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Racialisation

We saw in the previous chapter that there is no consensus on the precise meaning of 'race'. This is necessarily the case because those meanings are not fixed by nature, but are instead dependent on the historical, social and political context. This creates an epistemological problem for researchers (that is, one in which the status of knowledge is at the centre). As 'race' is a social but not biological category, what exactly is the subject of our investigation? If we want to understand the social meanings attached to 'race', rather than 'race' itself, then one solution is to use 'race' with inverted commas to highlight the concept's status as contingent and contested. Another is to adopt the approach whereby the researcher uses the concept to describe what the social actors see and talk about, namely race (with no inverted commas). A third option is to look at the social process by which 'race' comes to be meaningful in a given context.

The concept of racialisation is based on the idea that the object of study should not be 'race' itself, but the process by which it becomes meaningful in a particular context. In fact, racialisation has now become one of the key ways that academics make sense of the 'meanings of race'.

As we noted in chapter 1, Small's (1994: 30) rationale for using the concept of racialisation is illustrative of this approach. Contrary to the focus on 'race relations', he maintains, which first 'assumes that "races" exist and then seeks to understand relations between them', racialisation directs our attention to 'how groups not previously defined as "races" have come to be defined in this way and assesses the various factors involved in such processes'. In this way, it has superseded the 'race relations' paradigm in both the UK and the USA. This has entailed a transition from studies that visualize society as groups of stratified 'races' engaging in competition over various resources ('race relations'), to those that seek to chart the ways in which race is constructed and made meaningful in the context of unequal power relations (racialisation)¹. In the twenty-first century, processes can result in 'race' becoming a salient factor in the way social resources are allocated, that is, racialised.

I DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDINGS OF RACIALISATION²

As noted by Barot and Bird (2001), the term 'racialisation' has a history going back to the end of the nineteenth century, and has since engendered a diversity of understandings. These range from Fanon's interpretation of it as an equivalent of dehumanization through Banton's suggestion that it describes Europeans' response to their encounter with people from the developing world from the fifteenth century onwards (Fanon, 1967; Banton, 1977). Moreover, Miles and

Brown assert that racialisation is a ‘two-way process’ (2003: 102), with which I concur – with qualifications³. Post-colonial scholar Patrick Wolfe (2002: 58) suggests distinguishing ‘not too sharply, between race as concept – which, in this case, provided White men with an alibi – and the activation of that concept in the production of racial subjects, or racialisation. *Racialisation is an exercise of power in its own right, as opposed to a commentary that enables or facilitates a prior exercise of power*’ (my emphasis).

There is thus a broad agreement that racialisation is something detrimental that *is done to* others as part of a power relationship. However, it should also be borne in mind that attaching meaning to one’s own group as a ‘race’, and instilling this meaning with positive attributes (as we shall see below) is a common practice for subordinate groups seeking to defend and assert themselves collectively (see Spivak’s strategic essentialism in the previous chapter). Clearly this form of valorization and the process that Banton, Fanon and Wolfe are talking about are not equivalents. Let’s begin by looking a little more closely at what Frantz Fanon argues.

Box 2.1 Frantz Fanon

Frantz Fanon was born in Martinique in 1925. He joined the Free French army in 1943 and remained in France after the end of the Second World War. There he studied psychology at the University of Lyon and published *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Black Skin, White Masks) in 1952. He later went to Algeria, where he became Head of the Blida-Joinville psychiatric hospital in 1953. His experiences there finally pushed him to withdraw from his relationship with the French state and he joined the Algerian independence movement as an activist. His written work was published in a variety of French-language sources in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In 1960, he was diagnosed with leukaemia and wrote *Les Damnés de la terre* (translated as *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York, 1967) in ten months. He died in 1961 and was buried with full honours by the Algerian state. In the decade following his death, his work was translated into English. Fanon is one of the key writers influencing the development of post-colonial studies, and particularly Edward Said and Homi Bhabha.

Fanon’s theory was that in the binary world of European thought, the development of which ran contemporaneously with colonization, blackness came to embody bad and whiteness good. This process of psychological (as well as material and social) domination creates the categories ‘colonizer’ and ‘colonized’, and people who are identified (and come to identify themselves) as ‘black’ and ‘white’. As part of this relational process, he argues, the European created the ‘negro’ as a category of degraded humanity: a weak, irrational barbarian, incapable of self-government. For Fanon, this psychological process, in the context of physical domination and oppression, was tantamount to dehumanizing the oppressed. His understanding of racialisation was that it comprised the effects of a process instigated to relieve Europeans of guilt and to make the colonized responsible for their own oppression, because in this world view, they are too weak to rule

themselves. To be racialised was thus to have been dehumanized as part of the colonial process.

Michael Banton (1977: 18–19) also links racialisation to the colonial project, although his emphasis is far from Fanon's, on abstract levels:

There was a process, which can be called racialisation, whereby a mode of categorization was developed, applied tentatively in European historical writing and then, more confidently to the populations of the world.

Perhaps it might be useful to step back at this point from the historical specificity that is clearly emphasized by both Fanon and Banton. Not because their ideas are misleading, but because they suppose a certain amount of historical knowledge. Going back to a different starting point, David Skinner (2006: 460), writing on science's contribution to this discourse, argues simply that: "Racialisation" refers to the social and political processes whereby racially distinct groups are constituted'. In science's case, he stresses that this is not in the past only but in contemporary science. Indeed, it is important to stress that while historical methods are an integral component of this approach (how else can change be identified?), the process of racialisation is ongoing and multifaceted. It is very much part of the contemporary world and unfinished business.

This contemporary presence of racialisation is one of the points raised by Miles (1987), whose championing of racialisation as an alternative and improved paradigm to that of 'race relations' is one of the drivers of debate. Miles maintains that racialisation is closely bound up with labour markets: in particular with both internal and international migration of workers and the ensuing imbalance of the power relations characterising modern capitalism. Whilst phenotype is an important marker in which groups get racialised in this process, it is not the crucial feature of a population: take the Irish in nineteenth-century Britain and the Eastern European Jews in early twentieth-century England. These, for example, demonstrate the intimacy of the way in which social relations of class and 'race' intertwine to attach a specific set of racial meanings to a given group's collective behaviour. This process, for Miles, is primarily to do with material context (that is, the labour market and perceived competition between workers). As can be seen from the examples in section II (below), the term has also been deployed outside of this specific context, so it would be true to say there is no consensus either about the usefulness of racialisation, nor about its exact meaning: much like the vast majority of concepts in the social sciences, which are basically models-in-progress that help us understand different aspects of the social world, however imperfectly.

Indeed, whatever problems remain, racialisation represents an essential sociological tool because it draws attention to the *process* of making 'race' relevant to a particular situation or context, and thus requires an examination of the precise circumstances in which this occurs: who the 'agents' are; who the actors are. In other words, who does what and how? It provides us with an alternative to the binaries of racist/anti-racist. Racialisation does not necessarily include ideas of intention, but it does reintroduce ideas of 'race' and force us to look hard enough at our subject to realise that making racial identities also necessitates other forms

of social identification. It restores complexity to a world of either/or. It is never 'just' racism. Ali Rattansi concludes that:

Racialisation tells us that racism is never simply racism, but always exists in complex imbrication with nation, ethnicity, class, gender and sexuality, and therefore a dismantling of racism also requires, simultaneously as well as in the long run, a strategy to reduce relevant class inequalities, forms of masculinity, nationalisms and other social features, whereby racisms are reproduced in particular sites. (2005: 296)

RACIALISATION AS AN IDEA

Racialisation appears therefore to be a deceptively difficult idea to pinpoint. On one hand, the theoretical backing is relatively straightforward. Racialisation represents a strategic withdrawal from the position that 'race' has anything other than a social existence. The next step is to argue that 'race' becomes a meaningful element in social relations because of the existing ideological funds. It is therefore a group-level theory reliant upon a particular understanding of 'ideology' (defined as a set of ideas that distort the representation of social relations). Arguing that there is a process with identifiable outcomes that can be labelled racialisation also necessitates historical perspectives. If not, how can it be proven that there is such a *process* (by definition, a long-term phenomenon)?

My main concerns about the current balance of understandings of racialisation are, first, the degree of intentionality conveyed, and second, the implicit assumption that racialisation is *always and only* something the dominant group does to the dominated one. For the architects of apartheid, Jim Crow⁴ or the Final Solution, which could all be categorized as 'racial projects' (Omi and Winant, 1994), the separation, exploitation and/or elimination of people categorised as racially different was clearly the paramount driving force. However, it would be an error, as suggested in the previous chapter, to imagine extreme examples of racism as constituting the only ground for study and reflection. Racism does not always end in genocide or mass murder, and racialisation is not always an intended objective. Rather, it makes more sense to think of it as an intrinsic feature of the modern State's functions of classification, biopolitics and governance (Goldberg, 2000; Foucault, 2003. We shall return to this in Chapter 4).

I understand racialisation, then, to be a process by which 'race' becomes a salient element of social relationships, frequently as a normal part of the actions of the State and its agencies with other social actors. However, the door should be left open to the idea that racialisation may also be a reflexive act initiated toward an emancipatory end – as a form of group solidarity. As examples, we could cite the Black Power movement and the formation of online fora aimed at, and run by, particular minority groups such as the Chinese and Asians in Britain (as Parker and Song, 2001, argue; see below). So far, so good, yet this leaves us without any concrete examples that would help us understand and further critique racialisation. In the next section, we shall attempt to do this.

II RACIALISATION IN PRACTICE

The contributions to Murji and Solomos' (2005a) collection on racialisation demonstrate a plethora of approaches deploying an array of historical, sociological and psychological methods within the sociology of racism, analysing what is constructed as an uneven and contingent process. That it is uneven is about the only thing that emerges as a consensus. Ann Phoenix (2005), for example, shows how young white Londoners understand their racial identities in relation to those of their black counterparts through experiences of space and place. Deploying ideas from relational psychology, she observes how they theorise themselves as raceless individuals vis-à-vis raced Others. Tony Kushner (2005) argues that racialisation is the most effective tool to take into account the complexity of the responses to Jewish immigration to England at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (by both British Jews and Gentiles). He notes how culture, the residential spatial distribution and the employment practices and experiences of new Jewish immigrants became understood as evidence of racial difference which was threatening to the English working class in particular. David Goldberg (2005), deliberately attempting to avoid using racialisation as what he calls 'an analytic', settles on the specificities of the USA, and contends that a more appropriate way to understand the topic is the 'Americanization of race'. However, it is revealing that even his critique of racialisation entails the examination of a long-term set of interacting processes involving the interplay of structures and agencies, as does racialisation. These three examples are merely to hint at the dizzying array of applications of the idea of racialisation. What we shall do now is take three themes: immigration, nationalism and the construction of minority identities, and apply racialisation to their understanding. It is, of course, not the only way to understand this process but a revealing one.

Application 1: Citizenship

Membership of a nation state is not determined by simply excluding people explicitly on the grounds of 'race'. Historically, nations might be dominated by groups who come to define themselves and others racially. Yet in the contemporary world, direct reference to race as a criterion for membership is highly unusual, and the citizenship rules for many nations now clearly state that this is not a determining factor. When legislators set the rules, they are effectively answering the questions: who is a member of the national 'family', and where are the limits of the 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983)? In this case, racialisation works through the way in which routes to membership are regulated. In terms of broad patterns, the outcome is always to favour the access of some, while placing obstacles in the way of others.

There have broadly speaking been four principal ways to access citizenship since it became a modern phenomenon (with passports, immigration legislation, etc.). Two of these relate to Roman legal concepts: *ius soli* and *ius sanguinis* (see Box 2.2). The others are through changing citizenship through

having complied with a residence qualification (naturalization), or marriage to a national, possibly followed by a residential qualifying period (post-nuptial naturalization).

Box 2.2 Concepts of national belonging

The two concepts governing most nations' citizenship regulations are derived from Roman law. These are *ius soli* and *ius sanguinis*.

Ius soli refers to qualification for membership through birth within a given territory. *Ius sanguinis* refers to qualification through bloodlines (that is, parents' or grandparents' nationality). While most nations combine these routes in their contemporary legislation, this was not always the case. Until the 1970s, for example, French citizenship was gained through birth within France or one of its overseas *départements* or territories, regardless of parents' nationalities (*ius soli*), while the counter-case was Germany. The concept of German nationality is relatively new, as the country was only unified in 1871, then split again after the Second World War. It relied on the idea that German nationality was in the blood and expressed through culture. This meant in effect that after Germany's reunification in 1990, people of German culture who lived outside Germany (especially in Central and Eastern Europe) were granted German nationality (*ius sanguinis*). However, the children of immigrant workers from Southern and Eastern Europe and Turkey, who had been recruited to bolster the German workforce in the post-war period, and who had been born and educated in Germany, had no way of accessing German citizenship. This only changed in 2000 when a new piece of legislation guaranteed the right of access to nationality through birth in Germany and greatly facilitated naturalisation.

The case of the United Kingdom illustrates that there can be movement between these two poles at different times, for different reasons. Until 1948, no distinctions were made in British law other than that between British national and foreign national (or 'alien'). People born in the vast British Empire were deemed British. Only in the post-war period did large-scale migration to Britain appear as a possibility, as the economy required a larger labour supply than could be satisfied from within the country. The 1948 Act distinguished between British, Commonwealth, Irish and Other nationals, without stipulating a difference in rights accruing to members of the first three groups. At this stage, citizenship was clearly based on *ius soli*⁵.

Between 1948 and the early 1960s, discussion of the pros and cons of immigration into Britain occurred at Cabinet level, and became a political issue. A minority of parliamentarians protested against continued 'coloured' immigration (from the former colonies in the West Indies, Africa and the Indian sub-continent). By 1962, immigrants from these areas had to have a work visa, for which there was a quota – the first attempt to limit specific streams of immigration (see above). The intensity of debates on immigration and what was

referred to as 'race relations' in those days peaked in the late 1960s. In February 1968, the 'Kenyan Asians' crisis occurred. Indian families resident in Kenya and their Kenyan-born children were forced to leave the country by its new leaders. Faced with the prospect of the arrival of tens of thousands of so-called 'coloured' immigrants with British passports (which was perceived to be a potential cause of hostility toward the government), the British parliament passed a new piece of legislation with unheard – of rapidity: three days for all the readings of a Bill. The 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act deployed the concept of people with a 'substantial connection' to Britain. This was defined as having a parent or grandparent born in the UK. Those without this connection no longer had the right to automatic entry, residence and employment. The British passport-holding 'Kenyan Asians' were, at a stroke, rendered stateless. Note that the *ius soli* criterion now applied to a much smaller territory: the UK rather than the British Empire, or the UK and its former colonies. Here too is the introduction of the idea of 'patriality', or bloodlines (*ius sanguinis*) into the qualification for rights in Britain. However, all of this, and the ensuing 1971 Immigration Act referred only to immigration and not nationality per se. It was not until 1981, after the oil crisis that had reduced levels of primary immigration in Europe (and making family reunification a significant proportion of new immigration), that a British government incorporated the developments of the previous decades into citizenship legislation. The 1981 British Nationality Act set out three broad layers of citizenship (and is the only country's legislation that splits up rights accruing to nationals) and allows for eight hierarchical layers of rights-bearing nationals. At the top of this are those who were born in the UK on or after 1 January 1983, and whose parents are UK nationals or have permanent residence in the UK. So from a situation whereby all imperial subjects and those from the UK had been equally 'British' in legal terms until the 1960s, different criteria were steadily applied to people from areas of the world where non-white people were the vast majority, thus regulating employment opportunities and residence in the UK. Finally, in 1981, the pool from which British nationals with the full range of citizens' rights were drawn was fixed in order to limit access to it by people from the former empire. Take into consideration that after 1971 it had already become more difficult for former colonial subjects to enter Britain, making it less likely that they would form part of the pool of people born in the UK or who had permanent residence rights there. The intimacy of legislation with immigration and citizenship, as well as the racialised character of both, can thus be observed from this very short summary.

As a coda, when Britain signed up to the Single European Act in 1986, it granted freedom of residence and employment to the nationals (of whom the vast majority are white) of all the other EU member states. In terms of rights, this group is now second of the nine (previously eight) levels set out in the 1981 Nationality Act. So while legislation and regulations can be talked about as though they are 'neutral' administrative categories, they do, in practice, favour some groups over others, and the reasons why they do so can be traced to political decision making at particular historical moments.

Box 2.3 Japanese nationalism

Bruce Armstrong (1989) argues that over the period from the Meiji Restoration (1868) to the 1940s, Japanese nationalist ideology became racialised in different ways. The new unitary state needed a unifying language, a project, which developed around a combination of Shinto myths and the idea of the Japanese people as a family headed by the Emperor. Japanese culture was viewed as uniquely the property of those born into this family, and contrasted with other Asian people colonized in the Japanese empire (e.g. Taiwanese and Koreans) who were not phenotypically distinguishable from the Japanese. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, prominent intellectuals explained ideas of Japanese cultural and technological specificity by biological traits, as the ideas of social Darwinism developed from the European imperial enterprise were adapted to explain Japan's military domination. The reasons given for Japan's superiority were both genetic and cultural, and indeed Japan's destiny was to lead and control. This was so ingrained by the 1940s that even though direct references to 'inferior races' in the Empire were dropped, in favour of 'Japan overseas', the underlying racialised distinction remained important. Moreover, the large number of Koreans resident in Japan (due to the forced labour migration that followed Japan's annexation of Korea in 1909) remained distinct from the Japanese nation. Japanese citizenship is based primarily on *ius sanguinis*, although it was possible for naturalization, conditional upon taking Japanese names (which most Koreans found unacceptable).

Armstrong's example of Japan shows interaction with global discourses of colonialism (the master race dominating others and social Darwinism); the proximity of biological and cultural forms of racialisation; and the prominence of the idea of bloodlines in forging ties as part of the nation-building process. As we shall see in Chapter 4, nationalism and racism as ideas and practices are frequently this close.

Application 2: Immigration

Immigration policies are implemented using classificatory regimes that distinguish between nationals and foreigners, and then between different categories of foreigners. Each category is afforded a set of rights and a set of criteria for entrance and activity within the national territory. These criteria are not based on 'race' in any obvious way, but by nationality. In the early twenty-first century, for the developed economies, the more stringent conditions are, as a general rule, placed on nationals of developing countries.

So when applied to immigration policies, what can racialisation mean? Firstly, the official framing of discourse on immigration alters dramatically over time. The first immigration laws per se in the world (in Canada and the USA) in the 1880s were clearly racist, explicitly either banning or taxing only Chinese migrants. In the run-up to these pieces of legislation, Chinese immigrants had been blamed for stealing employment from their North American hosts, and corrupting their morals⁶. Secondly, identifying a policy as 'racialising' does not exhaust its meanings. A policy does not only have one outcome: it can combine forms of de facto exclusion – 'race', class, religion. To take an example, the UK's Aliens' Bill at the beginning of the twentieth century was directed at stemming the flow of East European Jews into

Britain, yet the final wording of the Aliens Act, 1905, stipulated that immigration officials had the right to prevent disembarkation of passengers who had paid for the cheapest class of passage and could not show proof of funds to support themselves once in the country. In practice, the implementation of the Act thus targeted poorer East European Jews, excluding them on the basis of 'race', religion and class simultaneously, but not by one of these identities alone.

However, in Europe, more than a century later, there are no outright bans on nationals of any country immigrating, nor are there exclusions of people by racial group. Indeed, all the EU nations must have equality legislation outlawing racial discrimination and providing redress to its victims. Moreover, particular visa schemes for seasonal workers, at one end, up to professionals in specific areas of employment, such as medicine, computing and civil engineering at the other end of the spectrum, target workers from outside the EU. Added to this, with the accession of the new Central and Eastern European countries to the EU in 2004, there are hundreds of thousands more white migrant workers in the West. From this starting point, I would argue that the immigration policies of European Union member states have been racialised over the last few decades.

However, we should remember that racialisation does not depend on either/or logic. They do not either exclude people completely or not exclude them at all. Immigration policies favour some categories of people over others, which means allocating differential levels of resources and rights to them once they are on national territory. Secondly, it should be noted that public policy and attitudinal responses to phenomena are neither always national nor rational. They are not purely national, because debates on immigration are affected by external events, e.g. the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the ramifications of the 9/11 attacks outside the USA, the 7/7 bombings in Britain, wars that generate large flows of asylum-seekers, etc. They are not purely rational because different kinds of migrants get lumped together in popular and political debates, so that people end up not knowing the differences between asylum-seekers, people with refugee status and labour migrants. Public expectations of public policy are therefore confused. Moreover, other research shows that for many people, belonging to a nation corresponds primarily with skin colour, and anyone who is not white might at certain times be assumed to be a foreigner.

The example I am going to use is of the way in which recent changes to the European Union's immigration policy have impacted negatively on the majority of Third World nationals. There are four relevant phases involving an EU policy. The first is the creation of the Schengen Area.

In the mid-1980s, an attempt was made to implement one of the founding aims of the European Union, that is, freedom of goods and people across internal borders. The Schengen Treaty now has the support of the majority of EU states and it means freedom of movement for EU nationals across the borders of the signatory countries. A non-EU national can obtain a Schengen Visa allowing travel within all the Schengen states for a set period (usually three months for tourists). The second element of importance is the recognition by the Treaty of Maastricht (1992) of the reciprocal rights of EU nationals in each other's countries. Greek nationals, for example, can reside and work in the UK without having to obtain a visa. After paying into the UK social security system for the same period as UK nationals have to do in order to qualify, they can receive benefits. The combined effect of these two developments is the preferential treatment afforded EU nationals in this area. The knock-on effects are

that as internal borders become less important, the efforts exerted on strengthening external borders have increased. The most relevant distinction in the twenty-first century EU immigration regime is not between Germans and Italians, nor between Portuguese and Irish, but between EU nationals and non-EU nationals (or as they are called in EU jargon, 'Third Country Nationals', or TCNs).

It is now more difficult than it was 30 years ago for non-EU nationals to gain access to this zone, as they have to comply with the criteria for a Schengen Visa (or a UK and Ireland one). One important criterion states that in order to change status (from a tourist to migrant worker or student, for example) the visa-holder must leave the Schengen Area and return to their country of normal residence, or failing that, the nearest with diplomatic representation. Therefore, the old ties of former colonies with the metropolis which had enabled people to move relatively easily to Britain, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain and Portugal for instance, under preferential conditions, have now been minimised relative to those countries' new responsibilities to *each others'* nationals.

The third important element in the equation is the phenomenon of 'managed migration', which is where a state seeks to focus on particular types of migrant by creating special visa schemes, or granting extra benefits to migrants with a particular profile, or developing a points-based system that favours migrants with particular skills. While this usually targets highly skilled workers (typically those from the health care, IT and civil engineering sectors), enabling TCNs to enter and reside within the EU, the conditions attached to these visas are usually neither particularly liberal nor conducive to settlement and integration (being short-term and granting minimal benefits and family reunion rights). The fourth element is the expansion of the EU eastwards. As increasing numbers of people from economies with lower wage levels than Western Europe enter the EU labour market, this has the effect of further reducing the chances of TCNs finding legal work outside of the highly skilled visa schemes, and also may well provide competition for those indigenous ethnic minority groups within the EU member states who are disproportionately concentrated at the lower levels of the socio-economic structure. Some countries even specify that job opportunities must be filled or at least offered to an EU national before it is offered to a non-EU national. All in all, this has meant that since the mid-1980s, EU member states have turned away from using non-European labour, and at the same time, intergovernmental action has resulted in a two-tier immigration regime (see Chapter 10 for asylum) in which EU nationals have rights very close to those of citizens. Although this has developed over a 25-year period through a number of individual, connected routes, the overall effect has been the racialisation of the EU immigration regime. White European manual workers now have a vast advantage over non-white, non-European manual workers. Even if someone from the latter category somehow found a visa scheme that allowed him/her to work legally in an EU country, that person would need to live there continuously for a certain number of years (probably 5–8 depending on the country), qualify and wait for the naturalisation process to finish (which means years of paying taxes without having rights). Remember that living continuously in an EU country is hampered by the fact that visas are often quite short-term, maybe 12–24 months, and sometimes non-renewable. Therefore, nationality and employment status count much more than other criteria towards obtaining access to labour markets. The obstacles in front of non-EU workers are much stiffer in relation to those in front of their European counterparts.

Box 2.4 Immigration regimes

Until recently, the national State had determined all the criteria used for immigration control. Exceptions to this rule were the *international* conventions on refugees (1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 New York Protocol), which set out the criteria for deciding who was a refugee and what status could be conferred on that person. While this is substantially true now, the European Union member states have de facto abrogated part of their right to operate their own criteria in respect of other member states' nationals. All EU member-state nationals have the right of residence and employment (and having qualified, the right to access welfare) in any member state (exceptions include nationals of the A8 everywhere except the UK, Ireland and Sweden). The context is important because international agreements then become structured around different rights enjoyed by EU nationals on the one hand, and non-EU nationals (referred to as 'Third Country Nationals' or TCNs in the EU's bureaucratic phrase) on the other. Control is exerted by placing conditions on entry, and on what rights different nationals enjoy while within national territory. The variables include whether or not the migrant has to have an entry visa; whether he/she has adequate funds; for what purpose they are entering national territory; how long they are allowed to stay; what rights they will have while in the country; who is allowed to join them; whether they are allowed to come and go without obtaining a new visa, etc. Given that these appear to be purely administrative variables, how can the process become racialised? Answer: in the placing of different conditions on people from different places, and in the practice of immigration control. The immigration regime is not a level playing field: some nationals are subject to far greater scrutiny when they apply for visas than are others. Secondly, the officials who administer the various levels of immigration control (external, border and internal) are not all trained to the same level of professionalism and some seek to be more strenuous in their application with people from outside Europe and Europeans who are not white.

In effect, this means that it becomes harder for (non-white) non-EU nationals to enter and work legally in Europe, while it becomes easier for whites. I would argue that US, Canadian, Japanese and, to some extent, Australian and New Zealand nationals do not face the same levels of scrutiny. Non-EU nationals are subject to more stringent visa regimes and immigration controls. They are required to provide higher standards of proof of identity and solvency, and since the enlargement of the EU, they compete at a structural disadvantage with new A8 migrants in Ireland, Sweden and the UK, and in the future, will compete in the other EU member-states. Administrative regulations that are, bureaucratically neutral are, in practice, discriminatory. This is a local story on local labour markets, but the rules are set at inter-governmental and member-state level.

Application 3: Self-racialisation

While it is clear that a group of people *can* be racialised by dominant groups, and thus transformed into a subordinate social category by a combination of ideological, cultural and legislative practices, inhabiting this social location can sometimes be a rallying point for solidarity, campaigns against discrimination and more. In this section, I want to give two examples of this: the Black Power movement and the

online fora 'British-born Chinese'⁷ represent diverse efforts to base social movements and explorations of shared identity around the idea of belong to a 'race'.

'Black Power'

For decades after the formal ending of slavery, African Americans endured institutionalised discrimination in employment, housing and education. They were also targeted for extra-legal punishments such as lynching and beatings for transgressing, or appearing to transgress the Jim Crow legislation and wider social codes that required them to behave in particular ways, and keep away from particular places. One of the legacies of the slavery and immediate post-abolition period was the social message that white was still superior to black. One of the ways in which this was expressed was for some to physically engineer a 'whitening' process using a range of products for the skin and hair.

By the mid 1960s, however, one stream of thought in black America was aimed at re-evaluating the term 'black', which had been so negatively endowed for so long, with new positive meanings. Malcolm X recounts in his autobiography (X and Haley, 1969) how part of his conversion to Islam in prison in the 1950s involved a fellow inmate encouraging him to sit with a dictionary and read through the entries for 'white' and 'black' respectively, and to compare the meanings attributed to them. The domination of white Americans, ran the argument, involved not only physical but mental subjugation, making black Americans internalise ideas of inferiority. These expressed themselves in many ways, and one of them was by straightening natural hair and avoiding association with anything African. On the contrary, black people who were part of the Black Power movement allowed their hair to grow naturally, in Afro styles, sometimes wore clothing and took names associated with their African heritage. The phrase 'Black is Beautiful' was coined in this period, and people who identified with this project eschewed cultural identification with white culture. The movement thus focused on both cultural resistance to the American norms, to one that encompassed political action, and on economic self-sufficiency rather than integration in white society, but based on black solidarity. A range of figures such as Robert Williams (who first coined the term 'Black Power'), Stokely Carmichael/Kwame Touré⁸, Malcolm X, Amiri Baraka and Angela Davis were nationally prominent in this diverse movement, whose vanguard was provided by the Black Panther Party. A key iconic moment came at the 1964 Olympic Games, when two American medallists in the 200m, Tommy Smith and John Carlos, gave the Black Power salute (outstretched right arm and clenched fist, wearing gloves) during the playing of the national anthem, an action that provoked hostile mainstream media coverage in America, as did the Black Power movement in general.

Although the Black Panther Party, for example, was effectively closed down by the authorities, and influential figures were killed or imprisoned, many ideas attached to Black Power itself, such as self-reliance, the nourishment of collective self-esteem and the need to focus on developing institutions and economic autonomy have survived. Not that these did not exist before the 1960s. Black Power was never a homogenous movement, and some of its critics were also black Americans, who considered it a controversial anti-white path away from the policy of slow integration into mainstream America that they had been seeking over generations, and toward unnecessary confrontation. However, this does not detract from the idea that in this movement, the negative associations of blackness were confronted and an attempt was made to

reverse them, to make black beautiful, in a context where it had not been, and to fix blackness as the rallying point from which people could campaign for equality⁹.

'BBC'

BBC does not only stand for the British Broadcasting Corporation but also 'British-born Chinese'. Indeed, David Parker and Miri Song (2006) argue that British-born Chinese online fora constitute an example of 'strategic essentialism' (see Box 1.2), and this process of 'reflexive racialisation' helps a community orientate itself around shared experiences involving being racialised as Chinese in Britain. Both parts of this equation are significant. While ties with mainland China, Hong Kong and the global Chinese diaspora are acknowledged and engaged in, there is also a sense that the concerns of the contributors to the fora are specifically grounded in typical BBC experiences, such as facing verbal abuse at restaurants run by family (2006: 583), and inadequate police responses to harassment. Parker and Song contend that: 'Taken together the messages constitute a collective witness to the experience of growing up as Chinese in Britain' (Ibid.: 584).

The argument is that the complexity of racialisation is the result of the two-tier process of homogenisation (finding commonality) of BBCs, and critically examining the internal differences of the group. The ongoing discussion thus opens up the possibility of *reflexively* developing a broad identity with a racial or ethnic basis, that is, critically examining it rather than taking it at face value. Yet this construction of British-born Chineseness, if you like, is openly recognised as *not* constituting a homogenising plea for biological and cultural authenticity. Indeed, some members reacted angrily to what was interpreted as exactly such a plea from an American-based Chinese website. For Parker and Song, the 'offline' context is one of racism experienced in particular settings that are familiar to the vast majority of BBCs, and this background 'overdetermines' (2006: 584) both the content and process of racialisation.

Moreover, the website has been the nucleus of campaigning against pernicious representations of the Chinese in Britain, as in the campaign to stop scapegoating Chinese food over the Foot and Mouth health scare in April 2001, as well as responses to other negative portrayals in the media. There are also offshoots of the site in civil society, with organizations representing BBCs developing out of it and sister websites appearing. It is also a site that is used as an obvious platform for groups campaigning around issues important to the membership. So, in this case, one of racialisation 'from below', as the authors put it, it demonstrates that the social process does not always have to be carried out as a direct effect of power being exerted to frame representations of a minority and/or dominated group in a negative way. It can also be a response to this minority position: an attempt to create a space in which experiences are drawn on in order to resist dominant representations and forge a positive identity that recognises plurality within a specific social location.

CONCLUSION

There is no consensus over the exact meaning or significance of racialisation, but there is broad agreement that it represents a step forward from essentialised race relations, and that seeing identity as a process is a useful perspective.

There are a wide variety of meanings ranging from the largely descriptive one, the increasing salience of ‘race’ in a given context, to something imposed as a result of unequal power relations, on one hand and, on the other, something minority groups can do, on purpose, as part of their resistance struggles. Such diversity makes racialisation of limited use beyond a certain analytical level without qualification which I hope to have suggested above. Allowing the understanding of racialisation as potentially a two-way process also moves us away from the one-way street model and toward the conclusion that racialisation is not a crude *synonym* of racism, but a means by which racism can be made functional and sustained, as well as resisted.

NOTES

- 1 ‘Race relations’ are discussed by Kushner (2005) for the UK and Jacobson (1998) for the USA. Rex (1970) is the most complete sociological exposition in my opinion.
- 2 After this chapter, the reader may wish to turn to the excellent introductory essay by Karim Murji and John Solomos (2005b) that introduces their collection (Murji and Solomos, 2005a), and Rattansi’s (2005) critical analysis in the same volume. While some of the argument presented above is covered, theirs goes into further detail about the distinctions made by more writers than I can deal with in an introductory text.
- 3 See Miles and Brown, 2003: 102. Moreover, subordinate groups can make claims for representation and solidarity based on positive interpretations of ‘race’ – the ‘Irish Race conventions’ in twentieth-century urban America and the Black Power movement, for example. However, such strategies are responses to unequal power relations.
- 4 Jim Crow was the name given to the raft of state laws, practices that institutionalised segregation and violence against African Americans during the post-slavery period until the passage of the Civil Rights Act (1876–1964). See the *Jim Crow History* website at: www.jimcrowhistory.org/
- 5 Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston’s well-known speech in the House of Commons on the ‘Don Pacifico’ incident in 1850 encapsulates this: ‘As the Roman, in days of old, held himself free from indignity when he could say “Civis Romanus Sum” [I am a Roman citizen], so also a British subject in whatever land he may be, shall feel confident that the watchful eye and the strong arm of England will protect him against injustice and wrong’.
- 6 See California History Online (www.californiahistoricalsociety.org/timeline/chapter7/c003.html) accessed 30 March 2009; Saxton, 1990; Chang, 2004. In the USA, the Chinese Exclusion Act 1882 followed the victory of the California Workingmen’s Party in 1879. In Canada, there were three pieces of legislation placing a ‘head tax’ on Chinese immigrants that was not applicable to other migrants. These were the Chinese Immigration Acts of 1885, 1900 and 1904. Finally, an act banning Chinese immigration outright was passed in 1947.
- 7 For British-born Chinese, see www.britishchineseonline.com/ – this is probably equally true of the ‘Dim Sum’ site (www.dimsum.co.uk/).
- 8 A text of a speech made at UC Berkeley in 1966 and an audio recording can be accessed at www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/stokelycarmichaelblackpower.html
- 9 See Van Deburg (1992) and Joseph (2006) for examples of analyses, as well as the foundational text by Carmichael and Hamilton (1967).