undermines class solidarity among U.S. workers. Furthermore, racism can dilute certain advantages of social class. Numerous ethnographic studies of the African American middle class point to the persistence of racial inequality in various arenas (e.g., Mullings & Wali 2001, Prince 2004). However, increasingly, class interests can undermine racial solidarity among racialized minority groups. Ironically, it is often gentrification and the contest for living space in congested neighborhoods in which these disparate interests emerge (Gregory 1998).

A significant body of ethnographic literature, of which we can only give a few examples here, demonstrates the many ways that gender shapes how race and class are experienced, such as poverty and homelessness (Susser 1996), health (Mwaria 2001), or participation in interracial social movements (Morgen 2002). A number of studies now also establish that although women are subject to discrimination themselves, they may also take part in supporting and reproducing racism. Extreme examples of this are found in white women's participation in racist movements (Ferber 2004). Race and class also condition the experience of sexuality (Maskovsky 2002).

Nationality, race, and class also intertwine in complex ways. In the United States, where immigrants and refugees find themselves inserted into a racially polarized context, class may mediate the ways in which immigrants are racialized. Although the "model minority" discourse seeks to use Asians as a "racial wedge" (Ong 1996, p. 66) or "a weapon deployed against" African Americans (Prashad 2000, p. 7), entire nationalities may be racialized according to the dominant class position of members of the group. Ong (1996) notes that for Asian immigrants, class attributes are racialized: Rich Chinese are "lightened," whereas poorer and darker Cambodians may be compared to African Americans. Immigrants and visitors are also assessed differently according to the status of their national homeland in the world system, which may to some extent mediate phenotype.

Although these studies provide a foundation for understanding how complex variables of inequality interact in particular instances, times, and places, the challenge remains to build on ethnographic work in order to move beyond understanding these forms of inequality merely as interlocking variables or identities, and to develop new theoretical understandings of how they actually intersect and articulate. For example, in the tradition of Hall's observation that "Race is...the modality through which class is 'lived'..." (2002, p. 62), Brodkin argues that in the United States race is lived through gender and that "race is a relationship to the means of production" (2000, p. 239).

## AGAINST RACISM

### The Future of Race

Over one hundred years ago, African American sociologist W.E.B. DuBois (1903), made prescient observation that "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line,—the relations of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea" (p. 8).

To what extent will race continue to be a central organizing principle in defining difference and rationalizing inequality in human societies?

Given the complexity and mutability of race and racism, it is not surprising that scholars disagree about its future. For example, although Winant (2001) predicts that race has become a permanent feature of human existence for the foreseeable future and that the most we can hope for is to reduce the degree of stratification and injustice that accompanies it, others emphasize racism's mutating, chameleonlike character (Fredrickson 2002, Gould 1996). Still others suggest that class will supercede race in social significance (Wilson 1978).

The contemporary global capitalist social order is characterized by competing and contradictory tendencies. As the redistributive functions of the nation state decline, and as millions of people cross borders to compete for limited jobs and resources in contexts of rising inequality and stratification, we have witnessed race making of various sorts intensify. Conversely, we are also confronted by corporate multiculturalism, "a global capitalism that draws no color line, because it seeks customers and collaborators from every race" (Fredrickson 2002, p. 148), although the real elite continue to be predominantly white and the disfranchised and socially stigmatized are predominantly racialized people.

The different logics of state capitalism, imperial interests, and transnational capital may work together or be at odds in race making. These conditions make it difficult to predict whether racialization will continue to be useful or even who will be racialized. If Harvey (2003) is correct that the coupling of nationalism and imperialism cannot be accomplished without resorting to racism, race making may mutate along lines of "civilizational conflicts" (Mamdani 2002). However, anthropologists have generally been fairly clear that the future of race is not predetermined: Ultimately the answer does not rest primarily on world structures but with the agency of people.

## Contemporary Antiracisms

Neoliberal racism, like neoliberalism, appears to be a hegemonic global project but is unstable and uneven. Within these spaces, contestatory projects emerge.[7]

The enduring duality of race lies in the complicated fact that race is always simultaneously imposed from above and experienced from below; the imposition of race inevitably creates the structural context for producing oppositional sites of resistance as well as creative spaces for the articulation of subaltern consciousness, culture, and opposition. Race thus potentially becomes a space for resistance and counter-narrative. Although some observers of antiracism question the perceived contradictions of racially based mobilizations, most contemporary interpretations provide concepts that illuminate racism's complex reality. The concept of structural racism, "which refers to the dynamics of economic and social institutions through which racialised groups become systematically marginalized or excluded..." (Stavenhagen 1999, p. 9) belies the easy distinction between "identity politics" or interest groups and movements directed toward transformative social change. Frequently, although not always, antiracist social movements combine class and race concerns. The notion of "racial project" (Omi & Winant 2002) captures the efforts of social groups to reorganize and redistribute resources along racial lines. This underscores the important point that racial projects may either reproduce or disrupt existing inequalities, opening up the space to define racial projects as resistance. Similarly, the distinction between "racial assignment" and "ethnoracial identification" allows for a more textured understanding of race (Brodkin 2001, p. 368).

Globalization also creates new possibilities for transnational antiracist organizing through building coalitions and alliances,

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[7]See Clarke (2004) for a discussion of the advantages of viewing neoliberalism as a hegemonic project.

networking, and implementing reform legislation. With the growth of an international labor force and the unwillingness and/or inability of states to address grievances through redistributive justice, there is an increasing awareness among antiracist movements that they must interface globally. The diversity of antiracist strategies and interventions derive, in part, from the local specificity of conditions but also from differing ideological perspectives among antiracist activists about the cause, nature, and future of racism, the level at which racism is shaped, and the most effective means of confronting it.

There is a wide array of coalitional activities, which address such issues as police harassment, racist violence, social services, voting rights, racist social movements, and immigration rights (e.g., Anthias & Lloyd 2002, Bowser 1995a). These projects have utilized a variety of antiracist strategies, policies, and practices, including individual antiracist interventions, public policy demands, and legislative reforms that may include specific compensatory measures, e.g., affirmative action, restitution (for example, of land rights), or reparations. Some have been controversial. Scholars have questioned the value of individual antiracist training and workshops in the absence of more structural interventions (Srivastava 1996). Similarly, demands for compensatory measures, such as reparations, are highly debated. Despite the successful campaigns for reparations on behalf of Jews and Japanese Americans, some experts raise doubts about African and African diasporic populations because, by contrast, they are thought to be unusually complex (Barkan 2000). Conversely, Corlett (2003) and Marable (2002) make a compelling case for U.S. reparations to Native Americans and African Americans. Recently, antiracist movements in Europe, drawing heavily on United Nations declarations and resolutions, have been involved in continental campaigns calling for the implementation of antidiscrimination policies. Although limited as remedies in themselves, such efforts have served as impor-

tant organizing tools (Lusane 2004; see also Banton 1996).

In the 1980s and 1990s, counterhegemonic social movements framed in the language of race and racism emerged, making claims on resources, forming unprecedented transnational alliances, and challenging racialization from above—a process we might call "racialization from below" (Mullings 2004, p. 4). The struggles against racism in the United States and South Africa have been important templates for other movements around the world and Afro-diasporic networks have significantly increased their scope, levels of activity, and transnational projects (e.g., Minority Rights Group 1995). The development of these organizations and movements has been particularly striking in areas such as Latin America, where ideologies glorifying race mixture and the lack of legal segregation have previously inhibited such movements, in contrast to the racial segregation of United States and South Africa, where there have been longstanding movements for racial equality.

On the other side of the world, Australian aborigines are also incorporating a language of race to affirm their oppositional identity (Cowlishaw 2000). Within the United States, there is a growing movement among some Puerto Rican and Dominican youth to reaffirm belonging to an African diaspora, a Latin "double consciousness" (Flores 2002, p. 48; see also Aparicio 2004). Popular culture plays a strategic though controversial role, creating and sustaining Afro-descendant identities and establishing belonging to a larger African diaspora. The adoption and indigenization of popular cultural forms, such as hip-hop (Codrington 2001, Olavarria 2002, Wade 2002), and the incorporation and exchange of various musical forms of the diaspora provide mediums for diasporic communication and sometimes for counter-hegemonic organization

Likewise, indigenous populations have become more successful in their attempts at hemispheric organizing since the pivotal 1991

meeting in Quito, Ecuador, attended by representatives of 120 indigenous organizations and nations (Delgado 2002). Clearly the role of new communications technology has been particularly important in the circulation of international production and mutual assistance. As a result of these activities and mobilizations, in the past two decades, many Central and Latin American nations, including Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, and Nicauragua, have passed legislation recognizing their multicultural populations and, in some instances, granting constitutional rights and land titles (Wade 1997, 2002).

The 2001 United Nations World Conference Against Racism was an important point at which these nascent movements began to converge (see Turner 2002). One of the guiding themes of the conference, "global apartheid" (see Booker & Minter 2001) was notable in providing an analysis that eschewed an essentialist concept of race, utilizing a language that called for the global redistribution of resources. The Durban conference moved toward a perspective linking subaltern populations not by race but by the transnational processes of racialization (Mullings 2004, p. 8).

As states increasingly incorporate the language of the opposition through formulations of multiculturalism (see Benavides 2004), to what extent will emphasis on culture and representation overshadow demands for resources? Hale (2002) suggests that state-endorsed discourses of multiculturalism support the politics of recognition, while sidetracking movements that simultaneously contest representation and distribution: "[M]ulticulturalism, I contend is the *mestizaje* discourse for the new millennium..." (p. 491). Anthropologists have been ambivalent about their complicated roles, and some have raised questions about the extent to which anthropological constructions have contributed to essentializing populations (Briggs 2001, Ramos 1998). Others suggest that subaltern populations have been able to use anthropological information to support their assertions of group

distinctiveness in their bids for land and resources and that anthropological critiques of essentialist notions of race can also undermine ethnic mobilizations (Wade 1995).

Underlying these concerns is the complex challenge of forging antiracist work to the broader project of creating a more equitable society across borders of race, class, gender, and national identity. It is noteworthy that, although the Brazilian antiracist movement accelerated during the late 1990s under the centrist government of former President Fernando Henrique Cardosa, more recently, with the ruling leftist Workers Party, Afro-Brazilians have achieved major gains in recognition of discrimination, antidiscriminatory legislation, and affirmative action (Gilliam 2003).

## Anthropology and Antiracism: An Agenda

What can we definitively say about racism? Racism is a relational concept. It is a set of practices, structures, beliefs, and representations that transforms certain forms of perceived differences, generally regarded as indelible and unchangeable, into inequality. It works through modes of dispossession, which have included subordination, stigmatization, exploitation, exclusion, various forms of physical violence, and sometimes genocide. Racism is maintained and perpetuated by both coercion and consent and is rationalized through paradigms of both biology and culture. It is, to varying degrees at specific temporal and spatial points, interwoven with other forms of inequality, particularly class, gender, sexuality, and nationality.

What must anthropologists address regarding racism and its consequences? First, we must begin to critically scrutinize our own discipline. Blakey (1994, p. 280) observes that "there is a tendency within the profession of anthropology for its practitioners to deny the pervasiveness of racism in its own history and to attribute racist thinking to aberrant individuals." Similarly Mukhopadhyay

& Moses (1997) suggest that anthropology needs to confront its history of helping to "erect the ideological edifice of racism and biological determinism." Anthropology is one of the least integrated disciplines (Gonzalez 2002, Shanklin 2000), with archeology (and no doubt physical anthropology) being 99.9% Euro American (Blakey 1997). In this regard, it is important for anthropologists to understand and act on the difference between diversity and affirmative action. Although both goals are laudable, diversity measures do not necessarily address the historical injustices of racism, although affirmative action does provide diversity.

It is also important to confront the manner in which race, class, and gender shape the production of knowledge. For example, Bolles (2001) asserts that even among some feminist anthropologists, the work of black feminists is undervalued because of its antiracist agenda. We must give attention to restructuring our textbooks and to interrogating our approaches to pedagogy. Shanklin's (1998) analysis of cultural anthropology textbooks found that only 4 out of 11 textbooks dealt with racism and that students in introductory courses may be taught about race but are generally not taught about racism.

All this will necessitate a radical reappropriation of the concept of culture. The limitations of the Boasian approach to culture, with its many confluences, its ahistoricity, and its lack of groundedness in processes of economy and power have allowed it to become essentialized, doing the work of race (Brodkin 2001, Visweswaran 1998). We see this in the culture of poverty or underclass concepts in the United States, in culture as irreconcilable difference embodied in the new racisms of Europe, in color blindness in the United States, as well as in the essentialism of liberal varieties of multiculturalism. An appropriate concept of culture must confront political economy and incorporate relations of power.

At its best, anthropology is uniquely positioned to make a decisive contribution to the critical interrogation of contemporary racism.

With its emphasis on underlying social relations and the informal workings of structures, networks, and interactions that produce and reproduce inequality, anthropology has a set of theoretical perspectives and a methodological tool kit that lends itself to interrogation of new forms of structural racism and to unmasking the hidden transcripts of the process through which difference is transformed into inequality. This enterprise demands long-term ethnographic and historical research into the complicated representations, institutions, and practices through which racism is continuously reproduced, including employment practices, education, housing, environmental racism, and everyday practices, as well as the study of coercion in the form of police brutality and the prison-industrial complex and of consent and privilege in the form of whiteness. It must be grounded in a critical interpretation of race not as a quality of people of color, but as an unequal relationship involving both accumulation and dispossession.

Anthropologists must resist using the passive exonerative voice and name racism and the forces that reproduce it. This requires moving beyond noting that race is socially constructed to confront forthrightly the extent to which structural racism is pervasively embedded in our social system. Anthropological research has the potential to uncover the systemic and dynamic nature of racism and to identify the subterranean mechanisms through which racial hegemony is both perpetuated and deconstructed.

Finally, anthropologists must address the issue of public engagement and praxis. No matter how well we research racism, it will remain largely irrelevant unless we are able to get our analyses out of the academy and into public discourse. Anthropological analyses of antiracism have already effectively shaped contexts for activist initiatives such as desegregation and other social movements. As Baker (1998) observes, as these movements contested racial constructions, they also reshaped the boundaries of anthropology within

the academy and presented a different reality to academics, permitting them to reimagine their concepts of race. We need to boldly build on this intellectual tradition and expand it.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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