

RACISM, A THREAT TO GLOBAL PEACE

Ineke van der Valk

Abstract

Nowadays war is more and more framed in terms of ethnic conflict. This makes the knowledge and understanding of racism a key issue, also for peace studies and the peace movement. This article discusses historical and theoretical dimensions of racism. Racism is defined as a complex, multifaceted, contradictory and historically specific system of domination and/or exclusion that produces social inequality between the majority population and (ethnic) minorities. This system is (re)produced by the social practices of dominant groups, including their discourse, and by shared social representations. The essay equally discusses prejudice as the attitude underlying racism and the social psychological process of stigmatization. Major domains of expression and the articulation of racism with other mechanisms of domination and exclusion such as sexism are examined too. The author argues that where racist discourses penetrate the remote corners of the world, anti-racism and the understanding of this phenomenon can not stay behind.

It is a feature of contemporary societies in this global world that societal imbalances and war are more and more framed in terms of ethnic and/or religious controversies and conflict, although root causes are often more complex. In worldwide postwar history some examples point to Rwanda and Burundi in Africa, Indonesia and Cambodia in Asia, and to former Yugoslavia in Europe. This points to the social and academic relevance, in particular for peace studies and the peace movement, of examining the social and political phenomenon of racism and the idea of "race".

"Race"

The concepts of race and racism are of relatively recent origin. Although ideas about human differences on the basis of color and phenotypic characteristics already occurred in earlier societies (Hannaford, 1996; Snowden, 1995; Lewis, 1995; Wood, 1995; Wilson, 1996: 37-41), the present meaning of the concept of "race" only became current toward the end of the eighteenth century subsequent to the French and American revolutions. [For the history of the concept "race", see Hannaford, 1996; Lieberman,

1977: 31.] The notion of “race” thus originated in modern times and has changed with the evolution of modern society. As Hannaford (1996) shows, the introduction of this concept constituted the culmination of a complex development in modern thought regarding descent, heredity and human differences. After the Reformation, explanations of the origin of people in terms of religion or reason was increasingly displaced by a racial discourse in which anatomy, bloodlines, climate, geographical location and language were central. The development of the natural sciences and of the related principles of categorization (Linnaeus/Blumenbach) contributed to this development (Wood, 1995: 39-42).

According to Bulmer and Solomos (1999: 7) “race” had three central meanings:

- humanity is composed of different groups, each with its own common physical characteristics;
- these groups have different origins;
- racial boundaries have cultural and social significance.

Distinctions between and negative evaluations of phenotypic differences in skin color, in hair color, in the color and shape of eyes, in the shape of the skull and so on has for a long time been a central element of the ideology of racism. These kinds of differences were used as explanations for differences in culture and in mental properties. By the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century this mode of thinking was common in the Western world. It was developed in academia and spread throughout society (Shipman, 1994). It was used to justify practices such as slavery and colonialism. “Race” was construed as a social fact and thus as an object of scientific inquiry (see Montagu, 1963; De Rooy, 1991).

By the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century the concept of “race” acquired major political significance too. “Race” as a dominant and widely accepted ideological concept in Western thought was no longer only used to explain differences but, in particular, also to justify inequalities at the political level. The shift to a political implementation of racist doctrines at the national level was made in the thirties by the National Socialists, under the leadership of Hitler. This development culminated in genocide during the Second World War, when the Nazis killed six million Jews and at least two hundred thousand Gypsies in gas chambers. [For a cognitive explanation of the perpetration of the Holocaust, see Goldhagen, 1996; for analysis of Nazi discourse, see Klemperer, 2000.]

After the Second World War, at the request of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), authorities in the social sciences examined the concept of race. In their declaration of 1950, they argued that “race” is less a biological phenomenon than a social myth:

...for all practical social purposes 'race' is not so much a biological phenomenon as a social myth. The myth of 'race' has created an enormous amount of human and social damage. In recent years it has taken a heavy toll in human lives and

caused untold suffering. It still prevents the normal development of millions of human beings and deprives civilization of the effective co-operation of productive minds. The biological differences between ethnic groups should be disregarded from the standpoint of social acceptance and social action. The unity of mankind from both the biological and social viewpoints is the main thing (UNESCO: Statement on Race by Social Scientists, in: Montagu, 1963: 172; see also Shipman, 1994: 156-170).

“Race” is a social construction invented by people (see also Miles, 1989; Saharso and Schuster, 1995). It is first and foremost a discursive category, “the organizing category of those way of speaking, systems of representation and social practices (discourses) which utilize a loose, often unspecified set of differences in physical characteristics--skin color, hair texture, physical and bodily features, and so forth--as *symbolic markers* in order to differentiate one group socially from another” (Hall, 1992b: 298). The UNESCO statement advocated dropping the term “race” and replacing it by the more neutral term “ethnic group”. “Race” no longer existed; that is to say, science abandoned the concept. Racism, however, did continue to exist.

Racism

The concept “racism” is much younger than the concept “race”. The first scientific use of the concept of racism is often attributed to the German Jewish scientist Magnus Hirschfeld (Wodak and Reisigl, 2000: 43; Miles, 1993: 29). He used it in the title of a book that was published in 1938 in which he criticized racial thinking. In Western Europe the term first appears in the dictionaries in the thirties. Since then, racism has remained a contested notion.

It is often argued that even now a generally accepted definition is lacking. [For a discussion of different definitions, see Van den Berghe, 1967: 9-11; Memmi, 1994: 105-133.] The absence of such a generally accepted definition is related to a recognition of the fact that the concept “race” has no static, unchanged or unchanging signification. Historical research into usage of the concept “race” has shown that this concept has taken different forms in different national contexts (Goldberg, 1993; Hannaford, 1996). Historically, racism has also varied in signification. It should be noted, however, that many other complex social phenomena equally lack an accepted definition, as is the case for example with sexism. Different disciplines, such as economics, sociology and social psychology, have developed different theories about the phenomenon of racism on the basis of their specific perspectives. [For a summarized overview of different theoretical approaches, see Wilson, 1996.] Thus, a definition of racism that can be accepted unanimously does not exist. In the words of Goldberg (1993: 209): “so there is no single explanation for racism, for there is no single racism to be explained.” We may, however, offer a global outline with some contours, including the properties of the phenomenon

that are the object of frequent discussions in the academic world. [For 'issues and debates' on racism, see Wrench and Solomos, 1993; see also Torres et al., 1999.]

Racism as Expression of Group Dominance

The most important and most far reaching forms of social inequality today are related to group relations based on gender, class and ethnic background. [Inequality on the basis of age, sexual orientation, and physical or mental handicap also plays a role.] Gender, class and ethnicity are influential concepts of social organization and processes of signification. Historically, specific mechanisms of group dominance have produced and reproduced these forms of social inequality. Racism is a typical expression of group dominance (Van Dijk, 1993: 18-48). Racism as a system of social inequality implies that social groups do not have equal access to and control over material and immaterial social resources. At the material level, these resources include employment, income and housing. Immaterial resources, however, are of equal concern, including education, knowledge, information and access to the social networks and means of communication instrumental in public debates (such as the media, politics, the judicial system, the educational system and the welfare sector). Discourse occupies a central position as far as these immaterial resources are concerned. Discursive representations imbue social practices with meaning and thus legitimate social inequality and the daily organization of dominance and exclusion. This also implies, among other things, that ethnic groups do not have control over their representation in public discourse. Few professionals working in the field of communication such as journalists, opinion makers, writers, politicians and teachers are from ethnic minorities. With a few exceptions, ethnic minority groups are represented in public debate, in the press, in politics, in scientific literature and in schoolbooks by opinion makers originating from the majority group (Van Dijk, 1993). Crucial for understanding the phenomenon of racism is the observation that racism not only refers to overt and violent forms of social domination and exclusion but also to more indirect and subtle forms expressed in daily practices, including through discursive practices. It should, however, be stressed that racism is not considered a mental property of individual persons, but rather a dynamically changing dimension of social practices.

The different historical manifestations of racism have always been intimately linked to the different economic functions that the labor of the targeted groups fulfilled in the socio-economic system (see e.g. Miles, 1993b; Wilson, 1996). Wilson (1996: 123-126) identifies the following characteristics of capitalism feeding racism: the exploitation of subordinated groups, the existence of extreme inequality, the monopolistic and private ownership of productive property, the struggle between capital and labor, the development of hierarchical labor structures, and the presence of reserve armies of labor. Racism develops and increases where human exploitation, extreme inequality, and oppression exist--in particular where structures of inequality overlap with differences of

color or origin. Disdain and denigration has historically functioned to justify and legitimize oppression and inequality.

Historically Specific Ideological Construction

Since the Second World War, racism has been conceptualized as an irrational prejudice according to which other groups are considered inferior on the basis of biological-racial characteristics. Racism, however, is not a personality disorder or irrational prejudice--although prejudice is an important underlying attitude--but a political, social and institutional phenomenon that is brought about and expressed in both the public and private spheres of life. Racism is a historically specific ideological construction (Hall, 1980). It changes with time and with the economic-political and socio-cultural conditions in which it functions. Consequently, it has to be studied in its specific historical and social context. In his book *Racism*, Miles (1989) points to the complexity of the process by which racism is ideologically reproduced. Ideologies are not uncritically reproduced, but people construct and reconstruct them, according to their material and cultural conditions in order to better understand these conditions. Racism is "practically adequate", Miles (1989: 80) argues. This aspect of racism means that the content of racism varies according to class positions. It is obviously the same aspect that determines differences between the manifestations of racism found in different European countries and in different historical timeframes (see e.g. Bowser, 1995; Wrench and Solomos, 1993; Wieviorka, 1994; Jansen, 1994). Miles (1993a) relates these differences between particular European manifestations of racism in given historical contexts to more general historical differences as well as to more specific articulations of the relation between nationalism and internal/external forms of racism that vary by country.

International scientists broadly agree that racism is a historically specific phenomenon that varies according to place and time (see among others Hall, 1980; 1996; Wieviorka, 1991; Bowser, 1995). Hall (1996: 435) warns against the misleading viewpoint that "(...) because racism is everywhere a deeply anti-human and social practice, that therefore it is everywhere the same -either in its forms, its relations to other structures and processes, or its effects." Hall even believes that the differences between British colonial racism and contemporary racism in the UK are greater than the similarities.

Thus, racism is not a uniform, static, trans-historical phenomenon, but a complex, contradictory, multifaceted and dynamic phenomenon that adapts itself to the conditions in which it functions. It is this multifaceted and dynamic character and this tendency to adapt that made Goldberg (1993: 3) characterize racism in biological metaphors as "hybrid", "chameleontic" and "parasitic on social and theoretic discourse." Racism, he argues, is almost empty and dangerous because it hides itself behind more acceptable conceptual schemata. The contradictory character of racism is coupled to the fact that it is often accompanied by claims of anti-racism (Goldberg, 1993).

Racism is more than an ideology. It also involves discriminatory practices and discriminatory effects in the functioning of elements of the social structure, such as institutions. Racism, in its broad sense, also comprises anti-Semitism and modern forms of ethnocentrism and xenophobia such as islamophobia. [For a discussion of islamophobia as a phenomenon that is distinct from racism see Brown 2000; for a more limited definition of racism as an ideology, see Miles, 1989.] Racism has many dimensions such as the cultural, socio-psychological, socio-political and economic and should be studied on each level. Cutting through these different dimensions, discourse is central to such an investigation.

Central Dimensions

Power and Group Polarization

As we have seen before, power is a central (sociological) characteristic of racism. By power we mean, following Van Dijk (1993: 20-22), social, economic, political and or cultural power in relation to a relation of domination/submission between social groups. "(...) Racisms are largely if not altogether exclusively expressions from dominance" (Goldberg, 1993: 111). "It is also a discourse of marginalization which is integral to a process of domination: and those who articulate racism always necessarily situate themselves within relations of domination" (Miles, 1993b: 101).

A related central element on a more socio-cognitive and discursive level is group polarization (i.e. "we" as superior versus "them" as inferior). The reference to biological differences has been dropped since the Second World War, but it continues to function as an (unexpressed) criterion for dividing people into groups. It is not explicitly referred to in argumentation, however. Today, cultural issues are more central to the arguments that racist discourse uses to characterize "us" as superior and "them" as inferior. An important similarity between pre-war racism and contemporary racism, however, is the representation of differences as natural and unchangeable. This is equally the case with biological differences and cultural differences. This naturalness is another central dimension that can be discerned.

Natural Distinctions

The theory of naturalism, particularly as elaborated by Gobineau and Darwin in the nineteenth century, argues that the distinction between social groups (differentiated according to sex, class and social background) is not socially construed, but naturally given (Guillaumin, 1995: 61-98; Biddiss, 1999). It is assumed that humanity may naturally be divided into different (unequal) social groups. This thinking in terms of the natural properties of groups implies that there is no consideration of the nature of social

relations, such as current relations of power, while the main focus is on the intrinsic characteristics of different groups. In a racist perspective, the “natural” replaces the “social” or “political” (Guillaumin, 1995; Goldberg, 1993: 109).

Racism constructs (real or imagined) difference as natural not only in order to exclude but additionally, in order to marginalize a social collectivity within a particular constellation of relations of domination. All racisms are instances of the ideological marginalization, within a social formation, of a supposedly distinct social collectivity which is thought to reproduce itself through time and space, and which has been signified as naturally different, usually (but not exclusively) by reference to real or alleged biological characteristics (Miles, 1993b: 101).

The process of signification predominantly has the function to transform the other into the “Other” (Miles, 1993b: 14). The outcome of the process of signification is, according to Miles, visibility. This visibility may be construed in this manner, for example by a yellow star as was done by the Nazis for Jewish people. Always, however, the social construction of Difference is mystified (Miles, 1993b: 48). Difference is presented as inherent to the empirical reality of the observable, or of the supposed deviance of the dominant cultural norm. The content of this socio-cognitive process evidently varies according to time and place. There is no doubt that the process of signification has changed by the process of democratization of the social sciences. The ascribed properties have become less simplistic and have adapted themselves to the changing social situation. We may no longer witness arguments that “they are lazy.” [Labor force was important in colonial racism.] We may witness arguments such as “they are not able to raise their children” because growing criminality among immigrant youth disturbs us. One constant has remained. The markers that make the other visible as the “Other” have continued to be phenotypical in the first place (e.g. color of the skin or the eyes, hair texture, and so forth). Sometimes secondary cultural markers play a role, such as for example the *djellebah* or the headscarf. Miles (1989, 1993b) points to this process by which the other is seen as different on the basis of phenotypical characteristics with the concept of racialization. [For a definition of racialization, see Miles, 1989: 75-77.] Racialization is not necessarily verbalized. The next step is the process of evaluation. In this process phenotypical characteristics do not play a role, but a collection of ascribed and negatively evaluated properties and characteristics do, such as: “they oppress their wives”, “they are not able to raise their children”, and so on.

Biological and or Cultural Differences

Since the nineteenth century, “race” and “culture” have been intimately related in European thought. Biological characteristics (such as skin color, and later also hair and eye color and even measurements of skulls and noses) were studied to explain cultural differences (Barkan, 1992). This kind of research took place in the Netherlands as well as

in other Western European countries (see Julien, 1998; Noordman, 1989: 128; Pittard, 1924). It is not accidental that in the period between the two world wars cultural anthropologists played an important role in both the scientific underpinning of racism as well as in its refutation. The debate on “race” among scientists engaged in the development of scientific racism was hardly ever about physical characteristics alone. It was almost always interwoven with cultural interpretations and psychological speculations about human nature and its potential. Race, culture and language were considered to be different expressions of an inherited identity (Barkan, 1992: 19, 38). In the 1920s, the American cultural anthropologist Franz Boas and his followers were the first to plead for the separation of “race” and “culture” (Lieberman, 1977: 34-37). From that point onward the debate on “nature” versus “nurture” and the theory of cultural relativism developed. The question of the relationship between what people are given at birth and what they acquire by education and socialization occupies a central position in this nature/nurture debate (Rose, Lewontin and Kamin, 1984). Political opinions and social developments played an important role in this evolution, as well as scientific insights in such areas as genetics. Barkan (1992) shows that the work of these cultural anthropologists has been of utmost importance for refuting (scientific) racism. Racism did not disappear, but “racial differences are viewed in cultural terms, not biological, xenophobia has become more egalitarian and the strife is no longer waged in the name of superiority” (Barkan, 1992:xii).

It is important to avoid a too simplistic presentation of the historical relation (or the lack of such a relation) between phenotypic characteristics and cultural properties in racist discourse. Racism shows different emphases, according to time and place. The central position of biology should be considered as characteristic of the racism of a specific historical period. In other periods, its position was occupied by language or culture. The old pre-war racism theories were based on evolutionary thinking and equally presupposed possible evolution: black “races” occupied a lower place on the social ladder but could reach a higher level. It was the “White Man's Burden” to help them to do so. The following citation from a pre-war (racist) book on the “race question” illustrates this:

The African people itself has no means to develop this knowledge. If they want to obtain this knowledge in order to develop an independent existence, they have to acquire this in interaction with whites (...). For generations the African race will only be able to raise itself to a respectable existence when their future leaders drink from this western source of knowledge (*Het Rassenvraagstuk en het Christendom* [The Race Question and Christianity], p. 53).

That the social elevation of deviant groups, the emancipation of the “uncivilized man” is possible is an idea that originates in the Enlightenment. It is a central element of the Enlightenment. At the same time the Enlightenment attributes an important role to “nature” and “natural difference” in explaining social conditions. This permanent contradiction often leads to the argument that “the Other” is susceptible for change

despite his/her descent. Ultimately culture would triumph over nature. Today a range of cultural and religious differences function as pillars sustaining the stereotypes and prejudices that play a dominant role in contemporary racism. This many-sidedness of racism gives rise to a recent tendency in science not to speak about "racism" in the singular but about "racisms" in the plural (see among others, Miles, 1993a: 41; Rattansi, 1994: 55-57, Hall, 1996: 435; Goldberg, 1993: 90). Racisms vary according to the central position occupied by biological or cultural characteristics and in the patterns of articulations linking racism to ideologies of nation, gender and class. [For racism and gender, see Brah, 1993; Brittan and Maynard, 1984; Davis, 1983; Dugger, 1995; Guillaumin, 1995; Saharso and Schuster, 1995; for racism and class, see Aronowitz, 1999; Bonacich, 1999; Balibar, 1999; for racism and nationalism, see Balibar and Wallerstein, 1988; Miles, 1993a.] These variations depend on historically determined, contextual differences between the social formations in which racism functions (Hall, 1996: 435) and on the "target group" (Rattansi, 1994: 55-57). The historical relation between physical characteristics and cultural properties in racist discourse is not simple, but complex. Different gradations exist, both historically and today.

Existence Denied

Denial may be considered a central element of contemporary forms of racism. This may be explained by the fact that racism has become an unacceptable ideology in accordance with more general norms that developed after the Second World War.

As in many other Western-European countries, racism has been declared taboo in the Netherlands. Those who openly admit to adhering to racist ideologies are excluded. Admittedly this stance has positive effects, but it also has a darker side. The exclusive conceptualization of racism as open and blunt has marginalized those forms of anti-racism that consider its structural dimensions and less spectacular everyday expressions. It seemed as if there was no longer any racism in society because it was not allowed to be there. Those who argued that this was not the case were considered over-sensitive or on the extreme left, which was subsequently identified with the extreme right. The French scholar Leon Poliakov (1979: 18) who studied the myth of race-thinking identifies a similar mechanism concerning the history of modern thought: "that everything happens in a way as if the West, out of shame or fear of appearing racist, doesn't want to hear that it has ever been racist." He analyses this phenomenon as the collective repression by the West of a past with which people have not come to terms. Today, this mechanism implies that in the Netherlands the term discrimination is preferred rather than the concept of racism, in order to avoid confrontation. Hisschemöller, Loewenthal and Vuysje (1988: 137-150) provide an analysis of the national consensus against racism, the pact that the official political forces in the Netherlands, ranging from the left to the right, made after the atrocities of the Second World War. In the perspective underlying this pact, the concept of race was identified with the Nazi's inhumane theories of superiority and

directly linked to racism, like two sides of the same coin. Racism, from this perspective, was merely a function of fascism. In addition to the atrocities committed during the Second World War, the end of the colonial era brought about this change in the concept of racism. In this way, in the post-war years racism was pushed to the margins of society by considering it as, at best, a characteristic of extremist groups. This has led to the curious paradox that contemporary forms of racism, in particular if they are denied, are not always recognized as such.

Contemporary Forms of Racism

Contemporary forms of racism are often characterized as modern racism or new racism. Martin Barker (1981, 1984), in his study of the new racism in the United Kingdom, points to two changes in the post-war ideological legitimization of racist practices. First, the superiority of one's own culture and nation is no longer emphasized either openly or straightforwardly; racist practices are now legitimized on the basis of so-called "principal otherness". Second, presumed biological-genetical differences are also replaced by differences between cultures or nations, represented as homogenous entities. "Race" is coded as culture or ethnicity. Barker (1981) characterizes the new racism as pseudo-biological culturalism. In this vision, the building blocks of the nation are not the economy or politics, but human nature. "It is part of our biology and our instincts to defend our way of life, traditions and customs against outsiders -not because these outsiders are inferior, but because they belong to other cultures" (Barker, 1984: 78). As we have seen above a shift in the racist discourse from phenotypical characteristics to socio-cultural properties has been developing since the 1920s. Influenced by the Second World War this tendency has deepened and generalized. This is why a relativization of contemporary cultural racism as "new racism" is imperative (see also Miles, 1989; Rattansi, 1994). History shows variations and differences in accentuation according to time and place in thinking about the relationship between phenotypical and cultural characteristics.

Contemporary racism is also characterized as "racism without race". Practices or ideas are characterized as racist if they are "oriented in intention or effect towards the production, reproduction or affirmation of unequal relations" (Wellman, 1999: 190). Goldberg (1993: 102) rightly points to the fact that racism is not always about dominance, but more about exclusion: "...exclusion will be racist when the underlying characterization (...) is racialized either explicitly or by being linked to a history of racialized characterization. The characterization in question can then be said to stand in the tradition of such reference." He thus confirms the historical continuity in forms of social domination and exclusion.

Domains

A distinction may be made between four important domains in and through which racism is produced and reproduced: elite racism, everyday racism, institutional racism, and politically organized racism.

Social elites working in the most important social sectors, such as politics, policy sectors, the media, educational institutions, and welfare institutions, pre-formulate (so to speak) racist ideologies, often in hidden terms (Van Dijk, 1993, 1998). [See also Statham, 2001 for an empirical study of the way in which a state's policy approach treatment of migrants and minorities shapes the collective understanding of ethnic issues of groups of ordinary people.]

The concept of everyday racism was developed to explain the integration of racism in everyday situations and practices (Essed, 1991). Problematization, marginalization and exclusion are important effects of everyday racism.

The concept of institutional racism pertains to the discriminating effects of institutional rules and procedures that marginalize and exclude people from non-Western groups (Essed, 1993; Wilpert, 1993). Miles (1989: 84-87) points to two other forms of institutional racism. Racism is institutional when practices are institutionalized while the ideology is no longer explicitly articulated. A second form of institutional racism signaled by Miles occurs when the racist discourse has lost its explicit racist content but the original meaning is reflected in other words.

Politically organized racism is the racism of xenophobic, anti-immigrant parties that have come up and developed since the beginning of the 1980s in a number of European countries (Betz, 1994; Van den Brink, 1997; Van Donselaar, 1995; Elbers and Fennema, 1993; Greß, Jaschke and Schönekäs, 1990; Hainsworth, 2000; Kitschelt, 1995; Mudde, 2000; Vander Velpen, 1992, 1995; Wieworka, 1994).¹ These right-extremist parties, generally speaking, reject the established socio-cultural and socio-political system; although they do not openly question the democratic system as such. They are populist in that they frequently appeal to the common sense of ordinary people. They are authoritarian and support traditional values. They are anti-egalitarian and oppose the integration of immigrant communities by mobilizing xenophobic and racist sentiments.

Articulation

The scientific literature about inequality according to class, gender and ethnic background discusses the ways in which different discourses relating to the production and reproduction of systems of social inequality are intermingled and have common characteristics. This is not only the case for contemporary discourse, but also for historical discourse. This intermingling, and the related reciprocal influences of different discourse, is referred to with the concept "articulation". The scientific literature about

class, gender and racial inequality has often pointed to this reciprocal intrication and to the parallels between different discourses related to the production and reproduction of inequality in society. [See among others Rattansi, 1994: 26, 61; Miles, 1989, 1993b; Brah, 1993; Hall, 1991: 171-180; Brittan and Maynard, 1984; Wolpe, 1986; Davis, 1983.] This is also applicable to historical studies.

The first contact of the West with the "Other" in the voyages of discovery coincided with the period in which the so-called civilization process (analyzed by Elias, 1978) was developing in Western Europe. The poor, often unemployed or marginally employed population groupings that were qualified as backward and who were the targets of the civilization process, were frequently also defined in terms of race (Miles, 1993a: 47). Discussing the nature and impact of the civilization offensive in the Netherlands, Kruithof (1985: 382) speaks about "a kind of internal mission." It is quite likely that a form of racism pervaded these civilization processes. The backwardness of some groups was considered a biological fact that hampered their incorporation, as a "race", into the nation. Civilizing these groupings was the cultural and ideological pillar of the process of nation building. Civilization and racialization played an important role in the internal processes that occurred in the formation of nations (Miles, 1993a). Miles (1993a: 44) relates this historical racialization of civilization processes to a conceptual distinction between the *racism of the interior*--racism towards certain groups within a nation, such as Jews and Gypsies--and *racism of the exterior*--racism towards groups outside the nation, such as colonized peoples.

In the same framework, it is important to point to the research of Daniel Pick (1989) into socio-biological discourse around degeneration in different European countries between 1848 and 1918. Social evolution and degeneration were intimately linked in late nineteenth-century ideology. The ideal of unity that was so important to processes of nation formation was under continuous pressure from (presumed) cultural, national and racial disintegration. The city in particular was considered the center of disintegration. The concept of degeneration allowed the representation of current social problems in the depoliticized terms of nature, biology and race. The pathological elements that had to be excluded, such as criminals, prostitutes and the mentally ill, were considered to be interior, unwanted foreigners.

It must be stated that emphases vary in the discourses around degeneration in different countries. The eugenic movement of the United States and Germany, for example, which incorporated fear of degeneration, articulated its action towards immigrants, blacks and Jews. In the Netherlands, the eugenic movement was much more oriented towards class differences, as Noordman argues (1989: 250). Nevertheless, racial aspects were not absent in the Dutch situation (see Noordman, 1989: 100, 127, 128-137, 172). The race factor as an indicator of mental qualities was the object of much scientific work. Skull measurements were increasingly used as an instrument of research--by Dutch anthropologists, such as the notorious Paul Julien (1998) and in particular in the Dutch Indies (see also Wertheim, 1991). As the years passed, and given the political evolution

in neighboring Germany where Hitler carried out so-called “euthanasia” programs, the Dutch eugenic movement showed a certain “shyness” about the “race problem” (Noordman, 1989: 129). After the Second World War the degeneration concept, now definitely associated with the *Endlösung*, was no longer used. The eugenic movement disappeared. Yet, presuppositions of social degeneration have continued to have an impact on politics and culture, although more explicit theories are now repressed (Pick, 1989). From 1975 onwards however, when E.O. Wilson published the book *Social Biology: The New Synthesis*, social biology (the study of the biological basis of social behavior) has become popular and has pervaded the social sciences (Rose, Lewontin and Kamin, 1984: 233-264). The central thesis of social biology is that social and cultural behavior is coded in the genes. Guillaumin (1995: 63) defines this “new” trend of social biology as “neonaturalism”, “the present fashion for introducing biological considerations into the human sciences is not so much a new approach as a survival of the traditional naturalist attitude.”

As I have shown above, the intrication of different discourses about groups that are subject to social exclusion is historically complex. The concept of “articulation” was developed in order to better explain the mechanisms that play a role in the interweaving of these ideologies and practices. This concept was used from the 1970s onwards in the theories of British Cultural Studies under the leadership of Stuart Hall, who built upon the works of Laclau, Althusser, Gramsci and Marx (Slack, 1996). The problem of reductionism was high on the agenda. The relationship of elements of the social world had to be identified in a non-reductionist way. One of the problems of economic and class reductionism is that it was not capable of explaining how class factors such as gender and race play a role in the complex relationship between dominance and powerlessness. The concept of articulation came to function as a signal, indicating the necessity to avoid reductionism (Slack, 1996: 117). It indicated that both parallels and contradictions, as well as a lack of correspondence may occur simultaneously. The use of the concept of articulation allows for reflecting simultaneously unity and difference. Articulation, Hall (in Slack, 1996: 122) argues,

“has the considerable advantage of enabling us to think of how specific practices articulated around contradictions which do not all arise in the same way, at the same point, in the same moment, can nevertheless be thought together. The structuralist paradigm thus does (if properly developed) enable us to begin really to conceptualize the specificity of different practices (analytically distinguished, abstracted out), without losing its grip on the ensemble which they constitute.”

Miles (1989: 87-90) too elaborates on the processes of articulation. He argues that articulation occurs where an ideology shares certain characteristics with other ideologies, for example in the case of racism and sexism. The shared characteristic in this case is the representation of a naturalized division of humankind in terms that make it inherent and universal.

Historically, racism and classism have had a complementary origin and impact. Where the assumed superiority of the white race legitimated the repression and exclusion of other “races”, it also has led to the repression and exclusion of those elements within one's own “race” considered a threat to its quality. Groups of particular concern are criminals, the mentally ill, nomadic groups and people viewed as anti-social. With regard to this point, Hitler's fascism showed great excesses but has never been exclusive. In the United States, sterilization campaigns directed at so-called “anti-socials” occurred until the beginning of the 1970s. In the Netherlands, anti-social families were re-educated in special camps or neighborhoods (Dercksen and Verplanke, 1987; Milikowski, 1972). In both cases, the influence of eugenic thinking may be identified. The refutation of racism after the Second World War has never been total and undivided. The notion of “racial supremacy” and the elevation of race as the highest criterion were evidently refuted. Yet the existence of “races”, the inequality of different “races” and attempts to improve the “race” continued to be defended, provided this would not lead to repression, that is, “if the instruments themselves are good, not contrary to human nature and no insult to common sense” (Janssen, 1945: 44).

Both phenomena, racism and classism, are historically rooted in the process of nation formation. In this process, different groups (differentiated according to class, gender or ethnic-cultural background) were represented as naturally distinct and different from the dominant group, thus legitimizing their exclusion. Both ideologies share, with sexism, a historical function, namely legitimizing exclusion by white, dominant male elites. Articulation characterizes the relationship between these ideologies; similarities and parallels do exist, but so do differences and contradictions. To equate them would testify to reductionism. It would remind one of the traditional, orthodox, Marxist framework of thought, in which race was subsumed by class, as a result of which it was assumed that the solution to the race question would be a logical, self-evident consequence of the expected class revolution. Theoretically, this viewpoint has long been out of date, and unmasked as eurocentric.

Stigmatization

A common characteristic for different groups that are socially excluded is the sociopsychological process of stigmatization that they are subjected to (Heatherton, Kleck, Hebel and Hull, 2000). The recognition of difference and the consequent devaluation of others in terms of their deviance and the assumed threat they pose, along with the resulting anxiety, aversion, depersonalization and dehumanization, are all central to processes of stigmatization that transform others into “stereotypic caricatures”. Neuberg, Smith and Asher (2000: 31-62) argue that the tendency to stigmatize is universal; it is grounded in evolutionary rules essential to effective group functioning. These rules are based on the principles of reciprocity, trust, common values and group

welfare. The principle of reciprocity implies that people are not supposed to take more than they give with respect to social goods; the principle of trust implies that people will not cheat and betray others; with respect to common values, people are supposed to support and not to undermine them, just as they are supposed to contribute to group welfare. Stigmatization occurs, they argue, when these basic principles of effective and efficient group functioning are (supposedly) violated. Their research also suggests ways for reducing stigmatization: once the threat, or the perception of the threat, or indeed we may add, the representation of the threat, posed by individuals or groups to group functioning is eliminated, the stigmatization of targeted individuals and groups should decrease (Neuberg and Smith and Asher, 2000: 52).

Prejudice and the Role of Emotions

A key attitude in racism is the social cognitive phenomenon of prejudice. Early definitions of prejudice emphasize its “bad” character in different ways; it is a “rigid or inflexible attitude,” an “overgeneralized attitude,” an “unjust attitude,” an “irrational attitude,” and so on. In the 1980s more neutral, non-pejorative definitions began to be used, but always the negative character of the attitude was foregrounded. Duckitt (1992: 17) argues that this conceptualization of prejudice as simply a negative inter-group attitude implies a clear accentuation of the central role of the affective dimension in inter-group dynamics. Young-Bruehl (1996) also emphasizes the affective dimension of prejudice. She conceptualizes prejudice, at least some forms of prejudice related to what she calls ideologies of desire, as mechanisms of defense against the acknowledgement of desires and against guilt feelings, the voices of the superego (Young-Bruehl, 1996: 163-412). The underlying desire, she argues, has articulated itself into an ideology.

Duckitt (1992) distinguishes four levels of causation in relation to prejudice. On the basis of an extended review of theories and findings on the causal processes of prejudice, he presents prejudice as both a social and simultaneously an individual phenomenon. First, he argues, certain psychological processes ensure that every human has the potential to be prejudiced. Second, the activation of this potential is determined by social and inter-group dynamics of contact and interaction in specific social situations and societies. Third, prejudiced attitudes are socially transmitted. Fourth, individual differences influence people's susceptibility to prejudice, thereby creating different, varying outcomes to the mechanisms of social influence involved in the transmission of prejudices.

Traditionally the tendency in psychology has been to view emotions detached from the context of social and cultural processes that trigger them. As a physiological process, emotion has been located inside the body which, following ancient Judeo-Christian and Cartesian traditions, was considered to be separated from the mind (Hermans and Kempen, 1993). It is not surprising, then, that social psychology as a study of the mind has traditionally offered a highly cognitive account of how people process social information,

ignoring the affective dimensions (Anderson, 1990). Recent developments, however, incline toward reintroducing affect in the study of social cognitions such as stereotypes and prejudices.

Just like cognitions, emotions may also be communicated to others through *emotional contagion*, a process in which people in interaction catch each others' emotions. Research on emotional contagion moreover suggests that cognition and emotion are closely intertwined (Hatfield, Cacioppo and Rapson, 1994). Emotions may inform cognitions and be informed by them. Hatfield et al. (1994: 7) conceptualize emotional contagion as a multiply determined family of social, psycho-physiological and behavioral phenomena whose function consists of coordinating a variety of social interactions. These researchers (1994: 116) view contagion as "a normal coordinating component of a wide variety of social interactions." Emotional contagion may in particular be witnessed and is most frequently studied in parent-child interactions, therapeutic sessions, educational interaction and interaction between lovers. Emotional contagion however, Hatfield et al. (1994: 122) argue, also occurs on a mass scale, where in many historical events "fear, hysterical grief and anger have swept through communities." They refer for example to mass reactions to the Black Death in the Middle Ages and to the Holocaust in modern times.

Today, the mass media can potentially spread emotions on a scale previously unthinkable. Since politics crucially involves power, and emotional contagion is not restricted to small scale interpersonal communication, we may assume that processes of emotional contagion play a role in political practices as well, particularly since the mass media are involved. Given the dialectical relationship between emotions and cognitions, I assume that these processes of emotional contagion consequently may inform, and so reinforce, the beliefs and opinions of the public in the same way as the congruent social cognitions that are transmitted. There is, moreover, ample evidence of emotional factors such as anxiety, aggressiveness, frustration and feelings of hostility and dissatisfaction influencing individual's susceptibility to prejudice (Duckitt, 1992: 161-217). Emotions thus not only exert their influence by dialectically informing the cognitions of an actor, but also have a more direct effect on the cognitions of the public through the process of emotional contagion. It is in terms of this dual function that the role of emotions has to be integrated into a theoretical framework used to explain the production, reproduction and mechanism of ideologies such as racism and its underlying attitude of prejudice.

Concluding Remarks

Racism is a highly complex social phenomenon that can only be studied on an interdisciplinary basis. In this article I have shortly discussed its function, as well as some of its key dimensions and mechanisms involved while paying attention to its history and to related mechanisms of social exclusion. The discussion of racism is broadly based on the racisms that are found in western countries. It is highly relevant for countries and people

worldwide. Besides differences, expressions of racism in various parts of the world are more and more characterized by similarities. Social, economic and cultural systems more and more tend to converge. The world economy today is a fact as is reflected in the lexical item of the "global village". Modern means of communication have played an important role in this development. This development also has consequences for racism that tends towards homogeneity (Bowser, 1995; see also Van Dijk, 1993). The analysis of the discourse on immigrants in politics, the media and textbooks (including academia in different European countries) perfectly illustrate this tendency (see e.g. Mok, 1999; Van der Valk, 2002; Van Dijk, 1991, 1993; Wodak and Van Dijk, 2000). The same means of communication that have played such an important role in the development of globalization contribute to the ongoing reproduction of the phenomenon of racism on a world scale. With the means of communication the racist discourse penetrates the remote corners of the world, favoring tendencies towards ethnic conflict. This is why the knowledge and understanding of racism and the movement against racism can not stay behind.

Notes

1. Almost all European countries have seen a decline of support for and a decomposition of traditional party politics paralleled by the rise, diffusion and expansion of right extremist, populist parties. This development is related to more profound economic, social and cultural developments: the transition from industrial welfare capitalism to postindustrial individualized capitalism; the emergence of a global economy marked by increased mobility and competition; the decay of the grand ideologies of modernity; related processes of political and social fragmentation; individualization, alienation and growing public discontent, pessimism and anxiety (Betz, 1994).

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