



Introduction: Situating Race and Ethnic Studies

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In putting together this *Handbook of Race and Ethnic Studies* we have seen our editorial role as twofold. First, we aimed to bring together authors who could write chapters that map out the field of race and ethnicity as an evolving, dynamic and relevant field of scholarly debate and research. In doing we have made choices both about the chapters to include in the handbook, as well as the selection of specific authors to write those chapters and our editorial feedback and suggestions to them. We have always been conscious, however, of the need to allow for different voices and perspectives in the pages of this handbook, and this is no doubt reflected in the varied styles and analytical approaches of the different chapters. This diversity reflects a point reiterated by a number of authors in this volume that the very language and terminology used by researchers and scholars in this field remains a point of debate and contestation, much as it did during the 1980s and 1990s (see in particular Bhatt in Chapter 5 and Virdee in Chapter 6).

Second, we sought to provide an overview of the key debates in this field of scholarly study, the core changes that we have seen over the past few decades and at least a partial account of how the field is likely to develop and expand over the coming period. This is what we shall do in the course of this introductory chapter, in the short introductions to each part of the handbook and finally in the concluding chapter. This is not to say that there is simply one argument that runs through the volume. On the contrary, the substantive chapters that make up the handbook are written from a range of different theoretical paradigms and

historical and empirical examples. It is this very diversity of perspectives that we have sought to give voice to in the context of this volume.

DEFINITIONAL AND CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

During the past three decades we have seen a proliferation of monographs, textbooks, journals and internet sourced materials that explore in one way or another a range of theories about race and ethnic relations, racism, and processes of racialisation and domination (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Essed and Goldberg, 2002; Miles, 1993). This expansion of race and ethnic studies as a field of research has taken place both in sociology and related social science disciplines as well as in the humanities. Indeed one of the most notable features of contemporary research has been the central role played by questions about culture and forms of cultural identity. This has resulted in a wide body of scholarship and research on the ways in which our social understandings of ethnicity and race need to be developed in such a way as to allow for an analysis of cultural forms and processes. We shall discuss key facets of this literature in the course of our introductory and concluding chapters. Before turning to these developments, however, we want to address some of the definitional issues that have resulted from these contemporary debates.

In addressing these points we shall focus on two key issues. First, we shall draw on some recent conceptual debates in order to clarify the meanings that have been attached to key concepts and notions. In doing so we shall focus specifically on some facets of debates that have emerged particularly in sociology over the past decade or so. Second, we shall attempt to delineate the political context within which the conceptual debates have taken place. This is an important issue to include in any analysis of theories of racism, since it is evident that questions about race and racism are inevitably part of political discourses as well as being embedded in academic and scholarly research (Lasch-Quinn, 2001; Singh, 2004).

Seeking to understand these phenomena means being clear about what is meant by concepts such as race, racism, race and ethnic relations and related social concepts. We need to be able to respond both theoretically and empirically to questions such as: How has the category of race come to play such an important role in the analysis of contemporary social relations? What is meant by the notion of race relations? What is racism? These are questions that are at the heart of contemporary debates about race and ethnic relations and yet there is surprisingly little agreement about what concepts such as race and racism actually mean, or indeed how they can be researched. This is even more evident in the debates about how to research questions about race from an empirical angle (see for example the discussion by Denton and Deane in Chapter 4).

Many of the questions raised amount to the following: Is race a suitable social category? What do we mean when we talk of racism as shaping the structure of

particular societies? What roles have race and racism played in different historical contexts? Is it possible to speak of racism in the singular or racisms in the plural? These questions are at the heart of many contemporary theoretical and conceptual debates, and yet what is interesting about much of the literature about race and racism is the absence of commonly agreed conceptual tools or even agreement about the general parameters of race and racism as fields of study (Miles and Brown, 2003). Debates about these issues have raged over the past two decades and more and are reflected again in the pages of this handbook as well as in the wider social scientific literature (Essed and Goldberg, 2002; Gates Jr, 1986; Goldberg and Solomos, 2002; Miles, 1993).

In the context of the various contributions to this handbook it is interesting to note that there are a range of definitional starting points in the usage of terms such as race and racism, reflecting both levels of agreement as well as the contested nature of these concepts. At one level, for example, in relation to the concept of racism there is some agreement that racism is an ideology of racial domination based on beliefs that a designated racial group is either biologically or culturally inferior and the use of such beliefs to rationalise or prescribe the racial group's treatment in society, as well as to explain its social position and accomplishment. This reflects the ways in which the historical as well as contemporary analysis of racism is linked to the sociological analysis of forms of discrimination, exclusion, domination and relations of power (Fredrickson, 2002; Mosse, 1985). This is a line of analysis that is explored on the basis of different historical as well as contemporary examples in a number of chapters in this volume.

From this perspective racism as a concept is much more closely tied to the concept of race, and is a reminder that where members of society make distinctions between different racial groups, at least some members of that society are likely to behave in ways which give rise to racism as a behavioral and ideational consequence of making racial distinctions in the first place. Unfortunately the opposite does not hold. A society which denied or did not formally acknowledge the existence of different racial groups would not necessarily rid itself of racism. Indeed the recent literature on racial and ethnic classification in censuses, surveys and administrative records shows that the identification of members of a society in terms of the racial, ethnic or national origin may be a prerequisite to taking action to counteract racism (Goldberg, 2002; Nobles, 2000).

When it comes to the issue of the usage of categories such as race and ethnicity, however, it is also evident that there are noticeable divergences in the ways in which such categories are utilised. Although race and ethnicity are terms often used in conjunction, or in parallel, to refer to social groups which differ in terms of physical attributes accorded social significance in the case of race or in terms of language, culture, place of origin or common membership of a descent group without distinguishing physical characteristics in the case of ethnicity, there is no equivalent term to racism in relation to ethnicity (Brubaker, 2005; Cornell and Hartmann, 2007). As the account of Ralph Premdas in Chapter 12 argues,

perhaps ethnic conflict is analogous, but this is more of a descriptive term used to describe certain consequences of the existence of different ethnic groups and the development of forms of conflict or tension between them.

The recent explosion of scholarship and research has not only highlighted a certain lack of consensus but has also led to intense debate about the very language that we use in talking about race and racism. Over the past two decades or so the shifting boundaries of race and ethnicity as categories of social analysis have become ever more evident (Alexander and Knowles, 2005; Knowles, 2003). In particular, a plethora of studies have provided new perspectives on difference, identities, subjectivities and power relations (Alcoff and Mendieta, 2003; Cornell and Hartmann, 2007). In this environment ideas about race, racism and ethnicity have become the subject of intense debate and controversy. The role of racial and ethnic categorisation in the construction of social and political identities has been highlighted in a number of recent conflicts in various parts of the globe (Brubaker, 2004; Calhoun, 2007). Yet it is paradoxically the case that there is still much confusion about what it is that we mean by such notions, as evidenced by the range of terminological debates that have tended to dominate much discussion in recent years. A number of questions remain to be analysed: What factors explain the mobilising power of ideas about race and ethnicity in the contemporary environment? What counter values and ideas can be developed to undermine the appeal of racist ideas and movements? Is it possible for communities that are socially defined by differences of race, ethnicity, religion or other signifiers to live together in societies which are able to ensure equality, justice and civilised tolerance? All of these are questions that are addressed in one way or another in the course of this volume, although it is also evident that there is a need for more substantive scholarship in order to address them more fully.

HISTORY OF RACE AND ETHNIC STUDIES

An important facet of the literature on race and ethnic studies in recent years has been the attention given to the historical background and evolution of this field of scholarship. This interest in the history of this field is evident in the growing body of writing that retraces both the emergence of this scholarship in the disciplines of sociology and anthropology as well as in the specific experiences of countries such as the US, South Africa, Britain and other societies (Bulmer and Solomos, 2004; Holloway and Keppel, 2007; Stanfield, 1993).

This renewed interest in the history of the field is also evident in the growing body of research that is focused on the social and political impact of ideas about race in the context of the experiences of modernity and post-modernity, slavery and post-slavery, colonialism and racial and ethnic conflict. But if modern racism has its foundations in the period since the late eighteenth century there is little doubt that it had a major impact on the course of historical development during the twentieth century and seems destined to continue to do so in this century.

It seems clear as we stand at the beginning of the twenty-first century that racist ideas and movements are continuing to have an impact on a range of contemporary societies in a variety of ways. What is more we have seen the growth and genocidal impact of new forms of racial and ethnically based ideologies in many parts of the globe, including most notably in the 1990s and 2000s in both West and East Europe and parts of Africa. It is almost impossible to read a newspaper or watch television news coverage without seeing the contemporary expressions of racist ideas and practices, whether in terms of the rise of neo-fascist movements in some societies or the implementation of policies of genocide and what is euphemistically called 'ethnic cleansing'.

Such trends need to be situated both within the changing socio-economic environment of contemporary societies and within processes of cultural and social change. By this we mean that it is important not to lose sight of the complex social, political and cultural determinants that shape contemporary racist discourses and movements and other forms of racialised discourse and mobilisation. Indeed accounts of the growth of new forms of cultural racism suggest that, within the language of contemporary racist movements, there is both a certain flexibility about what is meant by race as well as an attempt to reconstitute themselves as movements whose concern is with defending their nation rather than attacking others as such. It is perhaps not surprising in this context that within the contemporary languages of race one finds a combination of arguments in favour of cultural difference along with negative images of groups such as migrants and racial minorities as a threat and as representing an impure culture.

RACE AND ETHNIC IDENTITIES

Given the ways in which social theories have become increasingly focused on the changing forms of social and cultural identity in contemporary societies (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000; Calhoun, 1994) it is perhaps not surprising that the subject of identity has been central to much of the recent scholarship on race and ethnic studies. The question of identity is certainly one which has been at the heart of much of the literature in this field in the past three decades, both in terms of specific studies of racial and ethnic identity and conceptual debates about the role of identity in the construction of racial and ethnic boundaries.

The preoccupation with identity can be taken as one outcome of concerns about where minorities in societies such as Britain, the United States and similarly advanced industrial societies. Yet concerns about identity permeate relations among ethnic groups within and across all sorts of societies as well. At a basic level identity is about belonging, about what we have in common with some people and what differentiates us from others. Identity gives one a sense of personal location, and provides a stable core of one's individuality; but it is also about one's social relationships, one's complex involvement with others, and in the modern world these issues have become even more complex and confusing.

As recent research has highlighted each of us lives with a variety of potentially contradictory identities: as men or women, black or white, straight or gay, able-bodied or disabled. The list is potentially infinite, and so therefore are our possible belongings. Which of them we focus on, bring to the fore, and identify with, depends on a host of factors. At the centre, however, are the values we share or wish to share with others.

In this context, it is interesting to note that much of the literature in the field of race and ethnic studies has emphasized that identity is not simply imposed but is also chosen and actively used, albeit within particular social contexts and constraints. Against dominant representations of others there is resistance. Within structures of dominance, there is agency. Analysing resistance and agency re-politicises relations between collectivities and draws attention to the central constituting factor of power in social relations (Kibria, 1997; Song, 2003).

Yet it is possible to overemphasize resistance; to validate others through validating the lives of the colonised and exploited. Valorising resistance may also have the unintended effect of belittling the enormous costs exacted in situations of unequal power, exclusion and discrimination. While political legitimacy, gaining access or a hearing, may depend on being able to call up a constituency and authorise representations through appeals to authenticity, it provides the basis for policing the boundaries of authenticity wherein some insiders may find themselves excluded because they are not authentic enough. For example, stressing race and ethnic differences can obscure the experiences and interests that women may share as women. We therefore need to ask: Who is constructing the categories and defining the boundaries? Who is resisting these constructions and definitions? What are the consequences being written into or out of particular categories? What happens when subordinate groups seek to mobilise along boundaries drawn for the purposes of domination? What happens to individuals whose multiple identities may be fragmented and segmented by category politics?

One of the problems with much of the contemporary discussion of identity politics is that the dilemmas and questions outlined above are not adequately addressed. This is largely because much discussion assumes that one's identity necessarily defines one's politics and that there can be no politics until the subject has excavated or laid claim to their identity. Inherent in such positions is the failure to understand the way in which identity grows out of, and is transformed by, action and struggle.

RACE, CULTURE AND ESSENTIALISM

The growth of identity politics can be seen to be challenging cultural homogeneity and providing spaces for marginal groups to assert the legacy and importance of their respective voices and experiences. From this perspective the growth in forms of identity-based politics has allowed many formerly silenced and

displaced groups to emerge from the margins of power and dominant culture to reassert and reclaim suppressed identities and experiences. This is certainly a feature of the politics of race and ethnicity in a wide range of societies today.

Stuart Hall's critique of what he defines in the British context as 'black essentialism' provides an important point of reference for the significance of identity politics to issues of race, culture and politics. Hall argues that essentialist forms of political and cultural discourse naturalise and dehistoricise difference, and therefore mistake what is historical and cultural for what is natural, biological and genetic. The moment, he argues, we tear the signifier black from its historical, cultural and political embedding and lodge it in a biologically constituted, essentialist racial category, we valorise, by inversion, the very ground of the racism we are trying to deconstruct (Hall, 1991, 1998). We fix the signifier outside history, outside of change, outside of political intervention. This is exemplified by the tendency to see the term 'black' as sufficient in itself to guarantee the progressive character of the politics articulated under that banner, when it is evident that we need to analyse precisely the content of these political strategies and how they construct specific racial meanings through politics. We have, Hall argues, arrived at an encounter, the end of innocence, or the end of the innocent notion of the essential black subject.

What is at issue here is the recognition of the extraordinary diversity of subject positions, social experiences and cultural identities that compose the category black and similar essentialist categories. This appreciation in turn reveals that black is essentially a politically and culturally constructed category, which cannot be grounded in a set of fixed transcultural or transcendental racial categories and which therefore has no guarantees. What this brings into play is the recognition of the immense diversity and differentiation of the historical and cultural experiences of what are seen as racial and/or ethnic communities across diverse societies.

While writers such as Hall have been attempting to question essentialist notions of black identity it is interesting to note that new political discourses situated to the right, have become increasingly preoccupied with defending the importance of ever more fixed notions of culture and nation. They have sought to reconstruct primordial notions of ethnic exclusivity which celebrate national identity and patriotism in the face of criticism from multiculturalists and anti-racists. Central to such discourses is the attempt to fuse culture within a tidy formation that equates nation, citizenship and patriotism with a racially exclusive notion of difference (Ansell, 1997; Smith, 1994). It is also crucial to recognise that conservatives have given enormous prominence to waging a cultural struggle over the control and use of the popular media and other spheres of representation in order to articulate contemporary racial meanings and identities in new ways, to link race with more comprehensive political and cultural agendas, to interpret social structural phenomena (such as inequality or social policy) with regard to race. It has to be said that for the 'new right' the appeal is by and large no longer to racial supremacy but to cultural uniformity parading under the politics of nationalism

and patriotism. The emphasis on heritage, the valorisation of an elitist view of self and social development, and the call to define civilisation as synonymous with selected aspects of Western tradition are being matched by a fervent attempt to reduce pedagogy to the old transmission model of teaching and learning now recoded around consecrated relics, shrines and tradition. In this case, difference is removed from the language of biologism and firmly established as a cultural construct only to be reworked within a language that concretises race and nation against the elimination of structural and cultural inequality.

GLOBALISATION AND DIFFERENCE

The preoccupation in much of the literature in this field with issues of identity and the assertion of the relevance and importance of understanding the role of new ethnicities has not resolved the fundamental question of how to balance the quest for ever more specific identities with the need to allow for broader and less fixed cultural identities. Indeed, if anything, this quest for a politics of identity has helped to highlight one of the key dilemmas of liberal political thought.

Yet what is quite clear is that the quest for more specific, as opposed to universal, identities is becoming more pronounced in the present political environment. The search for national, ethnic and racial identities has become a pronounced, if not dominant, feature of political debate within both majority and minority communities across diverse societies of the early 21st century. One of the dilemmas we face in the present environment is that there is a clear possibility that new patterns of segregation could establish themselves and limit everyday interaction between racially defined groups.

The growing evidence of a crisis of race and of racialised class inequalities in the United States is a poignant reminder that the Civil Rights Movement and other movements since then have had, at best, a partial impact on established patterns of racial inequality and have not stopped the development of new patterns of exclusion and segregation. But it is also clear that there is evidence that within contemporary European societies there is the danger of institutionalising new forms of exclusion as a result of increased racial violence and racist mobilisations by the extreme right.

Given broad expressions of racial/ethnic conflict across quite diverse national political environments, who would argue with any real faith that we can ignore the significance of race and ethnicity to society overall? Can we be sure that the resurgence of racist nationalism does not pose a very real danger for the possibility of tolerant, equitable coexistence between groups defined as belonging to different racial, ethnic and national identities? One of the great ironies of the present situation is that transnational economic, social and political relations have helped to create a multiplicity of migrant networks and communities that transcend received national boundaries. Categories such as migrants and

refugees are no longer an adequate way to describe the realities of movement and settlement in many parts of the globe. In many ways the idea of diaspora as an unending sojourn across different lands better captures the reality of transnational networks and communities than the language of immigration and assimilation. Multiple, circular and return migrations, rather than a single great journey from one sedentary space to another, have helped to transform transnational spaces by creating new forms of cultural and political identity.

SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF RACE AND ETHNICITY

The question of what impact racism has on social relations has preoccupied many sociologists of race working within a variety of theoretical paradigms. The focus of much of the empirical research on contemporary racial relations has been on the analysis of specific aspects of inequality in areas such as housing or employment, or on the development and impact of anti-discrimination measures. Certainly the bulk of research in Britain, the United States and other advanced industrial societies has been on the changing face of racialised inequalities.

In Britain, for example, by now a panoply of studies have examined virtually all aspects of racial inequality from both a national and a local perspective. These have been supplemented by other studies which explore the complex ways in which various migrant communities experience inequality and disadvantage in their daily lives (Mason, 2000; Solomos, 2003). The United States has a similar tradition of studying racial discrimination (Brown et al., 2003).

However, what is interesting about this body of work is that there are a number of questions which need to be addressed in a fuller manner. For example: how does one account for the emergence and persistence of racialised inequalities in employment, housing, social welfare and education, as well as evident inequalities in other areas? What processes help to explain the structuring of inequalities along racial lines? What can liberal democratic societies do to ensure that racialised inequalities do not lead to the social and economic exclusion of minorities? These are some of the questions which have been raised in one way or another by researchers and politicians for at least the past three decades, and yet we do not seem to have moved much closer towards resolving them. Rather we have seen deeply politicised public debates about both the origins and remedies for racial inequality.

The highly politicised nature of debates around racial inequality is partly the result of the fact that the interrelationship between racism and social inequalities has been and remains a deeply controversial question. It has given rise to quite divergent theoretical and political perspectives over the years. Part of the problem is that there is, in practice, very little agreement about how to conceptualise the interrelationship between racism and specific sets of racialised social relations. While some writers have used the notion of racism in a very broad social

and political sense to cover both sets of ideas and institutional practices, this is by no means a position which is universally accepted. Indeed, some writers have questioned the way in which the general category of racism or the more specific notion of institutionalised racism has been used to describe forms of social relations and types of inequalities. Yet others have argued that the concept of racism should be delimited in such a way as to define it essentially as an ideological phenomenon. Over the past decade the lack of a commonly accepted notion about what racism is has become even more apparent, particularly in the aftermath of the controversies about the development of Marxist and postmodernist perspectives to the study of race and racism.

This kind of debate and disagreement signals some of the real difficulties that exist with the ways in which the linkages between racist theories and practices have been conceptualised. There is a very real sense, for example, that terms such as institutional racism have become catch-all phrases which are used to describe quite diverse and complex patterns of exclusion. At the same time, such notions tend to be underpinned by instrumentalist notions of the relationship between racist ideas and specific types of inequality in a very undifferentiated sense. But such problems do not in themselves mean that we should not explore and understand the role of racism in structuring social relations. Rather they point to the need to develop a more open and critical framework for analysing such processes.

Despite this, divergent perspectives about the interrelationship between racism and processes of racial discrimination persist. For example, an influential approach to this issue is the argument that racism can best be perceived as particular sets of ideological values, which propound either biological or cultural explanations of racial difference. From this perspective racial discrimination is a practice which may or may not be the outcome of racist ideologies. Michael Banton articulates this argument clearly when he argues against the tendency to see racism and racial discrimination as interchangeable notions (Banton, 1992). For Banton and other researchers there is a clear danger that the notion of racism can become a catch-all term that encompasses quite disparate forms of social, political and economic practices. Similar arguments have been made by Robert Miles, who warns of the dangers of 'conceptual inflation' in relation to the usages of the category of racism in the social sciences (Miles and Brown, 2003).

Yet it is also clear that in much contemporary political discourse and research, the concepts of racism and racial discrimination have become merged, so that they have little apparent difference. The concept of racism is used in practice to mean almost the same thing as racial discrimination. This is perhaps not surprising, in the sense that from a historical perspective the linkages between racist ideologies and social and economic relations have been an important feature of many societies over the past two centuries. But what is also clear is that the relationship between racist ideas and specific practices and institutional forms is by no means simple. From a historical perspective it is quite clear that racism as an exclusionary practice can take various forms. The very complexity of the

relationship between racism and forms of social exclusion makes it important that a distinction be maintained between racism and racial discrimination.

SITUATING THE PRESENT

One of the themes we have tried to explore in the course of this introduction is the development of new patterns of racial reasoning around key aspects of social relations in contemporary societies. This is not to say that what is at work is simply a process of linear evolution towards what is sometimes called 'new racism' or 'cultural racism'. For what is clear is that the framing of racialised discourses as 'new' does not necessarily help us to understand the complex variety of arguments and ideas that are to be found within contemporary racist discourses. Nor for that matter does it tell us much about what is new and what is old in the racial politics that confronts us in the present environment.

While it is important to be clear about the differences between contemporary and traditional forms of racism, it does seem that some of the arguments about this issue do not really add much analytical clarity to this complex issue. Henry Giroux, for example, argues for the emergence of a 'new racism' in the following terms: 'We are now witnessing in the United States (and Europe) the emergence of a new racism and politics of cultural difference both in the recognition of the relations between Otherness and difference, on the one hand, and meaning and the politics of representation on the other' (Giroux, 1993: 8). From rather different perspectives other recent writings have talked of the emergence of 'meta-racism', new racism or more descriptively new cultural forms of racial discourse. While there is, as we have argued in the course of this book, something valuable and important about these arguments, it seems important to emphasize that what some writers have called new racism is not a uniform social entity as such. There is strong evidence that racial discourses are increasingly using a new cultural and social language to justify their arguments, but the search for a uniform definition of new racism has proved intractable, and has again emphasized the slippery nature of contemporary racisms. A key problem is that in a very real sense what some writers today call *new racism* has in some sense always been with us. While it is true that in the 19th and early-20th centuries there was an emphasis in much racial thinking on the 'biological' superiority of some races over others, it is also the case that racial thinking has also always been about idealised and transcendent images of culture, landscape and national identity.

An important feature of racism over the years has been the various ways it has managed to combine different, and often contradictory, elements within specific social and political contexts. In this sense we would agree with Mosse that racism is not a coherent set of propositions that has remained the same since the 18th century, but can best be conceived as a scavenger ideology, which gains its power from its ability to pick out and utilise ideas and values from other sets of ideas and beliefs in specific socio-historical contexts (Mosse, 1985). There is, in

other words, no essential notion of race that has remained unchanged by wider political, philosophical, economic and social transformations.

The characterisation of racism as a 'scavenger ideology' does not mean, however, that there are no continuities in racial thought across time and spatial boundaries. Indeed, it seems obvious that when one looks at the various elements of racial discourses in contemporary societies there are strong continuities in the articulation of images of the 'other', as well as in the 'we-images' which are evident in the ways in which racist movements define the boundaries of 'race' and 'nation'. The evident use of images of the past and evocations of popular memory in the language of contemporary racist and nationalist movements points to the need to understand the complex ways in which these movements are embedded in specific images of landscape and territory.

CITIZENSHIP, MULTICULTURALISM AND ANTI-RACISM

As we look towards the next century one of the main questions that we face is the issue of 'citizenship rights' in societies that are becoming increasingly multicultural. Within both popular and academic discourse there is growing evidence of concern about how questions of citizenship need to be reconceptualised in the context of multicultural societies. Indeed, in contemporary European societies this can be seen as in some sense the main question which governments of various kinds are trying to come to terms with. Some important elements of this debate are the issue of the political rights of minorities, including the question of representation in both local and national politics, and the position of minority religious and cultural rights in societies which are becoming more diverse. Underlying all of these concerns is the much more thorny issue of what, if anything, can be done to protect the rights of minorities and develop extensive notions of citizenship and democracy that include those minorities that are excluded on racial and ethnic criteria (Castles, 2007; Castles and Miller, 2009).

There are clearly quite divergent perspectives in the present political environment about how best to deal with these concerns. There is, for example, a wealth of discussion about what kinds of measures are necessary to tackle the inequalities and exclusions which confront minority groups. At the same time there is clear evidence that existing initiatives are severely limited in their impact. A number of commentators have pointed to the limitations of legislation and public policy interventions in bringing about a major improvement in the socio-political position of minorities.

This raises several questions. First, what kind of policies could tackle discrimination and inequality more effectively? Second, what links could be made between policies on immigration and policies on social and economic issues? What kind of positive social policy agenda can be developed to deal with the position of both established communities and new migrants? All of these

questions are at the heart of contemporary debates and have given rise to quite divergent policy prescriptions. It is quite clear that in the present political environment it is unlikely that any sort of agreement about how to develop new policy regimes in this field will be easy to achieve. On the contrary, it seems likely that this will remain an area full of controversy and conflict for some time to come.

But it is also the case that some key issues are coming to the fore in public debate. A case in point is the whole question of citizenship in relation to race and ethnicity. This is partly because there is a growing awareness of the gap between formal citizenship and the *de facto* restriction of the economic and social rights of minorities as a result of discrimination, economic restructuring and the decline of the welfare state.

MAPPING THE HANDBOOK

Before concluding this chapter we want to provide a brief overview of the thematic structure of the four component parts of the handbook. More detailed overviews can be found at the beginning of each part, but here we want to map out core themes in order to guide readers about the preoccupations and aims of each part.

We have organised the handbook in four interlinked parts, each focused around a specific analytical frame or set of orienting concerns. For each part we asked the authors to provide an overview of their specific fields of research by using their own scholarship to outline key questions in their area. In this context, the chapters in each part are linked together by a common concern to situate the particular topic within a broader analytical frame. At the same time, each chapter can be read independently from other chapters in the volume. The broad array of approaches taken by the authors of the four parts of the handbook reflect this loose coupling of chapters.

Part I draws together four interlinked chapters that address the overarching question of outlining the history, development and contemporary preoccupations of race and ethnic studies as a field of scholarly research. The main concern of the chapters in this part is to outline and evaluate the origins and development of the field of race and ethnic studies and the articulation of the core theoretical and empirical approaches that have shaped research agendas. In this sense they help to situate more fully the arguments that follow in the other three parts of the handbook.

In Part II of the handbook the analytical focus shifts to the analysis of the intersections between race and ethnicity and other forms of social hierarchy. The four component chapters of this part are framed by a common concern to explore the ways in which race and ethnicity are shaped, and in turn shape, the experiences of class, gender, nation, sexuality and transnationalism. This is evidenced in the nuanced accounts to be found of the range of historical and contemporary social processes that have shaped these intersectionalities.

Part III of the handbook brings together four chapters that are focused on the organisation and construction of race and ethnicity in specific social and political environments. This is a facet of the contemporary literature that has expanded greatly in recent years and we have only been able to cover some sites of these processes in the context of this volume. Taken together they help to highlight the important role of key social and political institutions in structuring the experiences of race and ethnicity in contemporary societies.

Part IV is the final section of the handbook and the six chapters combine an overview of some key arenas of current debate with a forward look at issues that are likely to come to the fore in the coming period. In particular we have selected chapters for this part that cover aspects of race and ethnic studies that are likely to grow further in importance over the coming period. In this sense this is a part of the handbook that is very much focused on the future as well as the past.

We conclude the handbook with an essay that provides an overview of some of the key themes raised within the eighteen substantive chapters. Because a recurrent concern in the various chapters is the critical analysis of the changing terms of analysis in various sub-fields of race and ethnic studies as well as the emergence of new analytical perspectives and the articulation between academic and policy debates, we focus on these themes in this chapter. The concluding chapter also identifies some especially promising trends and developments that seem likely to shape the study of racial and ethnic relations in the coming decades. This forward looking focus enables us to discuss emerging research questions and potential policy responses to the challenges that face a wide range of societies at the beginning of the 21st century.

CONCLUSION

We offer this handbook as an overview of this field of scholarly research on race and ethnic studies. It gives voice to the various perspectives that have shaped this field of research over the past few decades and it also highlights areas of innovation and change.

Perhaps the main point that we want to emphasize in conclusion is that there remains much to do if we are to develop an analytical framework that allows us to think through the various types of racial and ethnic processes, patterns of racialisation and related processes that are shaping the social and political environment of many societies across the globe.

Part of the dilemma we face at the present time is that there is a need for more detailed and historically grounded empirical research that focuses on the relationship between ideas about race, ethnicity and culture in specific social and cultural environments. This is partly because the preoccupation with developing ever more sophisticated theoretical narratives has led to a neglect of empirically focused research, whether at the local, national or transnational level. Yet, arguably, it is only through such research that we can begin to imagine what kinds of

policies and political interventions may be able to challenge racism and the institutional processes of exclusion on which it is based.

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