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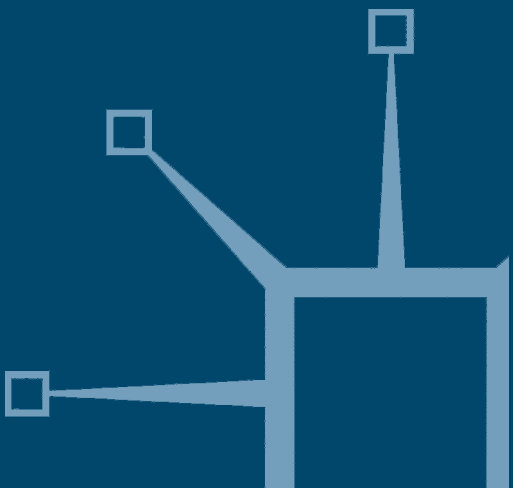
Racism and Public Policy

Edited by

Yusuf Bangura and Rodolfo Stavenhagen



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Yusuf Bangura
United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

and

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ASB	Amanah Saham Bumiputera
ASN	Amanah Saham Nasional
BCIC	Bumiputera Commercial and Industrial Community
BN	Barisan Nasional (Malaysian National Front coalition)
BNP	British National Party
BOP	Black Officers Forum (South Africa)
BPA	Black Police Association
CBNRM	community-based natural resources management
CETA	Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (US)
CICU	Central Information Collection Unit (Malaysia)
Congo (DR)	Democratic Republic of Congo
CPFs	community-police forums
CPI	Consumer Price Index
DAP	Democratic Action Party (Malaysia)
DF	Danish People's Party
DVU	German People's Union
EOI	export-oriented industrialization
FN	Front National (France)
4MP	*Fourth Malaysia Plan, 1981–1985*
FP	Denmark Progress Party
FPÖ	Austrian Freedom Party
FPS	Swiss Freedom Party
FrP	Norway Progress Party
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
Gerakan	Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (Malaysian People's Movement)
HART	Halt All Racial Tours
ICA	Industrial Coordination Act (Malaysia)
ICD	Independent Complaints Directorate (South Africa)
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISI	import substitution industrialization
KLSE	Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange
LAPD	Los Angeles Police Department
LN	Northern League (Italy)

MCA	Malaysian Chinese Association
MIC	Malayan Indian Congress
MNCs	multinational corporations
MOOHR	Maori Organization on Human Rights
MRN	Republican National Movement (France)
MSI	Italian Social Movement
MTO	Moving to Opportunity programme (US)
MTR5MP	*Fifth Malaysia Plan, 1986–1990*, Mid-Term Review
MWWL	Maori Women's Welfare League
NDP	National Development Policy (Malaysia)
NEP	New Economic Policy (Malaysia)
NGOs	non-governmental organizations
NICs	newly-industrialized countries
NPD	National Democratic Party (Germany)
NRC	National Research Council (US)
OPP	Outline Perspective Plans (Malaysia)
ÖVP	Austrian People's Party
PAS	Parti Islam (Malaysia)
Pernas	Perbadanan Nasional (Malaysia)
PMIP	Pan Malaysian Islamic Party
PNB	Permodalan Nasional Berhad (Malaysia)
POPCRU	Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (South Africa)
PSE	Public Service Employment programmes (US)
REP	Republican Party (Germany)
SAPS	South African Police Service
SEDCs	state economic development corporations (Malaysia)
SOEs	state-owned enterprises
SRI	Suspension Reduction Initiative (NZ)
SVP	Swiss People's Party
UDA	Urban Development Authority (Malaysia)
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UMNO	United Malays National Organization
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
VB	Flemish Bloc (Belgium)
WTO	World Trade Organization

Preface

This book is a product of UNRISD's contribution to the third *World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Intolerance*, which was held in Durban in 2001. The Institute invited more than 30 prominent scholars from all regions of the world to prepare papers and lead discussions in a parallel conference that focused on the research and policy dimensions of the problems of racism. High-level public figures, development policy analysts and advisers from within and outside the United Nations system chaired the ten panels. The former High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, opened the conference by highlighting the strong links between inequality of treatment, or racial discrimination, and inequality of outcomes as measured in terms of income, wealth, social development and power.

Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance are global problems. They affect the life-chances of individuals, social groups, institutions and public policies that seek to promote cohesion, equity and development. Even though the concept of race has been challenged by recent findings in genetic research, physical differences continue to influence perceptions and are an important source of prejudice in human interactions. Discussions on racism can be emotive as they often touch on issues of identity, dignity, justice and historical violations. The main value of the UNRISD conference was the neutral platform it provided to discuss the sensitive issues that world leaders were grappling with in the inter-governmental forum. It addressed the social construction of race and citizenship; the socio-economic and political forces that drive racism and inequalities; organized responses to cultural diversity; and the impact of various types of public policies on race relations.

This book discusses two important public policy issues that have been central to debates on racism. The first deals with citizenship. The history of efforts to establish accountable public sectors in multiracial societies is largely about struggles to roll back racial barriers and create a normative or legal order in which all are treated equally. Universal citizenship requires respect for cultural diversity, tolerance and accommodation. The world has certainly made progress in combating the scourge of racism and expanding the frontiers of citizenship. It is difficult to find a state that currently defines itself in racial terms or explicitly supports public policies that are racially discriminating. However, a

gulf remains between theory, or law, and practice. Many individuals who work in the public sector of many countries still hold racist views and discriminate against others they consider to be different. In other words, formal equality has not translated into substantive equality. It is not surprising that institutional racism currently dominates discussions on racism. The world should not relent in its efforts to rid the public sphere of racist individuals, values and practices.

The second issue is about social justice and equitable governance. These are needed to achieve stability and consolidate the values of citizenship. However, redistributive policies are not always easy to implement since they affect people differently. Losers may resist the policies, and winners may not be strong enough to defend them. However, governments often have room for active redistributive policies. The book shows that the content, application and outcomes of redistributive policies in ethno-racial societies may vary according to whether the disadvantaged population constitutes the majority group, has attained formal citizenship long enough to defend it and has strong access to policy-making institutions; or whether beneficiaries are a minority with limited influence on government. Redistributive policies thus vary a lot in countries such as the United States, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Malaysia, Brazil and India.

We would like to thank the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs for funding the conference. Thanks are also due to the governments of Denmark, Finland, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom for their core funding. Finally, we wish to thank Thomas Ansorg for helping to organize the conference and developing the conference website, and Michele Tan for formating the manuscript and checking the references.

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Introduction: Racism, Citizenship and Social Justice

Yusuf Bangura and Rodolfo Stavenhagen

At the beginning of the twentieth century, W. E. B. du Bois, the pre-eminent intellectual of the African-American people, foretold that it would be the century of the 'color line'. During the decades that followed, the world witnessed the rise and fall of Nazism, the Holocaust, the civil rights movement in the United States, the end of colonialism and apartheid, the emergence of indigenous peoples as political actors on the international scene, the renewal of racism in Europe and the horrendous spectacle of ethnic cleaning and genocide in Bosnia and Rwanda. A century on, the 'color line' is still with us, separating peoples and cultures, dividing the powerful from the downtrodden. Even as it binds some together in tight ethnic communities, it ties up many others in conceptual knots.

Racism exists in varying degrees in all regions of the world. Slavery, colonialism, genocide, the Holocaust and apartheid represent its most extreme form in world history; but other overt and subtle forms of racism persist in countries around the world. Racism affects social relations, influences structures of opportunities and life-chances and may provoke violence and wars. The legacy of institutionalized racism continues to weigh heavily on the development prospects of many groups and countries, constrains prospects for social cohesion, and affects implementation of public policies for equality, justice and social development.

Thinking on racism has undergone important changes since the founding of the United Nations.[1] During the first phase, racism was identified mainly with the legacy of Nazi ideology. Nazi racism was based on a carefully constructed pseudo-scientific ideology of racial purity and superiority, which has its roots in numerous strands of Western thought and found its way into the language of academic anthropology, biology, psychology and other disciplines. Today, scien-

tific racism no longer commands any academic recognition whatsoever, but can still be found under various guises in some scholarly institutions and publications (Barkan, 1992). The first activities of the United Nations in the struggle against racism relate to eliminating this legacy from the postwar world, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 well expresses this concern.[2]

The next phase relates to the struggle against colonialism and the fight of colonized peoples everywhere for freedom and national liberation as well as the fight to end apartheid. The 1950s and 1960s saw numerous former colonies achieve independence, and also witnessed the civil rights movement in the United States. Colonial racism was formally abolished, but its effects linger on in many parts of the world. The United Nations proclaimed the right to self-determination in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples of 1960, later incorporated as Article 1 of the Human Rights Covenants adopted by the General Assembly in 1966.[3] Emphasis shifted from individual attitudes and structured racist ideologies to the rights of peoples and the building of a new, more equitable international order. The rise to prominence of the Third World framed the background for a new scenario of international inequities, later to be accentuated by the process of economic globalization.

During the 1970s and 1980s racism re-emerged in a new guise, this time in the industrial heartlands of the North, involving mainly migrant labourers from the periphery, refugees and former colonial subjects. Incidents of racist violence, including riots, increased in the urban neighbourhoods of Western Europe. Racial discrimination was reported in the areas of education, housing, employment, health services and the criminal justice system, in which the youth of racial minorities have been particularly singled out through a process of 'criminalization'. Besides Blacks, Latinos have been prominent victims of racial profiling and discrimination in the United States.[4]

A number of states began to see racism not as a series of isolated incidents, but as a patterned and structured social problem. Massive transnational migration flows provoked widespread political debates about the perceived dangers of too many foreign migrants, the need for demographic 'balance', the control of borders, and so forth. Latent racism became manifest once again, and politicians capitalized by playing the 'immigrant-racial' card. The emergence and voter appeal of extreme right-wing political parties raised the issue to new levels. Some states enacted anti-discrimination legislation and new immigration laws, others set up commissions to study racial issues, and the European

Parliament prepared reports and passed resolutions on the topic. Racism in Europe had once more become an international issue of concern.

The nature of the debate was changing, however. Few people openly advocated racial discrimination of the phenotypical variety, and in the new global environment, the very concepts of race and racial relations were undergoing transformation. As immigrant communities mushroomed in the industrial states, perceived biological distinctions meshed with recognized cultural differences. In some countries, 'race relations' became a code-word for relations between culturally differentiated communities. Human rights defenders were now no longer advocating general equality (which seemed to many to be unattainable), but a new concept: *the right to be different*. States were expected to become less assimilationist and more pluralistic. Cultural differences were not to be abolished, but respected and celebrated. The always elusive melting-pot was to be replaced by a spicy multicultural salad bowl.

This book addresses two important public policy issues that have influenced debates on racism. The first is the complex ways racial cleavages have shaped the evolution of citizenship, especially in countries marked by deep ethno-racial divisions. Much of the history of efforts to construct a responsive and accountable public sphere can be seen as struggles to demolish racial barriers and incorporate previously excluded groups into the system of rights and obligations that define citizenship. The struggle for universal citizenship underscores the need for governments, civil society groups, corporations and development agencies to respect cultural diversity and its underlying values of tolerance, accommodation and human solidarity.

The second issue is the promotion of social justice and equitable governance, which are seen as fundamental requirements for achieving stability and consolidating the values of citizenship. However, reforms that seek to promote social justice and equitable governance are often beset with difficulties because they deal with redistributive issues. They may be seen in zero-sum terms by some citizens. Those who stand to lose may resist or undermine the reforms, while those who stand to gain may not be strong enough to defend them. Concerns for fiscal prudence under conditions of liberal competitive markets may also act as a constraint on the bridging of inequalities.

The social construction of race and citizenship

It is now widely accepted that race is socially constructed, not biologically determined. The practice of classifying humans according to dis-

tinct races has been discredited by genetic research. On average, 99.9 per cent of the genetic features of humans are the same; of the remaining percentage, which accounts for variation, differences within groups are larger than between groups (Cavalli-Sforza, Menozzi and Piazza, 1996). Despite efforts to disseminate these findings, including the adoption of the International Convention against All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1965, a gulf exists between scientific knowledge and popular beliefs about race. Trivial as physical differences may be in accounting for biological attributes, they structure perceptions and constitute a significant source of prejudice in social relations. As a social construct, the key attributes of race are fuzzy and open to multiple interpretations: different groups may use different yardsticks in different settings to define similar populations or individuals. A coloured person in South Africa may be classified as black in the United States even if he or she has more white than black grandparents, and the designation may be meaningless in West Africa or South Asia where the racial system that gave rise to the classification does not exist. Even people with roughly the same colour and physical appearance may be categorized as different races in certain contexts. This has been the experience of groups such as the Irish and European Jews in Europe and the United States.

The construction of race as identity may be linked with ethnicity, especially when variations in physical characteristics coincide with assumed cultural, linguistic and religious differences. Examples include relations between people of Indian and African origin in Guyana and Trinidad, indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians in Fiji, North and South Sudanese, Tutsi and Hutu in Burundi and Rwanda, and Chinese and Malays in Malaysia. In Burundi and Rwanda, despite the fact that the two groups share skin colour, language, religion and names, variations in height, body structure and nose shape are used to establish difference (Lemarchand, 1996). In some contexts, a group may identify itself as a separate race even if there are no clear physical differences between it and the groups it seeks to categorize as the 'other'. Thus we have concepts like the 'Yoruba race' in Nigeria, the 'Italian race' in Europe and the 'Chinese race' in Asia. Even when groups do not practise overt forms of discrimination, subtle differences in physical characteristics, which may not be apparent to outsiders, may be used to construct ideas about the 'other'.

Racial ideas may influence discourses on social integration or accommodation, encourage insular or xenophobic practices, and distort perceptions about rights and citizenship. Citizens are supposed to be bearers of equal rights and obligations. In polarized racial settings,

however, social solidarity, the cornerstone of citizenship, may be embedded in racial – not civic – networks, affecting the way the public domain is governed. However, it is instructive to note that all communities, whether based on racial identification or ethnicity, are complex, undergo change and experience internal diversities and conflicts. Race, in other words, is not only constructed, it is also contested.

The first five chapters of this book discuss these issues as they relate to experiences in the United States, Western Europe, the Middle East and Southern Africa. In the United States, George M. Fredrickson points out in Chapter 1 that commitment towards universal human rights coexisted with a strong historical tendency to exclude non-white groups from citizenship. The American Revolution appealed to universalistic values of human rights, but the 1789 Constitution excluded African-Americans and indigenous Indians from citizenship. The immigration law of 1790 limited the right to naturalization to 'free white persons'. Throughout the 1830s, 1840s and 1850s, as the debate on slavery intensified, pseudo-scientific racist ideologies were used by defenders of black servitude to prevent blacks from enjoying equal rights with whites. It culminated in the Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision of 1857, which declared all blacks ineligible for citizenship. The civil war and use of black troops to defend the Union represented the first major effort to extend citizenship to African-Americans. However, this gain was undermined in the South during the Jim Crow era which lasted almost a century, when blacks suffered discrimination, disenfranchisement and torture. Struggles for racial equality intensified between the 1930s and 1960s, culminating in the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965, which made citizenship rights more enforceable. However, formal equality has not led to social citizenship: a substantially higher proportion of blacks than whites are likely to be unemployed, imprisoned, in poverty or destitute.

Fredrickson discusses the United States' experience in comparative perspective. In the main, the US commitment to a universal human rights tradition distinguishes it from the German tradition of ethnic nationalism, which produced the horrors of Nazi rule and the Holocaust. Also, the United States' acceptance of multiculturalism sets it apart from the culture-coded ethno-racial intolerance of France, despite the fact that the latter has not established colour bars to protect white privilege. He concluded that since race has been socially constructed it should not be seen as natural or inevitable. There is already a process of deconstruction of race in the United States, as can be seen in the demolition of legalized segregation, racially inspired voting restrictions and discriminatory immigration quotas.

South Africa is comparable to the United States in terms of its historical commitment to institutionalized racism (Magubane, 2001). Before apartheid, the subjugation of the African population took two forms: slavery and peonage. Laws devised for indentured white immigrants, free 'coloured' workers and emancipated African slaves provided the backdrop for South Africa's notorious master and servant laws, which from 1910 were transformed into segregatory laws, and from 1948 into apartheid, effectively denying the African population citizenship rights. The 1994 Constitution and the new Government of National Unity proscribed apartheid, upheld universal citizenship for all South Africans and committed itself to both racial and gender equality.

Racial discrimination has not thrived only in societies with laws, policies and practices that classify individuals according to biological differences. In Peru and other parts of Latin America, de la Cadena (2001) has argued that nation-builders rejected biological determinism and produced a notion of race based on morality and reason to defend social hierarchies. In this framework, education was vested with the power to dissolve differences based on physical appearance. It gave rise to what she has described as *silent racism*, since the bulk of the non-white indigenous population remained excluded from the transformatory benefits of education. In South Asia caste is derived not from physical appearances, but from ancient practices associated with occupations, marriage bonds, dietary habits and religious customs (Prashad, 2001). It constitutes a significant source of discrimination, which by many accounts is comparable to social practices under apartheid South Africa and racial segregation in the southern United States. The Dalits, or Untouchables, could 'touch' most things owned by the dominant *jati* or ruling groups if their labour was required, but when they worked for themselves their touch was regarded by the *jatis* as social pollution. Caste discrimination has been outlawed in India and, as in the United States and South Africa, affirmative action policies are in place to help Dalits bridge the socio-economic gap. However, the enforcement of laws is lax, and discrimination, intolerance and caste-related violence persist.

Migration affects the construction of citizenship. Globalization is associated with the mass migration of people to countries perceived to offer opportunities for self-advancement. Immigrants may have a different physical appearance, culture, religion and language, which native populations may perceive as threatening to their values and notions of what a society should be. In Chapter 2, Ray Jureidini discusses the fate of migrant workers in the oil-rich countries of the Middle East. The

Middle East has experienced massive waves of immigrants engaged in short-term work, from household domestics to highly qualified professionals. The migration of cheap Asian and African female workers has produced a racialized and gendered secondary labour market in that region. These workers are associated with dirty, dangerous and difficult jobs, which nationals refuse to do, despite widespread poverty and unemployment. A central feature of the contract that underpins female labour recruitment for these jobs is its bondage character: workers are not free to access local labour markets without state approval and are attached to a sponsor for the duration of the contract. Conditions of slavery pertain for many female live-in domestic workers: threats of violence, restriction of movement, exploitative working conditions and widespread abuse. He calls for the introduction and enforcement of local labour laws and international conventions that will protect such workers.

Migration poses a challenge to traditional conceptions of the nation state in Western Europe. Nationalist struggles in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries established a tight relationship between the state and the nation. Defined as a group of people with a shared history, culture, language and territory, a nation was expected to form a culturally homogeneous state. Recent trends in cultural diversity challenge such notions of nation state homogeneity. In Chapter 3, Jeroen Doomernik discusses three broad types of European response to immigration. The first stresses the importance of equality before the law for both legal long-term residents and traditional citizens and grants the former easy access to citizenship. It also acknowledges the ethnic origins of residents and, if they do not conflict with the principle of equality, supports the public display of such differences. This is the multicultural approach. The second is the republican ideal, which also stresses the principle of equality before the law for residents and citizens, but discourages the display of cultural practices that are different from the dominant native culture. The third type is the most exclusionary. It is founded on the old notion of nation state homogeneity in which only co-ethnics are entitled to citizenship. Illustrative examples of the three cases are the Netherlands, France and Germany, respectively. On issues related to employment, schooling and housing, Doomernik argues that there may not be much difference in policy approaches between countries that subscribe to different philosophies of citizenship. However, the different ways policy-makers apply these philosophies in different countries may affect social cohesion and the integration of immigrants in host societies.

Racism often needs mobilizers, organizations and a discourse to activate or sustain it. In countries where liberal democracy is entrenched, it has been possible to gauge the extent of popular support enjoyed by racist, far right or xenophobic movements. In many Western democracies, xenophobic or far right parties are gaining electoral strength in local, regional and national elections, with some even participating in national governments or governing large cities. These parties often have strong links with neo-Nazi organizations, which attract a large number of unemployed youths immersed in a subculture of disobedience and intolerance. In addition, there has been a rise of xenophobic and racist groups in the transition economies of Eastern and Central Europe, especially in countries with large gypsy or Roma populations.

In Western Europe, a new form of exclusionary populism, exemplified by right-wing political parties and movements, poses a threat to that region's democratic and liberal order. Hans-Georg Betz discusses these issues in Chapter 4. Right-wing populist parties are different from traditional parties in several way. They rely on charismatic leadership and a centralized party structure, scrupulously pursue a strategy of political marketing with a pronounced customer or voter orientation, and project a style of mobilization that appeals to popular anxieties, prejudices and resentment of the existing political order. They advocate a comprehensive programme of social change, which includes strong hostility towards foreigners and multiculturalism, as well as other issues relating to national identity, which tend to vary according to country experiences. They advocate a restrictive notion of citizenship in which only natives or long-standing indigenes can claim full membership and associated social benefits. In contrast to earlier racist parties, contemporary right-wing populist parties do not advance notions of ethnoracial superiority. Their ideology is, instead, based on cultural nativism, which seeks to protect European, or 'one's own', society and way of life against outside influences and practices. The electoral base of these parties encompasses several groups, although young male voters with low to medium education tend to predominate. Far right parties have been included in governing coalitions in Austria, Italy and Switzerland. However, as Betz points out, these parties are often their own worst enemies: they tend to perform badly in office, causing their popularity ratings to diminish with time. He is confident that the institutions of Western democracy and civil society will be strong enough to meet the challenge posed by these parties.

Institutional racism is currently the most widely debated issue of racial discrimination. It refers to institutional practices that tend to

place the victimized group in continuous disadvantage with respect to a majority or dominant group in society in a number of areas such as education, employment, career opportunities, housing, health care and other social services or societal goods or benefits that are thus unequally distributed along racial and/or ethnic lines. Institutional racism may not be the result of any personal racist motivation by people in positions of power, but it clearly affects the outcomes: biased recruitment patterns in jobs, unequal access to health care, limited career opportunities, lower quality of education and delivery of other social services, ghettoization and multiple other forms of segregation and exclusion. Whether it is blacks and Latinos in the United States, Caribbean youth in the United Kingdom, Arabs and Africans in France, Turks in Germany, indigenous peoples from Argentina to Alaska to Australia, Burakumin in Japan, Dalits in India, Berbers in North Africa, the *patterns of institutional racism* tend to be similar the world over. They are frequently not even formally considered as racist, and may appear in the guise of social and economic disadvantages simply suffered by lower-income sectors. This is the debate surrounding the issue of descent-based and work-based discrimination among Asia's untouchable castes.

There is much debate about whether 'equality of opportunity' should lead to 'equality of outcomes'. Some recent scholarship holds that development actually means more freedom of choice based on enhanced capabilities of the individual. A just society would allow all individuals equal opportunity to increase their capabilities, and therefore overcome traditional inequalities (Sen, 1999). But what if inequalities are persistent over decades and centuries and are related to community, religion, ethnicity, culture or racial distinctions and to a history of oppression and exploitation (Tilly, 1998)? Equality of opportunity is not universally enjoyed, not even when the legal system is open and basically fair. Too often racial and ethnic discrimination occurs in the functioning of legal institutions, in the realm of the administration of justice and particularly in the criminal justice system.

The elimination of racial discrimination requires, therefore, competent, neutral, responsive and accountable law enforcement agencies. However, police departments in multiracial societies may constitute part of the problem of racism; in many countries, their preferential treatment of individuals has been queried. Benjamin Bowling et al. discuss these issues in Chapter 5. Police abuses include excessive use of force, torture and racist language against people they perceive as different. They rely on published reports on four police agencies – the Metropolitan Police in London, the New South Wales Police in Australia, the Los

Angeles Police Department in the US and the South Africa Police Service – to illustrate their arguments. They argue that measures to eliminate abuse of power from police work may include the creation of a police force that reflects the racial diversity of the communities served; promotion of equality of opportunity and equality of service; establishment of structures that will aid legal, political and community accountability; introduction of civilian oversight and transparent and effective methods for handling complaints; development of ethnic minority staff networks; and innovative educational and training schemes. At the core of the reforms is the need to demonstrate clear and overt commitment to the implementation of what they have called *democratic policing*. In other words, police officers should be accountable to the law, the state and the community.

Inequalities and social justice

Racism and inequalities may be linked to discriminatory public policies, the way labour markets are structured and differential access to governance institutions. Labour markets may be racially segmented because of past public policies, unequal development or efforts by individuals from specific groups to protect advantages in certain lines of activity. Public policies and market segmentation may lead to physical segregation of groups, further reinforcing racial prejudice and antagonism. Racially segmented markets may provoke instability when they are bifurcated, encouraging groups to hold each other hostage.

Inequalities can also arise from the impact of development policies and practices on different groups. When 'race' overlaps with social class, inequalities may assume hierarchical race–class dimensions – of the types that breed xenophobia and violence. Such inequalities may mask other cleavages by creating a racially bifurcated society. Many forms of racial inequalities are, however, ambiguous. Individuals in an assumed racial group may, for instance, rank well in socio-economic terms but the racial group may be disadvantaged nationally. Inequalities may occur in education, health provision, housing, income, employment, infrastructure development and asset holdings, such as land. Race may become a powerful tool in the hands of elites and politicians in struggles over public offices and resources.

Rapid integration of economies into the world market, advances in information technologies and changes in production systems may alter structures of opportunity and shape the dynamics of race relations.

Where economies have experienced sustained levels of growth, as in the United States during the 1990s, employment and incomes may improve even for disadvantaged groups. However, technological change may reinforce inequalities or introduce new types of segregation – the so-called digital divide – if excluded groups are unable to access the new technologies. These issues are discussed in the chapters that look at experiences in the United States, Malaysia, Indonesia and Southern Africa. Using time-series data, Danziger, Reed and Brown in Chapter 6 examine changes in the relative economic status of 'white non-Hispanics', 'black non-Hispanics' and 'Hispanics' covering the period of the 1970s and the long economic boom of the 1990s associated with dramatic technological changes, industrial restructuring and immigration. Their data suggest that employment and incomes increased, poverty declined and inequality stopped rising for all three groups. However, the gaps between whites and blacks and between whites and Hispanics remain very large in a broad range of socio-economic indicators. Racial disparties are widest in wealth: in the 1980s, white households held twelve times the median net worth of black households in assets; in 1994 the net worth of whites had declined to 8.6 times that of blacks – US$52,994 vs. US$6,127. The performance of Hispanics in most measures has been negatively affected by large-scale immigration from Latin America. Recent migrants are less well endowed than long-term residents. Danziger et al. point out that economic growth is important but not sufficient to correct these gaps. Policy needs to focus 'both on removing the barriers to equal opportunity and to raising the relative education and skills of minority children'. They suggest four policies to achieve this: improving schools in poor neighbourhoods, moving inner-city residents to the suburbs, active labour market strategies and anti-discrimination strategies.

A number of policies exist for tackling racism, racial prejudice, discrimination, xenophobia and inequalities. Public policies range from legal instruments and socio-economic programmes, to educational policies that seek to change behaviour and promote inclusiveness. They may involve sensitivity to racial cleavages in devising economic and social policies and reforming governance institutions. Targeted programmes may be adopted to correct historical injustices or to assist excluded groups to get out of poverty and exploit opportunities. Public policies may be implemented in macro- and micro-level settings where groups compete for resources and public offices. They have differential impacts, including among targeted beneficiaries. They are also often contested

by different groups, which makes it difficult to predict their overall effects on social change or draw universal lessons that may be applicable to all situations.

Public policies that promote social justice are a fundamental requirement for achieving stability and responsible citizenship. Affirmative action policies are associated with efforts to correct socio-economic disabilities, which certain groups may have suffered as a result of past discriminatory public policies. They focus on issues of employment, access to educational institutions, government contracts and broad areas of social policy. Their content and application may vary according to whether the targeted population constitutes the majority group and has strong access to policy-making institutions, or whether beneficiaries are a minority whose influence on legislators, the executive branch of government and administrators is limited. Policies are thus likely to vary between countries as different as the United States, South Africa, Malaysia and Brazil.

Affirmative action policies, as Danziger et al. point out, have come under considerable attack in the United States in recent years. Sections of the white population see them as open-ended commitments and reverse forms of discrimination that are likely to perpetuate a culture of dependency among the underprivileged minority vis-à-vis the state. It is also contended that these policies largely benefit minority elites and constitute a violation of individual rights. Minorities who benefit from affirmative action are rightly worried that the gains obtained over the past decades will quickly be eroded and that the indicators revealing unequal access by disadvantaged minorities to social benefits will rise once again. Affirmative action policies are now being dismantled or questioned by the courts (Curry, 1996). The dominant ideology that drives opposition to affirmative action is liberal individualism, which espouses a policy of colour-blindness: the practice of not using race when carrying out a policy (Loury, 2001). Colour-blindness should be distinguished from race indifference: the practice of not considering how a chosen rule might impact various racial groups. Both can ameliorate or exacerbate the social disadvantage of racial minorities. However, given the history of institutionalized racism in the US, Loury contends that struggles for racial equality may require a reordering of moral concerns: racial justice before race blindness or race indifference.

The debate in Malaysia, where the disadvantaged group has majority status, is different. Chapters 7 and 8 address these issues. In Chapter 7, Jomo K. S. assesses the extent to which the Malaysian government has been able to redistribute incomes, assets and other resources to the