RACE AND SOCIETY

TINA G. PATEL

⑤SAGE

Los Angeles | London | New Delhi
Singapore | Washington DC | Melbourne

2
CATEGORIZING RACE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will provide a contextual background to the ways in which race has been so far categorized, namely in essentialized and (black–white) polarized ways. The limitations of this for contemporary analysis is then highlighted. After reading the chapter, the reader will be able to describe historical patterns of racial categorizations, and to appreciate the need for an updated social constructionist approach to studying the dynamics of race in contemporary society. The theory and concepts covered in the chapter include: Afro-centrism; Black power; black deviance; colonialism; critical criminology; essentialism; ethnocentrism; eurocentrism; scientific racism; and social constructionism. The case study in the chapter concerns the online racism following Nina Davuluri's crowning as Miss America 2014. The key question raised in the chapter is: What are the key markers of race in contemporary society, and how do they differ from the markers of previous generations?

KEY TERMS

- Afro-centrism

- Black deviance

- Black power

- Colonialism

- Critical criminology

- Discrimination

- Eco-racism

- Essentialism

- Ethnocentrism

- Eurocentrism

- Prejudice

- Racialization

- Racism

- Scientific racism

- Social constructionism

- Whiteness

WHAT IS RACE?

Race, as we understand it today, differs from the scientific typology concept adopted by the biologists of the last few centuries. Such scientific racism used 'biological determinism' to argue that there were innate, biologically based (and thus natural) and unchangeable differences between humans. European global expansion from the late-fifteenth century onwards saw scientific explanations about 'race' becoming popular (Mason, 2000). By the mid-nineteenth century, there was firm support for what is called 'Enlightenment Thinking' – a discipline of 'race science', which critics have now

come to refer to as '**scientific racism**'. Some key contributors to this thinking included Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), David Hume (1711–1776) and Charles Linnaeus (1707–1778). They proposed hierarchical ideas about race, in particular white superiority and black inferiority. However, these were themselves tied to mistaken ideas about human biology, with common views being that blacks were closer to apes than whites, which we now know of course to be untrue (Ely and Denney, 1987). Genetic analysis has found that there is far greater genetic (biological) variation between people previously defined as being of the same race, in comparison to similarity levels between people of different races. Indeed, it has actually been found that the biological differences between humans, regardless of race, are relatively minor. In fact, Tizard and Phoenix (2002: 2) argue that 'when genes have been mapped across the world it has been found that trends in skin colour are not accompanied by trends in other genes … 85 per cent of genetic diversity comes from the differences between individuals of the same colour in the same country, for example, two randomly chosen white English people'. As Carol Mukhopadhyay (2011: 205) argues, this means that the current use of racial categories is 'arbitrary, unstable and, arguably, biologically meaningless. Individuals cannot reliably be "raced" because the criteria are so subjective and unscientific. And the meanings of "race" have changed over time.'

The contact made between Europeans and non-Europeans during the European expansion from the fifteenth century onwards, first led to the concept of race gaining scientific interest. However, given that contact was made on an unequal basis – underpinned with exploitative motivations, scientific inquiry was inevitably biased. This later played a key role in the development of notions about a supposed natural order. Within this order, white (which was seen as the colour of the Europeans who embarked on 'explorations', which later became conquest, control and ownership missions (Mason, 2000)) was associated with goodness, purity, intelligence, Christianity and godliness. On the other hand, blackness (which was the colour of all non-Europeans subjected to exploratory and conquest encounters) was associated with evil, dirt, stupidity, sin and the devil. From this developed a racially based hierarchical scale where white races were placed at the top and black races located at the bottom. Social scientific consideration of '**whiteness**' is relatively new, largely because whites were not considered to be a racial category; rather, they were the assumed norm, an unmarked territory and essentially the marker of the human race. As Dyer (1997: 3) notes, 'in other words, whites are not of a race, they're just the human race'. Recent work has centred on the deconstruction of whiteness as a norm, and how those belonging to its category experience relative privilege in comparison to their non-white (or lesser white) counterparts. As a category of people, those considered to belong to the white race are initially defined by phenotypical markers. As Jensen (2011: 22) notes:

> White people have white skin, which actually is not really white, of course, but a pale/pinkish/off-white shade that has come to be labelled as white. Associated with that skin pigmentation are a variety of other physical traits regarding, especially, the shape of noses and lips and the texture of hair. White people typically can trace their ancestors to Europe, especially the United Kingdom, northern Europe, and Scandinavia.

However, as Jensen (2011) goes on to point out, in reality, whiteness is not about physical features or ancestry. Rather, whiteness is about power, privilege and status. This is discussed in more depth in later chapters, but for now it is necessary to recognize that such scientific claims were actually used as a way of maintaining white superiority as well as justifying practices such as colonialism. **Colonialism** refers to the processes whereby certain European societies had extended their political, economic and cultural domination of other countries. Colonial 'discoveries', and later neo-colonial rule, were marked by unequal power relations, labour force exploitation (slavery), violence (physical, mental and sexual), and the systematic destruction of traditional communities. Some examples from modern history include the Spanish in the Americas and Africa, the Portuguese in Brazil, the British in India, France and Germany in Africa, and Holland in Indonesia (Melotti, 2003a: 39). In this sense, the popularity of race science must also be examined within the context of wider social developments of the era (Mason, 2000: 7).

One of the key texts in support of scientific racism was that offered by (slave owner) Edward Long in 1774, *History of Jamaica*. In contrast to the Christian theological idea of race as lineage, such as that all humans are of the same species and are descendants of Adam and Eve, with black races having degenerated, Long used the idea of race as type, arguing that black and white races were completely different species of human beings altogether – a theory based on Long's claims of physical and cultural characteristics being prominent in each race. For instance, this included the claim that black races had a 'bestial fleece', as opposed to hair like that of the white race, as well as an inferior level of intelligence to that of apes, again unlike that of the white race, who advanced well beyond primate intelligence (Banton and Harwood, 1975, cited in Rattansi, 2003: 242). Robert Knox's *Races of Man* (1850) went further with these scientific examinations and developed specific racial typologies, such as skin colour, hair texture, and skull shape and size. Indeed, so powerful was the belief that phenotypical features were clearly identifiable and unique to different races that these typologies influenced the racial classifications of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Rattansi, 2003: 243). Race today still involves the drawing of boundaries between people, often using phenotypical markers, such as hair texture, skin pigmentation and facial features, to do so (Pilkington, 2003: 11).

Although race-type ideas were popular in their time, they have since been (scientifically) discredited, most notably by their inability to account for evolution (Pilkington, 2003: 12). Although Charles Darwin's theory of evolution soundly challenged the idea of race-types, a belief in inherent racial differences, albeit social rather than biological ones, lived on in the work of social Darwinists, such as Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), Thomas Malthus (1766–1829) and Francis Galton (1822–1911). This helped to support the idea that evolution was a process of struggle and competition between groups for survival (Pilkington, 2003: 13). This helped to maintain the idea of a racial hierarchy – a natural order which rewarded those with the intellect and skills to overcome struggles in order to survive:

> There is in the world a hierarchy of races … those nations which eat more, claim more, and get higher wages, will direct and rule the others, and the lower work of the world will tend to be done by the lower breeds of men. This much we of the ruling colour will no doubt accept as obvious. (Charles Murray, 1900, cited in Pilkington, 2003: 13)

Most notably, widespread discrediting of any lingering race science ideas occurred following the end of the Second World War, when the horrors of Nazi Germany and its practices in pursuit of advancing the Aryan race[1] were publicly revealed (Mason, 2000: 7). More recently, though, there has been a surge of interest in genetics, socio-economic status and race. For instance, writers of population genetics have interpreted scientific data to argue that there are genetically based differences in IQ levels, which would further explain socioeconomic gaps between racial groups (see, for example, Herrnstein and Murray's *The Bell Curve* (1994)).

Indeed, it is fair to say that social scientific work on disproving race science ideas has not been supported by all social scientists. Considered as an 'academically validated' type of scientific racism, it can be found in the overlapping relationship between the Eugenics Movement and biological criminology, which was most popular in the USA and Europe from 1900 to 1930 (Webster, 2007). The Eugenics Movement in particular based its work on an attempt to improve the quality of human stock, which for them involved reducing the numbers of lower classes, the physically and mentally unfit, the criminal types, and others who were considered as socially undesirable (Garland, 1985, cited in Webster, 2007: 14). In the USA and Europe, those of non-white background came under this last category. The result was a move towards forced sterilization and genocide, both of which were used in Nazi Germany. However, such sterilization programmes were also widely supported in the USA as a 'solution' to its 'race problem', in which the 'negro' especially was seen as contaminating its 'high mental qualities' (Rentoul, 1906, cited in Black, 2003: 208–209). In 1924, the US state of Virginia implemented the Racial Integrity Act, which made marriage between white and non-white people illegal. Three years later, in 1927, again in Virginia, the Supreme Court's case of *Buck* v. *Bell* upheld the practice of mandatory sterilization (of black African-American woman Carrie Buck), stating that it was in the interest of the state to promote the purity of the white race in America (Pinder, 2011: 140).

Today such forms of 'genetically based racism' (Parrott et al., 2005: 3) have gained new popularity, especially following the Human Genome Project, which ran from October 1990 to April 2003 in the USA, although with input from an international body of scientists (Bonham et al., 2005). This is one of the most notable human genetic research projects whose publicly stated aim was to identify, for health and life insurance purposes, the genes associated with diseases. The project stated that it sought to prove once and for all that biological races did not exist. However, the project actually became known for adding weight to previously discounted claims about racial inferiority. As a consequence, it was used to strengthen racism, so much so that it has been described by some as having been used as a form of

'genetic colonialism' (Dodson and Williamson, 1999, cited in McCann-Mortimer, Auggoustinos and LeCouteur, 2004: 412). Even UNESCO's International Bioethics Committee in 1996 argued that its findings could be 'misappropriated for racist ends by those seeking whatever scientific support they could find to legitimate discriminatory beliefs' (Gannett, 2001, cited in McCann-Mortimer et al., 2004: 412).

ACTIVITY

Consider at least two instances where you have been in the presence of racism. At its core, did this racism use biological or social explanations?
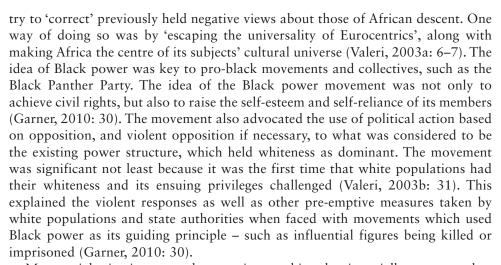

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF RACE

One legacy of 'scientific' understanding is that it presents the term 'race' and racial differences between humans as neutral, natural and scientific. This is evidenced by the way in which race is a taken-for-granted notion, assumed by all those who use it to be unproblematic, clear and unambiguous (Rattansi, 2003: 241). However, many social scientists have come to regard the concept of 'race', as well as its use more generally, as highly problematic. Those who take this view argue that race is a socially and historically defined concept. Thus, it is socially constructed (Pilkington, 2003: 11). **Social constructionist** approaches, such as those presented by the Chicago School (discussed later in this book), emphasize the socially constructed nature of social life. As Berger and Luckmann (1966: 61) state: 'Society is a human product. Society is an objective reality. Man is a social product.' It follows, then, that race-thinking is a habit; a learned attitude passed on from one generation to another. This, however, does not detract from the important point that, although there is no such thing as races, which (genetic) scientific analysis in the modern era has proved, being perceived to be of a particular racial type (as defined in the work of previous centuries) continues to ensure that being of a particular race is considered significant. It brings either disadvantage or advantage. Race is considered to be significant, and so it becomes significant (Pilkington, 2003: 15).

Usually black and minority ethnic groups experience negative outcomes of various racialized processes. However, attempts have been made to harness race and its significance in more self-affirming and positive ways. This was true of the **Black power** movement. Emerging originally in 1950s USA, and later popularized by various political movements in the 1960s, the term 'Black power' refers to the political and ideological revolutionary movement which sought to take a more active role in achieving civil rights, given that previous methods, such as those advocated by Martin Luther King Jr, were seen to be making little progress (Valeri, 2003b: 31). The Black power movement sought to redefine the term 'black', associating it instead with more positive meanings, as seen in the use of the common phrase of this time, 'black is beautiful'. Many of its supporters went further, using **Afro-centrism**, or the development and centring of African history and culture, to

try to 'correct' previously held negative views about those of African descent. One way of doing so was by 'escaping the universality of Eurocentrics', along with making Africa the centre of its subjects' cultural universe (Valeri, 2003a: 6–7). The idea of Black power was key to pro-black movements and collectives, such as the Black Panther Party. The idea of the Black power movement was not only to achieve civil rights, but also to raise the self-esteem and self-reliance of its members (Garner, 2010: 30). The movement also advocated the use of political action based on opposition, and violent opposition if necessary, to what was considered to be the existing power structure, which held whiteness as dominant. The movement was significant not least because it was the first time that white populations had their whiteness and its ensuing privileges challenged (Valeri, 2003b: 31). This explained the violent responses as well as other pre-emptive measures taken by white populations and state authorities when faced with movements which used Black power as its guiding principle – such as influential figures being killed or imprisoned (Garner, 2010: 30).

Most social scientists agree that race is something that is socially constructed as opposed to being naturally given. However, there is some dispute as to the status and continued use of the term. Many see race as 'a crude biological concept which is sociologically meaningless' (Rex, 1986, quoted in Bagley, Young and Scully, 1992: 71). In this sense, use of the term 'reflects and perpetuates the belief that the human species consists of separate races' and therefore 'can deflect attention from cultural and religious aspects' of identity (Runnymede Trust, 2000: 6). Miles (1989: 75) argues that if we continue to use the term, it gives greater credibility to the idea of natural racial-types. Hence, many social scientists have rejected the term. To demonstrate this, they have either highlighted its 'contested character' (Mason, 2000: 8) by not using it altogether or by using it in inverted commas. However, in calling for the term to be completely 'banished', Pilkington (2003: 17) makes the point that as the inverted commas approach becomes routinized it is likely to lose its impact. One advance on this problem has been offered by Miles (1989), who argues that we should replace the term 'race' with that of '**racialization**' in order to highlight the 'Other-defining process', which uses both alleged and real biological characteristics. In acknowledging the socially constructed nature of 'race', the term 'racialization' is used to refer to those social relations where racial meanings are found (Moore, 2003: 273). It is a preferred term as it recognizes the socially constructed nature of race (as opposed to it being a natural fact), without detracting from its social significance. Most importantly, the term also considers power and its relationship to racial categories.

Alternatively, Mason (1994, cited in Pilkington, 2003: 17) argues that race does not refer to categories (even socially defined ones) but to a social relationship – a social relationship that 'presumes the existence of racism' which, for Mason, means ideas and beliefs 'which emphasise the social and cultural relevance of biologically rooted characteristics'. It is this definition, Mason argues, that should alternatively be used in sociological debates. Doing so would avoid reifying the concept because it would highlight that there are actually no races, just the existence of a social relationship, which we refer to as 'race' (Pilkington, 2003: 17). Understanding race as a
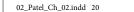
social relationship allows the recognition of how it 'remains a legitimate concept for sociological analysis because social actors treat it as real and organise their lives and exclusionary practices by references to it' (Mason, 2000: 7). Thus, although there are no such things as races, 'large numbers of people behave as if there are' and it is this that we social scientists must examine (Mason, 2000: 8). Regardless, we can agree that 'race has become a social fact: a self-evident characteristic of human identity and character' (Downing and Husband, 2005: 2). For this reason, the use, meaning and impact of race warrants social scientific attention.

During the 1960s, largely given that it was a core idea of the Black power movement, there emerged support for the view that there existed one essential Black identity that was core to all those of any black race. **Essentialism** holds that it is possible to identify the essence – that is, the truth or reality that lies behind a phenomenon. In terms of race, essentialism refers to the widely held assumption that humans possess indispensable innate and inherent characteristics which classify their true nature (McLaughlin, 2001: 109). However, it has since been argued that such polarized or singular concepts of race are problematic and insufficient to describe the complexity of social relationships and identities of particular groups, especially given that 'having a non-white skin colour does not indicate a related uniform experience' (Britton, 1999: 152). Consequently, a strong anti-essentialist critique emerged, notably by Stuart Hall (1996), who argued that the essentialist notion of a core black identity (and hence any essentialized identity) should not be viewed in terms of an essential black nature, or any other essentializing guarantee. Instead, Hall developed the concept of 'new ethnicities', arguing that we should move away from the conceptual autonomy of race, end the essential black subject, and dismantle the simple distinction of white oppressor/black oppressed. Race therefore becomes a linguistics categorization, constituted outside a pre-social biologically determined 'nature'.

One result of this was for preferences to develop for the use of alternative terms, such as culture and ethnicity. The use of terms outside 'race' brings the advantage of being able to widen the discussion to consider other non-typically raced groups who fall outside the traditional black–white confines but whose experiences are no less racially significant, especially in more recent times of xeno-racist and new popular racist thinking (Fekete, 2001; Kundnani, 2001; Sivanandan, 2006). For instance, consider the insightful body of work on 'browning' as an identification and **discrimination** process that draws on ethnic, cultural, racial and religious features (Bhattacharyya, 2008; Burman, 2010; Lugo-Lugo and Bloodsworth-Lugo, 2010; Meer and Modood, 2010; Semati, 2010). Here, discrimination refers to the act of unequal treatment of a person(s) because of (real or imagined) views held about their (perceived) group membership. In terms of race, this often refers to membership of racial, ethnic, religious or national groups. Discrimination is often linked to prejudice, although they do not have to occur together. For instance, one can have prejudicial views but not act on these (thus not be discriminatory). Consider, for example, business negotiations or those who fear receiving penalties for discriminatory behaviour (Healey, 2012: 31). **Prejudice** is a related term that refers to the tendency of an individual to think about others in negative, emotionally loaded ways. Prejudice often appears in instances

where there is competition between groups, as it is then used to justify tactics within that competition as well as the privileged status of the winning group (Healey, 2012: 23).

For more modern social science observers, however, race is not only socially constructed, but is done so via a power relationship in society, where being white equals privilege and superiority, and being black equals disadvantage and discrimination. This is maintained and perpetuated due to the dominance of ethnocentric and Eurocentric ideology and power structures. Here, **ethnocentrism** refers to the ways in which members of one ethnic group privilege their group above all others, in particular using their own set of ideals and values to judge others. Often this involves using positive terms to define themselves and derogatory ones to describe others (Melotti, 2003b: 103). The term **Eurocentrism**, which is derived from ethnocentrism, uses Europe as an inevitable and natural reference point for measuring ethnic groups and allocating privilege (Harrison, 2003: 107). Racially based concepts are therefore socio-politically loaded concepts in that their meanings and usage are based on ideas that are developed, maintained and passed on in social human interaction through dialectical and behavioural processes. This is supported not least by the vast amount of work which also disproved the dated ideas from the Enlightenment period around the so-called problematic nature of black people, such as them having poor IQ levels, a proneness to violent behaviour, being untrustworthy, sexually promiscuous, and so on. However, these crude, offensive and outdated ideas continue to dominate and show themselves in a variety of discriminatory practices and attitudes. In suggesting reasons for this, many have pointed to the deeply embedded racism and discriminatory practices of wider society and institutions within that society, practices that are both intentional and unintentional. Thus a combination of the persistence of inaccurate stereotypes and a power imbalance means that racism continues to exist and perpetuate itself in the attitudes, beliefs and very real practices of social processes.

DOES RACE *REALLY* MATTER?

In the words of Cornell West (1993), 'race matters' because it has mattered so much in the lives of millions of people. Race is not a harmless classification system. Race determines status and rights at every level of our lives. One significant way in which race matters is in terms of racism. **Racism** uses race to distinguish and separate groups of people, with the influential group using political, economic and social power to control and exploit other groups. However, Mason (2000: 9) argues that, more recently, the term has problematically been used in more loose ways, for instance to express disapproval of patriotic fervour and in response to ignorance about another's culture. Nevertheless, there is agreement that racism is used as a tool to preserve the power of the dominant group. Although racism can be directed at any racial group, the numbers and types of documented cases has led to it now commonly being taken to refer to the victimization experienced by black and minority ethnic groups at the hands of the white majority. Indeed, bell hooks goes further and refers to this type of racism as 'white supremacist thinking … the invisible and visible glue that keeps white folks connected irrespective of many other differences' (hooks, 2013: 3).

There are many types of racism, although all have very similar motivations, patterns and outcomes. Garner (2010) provides a good discussion of these, but for now it is useful to identify some prominent types of racism. These include:

- **Eco-racism** – this refers to the specific reasoning given for hostility towards migrant communities. This type of racism is presented in ecological terms, using claims about migration causing environmental damage as a reason for racially discriminatory attitudes. For example, population increases lead to the greater use of central heating systems that consume more oil and increase atmospheric pollution. It is argued that using the cover of environmental concern attempts to present the eco-racist as neutral (Braham and Valeri, 2003: 82–83).

- Ideological racism – a belief system which is embedded in culture. Members of that culture are taught stereotypes and negative emotions about other groups. For instance, consider the racist belief system used to justify slavery in the American South, which was absorbed by each new generation of southern whites (Healey, 2012: 32).

- Institutional racism – first coined by Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton in 1967, this refers to the overt and covert 'predication of decisions and policies in considerations of race for the purpose of *subordinating* a racial group and maintaining control over that group' (Carmichael and Hamilton, 1967, reproduced in Cashmore and Jennings, 2001: 112). The term was later popularized following the inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence (Macpherson, 1999), which emphasized more strongly the role played by the organizational culture's routine institutional practices and structures.
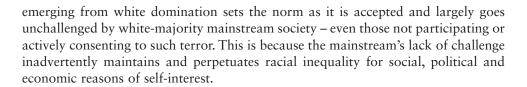
The impact of racism varies. Often it shapes the everyday routines and lives of victims in terms of access to places and spaces or to goods and services. For some, though, the impact goes beyond social limitations. Some victims of racism also go on to experience serious mental health issues. Here, for instance, Williams and Williams-Morris (2010) found that racism in societal institutions in particular negatively impacted on access to resources which limited the socioeconomic mobility and poor living conditions of those experiencing racism. In addition, victims of racism who accepted negative cultural stereotypes also suffered from poor self-evaluation. The impact of racism here thus adversely affected mental health and had a deleterious effect on psychological well-being (Williams and Williams-Morris, 2010: 243). This is supported by other research – see, for example, Landrinel and Klonoff, 1996; Larson, Gillies, Howard and Coffin, 2007; Williams, Neighbors and Jackson, 2003.

There are also other serious impacts of racism: for instance, global slavery; lynching, attacks by the Ku Klux Klan, Jim Crow and segregation in the USA; apartheid in South Africa; the pursuit of Aryan supremacism and the Final Solution in Nazi Germany; and the genocide in Rwanda. These examples indicate that, for some, race is indeed a matter of life or death. Black and minority ethnic experience of the terror

emerging from white domination sets the norm as it is accepted and largely goes unchallenged by white-majority mainstream society – even those not participating or actively consenting to such terror. This is because the mainstream's lack of challenge inadvertently maintains and perpetuates racial inequality for social, political and economic reasons of self-interest.

ACTIVITY

bell hooks (1992) talks about 'white terror' and its power. Consider the ways in which whiteness has been used (if at all) to exert control over others. Is hooks's argument valid today?

In contemporary society, the racialized unequal treatment of black and minority ethnic groups remains rife, although it often presents itself in more masked and reworked forms. However, people of black and minority ethnic background continue to be seen as 'flawed psychologically, morally and socially', not only as individuals, but in terms of their cultures and family life, and indeed every aspect of their lives (Owusu-Bempah and Howitt, 2000: 95). One result is that they are more readily labelled as deviants. The term '**black deviance**' refers to the process by which individuals come to be socially constructed as deviants or in some cases criminal, and where particular reference is made to race, ethnicity, religion or nationality to do this. For example, consider the focus in more recent times of media images, lay stereotypes and even political commentary on strict Asian parents who force their young daughters into arranged marriages; the parasitical nature of work-shy Irish travellers; and the hordes of bogus asylum seekers who are a drain on the county's welfare resources. The imagery of the black and minority ethnic dangerous 'other' also serves to create images of white victims. This is then used to justify further discriminatory attitudes and behaviour (Patel and Tyrer, 2011: 24). For instance, consider the presentation of Romanian and Bulgarian migrants in the lead-up to the free movement transition controls from 1 January 2014[2] and the ensuing attempts to severely restrict their numbers. A number of news organizations, such as the UK's *Daily Mail*, covered the event in depth, and, it can be argued, fuelled feelings of panic, fear, anger and hatred. For instance, look at the *Daily Mail*'s coverage of this news story in the run-up to the free movement of Bulgarian and Romanian migrants (see Image 2.1): the use of a rather downtrodden and shabby looking elderly lady who appears unable to contribute to the economy, against the backdrop of a typically British institution, visually evokes nationalistic emotions of fear and anger. The accompanying narrative is highlighted in parts with shading and bold text, to emphasize the key points of threat, which, the article suggests, runs across all the key areas of society. The message in this visually and textually xeno-racist article is that 'they' are a threat to 'us' and must be stopped, if only to protect all that is British.

Image 2.1 Romanian and Bulgarian free movement in the EU caused particular panic in newspapers such as the UK's *Daily Mail*. Courtesy of the *Daily Mail*, London.

Here we had a moral panic which made direct links between the UK's decline and the 'influx' of migrants. Migrants are imagined as having a predisposition to over-breeding (having lots of babies); causing overpopulation, which leads to a drain on the NHS, housing and education services; participating in 'welfare scrounging' and criminal behaviour; as well as importing a problematic culture into the country. Indeed, it has been argued that so severe and blurred is the immigration–refugee–asylum moral panic that in recent times all non-white people, regardless of whether they are British, a tourist, labouring migrant, or whatever, are being constructed within a wider framework of an asylum hysteria (Garner, 2007; McGhee, 2005).

A number of Human Rights Acts offer protection from many racially discriminatory practices. On an international level, this includes a number of measures introduced to protect people from the most dangerous consequences of racism, such as murder, genocide and enslavement. Examples of legislation include:

- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crime of Genocide (1948)

- Supplement Convention on the Abolition of Slavery and the Slave Trade (1956)

- United Nations Declaration of the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1963)

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)

- European Convention on Human Rights (1950)

- American Convention on Human Rights (1978)

- African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1986)

In the UK, such rights are absolute under the Human Rights Act (1998), and give us rights and freedoms that might not be covered by discrimination legislation, such as the Race Relations [Amendments] Act (2000). In terms of race matters, human rights refer to issues around safety, dignity, society and our private life. It is about the right to equal treatment and freedom from discrimination on (perceived) grounds of race, religion, ethnicity and nationality: 'People have the right not to be treated differently because of race, religion, sex, political views or any other status, unless this can be justified objectively. Everyone must have equal access to Convention rights, whatever their status' (Human Rights Act, 1998, article 14). However, in reality, violations of these Acts occur on a regular basis. For instance, consider the case of Jean Charles de Menezes, shot in 2005 in London's Stockwell tube station, or any other of the numerous cases where black and minority ethnic people experience enhanced victimization by the state (such as stop and search, deaths in custody, over-sentencing), as well as the rising numbers of recorded racist victimizations. Of interest is a body of literature which has found that some black and minority ethnic groups not only fail to report racism, but consider racism to be an inevitable part of their everyday norm. For example, in their study of the perceptions of prejudice by members of the Pakistani

population in Northern Ireland (UK), Donnan and O'Brien (1998: 204–205) found that their respondents felt that racist experiences were a 'normal' and expected part of being a member of the black and minority ethnic (migrant) population living in a white majority society. However, although such views were sometimes shared by the younger members of this ethnic group, not all were so readily accepting of the 'normalization' view.

Not only does race *really* matter in society, but it should also matter to social scientists. Of particular value here, especially in highlighting the relationship between power and racially based injustice (victimhood), is the approach taken by **critical criminology**. Considering itself to be a radical alternative to mainstream criminology, this approach argues that attention must be paid to the determining contexts of social conflict rather than causation factors (Chadwick and Scraton, 2001: 70). As such, the relationship between knowledge and power must be considered (see Foucault, 1980). In particular, critical criminological thought draws our attention to the exploitation and victimization of the powerless, by the powerful, controlling and oppressive state (Scott and Marshall, 2005: 124). In terms of race, it considers the ways in which black and minority ethnic groups have particularly been subjected to discriminatory practices by a criminal justice system and other powerful organizations and institutions that evade accountability.

Case study: Online racism following Nina Davuluri's crowning as Miss America 2014

Nina Davuluri was crowned Miss America in 2014 and became the first Indian American woman to win the title. Davuluri is the daughter of Indian immigrants from Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh (India). She was born in Syracuse, New York, and grew up in Oklahoma and Michigan. Having previously won the title of Miss New York, Davuluri received a mass of online racist and xenophobic abuse, largely via the popular social media platform Twitter, immediately after she won the Miss America 2014 title:

'And the Arab wins Miss America. Classic' – @Granvil_Colt

'Ummm wtf? Have we forgotten 9/11?' – @anthonytkr,

'How the f*** does a foreigner win miss America? She is a Arab!' – @jakeamick5

(Tweets cited in *The Times of India*, 16 September 2013)

The online abuse[3] targeted at Davuluri had centred on her Indian background and what soon became a reimagined shift to a 'Muslim' and 'Arab' heritage. This repositioning served to satisfy a type of anti-Muslim hostility that is framed by the xenophobic sentiments of white-American post-9/11 hatred. Tweets emerged which referred to Davuluri as 'a terrorist', claiming that her win was a victory for Al Qaeda (Broderick, 2013, cited in Cisneros and Nakayama, 2015: 108).

The powerfully explicit 'racial, national and gendered dimensions of the Miss America Pageant' acted as an 'ideal' platform for the festering of the cyber-hate received by Davuluri in that it allowed for the 'old racisms' to present themselves within what is often referred to as a post-race era (Cisneros and Nakayama, 2015: 109). Despite the presence of previous non-white winners,[4] alongside the insistence that we are now living in a post-race era, evident not least in America by the election of Barack Obama, the first black African-American president, the Miss America Pageant nevertheless remains framed by a wider project that seeks to reinforce the imagined racial and gendered logics of the American national identity: the beautiful, feminine and white woman. Of course it is a naturally occurring phenomenon, so the logic goes, given that non-white women are vulgar and sexually deviant (see Chapter 6). Thus the whiteness and national identity ideals (in other words, American-ness) of the Miss America Pageant remain a narrative of racial nationalism, white supremacy and anti-black (or, in 2014, heightened anti-Muslim) hatred.

The use of social media to exhibit such racist ideology was powerful, in part because of the blurred lines between hate speech and freedom of expression when in cyberspace, as well the opportunities for invisibility that are provided when online. Social media also offers a ready means of being able to communicate to large audiences instantly and in real time. In combination, this makes it easy for expressions of hate to spread rapidly and remain unregulated. Cyberspace also allows for older racial logics, that is racialized rationales of inferiority, to be used as a source and expression of abuse. For instance, tweets in the Davuluri case which objected to her being crowned Miss America drew heavily on a number of stereotypes that were characteristic of 'old' race logics about white supremacy, biological/cultural essentialism and exclusion (Cisneros and Nakayama, 2015: 113). Davuluri was 'brown', not only in her biological features, but also in her cultural expression of this difference, this being demonstrated in her self-selected talent performance of a Bollywood fusion dance. By that 'brown' fact alone, she was perceived as being unable to hold the Miss America title – a view held by many of those who sent abusive tweets.

ACTIVITY

What does Nina Davuluri's crowning as Miss America 2014 tell us about how we use racialized labels to determine a national identity?

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The discussion in this chapter has considered in more detail the ways in which 'race' is socially constructed and, from this, how it is then used to discriminate against some populations. The development of race ideology, and in particular its biological, essentialist and cultural roots, has been highlighted to enable a fuller appreciation of how the idea of separate and fixed races, along with the notion of a natural order of

races, continues to dominate social relationships. Within this context, the chapter notes the importance of examining and challenging such racialized constructions and the ensuing experiences of racism. The online racism directed at Nina Davuluri, the 2014 Miss America title holder, is discussed to highlight some of the issues covered in the chapter. The key question raised in the chapter centres on identifying the continued development, application and impact of race markers in what is often referred to as a post-race society.

MAIN POINTS

- Scientific racism was used to present ideas about white superiority and black inferiority.

- Race is socially constructed as it is politically and historically defined.

- Race matters because it allows patterns of racism, in particular the power to control and exploit.

- There are different types of racism, including eco-racism, ideological racism and institutional racism.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How has race been used in the past? How does this differ from its use in contemporary society?

2. To what extent is race socially constructed?

3. If there is no such thing as race, why does society behave as if there is?

4. What is the source of racism?

FURTHER READING

Carmichael, Stokely and Hamilton, Charles V. (1967) 'Black power: The politics of liberation in America', in E. Cashmore and J. Jennings (eds.), *Racism: Essential Readings*. London: Sage. pp. 111–121.
Dyer, Richard (1997) *White*. London: Routledge.
Fekete, Liz (2001) 'The emergence of xeno-racism', *Race and Class*, 43(2): 23–40.

REFERENCES

African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1986).
American Convention on Human Rights (1978).

Bagley, Christopher, Young, Loretta and Scully, Anne (1992) *International and Transracial Adoptions: A Mental Health Perspective*. Aldershot: Avebury.

Berger, Peter and Luckmann, Thomas (1966) *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Doubleday.

Bhattacharyya, Gargi (2008) *Dangerous Brown Men: Exploiting Sex, Violence and Feminism in the War on Terror*. London: Zed Books.

Black, Edwin (2003) *War Against the Weak: Eugenics and America's Campaign to Create a Master Race*. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press.

Bonham, Vence L., Warshauer-Baker, Esther and Collins, Francis S. (2005) 'Race and ethnicity in the genome era: The complexity of the constructs', *American Psychologist*, 60(1): 9–15.

Braham, Peter and Valeri, Mauro (2003) 'Eco-racism', in G. Bolaffi, R. Bracalenti, P. Braham and S. Gindro (eds.), *Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity and Culture*. London: Sage. pp. 82–84.

Britton, Nadia J. (1999) 'Racialized identity and the term black', in S. Roseniel and J. Seymour (eds.), *Practising Identities: Power and Resistance*. London: Macmillan. pp. 134–154.

Burman, Jenny (2010) 'Suspects in the city: Browning the "not-quite" Canadian citizen', *Cultural Studies*, 24(2): 200–213.

Chadwick, Kathryn and Scraton, Phil (2001) 'Critical criminology', in E. McLaughlin and J. Muncie (eds.), *The Sage Dictionary of Criminology*, London: Sage. pp. 70–72.

Cisneros, David J. and Nakayama, Thomas K. (2015) 'New media, old racisms: Twitter, Miss America, and cultural logics of race', *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*, 8(2): 108–127.

Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crime of Genocide (1948).

Donnan, Hastings and O'Brien, Mairead (1998) '"Because you stick out, you stand out": Perceptions of prejudice among Northern Ireland's Pakistanis', in P. Hainsworth (ed.), *Divided Society: Ethnic Minorities and Racism in Northern Ireland*. London: Pluto Press. pp. 197–262.

Downing, John and Husband, Charles (2005) *Representing 'Race': Racisms, Ethnicities and Media*. London: Sage.

Ely, Peter and Denney, David (1987) *Social Work in a Multi Racial Society*. Aldershot: Gower.

European Convention on Human Rights (1950).

Foucault, Michel (1980) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*. Edited by Colin Gordon. Brighton: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Garner, Steve (2007) *Whiteness: An Introduction*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Garner, Steve (2010) *Racisms: An Introduction*. London: Sage.

General Assembly of Virginia (1924) *Racial Integrity Act 1924*. Washington, DC: The Government Printing Office.

Hall, Stuart (1996) 'New ethnicities', in D. Morley and K. Chen (eds.), *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, London: Routledge. pp. 441–449.

Harrison, Gualtiero (2003) 'Eurocentrism', in G. Bolaffi, R. Bracalenti, P. Braham and S. Gindro (eds.), *Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity and Culture*. London: Sage. pp. 107–109.

Healey, Joseph F. (2012) *Diversity and Society: Race, Ethnicity and Gender*. Newbury Park, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Herrnstein, Richard J. and Murray, Charles (1994) *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*. New York: The Free Press.

hooks, bell (1992) *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. Boston, MA: South End Press.

hooks, bell (2013) *Writing Beyond Race: Living Theory and Practice*. New York: Routledge.

Home Office (1998) *Human Rights Act 1998*. London: The Stationery Office.

Home Office (2000) *Race Relations [Amendments] Act 2000*. London: The Stationery Office.

Jensen, Robert (2011) 'Whiteness', in S.M. Caliendo and C.D. McIlwain (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Race and Ethnicity*. Abingdon: Routledge. pp. 21–28.

Knox, Robert (1850) *Races of Man*. Philadelphia, PA: Lea and Blanchard.

Kundnani, Arun (2001) 'In a foreign land: The new popular racism', *Race and Class*, 43(2): 41–60.

Landrinel, Hope and Klonoff, Elizabeth A. (1996) 'The schedule of racist events: A measure of racial discrimination and a study of its negative physical and mental health consequences', *Journal of Black Psychology,* 22(2): 144–168.

Larson, Ann, Gillies, Marisa, Howard, Peter J. and Coffin, Juli (2007) 'It's enough to make you sick: The impact of racism on the health of Aboriginal Australians', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 31(4): 322–329.

Long, Edward (1774) *History of Jamaica*. London: T. Lowndes and Son.

Lugo-Lugo, Carmen R. and Bloodsworth-Lugo, Mary K. (2010) '465° from September 11: Citizenship, immigration, same-sex marriage and the browning of terror', *Cultural Studies*, 24(2): 234–255.

Macpherson, William (1999) *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry*. Cm. 4262-1. London: Home Office (www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm42/4262/4262.htm).

Mason, David (2000) *Race and Ethnicity in Modern Britain*. Second Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McCann-Mortimer, Patricia, Auggoustinos, Martha and LeCouteur, Amanda (2004) '"Race" and the human genome project: Constructions of scientific legitimacy', *Discourse and Society*, 15(4): 409–432.

McGhee, Derek (2005) *Intolerant Britain? Hate, Citizenship and Difference*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

McLaughlin, Eugene (2001) 'Essentialism', in E. McLaughlin and J. Muncie (eds.), *The Sage Dictionary of Criminology*. London: Sage. p. 109.

Meer, Nasar and Modood, Tariq (2010) 'Analysing the growing scepticism towards the idea of Islamaphobia', *Arches Quarterly*, 24(7): 116–126.

Melotti, Umberto (2003a) 'Colonialism', in G. Bolaffi, R. Bracalenti, P. Braham and S. Gindro (eds.), *Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity and Culture*. London: Sage. pp. 39–40.

Melotti, Umberto (2003b) 'Ethnocentrism', in G. Bolaffi, R. Bracalenti, P. Braham and S. Gindro (eds.), *Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity and Culture*. London: Sage. p. 108.

Miles, Robert (1989) *Racism*. London: Routledge.

Moore, Robert (2003) 'Racialization', in G. Bolaffi, R. Bracalenti, P. Braham and S. Gindro (eds.), *Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity and Culture*. London: Sage. pp. 273–274.

Mukhopadhyay, Carol (2011) 'Race', in S.M. Caliendo and C.D. McIlwain (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Race and Ethnicity*. Abingdon: Routledge. pp. 203–207.

Owusu-Bempah, Kwame and Howitt, Dennis (2000) *Psychology Beyond Western Perspectives*. Leicester: The British Psychological Society.

Parrott, Roxanne, Silk, Karri, Dollow, Megan, Krieger, Janice L., Harris, Tina M. and Condit, Celeste (2005) 'Development and validation of tools to assess genetic discrimination and genetically based racism', *Journal of the National Medical Association*, 97(7): 1–11.

Patel, Tina G. and Tyrer, David (2011) *Race, Crime and Resistance*. London: Sage.

Pilkington, Andrew (2003) *Racial Disadvantage and Ethnic Diversity in Britain*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pinder, Sherrow O. (2011) 'Eugenics', in S.M. Caliendo and C.D. McIlwain (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Race and Ethnicity*. Abingdon: Routledge. pp. 138–141.

Rattansi, Ali (2003) 'Race', in G. Bolaffi, R. Bracalenti, P. Braham and S. Gindro (eds.), *Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity and Culture*. London: Sage. pp. 239–245.

Runnymede Trust (2000) *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain*. London: Runnymede Trust.

Scott, John and Marshall, Gordon (2005) 'Criminology, critical', *Oxford Dictionary of Criminology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 124.

Semati, Mehdi (2010) 'Islamaphobia, culture and race in the age of Empire', *Cultural Studies*, 24(2): 256–275.

Sivanandan, Ambalavaner (2006) 'Race, terror and civil society', *Race and Class*, 47(1): 1–8.

Supplement Convention on the Abolition of Slavery and the Slave Trade (1956).

The Times of India (2013) 'Racist tweets mar sweet moment for Nina Davuluri, first Miss America of Indian origin', *The Times of India*, 16 September 2013 (http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/nri/us-canada-news/Racist-tweets-mar-sweet-moment-for-Nina-Davuluri-first-Miss-America-of-Indian-origin/articleshow/22631169.cms).

Tizard, Barbara and Phoenix, Ann (2002) *Black, White or Mixed-Race? Race and Racism in the Lives of Young People of Mixed Parentage*. London: Routledge.

United Nations General Assembly (1963) *United Nations Declaration of the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (1963). New York: United Nations.

United Nations General Assembly (1948) *Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948*. New York: United Nations.

United Nations General Assembly (1966) *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966*. New York: United Nations.

Valeri, Mauro (2003a) 'Afrocentrism', in G. Bolaffi, R. Bracalenti, P. Braham and S. Gindro (eds.), *Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity and Culture*. London: Sage. pp. 6–7.

Valeri, Mauro (2003b) 'Black', in G. Bolaffi, R. Bracalenti, P. Braham and S. Gindro (eds.), *Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity and Culture*. London: Sage. pp. 31–33.

Webster, Colin (2007) *Understanding Race and Crime*. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill/Open University Press.

West, Cornell (1993) *Race Matters*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Williams, David R., Neighbors, Harold W. and Jackson, James S. (2003) 'Racial/ethnic discrimination and health: Findings from community studies', *American Journal of Public Health*, 93(2): 200–208.

Williams, David R. and Williams-Morris, Ruth (2010) 'Racism and mental health: The African American experience', *Ethnicity and Health*, 5(3–4): 243–268.

NOTES

1. This was the series of so-called medical experiments (now referred to as medical torture) on concentration camp prisoners, mainly Jews (including Jewish children) from across Europe, as well as some Romani people, Soviets and disabled Germans. Typically, the experiments resulted in death, disfigurement or being left with a permanent disability.

2. From 1 January 2014 Bulgarians and Romanians were given the freedom to live and work in EU Member States. This brought them in line with the citizens of all other Member States (except Croatians, who will be subject to transitional controls until 2020).
3. For further examples of the tweets Davuluri received, see Cisneros and Nakayama (2015).
4. This includes (the first and only) Jewish winner Bess Myerson in 1945 and (the first) African-American winner Vanessa Williams in 1984, whose wins were incidentally used to satisfy a wider 'race' agenda (Banet-Weiser, 1999, cited in Cisneros and Nakayama, 2015: 112). However, the total number of non-white winners remains significantly low.